



At a Glance



	Page
Summary	28
Background	29
Audit Objectives and Scope	30
Significant Audit Observations	31
Board Oversight	
Roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined and information needs are not communicated	31
The Board is not effectively overseeing educational results	33
The Board does not ensure school-based plans address priorities	35
The Board does not oversee teacher and principal evaluations	36
The Board does not appropriately evaluate the Superintendent's performance	36
Management's Planning and Monitoring	
Management does not effectively monitor the school improvement process	37
Management does not monitor student performance in many subject areas	39
Students with individualized plans are not appropriately monitored by management	41
Teacher and principal evaluations are completed although improvements are needed	41
Professional growth plans are completed although not always linked to Board goals	42



3 Education and Early Childhood Development: Tri-County Regional School Board

Summary

Neither the governing Board nor management at the Tri-County Regional School Board is fully meeting their respective responsibilities in the oversight and monitoring of the delivery of educational services in their schools. While governing Board members and management have numerous and varied roles and responsibilities, their fundamental responsibility is to ensure the educational progress of their students is meeting expectations.

Although the governing Board meets on a regular basis they do not receive sufficient information or spend appropriate effort on the fundamental role of educating students. The Board does not request or receive important information to know whether schools are planning and making sufficient progress towards achieving business plan goals, the academic performance of students is meeting expectations, and the development needs of teachers and principals are met. Roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined so that they are understood by both the governing Board and management.

The Board has identified improving student achievement in numeracy and literacy as priorities, but has not undertaken an in-depth analysis to determine the root causes in its schools which are contributing to the underachievement of students in these two areas. We recommended the Board undertake such an analysis in order to identify and develop specific strategies to target key reasons their students are underperforming.

Although management directed schools to create annual school improvement plans, the goals outlined in the plans did not always align with the Board's priorities. Reporting by schools on progress towards their goals was limited. Management needs to ensure school improvement plans address Board and school priorities and reports on progress are timely.

Management monitors student progress in literacy through Provincial assessments and school-based testing, and has implemented an early literacy program. However, management does not fully monitor, or take action, on student progress in its other priority area of numeracy. Management also does not regularly monitor progress in other subject areas, including progress of students with individualized program plans. We recommended management regularly examine student progress in all subject areas, including students with individualized program plans, and take action to ensure students are progressing appropriately.

3 Education and Early Childhood Development: Tri-County Regional School Board

Background

- 3.1 The Tri-County Regional School Board is one of eight school boards in the Province. It was officially formed in August of 2004. It serves approximately 6,100 students over 7,000 square kilometers, covering the counties of Digby, Yarmouth and Shelburne. The Tri-County region is a bilingual area with French Immersion and French Second Language programs provided. Eleven members sit on the governing board. Each member also sits on the Education Committee, a standing committee of the governing board.
- 3.2 The Board is responsible for 28 schools.
- 17 elementary schools
 - 6 high schools
 - 1 middle school
 - 2 elementary/high schools
 - 2 adult high schools
- 3.3 The Superintendent is responsible for the overall operation of the Board's head office and schools, and the supervision of the Board's employees. In addition to the head office, operations are divided among four departments, overseen by three directors and one coordinator, who report to the Superintendent. The four departments are:
- Programs and Student Services
 - Operational Services
 - Human Resources
 - Financial Services
- 3.4 The head office consists of 47 support staff including 11 staff, such as coordinators and curriculum consultants, to monitor and provide professional support to the educational programs. The Board employs 466 teachers and principals across its schools and 351 non-teaching staff. Operational and management decisions at the school level are the responsibility of the principals and vice-principals. The Board's operating budget for 2013-14 was approximately \$69 million.



- 3.5 The Board states its mission as the following: *“We will ensure quality education for all our students enabling them to reach their full potential.”* The Board notes its motto is to put students first.
- 3.6 The Board outlined three specific goals for the 2013-14 year:
- improve student learning and achievement in literacy and numeracy;
 - promote a safe, supportive, socially just and healthy learning environment for students and staff of the Tri-County Regional School Board; and
 - increase operational efficiency and effectiveness in facility management, school utilization, student transportation, technology infrastructure, board finances, human resources, board governance, and programs and student services delivery.
- 3.7 In addition to specific goals in the business plan, the Board is responsible to fulfill its duties as outlined in the Education Act and Regulations. This includes focusing on the achievement of all students enrolled in the Board’s schools and programs.

