



CENTRAL OFFICE REVIEW FOLLOW-UP

Palliser Regional Division No. 26

April 2015

This review was presented as a verbal report to the Board of Trustees April 14, 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Board appoint a Corporate Treasurer forthwith, notify the Minister of this appointment and arrange for the bonding of the Corporate Treasurer as per section 116 of the School Act. Policies 11 and 12 appear to delegate this duty to the Superintendent.
Dale Backlin was appointed as Interim Corporate Treasurer in February 2015.
2. The Superintendent appoint the Corporate Secretary as FOIP head.
February 2014, Joanne Siljak was appointed as FOIPP Coordinator.
3. The Superintendent hire a Treasurer with an accounting designation, exemplary interpersonal skills and a stellar work record, thereby returning the finance department complement to three FTE.
Wayne Braun was hired in April 2014 and began work in June 2014.
4. Following the transition period, the Treasurer again report directly to the Superintendent/CEO.
Corporate Treasurer, Wayne Braun, reports to Superintendent, Kevin Gietz.
5. The Superintendent ensure the Division becomes compliant with Occupational Health and Safety requirements.
All staff are completing OH&S courses that pertain to their jobs through the program, Public School Works.
6. The board and senior management work in concert to strengthen the organizational culture relative to dealing with concerns and following defined organizational structure.
The process for bringing concerns forward should be clarified for all staff and trustees. Rumors and misinformation are unhealthy in any organization. When concerns or complaints are voiced, they should consistently be directed to the person who is the focus of the concern and, if not resolved, the issue should be advanced to that person's superior, and so on, until the matter is resolved. All staff have to feel safe. That means those who may have a concern are safe to voice it to their superior in a professional manner. In addition, the person who is the subject of the concern must feel safe from innuendo, falsehood, and malicious gossip. The ATA code of ethics process - which requires a member to go to their colleague first with a concern and then through the chain of command- is professional, ethical, mature and a positive way of dealing with concerns. When a matter has been advanced through the chain of command and the complainant's position has not been accepted, the professional and mature response is to accept the decision and move on. They no longer have a problem but rather they have a fact of life.

In addition, when corrective action is taken or when redirection is received, the appropriate response is for the recipient to ensure there is clear understanding of both what the receiver has done in the past and what is expected in the future. Again, if there are differences, the matter is appealable through the chain of command. The Board has indicated its position that attempted end runs to a trustee by any staff frustrates due process and the resolution of root issues; it also creates distrust. Administrative procedures in place currently provide direction relative to the above matters, so the recommendation is to review them for increased compliance.

7. The Board approve the expansion of the physical space available for Palliser School Division central office staff and, where feasible, move rents to market rates.
Lease spaces are now rented at fair market value. The space previously occupied by Southwest Family Services is now being utilized by Human Resources, payroll, technology and Education Services Directors.
The move of HR and Payroll to the vacant NE corner of the PEC building has both positive and negative components. It ensures a more private space for visitor meetings and confidential matters, but now separates the close linkage before experienced between payroll and finance.
Staff have more space to do their work.
8. The Board and senior management adopt LEAN and organizational abandonment practices.
The Board's recent negotiations with CUPE resulted in a LEAN practice. More specifically, the parties agreed that the Division would continue to pay twice a month, but the middle payment would be a set advance, which reduces the workload for payroll. In this case, value was maintained at less cost.

Finance Department:

- All expense claims are reviewed by the Purchasing Clerk for accuracy and receipts and then given to Corporate Treasurer for sign off on behalf of the Superintendent, other than his own claim.
- All credit card logs are reviewed for accuracy and receipts and then given to the Corporate Treasurer for sign off on behalf of the Superintendent other than his own log.
- All Facilities and Transportation invoices and contracts are given to the Corporate Treasurer for review and sign off and then processed for payment.
- All PD claim forms are given to Director of Learning Tom Hamer for review and sign off on the value of the event and then are given to the Corporate Treasurer for review and sign off on the financial components including receipts. They are then given to payroll/AP for processing.
- Payroll work will not be fully reduced until SRB is fully implemented and work flow processes are enhanced. This is a work in progress.
- The move of the Facilities Supervisor and support person into the main Central Office building ensures better supervision and collaborative environment.

HR/Payroll/Technology Responses:

- Bell Mobility Government of Alberta contracts have created efficiencies for the Purchasing Clerk as there is no need for staff to contact her in advance of travelling to the U.S. or abroad. These efficiencies have saved the board an estimated \$30,000 so far this year. Expected savings over 12 months is close to \$90,000.
- Moving payroll to a semi-monthly rather than bi-weekly structure reduced the number of pay periods per year by two to 24, saving time on payroll data entry.
- This 95-hour time savings will be seen for the first time in July 2015, when three pay Fridays will be managed with two pays. Considerable effort was made to explain to staff the why and how of the payroll changes.

