

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
INFORMATION BRIEFING NOTE**

DATE: February 18, 2018

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Rob Fleming, Minister of Education, for **Information** on Ministerial Order.

SUBJECT: SD 39 (Vancouver School District)

PURPOSE: Update as per Ministerial Order of October 2017, for meeting with Minister Fleming on February 22, 2018.

BACKGROUND:

The VSB is located in the lower mainland of British Columbia. The district has a student population of approximately 49,500 FTEs.

On October 17, 2016 the Minister of Education fired the Vancouver School Board for not meeting the requirement in the School Act to approve a balanced budget. An official trustee was appointed until an elected SD 39 board was inaugurated on October 30, 2017.

In October 2018 a Ministerial Order appointed Dianne Turner as Special Advisor to the Board of Education for School District No.39 (Vancouver). The term of the appointment commenced the day following the removal of the official trustee by OIC 245/17, and the Ministerial Order ends on or before October 31, 2018.

The special advisor was appointed to assist the Board with the following matters:

- a) Establishing best practices for Board governance, including clarifying roles and responsibilities of trustees and distinguishing them from those of senior district management.
- b) Revising the board policy manual to modernize existing policies and clearly delineating governance responsibilities and functions from those of management.
- c) Recruiting and hiring senior staff positions.
- d) Providing orientation, transition and support to new employees to facilitate improved employee satisfaction, performance and retention.
- e) Completing and implementing a seismic mitigation strategy between the Province and the Board.

The special advisor is to submit a report to the Minister in respect of progress made in carrying out those duties. This briefing provides a report as to the progress of each of the above matters.

DISCUSSION:

PHASE 1

Transition from official trustee to elected board

Orientation sessions began on November 4, 2017, during a Saturday workshop with the BCSTA and two school district presentations for trustees. At that first orientation session trustees participated in discussions and were provided presentations on governance, role of the board, legislative framework, stewardship, relationships, board and committee structures, characteristics of effective boards, conducting effective meetings, and decision making. Trustees received an overview of the work of elected officials and heard from two experienced board chairs about the work of boards.

Future workshop topics which would be taking place throughout the year were introduced to the board, such as recruitment and interviewing of the superintendent, facilities, finance, strategic planning, learning services, capital planning, seismic mitigation program, communication and media, employee relations and human resources, digital first strategies, long range facilities planning and aboriginal education. Workshops have been offered every week or two so trustees could learn about their roles and about the VSB faster due to their shortened term in office. Subsequent orientation workshops provided trustees with information about the district and also served to introduce them to staff who were providing the information sessions. In late November the board hired the new Superintendent, and she was then able to participate in the interviews to fill the remaining senior staff positions.

To be worked on during the coming months;

- Governance work will continue throughout the term of this board. In January the board unanimously passed a motion to engage in a thorough analysis of the governance at the VSB and to make any required changes to improve governance structures and processes.

PHASE 2

Transition from Acting Superintendent to new Superintendent and new Senior Staff Team

In January Suzanne Hoffman joined the VSB as the new superintendent. Once she started working in the district, the board were able to begin the journey of creating a strong working relationship with their superintendent and senior team. At the end of January, the last hiring of a senior staff position was completed. Although the Board was inaugurated at the end of October, they had an Acting Superintendent with them throughout November and December, which meant they had not yet fully engaged in activities associated with team building and creating a relationship with the new senior team. The board engaged a consultant to help them begin the process of ensuring that they would develop strong working relationships with senior staff.

Five out of six senior staff are new to their roles with the VSB since August 2017. The Secretary-Treasurer began in August 2017, the Employee Services Executive Director joined the district in November, the Superintendent and one Associate Superintendent started with the VSB at the beginning of January, and the third Associate Superintendent was hired and in place at the end of January. As a result, the senior team are now all in place and have started their work together to create a culture of learning, while also getting to know and learning to work with nine VSB trustees, five of whom are experienced trustees and four are new to the role. A significant amount of effort and time during January and February has been devoted to ensuring those

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relationships are getting off to a good start. Engaging in positive relationships with stakeholders is also vital to the creation of a great school district, and the staff and trustees are working hard to make that happen. Recently trustees and senior staff hosted a dinner with stakeholders, where trustees rotated from table to table to have the opportunity for smaller group dialogue, to get to know stakeholder representatives.

