CREE SCHOOL BOARD
STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN
2011—2015
OVERVIEW

Working Together to Build
A Well Educated and Successful
Cree Nation through
Inspired Teaching and Valued Learning

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June 17, 2010

Index

	Page Numbers
1. Introduction	3 –7
2. Strategic Goals and Yearly Progress Expectations	8-9
3. Strategic Action and Review Areas, and their Key Deliverables:	10-16
4. Resourcing Allocation	17-18
5. Performance Management and Evaluation	19
6. Conclusion	20

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Our Students (Our Clients)

- **603 Kindergarten and Pre K Students**
- **1,740 Elementary Students**
- **1,397 Secondary Students**
- **Approximately 800 Adult Students/ year receiving post-secondary support, continuing general education or vocational training**

The Cree School Board ("The Board") was established in 1978, under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, with a mandate to provide for the education of Cree youth, grades pre-kindergarten to secondary 5 level, as well as supporting Cree adults in their pursuit of post-secondary education, continuing education and vocational training. The Board has a mission which differs from most other School Boards in one very important aspect. In addition to providing for well-educated Cree youth and adults, it also has a mission to ensure that Cree Youth are proficient in the use of the Quebec Cree dialect, and well-grounded in their Cree culture and history.

Having the courage to understand where we stand, and what we need to do to improve.

Over the past two years, the Board has been pro-active in establishing goals for student success, and objectively assessing and sizing the "strategic gap" that exists between their students "desired situation" and their "current situation" in the areas of both youth and adult education. Several independent assessments have helped determine that this gap is sufficiently large and important enough to warrant a focussed, determined and professionally- managed approach to ensuring the gap is closed significantly over the next 5 years and beyond.

The Board has engaged leading experts in the areas of youth education to establish, in partnership with Cree School Board educators and their leadership, the initiatives and deliverables that will best address the gaps identified for the Cree Youth. The Board has also hired experts in the areas of strategic planning, organizational capacity building and governance, in order to establish the Strategic Direction and the desired "ends", that, in turn, allows the Management Group to establish the Board-wide initiatives and deliverables (the "means") that are necessary to help attain these desired "ends".

Placing our Students' first, in deeds as well as words, and allowing the students' educators to be the "custodians" of their needs, when necessary.

In addition to the educational initiatives and deliverables identified, the Board clearly understands that it's own internal organization and approach to managing has not been consistent with it's desire to position "students and educators first", and that, if this does not change in deeds as well as words, the educational initiatives will not be successful. It is for this reason that the Board has agreed to organize and conduct itself in a role of serving the students and their educators first and foremost, with a clear understanding that the educational groups within the Board, will act as the students' "custodians". In this capacity, they will request and approve operational schedules, deliverables and resourcing.

The Board will achieve this goal through the implementation of a "coalition team" framework, with team leaders tasked with leading and approving strategic deliverable "coalition teams" of staff from both educational and operational departments, working together, side-by-side, towards a common purpose. This realignment will be conducted as an early stage of the strategic action area deliverable (A7)- "Operating Groups that effectively serve the needs of students, first and foremost."

Putting all the pieces together, to help us guide our actions.

The Strategic Plan is the written manifestation of these goals, and what will be done at all levels of the Board, to successfully reach them. It has been designed with the students' success as its primary, overarching goal, and is the Plan which will guide all priorities, resourcing and organizational design of the Board, as well as the Plan by which all staff actions, choices and behaviours will be guided, individually and collectively.

And help us understand how we are doing.

It also includes a "Report Card" that clearly outlines the goals set and the extent to which they have been achieved. The Board has undertaken that it will govern itself with a total focus on these strategic measures and the deliverables associated with their success. The Board also undertakes that it is accountable for the performance on all these measures and will take the necessary action to ensure that successful delivery is rewarded and less than satisfactory performance is met with swift and effective change necessary to get back on track.

A turning point in our history -
Moving ahead with confidence and a shared sense of purpose

The Cree School Board understands the uniqueness of their dual mission of educating students in both core academics and Cree culture and language, as well as the need to support our Adult Students continuing education. While we will be taking immediate and assertive action to improve the core academics for our Cree Youth, and our ability to deliver the key programs to our Cree Adults, we will also begin the work necessary to design and develop a truly Cree Educational System that will imbed all aspects of the Cree Language, Culture and Lifestyle into the fabric of our students' education.

We have shown the courage to look objectively at our past performance, rather than hide from it, and are now prepared to show that same courage in implementing a Strategic Plan that is grounded in academic best-practice, and uniquely crafted to serve our two client groups, the Cree youth and the Cree adult students. By doing so, we will achieve our overriding goal for our students' success- academically, socially and economically.

The following chart outlines the overarching strategic direction that was the basis for developing the Strategic Action Plan, including our mandate, mission, vision, values and the principles under which the Board commits to operate.

Strategic Direction at a Glance: Proposed Future Direction

Mandate

As defined by Section 16 of The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, the Cree School Board has full jurisdiction and responsibility for education within the Category-I and Category-II lands of all Cree communities

Mission

To provide for life-long learning while instilling the Cree identity in partnership with our communities to allow each student to attain the qualifications and competencies to become a successful contributor to the Cree nation and society at large

Vision

A well-educated and successful Cree nation through inspired teaching and valued learning

Values

Souchayimuwiin	Taabwaaoushiiwiin	Dibtaiimuwiin	Souwaayiichiichaawiin	Chishtaiimiiduuwin	Naanahwiikaaduuwiin	Kaachaataawaayiiitaamuwiin
Courage	Honesty	Humility	Compassion	Respect	Sharing	Wisdom

Operating Principles

In order to align with, promote and support our mission, vision and goals, we commit to behave in accordance with the following principles:

