

## PART 4: SCHOOL BOARD SUPPORT FOR LEARNING

Part 4 deals with the base of the pyramid of support for learning in the CSB at the level of the School Board.<sup>a</sup> We have divided this layer into three separate sub-layers, starting with the one closest to schools, centres and post-secondary education field offices:

- educational service delivery for youth & adults;
- administrative services; and
- governance & general administration.



In this performance theme, we posed the following question:

- How successful is the School Board in providing support for learning through its structures, systems and policies for the governance and management of education?

Chapter 10 deals with the first layer and comprises four evaluative objects, each dealing with distinct organizational units of the Board:

- Office of the Supervisor of Schools;
- Educational Services;
- Continuing Education; and
- Post-Secondary Education Office.

Chapter 11 deals with the four departments providing various forms of administrative services:

- Human Resources;
- Finance;
- Material Resources; and
- Information Technology.

Finally, chapter 12 deals with the governance & general administration of the Board.

<sup>a</sup> All parts of the CAFSI report can be found on the CSB Educational Review website in English and French: [http://www.cscree.qc.ca/Edreview/ed\\_review.htm](http://www.cscree.qc.ca/Edreview/ed_review.htm), [http://www.cscree.qc.ca/Edreview/Fr/Etude\\_Ed.htm](http://www.cscree.qc.ca/Edreview/Fr/Etude_Ed.htm).

These parts are not written as 'stand-alone' texts. They are published separately because the report is too large to be downloaded as a single text. Thus, for example, the Reference List for all works cited in this Review can be found at the end of Part 5.

All of the units listed above are supposed to be accountable for their performance. They are expected to provide leadership and plan for delivery of whatever services they are expected to provide. They are expected to monitor and evaluate their performance and most of all, they are expected to achieve the results that they have set or that have been set for them.<sup>a</sup>

However, it is important to note that Part 4 does not attempt to provide a complete analysis of Board-level performance and capacity. Nor will it provide a holistic treatment of School Board governance and administration.<sup>b</sup> In part, this broader picture is provided by the Organizational Review and its analysis of Board structures, modes of organization and so forth. More particularly, a holistic portrait of the Board's governance and administration will have to come from the Board itself following its own synthesis of the Organizational and Educational Reviews and other current initiatives.

This chapter does not attempt to provide a complete analysis of school board governance or administration, which is beyond our mandate.

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<sup>a</sup> A brief discussion of the general nature of these five issues: (accountability; leadership & planning; service delivery; monitoring & evaluation; and results), is included in the section Evaluation Design, Units of Analysis, found in Appendix B. In the sections that follow in this chapter, the first four issues are dealt with in the analysis of the data. The fifth issue, results, is treated in relation to the performance standards for the unit in question, dealt with under **Key Findings, Conclusions & Recommendations** for that unit.

<sup>b</sup> As explained in Part 1, the mandate to construct such a holistic picture was withdrawn from the Educational Review.

## 10.0 EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY FOR YOUTH & ADULTS

This chapter deals with the first layer of Board support for learning, the layer that is closest to schools, centres and post-secondary offices. The Board maintains two departments for youth education and two for adult education:

- Office of the Supervisor of Schools;
- Educational Services;
- Continuing Education; and
- Post Secondary Education Office.

Each of these departments will be analyzed in the four sections that follow. Normally, one would expect to complement these individual presentations with a discussion of how their work is integrated, or at least coordinated. No such section has been included because, as far as we can determine, there is no coordination, let alone integration of their work.

We have made several references in this report to the concept of life-long learning. For individuals, this means that one can no longer graduate from school, college or university and say: *That's it. My learning is done. Time to get on with life.* We now have to accept that many things we learned in school will have to be re-learned on the basis of new knowledge. In addition, we will have to learn many other things that we never learned in school in the first place. The latter is especially important for those who dropped out of school.

School boards have a crucial role to play in promoting life-long learning and that role begins by integrating educational services for youth and adult students. The 'old model' where schools and adult education centres worked in isolation from each other is passé. Similarly, it is unacceptable for these schools and centres to be unconnected with what is happening in colleges and universities and other institutions of learning.

Often this practice of people working in separate boxes is referred to as '**silo management**' - as illustrated by the silos in the above graphic - close together, but unconnected. Contemporary public administration now includes various models of **horizontal management** to counter the isolation and fragmentation associated with silo management.



Horizontal management means "being able to work in teams and networks across organizational silos ... [and] bringing diverse people together and lining up authorities in a complementary way to achieve a common purpose."<sup>185</sup> Despite its name, this approach supports both vertical and horizontal integration of work:

- **vertical integration** of policy and leadership - across levels (e.g., regional and local) and structures (e.g., CHRD, School Board, centres) - and
- **horizontal integration** - across various areas of policy and practice (e.g., youth, vocational and adult education),

both within and across organizations (e.g. within the CSB, between the Board and the CRA).

At the present time, the four CSB units listed above operate in independent silos that are not even located in the same location. The Office of the Supervisor of Schools and Continuing Education are in Mississauga; Educational Services is in Chatham; and the Post Secondary Education Office is in Montréal. The Board needs to make a concerted effort to bring these units

together. This does not mean creating a new structure; it means changing the organizational culture of the Board to promote collaboration, a theme to which we will return in section 12.4.

## 10.1 Office of the Supervisor of Schools

This section deals with the support of learning through the ‘supervision’ of schools, that is, the exercise of line authority by the CSB over the nine schools where educational services are provided. In the CSB this accountability function is performed by the Office of the Supervisor of Schools. Although this Office has the most important operational responsibility of any unit in the CSB, it is staffed by only three administrative and professional positions: the Supervisor of Schools, the Assistant Supervisor of Schools and a consultant. It has no infrastructure and until recently, not even a single secretary.

The primary sources of data on the supervision of schools were feedback from schools, interviews with the Supervisor and Assistant Supervisor of Schools,<sup>a</sup> and the collection of various documents.

### Performance Standards

- The Office of the Supervisor of Schools adds demonstrable value to school performance through the provision of its services.
- The operation of the Office of the Supervisor of Schools meets expected performance standards for planning, managing, delivering and evaluating the services it provides.

### 10.1.1 Accountability

The Office of the Supervisor of Schools used to be a part of the Department of Educational Services. Apparently, the principals had made a request for the Supervisor of Schools to be directly under the Director General in order to improve what they perceived as a lack of responsiveness of this Office to their needs. After some delay, this change was made about a year and a half ago.

According to the General By-Law of the CSB, the Supervisor of Schools now exercises the following responsibilities, under the authority of the Director General:

- to coordinate the relationship between the school principals and vice-principals with the various departments and services of the Board and with the Cree regional entities;
- to assist the school principals and vice-principals with the organization of the schools and with the implementation of Board policies and procedures;
- to supervise the preparation of teacher allocations;
- to organize and approve professional improvement for school principals and vice-principals;
- to approve the work schedules and vacation schedules of school principals;
- to prepare, coordinate and submit annual school calendars for approval by the Council
- to authorize expenses and payments, and approve contracts for amounts not exceeding \$10,000.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Normally, these interviews would have included the consultant from this department but she is a member of the evaluation team.

<sup>b</sup> For purposes of this report, certain details of these functions have been omitted; see General By-Law, art. 17.11. As discussed above, the Office of the Supervisor of Schools used to be located in the Department of Educational Services, to which the By-Law still makes erroneous reference.

The By-Law does not include the Assistant Supervisor of Schools and no job description exists for this position nor for the consultant.

When one considers what the above list contains - and what it does not contain - several accountability issues appear to require attention.

First, conspicuous by its absence in this list is the nature of the accountability of schools to this Office nor its accountability to the Director General. There is no general statement on this list that expresses what ought to be the core function of this Office, the supervision of schools. As the line authority to schools, this Office ought to have an overriding preoccupation with the following:

If the Office of the Supervisor of Schools is not holding schools accountable for their performance, who is?

- How well are schools performing?
- What gaps in their capacity are impeding their performance?
- What can be done to improve their performance?

From what we can ascertain from the data we have collected, this Office has never been given such a mandate.

The list makes reference to the application of Board policies but the only one we identified for which this Office is responsible is the policy on Student Attendance. Also absent from the above list of duties, is any mention of the CEA, who reports to the Director General (in the absence of a Deputy Director General). Given the current mix of authority assigned to principals and CEAs, it is difficult to understand why the latter do not report to the Supervisor of Schools.

A more general issue, however, is that when the creation of a separate Office of the Supervisor of Schools occurred, no consideration seems to have been given to the human, material or other resources that ought to have been transferred from Educational Services to support this new Office. This would have been an ideal time to have posed and answered questions such as the following:

- What is the most appropriate manner to divide responsibilities between these two departments in order to oversee and support schools?
- What resources does each department require to exercise its mandate?
- How should these two departments work together to the benefit of schools?

Unfortunately, it does not appear as if any such questions were posed, let alone answered. These shortcomings need to be addressed not, we suggest, by revising the By-Law, but by a redesign of the Board's system of accountability, a topic which is being addressed by the Organizational Review. However, in the course of our work, several **stakeholders** have raised concerns about the relationship of this Office to Educational Services, concerns which should find a voice in this report.

- The first concern deals with the allocation of resources raised above. How can this Office be expected to support schools when it is given almost no resources to discharge its mandate?

- The second issue raised is the ambiguity which principals experience in structures such as PIT, the Pedagogical Issues Team. It is chaired by the Supervisor of Schools but depends on the participation of Educational Services.
- The third issue raised is the proposal currently being discussed that this Office should once again come under Educational Services.

Many school boards, especially large ones, have separate departments to exercise line and staff functions with respect to schools. In smaller school boards, where board administrators tend to wear more than one hat, such functions may be combined in a single department. Given Educational Services' poor track record,<sup>a</sup> if any consideration is given to amalgamating them, then perhaps Educational Services should be remoulded as a set of sub-units under this Office. In any event, as we will discuss later in this report,<sup>b</sup> solutions to current administrative problems will not be found by changing structures but in building the capacity of the units and individuals who staff them.

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### 10.1.2 Leadership & Planning

Every administrative unit requires leadership and planning in order to fulfill its roles and responsibilities. In the case of this Office, leadership means that schools can look to it for direction, inspiration and guidance. Schools should be able to look to this Office as their 'two-way' gateway to the Board: a gate in, to access information, resources, etc.; in short, to help get things done; a gate out in terms of the demands being made on schools, directives sent, etc.; in other words, a buffer between them and the senior administration.

We asked school administrators about the exercise of these gatekeeper functions, to which one responded: *The Supervisor of Schools has no power, no budget.* When asked to elaborate, we were told that control was in the hands of the Finance Department.

More than one principal expressed discontent with leadership from this Office in terms of presence:

*[People from this Office] should come and see me more, either to ask, 'What did you do with this?' or, 'Why aren't you doing this?' That doesn't happen.*

Leadership should set the tone for the schools, signal what is important. Unfortunately, this Office transmits signals it receives from the top that tell schools what is important is meeting administrative deadlines. One administrator recalled a meeting where:

*One of the principals said: 'You notice that we're never praised for our work. and the other one said : 'Yeah, it's always, I was very disappointed that ...'*

*One time I asked the Supervisor: 'Can we talk after the meeting, I have questions? But no, no time.*

Q: *Did she ever come back?*

<sup>a</sup> See section 10.2 that follows (p. 217).

<sup>b</sup> See section 12.2 (p. 277).

*A: No. We never sat down.*

Successful organizations plan ahead. Without becoming mired in planning, they chart a course to help them get to where they want to be, which of course implies that they know where they want to go. We inquired into the strategic and operation planning used by this Office only to find there was no planning to analyze - none is carried out. It seems that there has never been any planning and that there are no expectations from the top that there should be.

We also discovered that this Office is in a 'wait-and-see' mode, waiting for the end of the Organizational and Educational Reviews and to see what will happen after that. Given the important role that this Office will have in the follow-up to the Educational Review, it is imperative that it have the capacity to engage productively in strategic and operational planning and be able to support schools in such planning at their level. We saw no evidence that such capacity exists at the present time.

### **10.1.3 Service Delivery**

For this Office, service delivery is defined by the activities that it should be undertaking to support schools, given its current mandate. These services ought to focus on capacity building for schools. Activities could include anything that helps schools to enhance their performance, starting with the professional development of principals and vice-principals. The Office is aware that many school administrators do not know how to deal with the problems that exist. When we asked: How many of them have had management leadership training? the answer was clear: *None*.

The most prevalent form of support we could detect was sporadic visits to schools and periodic meetings. The visits do not seem to be well planned. When, and if, they occur, there are no expected results, merely a chance for the administrator to vent. This might make him or her feel slightly better but does nothing to enhance his or her capacity to manage the school. As one principal expressed it:

*I want to be taught more what I can do to improve my own efficiency, effectiveness, you know, to learn.*

At the present time, school visits are a 'hit-or-miss' affair; they are as likely to be cancelled as they are to proceed. They certainly do little to respond to the needs of school administrators as expressed above. The periodic meetings are another story.

Anecdotal evidence is mixed about the utility of these meetings which comprise 'Principals' Meetings' and PIT meetings. The reason for this dual track of meetings is not completely clear but it seems to reflect the continuing ambivalence about the respective roles of this Office and Educational Services. Apparently coordinators from Educational Services used to attend the principals' meetings and were able to respond to questions from participants about various items on the agenda. This practice came to a halt when Educational Services stopped them from attending. Now any questions must be raised at PIT, which, as far as we can determine, does not effectively deal with most of the issues brought before it. It is another example of bureaucratic inefficiency which needlessly spends additional funds, that could go into the classroom, for negligible results.

An undated document from several years ago, entitled *Cree School Board Reform*, specifies two action plans that PIT was supposed to take forward:

- improve teaching in the classroom; and
- improve the basic learning skills of our students.

It consists of a series of vague and general statements with no concrete plan of action, no specified results, no means of monitoring and evaluation and no accountability for follow-up. We were not surprised when we did not discover anything tangible that had occurred because of these so-called action plans.

All of these meetings take a considerable amount of time, especially when travel is factored in. While some coordinating functions are achieved by these meetings, the resources they consume, to say nothing of the frustration they generate, do not make them a very cost-effective means to support principals. Email and phone communication was cited by some as more effective, while others stated that messages went unanswered - a communication problem that is rampant throughout the Board administration.

The support provided for planning at the school level, using the LEP, is a case-in-point. We have already provided a critical analysis of LEPs in the section on school leadership.<sup>a</sup> The Office acknowledges that the LEP is a paper exercise and that there is little, if any, evaluation done regarding the achievement of intended results. We were told that support was requested from Educational Services but none was forthcoming. The issue was brought to the attention of the Director General but to no avail. There simply is not the capacity in this Office to conceptualize, design and support a local planning process, no assistance is provided by other units and no leadership is provided by the Board.

Support activities could include helpful guidelines and other documentation, the operative word being 'helpful.' There is a *Principal's Administrative Manual*, but this is a working document from 2001. It seems that no one has had time to work on it in the past seven years. It is not a very inviting document and contains a mixture of general information about Ministry policy, Board policies and de-contextualized bits and pieces from unnamed secondary sources. For example, one section is entitled Classroom Practices - Approaches to Teaching. The content is well written but there is no context in which to interpret and apply what is said, as there might be, for example, if it were part of a unit on teacher supervision. A great deal of work probably went into assembling the material in this binder, time and resources that have not produced any tangible benefit. This is another example of countless documents we have seen in the course of this Review: much effort, much paper, little result.

#### 10.1.4 Monitoring & Evaluation

Every organizational unit should be concerned with monitoring and evaluating its performance in accordance with the system in place inside the organization. This system should be based on the accountability of each unit and a vision of improvement of its service delivery and results. Ideally, each unit should play a major role in monitoring and evaluating its own performance, regardless of the role played by others.

As will be discussed in section 12.2.3 in Part 4 (p. 280), there is no system in the Board for the monitoring and evaluating of organizational performance. Each unit is therefore left on its own in this regard. It is not surprising, therefore, that this Office does not engage in any systematic monitoring or evaluation of its own performance.

As the line authority for schools, this Office ought to be concerned with every aspect of the performance and capacity of schools. We have already seen in a previous chapter, that schools do not engage in any systematic monitoring or evaluation of their own performance.<sup>b</sup> When we inquired into the role played by this Office in regard to monitoring and evaluating schools, we discovered that the only consistent role being played was to ensure that schools met deadlines for various administrative tasks.

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<sup>a</sup> See page 123.

<sup>b</sup> See section 6.4 (p. 136).

Periodically, specific inquiries are addressed to schools, for example a survey regarding school closures, new positions put in place in accordance with the three-year plan. These tend to be driven by requests from above, either the Director General or the Council of Commissioners. Furthermore, it appears that not all schools comply with these requests and there are no consequences for those that do not.

Given that much of the support services schools *ought* to be receiving *should* be coming from Educational Services, it can be argued that the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of schools ought to be *the* priority task of this Office. Unfortunately, this is not the case. There is no ongoing attempt to monitor and evaluate the core functions of schools - teaching and learning - nor their capacity to delivery quality educational services to their students.

Regardless of the specific means used, school boards monitor and evaluate school performance by:

- determining what performance is to be evaluated;
- articulating performance standards;
- determining how performance will be measured;
- providing for the collection of data on school performance;
- analyzing the data;
- reporting the results to schools, the school board and other stakeholders;
- using the results to take action to improve school performance; and
- supporting schools throughout this process.

As already seen in other sections of this report, various data are collected from schools, notably on attendance and standardized test scores, as well as those provided by the Ministry, notably student results on uniform exams and graduation. However, to date, this Office has not exercised any role in this regard.

In part, this shortcoming reflects the ongoing ambiguity over the respective responsibilities of this Office and Educational Services. For example, Educational Services has responsibility for data management, especially data relating to student achievement and school performance. This is a critical task in any school board. For the past number of years, much of this function has been delegated to an external consultant.

As we will see in the section that follows, standardized tests are administered in the schools but nothing is done with the results. We were told that this Office was supposed to assume responsibility for managing test data and that the consultant, whose position was only created in July 2007, was to play a key role for this purpose. However, to date, nothing has ever been clarified in this regard. There has been no written directive and no resources provided to undertake this function. We were told that Educational Services has complained that this Office is not doing its job in this regard; however, until a clear transfer of responsibility occurs, the responsibility remains with Educational Services.

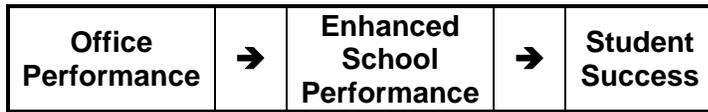
### **10.1.5 Key Findings, Conclusions & Recommendations**

For purposes of this Review, the results anticipated from this Office are captured by the performance standard stated at the beginning of this section. We must now ask to what extent the data that we have collected and analyzed permit us to determine whether this Office meets the stated standards:

- The Office of the Supervisor of Schools adds demonstrable value to school performance through the provision of its services.

- The operation of the Office of the Supervisor of Schools meets expected performance standards for planning, managing, delivering and evaluating the services it provides.

These expectations situate this Office in the results chain for student success. By achieving the results stated above, it helps schools to achieve higher levels of capacity and performance, which in turn will lead to improved student success. We found little evidence of such results



being achieved. However, we need to be very clear about what we mean - and do not mean - by this statement.

It would be grossly unfair to attribute low levels of school performance to this Office. As presently structured and resourced, this Office has an enormous responsibility - line authority for schools. However, it has been allocated very few resources and given no support by the Board to discharge its mandate. In a previous chapter we cited the comment of a principal who opined that their role was to keep teachers in line, while school resources were controlled by the CEA. We see an analogous situation here where the Office is expected to keep schools in line while resources are controlled by other units of the Board.

The leadership of this Office is trying its best to do what is expected of it. This Office is caught in a 'squeeze play' between the schools and the Board administration. It tries to respond to demands from above which are more concerned with administrative deadlines that schools must meet rather than with their performance in relation to teaching and learning. It tries to respond to demands from below but is unable to provide schools with the assistance they require, because it does not have the capacity to do so. This in turn results in poor communication, little accountability and inadequate follow-up.

Blaming the leadership of this Office for these poor results would be utterly inappropriate as we saw no evidence of bad faith, only a sincere attempt to do what it can in these difficult circumstances. The results that should be expected from such an Office will only be forthcoming when the Board decides to take school performance seriously and begins the long process of building the capacity of units such as this one to support them.

Based on the foregoing analysis, we recommend:

- R81 THAT**, subject to the analysis provided by the Organizational Review, serious consideration be given to making the Office of the Supervisor of Schools the sole point of accountability for the supervision and support of schools.
- R82 THAT** any restructuring of the Office of the Supervisor of Schools be subject to consultation of schools with respect to needed support.
- R83 THAT** the mandate of the Office of the Supervisor of Schools be clarified in accordance with any restructuring carried out, and appropriate resources allocated to allow this mandate to be fulfilled.
- R84 THAT** in accordance with other recommendations of this report, a comprehensive plan be developed and implemented to build the capacity of the Office of the Supervisor of Schools to exercise its mandate.

## 10.2 Educational Services

This section deals with the support of learning through the provision of various education-related services. In the CSB this **staff function** is performed by the Department of Educational Services, which comprises five sub-units:

- Instructional Services;
- Student Services;
- Special Education;
- Cree Programs; and
- Professional Development.

Unlike all other Board departments that are meant to support schools, Educational Services is located in Chisasibi. As will be seen below, this geographic separation from the Board office in Mistissini does not appear to be based on any rationale related to its mandate.

The primary sources of data on this department were feedback from schools, interviews with the Director and Coordinators, questionnaire data from educational consultants and other staff, and a series of documents provided for analysis. The most serious gap in these sources of data is the small number of education consultants who responded to the electronic questionnaire each one received. In addition, we have no way of ascertaining whether the documents supplied provide an adequate coverage of the material we requested.

### Performance Standards

- The Educational Services Department adds demonstrable value to school performance through the provision of its services.
- The operation of the Educational Services Department meets expected performance standards for planning, managing, delivering and evaluating the services it provides with respect to:
  - ◇ instructional services;
  - ◇ special education;
  - ◇ student services;
  - ◇ Cree programs; and
  - ◇ professional development.

### 10.2.1 Accountability

According to the General By-Law of the CSB, the Director of Educational Services exercises the following responsibilities, under the authority of the Director General:

- to prepare an annual education plan for approval by the Council;
- to supervise the planning and organization of the curriculum and programs of instruction at the elementary and secondary levels, including course materials and student evaluations;
- to ensure proper communication between school committees, CEAs, School Principals, teachers and the Board;
- to supervise the planning and implementation of Cree Programs, Student Services, Instructional Services and Professional Development;
- to administer and manage all programs and resources related to the complementary and supplementary services as defined in the pedagogical regime applicable to the Board;

- to authorize expenses and payments, and approve contracts for amounts not exceeding \$50,000 and cost reallocations not exceeding \$25,000;
- to approve the appointment and engagement of all regional support staff and administer the collective agreement applicable to its staff.<sup>a</sup>

Each of the five sub-units is headed by a Coordinator. The only mention in the By-Law of the coordinators is to their spending authority (Art. 17.14) and no job descriptions exist for their positions or for others employed by this Department: 22 consultants, a regional librarian and 15 administrative and technical staff. The staff and a brief description of each sub-unit are shown below.<sup>b</sup> Details can be found in the section on service delivery, beginning on page 222.