To be worked on in the coming months;

- As a contribution to the governance model in the district, the work of updating and modernizing the policy manual will begin February 19, 2018. This will require significant involvement of an expert in the field of policy writing to assist the board and staff, and within the policies roles and responsibilities of trustees and staff will be clearly delineated.
- Senior staff will be engaging in orientation and team building to facilitate improved employee satisfaction, performance and retention. Superintendent Hoffman and her team are creating strong relationships with the VSB community across the district, and will continue to work with the board to support staff.
- In order to assist with the long term planning of the Seismic Mitigation Program it is recommended that the Vancouver School Board collaborate with the City of Vancouver to hire a full time employee in the Planning and Permits department(s) of the City of Vancouver in order to provide direct ongoing liaison between the VSB and City of Vancouver to allow the processing of building applications and permits to proceed more efficiently and expeditiously.

PHASE 3

Transition – Support for Senior staff and provision of sustainability

While the majority of board governance actions, motions, and decisions, have been respectfully and thoughtfully done with staff, there is still considerable work to be done to ensure that staff are completely comfortable with the actions of the board. From time to time it has been evident that political pressure from outside sources continue to influence the deliberations of the board. Partisan politics has often defined the work of the board at the VSB in past years, forcing a significant amount of the work of staff to focus on issues and topics that do not fall within the mandate or intended work plan and strategic plan of the board. When this occurs, it tends to become a distraction from the important work that needs to get done to improve learning outcomes for students across the district, as it impacts the volume of work of staff and reduces the time staff are available to spend working on the core purpose of the school district. The board must do everything possible to prevent this from happening, to prevent burn out of staff, and to not allow these distractions to interfere with improving the outcomes for VSB learners. It is imperative that the board help staff to focus on the core purpose of the district, and through their actions facilitate improved employee satisfaction, performance and retention. These are important factors in the succession and sustainability of staff that must not be ignored if the district is to become a district that is attractive to future hiring, and to prevent staff from seeking employment in other school districts. There is still significant work to be done to create a healthy work environment for staff, that includes changes in governance and policies, with clearly delineated roles and responsibilities.

CONCLUSION:

Recommendation

Support for Senior Staff

It is recommended that once the Ministerial Order of an appointed special advisor to the Vancouver Board of Education changes or is removed, the specific role of a special advisor to provide support to senior staff be maintained. This support would be available to the Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer of the district, and would involve the opportunity for regular checking in with staff, and would provide assistance when required. The special advisor could provide updates to the Minister of Education and the Deputy Minister when requested or as necessary. This would be seen as proactively assisting senior staff in creating and maintaining a healthy workplace for senior staff at the VSB.

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INFORMATION BRIEFING NOTE**

DATE: February 22, 2018

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Rob Fleming, Minister of Education, for **Information** at the request of Deputy Minister Scott MacDonald

SUBJECT: SD27 Cariboo-Chilcotin Non-Confidence Vote

PURPOSE: Update on the requested assessment of the issues within the school district which were provided by the CCTA.

BACKGROUND:

SD27 is a geographically dispersed district. It has 23 schools and a student population of approximately 4665 FTE.

A vote on a motion of non-confidence was conducted by the CCTA in the Fall, prior to November 26, 2017. The vote of non-confidence included the Board the Superintendent and the Secretary-Treasurer. The *Areas of Concern* stated in the CCTA document and circulated in a press release identify three main areas of concern:

1. Personnel Practices
2. Contract Compliance
3. Financial Budgeting

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Conducted an assessment of the concerns expressed in the vote of non-confidence by the CCTA (Cariboo-Chilcotin Teachers' Association). This was the second vote of non-confidence by the CCTA in the past 12-14 months.