1. To exist first and foremost for the benefit of our students
2. To achieve excellence and innovation in quality, standards and leadership
3. To focus on continuous improvement and life long learning
4. To be results-oriented
5. To hold ourselves accountable to our values and are disciplined and transparent in our assigned responsibilities
6. To effectively and efficiently manage our costs and allocation of time and resources
7. To work collaboratively in the organization and with our communities

Goals

1. To achieve excellence in youth education
2. To achieve excellence in post secondary services
3. To achieve excellence in adult education
4. To have effective working relationships with communities and education partners
5. To provide high quality learning opportunities that are responsive, flexible, & accessible
6. To prepare students for life long learning and the world of work
7. To be a high performing school board

Performance Measures

Youth Education

- ✓ % attendance rate of enrolled students
- ✓ # of students registered
- ✓ % graduation rate
- ✓ % of enrolled students that graduate within 5, 6 or 7 years
- ✓ # of parents engaged in CSB activities
- ✓ % retention rate of teachers
- ✓ % retention rate of enrolled students
- ✓ Academic testing results
- ✓ % knowledge of Cree language and culture
- ✓ % parent satisfaction with schools

Adult Education

- ✓ # of applicants (vocational; general upgrade)
- ✓ % graduation rate (vocational; general upgrade)
- ✓ % retention rate of instructors

Post Secondary Education

- ✓ # of sponsored students (high school; mature; vocational)
- ✓ % graduation (completion) rate (university – under graduate and post graduate, college and vocational; per year)
- ✓ Return on investment (graduation rate vs investment; graduation rate vs retention in community)
- ✓ % source of applicants (high school; mature; upgrading: vocational; off community)

Overall

- ✓ Leadership effectiveness (actual measure to be confirmed)
- ✓ Ratio of actual to budgeted expenditures (surplus/deficit)

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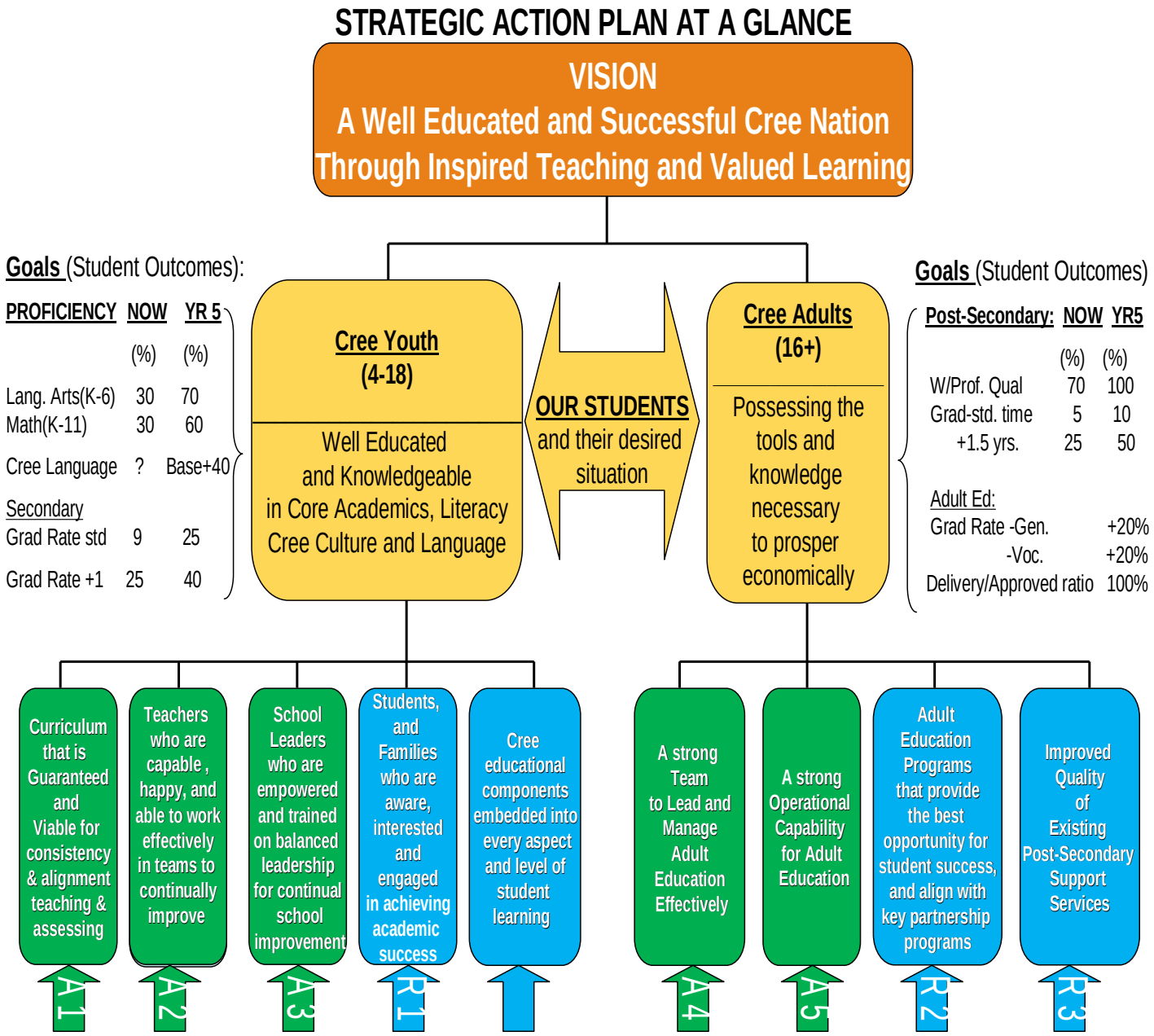
The Overall Strategic Action Plan Framework is summarized in the following chart



The 5 "Strategic Action" and 3 "Strategic Review and Recommendation" Deliverables

Plus 2 Foundational Strategic Deliverables

Strategic Action Deliverable (A6) : An effective Board, focussed on student success

Strategic Action Deliverable (A7): Operating Groups supporting students effectively

SECTION 2 : OUR STRATEGIC GOALS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS, AND YEARLY PROGESS EXPECTATIONS

The Board understands that successful achievement begins by clearly articulating your desired end-state and, in measurable goals, then assessing your progress towards these goals on a regular basis. In keeping with "placing the student first and foremost", all of the strategic goals are set in the area of student outcomes. Together these goals will form the vast majority of what the Board will dedicate its time, and resources, to achieving.