#### EXHIBIT 4-1: STAFF & RESPONSIBILITIES OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

<b>Educational Services</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director</li> <li>• 2 admin/technical staff</li> </ul>	
<b>Instructional Services</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coordinator</li> <li>▪ 10 Education consultants<sup>c</sup></li> <li>▪ 1 regional librarian</li> <li>▪ 5 admin/technical staff</li> </ul>	Provides advice to senior officials, teachers and professionals of the CSB respecting the implementation, development and evaluation of educational programs, the appropriate academic organization of schools and the selection and use of methods, techniques, equipment, teaching material, etc.
<b>Special Education</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coordinator</li> <li>▪ 3 Education consultants</li> <li>▪ 1 admin/technical staff</li> </ul>	Promotes the philosophy of inclusive education; ensures that the Board's assessment referral process is followed and that parents are informed and involved; provides essential services to students with special needs in all schools and assistance to teachers, support staff and administrators; promotes collaboration with outside agencies and awareness of students with special needs.
<b>Student Services</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinator</li> <li>• 2 admin/technical staff</li> </ul>	Responsible for financial, academic, vocational and social counselling; developing career resource centres, student housing and boarding home programs; developing medical and health related services and coordinating admissions; assisting in recreational and cultural programs; coordinating food services; maintaining student records; supervising student discipline; supervising programs for students attending school off the reserve; working closely with other CSB departments and outside agencies.

<sup>a</sup> For purposes of this report, certain details of these functions have been omitted; see General By-Law, art. 17.06, which refers to this position as the Director of Education.

<sup>b</sup> The information presented here is taken directly from information supplied by Educational Services or published on the Board website.

<sup>c</sup> Instructional Services reports seven consultants that have been in place: Assessment and Evaluation; English Elementary Education; Secondary ELA, ESL, and Secondary Social Studies; Cree Elementary Education (northern dialect); Cree Elementary Education (southern dialect); Second Languages. Two others were in the process of being filled when the data were submitted: Secondary French, French Second language, Secondary Social Studies, and Math and Sciences; and there are two vacant positions: Elementary French Education and Vocational Education.

<b>Cree Programs</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinator</li> <li>• 6 Education consultants</li> <li>• 3 admin/technical staff</li> </ul>	<p>Oversees the preparation, development and publication of learning materials for Cree Language and Cree Culture, the activities in the development of the Eastern James Bay Cree writing system, and all the related resources and the maintenance and updates of the web site <a href="http://www.eastcree.org">www.eastcree.org</a> wherein the Cree language resources are housed; collaborates with Instructional Services by adapting guidelines for Cree language and Cree culture instruction, with Professional Development, by providing resources and expertise for the Cree literacy program and teacher training; collaborates with Student Services and Special Education by providing Cree language expertise; conducts research to improve Cree programs.</p>
<b>Professional Development</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinator</li> <li>• 3 Education consultants</li> <li>• 2 admin/technical staff</li> </ul>	<p>Develops and administers training programs for Cree and non-Cree teachers, professionals, Principals, Vice-Principals and support personnel.</p>

Educational Services is responsible for the application of the following Board policies:

- Safe Schools;
- Field Trips and Excursions;
- Summer School;
- Promotion of Students;
- Suspensions and Expulsions of Students;
- Student Evaluation; and
- Transfer of Youth Sector Students.<sup>a</sup>

In addition, specific sub-units of the Department are responsible for other policies, which will be noted in the sub-sections that follow for each unit.

In terms of the accountability mandate of this Department, the contrast with the Office of the Supervisor of Schools is striking. The mandate is very broad, as presented by the Department, and considerable resources are allocated to it. If this Department were operating as intended, it should be seen as a major pillar of support by schools. It is no wonder, as discussed in the previous section, that principals are frustrated at the apparent lack of collaboration between this Department and the Office of the Supervisor of Schools.

This situation needs to be resolved but not by the re-absorption of the Office of the Supervisor of Schools into this Department. As the analysis presented in the rest of this section will demonstrate, this Department has more on its plate now than it can handle. The solution will either lie in placing existing or redefined sub-units under the authority of the Supervisor of Schools or in refocusing Educational Services as a collaborative partner that supports the work done by the Office of the Supervisor of Schools - the unit with line authority for school performance.

This perceived isolation is exacerbated by its location in Chisasibi. Given that a major service unit is located in a different community than the rest of the Board administration, we first tried to find out why this had been done. No clear answer was forthcoming but it was suggested that the move was based on political considerations, not administrative, and certainly not educational

<sup>a</sup> See Documentary Evidence/Youth Education/Board Policies in Appendix C; these policies are available on the Board website: <http://www.cscree.qc.ca/PPEdSer.htm>.

ones. When we asked the Director and the five coordinators about the location of their office, the reply, with one exception, was:

*I don't think it matters much because we have internet, we have faxes, we have phones.*

This reply might have been more reassuring if communication between Educational Services and the schools was functioning smoothly but every indication we received from schools was that this is not the case. Aside from mentioning that Waskaganish offered a better location because of airline connections, all but one of the six administrators saw no disadvantage with the status quo. The one dissenting voice, when we said that the location did not make much sense to outsiders, replied: *It doesn't make any sense to me either.* However, this person thought that, while from the perspective of serving schools, the office should be in Waskaganish, to be connected to the rest of the Board, it should be in Mistissini.

We recognize the attraction of Waskaganish from a travel perspective. This community is the hub for Air Creebec, providing greatest accessibility to six of the nine communities. Mistissini has no airport of its own and relies on the one located in Chibougamau, which is more than one hour away by road (in good weather). The communities of Oujé-Bougoumou and Waswanipi also rely on the airport at Chibougamau, being, respectively, one half-hour and one and one half hours away by road (plus one hour more to get to Mistissini by road).

Many of the staff who work in Educational Services come from Chisasibi and we are told they would not move to Mistissini. On the other hand, we realize that at the present time some consultants are not even based in Chisasibi, which further complicates the issue.<sup>a</sup> Finally, if this Department were moved to Mistissini, accommodation would be a serious issue.

We were informed by the Material Resources Department that the building where the Board is presently located is not structurally capable of supporting a third floor. As there is no room to expand horizontally, additional space would have to be found in a separate structure. Furthermore, housing would have to be provided, always a costly and difficult undertaking.

We do not wish to belabour this issue, especially as its resolution depends on decisions about restructuring, which in turn require the analysis to be provided by the Organizational Review. However, we would not want to see this issue ignored because of logistical problems over building space and housing, or even worse, for political considerations. Some creative thinking may have to be employed to find a viable solution, such as a centralized hub in Mistissini, with decentralized consulting posts in other locations, as is currently practised for some posts. Whatever solution is envisaged, it must, subject to real feasibility requirements, be based on what is best for the delivery of support services to schools.

Furthermore, if a move to Mistissini is contemplated, it should not be assumed that Educational Services personnel would be the ones to occupy the 'annex.' It would send a powerful message to schools, if they were located in the main administration building, with other administrative personnel moved to the second location. Perhaps such a move would help to dispel the current image of the Board: administration first, education second.

### **10.2.2 Leadership & Planning**

Schools ought to be able to look to Educational Services for leadership with respect to the areas of policy and practice for which it is responsible. These include some of the most vital matters of concern to schools: curriculum, programs and materials, special education and other complementary services, school organization and professional development. Appropriate

<sup>a</sup> One consultant from Instructional Services is located in Waskaganish, another in Mistissini. One consultant from Professional Development is located in Waskaganish, another in Waswanipi.

support in all these areas combined make the difference between a school that is floundering and one that is thriving.

In a department whose mandate is based on staff, rather than line, functions, the source of leadership authority does not reside in the leader's position *per se*. He or she does not exercise any managerial authority over school administrators, teachers or other school personnel. Instead, the primary source of leadership authority tends to be a combination of professional and personal. The source of professional leadership authority comes from the expertise of the leader who has demonstrated his or her knowledge in a given field that is relevant to school staff. The source of personal leadership authority generally comes from the 'people skills' of the leader, his or her ability to interact positively and constructively with others. However, sometimes this type of authority comes from dominant personality traits which enable the leader to 'force' his or her will on others. This negative type of leadership does not play well and is ultimately ineffective.

The successful leader in a staff role then is one to whom administrators, teachers and other school staff look to for guidance on the issues listed above - curriculum, programs and materials, special education and other complementary services, school organization and professional development. They want someone who has answers to their questions, answers on which they can rely, someone who understands their concerns and can offer advice that they find helpful. However, professional expertise is not enough. The leader must also be someone that they feel they can trust, who is approachable, someone to whom they can relate.

We interviewed the Director and each one of the five coordinators. We met with the consultants as a group and interacted with several of them individually. However, we did not have the opportunity to spend any extended time with these administrators and consultants, nor observe them interacting with school personnel. We did gain insights into their professional expertise from the materials we examined. In addition, for Instructional Services staff, we benefited from the information provided about this unit, the only one to do so.

From our limited vantage point, we believe that there is much knowledge within the group regarding their respective areas of expertise. However, as will be explored in the following section on service delivery, there are several important gaps in this knowledge base. From our feedback from stakeholders in schools, we understand that when information comes from this Department they have confidence in that information and will act on that basis. Unfortunately, sometimes that confidence is misplaced. For example, assertions from this Department about the effectiveness of CLIP does not appear to be based on a sound understanding of the research on language acquisition and bilingual models of service delivery.

Schools are 'front-line' organizations that look to leaders with practical expertise - 'know-how' that will help deliver services to students. The leader must therefore not only have knowledge about a given topic, but how to apply that knowledge, which implies expertise in the process of consulting. For example, someone may know what content would be helpful for teaching a given program but be unable to produce material that will be helpful to a teacher to use that content.

The personal source of leadership authority first requires effective two-way communication. The data we gathered from schools tell us that communication is a very serious issue in this Department. With some exceptions, people in the schools say that they never see anyone from Educational Services and when they call and leave messages, they either get no response, or a very belated one. People from Educational Services say they go to schools when they are invited, suggesting that the blame for any lack of services lies with the schools. That kind of response does not reflect responsive leadership, nor does it reflect a sense of accountability for the services this Department is supposed to provide.

In order to try and get a more balanced view of this issue, we prepared a questionnaire for each consultant. In addition to asking for general comments about the strengths and weaknesses of Educational Services, the questionnaire consisted of ten separate blocks, one for each school and one for work that was not school-specific. In each case, the consultant was asked to provide the following information:

- **Issues:** What issues have you encountered in your role as an education consultant which you have been expected to address in 2006-07 or the current school year?
- **Actions:** What actions have you taken to address these issues to date?
- **Results:** How has the situation improved because of your actions? Include a description of the evidence that enables you to determine that these results have been achieved or that progress is being made.

We saw this as an opportunity for consultants to tell their side of the story. We recognized that it was possible that they were more active in the schools than they were being credited. Unfortunately, only four consultants responded. Two of the four contained not one entry under individual schools. The other two contained some entries under schools but many of these failed to provide the specifics we were looking for. Overall, consultants were either unwilling or unable to demonstrate that they added value to the schools through their work.

The questionnaire data from other staff employed by Educational Services contained 'mixed messages.' Some felt that all was well, others that communication was a problem. Though here again, in some cases this was blamed on the schools. Some staff members did mention the perennial absence of the Director and coordinators from the office.

We asked Educational Services administrators about operational and strategic planning. Operational planning appears to be *ad hoc*, carried out by individual coordinators or consultants as they see fit. Thus, for example, the Coordinator of Student Services plans the activities that this unit sponsors in communities throughout the Board. We had little discussion about strategic planning because there was none to discuss. There does not appear to be any tradition in this Department to construct a long-range perspective of what Educational Services should be doing or how this vision should unfold. Nor is there any attempt to link this Department to the Office of the Supervisor of Schools or the needs of schools.<sup>a</sup>

### 10.2.3 Service Delivery

#### Instructional Services

Instructional Services provided us with a document intended to describe "who we are and what we do."<sup>186</sup> It states that the duties of the Coordinator entail the performance of all the duties required for the coordination, supervision, evaluation, research and development of one or more programs of a field of activity, particularly instructional programs, measurement and evaluation, teaching means, human, financial and material resources management, data processing, student transportation, continuing education or post-secondary programs. It further lists four specific responsibilities:

- participate in the drawing up of objectives, programs and budget of the department;
- assist the director of the department responsible for such programs and advise the other directors of services or establishments on all matters pertaining to the programs;

<sup>a</sup> However, this Department is responsible for the production of the current multi-year plan of the Board, which is discussed in section 12.2 (p. 279).

- coordinate and assess the implementation of specific programs;
- coordinate and evaluate the performance of personnel under their authority.

In describing the role of the consultants, this document quotes verbatim from the generic job description found in the provincial classification plan. We assume that this means that the Department has never crafted its own job description of this position.

This document provides a draft mission statement for this Unit which is shown in Exhibit 4-2:

#### EXHIBIT 4-2: THE MISSION OF INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

<b>Mission</b>	<p>Our Mission must be to exceed the expectations of teachers, administrators, regional management and other school stakeholders whom we define as our partners, our service customers, and our reason for existing.</p> <p>We will achieve this by becoming a trusted, valuable and highly relevant service, by continuing to learn to improve ourselves, by seeking to truly understand the schools' needs and by collaborating with them to achieve their own Vision and Goals and by providing all stakeholders with the best available tools and resources related to their needs.</p> <p>Finally, we will accomplish our Mission by following established processes for monitoring our actions and outcomes and for implementing improvements to those actions all along the way.</p>
<b>Beliefs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quality teaching makes a difference in student learning;</li> <li>▪ Teachers and principals can improve their practice through professional learning;</li> <li>▪ The professional learning of teachers is a central factor in determining the quality of teaching;</li> <li>▪ The professional learning of principals is a central factor in determining the quality of their instructional leadership;</li> <li>▪ Instructional Services can play a critical role in determining the quality of professional learning experienced by teachers and principals.</li> </ul> <p>High quality professional development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focuses on deepening teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical skills;</li> <li>▪ Includes opportunities for practice, research, and reflection;</li> <li>▪ Is embedded in an educator's work and takes place during the school day;</li> <li>▪ Is founded on a sense of collegiality and collaboration among teachers and between teachers and principals in solving important problems related to teaching and learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Goals</b>	<p>The goal of Instructional Services is to enrich and promote the success of our students by providing teachers, vice-principals and principals with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quality, up-to-date pedagogical expertise, information and services;</li> <li>▪ Effective, user-friendly assessment tools and services;</li> <li>▪ Support in promoting and coordinating regional activities;</li> <li>▪ Efficient data liaison support services.</li> </ul>

It would be difficult to take issue with anything in this statement. It says what one would want to hear about a unit of this kind. The obvious question then is: Does Instructional Services *walk the talk*? To answer this question we sought to determine:

- what this Unit actually does;
- what results it achieves; and

- how satisfied are its avowed “partners” and “service customers.”

We began this inquiry with the document to which we have been referring, which described what the Unit does in relation to four sectors of activity:

### **General Education Sector**

- We keep abreast of research and new developments in the field of education, especially with respect to curricula and educational methods, complementary activities, manuals and other educational material and evaluation of academic performance.
- In conformity with the policies established by the Board we assist with the introduction of both experimental and other new developments; we provide information on new requirements brought about by change and we encourage a continuous process of evaluation within the milieu. It is our duty to advise the Board and all persons concerned in such matters. Our main role is that of stimulating the educational interests of the teachers in our schools with respect to programs, practices and professional improvement.
- We may, when asked, advise on matters concerning the purchase of equipment and educational material and on ways of planning school organization, time-subject allocations, classroom management, etc.
- In addition, we may provide advice on questions concerning the professional improvement programs for teaching staff; we may also provide in-service, pedagogical day workshops, short-term courses, teacher assistance, assessments and evaluations if requested by a school after consultation with teachers.
- We provide a summative evaluation for the Cree School Board History of Québec and Canada program and we provide various services related to MELS examinations including a regional marking team supervised by Sanction des études.
- In conformity with the regulations of Sanction des études and under the supervision of Sanction des études, we manage, distribute, collect and mark MELS exams.
- We provide summative evaluations for English Second Language, French Second Language and Cree Mother Tongue at the end of Cycle III elementary.

### **Vocational Training Sector**

- We are concerned with promoting the Board's vocational training courses among the school clientele and the public.
- We collaborate in the organization of courses and in placing students into programs that are offered at the Vocational Training Centre and AVS programs offered in the schools.
- We collaborate with schools to develop AVE programs, and work-study programs at the upper secondary levels.<sup>a</sup>

### **Library & Resources Sector**

- We maintain a collection of didactic resources and professional literature which is primarily for the use of our consultants but is available to CSB personnel;
- We provide training and assistance to school documentation technicians working in school libraries;
- We assist with ordering and building appropriate library resources for student use.

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<sup>a</sup> No definition of either ‘AVS’ or ‘AVE’ programs was provided in the document.

### Data Sector

- We register new students coming into the education system and obtain their permanent codes;
- We make changes to student transcripts when errors are found;
- We assist schools in determining course codes and we find course codes for locally developed programs;
- We act as a liaison between the Cree School Board and Sanction des études.
- We provide standardized testing for data collection purposes in our schools (CAT and CELTS) in English, French and Cree.<sup>a</sup>

The document complemented this overview with activity reports for the past two years from the Coordinator and six of the seven consultants.

The overview reproduced above covers a broad canvas as one would expect from a unit that has been established for a long time and has considerable resources at its disposal. The questions we asked ourselves was whether the Unit provided value that was commensurate with this investment of resources.

The Coordinator's activity report revealed that, like so many other coordinators, much of his time is spent in meetings, presentations and workshops, and travelling to and from these events. This chronicle of events suggests that the Coordinator was busy but does not help us to see if this time was well spent. Some of the consultant reports were quite detailed, others were very short. In some cases, the schools in which they worked were identified. From the material submitted it would appear that some were much busier than others. Unfortunately, none of the activity reports provided any expected results from their work nor any evaluation of how successful they thought their interventions had been. To get some idea of these results, we then analyzed the feedback from school stakeholders and others about the value-added by Instructional Services.

### Regional Education Symposium, 2007

Educational Services also played a key role in organizing and conducting the Symposium, which we attended.<sup>b</sup> According to the document supplied, it was responsible for organizing all 155 workshops offered at the Symposium. In addition, two consultants offered a workshop and one provided a consultation session with Cree elders for Cree teachers.

There is no doubt that holding such an event is a major - and expensive - undertaking. The first symposium was held in Val d'Or and comprised over 400 participants. Participants in the second one, held in Montréal, numbered more than 500.<sup>187</sup> We do not know the actual cost of each symposium but each one must have cost close to one million dollars. While managing logistics is a key aspect of conducting such an event, the critical question for us was the value the symposium provided for the investment in time and money.

The report of the first symposium is a glossy publication in Cree, English and French, 155 pages in length. However, the actual report itself is only 5 pages in one language, the remainder being taken up with copies of addresses of keynote speakers and panel members. The report is almost exclusively devoted to logistical issues. The evaluation was limited to a compilation of the rating given by participants in individual workshop sessions. The draft report of the second symposium follows the same format.

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<sup>a</sup> See discussion of standardized tests in section 3.2.3 (p. 61).

<sup>b</sup> However, it should be noted that the person responsible for leading this initiative was a coordinator from the Board office.

The fact that participants rated individual workshops in the first very highly may be regarded by some as a sufficient justification for the time and money invested in the symposium.<sup>a</sup> We beg to differ. Workshops are widely assumed to be successful when participants say that they enjoyed them. However, the real true value of a workshop can be only be ascertained once one has determined the results that it was intended to achieve. If its purpose was merely to entertain then such an evaluation may be adequate. However, if it was intended to improve the performance of classroom teaching (since the primary target participants are teachers), one must look beyond the workshop to see what effect it had in schools. To our knowledge no such evaluation has ever been done. This is not surprising as most educational organizations with which we are familiar do not carry out long-range evaluation of their activities.

Given the depth of problems in CSB schools, it seems to us that Educational Services would be well advised to seek answers to such questions rather than being content that the event was well managed and enjoyed. The location of the symposium is also an issue. One outside stakeholder opined that such an event should be in Cree communities, not Montréal, and that the voice of students must be heard - something that was notably absent in the Symposium. It is obvious that no Cree community has the infrastructure to host a regional symposium, as currently conceived and structured. However, given the need to refocus the CSB on its students and communities, perhaps thinking 'outside the box' about how such events should be organized is worth doing.

**The voice of students must be heard in any educational event.**

### **The School Perspective**

Generally speaking, from the schools' perspective, Instructional Services does not live up to its statement of values and beliefs. School stakeholders do not feel like honoured partners and valued clients. They feel neglected and ignored.

*They have their offices just across the street from us and I haven't seen one consultant in our school this year (teacher).*

*The consultants - we never see them; we don't know if they really exist. We try to reach them in their office in Chisasibi and they never call us back (teacher).*

*For my part, I have heard of the legend of the consultants but in the past two years I have never, ever seen one or any evidence of one. There now you have a Cree legend for the Review (teacher).*

*They used to come but they don't come any more. We don't have to worry about developing the material they would bring to us because it doesn't exist (teacher).*

*One time they came to our school to provide a workshop on materials that we could use. We were given a nice list of websites (teacher).*

*A reform comes in and you're still floundering on your own, having to learn what it is all about. And then you have those big programs you have to go through. Teachers have to do that all on their own (Principal).*

*With the exception of one consultant, it's almost as if they're afraid to come to school. In the time I've been here, I've yet to see them come and meet us, for example, as a team of administrators (Principal).*

<sup>a</sup> The ratings were 62% excellent, 33% good, 4% adequate and 1% poor. The ratings for the second workshop are not yet included in the draft report.

Q: *What about Instructional Services? Any help from them?*

A: *Not as much as I would like to see, you know (Principal).*

Q: *What about people from Instructional Services?*

A: *[Name] is very helpful in providing a lot of material that we can look at and answering our emails (Principal).*

Q: *How about the consultants from there? Do they come to the school?*

A: *Not very much. They say they can't make it. They'll schedule it for the next year but we don't have them at the time we want them. It takes, maybe, a year to have them come (Principal).*

*The major complaint of my teachers is that the consultants are never in the school. They never see them. They are just phantoms. In sum, they do not add any value to our school. What they add is frustration because our teachers want to know what they are doing besides sitting in their offices (Vice-Principal).*

*I tried contacting Instructional Services - I was trying to find out what they could recommend as a textbook here. Well, I was told it's up to the school....all kinds of excuses not to give us any information at all. That's what it felt like (Vice-Principal).*

Some principals spoke about presentations made at principals' meetings, presentations that were interesting the first time but then repeated the next year - same presentation, same video. We have looked at some of this material and agree that some of it is interesting, but that potential is lost when there is no long-term plan to take an idea and follow it through so that it can actually be useful to schools. On the other hand, Educational Services told us:

*One consultant has been working for three years now with the principals on training, on professional learning communities and school improvement. After three years, I still don't see one single inkling of anything going on in the school in terms of their attempt to try to institute anything.... All they say is: I need more training, I need more training. It's the same as when we tried to start reform in our schools. We went in and we did workshops and we did workshops and people would say they've never had workshops on reform.*

We are not in a position to say with any certainty whether this statement from Educational Services or others from schools cited above more accurately portray what has happened over the past several years. What is clear, however, is that something is terribly wrong and the Board needs to get to the bottom of the situation.

In analyzing stakeholder views in relation to the claims made by Educational Services we realized that communication was a major issue, from phone calls and emails not being returned to a failure to establish a satisfactory means for schools and the Unit to talk to each other. Educational Services may wish to claim that they only go where they are invited and we understand the idea behind 'invitational consulting' - being responsive to client needs, rather than pushing an unwanted service at someone. However, schools must know what is offered and must feel that what is being offered is worthwhile. If schools are not asking for their services, this Unit ought to be asking why. Part of this answer, as indicated by one of the comments cited above, lies in the material that this Unit produces.

### **Curriculum Guides**

The final piece of analysis undertaken with respect to Instructional Services focused on the materials they produce. The Unit sent us several boxes of curriculum guides and related materials which were said to be "representative of the work we do and the resources we provide

to schools.”<sup>a</sup> All of these curriculum guides and related materials were analyzed. The following provides some key highlights from this analysis.