- Met with the Superintendent at the BCSTA Academy - November 23 and 24, 2017, to discuss the CCTA non-confidence vote and to arrange a visit to SD27.
- Three visits to Williams Lake to meet and conduct interviews with the Superintendent, Secretary Treasurer, Board Chair, Vice Chair, Trustees, Representatives from the CCTA, CCPVPA, Directors of Instruction, Parents, Board office staff, IUOE President, former trustees and Assistant Superintendent. (The visits took place November 28 and 29, December 7 and 8 and February 13 and 14.)
- Additional meetings and phone calls with BCSSA Executive Assistant(s) and President, BCASBO Executive Assistant, BCPVPA Executive Assistant, as well as follow up phone calls and in-person meetings with the above listed groups and individuals.

- Worked with the Ministry of Education Finance Department to seek clarity on finance and budget issues in the district and analyze the previous audit process and budget.

DISCUSSION:

INFORMATION GATHERED FROM INTERVIEWS, PHONE CALLS, MEETINGS AND EMAIL

According to most interviewees the school district has been described as having problems for many years. The stories told during the interviews describe poor relationships, and disrespectful behaviour of trustees, staff and community members. Those poor relationships have persisted over long periods of time, and some of the tensions from those previous problematic relationships still remain. Many described the district as being rudderless, without direction, and without a cohesive and coherent plan for improving outcomes for students. Staff describe frustration that they are not included in developing the direction for the district, and do not feel respected as experts in the field or as members of the school district community.

Specific areas of concern expressed during the interviews, phone calls and meetings:

Governance

Several of those interviewed have stated that the board, but more specifically the Board Chair, often engages in the operational work of the district. Additionally, s.22

s.22 have commented that s.22 does not communicate with the board effectively. The board does have appropriate processes and works carefully with policy reviews to ensure the work on the board has a good governance foundation. The issue of communication appears to stem from a problem with relationships across the district and therefore cannot be attributed to the board alone.

General observations of the governance work of the board is that it is functioning well and acting in accordance with appropriate board procedures. s.22 also feel that the complaints about the board are not as much about the procedural work of the board as they are focused more on the relationship issues that exist between the board and the CCTA and CCPVPA.

It has been expressed that current committee structures and processes are not meeting the needs of the community or stakeholders. Often the agendas are developed or changed at the last minute, without adequate notice to stakeholders. Meetings are also cancelled without adequate notice, leading to anger and frustration.

A recent meeting of the February Governance Committee was held and the CCTA and CCPVPA did not attend. When I contacted the president of the CCTA to ask why he did not attend the meeting he said the meeting agenda contained questions that would require input from his executive before he would be able to answer the questions. When I inquired with the district senior staff about the meeting agenda and the expectations of those in attendance they told me that the budget process always began with a set of questions, and that the stakeholders were not being asked to answer the questions that day. They were being asked to bring the questions back to their membership and then report back at the next Governance Committee meeting a month later. This lack of communication, and lack of trust and respect, is an example of the type of issues facing the district.

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A second concern about governance that has been expressed centers around the dual CEO roles of the Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer. Stakeholders suggest that this dual COE model contravenes the district policy and this has led to mistrust of the board. The model of a dual CEO reporting to the board was to have been a temporary measure, while an Acting Superintendent was in place. Once the permanent Superintendent was hired the plan was to revert to the usual organization structure of one CEO reporting to the board. The Superintendent has now been in place since April 2017. To many people the continued dual CEO role signals that the board intends to continue with the model. Many have commented that they do not know who the leader is, therefore it creates confusion about who has the ultimate decision-making authority. A deeper concern frequently expressed was that this dual CEO model seems to have led to a reduced focus on student achievement and the educational goals of the district. Some have expressed that the district has been too focused on the business operations in the district, which has tended to override the district's educational goals and objectives.

Finance and Budget

According to those interviewed the Budget and finance processes do not have adequate input from stakeholders and that communications about the budget and finance must be improved in order to build trust and gain respect from the field.