Goals have been set for year 5 (2015) of the plan, with targets set for each year end from year 1 (2011) through to year 5. Measurement of these targets will begin in year 1 of the Strategic Plan, but will only start to form part of the overall Board performance score starting in the year following implementation of the 'Success in Sight' program elements that directly affect them. As an example, Language Arts proficiency results will start to form part of the overall Board performance in 2012, one year after the new Language Arts curriculum is fully implemented. The new Math curriculum will be fully implemented in 2012, with performance on Math proficiency impacting overall Board performance in 2013.

The 'cascading" targets for the Youth Education area outlined in the charts below:

A) Student Academic Success Targets

End of Year	0	1	2	3	4	5
(A1) Youth Education:						
Cree Language Proficiency	??	Base	Base+10	Base+20	Base+30	Base+40
Language Arts Proficiency (CAT)	31	31	40	50	60	70
Math Proficiency (CAT)	31	31	31	40	50	60
Sec V Graduation - STD Time	9	9	9	14	19	25
Sec V Graduation - STD Time + 1 yr.	25	25	25	30	35	40

"Cascading Target " Implementation:

As noted by the coloured numbers in each year, while all categories should be measured from the start, Board performance would only start to be measured 1 year after implementation of the strategic deliverable that impact the category (E.g. Lang. Arts Curriculum is implemented in YR1, so performance starts to be measured in YR2, Math Curriculum implemented in YR2, and performance measured starting in YR3 etc.). Graduation Rates and Secondary Exam Pass Rates should only begin to count towards performance in YR 4, as they likely won't be impacted, by the strategic initiatives, in years 1-3.

In addition to these student success goals, several other "leading indicators", that will directly impact success in Youth education, will be measured and form a part of the overall Board performance score.

These are outlined in the chart on the following page:

B) "Leading Indicator" Targets

End of Year	0	1	2	3	4	5
% Curriculum Completed	15	25	50	75	95	100
Average Hire Time (days)	55	55	50	45	40	35
Teacher Retention	??	70	75	80	80	80
% of substitute teachers	35	30	25	15	15	10
Principals Scorecard	??	60	65	70	75	80
Attendance Rate	65	70	75	80	85	90
Stakeholder Statisfaction Targets						
Teachers	??	55	60	65	70	75
Parents	??	55	60	65	70	75
Employees	??	70	75	80	85	90

With the strategic goals set for student success, ongoing measurement of these "leading indicators" will allow the Board to understand whether progress to the ultimate goals is satisfactory and to take action where it is not.

Adult Education Goals for Student Success

While early in the process, year 5 goals for student success, and their associated yearly targets, have been set for the adult educational areas, based on input from the current management groups. These goals and yearly targets are outlined in the following chart:

B) Adult Student Academic Success Targets

End of Year	0	1	2	3	4	5
Post-Secondary						
Stakeholder Statisfaction Targets						
Academic Qualifications	60	65	70	75	80	90
Graduate Rate - STD	5	7	9	10	10	10
Graduate Rate - STD +1	30	35	40	50	50	50
Students Sponsored	350	400	450	500	550	600
Continuing Education						
Graduation Rate		4%	8%	10%	15%	20%
Students/Year	300	325	375	425	450	475
Vocational Training						
Graduation Rate		2%	5%	10%	15%	20%
Students/Year	150	160	170	190	230	279

In addition to these goals for student success, the Board will also be measuring a very important "leading indicator" of eventual success, namely the percentage of adult education programs approved by the Board that actually get delivered. Currently, only 40% of approved programs get delivered, and the Board will be expecting that this will improve by 20%/year for the next 3 years, to reach 100%.

SECTION 3.0 STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS AND DELIVERABLES - OVERVIEW

The Board has identified seven strategic action area deliverables that require its utmost attention and resolve to successfully attain the goals set for its Cree Youth and Adult students, as follows:

(A1) A guaranteed and viable curriculum

(A2) A high-performing teaching team

(A3) A high-performing school leadership team

→ For the Benefit of Cree Youth Students

(A4) A Strong Team to Lead Adult Education

(A5) A Strong Operational Capability for Adult Ed.

→ For the Benefit of Cree Adult Students

(A6) A High-Performing Board

(A7) Operating Groups supporting students effectively

→ For the Benefit of All Cree Students

In addition to these, the Board have identified four "review and recommendation" areas that have been deemed to be strategically important to future long-term success, but require a proper, strategic review be done as a first step in order to determine where the gaps are largest and the prioritization of what needs to be to close these gaps in future years of the Plan. These review areas are:

(R1) Engaged Students and Families

(R2) A Comprehensive Cree Educational System

→ For the Benefit of Cree Youth Students

(R3) Adult Education Programs that provide the best opportunity for student success, and align with key partnership programs

(R4) Improved Quality of Post-Secondary Programs

→ For the Benefit of Cree Adult Students

Making significant progress towards improvement in the Cree Youth academic success is at the core of the Board's Strategic Plan, as it will build the foundation upon which a successful Cree Nation will exist. It is for this reason that the most significant investments, of the Board, in both people and funding, will be made in the Youth Education sector, with specific emphasis placed on the strategic action and review area deliverables deemed most important to ultimate success, namely:

(A1) A guaranteed and viable curriculum
(A2) A high-performing teaching team
(A3) A high-performing school leadership team, and
(R1) Engaged students and Families
(R2) Cree Educational Components built into all aspects and levels of Youth Education

The first three of these deliverables will be the focus of the School Improvement Program entitled "Success in Sight". This program began in 2010, and will be fully implemented by 2015. It will be the model for continual school improvement from the outset. It is important to understand that this program is successful because of the synergies obtained from working to simultaneously improve the "parts" (curriculum), as well as the "people" and the "schools" (teachers and principals). Research also indicates that the "system" must also change, and this will be dealt with largely by strategic action area deliverable (A6)- "Operating groups that effectively serve the students, first and foremost".