Audit Objectives and Scope

- 3.8 In summer 2014, we completed a performance audit at the Tri-County Regional School Board. We examined activities relating to certain responsibilities of the elected Board members and the management team. The audit was conducted in accordance with Sections 18 and 21 of the Auditor General Act and auditing standards adopted by the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada.
- 3.9 The objectives of the audit were to determine if the Tri-County Regional School Board’s:
- governing members are providing adequate oversight related to the delivery of educational services within the Board’s schools: and
 - management team provides adequate planning and monitoring of educational services delivered at the school level.
- 3.10 Audit criteria were developed specifically for this engagement and were discussed with, and accepted as appropriate by, governance and management representatives of the Tri-County Regional School Board.



- 3.11 Our audit approach included interviews with governing Board members, the management team and school staff; documentation of processes; examination of legislation, policies and other documentation; and testing compliance with legislation, policy and other applicable processes. Our main audit period included activities conducted from April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2014, focusing on primary to grade six. However, we examined activities and documentation outside of this period as necessary.

Significant Audit Observations

Board Oversight

Conclusions and summary of observations

The governing Board is not fulfilling its oversight role in the delivery of educational services in the schools. Although it meets on a regular basis, Board members do not receive the needed information and do not appropriately focus on students' educational performance. The governing Board does not have the necessary information to know whether:

- schools are planning and making adequate progress toward business plan goals;
- student performance, including students with individualized program plans, is meeting Board expectations; and
- teachers' and principals' development needs are being met.

The governing Board does not understand the full nature and requirements of its responsibilities and has not told management the information it needs to carry out its responsibilities. In addition, the governing Board does not have a process to assess its own performance and does not appropriately evaluate the Superintendent's performance.

- Roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined and information needs are not communicated

- 3.12 *Governing Board's roles and responsibilities* – Governing Board members have oversight roles and responsibilities to fulfill. These are described in general in the Education Act and internal policies and by-laws developed by the Board. When Board members are elected, orientation presentations and seminars are provided. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and the Nova Scotia School Board Association, facilitate these sessions. The governing Board has not clearly defined its role and responsibilities in comparison to those of management. As well, the



governing Board has not defined and communicated its information needs in order to effectively carry out its responsibilities.

3.13 *Governing Board performance and self-assessment* – Members have varying views on how well the governing Board is performing and its governance practices. As part of its spring 2014 training session, Board members completed an anonymous survey. Our interviews, as well as responses from the survey, indicate most members have the following perceptions.

- Members are not in agreement about how to perform their governance role.
- Members do not understand the difference between Board decisions and those delegated to the Superintendent.
- Members do not consider all aspects of an issue.
- Members are not open to others' thoughts and opinions.
- Members cannot be honest with each other and do not leave meetings with mutual respect.

3.14 The governing Board cannot be effective without an appropriate understanding of its role and responsibilities and the information it needs to fulfill those responsibilities.

3.15 The governing Board does not have a process to assess its own performance and modify, as necessary, how it operates. An effective self-assessment process could allow the governing Board to evaluate how well it is performing and identify where improvements are needed. Such an assessment could assist the governing Board in being effective in its oversight role to ensure the educational needs of students are met.

Recommendation 3.1

The governing Board of the Tri-County Regional School Board should define its role and responsibilities and the information required from management in order to fully carry out its duties in educating students. Board members should also complete an annual self-assessment of their performance and address any identified weaknesses in a timely manner.

Tri-County Regional School Board Response: The Tri-County Regional School Board agrees with this recommendation.

- As part of our ongoing work on governance, we will undertake a detailed examination of our role and responsibilities under Section 63A and 64 of the Education Act and determine the information required from management in order to fully carry out our duties toward educating students.