The district currently relies on utilizing the budget surplus midway in the year, rather than building it in to the budget for the entire year, which would allow much more efficient use of those funds. The Ministry of Education Financial Audit has made the suggestion during the audit that the district should change this practice.

There is a lack of trust around the district budget and finances, and this is viewed as a contributor to the low morale in the district.

Leadership

School and District Leaders have expressed mistrust and non-confidence in s.22

s.22 They feel they have been left out of important decision-making. They also suggest that problems in the district have often been left for far too long, to the point of more serious issues arising, and creating dysfunction and burn out in school and district leaders.

Interviewees have suggested that there is a 'power triangle' that all staff and community members must navigate in order to get anything done. This power triangle is described as consisting of the s.22

s.22 and that this power triangle does not listen to other community members, making them feel unvalued and not important.

Concern has been expressed that s.22 does not include the senior education staff in important education decisions. There are three highly experienced Directors of Instruction and concern is that they are not being included nor consulted about important decisions, such as Principal or Vice Principal transfers or hires. Leaders in schools and the district also expressed that there is too little emphasis on student learning and instructional practices in the district, and far too much emphasis on the business and financial side of the district

The relationship that the board and senior staff have with the CCTA and the CCPVPA is very poor. Comments have been made which indicate this had been bad for some time. While it is accepted that there will be disagreements and differences of opinion, members of the board have all suggested that the board has not been shown respect by the CCTA or the CCPVPA, and that this needs to be remedied. The CCTA and CCPVPA have stated a similar concern, that they do not feel they have been shown respect by the board.

Morale (relationships, trust, respect),

Morale has been expressed as being at an 'all-time low'. The district has a few staff on leave and it has been suggested that more will be going on leave or will leave SD 27 to work in other districts. Most of those interviewed discussed the cause of the low morale across the district stemming from poor relationships, lack of respect, and a complete lack of trust.

The CCPVPA contract should have been settled many months ago, and although there was patience early on in the year because everyone understood the extreme stresses due to the fires and evacuations, that good will was said to no longer exist. The Superintendent, Secretary Treasurer and Board Chair had initially insisted that the salary increases the Principals and Vice Principals receive must come from the resources within their existing contract. This led to a morale issue among principals and vice principals. On February 19, 2018 the contract was settled, with approval by the board being required at the February board meeting, and the district did not insist that the cost of the salary increase come from the existing contract.

Vision

Effective organizations often have created a shared vision and/or a strategic plan that guides the direction of the organization, with most members of the organization having provided input into developing that shared vision. It has been over 12 years since the School District 27 has conducted a visioning exercise, and those interviewed insisted that it is absolutely essential to engage in a new process now to give the district direction. Many have stated that the district lacks direction and feels rudderless. The recently developed strategic plan has provided some guidance for district direction, however, it is missing key elements that a vision process can provide, particularly related to culture and values.

Culture

The culture of the school district is not positive, nor is it focused on learning. It will take time to address this issue, through trust building, intentional actions, and focused attention on improving the culture.

Communication

It is a challenge to determine where the communications have gone wrong. Relationship issues have further exacerbated communication problems in SD 27. Some of those involved are not accepting their responsibilities in these issues and are instead placing blame on others. This will require a sustained commitment from all parties to contribute to changing the narrative about SD27.

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CONCLUSION:

Many of the concerns expressed in the CCTA vote of non-confidence stem from issues of respect, relationships, and trust. To address these concerns long term measures and actions will be required. It will require a sustained focus on improving the culture and building a sense of a community, on behalf of the learners.

It is imperative that the differences and issues be dealt with, then the focus must shift to help school district community members create an improved culture and create a shared district vision, that will allow improvement through sustained short and long-term goals and actions. In order to achieve long term improvement in the district, a commitment must be made by all members of the school district community to do what is necessary to address the areas of concern expressed during the interviews.

