PART 5: FROM FINDINGS TO ACTION

Part 5 is intended to draw the various strands of the report together.[a] It contains three chapters:

- Chapter 13 provides a consolidated list of recommendations from Parts 1, 2, 3 and 4.

- Chapter 14 contains reflections and lessons learned from the Review from three perspectives:

  - the evaluation team;
  - the insiders on the evaluation team; and
  - all stakeholders of the CSB.

- The presentation of the perspectives of stakeholders fulfills a promise made at the outset of the Review to ensure that their voices would be heard in our final report.

- The final chapter looks forward to the 'road ahead,' outlining the first steps toward realizing the intended outcome of this Review - improved service delivery for students of the CSB - and its ultimate impact - greater student success.

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[a]   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/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 this Part.

13.0   CONSOLIDATED LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a consolidated list of the **115 recommendations** we have made for all performance themes covered by the Review:

- 6 recommendations on context and mission (R1 to R6);
- 57 recommendations on youth education (R7 to R63);
- 17 recommendations on adult education (R64 to R80); and
- 35 recommendations on Board support for learning (R81 to R115).

However, anyone who truly wishes to understand how we arrived at these recommendations, must look at the analysis provided in the first four parts of our report. Various sections and chapters in Parts 1, 2, 3 and 4 contained our analysis of a particular performance theme. At the end of each section, we presented a summary of key findings and conclusions, followed by the recommendations for that theme. In addition, the *Highlights* document provides readers with a summary of these findings, conclusions and recommendations. As stated in Part 1, the data collected during the Review provided the best 'evidence' we were able to uncover, given the constraints and limitations of this Review, which are also described in Appendix B. As previously noted, an evaluation rarely produces *absolute proof* of its assertions but the evidence must be *credible* and *sufficient* if the results of the evaluation are to be deemed trustworthy.

One way that an evaluation demonstrates its trustworthiness is to be clear and transparent in the presentation of the 'chain of

| Data | ➜ | Findings | ➜ | Conclusions | ➜ | Recommendations |
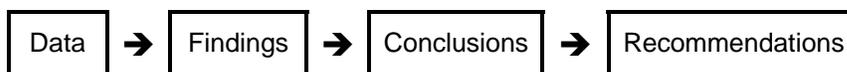
evidence' that links the data to the findings, conclusions and recommendations contained in the report. We have tried to do this in the detailed presentation of our analysis in Parts 1, 2, 3 and 4, and the provision of supplementary material in various appendices.

13.1   Context & Mission

Context	R1	**THAT**, pending the adoption of a new *Cree Education Act* (recommendation 2), the Board decide on the extent to which current public education legislation should apply to the CSB and request the government of Québec to enact this decision.
	R2	**THAT** the Board take appropriate measures to follow through on its earlier resolutions with a view to drafting a new *Cree Education Act* and regulations.

Mission	R3	**THAT** the Board reaffirm its commitment to provide its students with a quality education grounded in Cree values, language and culture that will prepare them for further study or employment in both the Cree Nation and the wider society.
	R4	**THAT** the Board determine an appropriate process to engage stakeholders in a review and revitalization of its mission, explicitly including adult and post-secondary, as well as youth education.
	R5	**THAT** this process be closely linked to other improvement planning so that stakeholders can see how these other initiatives regarding service delivery will support the mission.
	R6	**THAT** the revised mission include a statement of values, guiding principles and purpose, as well as the intended results for each major sector of activities.

13.2   Educating Youth in the CSB

Student Results		
Student Engagement	**R7**	**THAT** the Board use available data from other schools in Québec to identify suitable ***benchmarks*** for student attendance, perseverance in school and engagement in learning.
	R8	**THAT** the Board set appropriate ***standards*** for student attendance, perseverance in school and engagement in learning, applicable to all schools in the CSB.
	R9	**THAT** each school, in collaboration of the Board, set appropriate ***targets*** for student attendance, perseverance in school and engagement in learning.
	R10	**THAT** the ***capacity*** to achieve the standards and targets set for student attendance, perseverance in school and engagement in learning (recommendations 8 & 9) be developed in accordance with other recommendations of this report.
Curricular Learning	**R11**	**THAT**, following consultation of stakeholders in each community, standards be set for the mastery of speaking, reading and writing Cree, as well as for learning Cree culture, at every grade level of instruction, applicable to all schools in the CSB, while providing for progressive learning outcomes at each of these grade levels.
	R12	**THAT** the standards for student learning in all other subjects be based on the Québec Education Program (QEP), including any locally modified programs that meet Ministry standards.
	R13	**THAT** recommendations 11 and 12 be pursued in accordance with recommendation 33 (progressive implementation of new curricular model).
	R14	**THAT** the means required to effect recommendations 11 to 13, including enhanced performance and capacity of schools and the Board offices, be developed in accordance with other recommendations of this report.
Social & Personal Learning	**R15**	**THAT**, following consultation of stakeholders in each community, standards be set for the social and personal learning of students at every grade and level of instruction, as part of the cross-curricular competencies envisaged by the QEP.
	R16	**THAT** the means required to effect recommendation 15, including enhanced performance and capacity of schools and the Board offices, be developed in accordance with other recommendations of this report.

Classroom Instruction		
Teaching	**R17**	**THAT** the Board undertake a more thorough and fine-grained analysis of classroom teaching by regular and substitute teachers in all classes of each of the nine schools, including observation in classes, feedback from students, parents, teachers and other staff, and the examination of relevant documents and records.
	R18	**THAT** a report of the findings be communicated to stakeholders and used to draft a proposed set of standards for teaching in the CSB, including guidelines for implementation and application, that will then be used to consult stakeholders.
	R19	**THAT**, taking into account the feedback from this consultation, the Board adopt a set of standards for teaching in the CSB, including those applicable to substitute teachers, that shall be communicated to teachers and other stakeholders.
	R20	**THAT** the application of the teaching standards adopted by virtue of recommendation 19 be effected in conjunction with other recommendations of this report related to the hiring, support and supervision of teachers.
Instructional Resources	**R21**	**THAT** the Board undertake to review the legal and other qualifications of all teachers, including substitutes, and take appropriate action to ensure that instruction is being provided by appropriately qualified teachers, in accordance with recommendation 19 regarding the standards of teaching.
	R22	**THAT** the Board, in collaboration with school administrators, teachers and others, undertake a thorough needs assessment of classrooms and other instructional facilities, notably libraries and media resource centres, laboratories and workshops for science and technology, and computer laboratories, with a view to developing a comprehensive improvement plan.
	R23	**THAT** the Board, in collaboration with school administrators, teachers and others, complete a needs assessment of the instructional resources required to meet the needs of students in different programs at each level and language of instruction.
	R24	**THAT** the means required to effect recommendations 21 to 23, including enhanced performance and capacity of schools and the Board offices, be developed in accordance with other recommendations of this report.

Classroom Instruction		
Curriculum	**R25**	**THAT** the Board adopt the guiding principles outlined in recommendations 26 to 32 for the purpose of consulting stakeholders on the adoption of a new curricular model for elementary and secondary education to be applied <u>in all schools of the CSB</u>.
	R26	**THAT**, following consultation (recommendation 25), the Board draft a framework for the design and implementation of this new curricular model, including a realistic timeline and predetermined indicators of success, and communicate it to stakeholders, including the Ministry.
	R27	**THAT**, in keeping with recommendation 11, the new curricular model provide for the teaching of Cree from kindergarten to secondary V, including the development of a comprehensive curriculum that provides for progressive learning outcomes at each grade, the summation of which meet the expectations of stakeholders for the mastery of speaking, reading and writing Cree.
	R28	**THAT**, in keeping with recommendation 11 and taking into account extra-curricular means to promote Cree culture, the new curricular model provide for the teaching of Cree culture from kindergarten to secondary V, by an appropriate combination of specific courses and cross-curricular learning embedded in other course subjects.
	R29	**THAT**, in keeping with recommendation 12, the new curricular model provide for the teaching of all compulsory and elective subjects at the elementary and secondary levels based on the *Basic School Regulation*, the QEP and the certification requirements of the Ministry.
	R30	**THAT**, where appropriate, the curricular offerings envisaged by recommendation 29 include local programs of study, provided they meet Ministry standards.
	R31	**THAT** the new curricular model provide for diversified paths to learning at the secondary level, including vocational education, to be developed with the collaboration of the youth and adult education sectors of the Board.
	R32	**THAT**, except for the teaching of Cree language and Cree culture as a separate subject, the new curricular model provide for English or French as the language of instruction at a given level of instruction, in accordance with the wishes of each community as expressed by a resolution of the general assembly of parents, it being understood that a school may only offer instruction in both languages if numbers so warrant.
	R33	**THAT** the new curricular model provide for progressive implementation beginning at kindergarten and moving forward one year at a time and a <u>transitional regime</u> for students currently enrolled in schools of the Board.
	R34	**THAT** the means required to effect recommendations 25 to 33, including enhanced performance and capacity of schools and the Board offices, be developed in accordance with other recommendations of this report.