- We will continue our work on developing an appropriate self-evaluation process and instrument(s).
- General time-line – 2014/2015 school year; ongoing.

3.16 *Board and Education Committee meetings* – At the Tri-County Regional School Board, all governing Board members sit on the Education Committee. Education Committee meetings occur once a month from September to June. Regular Board meetings occur at the same frequency, with special meetings scheduled as necessary. This provides for 10 Education Committee meetings and 10 regular Board meetings per academic year. These meetings are important as they are intended to provide Board members the opportunity to focus on student performance and delivery of educational services in schools.

The Board is not effectively overseeing educational results

3.17 *Literacy and numeracy goals and targets* – Each year, the Board develops an annual business plan with goals and targets for the academic year. The 2013-14 Board plan included a goal to improve student learning and achievement in the areas of literacy and numeracy. This goal recognized that student performance in these two areas needs improvement. Although literacy and numeracy are a priority area, the governing Board has not directed management to undertake a comprehensive analysis to determine the root causes of the poor student performance. The potential impact of Board initiatives targeting literacy and numeracy is unclear and the initiatives may not be targeted in the right areas or delivered in the right way.

3.18 *Discussion and reporting on student performance* – Given the importance of student academic performance, we expected this would be a frequent topic at governing Board meetings. However, we found this topic was rarely discussed at either Board or Education Committee meetings. This is despite below-average student achievement results on provincial assessments in the last two academic years, as outlined in the following chart.

Provincial Assessment Results	2012–13			2013–14		
	TCRSB	Province	Rank	TCRSB	Province	Rank
Grade 3 Reading	70%	76%	7 ⁽¹⁾	60%	70%	7 ⁽¹⁾
Grade 3 Writing – Ideas	84%	88%	7 ⁽¹⁾	80%	88%	7 ⁽¹⁾
Grade 3 Writing – Organization	71%	80%	7 ⁽¹⁾	67%	76%	7 ⁽¹⁾
Grade 3 Writing – Language Use	74%	83%	7 ⁽¹⁾	70%	79%	7 ⁽¹⁾
Grade 3 Writing – Conventions	64%	71%	7 ⁽¹⁾	61%	66%	6 ⁽¹⁾
Grade 4 Math	Not offered	Not offered	N/A	69%	74%	6/7 ^{(1)*}



Provincial Assessment Results	2012-13			2013-14		
	TCSB	Province	Rank	TCSB	Province	Rank
Grade 6 Reading	65%	76%	8 ⁽²⁾	70%	75%	6/7 ^{(2)*}
Grade 6 Writing – Ideas	85%	89%	7/8 ^{(2)*}	88%	88%	4/5/6 ^{(2)*}
Grade 6 Writing – Organization	74%	81%	7/8 ^{(2)*}	77%	79%	5/6 ^{(2)*}
Grade 6 Writing – Language Use	75%	82%	8 ⁽²⁾	77%	79%	5/6 ^{(2)*}
Grade 6 Writing – Conventions	64%	73%	8 ⁽²⁾	61%	65%	6/7 ^{(2)*}
Grade 6 Math	64%	73%	7 ⁽¹⁾	65%	73%	7 ⁽¹⁾
⁽¹⁾ Ranking out of seven school boards (CSAP did not participate) – one is highest, seven is lowest ⁽²⁾ Ranking out of eight school boards – one is highest, eight is lowest * tied with another school board Results are percentage of students who met or exceeded the assessment expectation						

Source: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

- 3.19 The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development released eight different provincial assessment results for the 2012-13 academic year. The Education Committee received a presentation on two of these results. Without reporting to the governing Board on overall student performance using information such as provincial assessments, Board members are likely unaware of whether students are meeting expectations and adequate progress is being made. It is the duty of Board members to focus on areas of concern and hold management accountable for addressing school-based factors impeding student educational achievement.

- 3.20 Within the student population there are approximately 590 students with individualized program plans. These students have individual plans developed specific to their needs; these needs may be academic or more general life skills. Significant Board resources, such as teacher assistants, are used to support these students. Each school monitors its students with individualized plans throughout the school year and teachers document student progress. Provincial assessments do not include student progress toward individualized plan outcomes.

