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**GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL  
EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW  
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MYSTERY LAKE  
FINAL REPORT OF FINDINGS  
AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The School District of Mystery Lake (the School District) was first established with the opening of Juniper School in 1959 and now educates 3,000 students across six (6) elementary schools and one (1) high school in the City of Thompson. Its mission is *“to maximize each student's learning potential and to produce lifelong learners with a sense of self-worth and social responsibility by providing, in cooperation with the community, a diversity of educational experiences in a learning environment that recognizes the uniqueness of the individual.”*

The Department of Education engaged MNP to conduct a comprehensive governance and organizational review. The findings and recommendations of this report will be used to inform decisions about governance and administration structures, roles and responsibilities and processes and practices to support student learning, success and achievement, and ensure the School District of Mystery Lake can effectively and efficiently deliver on its mandate and achieve its vision for the future.

The overarching goal of this initiative was to conduct a review to critically assess the School District of Mystery Lake's current governance and organization model, identify gaps in effectiveness, make clear and practical recommendations for improvement and provide guidance for implementation. The specific objectives of this project were:

- To establish a Project Steering Committee comprised of representatives from the Board of Trustees, senior administration and the Department of Education that will be responsible for project oversight, participation in project meetings, review of deliverables including the final report of findings and recommendations, and decisions related to the project and final recommendations;
- To conduct in-depth data collection and review, including document reviews, stakeholder interviews and focus groups, and incorporate information gathered through the prior online survey and written submissions related to governance and the School District Office administration;
- To analyze all current state data using MNP's governance and organizational review assessment frameworks to identify gaps, duplication and overlap, as well as opportunities for improvement; and
- To develop a report of findings and recommendations that can be used to establish the necessary elements of the foundational components of the School District's governance and organizational model.

***When reviewing the findings, it is important to understand that they reflect the current situation of the School District of Mystery Lake at a point in time based on the survey results, interviews, focus groups and document reviews. The findings and recommendations in this report do not comment on the status of initiatives that have or may have started since the data was collected for this review. The focus of the review was to identify gaps and areas of improvement in the policies, practices and processes used to govern and manage the School District. It is important to note the review is not an assessment of individuals' performance.***

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

MNP utilized a number of different data gathering methodologies to ensure the project was comprehensive, inclusive and to ensure that information included in this report was as valid and reliable as possible. MNP reviewed numerous documents, administered a governance survey, and conducted interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders. In addition, MNP conducted a stakeholder consultation survey in the spring of 2011 to collect current and future state data and opinions from employees, parents, students and non-parent residents of the School District. The 2011 spring survey data has been incorporated into the findings and recommendations of this report. The following is a summary of these methods of data collection and analysis.

### 2.1 DOCUMENT REVIEW

School District of Mystery Lake documents were collected between February 2011 and November 2011 to establish a baseline understanding of the School District. The document review examined current divisional plans, policies and procedures, operating guidelines and position descriptions. Specifically, the document review included:

- Board Agendas 2010 and 2011
- Regular Board Minutes 2010 and 2011
- Leadership Team Meeting Agendas 2010 and 2011
- Board Policy Manual
- By-Law's
- Board Reports 2011
- District and School Plans 2010-2011 and 2011-2012
- Collective Agreements
- Evaluation Forms
- Job Descriptions
- Various Miscellaneous Documents (e.g. personnel list, past projects, etc.)

### 2.2 INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

Interviews and focus groups were used to ensure the documentation collected was reflective of the current situation and allowed for confirmation and elaboration of the data provided. The interviews and focus group sessions gathered in-depth perspectives and information from representative stakeholders. Our approach to interview and focus group consultations was to ensure that participants remained focused on and addressed all of the questions in the interview and focus group guides. MNP facilitated the conversations by staying on topic and probing when needed, ensuring that we did not overtly or implicitly encourage participants to answer in any particular way. The MNP project team conducted interviews and/or focus groups from November 21 to November 23, 2011 and from December 6 to December 7, 2011. The following stakeholders were invited to attend:

Board of Trustees	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chair</li><li>• Vice-Chair</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trustees</li></ul>
School Administrators	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Principals*</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vice-Principals*</li></ul>
Senior Administration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Superintendent of Education</li><li>• Secretary – Treasurer</li><li>• Assistant Superintendent of Education Services</li><li>• Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Policy &amp; Research</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilities Manager</li><li>• Director of Information Technology</li><li>• Executive Assistant to Superintendent of Education</li></ul>

Student Councils / Groups	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grades 7 and 8 Representatives*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grades 9 to 12 Representatives*</li> </ul>
Employee Association / Union	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thompson Teachers Association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>United Steelworkers, Local 8223 – Both Chapters</li> </ul>
Parent Association / Groups	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Burntwood School*</li> <li>Deerwood School*</li> <li>Ecole Riverside School*</li> <li>Juniper School*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>R.D. Parker Collegiate</li> <li>Wapanohk Community School*</li> <li>Westwood School*</li> </ul>
Community and Education Partners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addictions Foundation of Manitoba</li> <li>Boys and Girls Club of Thompson*</li> <li>Child and Family Services*</li> <li>City of Thompson</li> <li>Keewatin Tribal Council*</li> <li>Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC)*</li> <li>MacDonald Youth Services</li> <li>Manitoba Hydro*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manitoba Infrastructure &amp; Transportation</li> <li>Ma-Mo-We-Tak Friendship Centre Inc.*</li> <li>Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.*</li> <li>Manitoba Metis Federation*</li> <li>Manitoba Telecom Services (MTS)</li> <li>Thompson Aboriginal Educational Advisory Community (TAEAC)</li> <li>University College of the North*</li> <li>Vale*</li> </ul>

\* Indicates sessions where not all invited representatives were able to attend.

## 2.3 GOVERNANCE SURVEY

MNP conducted a board governance survey to understand the current Board of Trustees' governance processes and practices. The survey included a total of 86 statements and comment sections relating to board accountability, stewardship, effectiveness, individual trustee effectiveness, and committee effectiveness. The survey questions also allowed for written comments that would identify strengths and areas requiring improvements.

The survey was circulated to all Trustees, the Superintendent, and the Assistant Superintendents. Seven (7) of the ten (10) targeted survey participants completed the survey. Survey results were compiled and analyzed by MNP, and have been provided in the Current State Assessment, Governance section of this report.

## 2.4 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION SURVEY

MNP developed a stakeholder consultation survey to collect current and future state data and opinions from employees, parents, students, and non-parent residents of the School District of Mystery Lake. The survey was reviewed and approved by the Superintendent and Chair of the Board of Trustees prior to the survey launch on April 8, 2011. The survey was available for completion from April 8 to April 29, 2011. Participants could access the survey online at a website link administered by MNP (<http://take-survey.com/mnp/sdml.htm>) or by using a paper-based format. The District Office also posted the survey link on the School District of Mystery Lake website, allowing individuals to access the online survey and/or download a printable copy. The District Office also made paper copies and return envelopes available to all stakeholders interested in participating in the stakeholder consultation survey. All survey data was submitted and captured anonymously. In addition, all individual survey responses are retained by MNP to ensure confidentiality.

There were a total of 165 respondents to the survey. A total of 167 surveys were completed, however, two (2) respondents did not indicate which stakeholder group they belong to and are not included in the respondent demographics provided below. The following table breaks down survey respondents by stakeholder group:

Stakeholder Group	# of Respondents	% of Total
Employee	74	44.8%
Parent	75	45.5%
Student	5	3.0%
Non-Parent Resident	11	6.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>165</b>	

Employee respondents are broken down by employee group in the following table:

Employee Group	# of Respondents	% of Total Employee Respondents
School Board Office Administration	2	2.8%
School Board Office Support Staff	7	9.9%
School-Based Administration (Principals, Vice-Principals)	4	5.6%
Teacher / Clinician	51	71.8%
Educational Assistant	3	4.2%
School-Based Administrative Support / Library Technician / Computer Support	1	1.4%
Custodial / Maintenance / Trades Staff	1	1.4%
Coordinator / Consultant	1	1.4%
Substitute Teacher	1	1.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>71*</b>	

Three (3) respondents in the employee stakeholder category did not specify an employee group.

Respondent's relationships with the school system are presented in the following table:

Type of School	Employees, Parents, Students		Employees Only		Parents Only		Students Only	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
K-8 School	86	65.6%	49	69.0%	35	63.6%	1	33.3%
High School	45	34.4%	22	31.0%	20	36.4%	2	66.7%

25 respondents did not indicate which school type they are associated with.

The table below provides a breakdown of the resident neighbourhood of parent and non-parent respondents:

Neighbourhood	Parents and Non-Parent Residents		Parents Only		Non-Parent Residents Only	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Juniper	10	12.2%	9	12.70%	1	10.0%
Westwood	27	32.9%	24	33.8%	2	20.0%
Burntwood	22	26.8%	19	26.8%	3	30.0%
Deerwood	9	11.0%	6	8.5%	3	30.0%
Riverside	11	13.4%	10	14.1%	1	10.0%
Southwood	1	1.2%	1	1.4%	0	0
Eastwood	2	2.4%	2	2.8%	0	0

Four (4) respondents did not indicate a neighbourhood of residence

The table below provides a breakdown of the grade level of student respondents:

Grade Level	# of Student Respondents	% of Total Student Respondents
K - Grade 4	0	0
Grades 5 – 6	0	0
Grades 7 – 8	1	33.3%
Grades 9-10	0	0
Grades 11-12	3	66.6%

One (1) respondent did not indicate a grade level

## Stakeholders' Written Submissions

Educational and community partners were also invited to provide written submissions representing the views of their organization. A written submission guide was provided to each of the organizations invited to participate. Three (3) written submissions were received from the following groups:

- **Macdonald Youth Services – Kisewatsiwin Services:** An educational / community partner with a mandate to provide placement resources for CFS agencies. It is comprised of placement programs for Group Care, Foster Care, and Independent Living in Thompson and the Pas.
- **Thompson Teacher's Association:** The association representing teachers in the School District of Mystery Lake.
- **Hello Parents Network:** An educational / community partner that functions as a collaboration of all organizations serving children and parents in the region with the goal of strengthening families by hosting a variety of community events throughout the year.

### 3.0 BACKGROUND

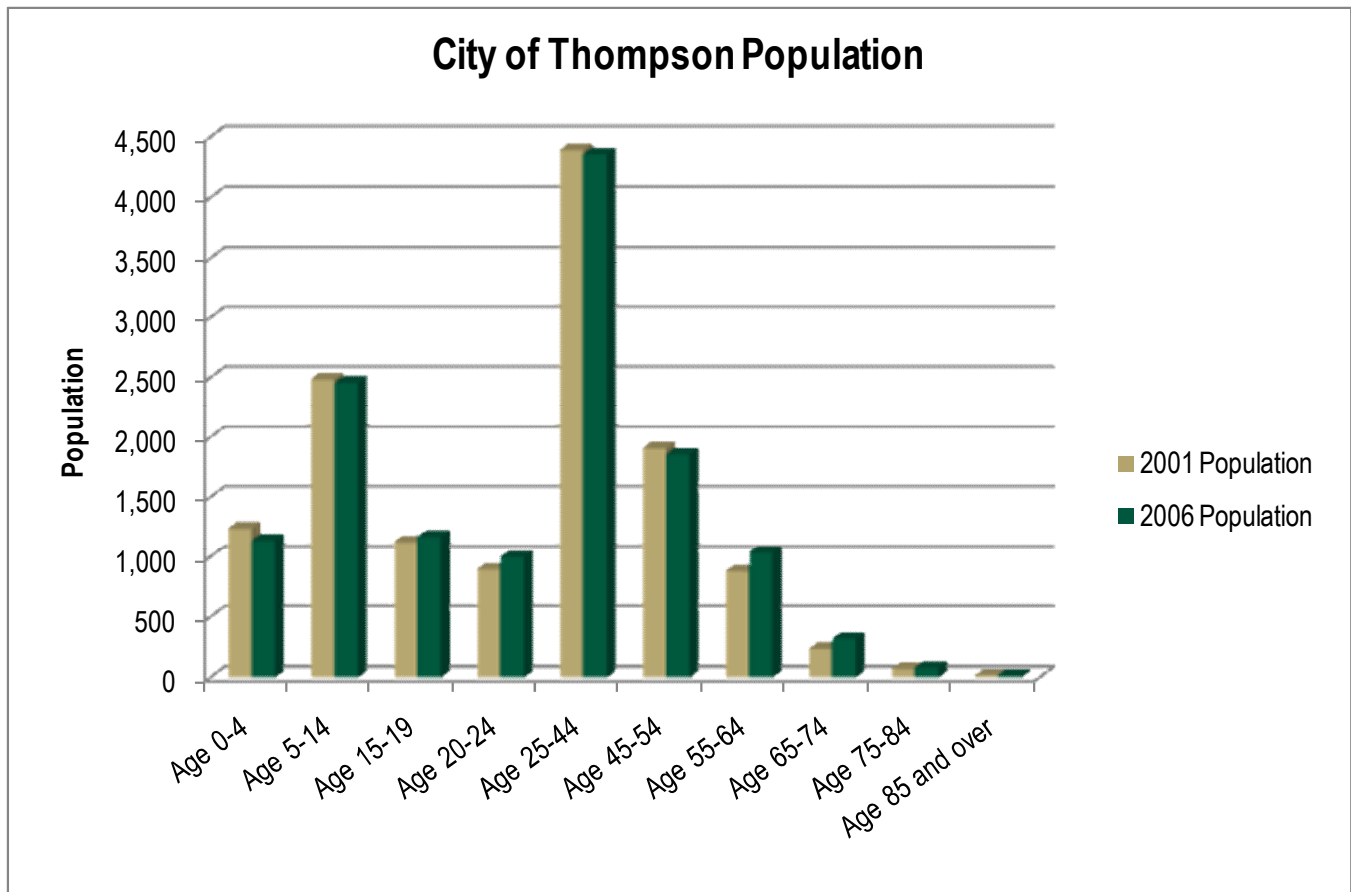
#### 3.1 DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE CITY OF THOMPSON

To provide additional context, MNP has included the following demographic information. This information was provided by Statistics Canada and compiled from the censuses in 2001 and 2006 for the City of Thompson metropolitan area.

##### City of Thompson Population

The total population of the City of Thompson was estimated at 13,256 in 2001 and 13,445 in 2006. Figure 1 shows the population of Thompson by age for the years 2001 to 2006.