Complementary Services	
Services for All Students	**R35** **THAT** the Board, in collaboration with school administrators, teachers and others, undertake a thorough assessment of the needs of students for complementary services, determine what must be done beyond the current level of service delivery to meet these needs and implement an action plan to do so.
	R36 **THAT** the Board, in collaboration with school administrators, teachers and others, undertake a thorough assessment of the present extra-curricular offerings in schools with a view to enhancing this important support for student engagement.
Services for Students with Special Needs	**R37** **THAT** the Board, in collaboration with school administrators, special education staff, teachers and others, draw up an accurate portrait of students with special needs enrolled in its schools and any school-age children or youth with special needs in its communities who are not currently in school.
	R38 **THAT** the Board, in collaboration with school administrators, special education staff, teachers and others, undertake a thorough assessment of the needs of the students and other children and youth referred to in recommendation 37, determine what must be done beyond the current level of service delivery to meet these needs and implement an action plan to do so.

School Support for Learning	
School Culture & Organization	**R39** **THAT** school administrators receive appropriate support to enhance their capacity to improve the culture of their school and enhance the breadth and depth of opportunities to learn through innovative models of school organization, within the framework of school organization approved by the Board in accordance with recommendation 2.
School Leadership & Planning	**R40** **THAT** the ambiguity regarding the leadership and administration of the school be resolved by making the principal the single point of accountability for the school, in accordance with recommendations 41, 42 and 43.
	R41 **THAT** the position of CEA, <u>as presently provided for</u>, be eliminated and a new position created or these functions redistributed in accordance with recommendation 42.
	R42 **THAT**, taking into account the analysis provided by the Organizational Review, as well as recommendation 40 of this report, the Board develop a proposal for restructuring the administration of schools for implementation for 2009-10.
	R43 **THAT** the implementation of recommendation 42 be subject to the development of the capacity of principals, vice-principals and other members of the school administration to assume the roles assigned to them.
	R44 **THAT** the Board halt the LEPs currently being implemented for 2008-09 and beyond and replace them with a short-term plan for the school's involvement in the implementation of the recommendations of this Review and subsequently by a new local planning process, to be developed in accordance with recommendation 110 (strategic planning) of this report.
	R45 **THAT** the implementation of recommendation 44 be supported by appropriate forms of capacity development in accordance with other recommendations of this report.

School Support for Learning	
Allocation & Management of Resources	**R46** **THAT**, subject to available resources, the school budget be based on the organization of instruction in the school and the school's operational and strategic plan.
	R47 **THAT**, subject to recommendations 40-42 (restructuring of school administration) and Board guidelines on financial management, appropriate roles be assigned to various members of the school administration for the effective and efficient management of the school's financial resources.
	R48 **THAT**, subject to recommendation 100 (Board guidelines re hiring) and following consultation of parents, streamlined procedures for the hiring of teachers and other school staff be developed and implemented.
	R49 **THAT** the supervision of teaching be treated as a priority responsibility of school administrators, to be exercised in accordance with Board guidelines on teacher supervision.
	R50 **THAT**, in accordance with Board guidelines on personnel management, school administrators be provided with appropriate direction and support to lead and manage all school staff in accordance with applicable collective agreements and regulations.
	R51 **THAT**, in accordance with Board guidelines on professional improvement, the school administration, in collaboration with school staff, develop and implement a comprehensive professional improvement plan for all school staff in accordance with applicable collective agreements and regulations.
	R52 **THAT**, in accordance with recommendation 104 (Board guidelines on purchasing), streamlined procedures for the purchasing of materials and equipment, which recognize the appropriate roles for teachers and the school administration in this regard, be developed and implemented.
	R53 **THAT**, subject to available resources and Board guidelines on maintenance and material resources, the necessary steps be taken to maintain, repair, renovate and improve school facilities and equipment, as well as the residences of school staff.
Monitoring & Evaluation	**R54** **THAT**, in keeping with recommendation 111 (Board-wide evaluation), all schools, with appropriate support from the Board, fully participate in a process to develop and implement a framework for self-evaluation of school performance.

Home & Community Support for Learning	
Parental & Community Involvement	**R55** **THAT** the Board, subject to recommendation 61 (building community links) and in collaboration with the principal and chairperson of each school committee, develop a framework for the consultation of stakeholders in each community on parental participation in student learning and school life.
	R56 **THAT** the principal and chairperson of each school committee, in collaboration with school staff and the School Committee, adapt the framework referred to in recommendation 55 and implement a process to consult stakeholders on parental participation in student learning and school life.
	R57 **THAT**, subject to recommendation 61 (building community links), the results of this consultation (recommendation 56) be used to formulate and implement a community action plan in support of enhanced parental participation.
	R58 **THAT** the Board review the criteria for membership in the School Committee with a view to including grandparents and others with custodial responsibility for students enrolled in CSB schools and, following consultation of stakeholders, amend its General By-Law accordingly.
	R59 **THAT** the Board, in collaboration with the principal and chairperson of each school committee, review the duties and responsibilities of the School Committee with a view to eliminating the mandate to study individual complaints (Art. 8.21(f)) and sharpening the focus of the Committee purpose and role to support the school and its community and, following consultation of stakeholders, amend its General By-Law accordingly.
	R60 **THAT** the Board, in collaboration with the principal and chairperson of each school committee, develop a framework for building the capacity of school committees to improve their performance, including enhanced communication and collaboration among the nine Committees and the Board.
School Linkages to Outside Bodies	**R61** **THAT** the Board, in collaboration with the principal and chairperson of each school committee, as well as appropriate regional entities, develop a framework for the building of linkages between school and community for their mutual benefit.
	R62 **THAT** the principal and chairperson of each school committee, in collaboration with school staff and the School Committee, adapt the framework referred to in recommendation 61 and implement a process to consult stakeholders on school-community collaboration.
	R63 **THAT** the results of this consultation (recommendation 62) be used to formulate and implement a community action plan in support of enhanced school-community collaboration.

13.3   Educating Adults in the CSB

Continuing Education		
Student Results	R64	**THAT** the Board undertake a thorough analysis of adult student results in relation to student engagement; curricular learning; and employment.
	R65	**THAT** the findings of the study referred to in recommendation 64, as well as the input arising from other recommendations of this report, be used to develop and implement an action plan to build the capacity and performance of adult education centres to achieve high levels of student results.
Training & Other Services	R66	**THAT** the Board thoroughly review current teaching practice in every one of its centres with a view to determining whether students are receiving the level of instructional services they need.
	R67	**THAT** the Board investigate the use of distance education as an alternative means for delivering some continuing education courses.
	R68	**THAT** the Board, in collaboration with centre consultants, teachers and others, undertake a thorough needs assessment of both instructional and residential facilities for continuing education, with a view to developing a comprehensive improvement plan.
	R69	**THAT** the Board, in collaboration with centre consultants, teachers and others, complete a needs assessment of the instructional resources required to meet the needs of students in different upgrading and vocational programs.
	R70	**THAT** the Board, in collaboration with centre consultants, teachers and others, undertake a thorough needs assessment of student services, determine what must be done beyond the current level of service delivery to meet these needs, and implement an action plan to do so.
	R71	**THAT** the Board develop and implement an action plan to build the capacity and performance of adult education centres to deliver quality services to their students.

Continuing Education	
Centre Support for Learning	**R72** **THAT** the Board clarify the status of the nine continuing education centres and, subject to any analysis provided by the Organizational Review, recognize the role played by consultants by reclassifying them as centre directors.
	R73 **THAT**, in accordance with recommendations 90 and 91 (Continuing Education) and any analysis provided by the Organizational Review, the Board undertake a detailed review of the operation of continuing education centres, with a view to developing and implementing an appropriate plan of action for the planning, management and evaluation of services in these centres.
	R74 **THAT** the Board review the composition and mandate off the LCEC and, in collaboration with centre and community leaders, help support the development of centre-community collaboration that the LCEC was meant to foster.
	R75 **THAT**, subject to any analysis provided by the Organizational Review, the Board recognize the role played by the consultant of the SRVTC by reclassifying this position as a centre deputy director.
	R76 **THAT**, in accordance with recommendations 90 and 91 (Continuing Education) and any analysis provided by the Organizational Review, the Board undertake a detailed review of the operation of the SRVTC, with a view to developing and implementing an appropriate plan of action for the planning, management and evaluation of services in this centre.
	R77 **THAT** the SRVTC assume a leadership role for the promotion of vocational education in the CSB.
	R78 **THAT** the Board develop and implement an action plan to build the capacity and performance of adult education centres to plan, manage and evaluate the services they provide.

Post-Secondary Educational Services	
Student Results	**R79** **THAT** the Board undertake a thorough analysis of post-secondary student results in relation to access to and success from post-secondary education, including extensive feedback from current and former students.
Student Services	**R80** **THAT** the Board undertake a thorough analysis of post-secondary student services in relation to financial support, counselling and other services, including extensive feedback from current and former students.

13.4 Board Support for Learning

Educational Service Delivery for Youth & Adults	
Office of the Supervisor of Schools	**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.
Educational Services	**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.
Continuing Education	**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.

	Educational Service Delivery for Youth & Adults
Post-Secondary Education Office	**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.

	Administrative Services
	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.

Governance & General Administration
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.

14.0   REFLECTIONS & LESSONS LEARNED

This chapter takes the discussion to the next level by considering three broad issues covered by this Review:

- the values, vision and purpose of the CSB;
- the achievement of intended results for youth and adults; and
- the operational performance and capacity of the Board.

The title of this chapter speaks of 'reflections' rather than 'conclusions' to emphasize that this discussion is more about what comes next than what has come before. Thus, the 'lessons learned' are meant to be a springboard for the leadership of the CSB to engage in a constructive dialogue about what this Review has taught us about the Board.