- 3.21 The governing Board has not requested, nor has it received, any information regarding students with individualized plans. Board members may not be aware of how many students are on these plans, progress toward their goals or other relevant information to understand how these students are performing. Therefore, the governing Board is not fulfilling its oversight role related to the results of students with individualized program plans.



Recommendation 3.2

The governing Board of the Tri-County Regional School Board should request that management determine and address the reasons for the unsatisfactory performance of its students in literacy and numeracy. In addition, the Board should regularly review reports on student performance, including students with individualized programs, to hold management accountable for the delivery of educational services to its students.

Tri-County Regional School Board Response: The Tri-County Regional School Board agrees with this recommendation.

- We will ask management to identify the areas of unsatisfactory performance of students in literacy and numeracy, and to identify the strategies for the satisfactory performance in those classrooms/schools where this is the case.
- We will ask management to develop a plan to address literacy/numeracy issues as identified, including best practices in our own and other classrooms.
- We will include student performance summary reports, including ALL students, as a standing agenda item for Education Committee.
- General time-line – 2014/2015 school year; ongoing

► The Board does not ensure school-based plans address priorities

3.22 *School improvement plans and annual reports* – Schools are required to develop goals and strategies for improvements and document those in an annual plan. School improvement goals are to be specific to each school and are intended to contribute to achieving the goals and priorities outlined in the Board’s business plan. Schools are to report annually on their progress in achieving their improvement goals.

3.23 The governing Board does not receive information on whether school improvement plans and annual reports are completed and whether school goals appropriately align with the Board’s goals. It is important the governing Board is aware of the status of these documents, and whether schools are making progress towards their goals, in order to hold management accountable for whether actions at the schools are addressing student educational needs.

Recommendation 3.3

The governing Board of the Tri-County Regional School Board should ensure that appropriate school improvement plans align with Board goals and oversee whether expected results are being achieved.

Tri-County Regional School Board Response: The Tri-County Regional School Board agrees with this recommendation.

- We will establish a mechanism to check school improvement plans against Board goals.



- We will establish a mechanism to measure school results against improvement plans.
- We will include school improvement plans as a standing item on the SAC portion of the Education Committee agenda, and establish a reporting schedule.

► The Board does not oversee teacher and principal evaluations

3.24 *Teacher and principal evaluations* – Board policy requires teachers and principals be evaluated periodically. This process is important in determining whether performance expectations are met in the delivery of educational services at the school level. The governing Board does not regularly receive summary information on teacher and principal evaluations. As a result, the governing Board is not fully aware of staff development needs, whether evaluations are completed according to policy, and whether schools are adhering to the public school program as required by the Education Act.

Recommendation 3.4

The governing Board of the Tri-County Regional School Board should ensure that teacher and principal evaluations are completed according to Board policy, that teachers are adhering to the provincial program of studies, and that staff development needs are being met.

Tri-County Regional School Board Response: The Tri-County Regional School Board agrees with this recommendation.

- We will establish a schedule for regular summary information on teacher and principal evaluations to be brought to the Board.
- We will monitor these reports to ensure that staff development needs are being met, within financial constraints, and that teachers are adhering to the provincial program of studies.
- General time-line – 2014/2015 school year; ongoing.

► The Board does not appropriately evaluate the Superintendent’s performance

3.25 *Assessment of Superintendent performance* – The Superintendent, like the governing Board, has specific responsibilities under the Education Act. In addition, the goals and priorities in the Board’s business plan provide overall direction for the Superintendent. In examining the 2012 and 2013 Superintendent performance appraisal process, we found the process did not link the Superintendent’s performance to the responsibilities of the position under the Education Act or the Board business plan. This limits the quality of the evaluation and the usefulness of the process as an accountability tool.



Recommendation 3.5

The governing Board of the Tri-County Regional School Board should evaluate the Superintendent's performance against the responsibilities of the position and take any necessary action.