Figure 1



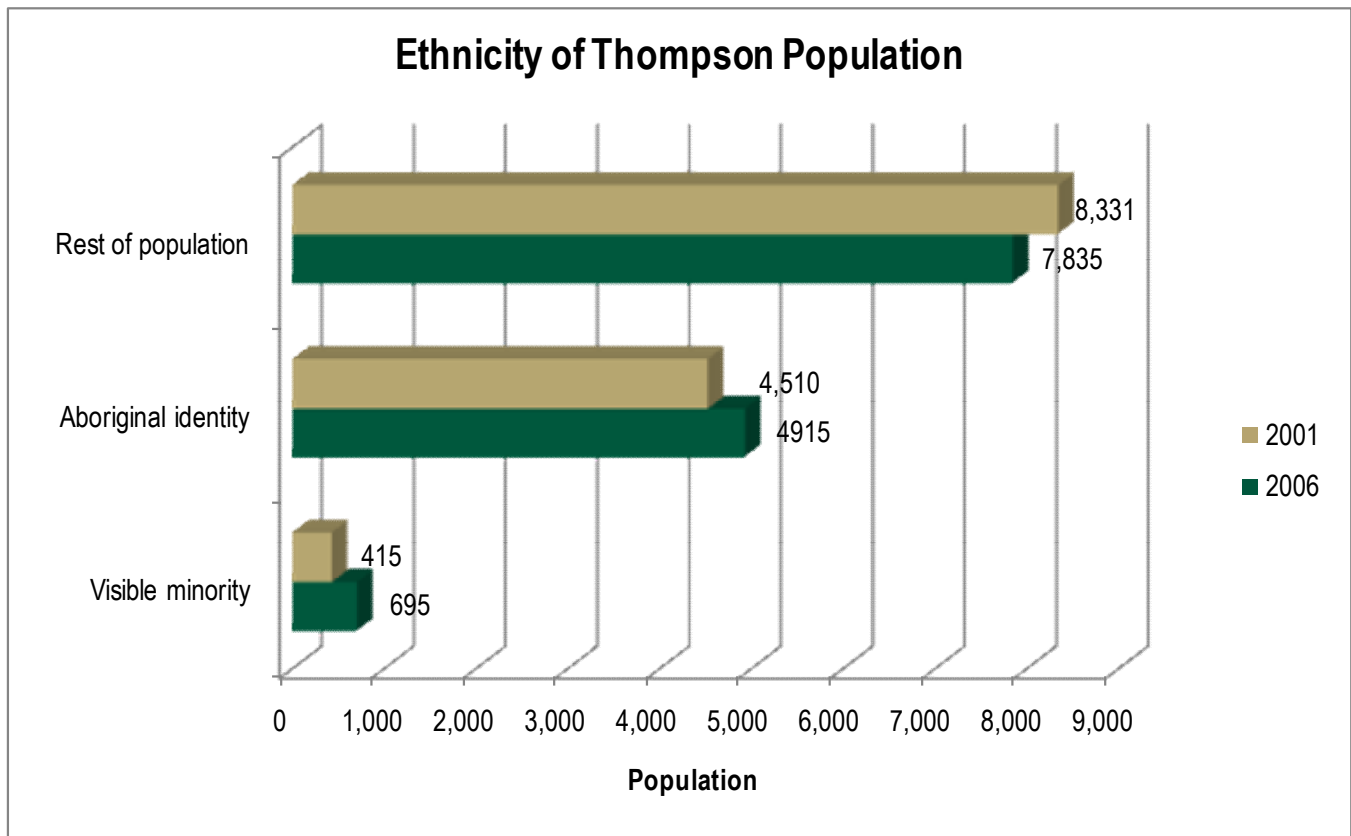
The population age groups for the City of Thompson have remained fairly stable in the years 2001 to 2006.



## Ethnicity of the City of Thompson

The following figure shows the ethnicity of the City of Thompson population in 2001 and 2006.

Figure 2

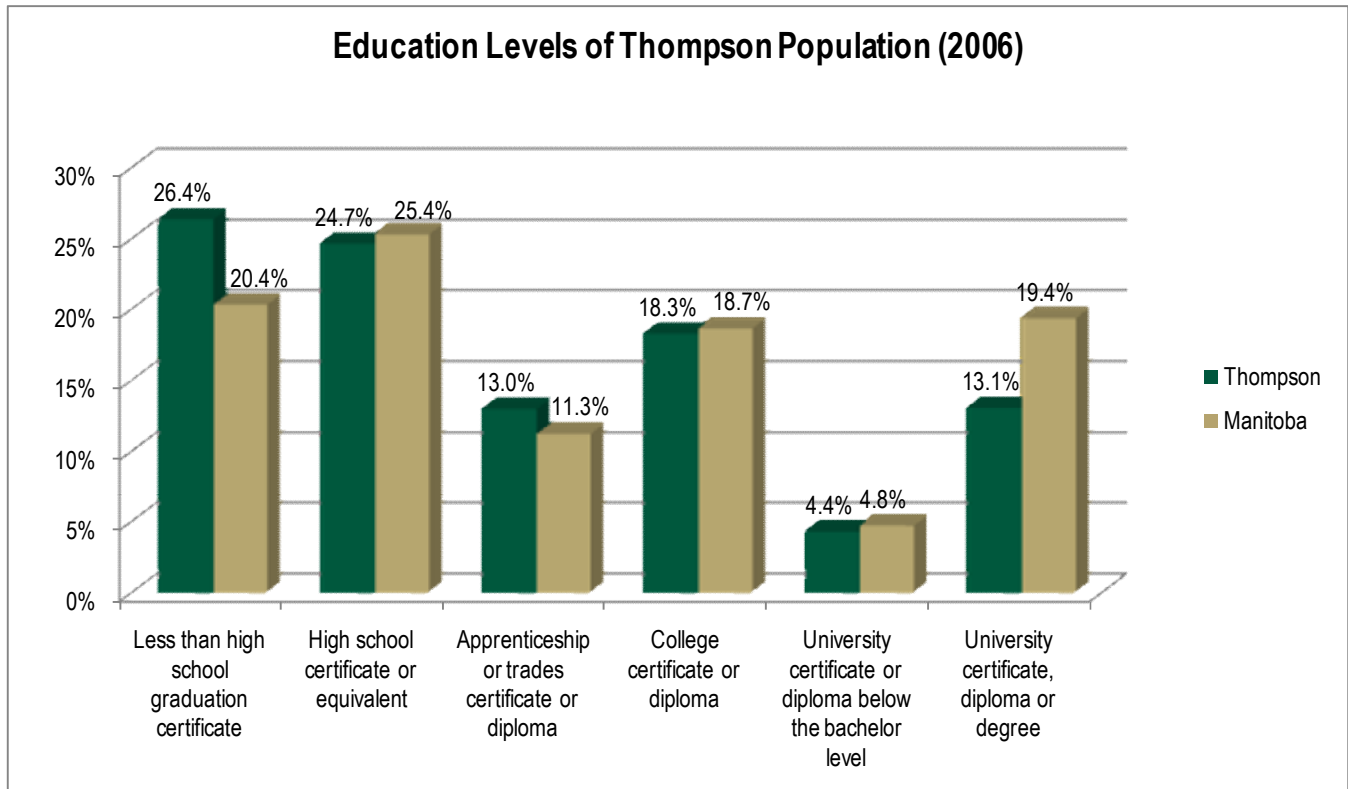


Thompson's visible minority population had increased by 280 from 2001 to 2006, an increase of almost 67.4%. As a percentage of the total population, visible minorities were 3.1% in 2001 and 5.2% in 2006. The Aboriginal population in Thompson had increased by 405 from 2001 to 2006, an increase of almost 9%. As a percentage of the total population, the Aboriginal population was 34% in 2001 and 36.5% in 2006. Conversely, 'rest of population' numbers dropped by 496, or almost 6%.

## Education Level of City of Thompson Residents

The following figure presents the highest level of education attained by the residents of Thompson in 2006 for those aged 25 years and older.

Figure 3



Based on 2006 Statistics Canada census data, the Thompson population aged 25 years and over is on par with the rest of Manitoba in terms of the proportion of the population that has attained a high school certificate or equivalent, an apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma, or a college certificate or diploma as the highest level of education achieved. A slightly higher proportion of Thompson residents aged 25 and over has attained an apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma (13%) compared to the Manitoba population (11.3%). When comparing the proportion of residents aged 25 or over with less than a high school graduation certificate, Thompson population (26.4%) has a significantly higher proportion of residents than the Manitoba population (20.4%). Thompson also has a significantly lower proportion of residents that have attained a University degree compared to the Manitoba population, 13.1% versus 19.4% respectively.

## Unemployment Data for the City of Thompson

Year	Unemployment Rate	Participation Rate
2006	6.9%	76.5%
2001	7.0%	79.6%

As shown in the table above, the unemployment rate among the Thompson population age 15 years and over has remained constant from 2001 to 2006, while the percent participating in the workforce has dropped by 3.1%.

## Household Income for the City of Thompson

There were approximately 4,805 households in Thompson in 2005. The table below presents the median income for all households in the City of Thompson and the Province of Manitoba for the year 2005.

Median Household Income	Thompson	Median
	\$68,416	\$47,875

### 3.2 DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MYSTERY LAKE

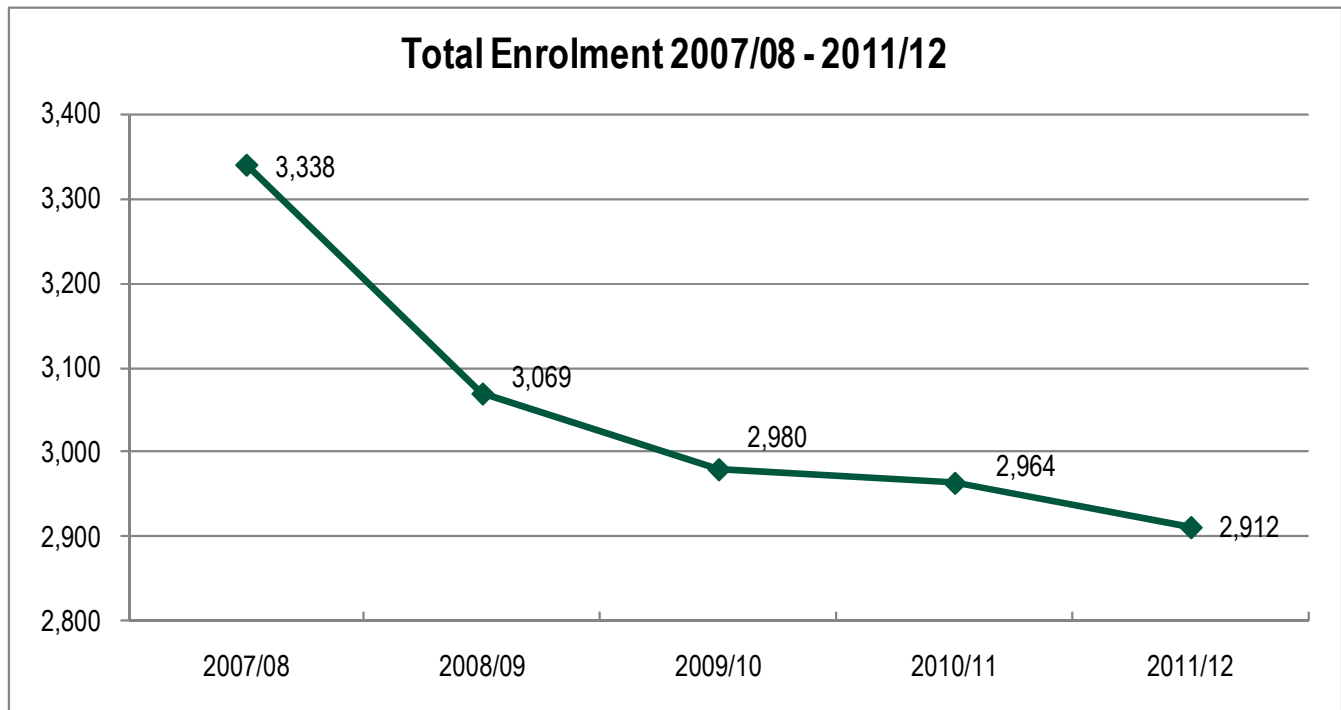
The following demographic information is to provide the context within which the School District must make decisions regarding its future direction and strategic plan. The information was obtained from the documents provided by the School District as part of MNP's documentation review.

As of the 2011 / 2012 school year, the School District of Mystery Lake has a total enrolment of 2,912 students in Kindergarten through Grade 12 and is comprised of one (1) High School and six (6) K-8 Schools.

#### Historical Total Student Enrolment

Historical total enrolment in the seven (7) schools within the School District is presented in the figure below. As illustrated, there has been a steady decrease in student enrolment from 2007/08 to 2011/12, with a total decrease of 426 students during that time period.

Figure 4



School enrolment data from SDML Community Report 2010-2011 and SDML Enrolment figures for 2011-2012

## Staffing Levels

The School District is supported by a staff of 403.5 employees, as shown in the following table:

Employee Group	Staffing
Board Office Administration	7
School Board Office Support Staff	42
Teacher / Clinician	232
Education Assistant	63
Custodial / Maintenance / Trades Staff	44
Coordinator / Consultant	15.5
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>403.5</b>

The largest employee group in the School District is teachers, which makes up 57% of all employees.

## Turnover Rates

The School District of Mystery Lake tracks turnover in four categories: retirements, resignations, voluntary transfers and involuntary relocation. In general, turnover trends have been fairly consistent since 2008, with some slight changes for certain groups in select years. Conclusions regarding turnover trends cannot be made without additional data and understanding of the reasoning and decisions made by both administration and position incumbents with respect to turnover.

### Teachers, School Based Administration, Senior Administration

Years	Retire	Resign	Transfer Voluntary	Relocation Involuntary
2008 - 2009	13 = 5%	24 = 9%	6 = 2%	7 = 3%
2009 - 2010	10 = 4%	13 = 5%	5 = 2%	8 = 3%
2010 - 2011	3 = 1%	19 = 8%	12 = 3%	4 = 2%

### Educational Assistants

Years	Retire	Resign	Transfer Voluntary	Relocation Involuntary
2008 - 2009	0	7 = 9%	1 = 1%	1 = 1%
2009 - 2010	1 = 1%	4 = 6%	2 = 3%	3 = 4%
2010 - 2011	1 = 1%	7 = 11%	2 = 3%	2 = 3%

### Clerical / Support Staff

Years	Retire	Resign	Transfer Voluntary	Relocation Involuntary
2008 - 2009	0	3 = 9%	1 = 3%	0
2009 - 2010	0	1 = 3%	7 = 14%	0
2010 - 2011	1 = 3%	0	6 = 17%	0

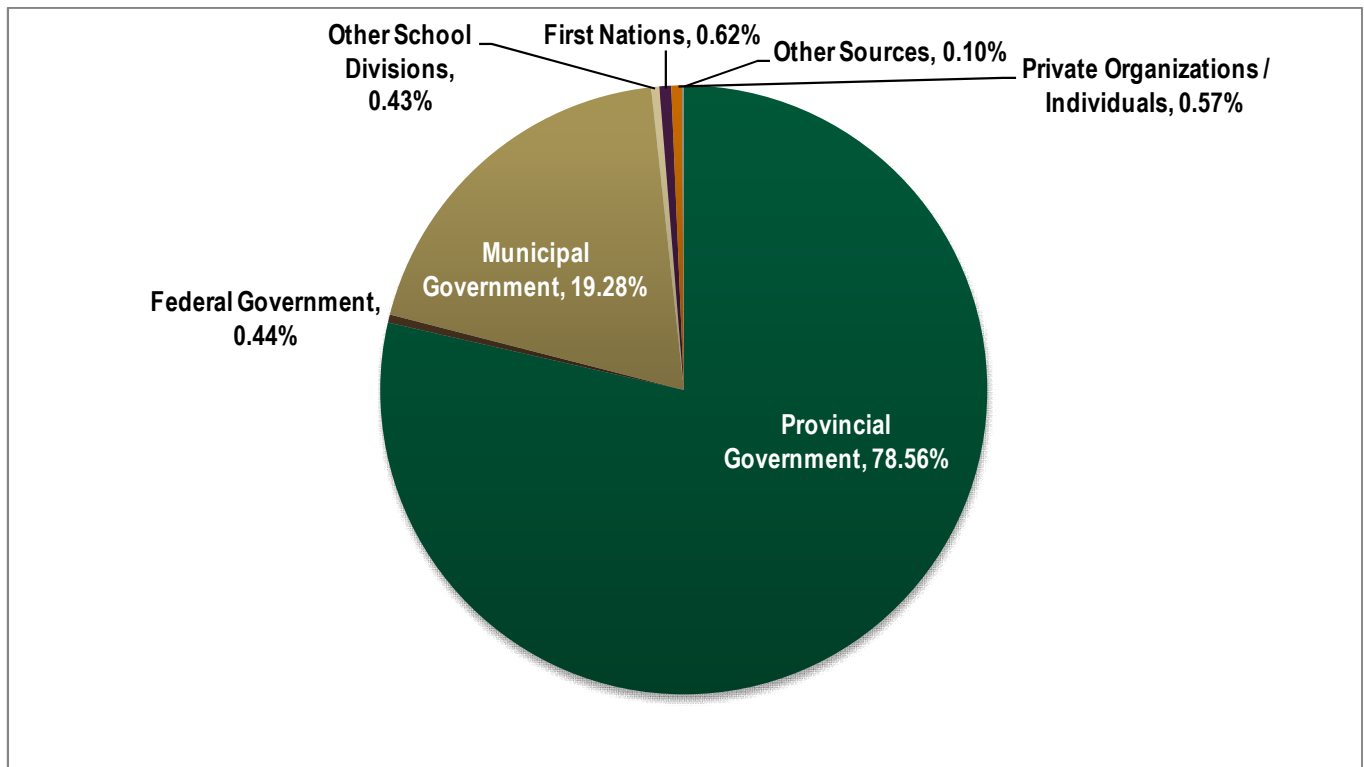
### 3.3 FINANCIAL RESOURCES

To provide context within which the School District can plan, the following financial information is provided and summarized in graphic and table format. This information is from the 2010 / 2011 Community Report.