Student and Family Engagement will be another key area of the Board's strategic focus, but The Cree student voice has yet to be properly heard, and best practices in Family Engagement are not yet clearly understood, and this area will, therefore, be the subject of study early in the Plan timeline in order to establish the best practices, and how they can best be adapted to the Cree Students' and Family situations.

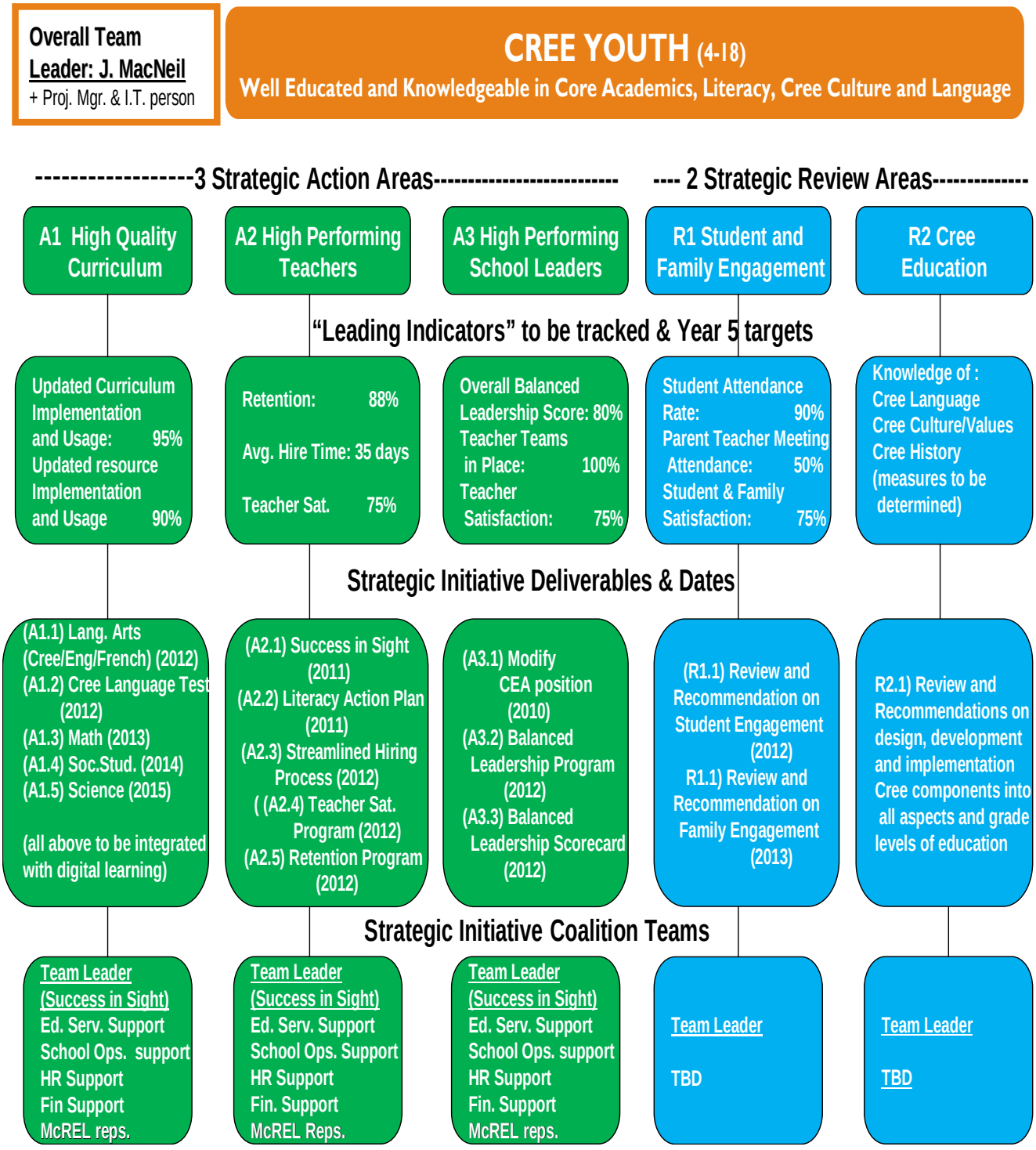
It is intended, generally, that Family Advisory groups will be established and charged with key accountability for two-way communications, recommendations and follow-up.

The area of Cree Educational components will require a longer time frame than five years, but will start with a thorough review of best practices in Native Education, and build the uniqueness of the Cree language, culture and lifestyle into all aspects of the foundational youth education area

While there are many other areas that contribute to successful student outcomes, such as facilities, transportation, funding models etc., the Board has chosen to focus its efforts and resources on those areas that are most closely aligned to student success, and that are in most need of improvement at this time in the Board's evolution.

SECTION 3.1 YOUTH EDUCATION—STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS AND DELIVERABLES:

The chart below summarizes the Strategic Plan components as they relate specifically to Youth Education.