Tri-County Regional School Board Response: The Tri-County Regional School Board agrees with this recommendation.

- We will continue to review the process for the assessment of the Superintendent's performance on an annual basis.

Management's Planning and Monitoring

Conclusions and summary of observations

Management does not ensure that schools have goals and strategies that are linked to Board goals and does not ensure schools appropriately report on their progress in achieving those goals. While management monitors student performance in literacy in several ways, it does not fully monitor student performance in numeracy. In addition, management is not regularly monitoring student performance in other subject areas or students with individualized program plans to ensure they are performing as expected. Management has implemented a process to evaluate teachers and principals. However, this process does not ensure personal growth plans are linked to Board and school goals, such as improving student performance in numeracy and literacy. In addition, recommendations for teachers' and principals' overall improvements are not always clear, actionable and specific for follow-up.

► Management does not effectively monitor the school improvement process

3.26 *School improvement plans* – In delivering the Provincial curriculum within its schools, the Board specifically identified improving literacy in its 2012-13 business plan and improving in numeracy and literacy in its 2013-14 plan. To carry out the Board's plan, it is management's responsibility to direct and assist schools to develop goals and action plans that align with the Board's goals and report periodically on progress in meeting those goals. We found management directed schools to create annual school improvement plans, outlining their goals for improvement. However, management did not clearly direct schools to ensure their goals align with Board goals to improve student performance in numeracy and literacy.

3.27 We selected six elementary schools to determine if annual school improvement plans were developed. Three schools did not develop a school improvement plan for at least one of the years covered during our audit period even though provincial assessment results showed student performance needed improvement at those schools. Management indicated changes in

administration at the schools as the primary reason improvement plans were not in place.

3.28 We examined the goals established by the four selected schools with 2013-14 plans to determine if they aligned with the Board's plan. Since some school plans did not clearly identify the data used to support the goals selected, we analyzed the 2012-13 provincial assessment data to determine whether student performance in numeracy and literacy at the schools warranted improvement goals in those areas. We noted the following results.

- Two schools had improvement goals that were focused on the areas in which student achievement was below expectations, as supported by the provincial assessment data.
- One school had a numeracy goal, while the provincial assessment results indicated a focus on both numeracy and literacy was needed.
- Provincial assessment results for one school indicated a literacy goal was needed more than the numeracy goal established by the school.

3.29 We examined the school plans to determine whether they included specific actions to address the goals established. Two schools had outlined specific action plans or strategies, and teachers were aware of and using the plans and strategies. The other two schools did not have specific strategies outlined in their plans. Teachers were to develop classroom strategies on their own initiative. This is not an effective way to implement improvement goals throughout the school.

3.30 Management requires each school to submit an annual report to indicate school progress against the improvement plan goals and outline the improvement goals for the upcoming school year. The deadline for submitting annual reports is September 30th of the upcoming school year. We could not determine whether the 2012-13 annual reports were submitted on time for the six schools we selected as management could not provide evidence of when they received the reports. These reports are a key tool for management to determine whether schools are making reasonable progress and are beginning a new school year with appropriate goals and action plans to address student performance. Reporting by schools on progress toward their goals was limited in the annual reports we examined.

Recommendation 3.6

Tri-County Regional School Board management should ensure that school improvement plans and annual reports are completed on a timely basis, include specific goals and strategies to address Board and school priorities, and report progress on achieving goals.



Tri-County Regional School Board Response: Tri-County Regional School Board Senior Management Team agrees with the recommendation. An enhanced follow-up process will be established and implemented within the current school year and adjustments made to ensure more effective monitoring and reporting occurs on an ongoing basis.