#### Operating Fund: Revenue and Expenses Budgets

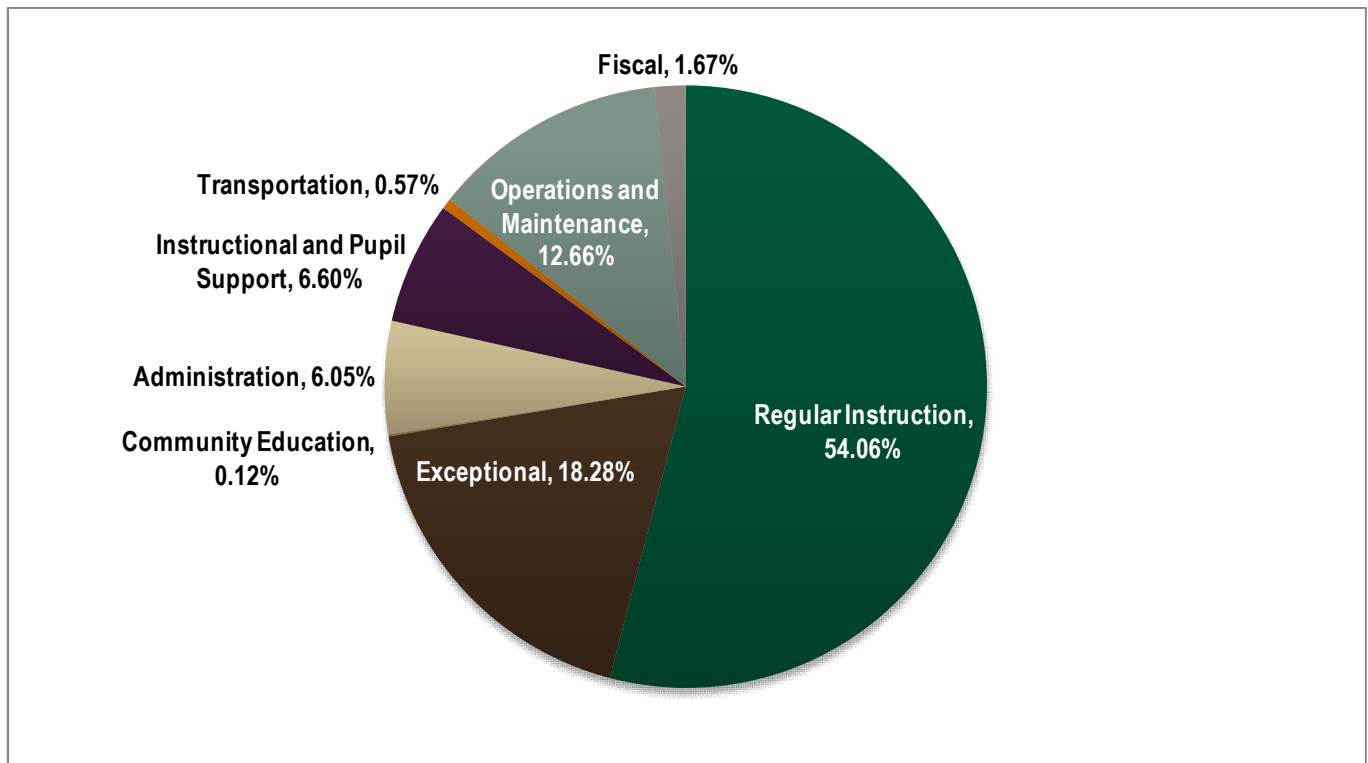
REVENUE SOURCE	Budget 2010 / 11	
	\$ Amount	% of Total
Provincial Government	\$29,607,826	78.56%
Federal Government	\$164,688	0.44%
Municipal Government	\$7,268,153	19.28%
Other School Divisions	\$161,833	0.43%
First Nations	\$233,935	0.62%
Private Organizations / Individuals	\$215,465	0.57%
Other Sources	\$36,798	0.10%
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$37,537,095</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 5



EXPENSES	Budget 2010 / 11	
	\$ Amount	% of Total
Regular Instruction	\$19,768,436	54.06%
Exceptional	\$6,685,903	18.28%
Community Education	\$42,327	0.12%
Administration	\$2,210,485	6.05%
Instructional and Pupil Support	\$2,413,071	6.60%
Transportation	\$206,906	0.57%
Operations and Maintenance	\$4,629,782	12.66%
Fiscal	\$608,890	1.67%
<b>Total Operating Expense</b>	<b>\$36,565,800</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 6



## 4.0 CURRENT STATE ASSESSMENT

### 4.1 ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The desired approach to determining improvement opportunities is to assess the structure, processes and practices relative to the School District of Mystery Lake's mandate, strategic directions, values and priorities as well as best practices.

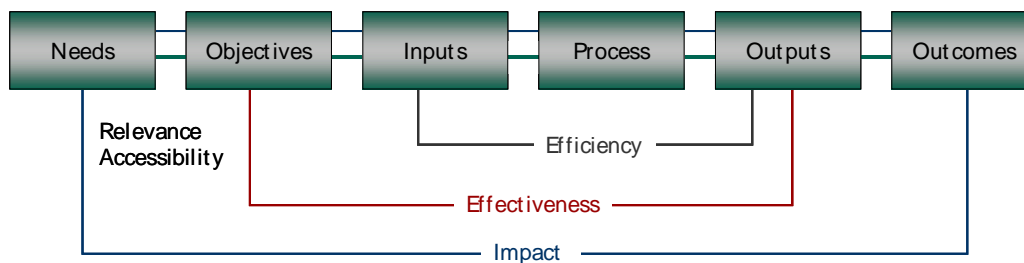
A comprehensive assessment is results-oriented, with a focus on developing and enhancing governance and organizational practices. There are two (2) elements to such an assessment: an analysis of results, and the means used to attain those results. The methods and processes are valid only to the extent that they make results feasible.

The **governance review** framework encompasses the following components:

1. **Accountability** – The areas in which the Board is accountable to the public, specific individuals, groups or regulatory bodies, e.g. public disclosures, compliance with external regulations, social responsibility.
2. **Stewardship** – The Board acts on behalf of others and therefore is responsible for ensuring that the organization's direction is compliant with its mission, as well as clearly defining roles of the Board and executive management, understanding and monitoring of risk and internal controls, and appropriate and efficient use of resources.
3. **Effectiveness** – The ability of the Board to structure itself in a way that adds value to the organization and to design tools to measure its overall effectiveness.
4. **Culture** – The degree to which the values and policies of the organization are reflected in both the Board and staff's conduct and behaviour.

The **organizational review** framework encompasses the following components:

1. **Accountability** – Clear delineation of responsibilities and demonstration of carrying out these responsibilities.
2. **Effectiveness** – Determination of the extent to which the organization attains its goals and objectives, and supports the overall objectives of the organization.
3. **Efficiency** – Determination of whether the output and quality of results meets expectations given the available resources.
4. **Value** – Determination of whether the services provided are of quality and at an appropriate cost.



It is important to note that a governance and organizational review is not an assessment of individuals' performance. The review is an assessment of the policies, practices and processes used to govern and administer an organization, and its ability to achieve successful organizational outcomes. Our findings are based on survey result, interviews, focus groups and document reviews, and reflect the current situation at a point in time.

In this section of the report, we summarize the current state of the School District and provide the findings and observations of our review, in the areas of:

- Significant Trends and Events;
- Environment, Culture and Climate;
- Governance;
- Structure and Organization; and
- Planning and Implementation.

## 4.2 SIGNIFICANT TRENDS AND EVENTS

As context for this review, it was important to understand the significant trends and events that have and are impacting the School District of Mystery Lake. Stakeholder feedback collected by MNP through the stakeholder survey, interviews and focus group sessions was reviewed, and key themes and issues were identified by MNP. The most significant trends and events identified by stakeholders participating in this review are summarized below.

### **Stakeholder Dissatisfaction with Instability and Turnover**

Stakeholders indicated the most significant trend in recent years has been the turnover and perceived lack of stability at the School District of Mystery Lake's senior leadership levels including Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Principal and Vice-Principal positions. The most recent event referenced by stakeholders was the dismissal of the Principal of R.D. Parker High School in the spring of 2011 and their concerns regarding the future education of students and the retention of staff at the high school. Most external stakeholders perceive this instability has resulted in a loss of focus for the School District and its leadership team, created a lack of trust within the School District and damaged the School District and the City's public image and reputation. Employees that participated in the interviews and focus groups, as well as the spring stakeholder survey, noted turnover at the senior leadership level has made it difficult to develop and implement long term goals and to take advantage of opportunities to provide education to all students in the best way possible. The responses of external stakeholders, in particular parents, highlighted concerns regarding the strain and effect of instability on students; however, students did not express these same concerns regarding turnover at the senior leadership levels.

Stakeholders (parents, students, teachers, administrators or external stakeholders) are seeking a consistent and stable school environment. Overall, stakeholders desire a school district that is focused on meeting the educational needs of all students in the community, working in collaboration with the community, and setting direction on issues that influence and will shape the School District in reaching its ideal future state.

### **Changing Demographics, Declining Enrolment and Graduation Rates**

Increased diversity, declining enrolment and less than ideal graduation rates of students were common trends identified by the stakeholders in the consultation process. The demands for EAL and special needs programming has increased in response to the increasing numbers of new Canadians and Aboriginal families who have settled in the community. The impact is two-fold – the declining enrolment results in decreased funding for the School District, and at the same time, the resource requirement of special needs programming has intensified due to the degree of diversity, learning and behavioural needs in the schools. Declining graduation rates have been identified by nearly all of the stakeholders as a concern and should be a focus for the School District. Graduation rates for 2011 were reported at 50.1%, a rate far below the provincial rate of 82.7% (Manitoba Education, 2010). Some contributing factors lowering graduation rates in the City of Thompson have been student transience, attendance, and students who take more than four years to complete a high school program (School District of Mystery Lake Community Report 2010-2011). Parents that participated in the spring 2011 stakeholder survey noted that layoffs and downsizing of natural resource sector jobs in the community meant the loss of a number of families who have left the community. This is expected to continue with the impending reduction of 500 jobs in the mining sector.



### **Stakeholder Desire to Increase Focus on Quality of Programs**

The School District of Mystery Lake's stakeholders would like a higher standard to be upheld for all involved with the education of students in the community. Literacy and the ability to communicate effectively are the foundations of school success for students and healthy life outcomes for adults. It is for these reasons that schools have placed an emphasis on providing diverse and rich opportunities to learn and explore reading and writing (School District of Mystery Lake Community Report 2010-2011). Students, parents and teachers have expressed the desire to move beyond passing students to the next level of their education without meeting the required competencies needed to succeed. Smaller classes were often cited as a solution to assist with this process, as well as having a stronger focus on core subjects. Many stakeholders viewed the additional programming offered by the School District as one of the School District's strengths, but would like to see the same effort applied to core subjects and inspiring excellence in students and their pursuits of higher education or career training.

### **Desire for Increased Stakeholder Communication and Consultation**

In general, stakeholders believe that decisions are made using a top-down approach that does not consult or collaborate with those related to or affected by those decisions. Teachers in general do not feel their experience or expertise is being considered or used effectively when deciding the educational direction of the School District. Parents feel ignored, with many parents of lower grade level students indicating they feel alienated due to the large amount of focus placed on the high school and senior students. Furthermore, parents also feel that important decisions or changes, as well as resulting progress, are not communicated to them effectively and proactively. Stakeholders wish the future to be one where all parties work to proactively identify and inform issues, research prospective outcomes, and make well-supported decisions that act as reference for the future actions of the School District. Overall, respondents felt that improvements could be made by implementing an effective communication process to provide for clear, consistent and timely communications to be delivered to all parties throughout the School District. There is a strong consensus amongst all stakeholders that this would be a large step in the right direction in addressing communication barriers within the School District.

### **Stakeholders Desire School District to Keep Pace with Technology**

The evolution of technology and keeping pace with technology continues to be seen as a challenge for the School District by many stakeholders. Parental concerns from the stakeholder survey in the spring of 2011 focused on the increasing role technology plays in the world and ensuring that their children have access to newer online resources and are technologically literate. There has been some progress made with the introduction of iPads and netbooks into schools and classrooms; however, there are varying degrees of availability, usage and comfort levels between different schools. Technology was seen as not only impacting the students in the classroom, but is also impacting how work gets done in the School District. In supporting student learning, administrators perceive the need to support staff in embracing new technology and provide the training and coaching required to appropriately learn these new technologies. Respondents indicated frustrations with the recent implementation and issues associated with Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP), and expressed the desire for more communication, planning and training on the new system and any future systems. It is felt the lack of resources (human, financial) and time has impacted the pace and ability to move forward on some key initiatives to support the implementation of new technology, such as a wireless infrastructure.

## **4.3 ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND CLIMATE**

The internal environment of an organization is influenced by the human resource policies, organizational culture, organizational climate and the approaches to improving programs and services. Human resource policies are extremely important and are specific statements of intention committing the organization to a specific course of action. They communicate to all employees acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, define the organization's position on given issues and assure consistency in the treatment of all employees.

The organizational culture consists of the core values, beliefs, behaviour patterns, assumptions, norms and perceptions that are widely shared by the members of the organization. A positive organizational culture helps to foster commitment of employees to the organization's goals by bonding their core values and core beliefs together for the attainment of the organization's goals.

Organizational climate refers to the prevailing atmosphere that exists in organizations and the impact it has on employees. There are three (3) major factors that influence an organization's climate: leadership style, human resource policies and practices and communication approaches.

The majority of stakeholders commented that the School District of Mystery Lake has highly committed and passionate team members. There were many statements about the strong values and dedication of Trustees and employees within the School District and pride for the community they live in. A number of stakeholders within the School District spoke of the high level of team work that occurs within their own peer groups, however, many commented there is a need to improve the sense of team and collaboration between peer groups, from the Board to administrators to teachers and staff to ensure that student education and priorities are met.

The culture of the School District of Mystery Lake has some optimism, but stakeholders desire more collaboration to turn that optimism into a positive attitude. The School District of Mystery Lake is an environment that poses many challenges due to demographics and geography, financial constraints as well as its recent contentious history. Its climate is tense and sometimes divided, but all stakeholders appear to be waiting for a change that will bring those working within the School District closer together. The most negative quality of the culture appears to be the underlying sense of distrust that exists between the Board of Trustees and stakeholders, and the School District Office and stakeholders.

The key challenge identified by most stakeholders both within and external to the School District is the leadership style exhibited by the Superintendent, which is also perceived to be supported by the Board of Trustees. Based on stakeholder feedback, the current leadership style can be described as one of "command and control" where decisions are perceived to be made without consultation or collaboration, and where directives are issued. Administrators within the School District also commented on the absence of regular direction, guidance and support from the Superintendent. This has resulted in confusion and frustration for both senior and school administrators, and lack of clarity on the scope of authority for decisions. These factors have contributed to what has been described as a stressful administrative environment, particularly within the School District Office. In some cases, administrators and external stakeholders have referred to the climate as one of fear, intimidation, mistrust and apprehension. Some Trustees echoed similar concerns regarding the Superintendent's leadership style, however, the majority of Trustees strongly believe that the School District of Mystery Lake currently has one of the most qualified and experienced Superintendents in its recent history in terms of knowledge, skills and experience.