An evaluation should help the Board to practise **organizational learning**: the process by which organizations improve their performance through informed reflection and dialogue.

| Purpose | ➔ | Ways & Means | ➔ | Results |
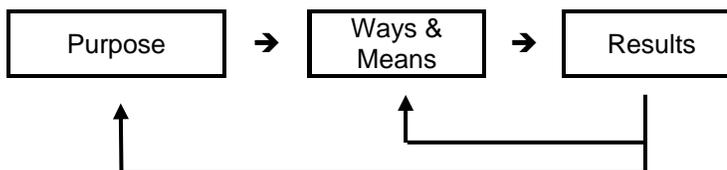
When an organization only questions *how* it is doing, it is engaged in 'single-loop' learning but when it asks *why*, it is engaged in 'double-loop' learning. Thus, as illustrated above, the first loop provides feedback on the ways and means used to achieve a desire result, while the second loop provides feedback on the purpose or rationale of the intended results.

This chapter attempts to support the second approach, double-loop learning, in the belief that if one neglects to keep asking why, one may expend considerable resources and time becoming effective and efficient in doing the wrong thing. (Hence the old adage that management is about doing a thing right while leadership is about doing the right thing.)

Organizational learning is an essential characteristic of a learning community:

> The metaphor of the learning community assumes, first, that schools are expected to facilitate the learning of all individuals, and, second, that educators are ideally positioned to address fundamental issues and concerns in relation to learning.[213]

Organizational learning does not happen spontaneously or easily; "like self-evaluation, it needs to be *built in*, not *bolted on*."[214] This explains in part why some past efforts to introduce this notion to the CSB were less successful than some people expected. Engaging in double-loop learning represents a change in organizational culture. 'First-order' changes, such as revised structures, affect the outside of an organization and are relatively easy to make. 'Second-order' changes, such as adopting organizational learning as a way of doing business, affect the inside and are the most difficult to make.

The following offers a beginning to making such second-order changes, a chance to think about and talk about what the leadership of the CSB has learned from this Review and how this learning will help define its future direction.

14.1   A Team Perspective

Values, Vision & Purpose

After exploring the main features of the Board's contextual landscape, Part 1 of this report focused on the Board's mission.

The values of any organization should provide guidance when considering various options. In an organization like the CSB, Cree values provide these guiding **beacons**. As stated several years ago by then

> A CSB mission based on Cree values and the 'best interests' of its students

Grand Chief Ted Moses: "If I had to put a name to those principles and those values which define the Cree character and which are at the core of our worldview I would say they are as follows: 1) the importance of truthfulness, 2) respect, 3) caring and 4) sharing...."

Dr. Moses went on to say: "The worth of Cree values and principles is not limited only to the pursuit of a traditional way of life. Being a genuine Cree is not just being a hunter and trapper. You can be a proud and genuine Cree and also be a teacher, a doctor or a judge."[215]

These two short passages capture several notions that we have tried to develop in this report.

- The importance of values and purpose: Cree values should be 'front and centre' in any discussion about options for renewal. When someone suggests taking a particular path, the first question that should spring to mind is: How does this fit with our Cree values?

- Values underscore vision and purpose: where we want to go and why. Vision and purpose are about ends - the destination, not to be confused with means - the journey.

- Leaders are expected to be able to tell the difference between means and ends and help others understand such differences, especially when some stakeholders may be trying to associate an end that everyone supports with a particular means that they prefer.

The most obvious example where such leadership will be required in charting a new course for the Board is in regard to the language of instruction. As we discussed in section 4.3.3 in Part 2, some stakeholders believe that if the Board only got rid of CLIP, all would be well; others view CLIP and the preservation of the Cree language as one and the same. In our view, both are wrong. Although we have recommended that English or French become the language of instruction from kindergarten to secondary V, we have emphasized that unless many other changes occur, students will continue to fail. We have also stressed that regardless of means, the preservation and promotion of the Cree language remains an essential end.

The end, according to the Board's mission, is two-fold: to preserve and promote Cree values, language and culture, while offering students a quality education that will provide them with a range of opportunities in post-secondary education, employment and their future lives, both inside and beyond the territory of the Cree Nation.

This Review has concluded that the current level of educational services offered by the Board does not serve either aspect of this dual mission. Like the majority of stakeholders, we believe that the problem resides not in the mission itself but in the delivery of services. However, some stakeholders believe the Board's statement of dual-purpose is 'Mission Impossible.'

The first task for the Board, therefore, is to engage stakeholders in a *meaningful* dialogue about its current and future mission, asking everyone to consider the values, vision and purpose that

the Board should pursue. Once these are firmly fixed, then, and only then, can the discussion turn to the most appropriate means to accomplish this mission.

Achievement of Results

Individual schools and centres and the School Board as a whole contribute to their communities in many ways but they have only one overriding purpose: to help students receive and benefit from the education to which they are entitled. This Review set out to determine what results were being achieved in relation to three types of student learning: student engagement; curricular learning; and social and personal learning.

In any context, student engagement can be thought of as both a result of and a condition for curricular learning. In order to learn, students must attend school, persevere through elementary and secondary school studies and be actively engaged in their personal learning, ideally becoming a life-long learner. Curricular learning, as the expression implies, is focused on the successful completion of whatever compulsory and elective courses and programs are offered. Social and personal learning, while often taken for granted, covers a range of knowledge, skills and behaviours that prepare students for life. In the CSB context, student learning is grounded in the values, vision and purpose discussed in the previous section.

As the summary of our findings revealed (see **Highlights** document), for the most part, the results for all three types of learning in the CSB are dismal. Student engagement is very problematic. Manifested in low rates of attendance and perseverance, this problem begins at home, where,

> Staying focused on student results means judging all actions taken or proposed by how they affect or are likely to affect these results.

for many students, there is little support for education. In terms of curricular learning, no amount of 'spin' can change the fact that only a very small percentage of students succeed in obtaining a secondary school diploma and most of these students are unable, without make-up courses and other assistance, to successfully undertake and complete post-secondary studies. The small amount of data we did manage to collect on social and personal learning suggests that this third main result is lacking as well.

The CSB has a slogan on some of its posters - **Students first** - but many people have told us that the Board seems more interested in employment for Cree adults than learning for Cree children. Students in the CSB will never achieve success until they truly come first in the actions taken by all members of the CSB school community, beginning in early childhood.

We have stated in this report that a secondary school diploma may be an immediate result from the successful completion of secondary V, but it is in fact a cumulative result of thirteen years of schooling, beginning in four-year old kindergarten. Decades of educational research have shown the importance of prevention and early intervention with young children. That is why experienced educational administrators know that the best teachers should be assigned to the early grades. In the CSB, the basic qualification for teachers in these grades is fluency in Cree.

Whatever the theory behind CLIP might be, the reality is that student results are not a primary concern. Year after year, students exit CLIP without the knowledge and skills that would enable them to succeed in school, in either Cree or a second language. In the remaining elementary grades students fall farther and farther behind. Ensuring that students achieve the results foreseen by the Québec Education Program [QEP] does not seem to be a priority. Many people in the system have low expectations for students and, as research has shown, students will 'live down' to low levels of achievement when they see that is what is expected of them.

Students will never succeed based on wishful thinking or by allowing them to write watered-down exams. They will succeed when everyone *truly* believes in them and takes the steps to make that belief a reality.

Operational Performance

In this Review, we defined organizational performance, first in terms of results – what the Board *succeeds* in accomplishing, and second, in terms of operations – what the Board *does* in order to promote success. This definition is grounded, therefore, in the focus of the previous section - student learning which, as already stated, is in turn grounded in the values, vision and purpose of the mission of the CSB. However, the definition of performance does not end with results. It includes operational performance - how well the Board delivers the services that are meant to lead to desired results.

Understanding its results-based performance informs the CSB and its stakeholders about the extent to which it is achieving intended results. Understanding operational performance tells them why. The first fulfills the accountability purpose of the Review but the second is essential for its improvement purpose. Unless the CSB understands why it is achieving some results but not others, it will never know what it has to do to improve results.

In Part 1, we introduced the notion of the 'performance pyramid.' In this design, performance begins with student results. Every other layer of the pyramid focuses on operational performance - successive levels of support for learning. Performance is therefore determined by the extent to which the 'unit' being analyzed – from the classroom to Board offices – contributes to student learning. This perspective inverts the traditional hierarchical 'control from the top' image of a school system. In the revised image, students are at the top and the School Board is at the bottom, providing the foundation for the support of teaching and learning.

The summary of findings (see **Highlights** document) reveals that operational performance in the CSB is generally low at every level of the pyramid, from the classroom to School Board support. One main cause of this situation is the almost total lack of accountability in the CSB.

Creating a high-performance organization begins with **everyone** being accountable - and being held accountable - for the contribution they are supposed to be making toward student success. This notion of accountability is not a bureaucratic one, where managers are accountable for some formal task. This notion starts with students being accountable for their own learning and continues with parents, teachers, school/centre/Board administrators, professionals and support staff - everyone - playing his or her part, with consequences for those who do not.