► Management does not monitor student performance in many subject areas

- 3.31 *Monitoring progress of students* – Teachers and principals are the frontline for the delivery of educational services through direct involvement with and monitoring of students in schools. Board management is responsible for monitoring student performance across all its schools and ensuring student educational needs are met. Our audit focused on management’s role in monitoring the progress of students, particularly in the elementary grades.
- 3.32 *Provincial assessments* – Numeracy and literacy are recognized as two fundamental areas of learning that students need to master during the early grades to be successful in their later schooling. The Board identified these two areas as priorities in its business plan. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development carries out provincial assessments in numeracy and literacy at various elementary grades. These assessments are one of the primary ways that management monitors student performance. Management analyzes the provincial assessment data to identify schools whose students are not performing to expectations. Management forwards the results and provides support to the school principals to take appropriate action to improve performance.
- 3.33 *Monitoring numeracy* – In 2011-12, the Board developed and implemented an assessment program called Targeting Twos. The program is designed to identify strengths and weaknesses of grade two students in numeracy before they write the first provincial numeracy assessment in grade four. Teachers provide extra assistance to students as needed and forward results to teachers in the next grade to continue student monitoring. Schools also submit the assessment results to management.
- 3.34 In 2014-15, management plans to perform comparisons between schools to determine, for example, if board-wide professional development is needed in a particular area of numeracy. Management also plans to identify the five schools with the greatest need in grade four numeracy, based on provincial assessments. Students in the identified schools who do not meet expectations will receive individual assistance from a numeracy intervention teacher. Implementation in all schools will depend on the success of the program in the initial five schools and the availability of funding. Management plans to review and analyze the progress of the students receiving support at the end of the first year of the program.



- 3.35 Although this planned program will likely be a positive step, a weakness remains as management is not regularly monitoring student performance in numeracy other than in grade two and in those grades that write Provincial assessments. As well, management does not regularly monitor and review school-based student assessments in other subject areas. Rather, management reviews results and responds in specific instances when a principal raises concerns or requests assistance. Management is not proactively monitoring student results at all grade levels and subject areas and ensuring performance weaknesses are addressed in an appropriate and timely manner. Therefore student performance in numeracy may decline and not receive attention by management until over a year later when provincial assessment results are received.

Recommendation 3.7

Tri-County Regional School Board management should regularly monitor the performance of students in all subject areas and take the required action to ensure student achievement meets expectations.

Tri-County Regional School Board Response: Tri-County Regional School Board Senior Management Team agrees with the recommendation. We will implement additional strategies, commencing this school year, to monitor student performance. Completely implementing this recommendation will be challenged by limited resources, among them being human resources.

- 3.36 *Monitoring literacy* – Management initiated a reading assessment process to track the reading progress of students in grades one, two and three. Management analyzes the school assessment results to identify gaps between school and Provincial literacy assessment results, and to identify any common areas of weakness among students. Management provides this information to the principals for comparison purposes and for input into their school improvement planning process. Teachers also use the assessments as a tool to determine which students should take part in an intervention program, discussed below. Management plans to implement these reading assessments in grade four in 2014-15.
- 3.37 *Early literacy program* – The Early Literacy Program, an initiative from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, provides students underperforming in literacy in grades one to three with individual, or small group, reading assistance. Classroom teachers, in consultation with the early literacy teacher, determine which students are selected for this intervention. Each elementary school has at least one early literacy teacher as part of the program. The early literacy teacher assesses students at the beginning and end of each school cycle to determine their progress.



► Students with individualized plans are not appropriately monitored by management

3.38 *Individualized program plans* – Management does not have an appropriate process for monitoring the performance of its approximately 590 students with individualized program plans. These students have individualized plans developed specific to their academic or other needs. School-based program planning teams monitor each plan individually. When available, Board management attends school program planning meetings and is more involved when students need a more complex individualized plan. However, management does not regularly monitor to determine if students with individualized plans are generally progressing appropriately. For example, management does not periodically review the progress of students on a sample basis, or investigate further if potential problems are identified.

Recommendation 3.8

Tri-County Regional School Board management should appropriately monitor the performance of students with individualized program plans and take needed action to ensure those students progress as expected.

Tri-County Regional School Board Response: Tri-County Regional School Board Senior Management Team agrees with the recommendation. Management will establish effective processes to ensure students with individual program plans progress as expected. This recommendation will be implemented in the current school year to ensure effective monitoring and reporting on an ongoing basis. This will supplement the monitoring that currently takes place through the program planning process.