Judging from the curriculum guides and other documentation provided to us for review it seems that while some members of the Instructional Services Unit have potential to produce useful guides and resource materials for teachers, they lack the skills to put materials into a teacher friendly, teacher useful, format.

- Not all, but many of the sample documents provided to us have no introduction or statement of purpose.
- They have no table of contents or index to guide the teacher through the document. In many cases they are an eclectic collection of photocopies that would require a great deal of time and effort, on the part of an experienced and competent teacher, before they could be used effectively with students.
- They would be of little use to teachers who are not well informed and confident with the content and methodology of their course of study.

A copy of the analysis of each document can be found in Exhibit C-31 and C-32 in Appendix C of this report.

In addition, we received copies of two other documents worthy of note: the Teacher Induction Program,<sup>188</sup> and a draft version of a Teacher’s Handbook.<sup>189</sup>

### Some things never change ...

In 1999, Henry Mianscum reported on the high turnover of teachers in CSB schools. Three years later, in 2002, the Board introduced the Professional Practice Assistance Program. It consists of two parts; the first part consists of the Program of Induction into the Teaching Profession designed for new teachers; the second part, the Individual Development Plan, was designed for experienced teachers. Four years later (2006), Educational Services produced a manual for Part 1.<sup>b</sup> The manual contains a great deal of material that could be helpful for the mentoring of new teachers, depending on the availability of appropriate mentors and the in-service and support provided to them. We did receive some feedback from schools on this program.

*I think that mentoring is a good idea. What the teachers told me is they feel that it’s too much, that we’re expecting them to do too much on this mentoring (Principal).*

*I think that it was necessary to try and bring our teachers up to the proper way of teaching.*

*Remember, a lot of our teachers, our Cree teachers, were only taught in the community and I believe that should never happen again (Principal).*

The draft version of the new Teacher’s Handbook is a valuable resource. How will it be used?

The draft version of the Teacher’s Handbook updates an earlier version from 2001-02. Unlike most documents produce by this Unit, this one has both a table of contents and numbered pages. We did not attempt to analyze the text in detail but it seems to be very well written and

<sup>a</sup> The document also contained copies of some of the policies listed previously at the beginning of this section, as their application is the responsibility of Educational Services, not a particular sub-unit. We assume that Instructional Services has the *de facto* responsibility for these policies but no information on this was included.

<sup>b</sup> We have no information as to what materials, if any, were produced for Part 2.

full of useful information. We only hope that this resource is put to good use and not merely sent to schools in a box for distribution.

In conclusion, we find that there is a serious 'disconnect' between Instructional Services and the schools it is meant to serve. The self-image of this unit and the image it projects about schools bears no resemblance to the images that schools have about the unit or what is actually occurring in schools. For example, in a three hour session for the CSB Management Group, the Coordinator addressed a common complaint - we have no programs in our schools. This session provided an overview of the Québec Education Reform and a close look at the components of the QEP in order to establish the fact that the CSB does have an education program that is being followed, a program that, among other features:

- recognizes and builds on the school's achievements;
- provides subject-specific learnings that are integrated into the development of complex intellectual skills, are fundamental and functional and are both contemporary and rooted in culture.

Unfortunately, there is little evidence that this is the understanding of the people in the schools. When asked about the curriculum they are supposed to teach, schools would say the QEP but add quickly that it was really up to individual teachers. Most teachers seemed unaware of anything specific that was required beyond some textbooks they were using. In general they indicated that they defined their own curriculum.

While the official curriculum may be the QEP, the documents produced by the MELS are rarely teacher friendly or teacher helpful by themselves. Many school boards in the south spend a great deal of time and effort preparing guides and explanations that synthesize and re-phrase the QEP to make it more useful to teachers. While the new regime indicates the content to be addressed while developing competencies, it is not specific enough for a teacher to use as a guide.

Some school boards have developed a hierarchy of concepts and skills in each specific content area. This is further broken down into grade level sections to allow teachers to have a clearer understanding of what specific content, skills and competencies would ideally be dealt with at a grade level. This allows teachers to understand what came before their grade level as well as how their grade level may be a prerequisite for further learning.

This type of curriculum outline is never intended to dictate the absolute order in which content is learned, but it does provide a continuum that teachers can use to back-map the student's learning if they are having difficulty with a concept or skill at a given grade level. In other words it can provide teachers with clues as to what students may have missed along the way and allow the teachers to go back to a point where the student may have floundered. This type of tool would be most useful in the CSB where frequent absenteeism can contribute to even larger gaps in learning. If teachers are to be able to teach their students effectively they must be able to determine the level of the student's understanding or competency and begin to teach them at that point, always with a view to having the student move forward on the continuum, to the best of his/her ability.

### **Special Education**

As noted previously in our discussion of special education services in schools, Ministry policy is framed by the provisions of the *Public Education Act* whose provisions are quite different from those that apply to the CSB which simply state:

Every school board must offer special educational services for children who are unable, by reason of physical or mental deficiency, to avail themselves of the instruction given in the regular classes or courses.

The admission of children to special educational services is effected after consultation with their parents, the teachers identified with those services and the staff concerned.

Every school board must take the necessary measures to admit to the recognized and appropriate classes he needs any handicapped person within the meaning of the Act to secure handicapped persons in the exercise of their rights with a view to achieving social, school and workplace integration (chapter E-20.1) who needs further general and vocational education to facilitate his school, vocational and social integration, from the end of the school in which he reaches 16 years of age until the end of the school year in which he reaches 21 years of age.<sup>190</sup>

These provisions reflect an 'exclusionary perspective' regarding the education of students with special needs. In other words, the presumption behind these provisions is that these students will be educated separately from other children.<sup>a</sup> However, the CSB does have a Board policy on special education,<sup>b</sup> that begins with an adapted version of the Ministry's major lines of actions as stated in its policy paper on special education.<sup>191</sup> The policy includes a commitment to the ten guiding principles listed below, subject to an important **caveat**: "sufficient funding and the availability of appropriate resources."

#### EXHIBIT 4-3: CSB GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Cree School Board is committed to the following principles:

- a) each child is entitled to a system of education that supports the child's learning, development and cultural integrity in the least restrictive environment, from pre-kindergarten to 21 years of age or until 25 years of age if handicapped;
- b) the role of the local school in the identification and intervention processes is recognized;
- c) the importance of a partnership between the school and the community in meeting the needs of students is recognized;
- d) students with special needs are integrated in the regular classroom and in school activities according to their needs and respecting the rights of other students;
- e) early intervention is an essential element of school success for all students;
- f) the provision of an environment in which all students can develop to their potential and become active community members.

In order to achieve these principles, the Board must ensure that:

- g) there is a framework in place that will enable all students to be included as part of the mainstream for the length of time and for the subjects that are most beneficial for them;
- h) each student's case will be analyzed individually to determine the most beneficial services, considering academic, social, emotional and physical needs;
- i) environmental and pedagogical adaptations will be made as required to facilitate student success;
- j) the services of a special education technician, student supervisor or attendant for handicapped students will be provided when prescribed and approved.

All of the above principles are subject to sufficient funding and the availability of appropriate resources.

The Policy also includes roles and responsibilities of parents, students, teachers, consultants and the school principal, an elaborate referral process that progresses through six sequential stages and the following statement regarding integration:

<sup>a</sup> Originally, this legislation would have been seen as progressive, as it provided for the education of children that previously were excluded from school altogether. However, by the late 1980s, they were seen as exclusionary, preventing - or at least not encouraging - the placement of these students in regular classes, something the revision of the *Public Education Act* in 1989 was meant to correct.

<sup>b</sup> See Documentary Evidence/Youth Education/Board Policies in Appendix C; the policy is available on the Board website: <http://www.cscree.qc.ca/PPEdSer.htm>.

The harmonious integration of a student with special needs into a regular class or group takes place on the basis of the evaluation of the student's abilities and needs, in order that such integration would facilitate the student's learning and social integration.

This should not significantly undermine the rights of the other students. If so, the Board may provide the student with alternative educational services.

The Coordinator is responsible for the application of this policy and is supposed to be supported by three consultants: one each for the English and French sectors (the later position remains vacant) and one for alternative education programs. All other personnel with responsibilities for special education are employed at the school level, as discussed in section 5.2 in Part 2.

As described briefly in Exhibit 4-1 (p. 218), this Unit provides support to schools and liaison with outside agencies. However, because this unit exercises staff functions, the Coordinator does not have authority over any school-based personnel. The role is advisory and facilitative in nature. The support offered includes a Special Education Procedures & Resources binder that contains the Board Policy, a list of the services offered, the job description of the Special Education Department Head, referral forms, various check-lists, MELS definitions for special needs and other resource materials. The material is well organized and presented, with a table of contents for the thirteen tabbed sections; however, the MELS definitions are from an older version and need to be updated.<sup>a</sup>

The interview data from this unit reflect a genuine effort to be responsive to schools in helping to meet student needs. From the Unit's perspective, they have made a positive contribution to schools, with positive change occurring, even if it is not happening as fast as some would like:

*We can't expect, in two years, that the whole Special Ed. Department is going to be perfect but, I have seen changes where I see the referral process, processes, is much better than it was. Before ... the consultants would come in and they would literally knock on the door ... "do you have anybody we should see?" whereas now, when they come to the school, they are provided with a list and file folder of "these are the people you are going to see". We have more follow-ups ... and we're doing multi-disciplinary team meetings for students with extreme needs.*

The feedback from schools corroborates this view. When we asked: What kind of help do you get in your school from Educational Services? we were told:

*Actually, now I feel that Special Education is helpful. It's now very receptive (Teacher).*

*Special Ed. does come to our school but I haven't seen anybody else for years (Teacher).*

*I seem to be getting a lot of feedback from Special Ed, I see a great improvement there (Principal).*

*Especially with special education, it's a great help (Principal).*

*Special Ed. does help a lot; they play a big role in our sector [kindergarten to grade 2] (Vice-Principal).*

*Spec. Ed. is in contact with us very often trying to do things. We work with Special Ed. here quite a bit (Vice-Principal).*

**Special Education is helpful. It's now very receptive (Teacher)**

<sup>a</sup> See endnote 115.

In the limited time we had, we cannot say that all is as well as it should or could be but by and large the picture which emerges of this unit is a positive one. The Unit appears to be 'in tune' with what is happening in schools and is seeking ways to improve service delivery. As evidenced by our discussion earlier, the Coordinator recognizes the need for a new model with regard to how outside consulting services are used. Attempts are being made to develop a Cree assessment package and there appears to be considerable effort to develop linkages with outside agencies.

However, as elsewhere, this Unit suffers from a lack of reliable data. As mentioned in our previous discussion of special education in schools we could not get an accurate count of the number of students in each special needs category by grade level for each school. This count raises an issue that did not arise in any interactions with any stakeholders but which we feel merits consideration, namely the scope of application of 'special education'.

Exhibit 2-27 (p. 106) listed the categories of special needs recognized by the Ministry which include, in addition to various categories of 'handicaps' (group C), groups A and B: students 'at risk' and those with 'social maladjustments' and 'learning disabilities.' The definition of who should be included in groups A and B has always been controversial in Québec and other jurisdictions.<sup>192</sup> The students contemplated by these groups span a range between 'regular' students and those with recognized disabilities.<sup>a</sup> The Ministry has never counted the number of students at-risk (Group A), a grouping that was only officially recognized a few years ago. In official statistics, group B has always outnumbered students in group C, ten-to-one.<sup>b</sup>

There has always been a general lack of agreement as to how do identify students in group B and the sheer number of these students makes the Ministry tremble at the funding implications (which is why they are no longer counted). In most school boards, when 'at-risk' students are added (all those considered to be vulnerable to academic failure or socialization), the number of students considered rises dramatically. However in the CSB, this number would encompass almost the entire student body. In other words, if special education encompasses groups A, B and C, the only students it would not be intended to serve would be the small percentage who are not experiencing difficulty in school and the infinitesimal percentage of gifted students.<sup>c</sup>

This does not seem to be a realistic 'target group' for 'special' services and funding in the CSB context, 'special' being understood as a level that goes beyond what the Board does for most students.

Finally, as with all other units, travel and absence from the office also seem to be an issue that needs to be addressed.

## Student Services

According to a document supplied, the Coordinator of this Unit is responsible for the coordination, supervision, evaluation, research and development of all the programs and resources related to the services required by the students. The services listed are: financial, academic, vocational and social counselling, the development of career resource centres, room and board program, assistance in recreational and cultural programs, food services, the maintenance of student records and general responsibility of all auxiliary student needs. He or she exercises the following functions:

<sup>a</sup> Although group B includes students with mild intellectual disabilities, speech impairments and other conditions that many would argue constitute recognized disabilities. Hence in some other jurisdictions they are simply classified as 'mild' disabilities.

<sup>b</sup> In the Ministry Policy (see endnote 191), group B equalled 11.16% of total students population, while group C equalled 1.26%.

<sup>c</sup> In many jurisdictions, but not in Québec, gifted students are recognized as a category of 'exceptionality' and considered as part of the groups of students with special needs.

- support of the personnel of Student Services by supervising their respective duties, the monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the staff members;
- close collaboration with other Cree School Board departments and administrators, other Cree entities, other school boards, community representatives, parents and school committees;
- supervision of all programs related to students attending school off-community;
- preparation and development of department policies and mandates;
- preparation of programs and services required;
- development of programs and policies for staff members;
- development of position papers respecting Student Services;
- preparation, administration and supervision of the budgets allocated for Student Services;
- participation with other Coordinators in the management and direction of Education Services; and
- carrying out of any related duties as assigned by the Director of Education.

This job description seems to highlight some aspects of this Unit's responsibilities while ignoring others contemplated by the seven Board policies listed below for which this Unit is responsible:

- Boarding Homes;
- Local Educational Assistance Program;
- Inter-Community Elite, Athletic and Sports Program;
- Inter-Community Schooling Program;
- Off-Community Leagues and Institutions of Athletic and Sports Programs;
- Off-Community Elementary and Secondary Education;
- Private Secondary Education Program;
- Secondary V Orientation Trips.<sup>a</sup>

We were not able to carry out a systematic analysis of all of the activities of this Unit. However, we did gain some insights into their operation from the data gathered from various stakeholders, beginning with the Student Services Unit itself.

In the limited time we had, we could not delve into all the programs and activities for which this Unit is responsible. We know that these include a regional Cree spelling bee, science fairs, careers fairs and school excursions, among others.<sup>b</sup> However, it certainly seemed as if the Unit had a lot on its plate but that it was well organized in terms of managing and delivering all these programs and activities. According to the Student Services Unit, it enjoys good communication and good relations with all the schools:

*We know them all and have worked with them for a long time. As much as possible, we try to make things smooth for them when we're running programs for them and they seem to think we do, so we're happy.*

The schools presented mixed views about Student Services.

*Student Services are responsive if someone is in the office but there is not always someone in the office; you can email but it takes a long time to get a response. So it's not always helpful (Principal).*

*We have good support from Student Services.*

<sup>a</sup> See Documentary Evidence/Youth Education/Board Policies in Appendix C; the policy on Secondary V Orientation Trips is the only one available on the Board website: <http://www.cscrec.gc.ca/PPEdSer.htm>.

<sup>b</sup> Additional information on these and other activities were supposed to be supplied but it was never received.

## Cree Programs

We understand that the mandate of this Unit has evolved over the years although we received no written documentation of any kind explaining current or past roles and responsibilities. We were told that at one time, Cree Programs was responsible for anything that had to do with anything Cree in the School Board. About five years ago the Board decided to transfer two people from this Unit to Instructional Services to work on pedagogy and support classroom teachers. At the present time it appears that the mandate of the Cree Programs is to develop Cree language learning resources for students and the East Cree writing system.

It appears as if the discharge of this mandate is totally disconnected from the schools. When we asked if this Unit undertakes any kind of systematic process to find out what each school would need in terms of its services, the response was short and crystal clear: No.

We endeavoured, first in an interview and then by email, to understand what this Unit has been doing, and not doing, over the years. As best as we could discern, at one time Cree Programs intended to develop curriculum in Cree but this was abandoned when the Board decided to adopt the QEP. Furthermore, no attempt was made to translate the kindergarten and first cycle elementary QEP into Cree. In part, we understand this to be because of a lack of professional resources to undertake such translation work. We were informed by one source from within the Board:

*There are very few people in the Cree Nation who have expertise in Cree written language. You could probably count them on two hands. The few people who have the skills to do this kind of stuff are being bombarded constantly to do all [kinds of translation work]. But, here's the other issue. Once it's translated, there's no guarantee that the teachers who are teaching it in Cree can even read it and understand it. And that's not all. For some of these teachers, their English skills are not well enough developed to be able to read that document and understand what it's telling them.*

We then asked Cree Programs what responsibility it had with respect to curriculum for the subjects being taught in Cree. Again, the response was short and crystal clear: None.

At the present time, the Unit has four consultants but proficiency in Cree seems to be an issue. Although it seems to focus exclusively on writing and publishing materials in Cree it appears to have only limited capacity in this regard. It relies heavily on an outside consultant, Professor Marie-Odile Junker from Carleton University and Nortext publishers.

Based on an interview and an examination of material being produced, the former appears to provide considerable support for Cree Programs and is responsible for the website ([www.eastcree.org](http://www.eastcree.org)) that we will discuss below. Professor Junker is clearly a valuable resource and would be able to contribute much to any future consideration of Cree language development. As our interactions with her and the site she directs have reminded us, there are many paths that one can choose to promote a language (see text box). The question for the CSB is not *if* but *how*.

It is important that the schools continue to support and teach the Cree language. But how and with what focus? You could have wonderful theatre, drama, oral contests, storytelling, .... You could have all kinds of things happening in Cree.

We did not attempt to contact the publisher but are concerned with the level of influence that an outside commercial interest may be exercising over the direction that Cree Programs is taking and how it is spending its money. We get the impression that the publisher is making decisions

that ought to be made by Cree Programs, decisions that may not be in the best interest of the CSB. We are not in a position to say anything definitive but this is clearly an issue that warrants a detailed probe.

From what we have seen, there is little capacity inside Cree Programs to fulfill its role. There is no use being made of the potential of desk-top publishing software and other media to produce materials more economically and make them more readily available to schools. There are valuable opportunities to involve staff and students as well that are not being explored. As part of Cree culture classes, students could interview elders, create their own media in Cree. The possibilities are endless if anyone took a leadership role and promoted such ventures.

In terms of the material itself, the curriculum guides provided by the Cree Programs (when it had this responsibility) are similar to others we received from the Department. While people have put in a good deal of time and effort to produce the documents, they are less than user friendly due to the lack of tables of contents and page numbers. The suggested activities would benefit from workshop settings and/or more explanation of exactly what the teacher is expected to do. They are more of an outline of suggested activities than a guide to teaching. It is interesting that they are cited as working documents from 1996 and 1997. Ten plus years is a long time to be in working document form unless the intent is to have a constantly growing document. There is no evidence that this is the case.

The Cree-English dictionaries (lexicons) are well done, but they do make one wonder about the viability of written Cree as a language of instruction. It would appear that the language is not yet developed to the point where one could expect instruction in the Cree language (written) to be taught without the use of a second language. If this is true, it is clearly impossible to expect other subjects to be taught using Cree as the language of instruction. No written Cree Language resources exist for the teaching of subjects such as Math, Science, or any of the Social Studies.

The material available at [www.eastcree.org](http://www.eastcree.org) is quite impressive. One can find stories, a reference grammar and linguistic atlas, a terminology forum, lessons, a dictionary and a resource section.

This site is intended as a resource for Cree language teachers, literacy instructors, translators, linguists, and anyone who has an interest in the nuts and bolts of the Cree language.

- In the stories section, you can hear the language.
- The reference grammar focuses on the way the East Cree language has organized itself. A Multimedia Linguistic Atlas of the Cree languages and dialects is currently under development. You can see a prototype involving family words.
- The Terminology Forum is for creating new Cree words. Editors are Cree language specialists, teachers, linguists, translators.
- The lessons offer hundreds of on-line exercises for learning syllables orthography for the two dialects. Using image and sound, lessons and game-like exercises allow a playful and progressive approach to mastering the basics of Cree syllabic orthography.
- The Eastern James Bay Cree dictionary is available in Northern and Southern dialects.
- The resource section contains many resources, including nine CDs, eight sets of flashcards for Celebrations, Transportation, Food, Objects, Natural Surroundings,

Actions, Family Members, and Syllabary Wall Cards There are also posters for Seasons and Syllabics.

Unfortunately, although one can listen to the 510 stories available or download them to listen to with appropriate software, there are no text versions available for downloading. The other publications that are referred to must be purchased from the CSB. They range in price from free to \$20. There are 120 published in southern Cree dialect and 104 in northern Cree Dialect. There does not appear to be an audio version of these. Orders cannot be made on line. The teacher checks off the items wanted and then prints the list from the webpage and sends it in.

The materials are well organized and easily accessible, if one is moderately computer literate. It is regrettable that there is no real guidance as to how one might use them. These materials would only become useful if teachers were provided with in-service as to how to access them and tie them to their curriculum. This, of course, assumes they are very familiar and comfortable with the curriculum, which seems doubtful in light of the guides provided.

The site does provide some innovative resources such as syllabic fonts for computers, spoken words and phrases in two languages (English and French) and two or more dialects. These resources would be helpful for students and staff alike if they were aware of them and were able to access them. They would become even more useful if they were tied to the curriculum. The amount of work done and the products available are certainly impressive, but without staff having the capacity to make use of what is available the effort is unlikely to yield the hoped-for results.

When we asked school stakeholders about Cree Programs we received similar responses to those cited earlier with regard to Instructional Services:

*Q: What kind of support are you getting now from Cree Programs?*

*A: Nothing. I spend a lot of time looking for my materials that I'm supposed to be using in my classes, then to phone up somebody and ask for support which is going to take two months to get - if I get it. It's getting frustrating (Teacher).*

*Last year one of the consultants came to see us at the school and she asked us what our needs were. So we made a list and then after she had gone we waited. We're still waiting (Teacher).*

*I asked if somebody from Cree Programs could come in to meet with the Cree language teacher. They said no, they had already sent everything to the teacher (Principal).*

*Q: Do you have Cree programs that are a help to you?*

*A: Not really. They always keep saying that the Cree programs are being evaluated. They're doing the evaluation. But when, I wonder? (Principal)*

*I haven't seen the Cree Programs consultant in the school yet. Maybe it's too early (Vice-Principal). [This comment was made during October.]*

### **Professional Development, AKA, Teacher Training**

We interviewed the Coordinator of Professional Development but we were not supplied with any documentation we had requested. We did manage to collect some information after repeated requests and 'digging' by one of the members of the team.

As stated in Exhibit 4-1 at the beginning of this section on Educational Services (p. 218), this Unit is mandated to develop and administer training programs for Cree and non-Cree teachers,

professionals, principals, vice-principals and support personnel. According to the data we have gathered, this Unit does not fulfill this mandate, and this for two reasons. The first reason is its exclusive focus on teacher training, which we will examine below. The second reason is more troubling and we will deal with it at the end of our discussion of Professional Development.

Teacher training is an obviously important issue in the CSB which is included in the first pedagogical strategy of the Board's multi-year plan.<sup>193</sup> First, there has been a longstanding goal of having more and more Cree teachers. Such a goal serves to reinforce the promotion of Cree language and culture. Furthermore, by reducing the dependency on teachers from the south, there ought to be a reduction in the turnover of staff, a perennial problem in the Board.

According to the Board policy on the Teacher Training Program,<sup>a</sup> the mission of this Unit is "to develop the best possible Cree teachers, with an emphasis on a high standard of professionalism." The Unit is responsible to:

- ensure that the program's content is culturally relevant;
- maintain the liaison with the universities;
- select the students and provide orientation;
- organize and schedule the courses;
- ensure the liaison with the community schools, principals and associate teachers on behalf of the teacher trainees;
- coordinate and evaluate the practice teaching sessions;
- organize the students' travel and lodging; and
- coordinate the financial assistance of the student/teacher trainee.