Both internal and external stakeholders believe that decisions within the School District continue to be made using a top-down approach without consultation or collaboration with those related to or affected by those decisions. In general, senior administrators and school administrators shared the perspective that there is a lack of regular and consistent information and communication. A number of the senior and school administrators indicated minimal communication with the Superintendent, and that communication generally occurs only on an as-needed basis. Administration meetings are held inconsistently, if at all, and as such, there is no avenue for dialogue and information-sharing. Many stakeholders also reported that communication is tightly funnelled at the Superintendent level, and in some instances, it is perceived that information is not flowing from the Superintendent to the Board of Trustees, and that information is not always relayed back to the senior administrators.

School-based administrators also commented on a lack of regular communication from the School District Office. Communication with the School District Office is predominantly via emails and pertains to issues on a need-to-know basis. Conversely, school administrators do not have a consistent view of what issues need to be communicated to the School District Office and the Superintendent, nor how often these communications need to occur. School administrators generally indicated a desire for more awareness, information and consultation on School District priorities, key activities, processes, and topics that affect school administration.

Internal stakeholders also commented on the lack of knowledge and understanding of human resources policies and practices. Overall, the School District as a whole is not consistently applying employee evaluation processes and some stakeholders were not even aware that such a process exists. Many also commented that current job descriptions are outdated and that most administrators are unclear as to accountabilities and responsibilities. Policies and procedures have also been reported as lacking and require updating to ensure they cover relevant topics and provide clearer guidelines and procedures. Most training and development for administrators is accomplished through professional development (PD)

opportunities, and many noted the desire for training guidelines, mentorship and direction on individual learning plans. One of the most significant areas of concern is in the realm of recruitment where there appears to be a lack of standardized processes, and a lack of clarity surrounding staffing plans and recruitment processes. Furthermore, attraction of qualified talent to the School District has been an ongoing challenge, which most perceived to be due to geographic location as well as the current public image of the School District.

While morale within the School District is generally low, many Trustees and administrators interviewed have indicated that it has started to improve in recent months at the Board level and somewhat within R.D. Parker High School; however, there is still a significant amount of work to be done to remove both real and perceived divisions between factions.

The dissatisfaction with leadership instability, the public's negative perception of the Board of Trustees and the School District's current climate, coupled with recent events this spring, has no doubt exacerbated the level of distrust within the community. Some stakeholders indicated this has been the climate within the School District for more than four (4) years and is not completely attributable to the current Superintendent or Board of Trustees. Others interviewed believe the climate is tense and divided as a result of the release of the Principal of R.D. Parker High School in the spring that has significantly impacted the community as a whole. They believe the community appears to be waiting for closure on arbitration decisions before it can even begin to move forward. However, cutting through all the tension and noise, there appears to be sparks of optimism. Most of those interviewed and surveyed by MNP expressed strong belief that the School District ultimately exists for the education and well-being of students and hope that it can eventually pull together. Overall, there is an overwhelming desire for positive changes to take effect in order to repair the perception of the School District of Mystery Lake and most believe that respect, transparency, accountability, communication, collaboration, and good governance are key areas to focus on in the future.

Trustees and administrators also indicated a few additional themes that were not as common but still cited often enough to be significant to the environment, culture and climate of the School District. Senior administrators have all reported increased job duties and in some cases lack of clarity in terms of responsibilities and accountabilities. Some school-based administrators have indicated that too much emphasis has been placed on the issues at R.D. Parker Collegiate and not enough on the elementary schools. Feedback from some of the Trustees indicated that roles and responsibilities of the Trustees are also blurred and that what occurs in theory versus what occurs in practice are not one and the same. For example, although it is understood that the Board's role is to provide guidance and direction, to not micro-manage or get involved in operational decisions, circumstances have prevented members from acting or operating accordingly. The Board has had to make operational decisions that should reside with senior administration, such as the hiring and termination of principals.

#### **4.4 GOVERNANCE**

Governance and accountability have become increasingly important elements of public, non-profit and private sector organizations over the last few years. The Public Schools Act provides the authority to form, alter, dissolve and establish school divisions / districts and stipulates the powers and duties of the School Board. The Act is based on the following principles:

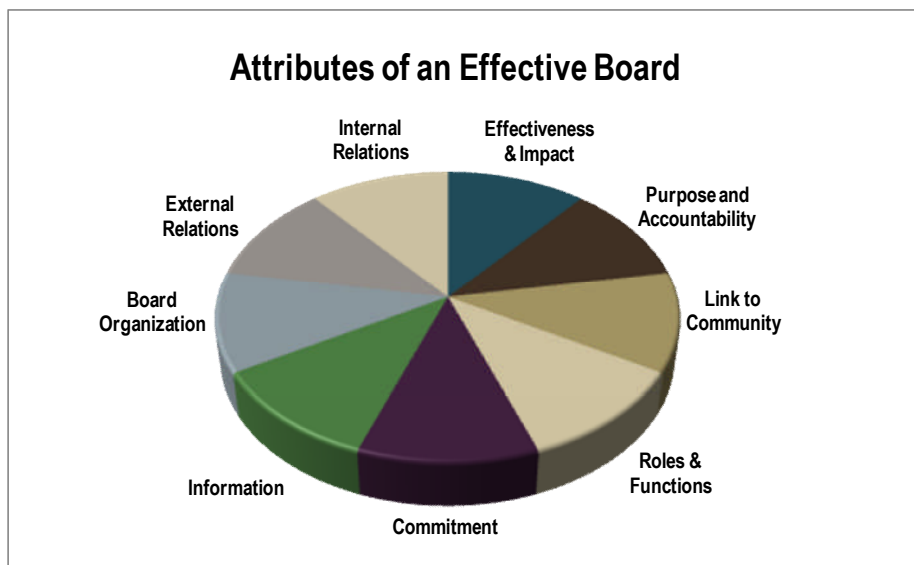
- A strong public school system is a fundamental element of a democratic society;
- The purpose of a public school system is to serve the best educational interests of students;
- The public school system should contribute to the development of student's talents and abilities;
- Public schools should contribute to the development of fair, compassionate, healthy and prosperous society;
- The public school system must take into account the diverse needs and interests of the people of Manitoba;
- Democratic local school divisions and districts play an important role in providing public education that is responsive to local needs and conditions;
- Parents have a right and a responsibility to be knowledgeable about and participate in the education of their children;
- Public schools require skilled and committed staff in order to be effective;

- It is in the public interest to further harmonious relations through a process of collective bargaining consistent with the principle that resources must be managed efficiently and effectively; and
- The Province of Manitoba and school divisions and districts share responsibility for the financing of the public schools.

Although there are numerous governance 'models' in existence, there is no "one size fits all" model of governance. However, sound governance principles and processes apply to all organizations – large, small, for profit, not for profit, crown corporations, agencies or private or publicly traded companies. The following visual represents governance principles based on best practices:



In 2000, the Office of the Auditor General examined School Board governance and issued a comprehensive report. The model of governance they used in conducting governance reviews was based on and incorporated best practices and leading perspectives in Board governance research. The model identified nine (9) attributes that represent the attributes of an effective Board:



### The following are best practices in Board governance:

- The Board should be clear about its role and accountabilities.
- The Board must be clear on whose behalf they exist and respect the rights and needs of its primary stakeholders.
- The Board should ensure that there is regular and constructive communication between the organization and its stakeholders.
- The Board should establish operating procedures that foster an independent, committed and knowledgeable Board.
- The Board should enrich the information flow between the Board and Administration - the Board must be clear on the information it needs to make ethical and responsible decisions and how it is to receive this information.
- The Board should drive governance through a powerful and productive Board committee structure.
- The Board should safeguard integrity in all reporting including financial reporting.
- The Board should establish and disclose where appropriate the respective responsibilities of Board and management.
- The Board should identify its employee(s) and establish clear performance expectations and rigorously evaluate this performance.
- The Board should understand the system of risk management and control - what are the potential risks to the organization and what do we have in place to minimize these risks.
- The Board should implement a robust Board self-evaluation.
- The Board should support continuous development for the Board members.
- The Board should focus on the true drivers of success for its organization.

#### 4.4.1 Governance Structure and Operating Framework

The School District of Mystery Lake was created in 1959 with the opening of Juniper School. Under the provisions of The Public Schools Act, the School District of Mystery Lake is a legal corporate body situated in Thompson, Manitoba. The Public Schools Act requires that each school division hold a general election on the fourth Wednesday of October every four (4) years. The Act establishes the parameters for the size of the Board (not fewer than five and not more than nine) and how the size of the Board is to be established. Currently, the School District of Mystery Lake has seven (7) Trustees. The 2010 election resulted in four (4) new Trustees elected to the Board, and the recent by-election held in November 2011 replaced one (1) Trustee position on the Board.

The School District of Mystery Lake's structure and operating framework is defined by its Procedural By-Laws for the Board of Trustees, and its combined Board and Administration Policy Manual that includes a chapter on Board Policies.

The **Procedural By-Laws** document outlines the powers and duties of the Board, the role of the Chair and Vice-Chair, and addresses the following components of the Board's structure and operating framework in more detail:

- Powers and duties of the Board of Trustees
- Authorities of Trustees
- General duty of non-disclosure
- General code of conduct
- Inaugural Board meeting
- Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair
- Duties of Chair and Vice-Chair
- Notice of meetings
- Emergency Board meeting
- Quorum
- Session end time for meetings
- Removal of persons from meetings

- Voting method
- Meeting attendance requirements
- Suspensions of rules of procedure
- Agenda preparation and distribution
- New agenda items
- Agenda format and approval
- Distribution of Board agenda material
- Minutes and approval
- Recording of minutes
- Motions and resolutions
- Duties of the Chair or Vice-Chair
- Public participation at meetings
- News media at meetings
- General regulations in meetings
- Rules of debate in Board meetings
- Voting mechanism
- Conflicting interest (real or perceived)
- Process for approval of policy and by-laws
- Standing / ad hoc committees
- Duties of Standing Committee Chairs
- Committee of the Whole
- Special and Advisory Committees
- Trustee-Only Meeting (“In-camera”)

The Procedural By-Laws for the Board of Trustees are fairly comprehensive and provide clear direction and guidance on the roles, responsibilities and duties of the Board. The Procedural By-Laws document was last updated in 2009.

The **Board and Administration Policy Manual** supplements the Procedural By-Laws, providing guidelines regarding Board Meetings, Committees, Trustee orientation and professional development, distribution of the Policy Manual itself, and Trustee expenses and reimbursements. The Policy Manual was last updated May 24, 2005. The **Policy Manual – Chapter 4 - Board of Directors** outlines the following powers, duties and policies of the Board:

- Duties of Chair and Vice-Chair
- Duties of Committees
- Regular Board Meetings
- Trustee attendance at conventions, conferences and seminars (“Developmental Education”)
- Minutes
- Trustee Orientation / Organization
- Policy Manual
- Policy of Individual Trustees (“Conduct and Ethics”)
- Travel and Additional Indemnities
- Regularly Scheduled Meetings
  - Principals
  - School Staff
  - Senior Administrative
  - Other
  - Parent – Teacher Conferences
  - External Meetings

The Board of Trustees drafted a detailed **Code of Conduct** that was reviewed and approved in May 2011. The Code of Conduct consolidates and expands upon the general policies set out in the Policy Manual and Procedural By-Laws, and addresses standards for ethical and responsible behaviour, confidentiality and non-disclosure, and conflict of interest.

The School District of Mystery Lake has established the following **Committees of the Board for 2011 / 2012**:

- Three (3) Standing Committees
  - Finance / Property Committee

- Policy Committee
- Public Relations Committee (includes City Race Relations, Thompson Crime Prevention Committee)
- Two (2) Board Negotiating Committees
  - Thompson Teachers’ Association (TTA)
  - United Steelworkers
- Ten (10) Committees for Board Representation to the Community
  - Thompson Unlimited Board
  - City Race Relations Committee
  - Adolescent Health Education Committee (A.H.E.C)
  - Thompson Newcomer Settlement
  - Scholarship Committee
  - Active & Safe Routes to School
  - Vale – Ad Hoc Committee
  - City Liaison & TTA Liaison
  - Thompson Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee (T.A.E.A.C)
  - Alternative Education Steering Committee

The following committees are referenced in the Board and Administration Policy Manual – Chapter 4 – Board of Directors, however, they have not been identified in the 2011 / 2012 Committees of the Board and their operational status was unclear at the time of this review:

- Property Committee
- Vocational Technology Committee
- Personnel Committee
- Special Needs Committee

The Board of Trustees meeting is held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month with the public meeting being held first, followed immediately by an “in-camera” meeting. There is no documented meeting schedule for committee meetings. Both the Trustees and senior administrators interviewed during the review commented that committees do not hold regular meetings and meet as needed, with the exception of the Finance Committee that tends to meet more regularly.

#### **4.4.2 Policy Structure and Development**

Policies are clear and concise statements of expected behaviours, practices and standards. It is a governing principle or set of principles that guides decisions, directs and limits actions in pursuit of defined objectives. A policy clarifies the “reason why” issues are being undertaken in a particular way. Policy may be determined by legislation, regulation or quality standards, and are generally approved by a senior governing body. Guidelines are recommended practices that allow some discretion in their interpretation, implementation or use. Procedures define the how, where and when to apply a policy, and outline the steps expected to be taken or to comply with policies. It describes a process that must be followed to achieve the desired results, as stated in the parent policy, and is directly linked to that policy document. Often, organizations will develop information documents and forms to communicate additional important information regarding policies and to assist in following outlined procedures.

The School District of Mystery Lake’s Procedural By-Law on Policy Adoption states that the Board of Trustees oversees the development of policy, and that the proposal of a new policy, policy regulation, or material amendments shall be the responsibility of the appropriate Standing Committee or the Policy Committee and will develop such in consultation with Administration and any other stakeholders as required. The by-law requires any proposed policy, policy regulation, or material amendment must receive the approval of the Board, by way of three readings, to become policy. Any amendments

to policies and policy regulations which are not materially substantive may be made by the Board by way of the approval of a single motion passed at a Board Meeting. Multiple readings by the Board or stakeholder consultations are not required for amendments which are not material.

The School District of Mystery Lake has established a policy and procedure structure combining both administrative and Board policies into one manual. MNP's review of the School District's Policy Manual found that current policies are inconsistent in both form and content. In some cases, policies are vague and do not provide the adequate level of detail, information and guidance. For example, some simply contain one sentence or paragraph. In other circumstances, policies were more robust and include processes, guidelines and related policies. Also, information in the Policy Manual often duplicates information in the Procedural By-Laws, but to differing levels of detail. For example, duties of the Chair, Vice-Chair, and individual Trustee conduct are included in both documents; however, the Policy Manual statements are brief and vague and cannot be fully understood without having reviewed the Procedural By-Laws as well. In addition, a Board Code of Conduct has been developed and approved by the Board as a stand alone document. The Code of Conduct is not referenced in either the Policy Manual or Procedural By-Laws. It should be noted that documentation such as position descriptions and organizational charts that are not policy or procedure documents are included in the Policy Manual. Policies in the Policy Manual have not been updated since May 2005.

During this review, MNP had been advised that the Policy Committee of the Board had been given the mandate to review and update all Board policies. It is MNP's understanding that a revised Board Policy Manual has been drafted that consolidates and updates all policies and procedures, and provides additional policies in the following areas:

- Mission and Vision
- Values and Beliefs
- Governance Model
- Goals and Key Indicators of Success
- Community Engagement
- Trustee Code of Conduct
- Annual Board Planning Cycle
- Board and Superintendent / CEO Relationship
- Decision-Making Matrix
- Learning Environment / Programs and Services
- Safe Schools
- Finances
- Audits
- Assets
- Sustainable Development

With respect to committees, there are no formal mandates or terms of reference documented in the Policy Manual but only brief description statements. For instance, the mandate for the Finance Committee states "Reviews District accounts prior to submission for approval by Board and deals with all financial matters prior to reporting to the Board" and the mandate for the Public Relations Committee states, "Includes City Race Relations Committee". Also, standing committees are not clearly specified in the Policy Manual or Procedural By-Laws.