In the CSB, this type and level of accountability for student learning does not happen. In Part 4, we remarked that the Board was more concerned with organizational structure than organizational performance, more focused on organizational boxes than how those boxes were managed. An external study of the CSB conducted several years ago cited the following comment from stakeholders to explain the lack of accountability, which this study also identified:

> It has been remarked by several interviewees that Cree culture was a 'no blame' culture and that it was very rare of members of the community to indulge in 'finger pointing'. Pushed to its logical consequence, this is seen by many as the reason why so little formal assessment or evaluation has been carried out in relation to past initiatives and practices within the ... CSB.[216]

Changing organizational culture is difficult enough but if this view is correct, then the required change is even greater. However, in our view, unless the CSB adopts a culture of accountability, then performance will never improve.

Organizational Capacity

In any organization, accountability operates through formal and informal systems, but most of all through people. People cannot be expected to be held accountable unless they have the **capacity** for meeting the expectations of their role - be it a student, a parent, a teacher, an administrator or another staff member. For people, capacity means having the tools to do the job and the skills to use them. For an organization, such as a school board, capacity includes structures, policies and systems that help students succeed.

In this Review, we defined capacity in terms of six components:

- **organizational culture**: shared assumptions, values and beliefs of members of the organization;

- **strategic direction**: leadership, policies and strategic planning in relation to overall vision and purpose;

- **structures and systems**: structures and systems for governing and managing work, including problem-solving, decision-making, monitoring, and evaluation;

- **human resources**: adequacy of the staff and other human resources, as well as how the organization engages in planning, hiring, developing and appraising human resources;

- **financial and other resources**: adequacy of financial and other resources, including facilities, technology and materials, as well as how the organization engages in financial planning and accountability, and the management of other resources;

- **external linkages**: planning, implementing and monitoring networks, partnerships and other external linkages.

We used these components to frame part of our analysis of service delivery in the Board. The lack of accountability, for example, stemmed from our analysis of the Board's organizational culture. We also found that the present culture of the Board is characterized by a weak sense of moral purpose and an inverted sense of values, where students come last. We found that time and resources are spent in meetings and travel rather than productive work, and that there is almost no follow-up to ensure that any goals that were set are being achieved.

The analysis also identified serious weaknesses in every other type of capacity listed above, as summarized in the *Highlights* document. This is why virtually every set of recommendations included one on building capacity. As we stated in section 3.1.4 of Part 2, merely stating desired results might help to sharpen one's focus and the commitment of stakeholders, but it will do nothing to achieve results. The path to improvement first requires a clear understanding of the issues, which begins with the insights provided by this report and the report of the Organizational Review. Any statement of results without improved capacity and performance amounts to nothing more than *wishful thinking*.

Capacity ➜ Performance ➜ Results

If the Board is serious about improving student results, then it must start to build the capacity of its schools, centres and other organizational units to deliver the services required to achieve these results. The formula shown in the text box is simple, making it happen is not.

14.2 An Insider Perspective

The evaluation team was made up of two 'outsiders' - external consultants - and two 'insiders' - persons who work for the CSB. This was done to provide a balanced perspective for completing the Review. Every aspect of our work and every section of this report has been informed by these two perspectives. However, in compiling the lessons learned, we felt it was important to have one reflection from a purely insider perspective.

There is a lack of 'Creeness' in schools, units, and offices. For an entity as prominent as ours throughout the Cree Nation, we should be promoting Cree through visible means such as artifacts, artwork, and pictures of our people throughout history, the communities, and surrounding areas. Written Cree should be on posters and bulletins, even if it is a simple message or word, and Cree should be spoken and heard where possible, especially when addressing students in announcements or meetings.

In classrooms, there is even a lack of Cree values, traditions, customs, and history present in lessons or in the learning environment. We need to model more of what it is to be Cree for our students and share what we can so they can maintain what they learn, develop a pride in being Cree that they can pass on to future generations.

> We need to model more of what it is to be Cree for our students so they can develop a pride in being Cree that they can pass on to future generations.

Staff engagement in general does not seem to be high in the CSB. Individuals, committees, departments, units, and our Board tend to work in isolation for the most part when we could share more with one another and 'help each other learn,' as the theme of our 2007 Education Symposium proposed. It seems people are less engaged, invested, or interested in what they are doing than one would expect.

Perhaps this happens simply because that is the way people work or because people are so involved on so many different committees. We did not address the engagement of staff in this Review as we did for students, leaving us to wonder what the results would show had we done so. We should all be driven to put Students first and to act more than talk, always asking ourselves: What is the purpose of what we are doing?

Many people have the best intentions but how these intentions translate into action is another

> Many people have the best intentions but how these intentions translate into action is another story.

story, as we spend our time in meetings, away from the communities, schools, and our offices. All of this distracts people from their work and a high level of productivity.

Professionalism needs to improve overall. Through our experience with this Review and our own work, we have seen lines of authority ignored, managers of units not always given the chance to do their work as people contact those in higher positions to obtain the decision they want. We need policies and communication procedures that are not just clearly outlined but respected by everyone at all levels so we can become a more professional school board where everyone knows what to expect.

As internal members of the team, we saw other instances of the lack of professionalism when we did not get responses to many requests for information or action. We took the time to communicate to people through email, in person, and over the phone, often several times asking for the same thing, but not getting the delivery of what we needed in the end. Much of our time was spent trying to collect material, data, and essentially doing our best to follow up

and fill in gaps to have a comprehensive report to share. This was frustrating for both of us, taking away from time we could have spent more productively. It is something we know people experience in their own positions within the Board.

Objectivity is more necessary on all levels. At times, we struggled to decide whether the findings bothered us because we did not agree with them or because we pictured the well-intentioned people that worked in these areas and who would be affected by what we would be saying. We found the latter to be true and that we all have to accept the findings of the Review and move on from there to all do what is best for students and future generations. This is how findings, other data, and issues need to be addressed in our offices, schools, and communities, from an objective point of view rather than a subjective one where feelings are considered rather than actions that will better the education we deliver to our students.

> We all have to accept the findings of the Review and move on from there to all do what is best for students and future generations.

Appropriate timelines need to be set. For future reviews and action plans to be more effective, time needs to be more appropriately planned so we can take the time to do real effective planning, consulting, preparation, communication, so that the actual exercises that need to take place will happen. We found our time quite intense and that we did not get to spend the time we wanted and needed with each of the stakeholders. The pacing was not appropriate when you consider the nature of Cree people who are typically patient and do not talk or share within such strict time constraints. We think we could have gotten more of a response from people if we had had more time.

We both struggled with balancing our jobs with our involvement in the Review process. It was not clear how much time we were expected to be released from our respective jobs and we found ourselves torn at times as to what we should be spending our time on. In the end, we gave the Review priority as it was something we truly believed in and deserved more time. In the future and for other commitments the Board expects of its employees, guidelines should be written about how much time people are released from their positions so that their involvement and engagement in a project, committee, task force, or evaluation will be higher and the result more effective for all.

> This Review has given us even more inspiration and guidance in our work as Cree people who only want to offer the best to Cree children.

In conclusion, we would also like to share that we have thoroughly appreciated this Review process and the wealth of information we have gained from it. We were met with much hospitality in communities and have that to take with us as well. This Review has given us even more inspiration and guidance in our work as Cree people who only want to offer the best to Cree children. We hope that it has the same effect on all who are touched by it.

14.3   A Stakeholder Perspective

At the end of focus groups and interviews, as well as various questionnaires, we asked stakeholders the following question:

This Educational Review is meant to lead to **action** to improve the quality of service delivery to students. What evidence would satisfy you that action is being taken to effect this improvement?

This chapter presents a summary of their responses.

> **Q: How will you know when change is really happening?**
>
> **A: When magical thinking has been eliminated (Teacher).**

Student Results

Not surprisingly, stakeholders want to see improved student results, as reflected in comments made by them when asked to complete the following statement: ***I will know that action has been taken when I see***:

> **When my child finishes grade 11 in the Cree S.B., I'd like to see her go to college and succeed. When my child comes out of college with a diploma or certificate on a non-native basis, that's success (Band Council Representative).**

- *attendance improving and students are motivated - success for all (Teacher);*

- *better graduation rates and higher graduation rates and not artificial ones (Board Administrator);*

- *decreased drop-out rates and increased graduation rates (Teacher);*

- *improvement in academic success (Teacher).*

Although virtually all stakeholders want to see improved student results they did not focus their expression of desired change on these results. Rather they concentrated on the conditions for learning that they believed would bring about these results, as presented below.

Schools, Centres & Community

As we have emphasized in this report, classrooms, not Board offices, are 'where it's at.' Stakeholders are well aware of this and realize that real change must happen in the classroom, where teaching and learning occur - or do not occur. As two Board administrators said:

> **Instead of hearing students' saying, 'School is boring,' I want to hear them say: 'Hey, school is fun!'**

> *I'd like to see students in the classrooms doing work.*

> *I'd like to hear students say 'I am learning.'*

Creating more effective classes begins with having qualified and motivated teachers, something several stakeholders mentioned:

> *It's the teacher who makes the difference* (Board Administrator).

We need to hire qualified teachers from pre-K to Sec. 5 and make sure that all teachers have proper training (Teacher).

> **Real change? When students begin to feel that this school is their school, that they belong, they're engaged (Teacher).**

I want to see an end to teacher bullying. When I was in pre-K, I remember my teacher yelling at me for colouring a flower black. Yelling at me saying, when did you ever see a black flower and I remember feeling so worthless or small. From pre-K to when I was in high school, I experienced teacher bullying through all those years (School Committee Member).