There is no doubt that building a cadre of qualified Cree teachers for all subject areas and levels of instruction would be a tremendous asset to the Board. Accordingly, it made sense for the Board to embark upon a long-term program of teacher training. This was an ambitious undertaking since being qualified does not simply mean having the paper qualification to teach. A qualified teacher, in addition to having a general education at the university level, must possess both subject knowledge - content of teaching - and pedagogical skills - the process of teaching - to do his or her job professionally.

The Teacher Training Program has evolved over time.<sup>b</sup> According to the Board policy, the current Program consists of three phases. In the first phase, the student follows courses to complete a certificate.<sup>c</sup> The second phase consists of three years of practice teaching (the 'practicum') which leads to the awarding of a teaching diploma that is valid to teach in First Nations' schools. At this stage, phase III, the teacher can assume teaching duties in a regular elementary classroom but he or she is expected to continue his or her studies toward a B.Ed.<sup>194</sup>

Five or six years ago, the Council of Commissioners decided to phase out the Teacher Training Program. Apparently, it was costing too much money.

At the present time there are six B.Ed. students at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi [UQAC] who will be graduating next year. There are thirteen B.Ed. students at the Université du Québec à Abitibi-Témiscamingue [UQAT]; four will be graduating this fall. This leaves nine who will be graduating by the fall of 2009.

<sup>a</sup> See Documentary Evidence/Youth Education/Board Policies in Appendix C; this policy is available on the Board website: <http://www.cscrec.qc.ca/PPEdSer.htm>.

<sup>b</sup> Using various anecdotal sources, we constructed a picture of how teacher training has evolved in the CSB, which is included in Appendix D of this report.

<sup>c</sup> The certificate consisted of 50 credits at McGill and 52 credits at UQAC.

At McGill there are nine Certificate students and 14 B.Ed. students. There are also seven students in the Inclusive Education Certificate program, twelve having already graduated from this program. We have three students pursuing their Middle School certificate.

Since most of the Cree teachers did not know how to read and write Cree, the Cree Literacy program was developed with McGill University, starting in the fall of 1993. It took three years for the program to be approved and accredited at McGill. It was a part-time program and all of the participants were Cree teachers who spoke the language but could not read it. It took three years for the first cohort to graduate. There were 45 graduates in the first cohort and two further cohorts have graduated. There are 17 students who still need a few courses to finish their Cree Literacy. Four were to graduate in May, 2008.

At the present time, most Cree teachers teach at the elementary level and the vast majority of these teach in the early grades where Cree is the language of instruction. The Teacher Training Program does not extend to secondary level and no plans are in the works to do so.

Anecdotal evidence amassed during the Review suggests that there is a general lack of communication, policies are not followed and many practices that ought to be routine are not in place. For example, informing principals that their teachers are going to be attending courses and about their travel arrangements to courses is often done at the last minute.

The supervision of practice teaching is done by the three consultants who work in this Unit, each one responsible for three communities. One is based in Chisasibi, one in Waskaganish and one in Mistissini.

According to input received, there seems to be a lack of leadership. The Coordinator, like most coordinators, is out of the office most of the time attending meetings that often do not have anything to do with the Unit. We have been told that staff meetings are not well organized and there could be fewer of them. More communication needs to be done by conference calls, video-conference, etc. There is no website where students can access what courses are scheduled, download course outlines, check their profiles, etc., and little effective use is made of email.

Four years ago the Board started to develop a new Teacher Training Program with McGill. During this period there have been no new students enrolled in any program as the Board has yet to decide which program(s) it will support. In March 2008, a new program was proposed to Council.

One principal expressed her dissatisfaction with the current impasse as follows:

*There's no program right now except for the ones that are already in the system and I don't think the new program is ever going to get off the ground.*

According to the presentation made to Council in March, 2008,<sup>195</sup> the new program will be full-time for four years and provide for general certification in the province. Fifty percent of the program will be delivered in the community, 50% at McGill. However, this document is not very helpful for understanding the details of the new program. Interview data did not provide any clarification and despite several requests no further documentation was provided.

Other comments were reminiscent of those heard regarding Instructional Services and Cree Programs:

*Q: Professional Development - do you have much to do with them?*

A: *We have a big problem with them too. It's so hard to get a hold of anyone; it's just the receptionist or the secretary, they're doing all the work.*

Q: *So you can't get through to the Coordinator?*

A: *Sometimes you don't even know where she is when you want to find out about a course or travel or how many credits a teacher still needs.*

Having dealt with the first reason explaining why the mandate is not being followed, we turn briefly to the second: the beneficiaries of whatever services this Unit provides to staff. The mandate clearly establishes that professional development is to be provided to Cree and non-Cree staff. We had almost no feedback from stakeholders about this Unit, probably because it was only relevant to anyone involved in teacher training. However, we did have the following input from one school administrator:

*I called one time to Professional Development trying to get myself something. Now, I don't know what you think about Professional Development but, to me, Professional Development is supposed to help you develop professionally. Well, at least that's what the name implies. So I've called up and asked for help to get me some courses so that I can develop better as a school administrator and was told: 'Oh, we only deal with the Cree people.' So I said: 'What? don't I work for the Cree School Board too' but did not receive any response.*

We have no idea if this was an isolated incident or reflects the unwritten policy and practice of this Unit. If the former, it is extremely regrettable. If the latter, it is intolerable. To provide a particular training program to Cree teachers is a perfectly acceptable form of affirmative action. Refusing to provide professional development to staff members who are not Cree is not affirmative action; it is discriminatory and a violation of their human rights. We rely on the Board to ensure that such actions are effectively proscribed.

As we stated in the previous section on instructional resources (p. 75), teachers are the most important resource in any school system. If there is one proxy measure for the quality of teaching and learning in a school it is the quality of its teaching staff. Ensuring that quality begins with the training of persons to become teachers. This is where this Unit has put virtually all its resources over the past number of years. This effort does not appear to have brought about the desired results, as reflected in the teacher comments cited in the text box.

In its desire to foster the hiring of Cree teachers (and their subsequent promotion to administrative positions), this Unit seems to have lost sight of its original mandate - to train *qualified* teachers. As one **teacher**, when asked about the most needed actions, replied: *Put properly qualified people in positions, not people who are there just because they are Cree.*

***The educational requirements of a Cree becoming a teacher is not the same as those for any other person in the province. Those Crees who go through the Cree School Board Teacher Training Program are not certified to teach in any school. This leads to lower standards, lower expectations, showing total disrespect for Cree minds.***

***Cree students can and should reach the same level of expertise as other students but the Cree School Board allows their Cree teachers to attain lower educational requirements, and less training filters down to the students (Teacher).***

Ensuring quality teaching also requires professional improvement activities for current staff. This is important for all teachers but it is crucial for those who may have been admitted to the profession with sub-standard levels of education and professional qualifications. As argued by the teacher quoted in the text box, Cree students deserve no less.

Whether this task is assigned to this Unit or another is a question better left to a general discussion of structures and responsibilities, a matter that is being dealt with by the Organizational Review. On the basis of our investigation, we can say, however, that this Unit does not have the capacity to meet this challenge.

#### 10.2.4 Monitoring & Evaluation

Like any department of the Board, Educational Services should be actively engaged in monitoring and evaluating its performance, notably the performance of each of the sub units discussed to add value to the teaching and learning that occurs in school. Monitoring and evaluation is the 'other half' of strategic and operational planning - reporting on what has been done in relation to what was planned. Since this Department does not engage in any systematic planning it was not surprising to find that neither did it do any monitoring or evaluation. This is not a failing that is particular to this Department and will be discussed further in section 12.2.3 (p 280) on Board monitoring and evaluation.

However, this Department does play a role in another related aspect of evaluative activities, namely student results. Data management, especially data relating to student achievement and school performance, is a critical task in any school board. For the past number of years, much of this function has been assigned to Educational Services. As mentioned in the previous section, it would probably be more appropriate if this responsibility were assigned to the Office of the Supervisor of Schools. However, to date Educational Services must bear responsibility for the low level of performance with respect to this important function.

In the course of conducting this Review, although we were told that Educational Services was responsible for data on student results, we had great difficulty finding any. We were looking for the *product* of a system that should have:

- determined what data were useful to measure and understand student results;
- put in place the means to collect these data;
- established the means to store, process and tabulate these data;
- produced reports that various stakeholders would find useful in order to interpret the data and make use of the results to improve educational services; and
- provided for in-service training and other forms of follow-up to ensure that these data reports were actually being used for this purpose.

We have no evidence that any serious thought was ever given as to precisely which data would be useful. However, various data on enrolment, attendance and perseverance are collected, as are data on student achievement, notably standardized tests and secondary examination results. We were not able to investigate this process first hand, but we have anecdotal evidence that strongly suggests that this process is very faulty. We have heard stories, for example, regarding the transmission of secondary exam results where some schools were

Educational Services' record for managing data on student results is extremely poor. Most of the responsibility for this function has been 'outsourced' to an external consultant. Data reports are mainly about attendance and little is done to help schools make use of the data to improve teaching and learning.

simply not prepared to provide the necessary data for validation and little was done to correct the problem. This is just another example of: no accountability, no follow-up.

We then discovered to our dismay that the conservation of these data was entrusted to an external consultant. When we asked Educational Services for data, all they could do was refer us to this consultant. No one could respond to any questions we posed about the data supplied - the meaning of the data was not considered to be their problem.

In terms of data reports, the first example we can offer are the reports on student attendance. Everyone in the Board is conscious of high rates of absenteeism as a major impediment to student success. The reports on attendance ought to facilitate action in this regard. They do not. They are inordinately long and difficult to follow - even for someone familiar with such data, let alone those who are not. Such reports are not useful to anyone. What schools need are reports that clearly and simply display and explain the data in a way that they can use to take action.

The second example we have is the transmission of standardized test results. These tests are supplied by the Canadian Test Centre which then corrects the tests and supplies Educational Services with the results. The feedback material supplied is comprehensive but not particularly user-friendly, which the Department simply passes on to schools, as *is*. No attempt is made to present this material in a manner that schools would find helpful.

We found no evidence of any attempt to provide support to schools to help them make use of the data, other than various PowerPoint presentations of various data (e.g., attendance, graduation and standardized test results) by the external consultant or Educational Services. It appears that the only purpose served by these presentations is their supposed 'shock-value' - to show schools how bad things really are. While getting people's attention in this manner can be a motivating - Hey, look at these results, we have to do something! - it can also be demoralizing, especially if there is no follow-up.<sup>a</sup>

We did not discover any evidence of such follow-up by Educational Services, which is not surprising in that it seems to feel no ownership of or responsibility for the data. We attribute this situation to the reliance on an external consultant and the general lack of accountability and follow-up that is endemic to the CSB. We also have some anecdotal evidence that teachers are prevented from reporting the results of standardized tests to their students. These test data could help teachers target their teaching, if the results of various sub-tests were used to pinpoint student difficulties in reading, language and math. One is left wondering why the Board goes to the expense of conducting these tests if the results are not used to improve teaching and learning.

In summary, over a period of time spanning many years, the Department has not demonstrated either capacity or performance with respect to the monitoring and evaluation of data on student results. Furthermore, our own interactions with the Department over these data suggest that there is little interest in improving this capacity or performance. Transferring responsibility for this function to the Office of the Supervisor of Schools may appear to be an attractive option in these circumstances. However, as stated in the previous section, such a transfer must be accompanied by the allocation of appropriate resources and capacity building if the Board wishes to ensure that data are managed for a constructive purpose - the improvement of teaching and learning.

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<sup>a</sup> That is a constant worry that members of the evaluation team have with regard to this report. If there is no immediate and constructive follow-up, it may simply further deteriorate stakeholders' confidence in the system. The worst case scenario if such action is not taken is that they will simply give up hope.

### 10.2.5 Key Findings, Conclusions & Recommendations

Returning to the performance standard stated at the beginning of this section, we must now ask to what extent the data that we have collected and analyzed permit us to determine whether Educational Services meets the stated standards:

- The Educational Services Department adds demonstrable value to school performance through the provision of its services.
- The operation of the Educational Services Department meets expected performance standards for planning, managing, delivering and evaluating the services it provides with respect to:
  - ◆ instructional services;
  - ◆ special education;
  - ◆ student services;
  - ◆ Cree programs; and
  - ◆ professional development.

In 1999, the Mianscum report made the following statement about the Educational Services Department:

Education Services is responsible for the development of the education plan and pedagogical program of all Cree schools but parents have difficulty understanding this department's role to the student's education when they do not see the management or personnel in their schools. The personnel have from time-to-time visited the schools but not as often as they are required. Thus, Education Services is often seen as ineffective in the delivery of the pedagogical program to the schools and is a form of invisible leadership within the Cree School Board.<sup>196</sup>

The brunt of this criticism fell on Instructional Services and Cree Programs.<sup>a</sup> During this Review, if the perspective offered by Instructional Services were to be believed, a new world has dawned. It portrays itself as a dynamic professional organization actively supporting teaching and learning in CSB schools. However, it appears that from a school perspective, nothing has changed. During the collection of data in the schools, time and time again, we were told that with two exceptions (Special Education and, with many reservations, Student Services), the Educational Services Department was not helpful to schools. One participant described Educational Services as the "castle on the hill" reflecting its isolation from the schools it is meant to serve.

Educational Services is viewed from the schools as the "castle on the hill."

*I call them the castle on the hill. We feel sometimes that these people they are just there to create their own jobs - they create projects, they create workshops, or they will develop a new program just to maintain them (Vice-Principal).*

*What is being done to clean house at Educational Services? They get paid a lot to do nothing; haven't seen them in three years (Teacher).*

<sup>a</sup> Neither Student Services nor Professional Development was mentioned; the Special Education Unit did not exist at that time.

In the limited time we had available, we find the school perspective more credible. Educational Services has no overall strategic or operation plan and does not undertake any systematic monitoring or evaluation of its services. When the current Director assumed her position one of the Coordinators said: *You don't have to worry about your job. We've all been here for a long time and we know what to do.* It seems as this advice was taken to heart as each sub-unit seems to operate on its own. With one exception and one partial exception these units are not doing so well on their own.

Judging from the curriculum guides and other documentation provided to us for review, the material produced by Instructional Services would be of little use to teachers who are not well informed and confident with the content and methodology of their course of study. There is material in Cree on the website at Carleton University ([www.eastcree.org](http://www.eastcree.org)) for teachers who are computer-literate enough to use it. However, the process for obtaining print copies is cumbersome and costly. The so-called Professional Development Unit only supports the Teacher Training Program, which from all accounts is not well managed, with disappointing results.

Special Education seems to be quite responsive to school needs while thinking about the 'big picture' beyond individual schools. This is a unit where capacity building would pay big dividends for improving school performance. Student Services appears to be well organized and successfully manages a wide range of activities. However, there does seem to be a lack of connectedness between this unit and the schools. The seriousness of this problem needs to be investigated so that the unit can take appropriate remedial action.

The Department's record for managing data on student results is extremely poor. Most of the responsibility for this function has been 'outsourced' to an external consultant. Data reports are mainly about attendance and little is done to help schools make use of the data to improve teaching and learning.

On the basis of the evidence we were able to gather, we conclude that the performance of the other three units (Instructional Services, Cree Programs & Professional Development) is not acceptable. From what school stakeholders have told us and what we have seen ourselves, the performance of these three units requires detailed investigation to determine if they actually live up to the claims they make on their own behalf. This investigation should include a probe into the possible conflict of interest caused by the reliance of Cree Programs on an external publisher. The services of the consultant at Carleton University could be a very valuable asset in any such investigation.

The CSB has invested considerable resources in this Department over the years. Under current structures, it is supposed to be the mainstay of School Board support for teaching and learning in the schools. As we have seen in earlier chapters of this report, such support is desperately required, Immediate steps need to be taken to ascertain the depth of the problems observed and then to correct them. Corrective measure might have to include reassignment of responsibilities to other departments, notably the Office of the Supervisor of Schools.

Based on the foregoing analysis, we recommend:

- R85 THAT**, as soon as feasible, a thorough *performance audit* of this Department be undertaken with respect to both its operation as a whole and of individual units, especially Instructional Services, Cree Programs and Professional Development.
- R86 THAT**, subject to the analysis provided by the Organizational Review and consultation of schools with respect to needed support, serious consideration be given to eliminating this Department and restructuring its functions as units of the Office of the Supervisor of Schools.
- R87 THAT** the Teacher Training Program, as currently operated and as proposed for the future, be thoroughly studied with a view to developing a program that meets the needs of schools for properly qualified teachers at all levels of instruction.
- R88 THAT**, regardless of any restructuring, schools be provided with the support they require to provide enhanced teaching and learning for students.
- R89 THAT** in accordance with other recommendations of this report, a comprehensive plan be developed and implemented to build the capacity of whatever units are assigned the responsibility for providing this support.

## 10.3 Continuing Education

This section deals with the part of the first layer of School Board support for adult learning, namely the support provided to the ten adult centres of the Board by the Department of Continuing Education. As indicated by the statement cited in the text box, Continuing Education does not feel that adult education receives the support it should be getting from the Board. We will return to this important issue in the chapter dealing with governance and general administration. Here, we are concerned with the performance of the Department and its support of adult learning.

***The adult sector is sometimes viewed with the attitude that we're in competition for various resources. As a consequence, we're left to fend for ourselves. We are not treated as if we're a part of the School Board (Continuing Education).***

In the CSB, Continuing Education combines both line and staff functions in its mandate. It exercises line authority over the nine continuing education centres and the SRVTC and is supposed to provide support to these ten centres. It thus has the equivalent responsibilities for adult learning that are exercised for youth by the Office of the Supervisor of Schools and Educational Services.

### Performance Standards

- The Continuing Education Department adds demonstrable value to the performance of continuing education centres and the SRVTC through the provision of its services.
- The operation of the Continuing Education Department meets expected performance standards for planning, managing, delivering and evaluating the services it provides with respect to:
  - ◇ upgrading programs; and
  - ◇ vocational training.

### 10.3.1 Accountability

Continuing Education is headed by a Director who is charged with the administration, management and evaluation of continuing education programs of instruction and learning, and of adult professional training and human resources development and the resources allocated thereto.<sup>a</sup> The Director's responsibilities include the following:

- to plan the curriculum and programs of instruction for continuing education, and approve the selection and registration of students in relation to continuing education activities carried out within the Cree communities;
- to promote adult professional training and human resources development, and approve the selection and registration of students in relation to adult professional training and human resources development within Cree communities;
- authorize expenses and payments, and approve contracts for amounts not exceeding \$50,000 and cost reallocations not exceeding \$25,000; and
- to approve the appointment and engagement of all support staff for adult education (except the SRVTC) and administer the collective agreements applicable to its staff.

<sup>a</sup> See General By-Law, art. 17.07.

The Director is assisted in the administration of the department by a coordinator and an administrative officer, as well as three administrative staff. As far as we could determine, there are no job descriptions for any of these positions.

We tried to distinguish between the role of the Director and the Coordinator, who seemed to be the Deputy Director. According to the written submission we received,<sup>a</sup> the Director oversees planning, financial, administrative, general management and personnel functions, while the Coordinator oversees all matters relating to courses and programs, including teacher contracts.

The Director appears to spend considerable time in meetings and travels a great deal. Time away from the office clearly has a negative effect on the performance of this Department. However, some of this travel is to centres, which the Coordinator also visits, but infrequently we were told.

Continuing Education is responsible for the application of the following Board policies:

- Eligibility for SRVTC;
- Subtuan Code of Conduct;
- SRVTC Residence Regulations; and
- SRVTC Student Assistance Program.<sup>b</sup>

In two undated presentation documents, Continuing Education describes itself as shown below.<sup>c</sup>

<b>Mission</b>	<p>Our mission is to help Cree adults succeed in their educational or vocational goals by providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ high quality accredited education and vocational training in Eeyou Istchee;</li> <li>▪ offer services that respect traditional Cree values;</li> <li>▪ use innovative and appropriate methods to provide education in the most effective and efficient way;</li> <li>▪ sufficient and effective support services; and</li> <li>▪ good facilities and equipment.</li> </ul>
<b>Vision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Maintain high completion rate.</li> <li>❖ Create a support system for students.</li> <li>❖ Provide high quality teaching staff.</li> <li>❖ Maintain a high level of community input.</li> <li>❖ Build cooperation between Sabtuan Continuing Education and other community organizations.</li> </ul>

<sup>a</sup> We circulated draft questions that we planned to use in interviews with administrators and others. In the case of the interview with the Director, the Department used these questions to prepare a written submission, in lieu of a full interview with the Director, which was limited to a short exchange about the documentation being provided.

<sup>b</sup> See Documentary Evidence/Adult Education/Board Policies in Appendix C; these policies are available on the Board website: <http://www.cscree.qc.ca/PPContinEd.htm>.

<sup>c</sup> The statement of mission is a combination of the material found in the two documents which do not portray the Department mission in the same terms; the material shown beside the other headings appear in one document but not the other.

<b>Values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Establish and maintain high educational standards.</li> <li>❖ Make learning enjoyable for students.</li> <li>❖ Respond to the individual needs of adult students.</li> <li>❖ Ensure teachers receive an effective orientation to Cree culture.</li> <li>❖ Treat all who come for service in a humane way.</li> </ul>
<b>Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Continuing Education learning is one-on-one.</li> <li>❖ Courses are tailored to the student's individual needs.</li> <li>❖ Learning takes place in the 'real world' (our schedules are flexible) - not just in classrooms.</li> <li>❖ Learning leads directly to jobs and a better life.</li> <li>❖ Learning is interesting, useful, and enjoyable.</li> </ul>
<b>Commitment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Helping students to get the knowledge needed to succeed.</li> <li>❖ Designing and delivering the best courses, with the best teachers, in the best learning environment.</li> <li>❖ Continually improving our services with new innovations like the Sabtuan Regional Vocational Training centre in Waswanipi.</li> <li>❖ Involving students in programs development.</li> </ul>
<b>The Future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Education and skills ... mean a promising career in various fields.</li> <li>❖ The economy is opening up [in] the north and the opportunities are enormous.</li> <li>❖ Build confidence and self-esteem.</li> <li>❖ In partnership with CHRD [we] offer training programs that are [relevant].</li> <li>❖ Continuing Education provides an alternative avenue for Cree youth seeking a meaningful education (in conjunction with the harmonization policy).</li> </ul>

It would be difficult to take issue with the promises that the above statements make. However, from the analysis of continuing education as it actually occurs in the nine continuing education centres and the SRVTC, Continuing Education does not live up to this image.

These documents appear to us to be promotional material rather than a statement of performance for which the Department expects to be held accountable. We acknowledge that our limited time in the centres did not enable us to verify some of the claims made above. For example we cannot comment on whether students are treated in a humane way.

The failure of Continuing Education to provide us with the data we requested on student results (despite repeated requests) means that we cannot verify the claims being made with regard to student success in terms of course completion and employment.

Other claims are too vague to be verifiable, for example: "Helping students to get the knowledge needed to succeed." However, for those claims that are specific enough to verify and for which we have sufficient data to comment, we find that Continuing Education does not meet the standards stated:

- We saw no evidence that courses or activities relate to Cree values in any way.
- With the exception of the SRVTC, there are virtually no support services provided to students.

- With the exception of the SRVTC, every centre lacks even minimal facilities to deliver services.
- With the exception of the LCEC in Waswanipi, we saw no evidence of strong centre-community collaboration.
- Instruction is not designed to meet individual student needs; students are simply provided with standard Ministry modules of instruction, which they must work through on their own, with more or less assistance from a teacher, depending on the course.

Based on what we have observed in the ten centres and from the small amount of quantitative data we were able to collect on student results,<sup>197</sup> we conclude that the claims made in the two documents referred to above are just talk, and Continuing Education does not 'walk the talk.'