SECTION 3.2 ADULT EDUCATION — STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS AND DELIVERABLES

The Need:

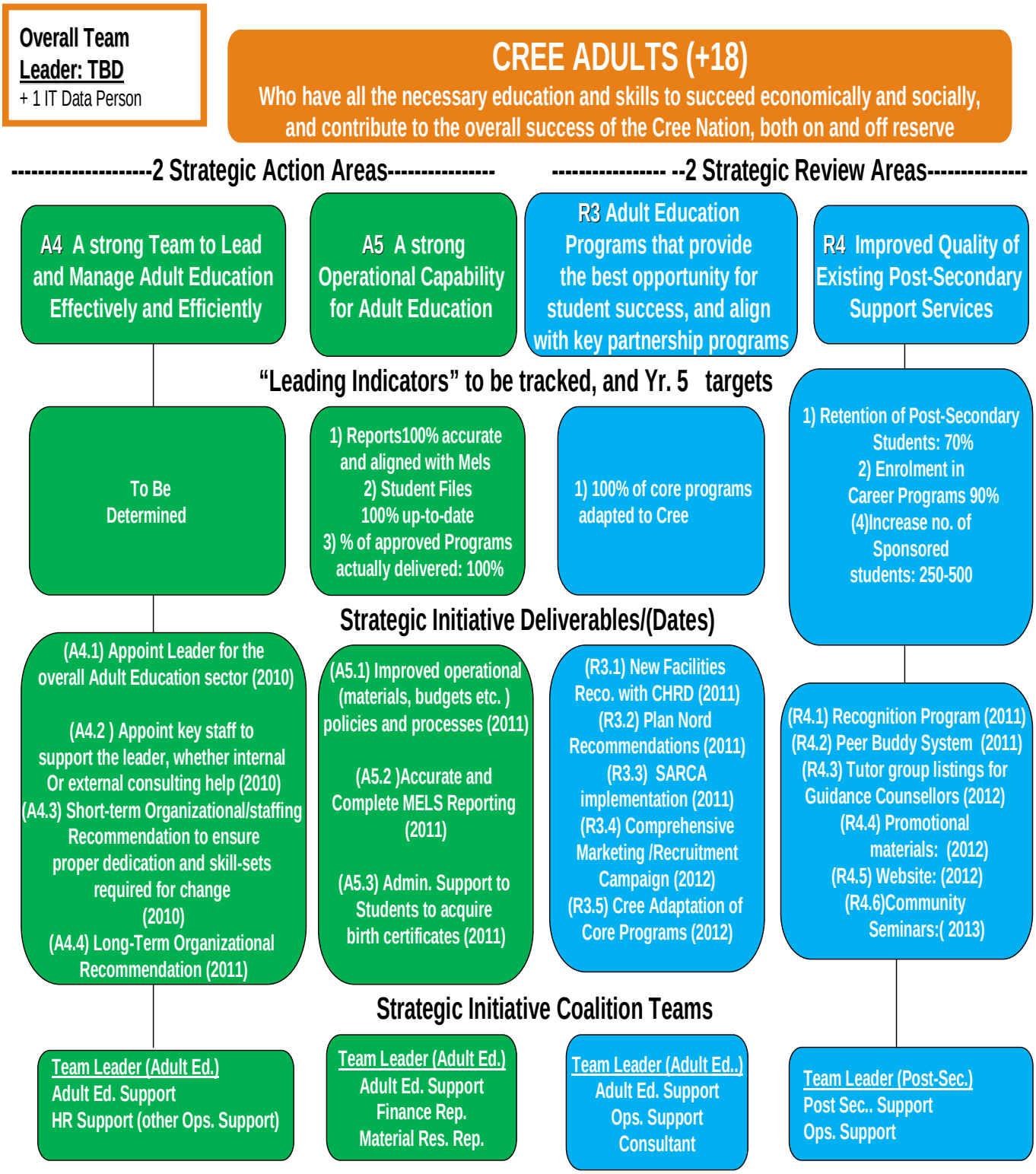
While the CAFSI report of 2007-8 of the Adult Education area was not nearly as in depth as that of the Youth area, it make a few key, high-level observations which are important to address, especially in view of the priority that is required in the General Continuing Education and Vocational Training areas.

Generally, the study found that "delivery in the nine continuing education centres and the Regional Vocational Training Centre is problematic".

More specifically, in the Continuing Education area, there was a "serious lack of facilities and support for students" and "centre consultants" that does the job of a principal but "are not recognized or paid as they should be". In the Vocational Training area, it was observed that the Regional centre has a "weak learning culture" and "does not assume a leadership role".

The Response:

Two Strategic Action Areas (A4 and A5), and two Strategic Review Areas (R3 and R4) have been developed to address the Adult Education strategic needs. These are outlined on the following page.


Overall Team Leader: TBD
+ 1 IT Data Person
CREE ADULTS (+18)
Who have all the necessary education and skills to succeed economically and socially, and contribute to the overall success of the Cree Nation, both on and off reserve
----------2 Strategic Action Areas----------
---------- --2 Strategic Review Areas----------
A4 A strong Team to Lead and Manage Adult Education Effectively and Efficiently
A5 A strong Operational Capability for Adult Education
R3 Adult Education Programs that provide the best opportunity for student success, and align with key partnership programs
R4 Improved Quality of Existing Post-Secondary Support Services
"Leading Indicators" to be tracked, and Yr. 5 targets
To Be Determined
1) Reports100% accurate and aligned with Mels
2) Student Files 100% up-to-date
3) % of approved Programs actually delivered: 100%
1) 100% of core programs adapted to Cree
1) Retention of Post-Secondary Students: 70%
2) Enrolment in Career Programs 90%
(4)Increase no. of Sponsored students: 250-500
Strategic Initiative Deliverables/(Dates)
(A4.1) Appoint Leader for the overall Adult Education sector (2010)
(A4.2) Appoint key staff to support the leader, whether internal Or external consulting help (2010)
(A4.3) Short-term Organizational/staffing Recommendation to ensure proper dedication and skill-sets required for change (2010)
(A4.4) Long-Term Organizational Recommendation (2011)
(A5.1) Improved operational (materials, budgets etc.) policies and processes (2011)
(A5.2)Accurate and Complete MELS Reporting (2011)
(A5.3) Admin. Support to Students to acquire birth certificates (2011)
(R3.1) New Facilities Reco. with CHRD (2011)
(R3.2) Plan Nord Recommendations (2011)
(R3.3) SARCA implementation (2011)
(R3.4) Comprehensive Marketing /Recruitment Campaign (2012)
(R3.5) Cree Adaptation of Core Programs (2012)
(R4.1) Recognition Program (2011)
(R4.2) Peer Buddy System (2011)
(R4.3) Tutor group listings for Guidance Counsellors (2012)
(R4.4) Promotional materials: (2012)
(R4.5) Website: (2012)
(R4.6)Community Seminars:(2013)
Strategic Initiative Coalition Teams
Team Leader (Adult Ed.)
Adult Ed. Support
HR Support (other Ops. Support)
Team Leader (Adult Ed.)
Adult Ed. Support
Finance Rep.
Material Res. Rep.
Team Leader (Adult Ed..)
Adult Ed. Support
Ops. Support
Consultant
Team Leader (Post-Sec.)
Post Sec.. Support
Ops. Support