I want to see happy students and happy teachers, of course. Because, if they are happy, it means that something's working in that school (Board Administrator).

We need more qualified substitute teachers (School Staff Member).

Inside classrooms, students need more and better individual support, especially now (and for the foreseeable future) when students are not operating at their grade level:

> **We need to consider where students are really at and stop pretending that they are at level (Teacher).**

*Stop pushing students on to the next grade / level when they do not have the background (*Teacher).

*More people working with students individually / flash cards, reading, comprehension (*Teacher).

*We need trained shadows working with difficult or students with special needs (*Teacher).

*Things will be better when students receive all needed support, whether special education, social services or others (*Teacher).

What children will learn depends, in part, on the curriculum being taught, including the language of instruction, a topic that elicited many different views:

*Reading programs in both French and English should be offered (*School Staff Member).

> **A solid reading program for all students.**

*English or French should be offered starting at Pre-K including Cree language as their second language (*School Staff Member).

*Bring in more culture in the school (bring back traditional activities i.e. drumming) (*Teacher).

*We need more variety in subjects, especially at the secondary level, if we expect students to finish school. When we offered the music class, we had so many students there taking music because they like music. There are a lot of students who like to play with the snowmobiles; they like mechanics (*School Committee Member).

*We follow the same academic programs in our schools and it's not working for our students. Maybe that's why they're dropping out. We should look into a more ' hands-on' vocational program for them (*CEA).

Stakeholders were very aware that conditions in the school must support teaching and learning.

*A safer environment for students (*Board Administrator).

Zero-tolerance for violence (Teacher).

*Evaluation of teaching strategies & methods (*Teacher).

*Incompetent people are fired and competent people are hired. The school no longer acting as a drop-in centre (*Teacher).

*Better communication between teachers and the school administration (*Teacher).

And of course, they realize that the school needs support from parents and community:

*I would also like to see the involvement of all the stakeholders. Mostly, I would like to see parents being more involved in the education of their children, to help show us how we can help their children. We need to find ways so that they're not too shy to come to us and tell us that this is what I'd like to see for my child. We have to work hard on fostering positive relationships with our communities because schools, way back, did not represent that to many of our parents (*Board Administrator).

> ***When you can go to the school any time and see parents coming and going, supporting the school. The minute I see something like that, then I'll say, hey, something's happening* (Board Administrator).**

> ***Smiling interested students, parents, teachers and staff invading the school from 8:00 am to 10:00 pm* (School Staff Member).**

*When you get to know the students they are very nice, they're very nice children, but something is going on in the community that is making them break stuff in school and we want help from the community. We want the community to work together as a community (*Principal).

*Create an active community team in each school (*Teacher).

*Students and parents would be actively involved in education beginning at birth. Perhaps we need an advertising program to teach parents to guide and teach their children – good behaviour, good health, good attitudes (*Teacher).

Although stakeholders realize that student success is dependent on improved conditions for teaching and learning in the classroom, in the school and in the community, they also know they cannot go it alone. They are looking to the Board for support.

School Board Support for Learning

For every comment we received about expected change at the student/school level, we received two comments about the changes stakeholders expect to see at the Board level and beyond, beginning with the Grand Council of the Crees.

Some stakeholders see the need for a broad-based approach to achieve significant educational improvement. The following input from a Band Council representative provides an eloquent statement of what needs to happen:

Leadership has to come from the Grand Chief and the Grand Council of the Crees, accepting the report and deciding how they're going to institute some of the steps necessary to deal with the situation. This is the body with the authority of all the Cree Nations – the nine chiefs within their own community who sit on the Board decide what action or what things are going to be done. If the report doesn't go to this level then I think that it will go nowhere; it will be buried right at the Cree School Board level. On the other end, each of the communities must take up its responsibility. Everybody has a responsibility; parents are responsible for getting their children to school, teaching them the importance of education, and the community needs to assist the parents. Maybe the Cree School Board is really concerned about education – I don't know. But, without those factors in place, nothing is going to change.

There is an underlying negative attitude toward the Board in this statement reflecting a perception that the Board is more concerned with finance than pedagogy, that it is disconnected from its schools and communities. However, this stakeholder leaves the door open, inviting the Board to

> **The Cree School Board should think about their mission: Is it 'Students first' or 'Money first'? (School Staff Member)**

prove that this view is incorrect. On balance, this statement offers a very positive and constructive view - the need for collaboration at all levels of the system and the need for leadership to make this happen.

Picking up on the theme of Board mission and priorities, several stakeholders stated that they wanted to see a focus on education, namely a standardized curriculum that applies to all schools in the Board, not just in theory, but in practice. This should not come as a surprise as evidenced by the following comments by members of the Board's own Council of Commissioners:

We need people to see that the Board establishes its mission and objectives. The first 20 years of our existence was spent on providing buildings, etc. We now need to focus on the curriculum. There have been a lot of changes in the last nine years. If we come up with a good plan the people will believe we are going to make changes. Our success rate is very low because we have not been teaching the curriculum. Teachers choose what they want to teach. We need to have a standardized curriculum throughout the Board (Commissioner).

> **We now need to focus on the curriculum (Commissioner).**

We need to set up a standardized curriculum that would be consistent throughout the Board from school to school, because we have kids that are moving within our territory from community to community and when they move from one community, they'll be strangers to the curriculum that is being used at a different school. (Commissioner).

This input makes it perfectly obvious that educational leadership is desperately needed. As one external stakeholder said:

For me, it's very clear: we need leadership from the top; it must be consistent and it must be focused. At the present time we do not have such leadership.

*Well, for me this review will go where the leadership takes it. And if the top leadership of the Board takes this on and says, We are going with this, then it'll go (*Board Administrator).

As we have argued elsewhere in this report, leadership must be thought of as a 'network of leaders' who are accountable to stakeholders for pursuing the mission of the Board. Two board administrators summed up the need for this approach in this way:

> *Well first of all, after the report is given, I hope all of us are involved in it and all of us are involved in the action plan that's created and to see things implemented. If you've asked for a Review, that means that you're willing to take the good with the bad. We all have to accept the fact that, if we've asked you to do this, then we have to accept the fact that we're going to have some dirty laundry aired and there must be an action plan put into place and a time line of when things are going to be done without falling into blaming everyone else for the problem. There has to be accountability (*Board Administrator).

> **This is a team effort; this is how we're going to help the students (Board Administrator).**

> *You know, I think that, since this is a team effort, I want the report to say, this is how we're going to help the students. This section, you're responsible for it. This section you're responsible for, etc. etc. and have somebody that's going to hold us to it (*Board Administrator).

Leadership must be backed up by support. Schools feel alone 'out there' and are looking for the Board to help them to do what they need to do, not merely tell them to do it. Continuing education centres rightly feel that while schools receive very little support, they receive practically none. These centres have no official recognition and are each administered by a consultant who is not even recognized as an administrator:

> **Being officially recognized by the CSB as an Adult Learning Centre would go a long way in showing me that action is being taken towards the type of service that we provide to the adult population (Centre consultant).**

> *Being officially recognized by the CSB as an Adult Learning Centre would go a long way in showing me that action is being taken towards the type of service that we provide to the adult population. We do the same work as principals and beyond and being re-classified as directors would qualify us for the secretarial/technical support that we need* (Centre consultant)*.*

> *Well, the thing that I would like to see happening is that somebody up there [Board office] telling us, here, that they've finally sort of woken up a little and they are going to focus more of their attention on the centre here and adult education* (Stakeholder)*.*

As we discussed in Part 3, facilities are a major issue in continuing education in every centre except the SRVTC. With few exceptions, continuing education has no instructional space of its own; it has inadequate office and storage space and no serious attempt is made to provide housing for their instructors.

> *Well, like I keep saying and I will keep saying it until I see it, facilities! And housing specifically for adult education teachers, both vocational and up-grading* (Stakeholder)*.*

Calls for more dynamic and pedagogically oriented leadership and support lead to another common call from stakeholders regarding human resources generally, not just those in leadership positions. The message is loud and clear: real changes in student success require significant changes in personnel, either in terms of improved capacity of existing personnel or by replacing them:

> *I'd like to see that the people that don't belong are asked to step aside. I feel that most of us need refresher workshops, courses, whatever, to have the knowledge to do our jobs well. It's time to have a positive change, Board-wide. It's almost like a block. We can't move forward because of all the things that should have never happened (*Board Administrator).

> **I'd like to see that the people that don't belong are asked to step aside (Board Administrator).**

> *What I'd like to see is that each and every one knows what his or her role is and what the reason is for us being there within the Board. Because sometimes we forget. We're there for the Cree students and for their continuous progress in school. That's what I'd like to see. But each person has to be aware of what his or her role is and how he or she can contribute to that (*Board Administrator).

> *I think the first significant [thing] would still be fire or pre-retire incompetent and unproductive Cree or non Cree staff and managers and put in place competent people. This will create a momentum for the new leader to emerge. This is not to create fear but to show that we are serious now. If you have motivated, competent people in the [Board] administration as well as in the school administration as well as in the classes, I think it's going to create a momentum in favour of the students' success (*Board Administrator).