### 10.3.2 Leadership & Planning

Leadership is clearly problematic in this Department. The centres do not feel they can rely on Continuing Education for leadership and even within the Department there is lack of confidence that it can do what is expected of it. One of the comments made in a centre related to the lack of connection between Continuing Education and the Ministry. The individual observed that in the world of adult education that connection was indispensable. We have already noted that the Director spends considerable time in meetings and travels a great deal. However, these meetings do not include time spent with Ministry officials. Neither the Director nor the Coordinator seems to have any contact with the Ministry.

There is considerable expertise in the adult education branch of the Ministry and the adult education services of school boards rely on this expertise and maintain close connections with Ministry officials. In part, this is because these services often have the same handicap that Continuing Education has in the CSB - a board focus on youth education. As a result, Directors of Adult Education often have a greater affinity with their counterparts in other boards than they do with other directors in their own board. Together with Ministry officials, they form a network of adult education administrators and professionals. The CSB is losing out by not being plugged into this network.

Rather than taking the kind of leadership role that one would expect, Continuing Education seems content to manage the day-to-day business of the Department. Adult education is, by its very nature, part of a much bigger picture. Not only is it an essential component in the provision of education to members of the Cree Nation, it is the vital link between the CSB and other outside bodies for the economic and social development of the region. Directing, not managing, these responsibilities requires a level of leadership that we have not been able to detect in this Department.

Adult education is part of a much bigger picture, including both the provision of education to members of the Cree Nation and the economic and social development of the region. Continuing Education does not appear to play any leadership role in this regard.

One way that leadership is exercised is through strategic and operational planning, which also seems to be very problematic. We asked about both aspects of planning, beginning with the departmental process for assessing the needs of centres for support with regard to development of programs and materials; professional development; and student services. The written submission provided the following response:

*The process begins with the education consultants. They collect the requests from the community, students and teachers and present them to the management at the strategic planning sessions. Planning is done in consequence but the best planning does little to meet the needs of program and material development, professional development and student services. Why? Because our staff have limitations due to lack of facilities, teachers or willingness to commit to projects that fall outside their day-to-day scope.*

Then, in response to the second part of our question on strategic planning, we were told:

*See above.*

In other words, the Department saw no difference between planning courses and strategic planning. With respect to annual operational planning the answer was:

*No operational plans, we have regular staff meetings instead.*

We were also provided with a number of documents that 'talked about' planning, dating back several years. However, they appeared to be of the same variety as the presentation documents from which we extracted the 'talk' about the Department's mission. They amount to a collection of PowerPoint slides with lots of bulleted goals to be achieved and actions to be taken. However, in reality, there is no strategic or operational planning.

Demands for courses come in from individuals and groups, such as a local Band Council, and the Department endeavours to *start* as many courses as it can. Start is the operative word because, although we could not obtain any hard data, we understand that many courses are cancelled and unspent budgets are frequent. We did not have the opportunity to explore these problems in detail. Perhaps the Organizational Review will be able to shed light on them. However, we have no hesitation in concluding that the lack of strategic and operational planning is a major impediment to success in providing support for continuing education in the CSB.

### **10.3.3 Service Delivery**

We have already talked about service delivery from the centres' perspective. Generally speaking, they do not feel that they receive even adequate support from Continuing Education. When we asked the Department about its service delivery, that is, the provision of goods and services to centres, the response was: *The quality is always good; it is the time that is a factor.* When we asked about the provision of the quality of guidance and support to centres, we were told: *We do not visit the centres often enough. Why? Time.* When we asked about professional development, the answer was: *Receptive to requests for further training.* When we asked about the extent to which the Department attempted to expand its capacity through linkages with outside agencies, other bodies and individuals, the response was: *We rely on band councils to give us their training needs. If we cannot deliver a program, we have to rely on other boards to do it for us.*

In the absence of any other data, we have to conclude that service delivery by this Department is extremely poor. Its poor performance is clearly caused by a profound lack of capacity to do the job that has been assigned to it. From the limited data we have, it appears that radical intervention must be taken to address this situation.

### **10.3.4 Monitoring & Evaluation**

As a unit that has both line and staff functions, we inquired about how well Continuing Education was performing in relation to both the monitoring and evaluation of the performance of centres, as well as its own performance.

The response regarding the monitoring and evaluation of the performance of centres appears to be confined to feedback about activities obtained during periodic meetings. In terms of resources, the response was that not much is done because of travel: *How do I monitor resources when I'm not there? The structure has to change.* No mention was even made about monitoring, let alone evaluating results. The conclusion we draw with this input is that monitoring of centre performance is almost non-existent and evaluation is not even considered.

The other significant feature of the response given was the reference to the need for a new structure. We were given a copy of the Department's submission to the Organizational Review outlining what this new structure should look like and listing all the new positions it should include. It is not our place to comment on this proposal; that will be done by the Organizational Review. However, we would like to state that from our perspective, while there may be ways to improve the way this Department is structured, structure is not the issue. As we will argue more generally in the chapter on governance and overall Board administration, the issue in this Department is the utter lack of capacity to discharge its responsibilities. Without a significant improvement in this capacity, different structures, no matter how much better they are, will make no difference in the performance of Continuing Education.

The response regarding the monitoring and evaluation of the performance of Continuing Education's own performance stated: *No tool to measure or evaluate performance but I use the Board's performance evaluation documents. I ask for performance reports and an action plan from managers but I rarely see results.* This was hardly a satisfactory response, especially inasmuch as, to the best of our knowledge there are no Board performance evaluation documents. We are not sure to whom the reference to managers is being made, as the document stated that there are no managers in the centres. In the absence of a better explanation, we must conclude that Continuing Education does not monitor or evaluate departmental performance.

***Accountability is almost non-existent because there's no real interest in Continuing Education. The School Board does not support improvement of performance (Continuing Education).***

It appears that there is no incentive to do so. When we asked about how the Board held the unit accountable for its performance, we were given the answer cited in the text box. This statement may well be symptomatic of a wider problem, namely a lack of interest in adult education at the Board level, as evidenced by the following exchange we had with one commissioner:

*Q: What about the local continuing education?*

*A: I have no comments. I don't know what's going on (Commissioner).*

### **10.3.5 Key Findings, Conclusions & Recommendations**

Returning to the performance standard stated at the beginning of this section, we must now ask to what extent the data that we have collected and analyzed permit us to determine whether the Continuing Education Department meets the stated standards:

- The Continuing Education Department adds demonstrable value to the performance of continuing education centres and the SRVTC through the provision of its services.
- The operation of the Continuing Education Department meets expected performance standards for planning, managing, delivering and evaluating the services it provides with respect to:

- ◆ upgrading programs; and
- ◆ vocational training.

In the CSB, the Department of Continuing Education combines both line and staff functions for adult education. It thus has the equivalent responsibilities for adult learning that are exercised for youth by the Office of the Supervisor of Schools and Educational Services. Unfortunately, it does not appear to have the capacity to exercise either of these responsibilities.

**Continuing Education does not appear to have the capacity to exercise either its line or staff responsibilities for adult learning.**

The Department presents itself as being dedicated to a mission-driven commitment to adult students and makes several claims in this regard. Some claims, for example, student success, could not be verified because the Department failed to provide us with the data that we requested time and time again. Other claims, for example: 'Helping students to get the knowledge needed to succeed,' were too vague to be verifiable. For those claims that we could verify, at least in part, we found that the Department did not measure up to its own standards with respect to Cree values, support services, facilities, centre-community collaboration or individualized instruction.

There is a very low level of leadership in Continuing Education, both internally with respect to its centres, staff and students, and externally, in terms of being connected to the wider world of adult education. Adult education is part of a much bigger picture, including both the provision of education to members of the Cree Nation and the economic and social development of the region. Continuing Education does not appear to play any leadership role in this regard. The Department does not engage in any systematic strategic or operational planning.

Despite its claims to the contrary, we conclude that service delivery by this Department is extremely poor. Its poor performance is clearly caused by a profound lack of capacity to do the job that has been assigned to it. Radical change is required to address this situation.

**There is no accountability for Continuing Education to perform, as judged by the Board's apparent lack of interest in what this Department does.**

As a unit that has both line and staff functions, we inquired about how well Continuing Education was performing in relation to both the monitoring and evaluation of the performance of centres, as well as its own performance. The short answer to this question is that monitoring is

confined to feedback about activities obtained during periodic meetings and evaluation is non-existent. This situation appears to be due to both a lack of capacity and a lack of incentive, as summarized in the text box.

Based on the foregoing analysis, we recommend:

- R90 THAT** the Board undertake a thorough *performance audit* of this Department in relation to the planning, service delivery and monitoring and evaluation of continuing education in the Board.
- R91 THAT** the Board conduct a thorough review of the policies and practices in place to determine the need for and approval of adult courses and programs.
- R92 THAT** the Board take immediate steps to establish appropriate linkages with outside regional bodies to ensure that Continuing Education plays the role it should in the economic and social development of the Cree Nation.
- R93 THAT** the Board ensure that all continuing education centres and the SRVTC receive the direction and support they require to do their job in providing adults with the educational services which they are entitled to expect.
- R94 THAT**, on the basis recommendations 90 to 93, the Board develop and implement an action plan to build the capacity of Continuing Education to fulfill its mandate.

## 10.4 Post Secondary Student Services Office

This section presents our analysis relating to another part of the first layer of School Board support for adult learning, namely the support provided to post-secondary education field offices. As was the case for Continuing Education, this Office combines both line and staff functions in its mandate. It exercises line authority over the two field offices in Montréal and Gatineau and is supposed to provide support to them. However, It does not have the equivalent responsibilities for adult learning that Continuing Education does, because its subordinate units (the two field offices), unlike the adult centres of the Board, do not offer courses and programs.

It should also be remembered, as noted in chapter 9, that the PSSS Office is located in Montréal and the Montréal field office is not only housed in this same facility, it is part of the structure of the PSSS Office. For purposes of this report, we decided to divide our analysis in two parts. In Part 3, we dealt with the services provided directly to students. In this Part, we present our analysis of the Board level aspects of this Office.

We realize that this division is somewhat artificial but we felt that it was important to recognize the two levels at which this Office operates. More specifically, we wish to underscore the importance of an integrated approach to the provision of Board-level support to learning.

### Performance Standards

- The Post-Secondary Student Services Office provides leadership by motivating and encouraging high expectations for students and field office staff through individual and group support.
- The Post-Secondary Student Services Office meets expected performance standards for planning, managing, delivering and evaluating the services the field offices provide.
- The Post-Secondary Student Services Office actively pursues and maintains appropriate linkages with post-secondary institutions.

The PSSS Office is managed by a Director whose office is located in Montréal. The following provides the principal responsibilities of the Director:<sup>a</sup>

- to administer, manage and evaluate the Post-Secondary and Adult Off-Community Programs of the Board;
- to screen the selection of applicants to these programs;
- to authorize payments to students in these programs in conformity with the established criteria up to a limit of \$10,000.00;
- to promote post-secondary education;
- to authorize expenses and payments, and approve contracts for amounts not exceeding \$50,000 and cost reallocations not exceeding \$25,000; and
- to approve the appointment and engagement of all support staff working in post-secondary education.

The PSSS Office has had numerous changes in leadership over the years. As one **staff member** observed:

*We need stability and consistency. Since the inception of PSSS, in early 1990's, we have been through at least 10 managers of PSSS. This hinders the process, goals and delivery of services. PSSS is a service centre that operates all year round for students in the program and from the Cree Nation. We must therefore be very creative throughout*

<sup>a</sup> See General By-Law, art. 17.08.

*the year, and the delivery of services has to continue on a daily basis if we want to ensure success and a satisfied clientele.*

We also gained insights into the operation of the Office from other interviews with the Director and the guidance counsellors of the two field offices, questionnaire data from PSSS Office staff and the focus group with two post-secondary students.

Some of the feedback from staff indicated several problems with the way in which this Office had been administered in the past. These included poor communication, staff absenteeism, poor work habits of some staff members with no consequences, and poor relations between administration and the staff, resulting in low staff morale. In addition, it appears that the Gatineau field office feels somewhat isolated. As we have seen in other operations of the Board, the Director travels a great deal, but to meetings, not to visit and support the subordinate units of the Department.

When we collected data for the Review, the Director had only recently been appointed to her position and these problems obviously occurred under the previous administration. We were not able, therefore, to fully understand the seriousness of these problems. This determination still needs to be done but will have to be part of the follow-up to this Review.

The PSSS Office is responsible for the application of the following Board policies:

- Implementation of the 'Ten-Year Clause' of the JBNQA;<sup>a</sup>
- Private Post-Secondary Institutions;
- Eligibility for Post-Secondary Student Services
- Off-Community Adult Secondary Program;
- Student Travel;
- Tutoring Assistance for Students;
- Tutoring Assistance for Students' Dependents;
- Student Moving Expenses; and
- Student Computer Subsidy.<sup>b</sup>

It was beyond the scope of this Review to undertake a detailed analysis of these policies. However, a superficial glance leads us to conclude that financial support is generous but the administrative process is a heavy one.

The office seems to be primarily concerned with the administrative flow of paperwork that begins with a student's application for post-secondary sponsorship or off-territory secondary education. There is an appeal process for both types of applications as well as for travel claims. We did not analyze this process in detail. However, it appears to be quite bureaucratic and subject to reversal of decisions at a political level. In other words, a decision is made which the student contests. The appeal process should ensure that it was made in accordance with Board policy. However, in reality, the process affords an opportunity for the Council to reach a different decision, even if contrary to its own policy. We do not know how prevalent this problem is but it is one that should be addressed.

The fact that the Director had not been on the job very long when we collected data prevented us from gaining many insights into how this Office operates. However, it did provide one insight: the lack of 'corporate memory.' The previous administration left little in terms of departmental

<sup>a</sup> The JBNQA contains a provision (art. 3.2.7) whereby a Cree beneficiary loses his or her rights if he or she has resided outside the Territory for ten or more years; however his or rights may be revived upon reestablishing residence in the Territory.

<sup>b</sup> See Documentary Evidence/Adult Education/Board Policies in Appendix C; Private Post-Secondary Institutions is the only policy available on the Board website: <http://www.cscree.qc.ca/PPpsss.htm>.

policy and planning. There is no mission statement, no strategic plan and no evidence of any monitoring or evaluation of departmental performance. If there have been serious linkages between this Office and post-secondary institutions or the Ministry, then the paper trail of these linkages remains to be uncovered.

As reported in Part 3 for the field office component of this operation, we have not been able to collect sufficient data to properly analyze the performance and capacity of the PSSS Office. Once again, this will have to be done as part of the follow-up to this Review.

### **Key Findings, Conclusions & Recommendations**

Returning to the performance standard stated at the beginning of this section, we must now ask to what extent the data that we have collected and analyzed permit us to determine whether the PSSS Office meets the stated criteria:

- The Post-Secondary Student Services Office provides leadership by motivating and encouraging high expectations for students and field office staff through individual and group support.
- The Post-Secondary Student Services Office meets expected performance standards for planning, managing, delivering and evaluating the services the field offices provide.
- The Post-Secondary Student Services Office actively pursues and maintains appropriate linkages with post-secondary institutions.

We were not able to collect sufficient data on the PSSS Office to properly analyze either its performance or capacity. There appear to have been several serious problems with the administration of this Office in the past, which the new Director needs to address.

The PSSS Office seems to be a 'paper mill' concentrating on the processing of applications and associated paperwork for post-secondary student support. Despite the existence of detailed Board policies and a decision-making process based on these policies, some decisions are reversed by the Council. We do not know how extensive this problem is but it clearly needs to be addressed. The newly appointed Director of this Office faces many challenges, not the least of which is the lack of any strategic planning or evaluation of the performance of the PSSS Office. In the absence of a more complete set of data, this Review will not contribute much to the capacity of this Office to meet these challenges. Such input is necessary but it will have to come from the follow-up to this Review. Accordingly, the only recommendation we are in a position to make are the following:

**R95 THAT** the Board undertake a thorough analysis of the PSSS Office in relation to the four themes that this Review has explored with other units of the Board: accountability; leadership and planning; service delivery; and monitoring and evaluation.

**R96 THAT** the Board use the results of this analysis, together with the results of the studies of post-secondary student results and services foreseen in recommendations 79 and 80, to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to build the capacity of the PSSS office (including its field offices) to fulfil its mandate.



## 11.0 ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

In this chapter, we take one more step back, by examining four departments that provide administrative services to the Board as a whole, and to schools and centres in particular:

- Human Resources;
- Finance;
- Material Resources; and
- Information & Technology.

For purposes of this part of our report, we are only concerned with the direct support these departments provide to schools, centres and post-secondary offices. Given our modified mandate,<sup>a</sup> we do not attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis of these departments anywhere in our report.<sup>b</sup>

We provide a brief overview of each of these departments in the sub-sections that follow. The primary sources of data on these departments were feedback from schools and site visits to Board offices in Mississauga which included interviews of directors and coordinators, data from staff questionnaires and the collection of various documents.

### Performance Standard

- An adequate allocation of human, financial, material and information technology resources are provided to schools, centres and post-secondary education offices, based on equitable and transparent criteria relating to the programmatic responsibilities of these units and other relevant factors.

## 11.1 Human Resources

This department is headed by a Director,<sup>c</sup> supported by three human resources advisors and four administrative staff. The Director is responsible for the administration, management and evaluation of the human resources services of the Board and the resources allocated thereto.<sup>d</sup> The duties of this position include the following:

- to administer in the human resources services the support staff collective agreement and for this purpose, to impose, if need be, to the support staff employees under his supervision appropriate disciplinary measures including suspension, dismissal and non-reengagement;
- to administer in the human resources services the non-teaching professionals collective agreement and for this purpose, to impose, if need be, disciplinary measures upon the said non-teaching professionals, except suspension of more than thirty (30) working days, dismissal or non-reengagement, but including suspension in view of dismissal;
- to supervise all matters pertaining to personnel including, without limitation, hiring policies, labour relations, salaries, conditions of employment and negotiations of collective agreements; and
- to authorize expenses and payments, and approve contracts for amounts not exceeding \$50,000 and cost reallocations not exceeding \$25,000;

<sup>a</sup> See discussion in *Part 1, Overview, Context and Mission*, beginning in section 1.2, Purpose & Results.

<sup>b</sup> Such an analysis is to be found in the report of the Organizational Review and the synthesis of both Reviews to be carried out by the Board.

<sup>c</sup> During most of this year, this position was occupied by a substitute, as the regular Director is on maternity leave; however, the substitute has now left.

<sup>d</sup> See General By-Law, art. 17.09B.

- to approve the appointment and engagement of all support staff working in human resources and administer the collective agreement applicable to its staff.

Human Resources is a key department in any organization but is even more crucial in a service body such as a school board whose services are dependent on people. We mentioned in **Part 1, Overview, Context & Mission**, that organizational performance depends on the capacity of the organization to deliver services and achieve desired results. In a people-based organization, that capacity comes largely from its human resources.

As presented in earlier sections of this report, teachers are the most important asset a school board has. They, more than anyone else, interact with students in classrooms, where the core of teaching and learning occurs. They are assisted and supported by others, such as educators, counsellors and SATs, who also provide services to students, and everyone else who works in the school, from the principal to the maintenance staff.

Schools and centres look to the Human Resources Department, therefore, as the key means of ensuring that its human resource capacity is extended to the fullest possible measure. Specifically, they look to it for the following:

- allocation of an adequate level of the various types of human resources the school/centre requires (teachers, educators, counsellors, administrators, etc.);
- an efficient process for the recruitment and hiring of school/centre staff, as well as guidance and support in the conduct of this process;
- appropriate remuneration and working conditions for school/centre staff;
- guidance and support for the supervision of school/centre staff, including the management of the collective agreements, employment systems (e.g. employment insurance), etc.; and
- professional development of school/centre staff.

As part of this inquiry, we sought first to obtain data from the Human Resources Department on the FTE count of every type of staff provided to schools, as well as the job descriptions of each type.<sup>a</sup> All we received were lists of posts without any indication of the FTE level of these positions and provincial classification plans, which led us to conclude that the CSB does not have job descriptions of its own making. Despite several requests for follow-up, we did not even receive the courtesy of an acknowledgement, let alone any data.

Second, we asked for the principles, rules or policies governing the allocation of staff to schools. Despite repeated requests, none of this information was ever provided. Interviews with some school principals suggested there was a problem in this regard, namely too much reliance on uniform allocations to schools. As stated previously,<sup>b</sup> such a policy is advantageous to small schools and disadvantageous to large schools. Applied appropriately, such a policy helps to level the playing field for small schools. However, when over-applied it distorts the distribution of resources. Unfortunately, due to the lack of data, we cannot provide any insights into this important issue.

We have already commented on the hiring process at the school end, where we saw that schools generally had a very low opinion of the process and the role played by the Human Resources Department, both as a support for schools and in its own right at the Board level. We

<sup>a</sup> For a definition of an FTE count, see page 112 (note).

<sup>b</sup> See discussion in the section on the allocation of financial resources to schools, beginning on page 128.

hoped to gain a second perspective on these issues from the Human Resources Department itself.

From what we have been able to observe and deduce from the data we were able to collect, this Department does not meet expected performance standards in this regard. Having the right personnel in place is a particular challenge for a school board such as the CSB, beginning with recruitment. We know that turnover of personnel has always been high, even if we do not have precise data about numbers. In part, this may be due to the challenges for teachers and others who come north to work in the Board. It is the task of the Human Resources Department to mitigate these difficulties *as much as possible*.

A good first step in this regard would be the provision of adequate information to prospective teachers and others about what they can expect. While such information needs to attract staff, it must not do so at the expense of honesty. All that positive misleading information accomplishes is to contribute to the number of staff who arrive on one plane and leave on the next one.

The policies and procedures for recruiting and hiring staff must provide for the speedy processing of applications and the verification of references - something that apparently the Department does not do. Although we were seeking clarity from the Department on these issues, what we found were non-answers,<sup>a</sup> and denial. In the little bit of interview data we did manage to gather, we learned that the Department is aware of criticism but blames the situation, not on its own performance, but on the schools:

*The Human Resources Department of the Cree School Board is essentially a support service to the ... local schools. The authority for the hiring, dismissal and evaluation of all staff and the application of the various collective agreements has been delegated under the by-laws of the Board to ... each community.*

*The Human Resources Department is therefore rather powerless to implement change and force compliance in many areas of HR administration as it is not a decision maker....*

*The Human Resources Department is viewed as very weak and criticized for not getting its job done but in fact the responsibilities for HR are in the communities ... themselves....*

The analysis to be provided by the Organizational Review will undoubtedly provide insights into the distribution of responsibility for human resource matters between this Department and the schools. However, from our vantage point, it has failed to provide any leadership in this area nor does it provide schools and centres with the support which they deserve and which they desperately need.

**Human Resources needs some serious revamping. Its process is too bureaucratic; it's not flexible enough to be able to accommodate what the local school operations need (Commissioner).**

That leadership should start at a policy level and extend to the 'nuts-and-bolts' level. At the policy level, the overriding issue we have observed is the unrelenting imperative to hire and promote Cree persons as teachers, school administrators, etc. As we have alluded to earlier in this report, such a policy can legitimately be regarded as **affirmative action** - any action taken to undo past wrongs against members of historically disadvantaged groups.

<sup>a</sup> The substitute director did not feel he could answer our questions and our attempts to reach the regular Director on leave were unsuccessful.

To some, affirmative action is an integral part of equality rights, to others a logical extension of the right to non-discrimination, to others a logical extension in extreme cases, and to others still, an illogical extension that attempts to right one wrong with another wrong. An indicator of its controversial nature is the absence of affirmative action language in international human rights instruments.<sup>198</sup>

As this quotation suggests, affirmative action is a controversial policy. Unfortunately, opinions about it tend to be polarized on the basis of normative beliefs on the nature and extent of equality rights.<sup>199</sup> We do not wish to challenge the appropriateness of hiring and promoting Cree persons as teachers, administrators and so forth. However, we do not endorse how this policy has been implemented nor the effects it is having on the students of the CSB.