Support and Advisory Option:

Special Advisor

To ensure the issues in SD27 are addressed it is recommended that a Special Advisor be assigned to oversee the progress being made with respect to the recommendations within this report. The Advisor would report to the Deputy Minister and Minister of Education at regular intervals throughout the year regarding the progress being made.

Support Team

It is recommended that a team of three people work with the district to assist them in focusing on solving these issues. The team would conduct a more thorough analysis of the issues and provide support and follow up within the district.

Possible Support Team member composition:

Superintendent - retired
Secretary-Treasurer- retired
BCSTA – possible former Board Chair

Recommendations

- 1) Conduct a governance and policy review to clarify and delineate the operational and governance roles and responsibilities of the board and the staff. This would include the terms of reference, processes and functions of committees.
- 2) Review and analyze the function and effectiveness of the dual CEO roles in the district leadership organization.
- 3) s.22

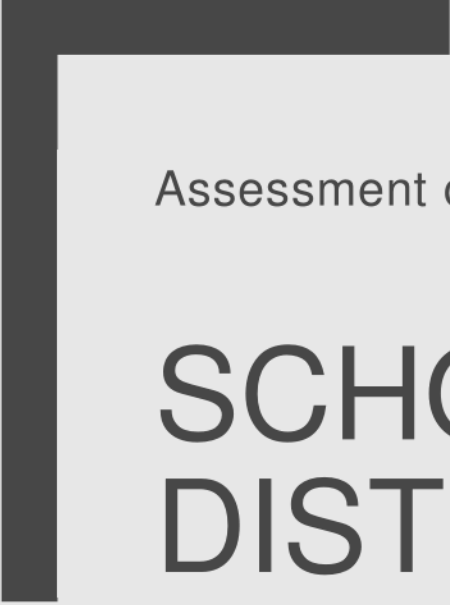
- 4) Engage in a visioning process, to create a shared vision, mission and values. Include all district leaders, staff and school communities in the process. Align the district goals and resource allocation and professional learning with the goals of the vision.

s.22

- 6) Develop a budget process that thoroughly engages the community, ensuring that when questions arise during the process inquiries receive timely and respectful responses.

s.13,s.17

- 8) Develop and implement a leadership program to build leadership capacity in the district and engage the school and district leadership team in learning together as a community.
 - 9) Engage an expert in culture building and restorative relationship building to do a thorough analysis of what can be done to improve what those interviewed described as a district engulfed in mistrust, disrespect and low morale and to beginning the hard work of creating a healthy organizational culture.
 - 10) Analyze and address the concerns expressed about the ‘power triangle’.
 - 11) Work to develop a respectful, professional relationship between the CCTA, Senior staff and the Board.
 - 12) Engage a communications expert to assist the district with changing the narrative about SD 27, and provide workshops for staff and trustees on effective and transparent communications within the district.
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Assessment of Concerns

SCHOOL DISTRICT 27

Dianne Turner (Special Advisor)

Province of British Columbia



TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference for the assessment are as follows:

- Conduct an assessment of the concerns expressed in the vote of non-confidence by the CCTA (Cariboo-Chilcotin Teachers' Association)
- Work with the Ministry of Education Finance Department to seek clarity on finance and budget issues in the district.
- Report to the Deputy Minister and Minister of Education on the assessment of concerns and make recommendations for possible actions once all the interviews and visits to the school district have concluded.

ASSESSMENT APPROACH

- Initial meetings with the Superintendent at the BCSTA Academy - November 23 and 24 2017, to discuss the CCTA non-confidence vote.
- Deputy Minister – meeting November 29th. Decision was made to visit the school district and assess the issues detailed in the non-confidence vote by the CCTA.
- Three visits to Williams Lake to meet and conduct interviews with the Superintendent, Secretary Treasurer, Board Chair, Vice Chair, Trustees, Representatives from the CCTA, CCPVPA, Directors of Instruction, Parents, Board office staff, IUOE President, former trustees and Assistant Superintendent. The visits took place November 28 and 29, December 7 and 8 and February 13 and 14.
- Additional meetings and phone calls with BCSSA Executive Assistant(s) and President, BCASBO Executive Assistant, BCPVPA Executive Assistant, as well as follow up phone calls and in-person meetings with the above listed groups and individuals.
- Assistance from Ministry of Education Finance Department – Analysis of audit process and budget.