As one would expect, stakeholders talked about improved communication as a precondition for change and a sign that the Board was finally listening to others. To stakeholders, more open communication also means greater visibility of the Board in the community:

> *Our means to convince stakeholders will require a heavy dosage of communication on meaningful action. The communities and stakeholders will need to be convinced that the CSB is serious in delivering education by preaching the importance of it.... Cree people need to embrace it as being of high importance and high value. Constant communication in the airwaves and advertisements is another means. Selling education to the public will need to take different and unique approaches that will need to be discovered through the strategic team of CSB (*Board Administrator).

> *I would need to see them going into the schools. I would actually like to see the leadership go into the schools and see what needs to be changed and go from school to school, ensuring that teachers are in place, that principals are in place and, most of all, that kids are in place. Nobody follows the law on school age. Kids are out there running around and nobody's doing anything about it. What's going on? We're all just too laid back (*Board Administrator).

A number of stakeholders were already looking at the road ahead when we talked to them, some very mindful of the road behind:

Many years ago, there were Committees that were set up after the Mianscum Report and I was on two of those Committees. I spent a year and a half there putting myself on the line. We were looking at everything and, of course, what happened was when the consultant presented the report, the people at the top basically said, 'off with their heads' said we don't like this report so it was off with the consultant's head and that report disappeared so fast it would … (Teacher).

> **We're doing the same thing – goinga round in a circle, nothing moves. What's the purpose of doing a Review if you're not doing anything? (CEA).**

I just want to talk about the reviews that the School Board has been doing in the past years. When they do these things they go around in circles. You reach a point in time, you're going around and you don't know where you started. This situation is the same. We're doing the same thing – going around in a circle, nothing moves. What's the purpose of doing a Review if you're not doing anything? (CEA).

Stakeholders would like to believe that this time the situation is different but they will need to see concrete signs that the so-called follow-up to the Review is not simply 'same old, same old.'

There has to be somebody at the senior level who can be the 'champion' for the plan who will make sure that it's moving and moving in the right direction. That person would work with each school to make sure that the plan is being implemented and is being promoted through the whole community (CEA).

> **This is a start, keep going! Work towards your vision of improving services to our students and help to involve the parents too! (School Staff Member)**

I do want the Board to act on what is going to be the outcome of this evaluation. I want to see improvements for the benefit of students. For example, all staff have to be accountable. I find that there are so many meetings you can't reach anybody sometimes at the Board level because they're in Montréal or elsewhere for meetings. You have to be accountable for the position that you're in. Leadership is not just occupying a position, it's about acting on it (CEA).

The PSSS Office is not always operating in crisis mode (PSSS staff member).

There is good communication among the PSSS Office, local schools and centres, Continuing Education and other departments (PSSS staff member).

I want to see an Action Plan and I want to see that it's being implemented and I want to see who's responsible for it and I want to see that it could be followed up on frequently. Yes. There's too much that's just sitting there (Commissioner).

> **I want to see a report every 6 months to see if we are moving forward (School Staff Member).**

What I need to see is a monitoring committee in the future to follow up on the action plan – then I'm sure these things are happening (Commissioner).

I want to see a report every 6 months to see if we are moving forward (School Staff Member).

*Perhaps the Board could send to all staff members (including support staff), a copy of a summarized report on the different projects that are being implemented! Newsletters (monthly or quarterly) (*School Staff Member).

Not tons and tons of paper work, but results and what we can do to improve the situation. Results! Results! (Teacher).

*To be sure that action is done, not just talk (*Teacher).

*Have a concrete action plan adapted and with priorities set for each milieu (*Teacher).

*For the Educational Review team to come back to each community and let the communities know what they found out and let them know what actions will be taken to improve services of quality in education (*Teacher).

The input from stakeholders provides the CSB with the **indicators of real change** - that will signal whether action is being taken. In general we found that stakeholders are sceptical but hopeful - they want to believe that this Review is going to lead to change but they will have to see it to believe it. The comment by the teacher quoted in the text box is an eloquent statement of this mixture of hope and despair.

> ***I see no improvement since I first came here four years ago. I care very much for the people, I love the children and I feel great sorrow when I see that the children are so poorly served. Education does not appear to matter. This study MIGHT help* (Teacher).**

The submission of this report, as well as the report of the Organizational Review, marks the end of this phase of the Board's commitment to change - reviewing the past and the present - and the beginning of the next phase - future action for sustainable improvement in the delivery of educational services. This commitment has been expressed to us as follows:

For a long time now many issues and repeated conversations related to education and the poor delivery of it have been expressed at many levels and at many different periods in the course of the CSB's existence since it took over education. Some will say an Education Review of this nature is the first of its kind since the CSB existed. Others would argue that we have had many attempts with similar approaches. ***When do we start putting things into action toward improvement of education?***

This Review is an attempt to capture a lot of what has been expressed before but with the help of professionals to put together a comprehensive document. And from this document we hope it has the credibility and confirmations of past discussions in order for us to realistically implement positive strategies. The idea behind the Education Review is to know our status as realistically as possible. If we capture that and confirm all the past talks about our education system then we will be ready to move forward. We owe it to the stakeholders to know the status so that the urgency for change will be felt and supported.

15.0   THE ROAD AHEAD

In an initial section entitled **The Road Ahead**, the report of the Cree Language and Culture Conference, held in November, 1997, began as follows:

> The Conference produced recommendations, which provide guidance to future decision-makers. These recommendations should not be disregarded, but should be a source for future action. The words of the elders, educators and other Crees and guests who spoke at the Conference ... should be distributed to all communities and entities to form the basis for consideration and decision..... I look to the Council of Commissioners of the Cree School Board for guidance on how we can proceed from here to bring more of the Cree people, leaders, elders, youth, women, and Cree entities into the debate on our language and culture....[217]

This statement is a call for **action** on the basis of the recommendations of the 1997 report and **leadership** to show the way. Once again, in 2008, the leadership of the CSB is called upon to make a commitment to take action on the basis of the recommendations of the CAFSI report. As firsts steps on the road ahead it must:

- **communicate** its commitment to stakeholders;
- be **accountable** to them for this commitment; and
- **follow up** on this commitment.

This Review has drawn, as the Conference did, on the input of students, teachers, parents, commissioners, elders and other community members, administrators and other staff from schools, centres and Board offices, as well as other stakeholders from outside the Board. We do not know what commitment, if any, had been made before the Conference. In the case of the Educational Review, the commitment was made at the beginning, as reported in Part 1:

> **The Council of Commissioners and the Management Group of the CSB shall ensure that the Educational Review will be followed immediately by a final step ... to create and implement an action plan for improvement.**

A considerable investment has been made in planning and conducting this Review. The most important investment - more than the resources invested by the Board or the time and energy invested by the members of the evaluation team - is the faith that stakeholders have invested in this process. As we have mentioned elsewhere in this report, right from the beginning we were confronted with a mixture of scepticism and optimism: scepticism based on past experience, and optimism that this time, maybe this time, things would be different.

Throughout our many contacts with stakeholders during the review process, we repeated two commitments to stakeholders:

- our commitment to make their voices heard and provide a basis for change; and

- the commitment of the Board to make that change happen.

As alluded to above, the road ahead requires communication, accountability and follow-up. It is beyond the scope of this report to provide detailed guidance about this journey. However, we would like to offer some initial 'food for thought' as the leaders of the Board begin to plan how they will prove that the faith stakeholders have in them is justified.

It should be noted that the comments offered here are presented in terms of the three underlying themes of this report, communication, accountability and follow-up. They do not imply any sequence of action. In fact, sequencing the action steps will be a challenge in itself, as briefly discussed below in section 15.3, Follow-Up.

15.1 Communication

As stated in chapter 12 in Part 4 and elsewhere, communication is not a simple matter of sending a message. Effective communication means message sent, message received <u>and</u> message understood.

We acknowledged in the overview presented in Part 1 that the CAFSI report is longer than many stakeholders would like. It was written this way in order to provide the leadership of the Board with the most comprehensive picture of Board performance we could, given the constraints and limitations of this Review.

In order to reach out to a wider audience, we also prepared two other documents, in both French and English, namely: an *Executive Summary* and a more detailed *Highlights* document.

In the early stages of the Review, we created a dedicated portion of the Board website to communicate information to stakeholders, including the publication of all reports and other key documents pertaining to the Review. Any experienced web designer would likely characterize this site as 'basic.' We did not have the time or the resources to fully exploit the potential of this medium but we hope that the Board will do so as part of its follow-up.

There are countless ways that the Board can use to communicate with stakeholders. Written communication is often not the best one, especially if used alone, as in the transmission of a document to people by mail. Oral communication is essential, especially in communities, as discussed below, and in a variety of public forums.

An effective communication strategy is needed, one that identifies:

- the range of target audiences the Board wishes to reach;
- the purpose and intended results from each communication;
- the key issues that need to be communicated; and
- other related matters, including format, resources, time line and accountability.

In our view, that communication strategy should begin with the 'people on the point.'

We use the expression 'people on the point' to refer to the members of the Council of Commissioners, Board and school administrators, notably the principals. Each of these individuals is the 'point person' that answers for the Board to a particular group of stakeholders.

This Review, together with the Organizational Review, has generated considerable interest among stakeholders. The people on the point are the 'first responders' to calls for information. Community members will call their commissioner; teachers will ask their principal; Board staff will ask their director, and so forth. They will be put in an untenable position if they have not been adequately informed about this report and what is being done to follow up on it.