In our view, there are two essential conditions for affirmative action appointments, i.e. those that would not have been justified without considering the membership of the applicant in the historically disadvantaged group:

- first, the applicant, although lacking the normally required qualifications and experience, has the innate capacity to perform the job in question, given appropriate support and time; and
- second, the ways and means to provide such appropriate support have been developed and are operational.

Thus, when considering the appointment of someone as, for example, a teacher or a principal who lacks the appropriate qualifications and experience, the Board needs to ask:

- What evidence do we have to support the contention that this person has the potential to become an effective teacher or principal?

In the absence of a satisfactory answer to this question the appointment should not be considered. If a satisfactory answer is found, then the Board needs to ask:

- What is a feasible long-term plan to develop this person's competence in this position?
- How long will this take?
- Does the individual understand what is involved and is he or she willing to commit to this undertaking?
- During the time in which this development is occurring, what transitional measures are required so that the functions expected from this position are being performed?
- Do we have the resources and other means, as well as the will, to provide for these measures?

Again, in the absence of a satisfactory answer to each one of these questions the appointment should not be considered.

Perhaps the Organizational Review or the inquiry into Board policies in relation to governance has uncovered evidence of such considerations being made. With the partial exception of the Teacher Training Program, we have not. We designate this Program only as a 'partial exception' because it does not appear to be doing an adequate job at providing suitably qualified teachers.

Failing such evidence we conclude that affirmative action is being pursued at the expense of the students whom the Board is mandated to serve. Creating employment opportunities for Cree adults seems to be more important to the Board than providing educational opportunities for Cree children.

Creating employment opportunities for Cree adults seems to be more important to the Board than providing educational opportunities for Cree children.

One person we interviewed thought that this problem was so serious that the only answer was:

***Fire incompetent people, Cree or not, and replace them by competent people, Cree or not.***

Although wholesale dismissal is not a viable solution, taking stock of the problem and implementing feasible corrective measures, some of which might lead to dismissal, is not only advisable, it is essential. Unless serious action is taken to deal with human resource management, the other actions contemplated by this report will not lead to significant change.

Answers regarding the third item in the list of issues for supporting schools, remuneration and working conditions, can be found in part in the collective agreements of teachers and other school staff. Many stakeholders view these agreements as a major impediment to school success. Parents blame the union for teacher absenteeism, for preventing the Board from dismissing poorly performing teachers, for putting 'roadblocks' in the way of the school administration doing its job. Not surprisingly, the union begs to differ.

It is beyond the scope of this Review to analyze the provisions of these agreements. However, we have looked at them. Naturally they contain provisions that constrain the employer from doing some things it might wish to do. That state of affairs is true for any school board in Québec. Moreover, the agreements prevent the Board from acting in an arbitrary manner towards its staff. If there were no such checks and balances, staff morale would be even lower and the rate of staff turnover even higher. Furthermore, there are many provisions in the agreements that apply in other jurisdictions that are not included in the one that applies to the CSB. The problem does not lie in the collective agreements but in the management of human resources.

These agreements are created by the collective bargaining process. As mentioned in Part 1 of this report,<sup>a</sup> the CSB has a major say in what goes into these agreements - a much greater say than other school boards in Québec. We could not obtain any data from the Department on the bargaining process, but we have some anecdotal evidence from elsewhere that suggests the Board does not exercise the leadership in this process that the law assigns it. We have been told that in previous rounds of bargaining, the conclusion of the agreements for the CSB and its teachers and other staff were simply allowed to await the outcome of bargaining at the other 'main' tables, i.e. those involving the unions for school boards from across Québec.

The Human Resources Department should be taking the lead in these matters but this does not appear to happen. From what we have seen, the reason is that it does not have the capacity to do so. Nor does it have the capacity for the fourth item on our list of issues: management of human resources. Rather than claiming that schools are responsible for such matters and blaming them for their inadequacies, this Department ought to attend to its own deficiencies. With few exceptions, schools told us in no uncertain terms how little help they got from this Department:

<sup>a</sup> See Major Administrative Parameters for the Management of Resources (p. 23), in section 2.1.3 in Part 1.

Q: *Okay, how about the Human Resources Department?*

A: *Terrible. There are HR advisors in place - we're given an advisor and we hardly get the services or assistance from him or her but we have to work through that person. I phone or email and I get the answering machine. You leave your message there and you send an email and four or five weeks later you get an answer. By that time, you know ... (CEA).*

*Human Resources is in a mess. I email and call and I leave messages ... nothing happens. And then somebody is going to say well you didn't do the disciplinary measure correctly. You didn't do this, you didn't do that. But the thing is we're always told that before we apply any disciplinary measure we consult and check to make sure we are doing it right (Principal).*

One of the issues that was raised by many schools stakeholders was teacher absenteeism and the number of class days students spend with unqualified substitutes. We experienced our own frustration with getting a response from the Department. Not only were we not ever supplied any of the data we requested, we never even received the courtesy of a reply.

The Human Resources Department is not only responsible for helping schools and centres manage their personnel, they have a major role to play at the Board level. Again the absence of any data from the Department, we have only bits and pieces of information about what happens - and does not happen - at this level. It seems as if there are an inordinate number of grievances, a number of which end up costing the Board a considerable amount of money. It is the Department's role to deal with grievances as they arise - not to let them pile up. Good employee relations demand that real problems are dealt with promptly so that only a small number will ever end up in arbitration. Teachers and other employees need to see that their legitimate complaints are taken seriously. Normally, when board-union relations are good, the union will do its part to deal with any frivolous complaints. At the present time that seems unlikely, as the little anecdotal evidence we have suggests that board-union relations are not all that good. Again, we suspect that the Department does not have the capacity to discharge this responsibility properly.

The final item on our list, professional improvement, can be dealt with quickly: The Department does nothing in this area. Presumably from what we have been told on other personnel matters: the Department does not consider this to be its problem. In our view, a school board department mandated to manage human resources that does not concern itself with professional development is a department that has lost its way:

<p><b>Professional development is the heart of educational change.</b></p>
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Teacher learning is the heart of educational change. While professional development is every teacher's principal's and support person's business, systems are needed to support professional growth and to help schools develop as professional communities where teachers reflect critically on their own practice.<sup>200</sup>

Improved teaching and learning in the CSB depends on the professional development of its teachers, principals and other staff. The Human Resources Department ought to be a key part of the solution to this issue; right now, it is simply part of the problem.

Given the importance of this Department and the seriousness of the problems encountered, we conclude that it needs to be put under some form of internal 'trusteeship.' Such a move is normally made by the government when a public agency such as a school board so utterly fails in its duties that the government steps in and takes temporary control. A trustee is appointed to be in charge for a predetermined or indefinite period, during which the normal lines of authority are suspended. In this case, the trustee would assume responsibility for the Department for the length of time required to probe all aspects of its operations and make recommendations to the Board for changes to be effected once the trusteeship is lifted.

The Human Resources Department needs to be placed under internal 'trusteeship.'

## 11.2 Finance

This department is headed by a Director supported by a Coordinator, a senior manager (former coordinator) and two administrative officers, as well as six administrative staff. This department also includes the payroll department headed by a paymaster, supported by an administrative officer and five administrative staff. According to the General By-Law, the 'Director of Finance and Administration' is responsible for the administration, management and evaluation of the financial and personnel services of the Board and the resources allocated thereto.<sup>a</sup> We assume that this title is an anachronism from a time when the mandate of this department was broader than it is at the present time. More specifically, the director's duties include the following:

- to prepare and present the annual budget of the Board to the Council and ensure its transmittal to the Minister after its approval by the Council;
- to inform each Council meeting of budget performance including major cost over-runs;
- to ensure that the books, accounts and financial records of the Board are kept according to normally acceptable accounting procedures;
- to conduct a financial analysis of all programs and proposed programs of the Board;
- to supervise the preparation of the financial statements of the Board containing the auditor's report and to ensure their transmittal to the Minister after approval by the Council;
- to cause statistical reports to be prepared each year on the forms prescribed by the Minister for such purpose and to submit them to the Minister;
- to authorize expenses and payments, and approve contracts for amounts not exceeding \$50,000 and cost reallocations not exceeding \$25,000; and
- to approve the appointment and engagement of all support staff working in finance and administrative services and administer the collective agreement applicable to its staff.

As with Human Resources, our task in this sub-section is not to provide a comprehensive analysis of the Finance Department; that will come from the Organizational Review. Rather, we will simply deal with key issues regarding this Department's support to schools and centres. They look to the Finance Department for the following:

- allocation of an adequate level of funds that the school/centre requires for its operations; and
- facilitate the hiring of personnel and the purchase of supplies.

An adequate level of school funding depends on the source of funds available to a school board and all conditions pertaining thereto. Traditionally, for most school boards in Canada, these

<sup>a</sup> See General By-Law, art. 17.09.

sources were a mixture of funds from local taxation revenues and provincial grants. In more recent years, other sources have become more important as cash-strapped school boards search for additional sources of revenues, such as fund raising and user fees.

In the CSB, there are no local taxation revenues; almost all funds come from the Ministry, a series of general purpose and specific grants based on multi-year Budgetary Rules that are specific to the CSB.<sup>201</sup> These grants are in turn financed by the federal and provincial governments in accordance with the JBNQA.<sup>a</sup> Although the Budgetary Rules are not generally on the schools' radar, they ought to be as they determine how much money there is to distribute. In other words, before worrying about how big its share of the pie is, a school should be concerned with the size of the pie. Such rules may also stipulate how funds may or may not be spent, another issue that ought to be of concern to schools and centres.

It is beyond the scope of this Review to provide an analysis of the Budgetary Rules and we will limit our remarks to merely attempting to provide the reader with some salient features of these rules for the education of youth students. Unlike other boards, where registered students are eligible for funding up to 18 years of age (21 years for handicapped students), students in the CSB are eligible for funding up to 21 years of age (or 25 years of age for handicapped students). As schools are well aware, September 30 is the 'magic' date for counting eligible students and transmission of accurate data to the Ministry. However, no magic thinking will compensate for being late if the Board wishes to access its funding entitlement. Nor will it help if the data on the precise number of students with special needs are inaccurate or missing.

The basic allocation for teaching personnel is based on the following formula:

$$\boxed{\text{STUDENT POPULATION} \quad \times \quad \text{PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO} \quad \times \quad \text{SUBSIDIZED COST PER TEACHER}}$$

PTR for Funding			
K4	K5	Elm	Sec
25.0900	12.5450	10.9800	8.8613

The pupil-teacher ratio [PTR] expresses the number of students that will generate the grant for one teacher. The lower the PTR, the more generous the funding. As shown here, it is specific to each level of instruction; the

PTR for secondary education is slightly more generous than the PTR for elementary as it provides for the cost of one teacher for approximately 8.86 students while it takes 10.98 elementary students and 12.55 kindergarten students to generate one teacher salary.<sup>b</sup> According to the Rules, the PTR is based on the duration of the student timetable at each level of instruction and other relevant factors.<sup>c</sup> The subsidized cost per teacher is equal to the Ministry's estimate of the average cost to the Board to remunerate one teacher.

Since the subsidized cost per teacher is generally regarded as an accurate representation of this cost, The PTR is the key element in determining the level of funding. The Ministry simulates its determination of PTRs using computerized models the results of which are communicated to school boards as part of the board's 'budgetary parameters.' We repeatedly asked the Finance Department for copies of these parameters. We received continued assurances that they would be provided but assurances were all we ever received.

Without the information requested we could make no further analysis of this key aspect of the Budgetary Rules. It was also unclear to us how well the Finance Department understood how

<sup>a</sup> The federal government pays 75% and provincial government 25% of the grants provided.

<sup>b</sup> The PTR for four-year old kindergarten is no less generous than that provided for five-year old kindergarten because the students in the former attend school half-time.

<sup>c</sup> The recognized instructional times are: 12.5 hours per week for four-year old kindergarten and 25 hours per week for every other level. (The duration of secondary instruction is actually expressed as 54,000 minutes per year, which is the equivalent of 25 hours per week for 36 weeks.) Other factors specified are the number of students in each school, including the number with special needs; the recognition of three languages of instruction; teacher workload; and, smaller class size norms than those that apply to other school boards.

grant entitlement was determined. Such understanding is critical if the Board wishes to determine if it is receiving adequate funding. Furthermore, if the Board wishes to make a case for additional funding, it must do so using reliable data. The Ministry has very talented and experienced staff in its finance department. They will listen to sound arguments based on data but they will not be moved by unsubstantiated demands for more money. If the Board wishes to ensure that it has adequate funds to allocate to schools, then it must improve its understanding of the relationships between school organization and school funding.

The allocation of funds to schools is then dependant on the method used to make this distribution. In other school boards, this distribution is subject to various principles set forth in the *Public Education Act*. In brief, the Act provides for a transparent process: following consultation of the board-level parents' committee, the school board must make public the objectives, principles and criteria respecting the allocation of revenues to schools - grants, taxation proceeds and other revenues; and the amount kept for the school board's own uses. The school board must distribute to its schools, *all operating funds*, except the amount for its own needs and those of its committees. This must be done *in an equitable manner and in consideration of social and economic disparities and of the needs expressed by the schools*.

None of these provisions apply to the CSB. We repeatedly asked the Finance Department for copies of the guidelines it used to allocate funds to schools. Once again, we received continued assurances that they would be provided but they were never were. The refusal to supply these guidelines raises an obvious question: **What is the Department trying to hide?** If the Board wishes schools to believe that it is acting in their best interest, then it must act openly with full disclosure of the methods it uses to allocate funds to schools.

This disclosure should also include how it decides what amounts it retains for central Board expenditures and the basis on which this decision is made. The lack of disclosure provides evidence for the view that for the Board administration, the unwritten rule is: Me first, then schools.

Providing for the equitable distribution of funds to schools does not mean treating everyone the same. It means treating everyone fairly based on established guiding principles. Adding transparency means that the distribution is done openly, with sufficient information provided to stakeholders that they understand how and why the distribution is made. Until such transparency is achieved, schools and communities will be left wondering: Was this fair? with no way to find out.

Until the Board explains how it allocates funds to schools, they have no way of knowing if the process is fair.

Anecdotal evidence we collected about the budget process does not reveal a process that engages schools in financial planning and management of their resources. Budget numbers are given to the CEAs who make up a proposed budget that is subsequently presented for approval. The lack of collegial management between most CEAs and school principals, to say nothing of the level of involvement of the school committee, does not reflect a process of a school board supporting schools. Rather it reflects a bureaucratic top-down process in which much paper is shuffled, administrators are gathered in external meetings, with the usual cost and disruption, with little to show for the effort except what the Board intended in the first place as a school budget.

The second major preoccupation of schools once its allocation of funds has been determined is the process by which these funds are spent. We have already talked about this process in a previous section of this report and will limit our remarks here to complement our earlier discussion.<sup>a</sup> It should be noted that the purchasing process involves the departments of Finance

<sup>a</sup> See discussion of the management of financial resources in section 6.3.1 (p. 128).

and Material Resources. Both departments have a very different perspective on the expenditure process than the one held by schools.

From the Finance Department's view, it is well organized and efficient with a sound process for managing and controlling expenditures. From the perspective of both schools and centres, as noted previously, the process is very bureaucratic and unresponsive to their needs. The Department places the blame for slow processing of orders on the schools because of missing budget codes, improperly followed procedures, etc. The schools and centres talk about paperwork stalled at head office while it languishes on someone's desk.

It was beyond the scope of this Review to get to the bottom of this situation and we hope that the Organizational Review will shed light on how well this process works and why difficulties occur. If the analysis of the Organizational Review is insufficient for this purpose, then the Board will have to undertake a thorough audit of the expenditure process. From the limited data we have collected, we suspect that such an audit will reveal deficiencies on the school/centre side of the process. However, we also have reason to believe that it will reveal that the focus of the Finance Department is on control: ensuring that the rules are followed is much more important to the Department than ensuring that schools and centres have the resources they need to operate.

We have some anecdotal evidence to suggest that certain individuals within the Department have decided that they should be the final arbiter of what schools spend. These individuals seem to have forgotten that schools and centres do not report to the Finance Department, that it does not, or at least should not, represent school board authority. There seems to be a spirit of arrogance in this Department that it is an organization of ultimate importance in the Board. If this is true, then the Board must take the necessary steps to change this attitude. The Department is obviously an important one but it is not, nor should it be allowed to act if it were, a source of line authority to schools. It is a service department whose sole function should be to support the Office of the Supervisor of Schools and the Department of Continuing Education, which do have such line authority, and the schools and centres themselves.

### **11.3 Material Resources**

This department is headed by a coordinator supported by two superintendents, a project manager and five administrative staff. The Coordinator's responsibilities are not clearly spelled out in the General By-Law;<sup>a</sup> however, from information provided during the Review, we obtained a reasonably clear picture of this Unit's mandate and structure. The Department deals with all aspects of material resources for the Board, including:

- negotiations with the Ministry;
- capital projects;
- housing;
- renovations, repairs & maintenance;
- moving and storage;
- purchasing;
- school bus transportation; and
- board vehicles.

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<sup>a</sup> Article 17.17 of the General By-Law merely establishes the spending authority of the Coordinator, the authority for approving payments in capital projects and the allocation and management of housing in units for head office staff.

As with the other departments comprising Administrative Services, our task in this sub-section is not to provide a comprehensive analysis of this Unit; that will come from the Organizational Review. Rather, we will simply deal with key issues regarding its support to schools and centres. They look to this Department for the all of the above services as they apply to schools, centres and community (housing).

Like Finance, this Department plays an important role in the negotiations with the Ministry for capital funds and projects. As mentioned above, it plays a crucial role in the purchasing process. Like Finance, this Department tends to place the blame on schools and centres for any problems encountered. As stated in the previous sub-section, it was not possible for us to get to the bottom of these different perspectives. That is something the Board must address as part of the follow-up to this Review and the Organizational Review.

Likewise, we were not able to explore in any meaningful depth the other issues listed above. Once again, we assume that the Organizational Review will provide important insights into this Department's important role within the CSB.

## 11.4 Information & Technology

This department is headed by a coordinator whose responsibilities are not specified in the General By-Law.<sup>a</sup> In addition to the Coordinator, the Unit has one analyst, a webmaster, six technicians and other administrative staff.<sup>b</sup> We received no documentation from this Unit but we understand that it is overwhelmed by the breadth and depth of the challenge of providing adequate information and technology [IT] support to the schools and centres (as well as Board offices). Staff turnover is a big concern as competent IT specialists are in high demand.

As with the other departments comprising Administrative Services, our task in this sub-section is not to provide a comprehensive analysis of this Unit; that will come from the Organizational Review. Rather, we will provide minimal comments on some issues regarding its support to schools and centres. They should be able to look to this Department for the following:

- facilitate school/centre management through the use of IT;
- support student learning through:
  - the provision of computers, other hardware and related facilities;
  - the provision of educational software;
  - connectivity to the Internet and other systems (e.g. SchoolNet); and
- professional development of teachers and other educational staff.

According to the Department, it provides as many computers as possible (according to annual funding allocation available) to the schools on an annual basis and makes sure that they are installed and operational as quickly as possible.

By its own admission, this Unit does not have the expertise to counsel schools in which software is appropriate for them as it is the Education Services responsibility to do this. However once a choice has been made, it tries to make sure that the service is operational and available for the teachers and students.

It does its best to ensure that all equipment have 100% connectivity to the Internet and that required services on the network are available from public access to remote and mobile

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<sup>a</sup> Article 17.17A of the General By-Law merely establishes the spending authority of the Coordinator.

<sup>b</sup> Three tech staff positions are decentralized to the community in Chisasibi, Waskaganish and Waswanipi; see departmental organization chart on the Board website: <http://www.cscree.qc.ca/Services/IT/ITD/ITd.htm>.

employees. Security of data on the private network is a premium requirement for I.T. and this is dealt with by putting various devices and services in place.

The Unit does not have the staff to help in computer integration in the classrooms, However, we were told that it is currently recruiting new staff who will provide the knowledge required to improve on this. Finally, technicians at the local level are providing training and support for teachers and students in operating equipments and services, while technicians at the regional level provide help desk assistance.

From what we were told, we infer that centres rely on whatever equipment schools have and to which they are given access.

Once again we must rely on the Organizational Review to provide more detailed insights into this Department's important role within the CSB. From the small amount of data we collected, we got the impression of an under-resourced unit trying its best to meet an incredibly high level of demand for its services.

## 11.5 Key Findings, Conclusions & Recommendations

Returning to the performance standard stated at the beginning of this section, we must now ask to what extent the data that we have collected and analyzed permit us to determine whether the departments comprising Administrative Services meet the stated standards:

- An adequate allocation of human, financial, material and information technology resources are provided to schools, centres and post-secondary education offices, based on equitable and transparent criteria relating to the programmatic responsibilities of these units and other relevant factors.

First we must reiterate what we stated at the beginning of this chapter: for purposes of this report, we are only concerned with the direct support these departments provide to schools, centres and post-secondary offices. Given our modified mandate,<sup>a</sup> we do not attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis of these departments anywhere in our report. Such an analysis is to be found in the report of the Organizational Review and the synthesis of both Reviews to be carried out by the Board.

Schools look to these departments for the following types of support:

- the allocation of an adequate level of the human, financial, material and IT resources the school/centre requires, including staff housing;
- efficient processes for the recruitment and hiring of school/centre staff, the purchasing of materials and supplies and other aspects of the provision of various resources, as well as guidance and support in the conduct of these processes;
- appropriate remuneration and working conditions for school/centre staff;
- guidance and support for the management of all the resources the school/centre staff has at its disposal, especially human resources; and
- professional development of school/centre staff in a wide variety of fields.

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<sup>a</sup> See discussion in *Part 1, Overview, Context and Mission*, beginning in section 1.2, Purpose & Results.

Our analysis of the allocation of human resources was rendered all but impossible because of the lack of data from this Department; we experienced first hand the frustrations schools and centres reported to us in trying to get support from this Unit. At a policy level, we are very critical of the Department's pursuit of affirmative action appointments and promotion of Cree staff because of (a) its apparent disregard as to whether the people will, given support and time, be able to do the job in question; and (b) for the failure to put such support plans in place. We have found that creating employment opportunities for Cree adults seems to be more important to the Board than providing educational opportunities for Cree children. From the data we were able to gather, we conclude that this Unit has failed to meet even minimal performance standards and that the Board must take drastic action, as recommended below.

We provided some insights into the Budgetary Rules applicable to the CSB and questioned whether the Finance Department fully understood the basis of grant entitlement and had the capacity to support schools in relation to budgetary requirements for school organization. Our analysis of the allocation of financial resources was also rendered all but impossible because of the lack of data from this Department.

We have commented briefly on the process for purchasing, managed jointly by the departments of Finance and Material Resources. We noted the wide discrepancy between the school and departmental perspectives on this process. Without pretending to have gotten to the bottom of this situation, these differences of opinion are serious enough to warrant a detailed audit of the process. We also found that the attitude of the Finance Department reflects the perception in schools that the CSB is a board-centric organization, with Finance at the centre of the Board.

We are unable to provide any detailed analysis of the other aspects of the Material Resources Department nor of the IT Department. However, in no way should this be interpreted as a reflection of the importance these units have to schools.