BACKGROUND

A vote on a motion of non-confidence was conducted by the CCTA in the Fall, prior to November 26, 2017. The *Areas of Concern* stated in the CCTA document and circulated in a press release identify three main areas of concern:

1. Personnel Practices
2. Contract Compliance
3. Financial Budgeting

In November 2017, a motion of non-confidence by the CCTA was voted on. In addition to having non-confidence in the Board, the current motion of non-confidence included as part of the motion, non-confidence in the Superintendent and the Secretary-Treasurer.

Issues identified and claims made in the CCTA document of non-confidence:

1. Personnel Practices
 - Undesirable work situation for the Assistant Superintendent
 - Failure to address interpersonal situations until they escalate into harassment
 - Relying on ex-Senior Managers to conduct investigations
 - Creating unpleasant work scenarios to drive people out of worksites
 - Threatening to place evacuated members on unpaid leave during fire evacuations
 - Failure to compensate lost prep time due to TTOC shortage – grievance denied
 - Contact Committees do involve CCTA members but Board and Sr. Team do not involve them in decisions
 - CCPVPA President assigned to rural position – seen as punitive in nature
 - Communication processes inhibit two-way communication.
2. Contract Compliance
 - Failure to respond to CCTA requests since November 2016 regarding compliance
 - District filed a 'fraudulent staffing request claiming existing staff under CEF submission. Attempted to transfer CEF funding to General Operating Fund. Ministry did not permit this.
 - Board denied Staffing Appeal- Forest Grove Elementary – June staffing
 - District did not respond to request for portable at Cataline.
 - Reduced non-enrolling service level to minimum required levels.
 - Support Services codes all Severe Behaviors as Category H to drive funding, and keeping it out of composition compliance.
 - Staffing at maximum class size and composition levels.
 - Alternate program exceeding staffing ratio.
 - School data not supplied until day before four-party dispute resolution meeting.
 - Still no non-enrolling data generated and shared with the local.

3. Financial Budgeting

- Audited Financial Statements show large Operating Fund surpluses every year.
- Amended budget in February claims that the surplus has been allocated to staffing.
- The additional staffing is never hired and the surplus grows each year.
- \$350,000 computer purchase did not go through the Tech Committee. The union filed a step 3 grievance.
- The Ministry calculated that over \$800 per student is unspent each year and is added to accumulated surplus.
- 2017-2018 budgeted less money for staffing and non-enrolling despite compliance requirements.

ASSESSMENT

INFORMATION GATHERED FROM INTERVIEWS, PHONE CALLS, MEETINGS AND EMAIL

According to most interviewees, for many years, the school district has been described as having problems. Many of the stories told during the interviews go back many years, and describe poor relationships, and disrespectful behaviour of trustees, staff and community members. Those poor relationships have persisted over long periods of time, and some of the tensions from those previous problematic relationships still remain. Many described a district which appears to be rudderless, without direction, and without a cohesive and coherent plan for improving outcomes for students. Staff describe frustration that they are not included in developing the direction for the district, and do not feel respected as experts in the field or as members of the school district community.

To change the concerns described it will require long term measures and actions to create an improved culture, and to build a sense of a community that brings people together working on behalf of the learners. It is imperative that the differences and issues that people have with one another be dealt with, then the focus must shift to have all school district community members get on with the work of creating a vision, and then setting directions for the district that will allow improvement through sustained short and long term goals and actions.

In order to achieve long term improvement in the district, a commitment must be made by all members of the school district community to do what is necessary to address the areas of concern expressed during the interviews; governance, finance and budget, leadership, morale (relationships, trust, respect), vision, culture and communication.