Informing them - and keeping them informed - cannot be accomplished by sending everyone a copy of the report. As suggested above, a communication strategy is required, first to ensure that everyone on the point truly understands what the report says - and doesn't say. Rumours will undoubtedly be flying, unintentionally communicating incorrect information. In some cases, incorrect information may be deliberately circulated to promote someone's agenda. The best antidote to these potential problems is 'early intervention' through the timely communication of accurate accessible information.

One essential form of communication is direct dialogue with each community, as recommended by the Mianscum report in 1999 (see text box).[218] The original work plan of the evaluation team included a presentation of the report to each community, something that many stakeholders insisted upon when we visited each community. When this plan was made, data collection was meant to be completed by the end of November, and we thought we would present our report at the end of March or the beginning of April. The extension of the data collection process into February, coupled with the large increase in the amount of data to be processed and analyzed, delayed the report date until June.[a] The last two weeks of June is no time to attempt to visit schools and engage stakeholders in a discussion. The task of presenting the report to the communities must therefore be left to the Board.

> "The Council of Commissioners must determine the next phase of addressing these problems. One thing I can attest to is that the Cree School Board should look forward to meeting the Cree schools and communities. Your presence in the Cree communities and schools would be a greatly appreciated by the people" (Henry Mianscum).

These community presentations will likely constitute the first public demonstration of the Board's commitment to follow through on both the Educational and Organizational Reviews. In our view, these presentations should:

- occur as early in the new school year as possible;

- be planned in collaboration with the principal, the school committee chairperson and the education representative on the Band Council;

- be delivered by a well-informed team from the Board, including the Chairperson and the Director General;

- consider students as one of their primary audiences (see text box);[219]

- provide information about the Review <u>and</u> about the process that is planned to follow up;

- include different sessions adapted for the needs of various stakeholder groups - one presentation will not 'fit all;' and

- provide appropriate written material to each audience.

> "Students, even little ones, are people too. Unless they have some meaningful (to them) role in the enterprise, most educational change, indeed most education, will fail" (Fullan).

Given that these presentations should take place early in the 2008-09 school year before much action planning has been accomplished, it will be important to provide stakeholders with a clear statement of the process that is envisaged and the timelines that have been set, as discussed below in section 15.3.

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[a]   The extension of the data collection was due to missed community visits because of inclement weather and other problems. The additional data came from the large number of stakeholders participating in the Review. However, problems noted earlier concerning the lack of data from Board records and documents remained unresolved.

15.2 Accountability

We have already spoken about accountability as part of our reflections and 'lessons learned.' In this section we move from **talking** about accountability to **doing** something about it. Although the design of a system of accountability for the Board will have to come as part of its planning process, we do wish to offer three specific actions that we believe should be taken immediately:

- send a clear signal of change;

- assign responsibility for guiding change; and

- ensure there is clear accountability for communication and follow-up.

Meaningful change occurs slowly and in small steps, often through small but important gestures that are not visible to the majority of stakeholders. However, in the same way that justice must not only be done, it must be seen to be done, it is important for the Board to send a clear signal of change with respect to accountability.

That clear signal does not have to be a dramatic gesture and it most certainly should not be an empty gesture, high on symbolism, low on substance. However, it should be visible to all and convey the message that a new mode of governance and management has been adopted. Such a signal could include the following:

- a clear statement by the Council of Commissioners, indicating it has received the report of the Review and while it does not necessarily agree with every aspect of the analysis presented:

> Accountability begins with the Board accepting full responsibility for the current state of affairs and being accountable to its constituents for the progress of change.

  - that it accepts full responsibility for the current state of affairs and for setting the Board on a new course;

  - that it will be accountable to its constituents for the progress of this new course;

  - that it has mandated the Director General to manage the change process and will hold him to account for the realization of this mandate;

- a clear statement by the Director General to the effect:

  - that he is fully committed to carry out this mandate;

  - that all board, school and centre administrators will be held accountable for the tasks for which they have been given the responsibility; and

  - every staff member of the CSB will in turn be assigned his or her role to play and will be held accountable by their respective administrators.

In so doing, it is important for everyone to realize that this new mode of accountability is not a 'witch hunt' nor an exercise of 'name and blame.' While there is still a need to better understand much of what has happened in the past, seeking to assign blame will not be helpful in moving forward. However, the above statement should make it crystal clear that from now on every

administrator and staff member of the CSB, regardless of position or family connections, will be held accountable for the performance of his or her duties.

However, making the switch from no accountability to full accountability requires transition planning. The general assumption behind the accountability requirement is that individuals have the personal knowledge and skills, as well as any other required capacities for meeting the expectations of their roles. There are many people in the CSB who have been appointed to positions for which they do not have the requisite capacities. It will be important to conduct a thorough review of all staff members, beginning with those in senior administrative positions to determine the extent of this problem.

In other words, like every other aspect of the change process, accountability must be managed. It will not come about through wishful thinking, as the old administrative mode of the CSB has amply illustrated. In the new mode, accountability needs to be firm but it needs to be fair and it needs to be based on realistic time lines and means of implementation.

Moving from the general to the specific, the first tasks to be undertaken are those outlined below in section 15.3. Accordingly, the Board should decide at the outset who, beyond the Director General, is accountable for leading the change process and for ensuring communication and follow-up. We do not feel that it is appropriate for this report to make specific suggestions in this regard. However, we would offer the following as further food for thought:

> "The Council of Commissioners should form a task force to address the problems and develop a strategic plan to correct the deficiencies within its structure in the short, medium and long term. This effort should be in conjunction with all persons associated in the delivery of education services to the student clientele of the Cree School Board. Participation in this undertaking should include the community and schools" (Mianscum report).

- A separate 'task force' to oversee the change process (or whatever one would call such a body) has the advantage of being removed from the structure of everyday management. However, that can also be its inherent weakness if it is going in one direction while the regular Board management structures are going in another. Although clear lines of authority would have to be established, on balance, having a dedicated task force is probably a good idea, as recommended by the Mianscum report in 1999 (see text box).[220] In fact, it should probably have been formed three months ago to be operational when the Review was completed.

- Whatever structure is adopted, it is essential that it involve stakeholders from different levels of the system. For example, it could appoint two or three teachers from different levels and languages of instruction to participate on a full-time basis. A meaningful way for students to participate needs to be found. Finding an appropriate mix of stakeholders while not creating an unwieldy structure will not be easy.

- In addition to seeking broad representation in this process, the essential characteristic of any member of a task force or other structure is personal competence. Given its history and current state of performance, the Board cannot afford to appoint persons who are not capable of providing the needed direction to change.

- The Board already has a multitude of committees; this would probably be a good occasion to wipe the slate clean. Like 'zero-based' budgeting, the Board could start from

the premise that all current committees are dissolved and then recreate or reconstitute those that are deemed essential, with a clear mandate, resources, etc.

- Guiding the change process may well require the help of 'critical friends.' We use this expression advisedly, as we are aware that the Board has even more consultants than it has committees. Some of them, it appears, feel they have been appointed for life. A critical friend, as the expression implies, is a resource person who has expertise in one or more aspects of the change process and who has established, or is willing to establish, a relationship with the Board. The roles played by critical friends must complement – not supplant – the roles played by Board officials and must support – not undermine – Board ownership of the process.

15.3 Follow-Up

15.3.1 Actions To Be Taken

If the input provided above in section 15.2 were being acted upon, then follow-up would already have begun, for example, with the preparation of materials about the report, planning community presentations and forming a task force or steering committee to oversee the change process. One of the first tasks to be undertaken beyond these initial ones is the synthesis of the various planning and evaluative initiatives that the Board has undertaken in the past year:

- the Strategic Planning Exercise;
- the Organizational Review;
- the Educational Review; and
- the work on governance.

> Action Planning cannot proceed until the Board completes a synthesis of all current planning and evaluative initiatives.

As mentioned in the overview provided in Part 1, originally this synthesis was to be provided by the Educational Review, which was expected to 'roll up' the data and analysis of these other initiatives to provide the Board with a holistic portrait of its performance. Although this mandate was withdrawn, the need for this synthesis remains.

We mentioned previously that some stakeholders have questioned why these various initiatives were undertaken in the sequence reflected by the order of the above bulleted list. They have also asked what the relationship among these initiatives is and how all the pieces are supposed to fit together. These are good questions than merit a good answer from the Board.

Although the development of an action plan is front and centre in everyone's mind, this synthesis needs to be completed first. The Strategic Planning Exercise, conducted before the Educational Review had even begun, brought people together and created expectations regarding the vision of the Board. Many stakeholders told us about their participation in this process and the creation of what they thought was the beginning of a strategic plan. When the Board announces a new action plan many of them may well ask:

- Didn't we do this last year?
- Why are we doing it again?

It is therefore important for the Board to situate this exercise in relation to the new action plan being developed.

Throughout this report we have indicated important performance issues that we did not attempt to tackle, many of which we assumed were being addressed by the Organizational Review. At the time of writing this report we have not seen their final report so we do not know if all of these assumptions were correct. For those that were not, this means that these gaps in analysis need to be added to those we have identified for further study.

For those assumptions that were correct, the analysis of the Organizational Review must be considered alongside of that provided by this report to come up with as complete a picture of Board performance as possible. This consolidation of the two Reviews only provides the first step toward the construction of a synthesis.