### 4.4.3 Board Governance Survey Results

MNP conducted a Board governance survey to understand current Board governance processes and practices. The survey solicited responses relating to Board of Trustee accountability, stewardship, Board effectiveness, individual Trustee effectiveness, and committee effectiveness. Survey results were compiled and analyzed by MNP to compare the current state of the School District of Mystery Lake governance practices to best practices and good governance principles, to gain insight into the perceptions of participants including a determination of the degree of consistency in the responses, to create awareness of best practices in governance, and to gain insight into the effectiveness of the Board and its current practices.

The following table highlights the areas of agreement and strengths of the Board of Trustees, and the corresponding areas of disagreement and/or gaps in governance operations and effectiveness as identified by the governance survey. This reflects responses where a significant majority of respondents, but not necessarily all, agreed with statements made. Areas in italics identify where additional work is required to ensure that all Trustees agree on their overall understanding and effectiveness with respect to accountabilities and stewardship of the School District.



Governance Component	Strengths	Areas of Disagreement / Potential Gaps
<b>Accountability and Stewardship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of conduct exists for Board and Senior Administrators</li> <li>• Conflict of interest policy exists</li> <li>• Board understands its legal and regulatory reporting requirements</li> <li>• Vision, mission and operations are aligned with the government mandate</li> <li>• <i>Evidence in decision-making that the Board and Senior Administrators model School District of Mystery Lake's values and code of conduct</i></li> <li>• Finance Committee reporting, terms of reference, financial literacy and clear financial information</li> <li>• Level of information within the annual report</li> <li>• <i>Role of the Board is clearly understood among Trustees and Senior Administrators</i></li> <li>• Role and responsibilities of Chair, and role and authority delegated to Committees</li> <li>• Board's official spokesperson is clearly delegated</li> <li>• <i>Board has input into the mission, vision and strategic plan</i></li> <li>• A job description for the Superintendent exists</li> <li>• Understanding of material risks in areas of financial reporting, reputational risk, operational risk</li> <li>• <i>Board receives feedback from Administration that is adequate reliable and relevant</i></li> <li>• <i>Board conducts its meetings in an ethical and business-like manner</i></li> <li>• <i>Board members effectively apply their knowledge, experience and expertise to issues confronting the School District</i></li> <li>• Board seeks outside expertise or counsel for difficult or sensitive issues</li> <li>• Board meets from time to time without Administration present</li> <li>• Board minutes are documented, approved and filed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of the Superintendent is clearly understood among Trustees and Senior Administrators</li> <li>• Individual Trustees feel informed when the School District communicates publicly</li> <li>• School District of Mystery Lake is fulfilling its mission to clearly defined stakeholders</li> <li>• Board has high degree of comfort that the vision and strategic direction of the School District are being accomplished through the work of the Superintendent</li> <li>• Clearly defined performance evaluation criteria for the Superintendent exists</li> <li>• Board is effectively monitoring the performance of the Superintendent</li> <li>• Terms of employment of the Superintendent are documented and agreed upon by both the Board and Superintendent</li> <li>• Understanding material risks in the areas of strategic risk</li> <li>• Risk mitigation plans in place</li> <li>• Administration supplies Board with information in a timely manner so Trustees are well prepared for meetings</li> <li>• Regular feedback is provided to the Department of Education on the adequacy, reliability and relevance of information</li> <li>• Board communicates its role to relevant stakeholders</li> <li>• Board members feel pressure to advocate on behalf of specific constituents</li> <li>• Board speaks with one voice (i.e. decisions of the Board are respected and supported by all Trustees)</li> </ul>
<b>Board Effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to deal with strategic issues, stakeholders' interests <u>as well as</u> financial, educational and performance information</li> <li>• Knowledge of education system, government, and business acumen</li> <li>• Communication with Minister's Office and Department of Education</li> <li>• Assessing quality of information from Administration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Succession planning process</li> <li>• Understanding the broader needs of the community and the public</li> <li>• Measures to assess Board performance on key Board functions</li> <li>• Ability to speak with one voice once decisions are made</li> </ul>

Governance Component	Strengths	Areas of Disagreement / Potential Gaps
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of information from Department of Education is provided on a timely enough basis for decision-making</li> <li><i>Measures to track value of the School District's activities</i></li> <li><i>Flexibility and resources to devote significant portion of Board time to strategic issues</i></li> <li><i>Orientation for new Trustees on School District of Mystery Lake, roles and expectations</i></li> <li><i>Discussion and debate at Board meetings</i></li> <li><i>In-Camera meetings without Administration</i></li> <li>Continuing training and development for Trustees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluating our performance as a Board</li> </ul>
<b>Individual Trustee Effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall, Trustees perceive their individual performance to be effective on all areas in the self-assessment</li> <li><i>The majority feel motivated and engaged as a Trustee</i></li> </ul>	<p>There were a few areas where one or two individuals identified areas where improvements in effectiveness could be made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding accountabilities to act in best interests of School District of Mystery Lake versus interest groups</li> <li>Using information gained from the community when deliberating issues or making decisions</li> <li>Supporting a Board decision once it's made</li> <li>Asking probing questions on policy or strategy</li> <li>Respecting confidentiality</li> <li>Comfort in approaching the Chair or Superintendent</li> </ul> <p>Almost half (3 out of 7) of the Trustees feel their personal value system is not congruent with that of the Board and the School District</p>
<b>Committee Effectiveness</b>	<p>Committees believed to be effective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TTA Negotiating Committee</li> <li>Finance Committee</li> <li>Property Committee</li> </ul>	<p>The Committees where improvements could be made included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Committee</li> <li>Vocational Technology Committee</li> <li>Personnel Committee</li> <li>Liaison Committee</li> <li>Public Relations Committee</li> <li>Special Needs Committee</li> </ul> <p>The Vocational Technology Committee was considered to be the most ineffective committee by the majority of respondents</p>

Comments provided by survey respondents indicated that additional work is needed to improve due process during meetings. In particular, issues were raised concerning individual Trustee conduct during meetings, including making disparaging remarks and exhibiting conduct that undermines other Trustees and the Board as a whole. Similarly, there is a belief that some Trustees are catering to special interest groups and special agendas. Feedback indicated that more time needs to be spent on strategic planning and prioritization at the Board level, and that the Board requires more focus on the educational vision, direction and expected outcomes for the School District. In addition, respondents felt that accountability and transparency to stakeholders should be improved, along with improvement in community engagement as a whole. One (1) respondent expressed concerns regarding the Superintendent's leadership style and felt that a more positive tone should be set with the administration team. A few respondents also believe more work should be done to improve vocational education, that a professional public relations strategy should be developed, and that more information should be shared equally among the Trustees.

Based on the comments received in the survey, it appears that not all of the Trustees are fully aware of the committees of the Board, the mandates and terms of reference, and the role of Trustees with respect to committee involvement. In particular, some Trustees did not understand their role with respect to other organizations such as Thompson Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee and Thompson Unlimited. There also appears to be a misunderstanding between standing committees of the Board versus community committees that Trustees may be members of, and their differing roles, duties and mandates.

Many of these findings were further supported by the stakeholder feedback collected during interviews, focus groups and the MNP stakeholder survey conducted in the spring 2011, which have been summarized in the section that follows.

#### **4.4.4 Board Governance Feedback from Stakeholders**

As part of the stakeholder consultations, MNP conducted a series of one-on-one interview sessions with the Board of Trustees in February and November 2011. MNP also solicited feedback on Board governance from administrators and external stakeholders through the online survey conducted in February and March 2011 and during interviews and focus groups sessions held in November and December 2011. The consultations were conducted in order to understand how the Board and stakeholders view the current state of the School District, its vision for the future, and perceptions regarding the Board's effectiveness. MNP consolidated and analyzed the responses to identify common themes and concerns as well as potential differences. Their responses are summarized below.

General feedback received from stakeholders suggests that while some aspects of the governance model are working well, other aspects require more attention in order to support and improve the performance and image of the School District as a whole. It was felt that leadership tone is set at the top, and those holding Trustee positions must demonstrate and model the desired behaviour. Governance concerns raised by stakeholders included improving accountability to the public for decision-making, and modeling ethics and integrity in decision-making to support the Board's priorities rather than personal agendas. In addition, stakeholders commented on inappropriate behaviour by some Trustees, which they believe has damaged the reputation of the Board and eroded its credibility.

Feedback from Trustees indicates the Board has made some progress towards improving their governance policies and practices, including the development of a Code of Conduct and the more recent review of the Board Policy Manual to address some of the gaps and missing items. They have also indicated that in general, they are beginning to see some progress towards a more productive and positive culture within the team.

Participants in the interview process who are familiar with Board operations expressed differing views of the role of the Board and senior administration, particularly regarding decisions on hiring and firing of senior and school administrators. Some believed the major role of the Board is to set direction and act as a conduit between stakeholders and administration. Others expressed a view that the Board must have a more hands-on role in hiring and firing decisions, and that the Board should approve recommendations for the hiring and firing of senior administrators, principals and vice-principals.

The Board of Trustees and external stakeholders felt that the Board's image within the community and the community's understanding of the role of the Board must be improved. Suggestions ranged from establishing a clear communication policy and/or public relations strategy at the Board level, doing a better job of explaining conflict of interest when necessary, and looking for opportunities to diminish perceptions based on widespread gossip and hearsay within the School District. They noted these issues affect the image of the School District and the Board as a whole. More importantly, it is believed the negative public image is impacting the recruitment and retention of staff not just within the School District, but within the community as well.

The Board of Trustees characterized their current culture as divided and uncertain. Several Trustees described their role as having to perform "damage control" or being reactive to recent concerns, which has led them away from the typical duties of a Trustee. The Board contains both new and longer-serving members, and Trustees identified a somewhat "us versus them" mentality present as they learn to work together. It is also worth noting that the perception of a divided Board was echoed by other internal and external stakeholders. The Board recently elected a new Chair. Some Trustees and stakeholders anticipate the new incumbent will affect changes by introducing a better process for issues identification and discussion, improving discussions and decision-making, providing more communication and information to the community and stakeholders, and conducting more efficient meetings. Some stakeholders are concerned that long-standing members of the Board may continue to influence the new Chair and perpetuate the recent culture and climate of the Board.

Two (2) specific groups of values emerged from the responses of Trustees. First, Trustees indicated support for specific "ethical" values. They indicated honesty, integrity, vision, tolerance, transparency, and being viewed as firm but fair as most important. Second, Trustees supported "educational" values. These included an emphasis on life-long learning, providing authentic, high quality learning opportunities, and placing the needs students first above all others.

Trustees most often cited specific examples of the School District's programming as its greatest strength. These included the School District's music and arts, keynote, young mother, and ECHOES programming. Trustees also felt that long serving and knowledgeable Trustees, teachers, parent council members and maintenance staff are a strong asset, demonstrating confidence in the School District's human resources. Specific Trustees felt the School District was community-minded, provided good benefits, and was in a good financial position.

Based on feedback from the Board of Trustees, it is their belief that their role should be to represent the public by providing clear direction and policy for the School District, ensuring accountability, and ensuring the best resources and educational methods are provided to students. Some Trustees felt their role was to be the voice of their constituents by ensuring quality programming is in place, fighting for maximum funding for that programming, and making decisions in conjunction with the Superintendent about the direction of the School District of Mystery Lake. More importantly, Trustees generally felt their approach in the future could be more proactive by being more knowledgeable, identifying upcoming and ongoing trends, and then setting direction for the School District on a given issue.

Contrary to the feedback from the Trustees as described above, some community and educational partners do not perceive the Board or the School District to be placing the needs of students first above all others. They expressed concerns that not all students have the same opportunity for equal education and of the same quality. They also indicated a lack of communication, involvement and collaboration with the School District, which, over time, has deteriorated the working relationships and partnerships they believe to be instrumental in the effort to ensure the well-being of all students.

The Board of Trustees noted that most trends of the last several years stem from the leadership instability and human resources issues that the School District has faced. They indicated that the termination of several positions in a relatively short period of time has led to low morale across the School District, and some felt that staff are fearful of losing their jobs. Trustees also noted that dealing with the impacts of recent termination decisions has consumed a large amount of the Board's time and attention, moving it away from longer term strategic issues. In general, Trustees noted these events have created a staff culture that is questioning and suspicious of the Board, and has hurt the reputation of the School District with prospective employees and with the community. The general lack of trust by stakeholders is a significant challenge for the Board.

Aside from human resources, Trustees noted that funding concerns and delivery of programming are key issues. As specific jobs related to natural resources in the community disappear, the Board indicates declining enrolment will pose funding and budgetary challenges as they will be faced with running its selection of programming with less financial resources.

Most Trustees felt their biggest priority will be to build stability. Trustees felt this will be best accomplished by establishing a clear vision and a strategic plan that will lead them in the right direction and be more effective. The Board indicated programming and graduation rates are immediate issues. When asked what will be the greatest barriers to meeting these priorities, Trustees noted interpersonal conflicts, the pressure to make popular decisions as opposed to informed ones, retiring teachers, and demands regarding restrictions or requirements imposed by the Manitoba education system as their biggest challenges.

## 4.5 STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

Organizations do not exist without people. The recruitment and retention of highly skilled individuals who have the competencies required to successfully contribute to the goals and objectives of the organization, and the creation of an environment and culture that enables top performance, are crucial in the challenging environments of today's public and private sectors.

Designing a structure and organization is not about drawing organizational charts and diagrams but about organizing resources including people, processes and technology to deliver results in the most effective and efficient way. The structure needs to be based on an in-depth understanding of the strategic goals of the organization and the vision of where it wants to be in the future. There are a number of ways in which organizations can be structured, each with its advantages and disadvantages: geographical, functional, process-based, product / service-based, centralized, decentralized and using a matrix model.