Governance

It has been stated by several of those interviewed that the board, but more specifically the Board Chair, engages in the operational work of the district. Additionally, s.22

s.22 have commented that s.22 has not communicated with the board effectively as they are unaware of the concerns expressed. The community and staff have stated that the process of developing the agenda for board and committee meetings has prevented stakeholders from communicating in a way that engages them and supports the work of the staff and stakeholders, and in one recent situation this tended to anger a school community. A comment from some people was that the district has been too focused on the business operations in the district, which has tended to override the district's educational goals and objectives.

General observations of the governance work of the board is that it is functioning well and acting in accordance with appropriate board procedures. s.22

feel that the complaints about the board are not as much about the procedural work of the board as they are focused more on the relationship issues that exist between the board and the CCTA and CCPVPA.

It has been expressed that current Committee structures and processes are not meeting the needs of the community or stakeholders. Often the agendas are developed or changed at the last minute, without adequate notice to stakeholders. Meetings are also cancelled without adequate notice, leading to mistrust and frustration.

The CCTA and CCPVPA did not attend the February Governance Committee. When I connected with the president of the CCTA to ask why he had not attended the meeting he mentioned that the agenda contained questions that would require input from his executive before he would be able to answer the questions. When I inquired with the Senior staff they told me this was always the way the budget process began, and that the stakeholders were not being asked to answer the questions that day but were instead being asked to bring the questions back to their membership and then report back at the next Governance Committee meeting a month later. This lack of communication and lack of trust and respect is indicative of the issues facing the district.

A second concern about governance that has been expressed centers around the dual CEO roles of the Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer. Stakeholders suggest that this dual COE model contravenes the district policy and this has led to mistrust of the board. The model of dual CEO role was to have been temporary, while there was a temporary Acting Superintendent. To many people this dual CEO reporting situation means that they do not know who the leader is, therefore it creates confusion about who has the ultimate decision-making authority. A larger concern frequently expressed was that this dual CEO model has led to reduced focus on achieving the educational goals of the district.

Recommendations

- 1) Conduct a governance and policy review to clarify and delineate the operational and governance roles and responsibilities of the board and the staff. This would include the terms of reference, processes and functions of committees.
- 2) Review and analyze the function and effectiveness of the dual CEO roles in the district leadership organization.

Finance and Budget

According to those interviewed the Budget and finance processes do not have adequate input from stakeholders and that communications about the budget and finance must be improved in order to build trust and gain respect from the field.

The district currently relies on utilizing the budget surplus midway in the year, rather than building it in to the budget for the entire year, which would allow much more efficient use of those funds. The Ministry of Education Financial Audit has suggested that the district utilizes the surplus as part of balancing the budget, however, it uses those funds midway in the year rather than throughout the year. The recommendations can be found in the XXXX Report.

There is a significant lack of trust around the district budget and finances, and this is viewed as a contributor to low morale in the district.

Recommendations

- 3) Develop a budget process that thoroughly engages the community, ensuring that when questions arise during the process inquiries receive timely and respectful responses.

s.22

Leadership

School and District Leaders have expressed mistrust and non-confidence in s.22

s.22 They feel they have been left out of important decision making and have felt that problems in the district have often been left for far too long, to the point of more serious issues arising, and creating dysfunction and burn out in school and district leaders.

Concern has been expressed that s.22 is not including the education staff in important education decisions. There are three highly experienced Directors of Instruction and they are not being included nor consulted about important decisions, such as Principal or Vice Principal transfers or hires.

It has been expressed by all leaders interviewed that there is too little emphasis on student learning and instructional practices in the district, and far too much emphasis on the business and financial side of the district.

The CCPVPA contract should have been settled many months ago, and although there was patience early on in the year because everyone understood the extreme stresses due to the fires and evacuations, that good will no longer exists. The Superintendent, Secretary Treasurer and Board Chair have insisted that the salary increases the Principals and Vice Principals receive must come from the resources in their existing contract. Other school districts in the region, and other parts of the province, do not expect exempt staff salary increases to come from already existing compensation or benefits within the exempt staff contracts, and this has led to morale issues.