► Teacher and principal evaluations are completed although improvements are needed

3.39 *Teacher and principal evaluations* – Management has an evaluation process for teachers and principals outlined in the Board’s policy manual. Permanent teaching staff and principals receive an in-depth evaluation every four years and a yearly performance summary between evaluations. In-depth evaluations for principals include assessments related to school improvement plans and implementation strategies. Term teachers receive a similar evaluation one or more times per year, depending on the length of their term. The yearly performance summary is a brief document which summarizes permanent teachers’ and principals’ accomplishments and involvement in the school during the year. Principals or vice-principals complete teacher evaluations at their schools and submit them to management. Board management is responsible to complete principal evaluations.

3.40 We examined a sample of teacher and principal evaluations at our six selected schools for compliance with Board policy.

- 19 of 22 teachers we selected had the required evaluations completed during 2011-12 to 2013-14.
- All six principals we selected had an evaluation for 2012-13, the first year in which principal evaluations were required. Evaluations for 2013-14 were not yet due at the time of our audit.
- The three in-depth principal evaluations we examined included assessments related to the school improvement plan and strategies.

3.41 Part of the evaluation process is to identify any areas for improvement and provide recommendations. We found many of the recommendations to teachers were made to address situations observed during a specific classroom visitation. Other recommendations were more general and not always specific for follow-up, such as continue to seek guidance when needed. In four cases, it was not clear in the subsequent evaluations whether recommendations from a previous evaluation had been implemented or performance improved. We found one instance in which a specific recommendation in the 2012-13 evaluation was not implemented by the principal in the following year.

3.42 If recommendations to teachers or principals on areas for improvement are not specific, they do not provide sufficient guidance on actions needed and are difficult to follow up. Appropriate follow up on specific recommendations supports accountability of those being evaluated.

Recommendation 3.9

Tri-County Regional School Board management should ensure the evaluation process includes recommendations for improvement that are specific and that timely follow-up is completed to determine if appropriate progress has been made.

Tri-County Regional School Board Response: Tri-County Regional School Board Senior Management Team agrees with the recommendation. This recommendation will be implemented in the current school year to ensure more effective monitoring and reporting on the evaluation process for teachers and Principals. While an evaluation process is in place, this addition will further strengthen overall teacher and Principal evaluation.

► Professional growth plans are completed although not always linked to Board goals

3.43 *Professional growth plans* – Although not a formal Board policy, management has directed permanent teachers and principals to complete an annual professional growth plan to identify personal improvement goals they want to achieve. At least one of the areas for growth should reflect the school improvement plan. Plans are to be reviewed initially and at the end of the year by staff and their supervisors.



3.44 We examined a sample of teacher and principal professional growth plans at the six selected schools for compliance with management's direction.

- All teachers and principals we selected had professional growth plans for 2013-14, as required by policy.
- In 2012-13, four teachers and one principal did not have professional growth plans.
- We found limited evidence of review of teachers' plans by principals.
- Two teachers did not have a specific numeracy or literacy goal in 2013-14.
- We found evidence of review of principals' plans by management.
- Three principals did not have a numeracy or literacy goal in their 2013-14 plans.

3.45 Management indicated that they are making improvements to the professional growth plan process in 2014-15 to ensure teachers complete and submit plans to the principals and principals to management and that plans are reviewed as required at designated times.

Recommendation 3.10

Tri-County Regional School Board management should ensure that professional growth plans are completed and that plans link to Board and school improvement goals.

Tri-County Regional School Board Response: Tri-County Regional School Board Senior Management Team agrees with the recommendation. The professional growth plan is currently in place and will be adjusted to better reflect the Board Business Plan and school improvement plan. This will be implemented for the 2015-2016 school year.



Tri-County Regional School Board Additional Comments

Board Summary:

In summary, the Tri-County Regional School Board will make every effort to implement the recommendations, subject only to possible financial restraints.

Management Summary:

In summary, the Tri-County Regional School Board Senior Management Team commits to working towards implementing these recommendations. However, the underlying challenge in the implementation continues to be limited resources, staffing levels being paramount, due to financial restraints.