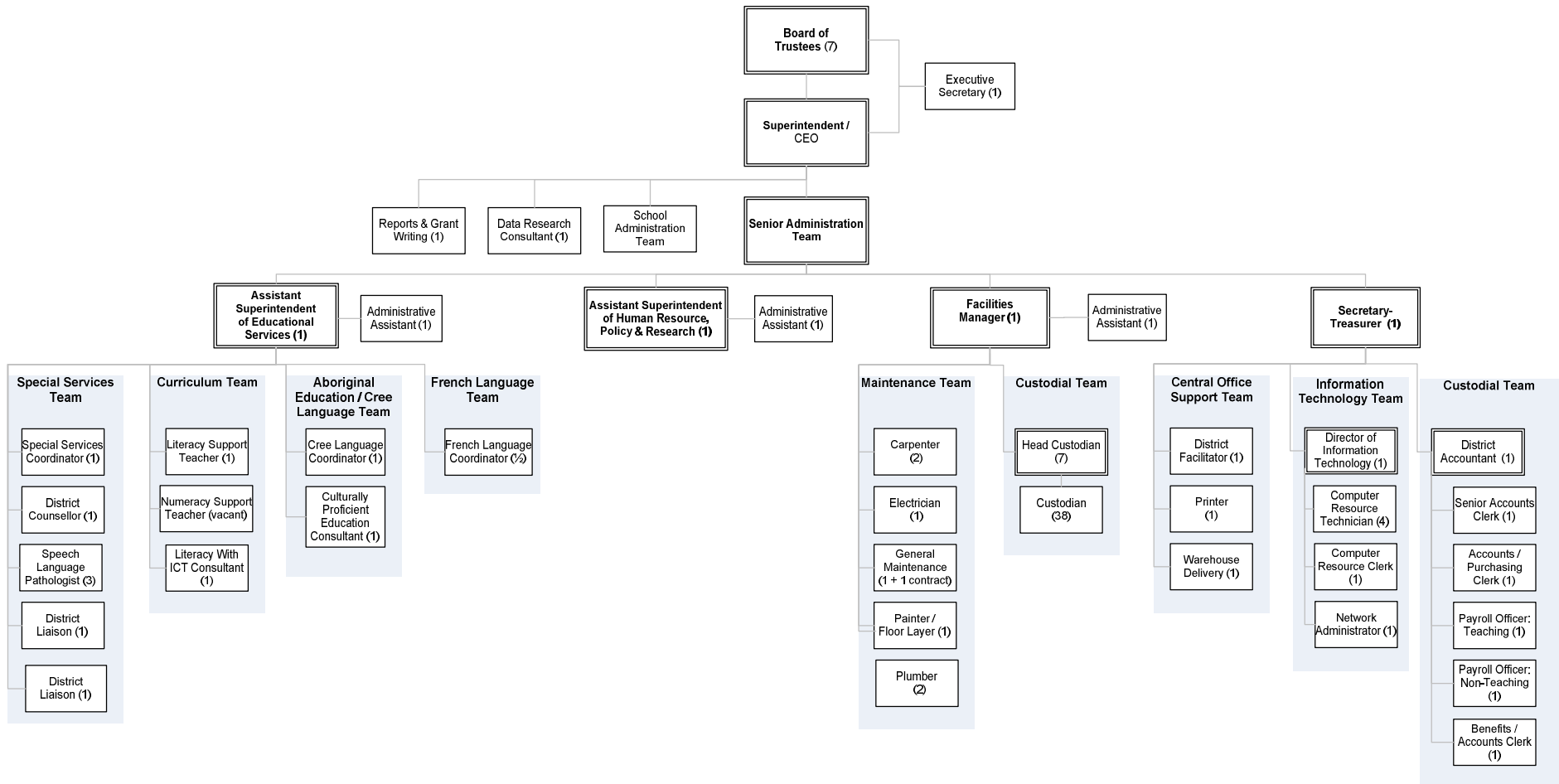
### Best Practice Organizational Design Principles:

- **Simplicity** – The organization needs to be simple enough for people to understand
- **Span of Control** – The number of people effectively managed by one person should be selected so as not to sacrifice efficiency and effectiveness
- **Size and Balance** – There should be a reasonable balance in the size of portfolios so they can be managed
- **Job Structure** – A position should be designed around activities that need to be performed and not tailored to the qualifications of the individual
- **Specialization** – The activities for which a single individual is held responsible should be similar
- **Decentralization of Authority** – The responsibility for making a decision should be placed as far down in the organization as is appropriate
- **Authority and Responsibility** – Leadership should be given responsibility for results and the authority needed to perform the job properly

When assessing an organization, it is important to establish the framework and the elements for consideration that all consultation and inquiry processes are designed to collect. This includes data, information and opinion. MNP reviewed the School District of Mystery Lakes' organization structure and positions to assess the organization against the core elements in our framework: leadership, management, program and service development, human resource management, promotion and communication, information resources and technology, financial management, facilities management, and purchasing and procurement. Our current state findings for organization structure and positions are provided in the sections that follow.

## 4.5.1 Current Organizational Structure

The School District of Mystery Lake delivers educational programs and services to a student population of nearly 3,000 in six (6) elementary schools and one (1) high school serving the City of Thompson. The School District Office provides administrative leadership, direction and management of support functions including: human resources management, educational services, facilities and maintenance, information technology, and financial and capital management. Currently, the School District is organized functionally and support functions are centralized at the district level. The organizational chart as of January 10, 2012 is provided below:



The Superintendent reports directly to the Board of Trustees and is responsible for leadership and management of all aspects of the School District to support student learning. Recently, responsibilities for the collection and analysis of fact-based research data to support strategic initiatives have been identified as a priority and a Data and Research Consultant position has been created that reports to the Superintendent. The senior management team is comprised of two (2) Assistant Superintendents, a Secretary-Treasurer, and a Facilities Manager responsible for the following functional areas:

- **Educational programming** to support excellence in education in the areas of curriculum, specialized programming and initiatives within the School District.
- **Human resource management and policy** to support the implementation of human resource strategies and policies including employment practices and adherence to legislation.
- **Financial management, information technology** and oversight of **central office support teams** to ensure budget development, finance and purchasing, technological support services and systems, and effective management of central office administrative assistant teams.
- **Facilities and maintenance** to ensure effective maintenance and custodial services for all facilities within the School District.

Recently, the School District Office has assigned a senior administrator as the point of contact for each of the schools to improve communication and the delivery of services. The Superintendent is the key point of contact for the high school, and K-8 schools are divided equally between the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services and the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Policy & Research.

#### 4.5.2 Position Design – Roles and Responsibilities

MNP reviewed the School District's positions and their responsibilities and authorities based on position descriptions provided, our documentation review and the interviews conducted. MNP found many position descriptions to be outdated, requiring updating, and differing in format. Position descriptions were being updated by the School District during the time of this review. Our findings of the positions by functional areas have been provided below.

The **Superintendent** position is responsible for supporting the leadership of the Board of Trustees and to advise the Board on all aspects of the School District including working in partnership with the Board to develop and implement a process to ensure regular strategic and operational planning, monitoring and reporting, directing all aspects of the School District's operations through the senior leadership team, policy development and implementation, establishing frameworks and systems for teaching and learning for all students, research and development to support excellent in student learning, and building community and public relations.

The current incumbent in the Superintendent position has been in the role since the summer of 2010. Internal stakeholder feedback indicated the roles and responsibilities of the position are being completed generally, however, it was felt that some responsibilities are being completed to varying degrees due to a variety of factors. For example, a process for strategic and operational planning had recently been implemented in the fall of 2011 that engaged the Board, senior administration and school administration. Feedback also indicates that reporting to the Board is more comprehensive than it has been in prior years. In addition, more information and outcome results are being provided to the Board on student numeracy and literacy, and on enrolment statistics and trends as well. Areas requiring additional focus and attention at the Superintendent level include developing a more robust and comprehensive planning process for strategic and operational planning, providing more time and attention to foster positive stakeholder and community relationships, and focusing more time on ensuring that Board and administration policies and procedures are clear, relevant and up to date.

Stakeholders in general believe the current incumbent to have the qualifications and experience required for a Superintendent. The areas of concern referenced by stakeholders seem to be regarding lack of visibility and accessibility. Both senior and school administrators commented on the lack of guidance, direction and mentorship offered by the Superintendent. The examples provided included numerous absences, administration meetings that are held inconsistently and that do not provide a venue for

dialogue amongst administrators, and a lack of regular and consistent communication. Administrators expressed a desire for more regular information and consultation on key priorities and activities within the School District that affect administration and their ability to achieve objectives. Communication topics suggested ranged from receiving more advanced communication regarding MNP's review, increased understanding on the outcomes of the full-day kindergarten pilot, having a better understanding of the grant review process and deadlines, and a better understanding of the district and school planning and budgeting processes. Many senior and school administrators would like to see more leadership development and coaching opportunities, as well as formalized development plans, particularly those that are fairly new in their positions. Overall, there is a feeling of disconnect between senior administration and school-based administration, with school administrators feeling disconnected from the School District Office and senior administrators feeling disconnected from the Superintendent and the Board.

As discussed previously with respect to the internal climate in the School District, the overall leadership style of the Superintendent is viewed by stakeholders as directive and at times intimidating. The style can be labelled as one of "command and control", where all information and communication is funnelled through the Superintendent and decisions are made without consultation or collaboration with administrators. Many of the administrators are new in their positions (one to two years tenure) and feel they are not able to access support or guidance from the Superintendent or the School District Office without repercussions or being reprimanded for mistakes. Fear of job loss is prevalent amongst the majority of the administrators interviewed, and some have even commented on or made accusations of bullying and harassment. Again, many described the School District's climate as one of low morale, fear, lack of trust and regular confusion due to a lack of or unclear communication. They expressed concerns not only for the School District's reputation, but ultimately the perceived impact and effect this will have on students.

A new **Data and Research Consultant** position was created in response to the continued priorities of research and data analysis for the School District to support research and development in student learning. This position reports to the Superintendent and is responsible for providing leadership in the development of administrative procedures impacting student achievement, assessment and transition, and ensuring that Board priorities concerning student achievement are addressed collaboratively with school administrators. The position will also support planning and reporting by providing statistical and comparative analysis of Provincial and District test results. This position will be effective January 10, 2012.

The **Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services** is responsible for the delivery of support services, curriculum and specialized programming for all schools throughout the School District. This includes promoting consistency in the direction of schools as it relates to the implementation of educational services including definition of program objectives, guidelines and procedures. Educational services have been grouped into four areas of specializations: Special Services, Curriculum, Aboriginal Education / Cree Language and French Language.

The positions that reside within the **Special Services** team include Special Services Coordinator, District Counsellor, Speech Language Pathologists, District Psychologist and District Liaison. Support and services provided by the team include consultation, referral to specialized services, assistance with the development of funding applications, advocacy and networking, hearing and vision screening, clinical assessments of psychological pathology and speech / language functioning, direct services to children, and programming planning.

The **Curriculum** team includes the Literacy Support Teacher, Numeracy Support Teacher and a Literacy with ICT Consultant. The incumbents work with teachers to provide support to increase their skills and effectiveness or work with a variety of community groups and partners to support the delivery of programming for the schools.

The **Aboriginal / Cree Language** team primarily focuses on increasing Aboriginal perspectives in the classroom and meeting the needs of Aboriginal students, a group representing approximately 65% of the student population. The Cree Language Coordinator coordinates Cree language programming, and develops Cree language resources to ensure the consistent and effective implementation of local and provincial Cree bilingual and Cree as a second language curriculum. The Culturally Proficient Education Consultant provides guidance and assistance to administration, instructional staff and other teams to support the development, implementation and incorporation of Aboriginal Perspectives in curriculum and programming to enhance Aboriginal student success and cultural proficiency throughout the School District.



The fourth area under the Educational Services umbrella is the **French Language** team supported by a half-time French Language Coordinator who coordinates, advises and assists with the development, implementation and evaluation of curricula, programs and services ensuring the consistent implementation of French language programming (French Immersion and Basic French) in the School District that are based on best practices in second language teaching.

At the time of this review, MNP had come to understand that the New Teacher Mentor and Early Childhood Development Consultant positions had been eliminated and a Numeracy Support Teacher and Literacy with ICT Consultant positions had been added for the 2011/12 school year.

Access to educational services varies depending on the service and the availability of resources. Typically, school administrators will work directly with the Education Services team members responsible for direct service delivery. School administrators have been provided with a flowchart that outlines the process to access service. There is an Educational Services pamphlet available for the public and schools that defines services, expectations and contact information for the required service. Requests for services and referrals can be initiated by the parents by contacting numbers provided, or initiated at the school level. Regardless of how the request is initiated, it normally involves consultation and involvement of on-site resource teachers, classroom teachers, parents and the student.

A current focus within the Education Services team is cultural awareness training and programming for administrators and teachers within the School District. The hope is to enable educators to better address the cultural diversity of the student population, to increase their ability to engage all students and to improve student learning, and ultimately to retain students to have them complete high school.

Generally, many internal stakeholders indicated that Education Services is working well and see it as evolving in the right direction. The current incumbent has been in the position since February 2010. Some functional gaps were noted and areas for improvement were identified. A current gap is in the evaluation of current programs to assess program delivery mechanisms, the quality and effectiveness of programming, and to ensure that best practices are being implemented. Many school administrators expressed a desire to see more new programming ideas being generated by the Educational Services group rather than at the school level, to have improved response and turnaround times on referrals and/or requests, and see a need for additional qualified resources to support student numeracy, French language, and Aboriginal education. Some of the internal stakeholders interviewed also expressed concern there are a lack of resources to meet the increasing level of special needs programming necessary to raise the level of student literacy and numeracy. Generally, feedback from all stakeholders interviewed as well as those surveyed expressed a desire to focus on the quality of programming verses the quantity.

The **Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Policy & Research** is responsible for providing leadership in the implementation of human resource management strategies and policies for all teaching staff, School District support staff, administrators, coordinators and non-teaching personnel, including administrating and negotiating contracts, grievances, recruitment, hiring and retention. This position also provides leadership and direction with respect to models of supervision and staff evaluation and in collaboration with the Superintendent, supervises and evaluates school administrators. One (1) Administrative Assistant reports to and supports the Assistant Superintendent. Currently, those who have staff management responsibilities are responsible for all aspects of human resource management within their operational areas with support and guidance from the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Policy & Research. Services and support requests are normally made through a phone call or email to schedule a meeting or to request on-site support. There were discussions during the time of MNP's review to transfer the scope of "research" to the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services. Since that time, a decision was made to align this function with the newly created Data and Research Consultant position that reports directly to the Superintendent.

The current incumbent has been in the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resource, Policy and Research since the summer of 2010. It is the opinion of a few of the interviewees that due to the incumbent being new to the role there appears to be a lack of understanding and comfort level with contract interpretation and administration, and unfamiliarity with some past practices. Additional training and or understanding of labour law will benefit and enhance the effectiveness of the incumbent in this area.

Some interviewees commented on a lack of clarity and understanding of human resources policies and practices within the School District. They are generally considered to be outdated, and in some cases not comprehensive enough to cover the issues facing the staff and not providing the level of guidance required. MNP observed that not everyone at the school administrator level is aware of where to locate the most current policies (paper or electronic). Administrators have also commented on job descriptions being outdated and that most have been assuming duties as they arise and are unclear as to accountabilities and responsibilities.

One of the most significant areas of concern is in the realm of recruitment where there appears to be a lack of standardized processes and approach, and a lack of clarity surrounding staffing plans and recruitment processes. Furthermore, attraction of qualified talent to the School District has been an ongoing challenge, which most perceived to be due to geographic location as well as the School District's current public image. Turnover experienced over the past few years in leadership positions has the majority of internal and external stakeholders perceiving the hiring process to be flawed and costly. Feedback indicated that the staffing formula is unclear to some school administrators and that a concrete human resource procedure including a standardized hiring process is required. In addition, most stakeholders believe it has been a challenge to attract high quality candidates and even more difficult to attract specialty staffing to the area given that media and public perception has not been favourable.

General feedback is that succession planning is lacking, and leadership development and training for administration positions is inconsistent throughout the School District. Currently, Vice-Principals are trained by having responsibilities delegated to them, however, each Principal delegates to varying degrees, with some working in partnership with Vice-Principals more than others. In some cases, there is good collaboration and the Principals and Vice-Principals use one another's individual strengths to their advantages. School administrators commented there is limited time for Principals to train and mentor Vice-Principals due to high workloads. There is also a lack of succession planning across the School District, and no formal successors identified or properly prepared to step into future leadership positions at the School District Office and school levels. In addition, there is little to no leadership development planning and programming that is occurring to support the professional training of administrators. Once administrators are on the job, little leadership development is offered and many indicated that development plans are self created with no support or direction. Most training and development for administrators is accomplished through professional development (PD) opportunities. Feedback indicates additional guidelines and direction on learning plans is desired to guide their individual development. Many of the school administrators interviewed believe there is a general lack of interest by teachers to move into administration, and that the current climate within the School District is making it more and more difficult to attract candidates into leadership positions.

MNP observed that the majority of school administrators are new in their roles. For example, at the Vice-Principal level, three (3) of the incumbents have been in the role for three to four years while the balance have been in their role only one (1) to two (2) years. In addition, orientation for senior and school administrators is limited. Once hired there appears to be little to no direction or guidance by the Superintendent and varying degrees of guidance for Vice-Principals by Principals. Some of these responsibilities fall to the Assistant Superintendents, however, the current incumbents are fairly new in their roles and do not have the degree of experience to advise school administration in all cases.

The majority of internal stakeholders commented that performance reviews are not conducted on a regular basis and are practically non-existent. Principals have found the evaluation process to be inconsistent, unclear, not occurring annually and not tied to the core competencies. As a whole, the School District is seen as not consistently applying the performance review process and some school administrators were not even aware that such a process exists.