The synthesis will come when the Board has completed the following:

- considered what both Reviews have to tell it;

- decided how it reconciles any contradictory or opposing views;

- reached its own conclusions about Board performance and capacity;

- determined which matters require further study;

- decided which recommendations arising from the two Reviews it:

    - accepts;
    - tentatively accepts pending consultation;
    - tables for further study; or
    - rejects.

Once this synthesis is complete, the Board can then move forward to create an action plan. An action plan provides a 'road map' to the organizations embarking on a 'journey of change' (see text box).[221] Using this metaphor:

- The **destination** is a set of results based on the organization's values and beliefs.

- The **journey** is a strategically planned alignment of actions and conditions that empirical research demonstrates are necessary and sufficient to achieve intended results.

> **A Road Map for Change:**
>
> "Instead of bridges, avenues and freeways, this map would illustrate destinations of progress and the routes to travel on the way to achieving progress. The map would also provide commentary about assumptions, such as the final destination, the context for the map, the processes to engage in during the journey and the belief system that underlies the importance of traveling in a particular way."

Action plans come in all shapes and sizes. However, they all share certain common characteristics, such as those listed below.

- the **intended results** for improved capacity and performance to deliver education;

- the **means** selected to achieve these results;

- the **resources** required for this purpose;

- the **planning** of improvement efforts, including a **timeline** for all aspects of the plan; and

- the means for **monitoring and evaluating** the results.

The first step, formulating results, is very important, if the Board wishes to avoid Alice's predicament in Wonderland - if you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there. We have referred to the notion of a 'results chain' throughout this report. Simply put, this refers to a sequence of change, whereby activities, supported by various resources, produce short term results (called outputs) that lead to other desired results (called outcomes) that eventually lead to desired long-term results (called impact).

Activities (Resources)	➔	Results		
		Outputs	➔ **Outcomes**	➔ **Impact**
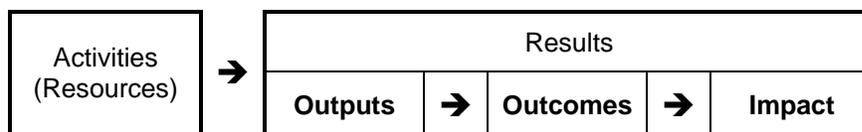
The challenge of results-based planning is determining and demonstrating the rationale that links resources, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact. In other words:

- What leads you to believe that the results chain you have in mind is valid?

Answering this question is a form of ***back mapping***, as you start at the end of the results chain and move toward the beginning. Back mapping "requires planners to think in backward steps from the long-term goal to the intermediate and then early-term changes that would be required to cause the desired change."[222]

Planning requires a time line, establishing 'points of accountability' along the route. Deadlines must be realistic and may have to be adjusted to take into account unforeseen circumstances or events. Without them, there is no way of determining whether the plan is 'on track.'

Two of the recommendations of this report deal with the need for self-evaluation by schools/centres and by the Board as a whole. While it will take time to develop an appropriate self-evaluation framework, the Board needs to monitor and evaluate its action plan. Determining the means for monitoring and evaluating the action plan must be done at the outset of the planning process. Once again, someone must be made accountable for making this happen.

As the Board begins to move forward with the development of its action plan, it should discover that many of the activities in the plan are for **capacity building** - if this is not so, then the plan is in serious trouble.

Finally, there are three issues that need to be considered in every part of the action plan:

- sequencing;
- priorities; and
- overload.

Simply put, **sequencing** involves deciding the order, or sequence, of various actions to be taken. Sometimes these decisions will be obvious but not always. Back mapping will help identify the majority of the steps in the results chain, as one discovers that A leads to B which leads to C, and so one. However, the action plan will involve actions at various levels of the system simultaneously. For example, classroom teaching depends in part on teacher supervision but the Board cannot any postpone action on classroom teaching until it has completely dealt with teacher supervision.

In some cases, there will be no good solution to such dilemmas, but there will be some that are better than others. Often, a two-pronged approach will be required, where a small but crucial change is made in A, so work can begin on B, after which more work is done on A.

In other cases, the sequencing may be decided on the basis of **priorities**. The Board will not be able to do everything at one, so it needs to look at all the recommendations and decide on those which should be accorded the highest priority. In this regard, keeping the most immediate needs of students in the front of everyone's minds at all times will be essential. For the evaluation team, there is one such priority that towers above all others: **teach students to read**. We will return to this goal in the final section but nothing else we have recommended will help more to improve student learning than ensuring that all students learn to read.

The last issue we wish to mention is **overload**. The Board faces enormous challenges if it seriously intends to address the 115 recommendations made by this report. If it tries to do too much too fast, its system will short-circuit and explode. While not being satisfied with only doing a little, the Board needs to temper its desire for change with a healthy dose of realism. In an organization of limited capacity, far more progress will be made in taking small steps than attempting any 'great leap forward.' As people gain capacity and develop greater confidence, the steps can become larger. In other words, **don't stand still, but walk, don't run**.

15.3.2 A Brighter Future for Students

We began this report in Part 1 with reference to the importance of 'education for all.' In several places within the report we have talked about formal and informal paths to lifelong learning. In these discussions, we wanted to send two clear messages to stakeholders:

- First, learning is not something that stops when a person leaves school; and

- Second, even though 'catching up' can be extremely difficult, it can be done.

We have recommended a 'fresh start' to teaching and learning with a new curricular model. The keystone of this new model is **reading - the gateway to lifelong learning**. For us, the girl in this picture represents the children of the Cree Nation.[223] We imagine her asking:

Who is going to teach me to read?

Giving her a positive response is what this Review is all about.

We realize that this cannot be accomplished overnight. That is why we emphasized the importance of a transitional regime for students already in schools of the Board. One of the most important tasks for the Board in the coming months is to assure these students and their parents that they are not being abandoned. Empty promises will not suffice.

The Board needs to have a practical set of strategies, including remedial reading and perhaps a formal extension of the time allowed for completion of secondary schooling. Continuing Education should play an important role here, especially to help recoup those students who have already dropped out.

There was a story reported during a study conducted in the U.K. The evaluators asked students if the school was doing a better job. One student replied: "I used to feel that this school cared about how well I was doing. Now I just think the only thing it cares about is how **it's** doing."[224] The message is clear: when focusing on Board policies, administrative procedures and so forth, none of this matters if it does not help students. They are the only reason for any effort being made. If we were to come back to visit schools a year from now, we want to hear students say:

It's better now; you know, after all these years in school, I'm finally learning to read.

The most important task for the leadership of the Board is to re-kindle that spark of hope that:

- *learning is important;*

- *it's not too late; and*

- *we will help you to succeed.*

Developing the plan discussed above is both an exercise in capacity building and organizational learning. If the CSB truly wishes to become a learning community, then organizational learning should be one of its guiding principles. As educators, we are used to thinking about how individuals learn but we are not used to thinking about how an organization is able to learn. In their book on school improvement, Canadian researchers, Coral Mitchell and Larry Sackney begin a chapter entitled, Learning About Organizational Learning, with the following statement:

> Writing about organizational learning is a bit like heading into the Amazon rainforest. You have some maps, and maybe a guide or two. You know the trip has the potential for exciting discoveries - some of which may lead to new and beneficial cures for stubborn ills. But you also know that the terrain has been seen from many different perspectives and has been described in many different ways. And you know that the path is fraught with unanticipated circumstances and unexpected challenges.[225]

Just as we hope that students will become life-long learners, the Board must do likewise. If it does, then it will certainly improve both its capacity and performance. If that happens then student success is bound to improve and that is what this whole Review is all about.

At the conclusion of one focus group, we told everyone that the Board was committed to use the results of this Review to make a difference in the lives of children and youth. A teacher came up to us and said:

You know, I almost believe you.

To us, this simple but powerful statement expressed all the fears and hopes of stakeholders that we encountered throughout the Review: fear that, once again, nothing would happen, but hope that, this time, real change would take place.

It is now up to the Board to prove that the hopes this teacher expressed, not her fears, are justified. If it does, then the vision expressed by Henry Mianscum in 1999 (see text box),[226] will finally be realized.

"The most valuable resource that the Cree Nation has is our children. Schools, teachers, students, parents and communities will always require more of the Cree School Board in regard to our children's education and well-being because in these children lay our dreams, hopes and aspirations for the future of the Cree Nation" (Henry Mianscum).

NOTES TO PART 5

213   Mitchell & Sackney, 2001, p. 1.
214   Smith, 2000, p. 184.
215   Address by Grand Chief Dr. Ted Moses to the Saah Winn Hen Gathering ("Understanding the meaning of life"), Chisasibi, July 12, 2005. Retrieved from: www.gcc.ca/gcc/.
216   Visser & Fovet, 2007, p. 8.
217   *Summary report of the Cree Language and Culture Conference*, 1998, p. 2.
218   Mianscum, 1999, p. 25.
219   Fullan, 2001, p. 151.
220   Mianscum, 1999, p. 25.
221   Organizational Research Services, 2004, p. 1.
222   Anderson, 2004, p. 3.
223   The photograph is taken from Gnarowski, 2002, p. 163.
224   Cited in MacBeath, Boyd, Rand & Bell, 1996, p. 47.
225   Mitchell & Sackney, 1998, p. 177.
226   Mianscum, 1999, p. 25.

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[a]   This Reference List includes all sources cited in the endnotes found in Parts 1 to 5, in the footnotes found in the Appendices and in Exhibit B-1 in Appendix B.

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