SECTION 3.3: OVERALL BOARD AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT GROUPS STRATEGIC ACTION AREA AND DELIVERABLES

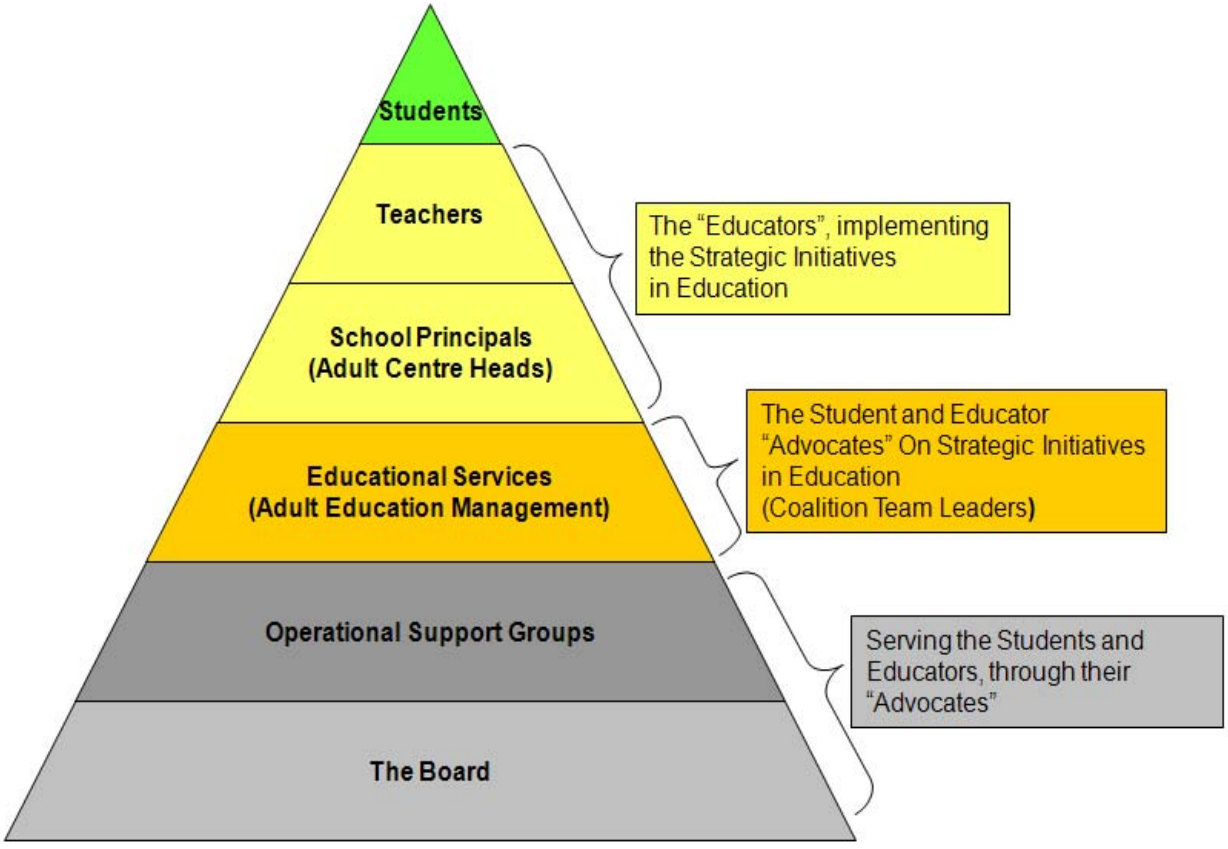
Strategic Action Deliverables: **(A6)- An effective Board that is focussed on student success**
(A7) Operating Groups that serve students efficiently

The Need:

The Board understands that there has to be a significant shift in the manner with which it governs its own priorities and actions, as well as the priorities and actions of the operational groups of the Board. Specifically there has to be a clear shift wherein the Board dedicates their efforts to setting Strategic Direction required to achieve student success, and the Operating Groups align their actions and resources to this strategic direction. While there is no doubt that the Operating groups also have a mandate to be efficient in utilization of their resources, this efficiency mandate come second to the primary reason for their existence - helping in achieving success for the Cree students.