The **Secretary-Treasurer** is responsible for financial management, information technology and central office support. Each of the functions in this portfolio provides services to all schools throughout the School District in a centralized structure. The Secretary-Treasurer works with the Finance Committee of the Board and the Superintendent to develop the School District budget, create financial statements, and develop variance reports for review by administration and the Board of Trustees. Most interviewees indicated they are pleased with the sound financial management of the School District, with the School District having reported a surplus and not having to raise taxes. Trustees and administrators felt that, in general, there are good checks and balances in place, and clear protocols on approvals. Yet at the time of this review, it was commented by some that financial integrity requires some structural changes and more accountability including documented controls. There is a perception by a few that the recent distribution of surplus funds did not benefit the School District as a whole, however, MNP observed there was a lack of

understanding and lack of communication to the school level administrators and external stakeholders as to how surplus funds were spent. The employee association has expressed desire for increase transparency with spending and allocation of funds.

The **Finance** team is responsible for payroll, payables, grant applications, school budgets, school-based reports of revenue and expenses, purchasing, benefits administration, financial statements, auditor reports and projections consolidation for the Board. This area is currently supported by three (3) Payroll staff and four (4) Accounts Payable / Accounts Receivable staff. With the District Accountant on indefinite leave, the work has been redistributed amongst the team members, which has increased the workload for the team as a whole.

Internal stakeholders including Trustees, senior administrators and school administrators have reported that financial management is working well in general and they feel there is a good working relationship with the Secretary-Treasurer. As indicated earlier, an area of improvement based on feedback is the need for greater clarity and understanding at the school level of the School District's budgeting process and the process to request funds for new initiatives. MNP observed that not all the school administrators understood the budgeting process or how it works.

The **Director of Information Technology** (IT) reports to the Secretary-Treasurer. The current incumbent leads the information technology team and is responsible for the delivery of all technology services to support both program delivery and administrative support needs for all schools and support units throughout the School District. The delivery of information technology services is managed centrally and includes software installation, supporting staff in the use of technology, coordination of network infrastructure, purchasing technology equipment and devices, data management, security, troubleshooting, all modes of electronic communications (email, internet, phone, video and teleconferencing) and providing general technology information. The Technology Services team also manages the website to ensure lines of communication and posting / updating of information. Senior administration is responsible for all content on the website. In practice, this responsibility rests primarily with the Superintendent.

Technology service requests normally flow from Teacher → Principal / Vice-Principal → Computer Resource Clerk → Director IT. The Director of IT then prioritizes requests and deploys appropriate staff. Deployment may be a simple call back to direct troubleshooting via phone instructions or it may require staff to attend on-site. Feedback in general is that this area has high demands and heavy workloads, making it difficult to service all requests. Additional funding and focus has been placed on upgrading IT staff's knowledge and skills through training and conferences, as well as upgrading basic technology, such as having the appropriate bandwidth in place.

A number of IT challenges have been raised by interviewees and focus group participants. Issues relate primarily to the lack of resources both in manpower and funding. One respondent commented that the IT team is 'running to stay still', continuously handling day to day emergencies and supporting all District employees in their daily use of technology. The perception of stakeholders indicates there is a lack of proficiency with staff in general, and the level of technology available across the schools in the School District varies. When current resources are troubleshooting and supporting employees, they are unable to dedicate time towards upgrading technology such as setting up the wireless infrastructure. Response time has also been reported as slow, and again this is due to the factors already mentioned. The School District also lacks a formal technology plan that outlines future purchases and upgrades of its existing technology infrastructure and resources, and a plan that evaluates the impact IT has on student learning. Feedback during interviews indicated the School District Office is currently attempting to develop a three-year (3) IT plan.

The **Central Office Support Team** is also accountable to the Secretary-Treasurer and includes the District Facilitator, Printer and the Warehouse Delivery positions. The District Facilitator provides support to District facilities, including the booking of substitute teachers, Educational Assistants and support staff as well as switchboard duties and managing the School District Office reception.

The **Facilities Manager** reports to the Superintendent and is responsible for general maintenance and custodial services for all schools and administration buildings, facilities planning, capital project planning and management, utilities and workplace health and safety. This functional area is comprised of two distinctive functions: the maintenance team and the custodians. Reporting to the Facilities Manager is an Administrative Assistant, Head Custodians (7), and all members of the maintenance team (8).

The **Maintenance** team currently includes Carpenters (2), an Electrician, a full-time and a contract position in General Maintenance, a Painter / Floor Layer and Plumbers (2). Work is managed and directed by the Facilities Manager, supported by the Administrative Assistant. Maintenance requests are initiated through work orders at the school level by the School Secretary or Principals and sent to the Facilities Manager. The Facilities Manager reviews the work order, determines priority level, resources, and when the work will be accomplished depending on the scope of the work. Feedback from internal stakeholders suggested that overall the team is doing the best that they can, however, it is recognized the team is overstretched and is sometimes slow in responding to work orders. In some cases, stakeholders reported some work orders have been outstanding for three (3) years. They perceived this group to be doing a good job given that they appear to be overworked and under-resourced. Aging facilities and heating issues were common concerns reported by internal stakeholders. Others commented that having a daytime maintenance schedule would be helpful.

The **Custodial** team is made up of approximately 45 Custodians, which include seven (7) Head Custodians that report to the Facilities Manager. Each Head Custodian is responsible to provide supervision to a team of custodians to ensure the activities directly concerned with caretaking of the school are met. The Custodians will apply for positions at schools and will normally stay at that location unless transfers are required due to conflicts. Overall, no major issues have been identified in terms of custodial service delivery.

The **Workplace Health and Safety Committee** is comprised of representatives from each school (both management and staff) and falls under the responsibilities of the Facilities Manager. The Committee is led by two (2) co-chairs who alternate the responsibilities of chairing the meetings, one (1) management and one (1) non-management as per legislation requirements.

The Facilities Manager has noted an increase in workload, which is attributed to increasing demands on the incumbent's time for employee issues and the mediation of disputes. These issues range from cleaning issues to personality conflicts to harassments and grievances. There is a desire to conduct more performance reviews and build an accountability process within the facilities team. The up-keep of the aging facilities continues to remain a challenge and has resulted in increased numbers of work orders that need to be managed in terms of assigning priority levels and resources. Capital planning for facilities is usually put on hold in order to deal with the day-to-day needs of the School District. Furthermore, the Facilities Department is also responsible to manage all outside user groups utilizing school facilities, which involves issuing permits, evaluating and managing applications, scheduling and any associated changes. This consumes approximately one-quarter of the Administrative Assistant's time. Currently, every gym is being used nightly and therefore also has an impact on the Custodians' workflow and some concerns around safety for self and for users.

The Facilities Manager sees an opportunity for improvement and increased effectiveness by creating a Foreman position to oversee the maintenance staff. This position would be responsible to triage and investigate work orders, follow up to ensure completion and manage team productivity. This would enable the Facilities Manager to focus on more proactive activities such as planning for future projects and capital needs, and managing and developing staff to improve accountability.

The **Executive Secretary** provides support to the Board, the Superintendent and the Secretary-Treasurer. This position currently supports the Superintendent with all operational functions and the Board with all governance functions. Under the direction of the Superintendent, the Executive Secretary prepares meeting agendas and ensures delivery of agendas to Trustees and other recipients accordingly. The Executive Secretary attends Board, administration and staff meetings and is responsible for managing all minutes – recording, filing, storing and distribution. It is important to note that the governance function support provided to the Board requires the Executive Secretary to attend all in-camera meetings to record motions during the meeting. Due to the number of confidential and sensitive issues arising at the Board level, this dual role creates the potential for real or perceived conflicts of interest and confidentiality is paramount.

The **Principal and Vice-Principal** positions are the **school-based administration positions** responsible for specific schools throughout the School District of Mystery Lake. The Principals are responsible for planning, program and service delivery, facilities management, human resource management and community and stakeholder relations. The majority of the Principals reported having a half-time Vice-Principal to support them in their role. The incumbents in the Vice-Principal positions also have classroom or resource / guidance duties. Feedback from the Vice-Principals indicated that one aspect of their role often takes precedence over the other, and more often than not, they feel the result is that both jobs suffer. While it is not uncommon to have

half-time Vice-Principals in smaller school districts, the school-based administrators interviewed did suggest that the Vice-Principal role within the School District of Mystery Lake be turned into a full-time position to allow incumbents to be more effective and proactive in their roles.

## 4.6 PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

A strategic plan clearly identifies the organization's mission (purpose), the vision, the values, the internal strengths and weaknesses and the external opportunities and threats as well as clearly formulated strategic directions and objectives. A good strategic plan will also include broad based-quantitative and qualitative performance indicators (measures). The following are characteristics evident in well-designed strategic plans:

1. Forward thinking and visionary while taking realities into account
2. Reflective of stakeholder and community (if applicable) needs
3. Inspiring
4. Presents a clearly defined direction and vision that can be understood by any reader
5. Dynamic, fluid and flexible - a living document

A good strategic plan provides a context to accomplish the following:

1. Ensure that all Board, staff and stakeholders understand and embrace shared values and a common vision
2. Ensure that the organization "stays on track" in a clearly defined direction
3. Ensure that organizational performance is measured and evaluated
4. Ensure that Board, staff and key players understand how they fit into the organization
5. Ensure that the organization has a framework from which to develop an operational plan
6. Ensure that there is a tool to demonstrate to all stakeholders and the public that there is a well thought out planning process in place and that the organization has the tools and the strategies to set it up for success

Strategic plans contribute to the success of an organization only if the plan is implemented, monitored and flexible. They are a tool and not an end in themselves. A typical strategic planning model aligns itself throughout the organization beginning with the development of a strategic plan that is cascaded down through the development of an operational plan, then departmental / school plans, and then individual performance plans.

### 4.6.1 Current Planning Process

The School District of Mystery Lake has established a strategic District Plan for the period of 2011-2014. There is a documented mission and vision statement, and key priorities for the School District have been defined.

#### **Mission and Vision Statement**

School District of Mystery Lake's mission is to maximize each student's learning potential and to produce life long learners with a sense of self-worth and social responsibility by providing, in cooperation with the community, a diversity of educational experiences in a learning environment that recognizes the uniqueness of the individual.

School District of Mystery Lake believes that:

- Individuals have the right to access quality education that maximizes individual potential
- Individuals are accountable for their actions
- Education is a shared responsibility amongst home, school, and community

- The family has the primary responsibility to provide a safe, secure, nurturing and caring environment for the child
- Learning – a personal, life-long pursuit – enhances physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects within the individual
- All individuals have the right to learn in a positive, respectful, secure and healthy environment
- All individuals have dignity and intrinsic worth
- Education is essential to progress
- Optimism and vision are keys to the future
- All individuals can meet the challenge of higher expectations
- Diversity enriches

### **Priorities**

Keeping the mission and vision statements at the centre, the School District of Mystery Lake established the following priorities:

1. Improve student engagement, success and achievement in learning
2. Improve communication and engagement with all educational partners and the community, to strengthen the public profile of the School District; through the development of a comprehensive public relations plan
3. Model a commitment to and promote a professional learning community of cultural proficiency, social justice, and excellence in education
4. Strengthen the capacity and leadership development of staff by providing quality professional growth opportunities and succession planning
5. Effectively link policy, procedures and practice to research and evidence

Goals have been established at two levels:

- Board / District level
- School level

Outcomes, strategies, indicators and data sources have been developed for:

- Student Learning
- Student Services
- Categorical Grant

For each of the expected outcomes, a plan has been developed that identifies strategies, indicators to measure success, steps and actions to be taken and expected timelines for achievement. However, what appears to be lacking are regular status reviews to determine progress on implementation, responsibility commitments, and resource requirements.

Feedback from stakeholders suggested dissatisfaction with the School District's planning processes, commenting that the process was top-down, unclear and inconsistently implemented. Most of the school administrators interviewed did not have a good understanding of the planning process used by the School District, reported a lack of communication and agreed that it was inconsistently implemented and confusing. They also reported that a top-down approach was adopted this year instead of a more collaborative bottom up approach that they were familiar with in the past years. Feedback from senior administration and management in the School District Office indicates that they have solicited requests and input via emails or informal meetings with some internal stakeholders.

Overall, the budgeting and planning processes in the School District are unclear and confusing to many internal stakeholders, and have typically not involved the appropriate level of consultation and collaboration from those impacted by the planning outcomes. MNP observed that a standardized planning process has not been developed or documented, and that there are no formal mechanisms being used to obtain feedback from internal and external stakeholders to inform planning.

## 5.0 FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

### Significant Trends and Events

1. **Stakeholder dissatisfaction with instability and turnover within the School District.** Stakeholders indicated the most significant trend in recent years has been the turnover and perceived lack of stability at the School District's senior leadership levels including Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Principal and Vice-Principal positions. Stakeholders perceive this instability has resulted in a loss of focus for the School District and its leadership team, created a lack of trust and damaged the School District and the City's public image and reputation.
2. **Changing demographics, declining enrolments, and low graduation rates are seen as a significant trend by stakeholders.** This has challenged the School District to provide a complete range of ESL and special needs programming and services to address the number of new Canadians and Aboriginal families in the community, and student transience at the high school level.
3. **Stakeholders desire increased focus on quality of programs.** The quality of education of the children remains a key interest of stakeholders. The School District of Mystery Lake's stakeholders would like a higher standard to be upheld for all involved with the education of students in the community. Many stakeholders view the variety of programming offered by the School District as one of its strengths, they would also like a higher standard to be upheld for all involved with the education community and to see the same effort applied to the core subjects and inspiring excellence in students and their pursuits of higher education and learning.
4. **Desire for increased stakeholder communication and consultation.** Stakeholders believed that decisions are made using a top-down approach that does not consult or collaborate with those related to or affected by those decisions. It was felt many of the improvements could be made by establishing clear communication processes for delivering information to all parties throughout the School District.
5. **Stakeholders desire School District to keep pace with technology.** The evolution of technology and keeping pace with technology continues to be seen as a challenge for the School District by many stakeholders. Technology was seen as not only impacting the students in the classroom, but also impacting how work gets done in the School District. The lack of resources (human, financial) and time has impacted the pace and ability to move forward on some key initiatives to support the implementation of new technology, such as a wireless infrastructure.

### Environment and Culture

6. **The majority of stakeholders commented that the School District of Mystery Lake has highly committed and passionate team members.** There were many statements about the strong values and dedication of Trustees and employees within the School District and pride for the community they live in.
7. **The environment and culture of the School District of Mystery Lake was described by many stakeholders as one of fear, mistrust and low morale.** The climate at the Board level and in the School District Office was described by stakeholders as tense and sometimes divided. The most negative quality to the culture appears to be the underlying sense of distrust that exists between the Board of Trustees and stakeholders, and between the School District Office and stakeholders. All stakeholders appear to be waiting for a change that will bring those working within the School District closer together.
8. **Stakeholders described the leadership style exhibited by the Superintendent as contributing to a negative tone at the top.** Stakeholder feedback described the leadership style of the Superintendent as one of "command and control", where decisions are perceived to be made without consultation or collaboration and directives are issued. In some cases, administrators and external stakeholders have referred to the climate as one of fear, intimidation, mistrust and apprehension.

9. **Interviewees from the School District stated there is a lack of regular and consistent information and communication.** A number of the senior and school administrators indicated minimal communication with the Superintendent. It is perceived that information is not flowing from the Superintendent to the Board of Trustees, and that information is not always relayed back to the senior administrators. School administrators also commented on a lack of regular communication from the School District Office.
10. **Interviewees within the School District commented on a lack of knowledge and understanding of human resources policies and practices within the School District.** Policies and procedures have also been reported as lacking and require updating to ensure they cover relevant topics as well as clearer guidelines and procedures. One of the most significant areas of concern is in the realm of recruitment where there appears to be a lack of standardized processes and approach, and a lack of clarity surrounding staffing plans and recruitment processes. Furthermore, attraction of qualified talent to the School District has been an ongoing challenge which most perceived to be due to geographic location as well as the current public image.