- A Google sheet of changes to non-certificated staff has ensured consistency between Human Resources and Payroll staff. Payroll also updates My Budget information regarding non-certificated staff.
- Streaming of workflows through the creation of a support staff Google form and spreadsheet ensures consistent and accurate information is shared in real time with a variety of stakeholders in Central Office. This includes new hires, resignations, terminations and medical leaves.
- With the addition of a Director of Human Resources, a greater number of HR functions are now being completed by the HR department. In the past, all Directors and Associate Superintendents spent significant time on human resource functions such as short listing, reference checking and conducting interviews. Now the vast majority of these activities are completed by the human resources department. This frees Directors and Associate Superintendents to complete important work within in their areas of responsibility.
- The move to SRB will create significant efficiencies within the human resources and payroll departments. For example, the need for manual data entry will decrease substantially. With SRB, most of this entry will be done real time, by the employee at the school site. Currently, the vast majority of this data entry is completed by payroll. This is a time consuming process that will be virtually eliminated with SRB
- Communication with payroll has been streamlined. Associate Superintendent (Human Resources) Ken Garinger (certificated staff) and Director of Human Resources Mike Nightingale (non-certificated) serve as the first line of communication for payroll questions. This has relieved some of the burden from payroll by eliminating some interruptions, especially as we get close to a payroll deadline
- In order to make timelines for payroll more manageable, the date schools need to have time sheets and teacher absences sheets into central office was moved forward by two days. This provided additional time to ensure the payroll could be completed in a timely manner and properly audited. To assist with this change, the days inter-office mail is picked up were altered.
- University student teacher placement requests now come through the HR department to ensure placements are appropriate to the principal's ability to host a student teacher and the teacher's ability to provide meaningful guidance and support. This reduces interruptions for principals.
- Adjustment to the collaborative day structure is an example of a lean process. Through the Board and senior management's endorsement of hosting the third division-wide collaboration day at three different sites, a reduction in travel time and travel costs were enjoyed by the majority of teachers. Teachers could attend in Coaldale, Vulcan or Calgary and join other members of their learning groups by Google Hangout. The Hangouts were conducted using cameras and Chromebooks from schools, on loan for the day.
- Palliser purchased solid state computer drives for use in new teacher computers. This was a substantial savings over purchasing the desktops directly from the manufacturer with the solid state drives included
- The new hard drives that were removed from the newly purchased teacher computers were used to upgrade older teacher desktop computers. This allowed us to replace technology in schools with something better at no cost
- The laptops replaced by the newly purchased teacher desktops in Coalhurst were used to replace aging laptops in use by our Colony teachers
- Some of these laptops were provided to Palliser Beyond Border teachers to provide them with newer technology at no added cost.

- Old desktop computers from the classroom were used to create network monitors at all schools, except in Calgary schools that maintain their own networks. Free software on them allows Technology Services to analyze network traffic from our schools, data which will aid future technology planning and decision-making. Free UPS monitoring software on these computers also allows us to manage and safeguard technology infrastructure in schools.
 - Schools requesting large TV displays for digital messaging were provided a free option using SMART TVs with Google to avoid the cost of cable runs and computer purchases.
 - Laptops for a student pilot project at Barons School were provided from
 - The laptops that went to Barons for the student pilot project were provided for free from computer for schools program, at no cost for hardware.
 - Technology Services supported the setup and implementation of Blackboard Collaborate's service for online instruction. Usage by students can be tracked to help guide ongoing use. Blackboard Collaborate meeting rooms are also used for Palliser Beyond Borders staff meetings to save travel time.
 - Google Hangouts have been used to connect Calgary Christian and Brant Christian School, following a failure of videoconference equipment. There was no cost for hardware.
 - The first stage of a backup and archiving system has been completed to reduce down time should there be a significant failure of Palliser technology. Backed up information is now stored for a year.
 - Older refurbished servers and arrays were used to test the effectiveness of creating a fail-over cluster with virtualized equipment to reduce future cost of server maintenance, cooling and power consumption.
9. The Board approve increases in central office staffing as follows: a) increase the two payroll clerks to a 40-hour paid work week rather than the current 35-hour work week and b) add one *FTE in the human resources department, either an entry-level management position or a director of human resources.*
Payroll hours were increased to 40 hours per week and Mike Nightingale was hired as Director, Human Resources in August 2014.
10. The Board and senior administration review the process of selecting and implementing Altus to date and determine if this is indeed the option which should be implemented.
Discussions were held with staff, contracts were reviewed and the process used for selecting Altus was investigated. Upon review the Board, senior administration and staff determined that Altus was not the best fit for the division. The contract was mutually severed and a call for proposals was initiated. After extensive research SRB Solutions was hired to supply and assist with Human Resources, Finance and Pay Roll software. The new system is being implemented starting in March 2015.
11. The Superintendent implement more regular COLT and staff meetings for central office focused on information sharing, recognition, and celebration.
Central Office staff meetings are scheduled once every other month. If it is warranted, a meeting may be called in between.
Central Office Leadership Team meetings are scheduled every other month.