Based on the foregoing analysis, we recommend:

- R97 THAT** the Board re-examine its policy and practice on affirmative action hiring and promotion and, following consultation of all major stakeholders, adopt and implement a revised policy that ensures the potential competence for the position of the person chosen, the time and support required to develop this competence, the implementation of a plan to provide this support, and the commitment of the individual to this plan.
- R98 THAT,** in preparing for upcoming negotiations with the Ministry over funding, the Board deepen its understanding of how the Budgetary Rules are constructed and develop data-based arguments reflecting school needs for funding.
- R99 THAT,** in preparation for the next round of collective bargaining with its teachers and other personnel, the Board, in consultation with schools, develop viable bargaining positions based on the needs of its schools.
- R100 THAT** the Board, subject to the analysis provided by the Organizational Review, conduct an in-depth probe of its human resources policies and procedures for recruitment and hiring, the management of the collective agreements and other employment regimes, and the support of schools in regard thereto.
- R101 THAT,** depending on other actions taken regarding restructuring on the basis of other recommendations of this report or those provided by the Organizational Review, due consideration be given to the role the Human Resources Department should play in terms of the professional development of school staff.

**R102** THAT, in keeping with recommendation 100 and 101, the Board take immediate measures to develop the capacity and performance of the Human Resources Department, including the placement of the Department under internal trusteeship, so that this Department may meet the expectations which have been or will be assigned to it.

**R103** THAT the Board, following consultation of all major stakeholders, adopt a framework for the allocation of resources to schools that includes a clear public statement of the guiding principles and criteria used, and provides for a transparent process for ensuring an equitable distribution of available resources based on school needs.

**R104** THAT the Board cause an independent audit to be conducted into the policies and procedures for the purchase of materials and supplies for schools with a view to facilitating this process while maintaining proper controls on the expenditure of Board funds.

**R105** THAT, in keeping with recommendation 108 (expanded use of IT connectivity in the Board), the Board develop a long-term plan for the investment in information technology in support of learning.

## 12.0 GOVERNANCE & GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

This chapter takes another step back, and deals with the more general topics of governance and administration - the base of School Board support for learning carried out through the various departments discussed in the previous sections. It contains four parts:

- structures and systems;
- strategic direction;
- community relations and external linkages; and
- organizational culture.

For purposes of this part of our report, we are only concerned with the direct support the governance and general administration of the Board provide to schools, centres and post-secondary offices. Given our modified mandate,<sup>a</sup> we do not attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis of the governance and general administration of the Board anywhere in our report.<sup>b</sup>

The primary sources of data on these topics were feedback from schools and site visits to Board offices in Mississauga which included interviews of the Chairperson of the CSB, the Director General and the Secretary General, data from staff questionnaires and the collection of various documents.

### Performance Standards

- School The Board provides strategic direction to its schools, centres and post-secondary education offices, through leadership and an integrated management framework for the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the Board and its schools.
- The School Board actively pursues and maintains appropriate linkages with external service agencies and other bodies to support its schools, centres and communities.
- The organization culture of the School Board reflects the values and purpose of its mission and supports the achievement of high levels of performance.

## 12.1 Structures & Systems

The structures provide the 'hardware' of an organization: how authority is allocated and how work is divided and coordinated, while systems provide its 'software' to make decisions and provide for communication, both within the organization and with its external stakeholders. This section provides an overview of how the CSB is structured followed by a brief discussion of communication, the only system issues which we address in this section.<sup>c</sup> The analysis of board structures and decision-making systems will be covered by the Organizational Review.

### 12.1.1 Governance & Management Structures

The structure of an organization is commonly depicted in an organization chart which displays the divisions (sub-units) of the organization, the allocation of authority and the lines of reporting that define who is accountable to whom and for what. Authority may be concentrated at the top (centralized structure) or more widely dispersed (decentralized structure). Traditional views of organizational structure see it in vertical layers from top to bottom, reflecting the bureaucratic

<sup>a</sup> See discussion in *Part 1, Overview, Context and Mission*, beginning in section 1.2, Purpose & Results (p. 4).

<sup>b</sup> Such an analysis is to be found in the report of the Organizational Review and the synthesis of both Reviews to be carried out by the Board.

<sup>c</sup> Organizational systems also include planning, monitoring and evaluation which, in this report, are dealt with in section 12.2 (p. 277).

school of management thinking. More contemporary views emphasize the need for ‘horizontal management’ to counter the isolation and fragmentation associated with hierarchical structures.<sup>202</sup>

The organization chart of the CSB referred to in the Introduction in Part 1,<sup>a</sup> reveals that the line of authority between schools and the Board runs from the Director General through the Office of the Supervisor of Schools. The heads of all other units also report to the Director General as do the CEAs in individual schools. The latter, as well as certain administrative units, would normally report to the Deputy Director General but this position has been vacant for some time.

## Governance

According to the General By-Law of the Board, the Council of Commissioners is composed of one commissioner from each community plus a member elected by the CRA who shall, ex officio, be the Chairperson of the Board, for a total of ten members. The position of Chairperson is a full-time position, remunerated in accordance with established norms. Regular meetings of the Council must be held at least four times per year; special meetings may be called by the Chairperson, the Director General or the Secretary General; emergency meetings require unanimous consent and may be held by telephone or other means.<sup>b</sup>

The Executive Committee is made up of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson of the Board and one other commissioner appointed annually by Council. The Director General is a non-voting member. The Executive Committee has a very general mandate to “administer the business and activities of the School Board and ensure that every order, ordinance, decision, resolution or contract be faithfully and impartially observed and carried out.”<sup>c</sup>

During the course of the Educational Review, we attended a small number of meetings of the Council for the purpose of reporting on the Review, but we did not have the opportunity to see either the Council or the Executive Committee at work. As a proxy for such direct observations, we sought the opinions of stakeholders about the operation of the Council and the Executive Committee.

Some stakeholders commented on the intrusion of Council into management of the Board, as opposed to focusing on the governance of the Board.

*Council is supposed to govern but it makes management decisions that affect the departments. It should be more of a governing body, following the mission, the purpose of it all. That's its role - to make sure that we follow the policies, the five or ten guiding principles, the values of the Board.*

We even heard stories, from more than one stakeholder, of directives being sent from the Council, even individual members, to departments of the Board. Such actions are utterly inappropriate and undermine the managerial authority of the Director General and the other members of the Management Group. The operation of the Council is a long way from the day-to-day concerns of schools and centres. However, the one common complaint from them concerned the role of the Executive Committee with respect to hiring - more delays that hinder

<sup>a</sup> See [Organization Chart](http://www.cscree.qc.ca/Organization/organigram.pdf) on CSB web site (<http://www.cscree.qc.ca/Organization/organigram.pdf>).

<sup>b</sup> The provisions regarding the Council are set forth in the General By-Law, art. 4; the remuneration of the chairperson is governed by By-Law No. 2.

<sup>c</sup> The General By-Law, art. 5, which sets forth the provisions regarding the Executive Committee, also states that it shall also perform the functions delegated to it in writing by the Council.

the timely engagement of teachers. It appears as if the Executive Committee acts more as a managerial body than a governing one.<sup>a</sup>

Others stated that decisions were made and then reversed creating uncertainty and instability. These decisions were often about operational matters, which should not have concerned the Council in the first place.

### **General Administration**

The Management Group consists of the senior administrators of the Board,<sup>b</sup> and two CEAs and two school principals, each appointed by the Executive Committee on a yearly basis, for a total of 13 members. The mandate of the Management Group is to act as a consultative and administrative body responsible for general planning and coordination of the activities of the Board and shall:

- review all new policies, projects, major contracts, policy revisions, procedures, changes to procedure and rules of application of procedures, if possible prior to their submission to the Council or the Executive Committee for approval;
- review the day-to-day administration of the Board and make recommendations to the Council or the Executive Committee;
- supervise the compliance with the budget of the Board; and
- maintain good communications between the Council and all departments of the Board, community school administrations and the communities.

It should be noted that this mandate does not mention continuing education centres. This omission is perhaps reflective of a general lack of attention to adult education.

The Office of the Director General comprises the Director General, the Deputy Director General (vacant position) and two administrative staff. The Director General is the Chief Executive Officer of the CSB, responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Board, the supervision of the senior staff of the Board and for ensuring the quality of the services provided by the Board. The General By-Law lists a number of specific responsibilities, as summarized below:<sup>c</sup>

- to ensure that short term and long term organization plans for the Board are prepared and developed, and to submit these plans to the Council for approval, and to supervise the implementation of such plans once approved;
- to supervise and to oversee the activities of the senior staff, with the exception of school principals (Supervisor of Schools) and CEAs (Deputy Director General);<sup>d</sup>
- in coordination with the Director of Finance and Administrative Services, supervise the preparation and implementation of the budget and review financial and statistical reports prior to their submission to the Executive Committee and to the Council for approval; and

<sup>a</sup> We understand that issues regarding governance versus management are currently being addressed, including the development of policy guidelines for the operation of these two spheres.

<sup>b</sup> The General By-Law, art. 6, which sets forth the provisions regarding the Management Group, states that the senior administrators are: the Director General, the Deputy Director General, the Director of Finance and Administrative Services, the Director of Human Resources Services, the Director of Education Services, the Director of Continuing Education, the Director of Post-Secondary Student Services, the Secretary General and the Supervisor of Schools. Principals and CEAs are considered part of senior staff, while coordinators, vice-principals, the capital projects manager, and superintendents from Material Resources, are classified as managers.

<sup>c</sup> See General By-Law, art. 17.04.

<sup>d</sup> In the absence of a Deputy Director General, the Director General assumes this responsibility.

- authorize expenses and payments, and approve contracts for amounts not exceeding \$50,000 and cost reallocations not exceeding \$25,000.

The Office of the Secretary General comprises the Secretary General and four administrative staff. The Secretary General is responsible for the administration, management and evaluation of the official records of the Board, including the custody and management of its archives and related duties such as official correspondence and communications on behalf of the Board and application of the Act respecting *Access To Documents Held By Public Bodies and The Protection of Personal Information*.<sup>a</sup>

As we did with respect to governance, we asked stakeholders what they thought about the structures and operations of the general administration of the Board. The most telling comment came from one **coordinator** who thought that the preoccupation with restructuring was totally misplaced:

Competent managers, not restructuring, is the key to improved organizational performance.

*You know, the present organization as it is - put the right people in the right place - make them accountable, okay, and it will work. You don't need a new organizational structure; it's as simple as that. If you don't have the right people in the right place who are accountable it doesn't matter what the organization is. It's easy in an organization to change the boxes, right? It's an easy thing to do. It's not so easy to have the right people in charge of the boxes.*

Another coordinator also questioned the importance of structures compared to what people actually did within these structures:

***In Alice in Wonderland, there's this saying that if you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there.***

Another common theme in stakeholder comments was the weight of central administration:

*We are top heavy in the administrative - and I mean the administrative as opposed to the pedagogical - end.*

*The Cree School Board is seen by almost everyone to be too bureaucratic. Bureaucracies tend to exist in hierarchical structures where we see layer upon layer of management. Organizations that are flat in nature, where there are fewer layers of management, are more responsive.*

*The Management Group is too big. The meetings take forever. The Management Group is not supposed to be a group discussion, it's supposed to be a 'making decisions' group. [But if you don't want to make a decision, the safest way is to take it there ...] Exactly. You understand perfectly.*

*I don't want to talk about issues [in the Management Group] for days. Tell me what the problem is. Here are the solutions. What are we going to do? Okay, next. But there's just more discussion. we lack focus. We need somebody to say, okay, enough of that discussion. Let's move on.*

[Bureaucracy and redundancy] *Too many layers. Too many cover-ups of incompetent people.*

<sup>a</sup> See General By-Law, art. 17.10.

This last comment reflected a situation that we observed as well. Someone is appointed to a position that he or she is incapable of assuming. Rather than attempting to build that person's capacity or, if that is not possible, removing him or her from the position, the Board simply hires an additional person to do the job - 'one for the price of two.'

Although we must leave the analysis of board structures and decision-making systems to others, the input from stakeholders we received suggest a top-heavy bureaucracy that is overly concerned with organizational boxes and not concerned enough about the people managing these boxes. The other general organizational systems issue that was on everyone's radar was communication, or more accurately, the lack of it.

The one issue on which we would like to briefly comment is the need for an integrated approach to management of support for educational service delivery to youth and adults. We mentioned the importance of this approach at the beginning of chapter 10. The rest of that chapter was concerned with the individual units responsible for providing direction and support to schools, centres and PSSS offices. As we stated, there was no section on coordination because there was no coordination to analyze.

At the present time, these four units (Office of the Supervisor of Schools, Educational Services, Continuing Education and the PSSS Office) operate in independent silos, to the detriment of the respective clientele. To take but two examples: There are students in high schools who would benefit from vocational education but that is dealt with in adult education. There are adult students who might wish to go on to post-secondary studies, but Continuing Education has nothing to do with that level. The Board needs to begin to develop an integrated management approach to the support of service delivery for students at all levels.

This will take time and careful planning. The Board would be well advised to start small and look for informal ways to move forward: small steps toward meaningful change. We would also like to stress that we are talking about new ways of operating; we are not advocating new structures.

## **Communication**

The core of any communication is a message transmitted and received. Whether the medium is oral, written or visual, communication does not occur unless both halves of this transmission are functioning and the message received is the same as the one that was sent.

In an hierarchical organization, communication is often viewed as a one-way channel: bosses talk, workers listen. Communication is authoritarian and strictly functional, providing information that is needed to carry out work. In slightly more progressive organizations, there is some two-way communication: questions are posed and, in some cases, suggestions are made. Even this limited form of communication is missing in the CSB.

From what we have been told and what we have observed, simple communication tends to vary between communication that is incomplete and often misunderstood and no communication at all. For example, we have talked about the lack of communication from the Board about the mission of the CSB - it does not even appear on the Board website. It is difficult to expect stakeholders to support the mission when they do not even know what it says. We have made countless references in this report to emails and telephone calls not being returned.

Sometimes communication is provided in writing that the audience does not understand. We have given several examples of this throughout this report, including attendance reports and handbooks for parents. Verbal communication often suffers from the same disability, for example, presentations in workshops about concepts to which participants cannot relate. In many cases, 'telling' people something is considered as having had communication with that

person. Even worse, merely telling someone something is considered to be an action taken to solve a problem.

For example, the Board issues a directive to schools about vandalism. Communication and action are considered to be complete. Subsequently, when it is discovered that vandalism has not abated, schools are blamed. Regardless of what the original communication to schools stated, the message received was: We do not know what to do, we are not able or willing to help you. It's up to you.

The absence of communication is closely associated with the lack of follow-up and the unavailability of managers because of meetings and travel. Stakeholders take part in a group discussion. Several issues are brought up that require action. Participants believe - hope - that something will happen, and then .... No communication, no follow-up and no action.

*I think there's a lack of informing parents of what's going on in the school - a lack of reaching out to the community. Sure, they announce on the radio, but not everyone listens to the radio. There's got to be other ways of reaching out to the people. Sometimes we're just not informed (School Committee Member).*

*When we have our meetings, half the time the commissioners are not there, they don't report back to the committee. That's why I say there's a lack of accountability as far as the School Board is to each community and to the whole Cree Nation itself. Yes, the Chairman of the School Board sits on the Grand Council, but what kind of report does he make to the Chiefs. Nobody knows (Band Council representative).*

Problems associated with communication, meetings and travel could be at least partially alleviated by the greater use of technology, notably video-conferencing. These facilities are woefully underused. Together with other technological resources, they offer a cost-effective alternative to endless days spent on travel and meetings.

Anticipating this type of problem is why we insisted on developing communication linkages with stakeholders during the course of this Review. We have expended considerable time and energy to keep everyone informed about what was happening and open various means for stakeholders to communicate with us, including email and the dedicated website. We provided schools and centres with detailed information about our visits and provided questions to interviewees ahead of time. Given the time frame in which we were operating and the nature of the data collection process, we had to rely on the school/centre administration and others to pass on information to others. Sometimes this worked; other times it did not. The lessons we learned from this experience will be dealt with in **Part 5, From Findings to Action**.

Even if the CSB managed to correct these basic communication difficulties, it would not have broached the core of the communication issue: creating an ongoing dialogue among stakeholders that makes them feel a part of the CSB community, working together for a common purpose, student success. This level of communication is an essential component of a learning community. People cannot work and learn together unless they can truly communicate with each other.

The development of a collaborative team is supported by a particular kind of communication that blends ... advocacy (the advancement of one's opinion or belief and inquiry (the exploration of a colleague's opinion or belief)... [A] pattern of communication [develops] that is characterized by questions as often as by statements. It is a pattern that allows individuals to contribute freely without fear or recrimination or reprisal and that opens spaces for consideration of sensitive issues, problems of purpose, and unarticulated dreams or dreads. This kind of communication allows individuals to engage in collective inquiry and to develop shared understandings about purposes, values, and commitments.<sup>203</sup>

That level of communication is all but non-existent in the CSB but this is what is needed to find 'the road ahead,' a theme to which we will return in Part 5. Open and non-threatening communication will be required to deal with the important and *sensitive* issues referred to in the above quotation. There is no more obvious example of this than one issue discussed in section 4.3.3 in Part 2: language of instruction (p. 90).

As mentioned previously, CLIP is a lightning rod for emotive opinions. Constructive dialogue is not possible when opinions are totally polarized and arguments are framed in an adversarial manner: If you're against CLIP, you're opposed to Cree language and culture. If you're for CLIP, you do not care about the education children are receiving. We have seen many examples of such polarizing opinions expressed. For example, one stakeholder stated that parents who wanted English or French taught in kindergarten had 'sold out' to the dominant white culture of the south.

It is no accident that the title of this report begins with communication as a key issue to be addressed. Communication alone will not enable the Board to move forward but without it, no movement will take place. That communication must begin with the tabling of this report.

During the collection of data, many stakeholders asked us if we were coming back to present our report. We told them that we planned to have a report ready for the end of March (our original target date) and expected to be involved in the communication of our findings to communities. The extension of data collection into the new year and the amount of data collected delayed our projected report date until June. The last two weeks of June is not a time when schools and centres are in a position to receive visitors, let alone host a major delegation and organize community meetings with stakeholders. The task of communicating the results of this Review must therefore take place initially via the Internet, with the publication of the report on the Board website. Subsequent communication strategies will become part of the Board's action plan, to be discussed in **Part 5, From Findings to Action**.

## 12.2 Strategic Direction

As noted in Part 1 of this report, successful organizations have a clear idea of the direction in which they are headed. Accordingly, this Review was concerned with the Board's performance and capacity in this regard. The strategic direction of an organization can be considered in relation to three aspects: leadership; planning; and monitoring and evaluation.

### 12.2.1 Leadership

Leadership at the Board level shares many of the characteristics and raises similar issues to leadership at the school/centre level which we discussed in Parts 2 and 3. One of the prime characteristics we mentioned was 'shared leadership,' the recognition that there is not one single point of leadership at any given level.<sup>a</sup> Although the persons who occupy the most senior leadership positions in the Board, notably the Chairperson of the Council of Commissioners and the Director General, are absolutely crucial in providing the leadership the Board requires, neither one, nor even both together, can 'go it alone.'

In 2001, Thomas Sergiovanni, a distinguished professor of educational leadership, when asked what kind of leadership do we need in education today, replied: "Whatever the answer, it will not be the superhero leadership of the past." He went on to say:

The new century will not be kind to leaders who seek to change things by the sheer force of their personality. Nor will it be kind to leaders who seek to change things by the sheer force of their

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<sup>a</sup> See section 6.2 (p. 118).

bureaucratic authority. Instead, we will need leadership for schools themed to learning, to the development of civic virtue, and to the cultivation of self-management.<sup>204</sup>

Sergiovanni talks about the 'hand,' the 'head' and the 'heart' of successful leadership. The 'hand' refers to the decisions, actions and behaviour of the leader - what he or she does. The 'head' refers to the leader's mindscape of how the world works - what he or she thinks. The 'heart' refers to the leader's beliefs, dreams and commitments - what he or she values. Although leadership is most often associated with change, Sergiovanni points out that sometimes leadership needs to stand up to changes that will be harmful: "Leadership forces are the means available not only to bring about changes to improve schools, but to protect and preserve things that are valued."<sup>205</sup>

In our view this is the type of leadership required in the CSB to protect and preserve Cree values, language and culture, while making the changes that are required to ensure that schools and centres provide students with the opportunities that education is meant to provide. We would only add that the leaders of the CSB must have wisdom to understand which elements should be preserved and which ones should be changed.

As a general rule, leadership in the CSB does not receive very high marks from stakeholders.

*Leadership is weak and brings little support to schools because they are left to themselves (Coordinator).*

*I think that the leadership has not found much time to really come and talk to us or support us (CEA).*

*I can honestly say we need more support. I don't even get a phone call once a month from my immediate supervisor (Stakeholder).*

*The senior leadership might be tackling too many things at the same time which is often something that happens at the School Board. We want to change things, we'll charge all around instead of concentrating on one thing and saying, ...we're going to go from here to there, and then taking it one step at a time. To the schools, I think it's confusing because there are just too many things happening at the same time (Director).*

*The direction of the Board goes here and there, here and there. It is not really focused, We also need a leader who can think 'outside the box.' (Stakeholder).*

One director explained that leadership was lacking, in part, because:

*There are too many meetings with travel all over the place - everywhere but to the communities. Is that good leadership? I'm not sure. We have to show our faces more in the schools. Let's go to the schools. Let's have our meetings in a school. Maybe we can go and visit the school. Good leadership goes where the action is.*

One member of the Management Group provided a vision of leadership, while a staff member summed up the expectations of many regarding leadership for change:

*We need people who can lead and gain a following based on their vision for the future and a strong sense of mission and purpose. But moving in this direction requires guiding principles based on strong values. Furthermore we need leaders who are well trained and have a comprehensive view.... Leadership will also require courage and strong motivation and energy from within to do what is right and purposeful.*

*I do not expect dramatic changes but, as an employee and a parent, my wish is to see improvements within our schools. My belief is we have resources enough to start but the*

*changes have to come from the top; meaning management level. If management DO NOT work as a team then how do we expect the pieces to fit properly & securely?*

A number of these comments serve to point out the relationship between leadership and other important issues such as communication, planning and follow-up.

### 12.2.2 Planning

Traditional management theory has always regarded planning as one of the essential defining elements of management. Several years ago, many people lost faith in strategic planning. They argued that the idea that an organization could be guided by a multi-year plan in ever changing times was unrealistic. The pendulum has swung back again and planning has returned 'full force.' Governments manage in accordance with *strategic plans* and *business plans* and Québec is no exception. Every government department (such as the MELS) must adopt a multi-year strategic plan stating its mission, strategic directions, target results that flow from these directions and the performance indicators to be used in measuring these results. Likewise, public school boards must now adopt a multi-year strategic plan and school success plans are supposed to fit under this strategic umbrella.

#### MELS' Strategic Goals

- Providing relevant programs;
- Improving achievement;
- Providing qualifications;
- Improving effectiveness & efficiency.

Every government department (such as the MELS) must adopt a multi-year strategic plan stating its mission, strategic directions, target results that flow from these directions and the performance indicators to be used in measuring these results. Likewise, public school boards must now adopt a multi-year strategic plan and school success plans are supposed to fit under this strategic umbrella.

Strategic planning tends to be medium to long term (three to five years and longer). It looks at the 'big picture' with its eyes on longer term results (often called outcomes and impact). In the short term, planning becomes more operational and *fine-grained*, without, however, becoming mired in detail. The operational dimension of planning is more concerned with ways and means to accomplish short term results (often called outputs). Planning is not a static exercise but a balancing act of stability and movement. "Organizations that have attained noticeable success are characterized by active strategic plans that drive their activities. Once in place, the plan is adhered to, and re-evaluation and adjustments are made on a regular basis."<sup>206</sup>

As mentioned in *Part 1, Overview, Context & Mission*, the CSB has engaged in a number of planning initiatives over the years. The Mianscum report gave rise to a flurry of activity and the creation of several committees, whose collective purpose was supposedly to steer the Board in a new direction. We have seen an undated document entitled Cree School Board Reform that contains a string of action plans. For all the plans, there has been little real planning, nothing that provides a clear vision of where the Board wants to go and how it will get there. The Three-Year Plan is a case-in-point.