### **Governance**

11. **The School District of Mystery Lake does not have an up-to-date, complete and consolidated policy manual for the Board or Administration.** Current policies are generally vague and inconsistently presented both in format and content. Some policies were found to include policy statements, documented procedures, guidelines and references, and many were contained across numerous documents. By-laws were updated in 2009, however, the policy manual has not been reviewed in over six (6) years. The Policy Committee of the Board has completed a review of the current policy manual, and a new draft Board policy manual has been developed for review and approval by the Board.
12. **Although all Trustees and administration agreed they exist to provide the best education for its primary stakeholder (the students), there is a lack of clarity and consensus on the role of the Board versus the role of administration.** Some Trustees believe the Board should set direction and overarching policy and the role of administration is to operationalize and implement. Some Trustees believe they should be involved in management decisions regarding recruitment and terminations of senior administration and principals, and should be strongly involved in community and stakeholder relations. Lack of clarity and consensus is causing confusion about accountability and responsibilities between the Board, the Superintendent and senior administration.
13. **The Board as a whole does not speak with “one voice” and is not modeling behaviour in accordance with its new Code of Conduct.** Decisions of the Board are not being respected and supported by all Trustees outside of meetings, and it appears that in-camera discussions are not being held in confidence. In addition, stakeholders commented on the misconduct and inappropriate behaviour of some Trustees, which they believe has damaged the reputation of the Board and eroded its credibility. Individual Trustees at times feel pressured to advocate on behalf of specific constituents. Governance concerns raised included improving accountability to the public for decision-making, and modeling ethics and integrity in decision-making that supports the Board’s priorities rather than personal agendas.
14. **The role and responsibilities of the Board and individual Trustees are not clearly understood by all individual Trustees.** While a majority are clear on the Board’s role, there are a few members that indicated a poor understanding of the role of the Board.
15. **The role and responsibilities of the Superintendent are not clearly understood by Trustees and senior administration, and performance criteria has not been set or monitored.** The majority of Trustees and senior administrators did not clearly understand the role of the Superintendent. Feedback from the governance survey indicates a majority of the Board does not have high degree of comfort that the vision and strategic direction of the School District are being accomplished through the work of the Superintendent. At the time of MNP’s review, the Board had not yet set performance criteria or evaluated the performance of the Superintendent.



16. **Committees of the Board do not have formal, documented mandates or terms of reference.** The Board as a whole does not have a consistent understanding of the number, purpose of or expectations of all the committees identified in the by-laws and policy manual. The Board's committee structure has not been reviewed for some time, and the roles and duties of committee members are unclear. Committee mandates and members have not been clearly documented and regularly scheduled meetings have not been established.
17. **The Board requires information from administration in a more timely manner to be well prepared for meetings.** The Board currently receives formal information on the Friday prior to the Tuesday Board meeting, however, more than half of the Board members surveyed indicated they do not feel that administration supplies the Board with information in a timely manner to review material and be well prepared for meetings. It is unclear based on the information provided whether or not information for in-camera meetings is provided in a timely manner.
18. **The adequacy, reliability and relevancy of information and feedback from administration to the Board can be improved.** While the majority of Trustees believe that feedback from administration is adequately reliable and relevant, not all Trustees believe this to be the case. In addition, the regularity of feedback provided to the Department of Education on the adequacy, reliability and relevancy of information could be improved as well.
19. **The Board as a whole does not feel confident in understanding the areas of strategic risk for the School District and a comprehensive risk mitigation plan is not in place.** Based on the results of the board governance survey and interview feedback, the Board as a whole feels confident in understanding material risks in financial reporting, and most understand the material risks in the areas of operational and reputational risks. The Board as a whole does not feel it has the same level of understanding of the strategic risks facing the School District (i.e. risks within the political environment, risks to market competitiveness, and risks within the funding environment). In addition, the Board does not have a documented risk mitigation plan that identifies areas of financial, operational, reputation and strategic risks and strategies to mitigate those risks.
20. **The Board's relevant stakeholders are not clearly defined, and communication and engagement plans for stakeholders do not exist.** While primary stakeholders have been identified (students, parents, employees associations and unions, and the general public), the Board has not clearly identified secondary stakeholders and the Board's duties to these stakeholders. There is confusion among Trustees on the role and duties of the Board with respect to secondary stakeholders such as educational partners, community partners and the various municipal, business and advisory groups in Thompson. As a result, there is no targeted engagement or communication plan to inform or consult with these stakeholders beyond the general public meetings.
21. **A documented succession planning process does not exist for the School District of Mystery Lake.** The School District has experienced turnover at the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent levels during the past four years due to various circumstances including natural attrition; however, a formal and documented succession planning process has not been implemented to identify and develop potential internal candidates or to target potential external candidates. This creates added risk for the Board of Trustees' and the School District's operations.
22. **The Board has not established performance measures on its key Board functions and has not evaluated its own performance.** The Board has not established clearly-defined performance measures, and does not conduct an overall Board evaluation. Individual self-assessments are not conducted by Trustees with or without the Chair. As a result, performance improvement or educational development plans have not been developed.
23. **General improvements are needed to properly orient new Trustees, and to foster the Board's ability to discuss and debate issues, and to use information gained to deliberate and make decisions.**

## Structure and Organization

24. **School District of Mystery Lake's organizational structure is functionally focused where activities and employees are grouped into functions / departments. Increased communication is required across functions / departments.** Feedback from interviewees indicated that duplication in resources is not evident, that within the functions there exists good communication, collaboration and teamwork. The challenge mainly relates to the need to increase communication between the functional groups as a result of the lack of awareness around plans, activities, and key points of contact within the groups.
25. **The School District Office is perceived as inaccessible and unavailable for support and direction according to the feedback from internal and external stakeholders.** The majority of school administrators found they are often unable to access timely information or support from the School District Office. External stakeholders expressed similar experiences and concerns where responses to phone or email messages have not been provided or have not been provided in a timely fashion.
26. **The visibility and accessibility of the Superintendent must increase, and a more collaborative and consultative management style should be implemented with internal and external stakeholders.** Stakeholders in general believe the current incumbent to have the qualifications and experience required. The areas of concern are the lack of visibility and accessibility, and a "command and control" leadership style. Both senior and school administrators commented on the lack of guidance, direction and mentorship offered at the Superintendent level, and expressed concern regarding prolonged absences.
27. **There is a need for improved communication and collaboration within the School District Office leadership team, and within the overall administration team. In addition, there is a need for more consistent and value-added administration meetings.** Generally, administrators felt there is lack of regular and consistent communication by the Superintendent and between senior administration and school-based administration. For example, administration meetings are not being held consistently and are not providing a venue for dialogue. Both senior and school-based administrators desire more regular information and consultation on key priorities and activities within the School District impacting administration and the ability to achieve objectives.
28. **Authority and accountability is not clear at the senior administration level.** There is a lack of clarity among the Assistant Superintendents and the Secretary-Treasurer regarding their level of responsibility and decision-making authority. In particular, there is a lack of understanding of who should be dealing with inquires at the School District Office and who has authority to make decisions regarding inquiries or questions. In circumstances when the Superintendent has been absent, decisions have been made by senior administration, sometimes jointly and sometimes independently depending on the circumstances. This has led to inefficiencies, increased confusion, and reduced credibility in the School District Office generally.
29. **The Executive Secretary position has a dual function, supporting both the Board of Trustees and Superintendent. This creates a level of risk for real or perceived conflict of interest due to the confidentiality required in sensitive or contentious situations.** This position currently supports the Superintendent with all operational functions and the Board with all governance functions. This position is also involved in all in-camera meetings. While there has never been any issue with respect to confidentiality on the part of the current incumbent, due to the number of confidential and sensitive issues arising at the Board level the dual role of the Executive Secretary position, there is a risk for real or perceived conflicts of interests due to reporting relationships.
30. **The human resource function within the School District of Mystery Lake lacks formal processes and a structured approach resulting in perceived lack of clarity on support responsibilities, guidance and services.** Responsibility for leadership of the human resource function is the responsibility of the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. It is expected that administrators, managers and supervisors will assume responsibility for all human resource processes within their operational areas with support and guidance from the Assistant Superintendent. Observations include lack of a structured approach, processes and/or programs for:
- Recruitment and selection

- Workforce planning
- Performance management
- Employee / labour-management relations
- Training and development
- Leadership development
- Succession planning

31. **The School District is lacking an information technology plan that aligns with the School District's strategic priorities.** It appears that the School District is moving forward in increasing technology, as well as streamlining and automating work processes. Although upgrades are perceived as progress, there is a lack of understanding as to why, when and how technology is implemented or introduced. There is a perception that in some cases, the new technology available is not utilized either because current infrastructure does not support or employees have not been trained on how to use it. Creation and communication of a technology plan for the School District would be helpful to enable all employees to understand technology priorities, timeframes and how technology supports strategic priorities.
32. **Senior leadership within the facilities function is heavily involved in day-to-day decisions and work processes making it difficult to effectively manage resources and to conduct future planning.** The Facilities Manager has noted an increase in workload as a result of employee issues and the mediation of disputes. These issues range from cleaning issues to personality conflicts to grievances. In addition, all maintenance requests are reviewed by the Facilities Manager who determines priority and manages the deployment of resources. Increased time on day-to-day work issues has made it difficult for the Facilities Manager to focus on more proactive activities such as planning for future projects and capital needs, and managing and developing staff to improve accountability.
33. **There is a lack of documented processes and procedures in the finance, facilities, educational services and human resources functions.** This presents challenges for new employees who are trying to learn the position and presents a risk to the organization for loss of knowledge when individuals leave the organization.
34. **Many senior and school administrators are new to their positions and require more leadership development and coaching opportunities, as well as formalized development plans.** Currently, school administrators feel disconnected from the Superintendent and School District Office, and the senior administration team feels disconnected from the Superintendent and the Board. As a result, information sharing, mentoring and coaching discussions are not occurring, and there are no formal processes in place to support the creation of formal development plans.
35. **School administrators have had limited involvement and input into School District planning and budgeting processes.** Finance, facilities and maintenance, information technology, human resources and programming are managed centrally and most commented on a lack of involvement or consultation in the planning and budgeting processes. Best practices in organization design suggests accountability and authority should occur as close to the delivery of programming and services as possible, and that leadership be involved in planning and budgeting processes.
36. **Workload issues at the Principal and Vice-Principal levels make it difficult to fulfil duties and appropriately train or develop in administration positions.** School administrators believe there is a disconnect between the expectations of Vice-Principal positions and the time allocated for administrative functions. Most Vice-Principals within the organization have instructional and/or resource responsibilities, and are finding it difficult to perform well in the role. In addition, Principals are finding they cannot adequately delegate and train Vice-Principals.
37. **The School District of Mystery Lake is lacking a structured strategic planning process.** A standardized planning process has not been develop or documented for the School District of Mystery Lake. The lack of formal planning process is prevalent from strategic plan level down to the individual employee performance plan level, where performance management has been reported as essentially non-existent.

38. **The planning process does not involve and integrate the support functions within the School District.** The functional areas of technology, finance, and maintenance do not have integrated plans that demonstrate support of the expected educational outcomes. The support functions within the School District exist to create the environment conducive to learning.
39. **The School District of Mystery Lake's planning process currently lacks consultation and collaboration with key stakeholder groups both internally and externally.** The current process has been reported to be top-down and lacking regular consultations with stakeholders. The comprehensive stakeholder survey results conducted in spring 2011 was used to inform the planning process; however, the School District of Mystery Lake has not identified methods for soliciting the opinions of its stakeholder groups for future planning processes.
40. **It is unclear whether the identified outcomes in the long-term plan have been translated into key performance indicators that the Board and Senior Administration can use to monitor the progress of the School District.**
41. **The School District has clearly-articulated mission, vision, priorities, and long-term desired outcomes, which forms the foundation for a strong planning process.**

## 6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

MNP formulated recommendations based on the following principles and assumptions:

- The quality of education in the School District of Mystery Lake must be maintained and/or enhanced by the changes.
- The governance structure, policies and practices must provide clarity of roles, responsibilities, expectations and accountability, and promote effective and sound decision-making practices.
- The organization structure and position design must provide clarity of roles, responsibilities, expectations and accountability, and promote efficiency and effectiveness of administrative practices.
- The School District of Mystery Lake recognizes and acknowledges that change is required to meet the future directions of education and the role of the school in the community.
- The School District of Mystery Lake recognizes that the recommendations included in this report are broad and interrelated, resulting in the need to be inclusive rather than selective in implementation.

MNP has been advised that effective January 20, 2012, the Superintendent resigned from her position. This event has not altered MNP's recommendations. Any recommendations pertaining to the Superintendent position would continue to apply and the recommendations remain valid and conducive to the School District of Mystery Lake's future success. MNP's recommendations are as follows:

1. Develop a culture of excellence for students by setting clear performance standards that support them in achieving their future educational and career goals.
2. Conduct a review of programming and educational services to ensure it is meeting the needs of students, parents and changing demographics and develop a plan to address those needs.
3. Concentrate the Board's efforts and discussion on the true drivers of success in the School District.
4. Clearly define the role of the Board and the role of administration and establish governance practices that respect these roles. Adopt a governance model that allows the Board to lead and administration to manage.
5. Review Board committee structure, role and purposefully identify the appropriate Board committees and establish mandates and terms of reference for the committees.
6. Develop a customized, formal orientation process for the Board and the Chair position.
7. Provide formal Board Governance training to the Board to develop a common understanding of roles, responsibilities, behaviours and expectations of Trustees.
8. Formalize a structured strategic planning process resulting in the development of a strategic plan that is cascaded down into operational plans for the School District Office and schools.
9. Establish very clear expectations of the Board's information needs based on the vision, strategic directions and plan for the School District and establish the structure and systems to be able to consistently and easily collect, retrieve and report this information.
10. Develop key and operational performance indicators based on the School District's strategic directions, goals and priorities and use these as the basis for the Board's focus.
11. Develop a communication and consultation process to regularly and consistently engage stakeholders.
12. Develop a complete and consolidated policy manual for the School District of Mystery Lake to reference as the single source of Board policy, and a policy manual for administration.

13. Develop and implement a Board Evaluation Process.
14. Develop and implement a Superintendent evaluation process.
15. Develop a Superintendent recruitment process.
16. Provide formal leadership coaching and mentoring for the Superintendent.
17. Clarify and confirm the role and contribution of all functions, processes and structures in achieving the School District of Mystery Lake mandate and vision.
18. Review, update and document all administrative policies, processes and procedures in the areas of finance, information technology, facilities, educational services and human resources within the School District Office.
19. Create two additional positions to enhance Board governance, stakeholder communications and community relations provided they can be accommodated within budget parameters. Alternatively, delineate and delegate these responsibilities to existing positions within the School District to minimize administration costs.
20. Review and update all job descriptions to clearly define roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authority for all School District Office positions.
21. Develop and implement a succession planning and leadership development program for administrator positions.
22. Create an integrated long-term technology plan for the School District.
23. Develop and implement a comprehensive approach to reviewing, communicating and making decisions about the recommendations of this review.

MNP has provided recommendations as a result of this governance and organizational review that, if adopted, will introduce significant change to the governance and administration of the School District of Mystery Lake. To effectively manage this change, the School District of Mystery Lake will require:

- A clear sense of the organization's purpose or reason for being.
- A vision of what the organization should look like.
- A complete understanding of the organization's interdependency with its outside environment.
- Clear attainable descriptions of end-state governance and organizational model, as well as descriptions of intermediate states.
- A well-developed transition plan with timelines, tasks, responsibilities and the resources to implement effectively.
- A strong communication strategy to ensure employees and external stakeholders understand the rationale behind the change, how it affects them and the progress along the way.

MNP would like to thank the Department of Education, Board of Trustees, employees of the School District of Mystery Lake, student representatives, parent representatives, employee association representatives, as well as external community and education partners for their participation in this review.