The relationship that the board and senior staff have with the CCTA is very poor. Many comments have been made which indicate this had been bad for some time. It is essential that this be addressed immediately. While it is accepted that there will be disagreements and differences of opinion, members of the board have all suggest that the board has never been shown respect by the CCTA or the CCPVPA, and that this needs to be remedied.

Recommendations

s.22

s.13,s.17

- 7) Work to develop a respectful, professional relationship between the CCTA, Senior staff and the Board.
- 8) Develop and implement a leadership program to build leadership capacity in the district and engage the school and district leadership team in learning together as a community.

Morale

Morale has been expressed as being at an 'all-time low'. The district has a few staff on leave and it has been suggested that more will be going on leave or will leave SD 27 to work in other districts. Most of those interviewed discussed the cause of the low morale across the district stemming from poor relationships, lack of respect, and a complete lack of trust.

Interviewees have suggested that there is a 'power triangle' that all staff and community members must navigate in order to get anything done. This power triangle is described as consisting of s.22

s.22 and that this power triangle does not listen to other community members, making them feel unvalued and not important.

Recommendations

9) Engage an expert in culture building and restorative relationship building to do a thorough analysis of what can be done to improve what those interviewed described as a district engulfed in mistrust, disrespect and low morale.

10) Analyze and address the concerns expressed about the 'power triangle'.

Vision

Every effective organization has a shared vision and/or a strategic plan that members of the community use as a guide to the direction in the organization and have had some input into developing. It has been over 12 years since the School District 27 has conducted a visioning exercise, and those interviewed insisted that it is absolutely essential to give the district direction. Many state that the district lacks direction and is rudderless.

Recommendations

11) Engage in a visioning process, to create a shared vision, mission and values. Include all district leaders, staff and school communities in the process. Align the district goals and resource allocation and professional learning with the goals of the vision.

Culture

The culture of the school district is not positive, nor is it focused on learning. It will take time to address this issue, through trust building, intentional actions, and attention to improving the culture.

Recommendations

12) Engage an expert in culture building to assist the district in beginning the hard work of creating a healthy organizational culture.

Communication

When an organization is experiencing the problems facing SD 27 there is often a challenge to determine where the communications have gone wrong. Relationship issues have further exacerbated communication problems in SD 27. Some of those involved are not accepting their responsibilities in these issues and are instead placing blame on others. This will require a sustained commitment from all parties to contribute to changing the narrative about SD 27.

Recommendations

- 13) Engage a communications expert to assist the district with changing the narrative about SD 27, and provide workshops for staff and trustees on effective and transparent communications within the district.

Support and Advisory Option:

Special Advisor

As a formal way of addressing the issues in SD 27 it would be helpful to assign a Special Advisor to oversee the progress being made with respect to the recommendations made within the report. The Advisor would report to the Deputy Minister and Minister of Education at regular intervals throughout the year.

Resource Team

It is recommended that a team of three people work with the district to assist them in focusing on solving these issues. The team would conduct a more thorough analysis of the issues and provide support and follow up within the district.

Possible Resource Team member composition:

Superintendent - retired
Secretary-Treasurer- retired
BCSTA – possible former Board Chair

Issues to address with the district:

- Review of board governance processes, and the work of the board including policy, committee structures, and the decision to have a dual CEO model. When a new board is elected in October 2018 the team would assist the district with creating and providing an orientation process for trustees.
- Review the district Vision and Strategic plan. It has been over 12 years since the district conducted a visioning exercise. Help to develop a visioning process.
- Leadership team development, including school-based leaders and district-based leaders.

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- Analysis of the culture in the district, and if necessary enlist the support of an expert in culture building to get the district moving toward a better culture, based on trust, respect and strong relationships.
- Analysis of what many have described as power triangle.
- Assist the board in developing a communications plan to improve the narrative about the school district and to provide training in effective communications for staff and trustees.