#### The Three-Year Plan

The *CSB Three-Year Plan* was adopted in October, 2004. It takes account of the new funding arrangements in June, 2004 and provides for the reallocation of certain funds for implementing the Plan during the first three years. It comprises four so-called strategies:

- recruit and develop competent teachers;
- strengthen CLIP, Cree language and Cree culture;
- foster the success of all students by ensuring that all student needs are met in the educational programs offered in the schools;
- community responsive schools.

The rest of the Plan, which completely ignores adult education, consists of a series of *ad hoc* projects. In each case, the description of the project includes the following rubrics:

- pedagogical issue;
- justifications;
- goal;
- details; and
- budget.

We do not have a preconceived idea of the precise format that a strategic plan must take but we have no hesitation in saying that this document does not constitute a strategic plan. In contrast to the Regional Educational Project,<sup>a</sup> it does not provide any strategic direction to the Board. As alluded to above, it really consists of a loosely connected series of projects grouped under four so-called strategies.

We say 'so-called' because they are not really strategies. They would be better described as vaguely formulated goals with no overarching framework to situate them. A strategic plan begins with statement of values, purpose and vision, which should be grounded in the mission statement of the organization. The values and purpose ground the plan in what matters to the organization while the vision creates an *image* of where it wants to go. This statement is then used to develop various intended results to be accomplished in the short, medium and long term. 'Strategies' describe major types of actions to be taken to achieve these results. Strategies are then typically followed by the actions to be taken to achieve them. However, these actions are not just a 'mish-mash' of disconnected actions but an integrated set of activities, each one aimed to produce small results that collectively will contribute to the larger results being sought.

We did not receive any input from stakeholders on the Three-Year Plan but several commented on other current initiatives. In addition to the Educational Review, these included the Strategic Planning Exercise, conducted by Jo Nelson of ICA Associates in the spring of 2007, with follow-up in January 2008; and the ongoing Organizational Review, led by Ian Smith of the Oliver Wyman Group. Some people saw these three initiatives (Strategic Planning, Organizational Review and Educational Review) as an example of leadership. However, some stakeholders were puzzled by the sequence of these initiatives and their relation to each other. More specifically, they asked:

- Why are we looking at options for organizational restructuring before the Educational Review has completed its evaluation of service delivery? and
- Why was the Strategic Planning Exercise conducted first? Would it not have been more appropriate for this to come as part of the action planning process, as a follow-up to the two reviews?

Given our revised mandate, we will not comment on these questions, let alone provide any answers to them. We leave them for the Board to consider as it sees fit.

### 12.2.3 Monitoring & Evaluation

Evaluation constitutes the 'other half' of the planning process. Thus, as noted in the previous sub-section, the strategic plans of government departments must contain the ways and means that will be used to evaluate results. The same is true for the strategic plans of public school boards. Monitoring occurs in between planning and evaluation. It can be defined as "an ongoing

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<sup>a</sup> See section 2.1.2 (p. 19).

process to ensure that planned activities or processes (including resources) are 'on track' and that progress is being made toward intended results."<sup>207</sup>

Organizations may engage in many forms of evaluation. They may evaluate policies, programs, services and so forth. For purposes of this discussion we are only concerned with self-evaluation of organizational performance. This is the Board-level equivalent of the school self-evaluation we presented briefly in chapter 6 in Part 2.<sup>a</sup>

A Board-level evaluation is more complex than a school-level one. Like this Review, it encompasses much of what one would expect in a school evaluation except it involves all schools, as well as adult education centres. In addition, it includes central office organizational units and has a much broader context to consider.

An organizational evaluation may be conceptualized and conducted in different ways and while this Review offers one such approach, it is not the only one the Board should consider if it implements a self-evaluation framework, as we hope it will. However, all organizational evaluations share common elements:

- determine the aspects of organization performance you wish to evaluate (objects of the evaluation);
- determine the means that will be used to gather evidence about these objects and analyze the data so collected (methodology);
- develop a process to conduct, including the creation of an evaluation team (work plan);
- conduct the evaluation, that is: collect the data, analyze the data and write the report; and, most importantly of all
- prepare and implement an action plan to make use of the results of the evaluation.

We have taken considerable effort to document the planning and conduct of this Review. First, it serves to make it transparent, in accordance with the Ethical Guidelines which were established at the outset. Second, it provides a basis for the Board to develop its own self-evaluation framework for the future. The Board has invested considerable financial resources in the conduct of this Review and the Organizational Review. We hope that the material we have provided will increase the value of that investment, giving the Board more than just a report, but a foundation that will save it time and money for future self-evaluation work.

Like its schools and centres, the CSB does not engage in organizational self-evaluation on an ongoing basis. However, it has commissioned evaluative endeavours, notably the Review conducted in 1999 by Henry Mianscum and the present Educational and Organizational Reviews. Moreover, it collects data that are relevant to organizational evaluation and it is to that data management system that we now turn.

The world of contemporary public administration runs on data. Generally speaking, this is due to the emphasis on performance evaluation which, like this Review, requires evidence which comes from data. As stated by the Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada:

[T]he 21st century is the age of information and evidence — a time when the keys to progress and success lie in our ability to innovate, to tap into new information and evidence and transform ideas into exciting new developments, new services, and new solutions.<sup>208</sup>

Québec has taken a leadership role in developing education data management systems in Canada. The Ministry has a long history of data-based decision making and school boards that do not pay attention to data do so at their own peril. Nowhere has the Ministry paid more

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<sup>a</sup> See section 6.4 (p. 136).

attention to data than in the funding of education. However, it has also spent considerable efforts on data about student results - the data management issue that concerns us here.

Our analysis of the current system to manage these data was quite critical.<sup>a</sup> If the Board is going to implement any kind of self-evaluation framework, then it must completely revamp its data management system. This system must provide for the collection of all data relevant to organizational performance and capacity. It therefore becomes part of a larger system to monitor and evaluate the performance of the Board, its schools, continuing education centres and other organizational units.

During the course of this Review there were many questions we could not answer because we had no data. Moreover, we answered some questions, subject to major reserves regarding the reliability of the data we were using. However, it is important to underline the enormity of this task, one that will take several years to put in place. It needs to be planned carefully and incrementally, beginning with the data that are the most crucial and the easiest to collect. This task will require considerable capacity building, not only at the Board level, but at the school/centre level as well. In keeping with our earlier discussion of communication, merely telling schools they must do this does not even begin such a process; in fact, it would kill it. If the Board is serious about being able to evaluate its performance then it must make an equally serious investment in time and resources to make it happen.

### 12.3 Community Relations & External Linkages

Years ago, organizations were thought of as 'stand-alone' bodies, defined by boundaries from other organizations. In more recent years, we have come to see that these boundaries are more porous than impermeable, more open than closed, and that organizations must now be understood in relation to various outside bodies.

Many organizations find that they are unable to move toward their mission without the help and support of like-minded organizations. Many are forming new types of relationships (either formal or informal) with other organizations to support their desire to be more successful.<sup>209</sup>

Being connected has become a key strategy for improving the capacity and performance by extending the 'social capital' of the organization.<sup>b</sup> Nowhere has this been more true than in education. Talk of 'networks,' 'joint ventures' and 'partnerships' is now common in educational circles in Québec and elsewhere. This connectivity begins with the communities that the CSB is meant to serve, notably with the students and their parents.

Being 'well connected' is a phrase that usually suggests knowing important people - the better connected you are, the more important the people you know. For a school board the phrase ought to mean that it has strong links to its stakeholders and communities. Such connectivity requires visibility and communication - two attributes that appear to be lacking in the CSB.

We did not receive much input on this theme. In terms of community relations, numerous stakeholders did state that the Board needed to be more visible in the community, a topic we have talked about under Leadership. The Board needs to reach out to the communities to dispel the following image: THE LOCAL SCHOOL IS NOT OUR SCHOOL, IT BELONGS TO THE CSB; IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH US.

<sup>a</sup> See analysis of Educational Services, in section 10.2.4 (p. 240).

<sup>b</sup> 'Social capital' can be defined as networks of social relations that provide assets or access to assets, including human, financial or other resources; it differs from 'human capital,' which refers to the competencies, capacities and other attributes possessed by individuals.

We even heard from more than one source how the community's attempt in Mistissini to get more involved with the school was met, not by an open door at the Board office but by a lawyer's letter saying: the school is our business, not yours. Until that attitude changes, better community relations are a long way off. One external stakeholder summed up the issue saying: *The board is off track.*

***The board is off track***

*If you're trying to fix a community problem, why are you trying to fix it in the Boardroom. Go and see what the problem is. Understand what the problem is. The School Board has not sent in anyone into the schools to fix the problems. Everybody is down in Montréal or Québec or Ottawa or Val d'Or talking about the problem. But nobody really knows what the problem is.*

There are linkages between the Board and external agencies such as the CRA. We were told, for example, about the Leadership Summit involving leaders of the CRA, the CSB, the Cree Health Board and other major Cree entities. As discussed in chapter 7 of Part 2, this Summit was used to address the concerns raised by principals about the social problems in their communities.

***'Togetherness' - working together to make education work - doesn't exist and everything operates separately (Band Council representative).***

We had some input about a new framework for collaboration between the CRA Youth Department, the CSB, and others.

*To be honest, we didn't have a direct working relationship with them until about a year and a half ago. It's the same with other organizations. They, more or less, do their own thing and they don't have a working relationship with other organizations. Through my discussions with the people in the Health Board and the School Board, we found that we had something in common. That's when we discussed and agreed that we should pool our resources together and work for the common good of the Cree Nation that will benefit the school population. So that's what we're doing. We're still in the planning stages of developing the framework for governance for the partnership.*

However, we could not obtain any documentation and it is unclear to us what this collaboration will look like or what results it is trying to achieve.

Thirty years ago the JBNQA set in motion the creation of the CRA, the CSB and a range of other entities whose collective mandate was the social and economic development of the Cree Nation. Recent agreements with Ottawa and Québec have further contributed to this development potential. Education is one of the most important policy levers in such endeavours. In development work around the world, education is universally recognized as an essential building block. More than one external stakeholder spoke to us about the need for skilled human resources at every level - administrative, professional, trades, etc. Providing those resources is the business of the CSB and there is every reason for it to seek out collaborative relationships with the entities that need these resources to see how they can work together for a common cause.

Relations with the Ministry are an important aspect of the Board's external linkages. From the data we collected, we understand that such linkages operate at intermediate staff levels. For example, we know that the Coordinator of Instructional Services follows developments within the Ministry closely but we do not know the extent to which this involves contact with Ministry officials on an ongoing basis. We know that other coordinators, such as Material Services, are in frequent contact with Ministry officials because of the nature of their work. However, regular contacts at higher levels do not appear to be in place.

Establishing regular contacts between senior CSB officials and their counterparts in the Ministry and other school boards would be extremely beneficial. We know that the Director General has met with the Assistant Deputy Ministry for the Anglophone Community and we understand that an invitation was extended for him to participate in the regular meetings of the directors general of Anglophone school boards. We hope that this invitation was accepted and acted upon.

Although many of the challenges facing the CSB are unique, many have been faced by school boards elsewhere. They have developed ways and means to address issues that could be helpful to the CSB, even if many of them need to be adapted because of local contexts. These boards have also developed valuable contacts with outside resources and many of them have been very enterprising in cultivating various networks with policy makers, practitioners and researchers in Canada and elsewhere.

Developing such contacts and networks takes time and effort and, above all, personal involvement. These networks operate on the basis of personal relationships that take years to cultivate. People help other people but they do so not because of any bureaucratic obligation but because they want to. Most administrators to whom we spoke complained of a lack of time to do their job, and therefore, finding the time to invest in the development of these contacts and networks may seem unrealistic. However, if the Board were to drastically reduce the amount of time spent in meetings and travel to and from meetings, especially those held outside the Board territory, then there would be plenty of time available.

## 12.4 Organizational Culture

In this section we move from the concrete to the abstract. We define organizational culture as the shared assumptions, values and beliefs of members of the organization. The literature on managing change places considerable emphasis at making changes in the *culture* of the organization - the way organizational members see the world. It “runs like an invisible thread throughout the entire subject of capacity building”<sup>210</sup> (see text box).<sup>211</sup>

“The failure rate of most planned organizational change initiatives is dramatic. What is most interesting about these failures, however, is the reported reasons for their lack of success [notably] a neglect of the organization’s culture.”

As alluded to above, organizational culture is intangible and often elusive. It is not surprising, therefore, that when we asked stakeholders about the culture of the CSB, some were not sure how to respond. However, we did gain some interesting insights from input received, as well as our own observations of the CSB ‘at work.’ The following provides the range of comments we received from members of the Management Group on the organizational culture of the Board:

*Q: When you talk about some organizations - you know, that people are hard working, the culture of the organization is ‘get things done’ and other organizations are more laissez-faire. Some are warm, some are cold, some are driven - can you make any comments about the organization or the culture in that sense?*

*A: Laissez-faire.*

*Q: In the culture of this School Board, what really matters?*

*A: What is important in our School Board is Finance and Administration. Educational services have always been a sort of a side thing. It’s administration driving pedagogy and telling the pedagogical personnel of the Board what to do.*

*Q: Does the organizational culture of the CSB support the achievement of high levels of performance*

*A: No. There's very little assessment and evaluation of management and schools' performance. People need to be accountable. That's the bottom line. I mean throughout the organization from a teacher to the principal, from a janitor all the way to the DG.*

*A: My answer bluntly, to the question, is no! Obviously. The major roadblock is related to unproductive staff who are not monitored or disciplined by their boss. Another major problem is that some managers are too comfortable in their position and enjoy their paycheque more than their job. As long as there is no change in the tolerance of unproductive Cree managers, it is a waste of effort to believe that the structure, even renewed, will fix anything. It's completely unrealistic.*

*Q: Do you think the culture of the School Board reflects its purpose and mission?*

*A: No. I think there's a lot of planning and a lack of action. There are committees and meetings right, left and centre. I can't say that we're not being productive, but we're not being as productive as we could be if there were not that many meetings and that much money spent on them.*

*A: No. People's behaviours sometimes reflect 'its not my problem' attitude. All in all we need to go back to focusing on our purpose and mission and that is to ensure the success of students.*

It is a very negative image of CSB culture that emerges from these comments. What is even more striking, however, is that while some members of the Management Group had nothing to say about organizational culture, not one had a positive word to say about it.

Although school stakeholders did not seem to relate to the notion of organizational culture, possibly because we did not explain it very well, they did have a clear sense of what matters in the CSB. It was obvious from what people said that they do not believe the Board truly believes in the slogan, 'Students first.' To schools, the real slogan should be 'Finance first.' As one of the Board administrators cited above said, they perceive the culture of the CSB as one where administration drives pedagogy, whereas it should be the other way around.

Organizations talk a good deal about change - 'talk' being the operative word. 'Walking the talk' is another story. One reason that making real change happen is so difficult is that organizations become preoccupied with the 'outside' - its structural shell - while ignoring the 'inside' - its culture. Michael Fullan, one of Canada's leading authorities on educational change puts it this way:

Structure does make a difference, but it is not the main point in achieving success. Transforming the culture - changing the way we do things around here - is the main point. I call this *reculturing*. ... Furthermore, it is a particular kind of reculturing for which we strive: one that activates and deepens moral purpose through collaborative work cultures that respect differences and constantly build and test knowledge against measurable results....<sup>212</sup>

When Fullan talks about moral purpose, he reminds us that education is about making a difference in the lives of students. The more disadvantaged the students, the more that difference can mean. The CSB was created to make that difference happen. Thirty years ago when the JBNQA was negotiated, the leaders of the Cree Nation said: Our children deserve the same educational opportunities that other children receive. It is their birthright and we want a school system that will provide those opportunities to them.

The dismal student results presented in chapter 3 of Part 2 are proof positive that the promise that the creation of the CSB signalled has not been honoured. From what stakeholders have told us and what we ourselves have observed, the current organizational culture of the Board is one of the main stumbling blocks, if not *the* stumbling block, to honouring that promise. As we see it, the following summarizes the key points about the Board's current organizational culture that are impeding positive change:

- The CSB has a weak sense of moral purpose; it has become disconnected from its core values; it needs to realign its moral compass.
- In the CSB, administration is more highly valued than pedagogy and employment for adults more highly valued than education for students, who come last, not first.
- There is almost no accountability for organizational performance or results, from the top to the bottom of the organization and, what is worse, no consequences for poor performance.
- Too much time and resources are wasted in meetings and travel, especially outside the territory of the Board, resulting in much talk, little action.
- There is virtually no follow-up, no attempt to ensure that what has been begun will be completed; plans are made and started but then ....

The organizational culture of the CSB is a long way from the culture of a collaborative learning community. Reculturing the CSB, to use Fullan's expression, will represent the greatest challenge to the Board leadership in finding the road ahead. Those with the responsibility for leading the change process will meet resistance from those who have a vested interest in preserving the status quo. Many stakeholders are sceptical that this will happen, that the hard decisions will not be made, that leaders will not truly challenge people to change. They told us they will not; it is not the Cree way. We beg to differ. Neglecting or refusing to take positive steps to change may have been the CSB way but it is not the Cree way. One wise stakeholder with whom we spoke talked about how the Board had lost its way, its Cree way, a way where people were close to Cree values and could rely on each other when times were hard. That is the Cree way and that is the culture that will enable the Board to move forward and make 'Students first' a reality, not a slogan.

**Changing the culture of the CSB will represent the greatest challenge to the Board leadership in finding the road ahead.**

## 12.5 Key Findings, Conclusions & Recommendations

Returning to the performance standard stated at the beginning of this section, we must now ask to what extent the data that we have collected and analyzed permit us to determine whether School Board support for learning meets the stated standards:

- The School Board provides strategic direction to its schools, centres and post-secondary education offices, through leadership and an integrated management framework for the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the Board and its schools.
- The School Board actively pursues and maintains appropriate linkages with external service agencies and other bodies to support its schools, centres and communities.
- The organizational culture of the School Board reflects the values and purpose of its mission and supports the achievement of high levels of performance.

We provided a brief overview of the structures for the governance and management of the CSB but, in keeping with our revised mandate, we did not attempt to provide any analysis of these structures. However, from the feedback of stakeholders that we did report, it is obvious that many of them are very critical of these structures. They find that the Board is top-heavy and unresponsive to school and community needs. Rather than seeing itself as the base of a pyramid supporting schools, as we have suggested it should be, the Board seems to see itself at the apex of the pyramid, with schools at the bottom.

We have not explored Board systems for decision-making, another important issue left to the Organizational Review. However, we did talk about communication, a core system in any organization. In the CSB, even basic communication is lacking. Schools lack the capacity to deal with the enormous challenges they face. School principals do what any sensible administrator would do - they call the Board for help. Unfortunately, when they do, all they get is a recording: 'No one can take your call, please leave a message.' They do but no one calls back.

We have noted that these and other basic communication issues need to be addressed, notably through the expanded use of technology, including video-conferencing, to drastically cut down on the horrific amount of resources that are wasted on meetings and travel. The Board must also invest time and energy in developing a collaborative dialogue among all members of the CSB community. Such a dialogue is an essential component in building a learning community, which we have argued is the direction that the Board needs to take.

The leadership of the CSB is invisible in the communities. Many stakeholders hope that the Organizational and Education Reviews signal a change in the attitude of the Board leadership but they are now in a 'wait-and-see' mode. As will be presented in **Part 5, From Findings to Action**, the first test of the Board leadership in this regard will be the presentation of this report to the communities. They will be waiting to see who comes and what the Board is actually doing to follow up on the two Reviews.

Leadership, we have argued, is not confined to a single person at the top of an organization. Leadership needs to come from a variety of interconnected sources working together toward a common goal. Furthermore, these leaders must come from all levels of the organization, not just the top. There are leaders in the communities, in the ranks of teachers, and the student body. What better opportunity to develop the leaders of tomorrow than the participation of students as leaders in the change process. After all, it is their future that the Board is trying to ensure.

Although the Board has had many plans over the years, it has a poor track record in planning. It needs to develop the capacity to set long, medium and short term results that are linked to each other in a coherent fashion. Then it needs the capacity to develop strategic and operational plans to achieve these results. These plans must dovetail with planning at the school level or else the disconnectedness that we have observed between the Board and its schools will simply continue.

Monitoring and evaluation are essential components of the overall framework for managing an organization. A high-performing organization not only needs to know where it is going and how it intends to get there, it needs to know how it is progressing and whether or not its journey has been successful. Monitoring and evaluating performance require data, and that requires an efficient data management system, something the Board does not have at the present time.

We have discussed the importance of community relations and external linkages to the Board. In general, community relations are weak, a sign of the poor communication and leadership discussed above. We have seen some examples of collaboration with external agencies in the region but we were not able to determine the extent of these linkages. This is an area that needs to be further explored. We also mentioned the importance of connections to the wider educational system, connections that appear to be underdeveloped at the present time. We urge the Board to take measures to remedy this situation. Just as schools lack capacity and must look to the Board for support, the Board lacks capacity and must look outside for support.

In the final section of our analysis of School Board support we attempted to deal with the elusive notion of organizational culture. We found that it was not a culture that was connected to the Board's mission, nor was it conducive to high levels of performance. As a result this culture does not support student success. We found that the present culture of the Board is characterized by a weak sense of moral purpose, an inverted sense of values where students come last, an utter lack of any accountability, time and resources spent in meetings and travel rather than productive work, and a virtual absence of any follow-up.

Based on this analysis, we offer the following recommendations:

**R106** THAT, based on the findings of this Review but more particularly, the Organizational Review, the Board take immediate steps to streamline its top-heavy administration in ways that will make it more responsive to the needs of schools and communities.

**R107** THAT the Board immediately take steps to move toward the integrated management of Board-level support for educational service delivery to youth and adults in schools, centres and PSSS offices.

**R108** THAT the Board begin a long-term process to improve communication, beginning with the most basic forms, including an expanded use of technology such as video-conferencing, and extend to the creation of a collaborative dialogue among all members of the CSB community.

**R109** THAT the Board begin a long-term process to develop appropriate forms of shared leadership with both the capacity to guide change and the wisdom to understand which elements should be changed and which ones should be preserved.

**R110** THAT the Board begin a long-term process to develop appropriate forms of strategic and operational planning to chart its course, ensuring the coherence between Board-level and school-level planning processes.

**R111** THAT the Board begin a long-term process to develop a framework for the monitoring and self-evaluation of its organizational performance and capacity, ensuring the coherence between Board-level and school-level monitoring and evaluation processes.

**R112** THAT the Board, in collaboration with schools and community leaders, begin to rebuild positive relations with its communities, with a view to strengthening the ties between school and community and between them and the Board.

**R113** THAT the Board, in collaboration with various external agencies in the region and beyond, develop a long-term strategy to build effective partnerships, networks and other linkages to develop the Board's capacity to provide high quality services to its students and contribute to the development of the region as a whole.

**R114** THAT the Board undertake to deal with the negative, even destructive, elements of its present organizational culture, namely its weak sense of moral purpose, an inverted sense of values where students come last, an utter lack of any accountability, time and resources spent in meetings and travel rather than productive work, and a virtual absence of any follow-up.

**R115** THAT the Board begin a long-term process to develop a positive organizational culture that is reflective of and supportive of its mission and purpose, accountable for its performance and provides the basis for the development of a collaborative learning community.

## NOTES TO PART 4

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Committee, n.d.  
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193 CSB, Educational Services, 2003.  
194 See also, CSB, 2005.  
195 Teacher Training Program, 2008.  
196 Mianscum, 1999, p. 24.  
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199 See, e.g., Smith & Foster, 2003.  
200 Stoll, 1999, p. 522.  
201 MEQ, DGFE, 2004.  
202 Hopkins, Couture & Moore, 2001.  
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