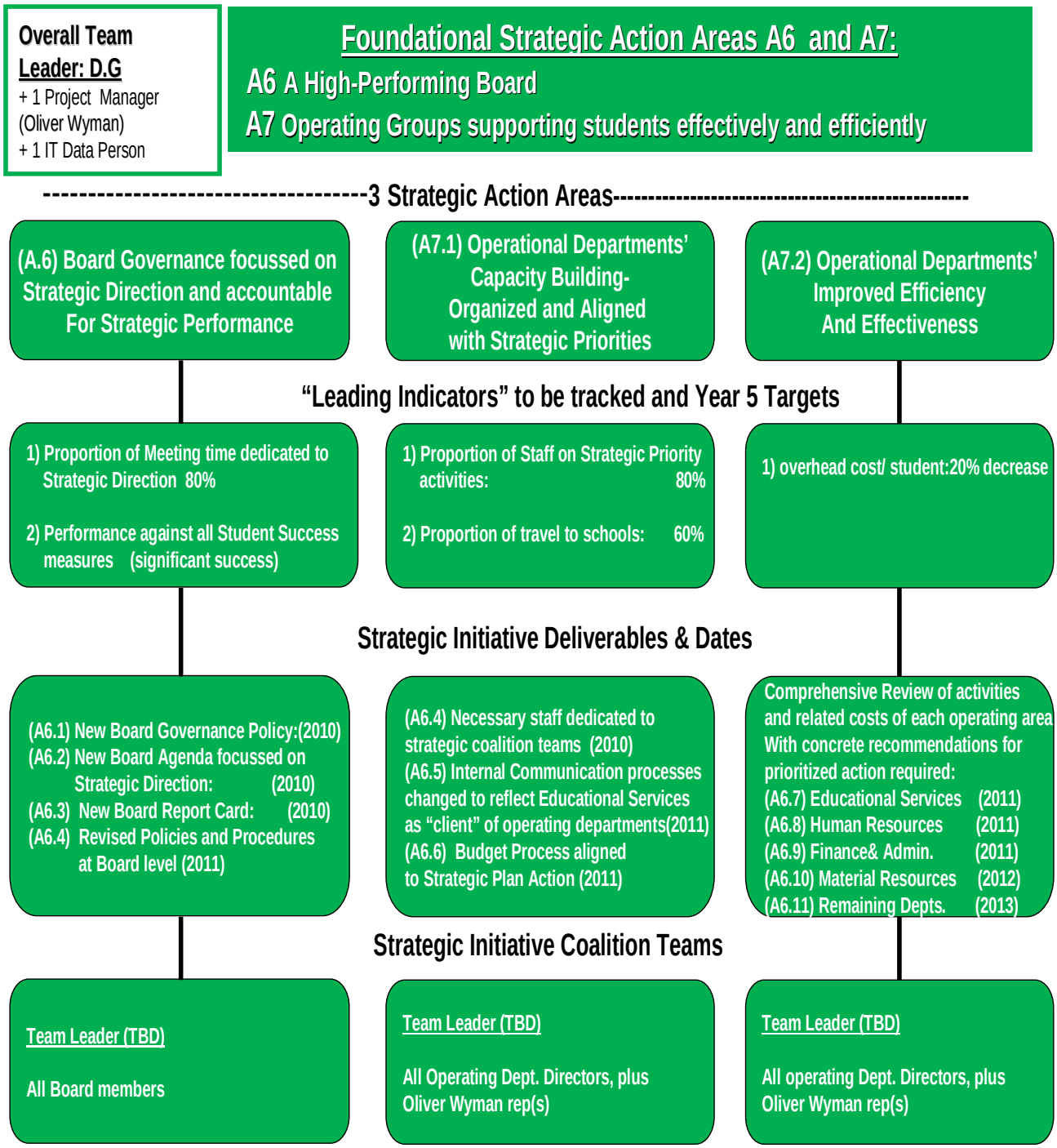
The CAFSI report of 2007-8 referred to the need to shift from "a bureaucratic hierarchy with students at the bottom, to a pyramid of support for schools with students at the top".

Turning the Pyramid of "Service to Students" the Right Way Up



The Response:

To aggressively, and appropriately address this situation, the Board have included the overarching (and underpinning) strategic action area s (A6) and (A7) , with several key targets and deliverables, properly prioritized, as shown in the summary chart below:



SECTION 4: RESOURCE ALLOCATION

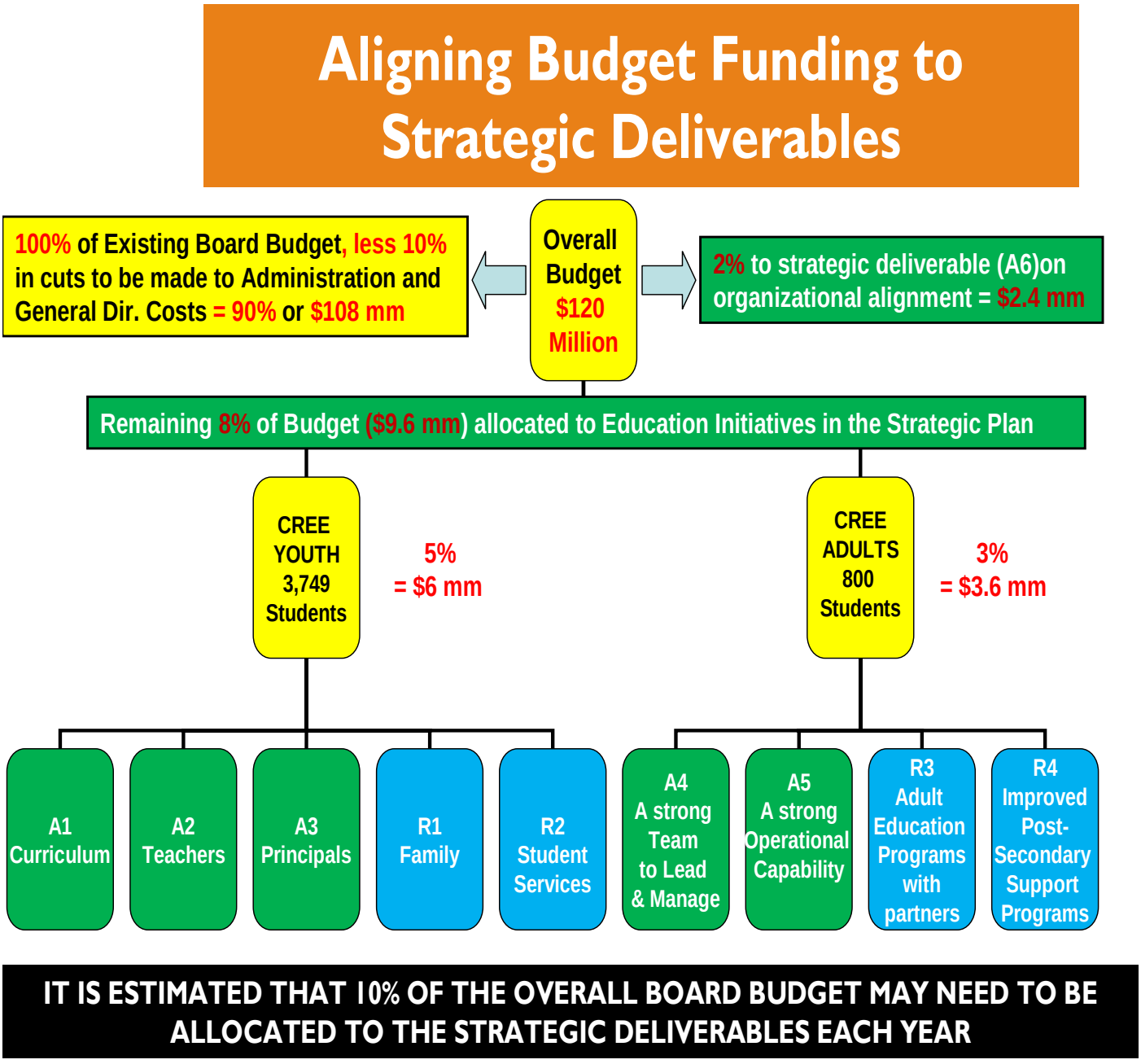
Staffing Allocation;

The resourcing of the Strategic plan has been guided by an overall understanding that the deliverables in the plan are a reflection of the areas that are most important to achieving the student success outcomes, and therefore should be the areas receiving the majority of available resourcing.

The chart below depicts the overall approach that the Board will be taking to the allocation of staffing in the future:

Budget Allocation:

In addition to staffing allocations, budget allocations will be looked at in the same way, ensuring that a significant portion of the overall Board annual budget is allocated against the strategic initiatives. This approach is set out in the chart below:



SECTION 5: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION

All of the strategic goals related to student success, as well as those "leading indicators" of success, form part of the overall Board "Report Card". This "Report Card" will not only serve as a very public and openly shared view of ongoing performance, but will also guide the agenda that the Board will meet on and spend their time on. The proposed Report Card is outlined below:

BOARD LEVEL STRATEGIC REPORT CARD
(With Annual Incremental Targets)

A) Student Academic Success Targets

End of Year	0	1	2	3	4	5
(A1) Youth Education:						
Cree Proficiency	??	Base	+10	+20	+30	+40
Lang. Arts Proficiency (CAT)	31	31	40	50	60	70
Math Proficiency (CAT)	31	31	31	40	50	60
Sec V Grad. Rate - STD Time	9	9	9	14	19	25
Sec V Grad. Rate - STD +1 yr.	25	25	25	30	35	40
(A2) Adult Education:						
Academic Qualif. (post-sec)	60	65	70	75	80	90
Grad. Rate (post-sec.) - STD	5	7	9	10	10	10
Grad. Rate (post-sec.) +1.5	30	35	40	50	50	50
Graduate Rate - Vocational	50	55	60	65	70	70
Graduate Rate - General	50	55	60	65	70	70

B) Strategic Project / Operating Effectiveness Targets

End of Year	0	1	2	3	4	5
(A1) Youth Education:						
% Curriculum Completed	15	25	50	75	95	100
Average Hire Time (days)	55	55	50	45	40	35
Teacher Retention	??	70	75	80	80	80
% of substitute teachers	35	30	25	15	15	10
Principals Scorecard	??	60	65	70	75	80
Attendance Rate	65	70	75	80	85	90
Adult Ed. Program Delivery	40	60	80	100	100	100
Oper. Staff on Strategy	40	45	50	55	60	65
Cost / Student (000's)	28	26	24	22	20	18

C) Stakeholder Satisfaction Targets

Teachers	??	55	60	65	70	75
Parents	??	55	60	65	70	75
Employees	??	70	75	80	85	90

"Cascading Target" - Implementation:

As noted by the coloured numbers in each year, while all categories should be measured from the start. Board performance would only start to be measured one year after implementation of the strategic deliverable that impact the category. (E.g. Lang. Arts Curriculum is implemented in YR1, so performance starts to be measured in YR2, Math Curriculum implemented in YR2 and performance measured starting in YR3 etc.) Graduation Rates and Secondary Exam pass Rates should only begin to count towards performance in YR4, as they likely won't be impacted in years 1—3 by the strategic initiatives.

SECTION 6: CONCLUSION

The Strategic Action Plan outlined herein represents the road map which all Board staff will determine their priorities and actions, and by which they will measure their individual and group success.

As with any strong Strategic Action Plan, some aspects will change from year to year, as part of the annual plan process of the Board. As new information becomes available from the review and recommendation deliverables, and as major changes in the environment occur, the strategic deliverables will be reviewed for currency and relevance. It is important to understand however, that the vast majority of this plan will remain in place over the next 5 years, and well beyond, and realization of the deliverables and the success they are intended to drive, will ensure the successful attainment of the Board's mission and vision.

The challenge now in front of us is to ……

Execute the Plan, with Consistency, Conviction and Commitment.