



Preliminary Responses by the VBE Trustees to the Special Advisor's Report Recommendations

	Recommendations	MOE	VSB	Comments
1	That the VSB of Trustees fully exercise their duties and responsibilities as defined by the School Act and balance their actions with the full range of its accountabilities and governance responsibilities.		x	The Board adheres to its responsibilities as defined by the School Act.
2	That the ministry review the current co-governance model to ensure it is meeting the needs of the public education system	x		
3	That the Board restore the Committee structure to its original intent, as a vehicle for receiving stakeholder input in an effective and efficient manner by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping strict control of the process for setting the agenda to encourage a focus on key/significant issues; and • Changing the operations of the Committees to ensure that the participation of stakeholder representatives is restricted to the provision of input only, with no involvement in the decision-making process. 		x	This is consistent with Board practice. The Board is the final decision maker.
4	That the Board reduce the number of Trustees on the Management and Coordinating Committee and on the Personnel and Staff Services Committee to four or fewer.		x	The recommendation to be considered by the Board. NOTE: Education & Student Services Committee
5	That the Board change its philosophy on consensus decision making to better balance the need for input from stakeholders with the operational requirements of the organization, including efficient decision-making and use of staff resources. This might include reducing the number of advisory committees, or restricting stakeholder representation to selected (rather than all) standing committees.		x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board has no such philosophy as indicated by the recommendation regarding decision making. • The recommendation regarding the number of committees is to be considered by the Board.
6	That the Board establish an Audit Committee to provide oversight and make recommendations in respect of the Board's fiduciary responsibilities to the organization.		x	The recommendation to be considered by the Board and the Board will request Ministry of Education funding to support the

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				establishment and ongoing costs of this committee.
7	That Audit Committee membership be restricted to no more than four Trustees (in the majority), supplemented by one or two external financial professionals to ensure the Committee has sufficient knowledge, skills, experience and objectivity to effectively carry out the functions of the Committee. Stakeholder representation should not be included in the Audit Committee.		x	See #6
8	That the Board focus on fulfilling its stewardship responsibilities related to the provision of educational services and limit the amount of staff resources used to support the Advocacy Committee and related advocacy activities to those activities that are demonstrably associated with the business of the school district, as opposed to the political activities of Trustees.		x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board is fulfilling its stewardship responsibilities. The Advocacy Committee is multi-focused and also showcases the success of Vancouver students.
9	That the Board take immediate steps to fully address concerns about the lack of impartiality of several of the Trustees.		x	In response to this recommendation, the Board believes that as elected officials, Trustees represent the views of their constituents, and as such, there has been no inappropriate impartiality.
10	That outside expertise be employed to work with VSB Board and management to implement the governance improvements recommended here (including improvements to the Committee structure and better balance across the full range of Board accountabilities) along with any additional steps required to facilitate an effective working relationship between Trustees and district management		x	This initiative was being discussed prior to the release of the Special Advisor's Report. The Board continues to look for more efficient ways to govern the District.
11	That the ministry consider developing an avenue by which staff, trustees and stakeholders, can have their concerns reviewed and addressed.	x		
12	That the Board meet its obligations in terms of planning and the provision of strategic direction and appropriate oversight to district management Significantly reduce its level of involvement in the day-to-day operations of the school district.		x	This recommendation will be considered in conjunction with #22. Recommendation consistent with School Act?

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13	That the ministry promote fiscal responsibility and integrated planning in school districts through a revised achievement contract approach that links services and resources to outcomes.	x		
14	That the VSB Board of Trustees, with the support of VSB staff, develop a competency-based approach to Trustee orientation and training, including a formal process for: identifying the competencies required; identifying any “competency gaps” that need to be filled; and filling these gaps through training or access to outside expertise.		x	Not an appropriate practice for elected officials.
15	That the VSB Board of Trustees implement a self-assessment framework to annually measure its effectiveness. Consideration should be given to sharing the results of this assessment publicly.		x	Not an appropriate practice for elected officials.
16	That the ministry make Trustee participation in orientation and training mandatory to support Board of Trustee effectiveness	x		
17	That the Minister work with the Board to review its administrative practices to ensure that trustees are fully aware of their duties with respect to conflicts of interest, the consequences of failure to comply with those duties, and that board meetings are conducted in a manner that facilitates and supports trustees in the proper exercise of their responsibilities with respect to conflicts of interest under the <i>School Act</i> .	x		
18	That the Minister and Board take steps to determine whether the potential for trustee conflict of interest has been realized.	x	x	Trustees comply with the School Act requirements.
19	That the ministry review Conflict of Interest provisions set out in the <i>School Act</i> and strengthen the provisions for remedy.	x		
20	That VSB develop a strategic plan that establishes direction and priorities. The plan should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • form the basis for long term educational and business decisions; • include appropriate performance 		x	This recommendation will be considered by the Board in conjunction with the District Management Team and will be enabled by implementation of

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> measures; and be kept current through periodic reviews and refreshes. 			recommendation #22. At this time the VSB has established a district plan for student learning.
21	That VSB support its strategic plan through a long range financial management plan to steer the district to financial stability.		x	This recommendation will be developed as part of the strategic plan, supporting the budget process. This requires a stable and predictable budget plan but cannot be fully achieved without the implementation of recommendation #22.
22	That the ministry should develop a long term strategic plan for education to facilitate better long term planning in the school districts .	x		
23	That the VSB improve its budget process by periodically undertaking a zero-based budgeting exercise to validate its incremental budget.		x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the time of revising the chart of accounts staff and management undertook a full base budget detailed review (2008/09). The 2010/2011 base budget is built on detailed information especially for salaries which comprise over 90% of the budget.
24	That VSB improve the balance and transparency of its budget consultation documents by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> including appropriate context, projected revenues, expenditures and projected operating (deficit)/surplus; ensuring information included is clear, complete; and posting its amended budgets and audited financial statements in the same part of its website as the preliminary budgets. 		x	This recommendation will be considered by the Board
25	That VSB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct the program services review originally planned for the 2010/11 budget process; Revisit school closures; Stop funding non-core services; Increase rental rates; and Work with the unions to negotiate concessions. 		x	Comments by item: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district originally planned to perform a Core Services Review for the 2010/2011 budget process. This is to be considered with Strategic Planning. In the interim the district is conducting a Program Review of Aboriginal

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				<p>Education, Special Education and Literacy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This initiative was in progress prior to the appointment of the Special Advisor. Currently being visited through the pending release of the pre-notification list of possible school closures (see #39). • Clarification required on definition of non-core services. • In progress through Committee II (Planning & Facilities) prior to the appointment of the Special Advisor and included in the budget proposals.
26	That VSB prepare projections and forecasts on an established schedule and retain the supporting documentation		x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projections are currently prepared in April (preliminary), October (enrollment update) and February (amended budget) along with others as required. Additionally Trustees are provided with 3 year budget projections as part of the budget process.
27	That VSB provide quarterly financial reports to the Board setting out revenues and expenditures to date, projections to the end of the year and a comparison to budget, with explanations of any variances and discussion of any anticipated risks to the forecast and strategies to mitigate the risks.		x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports are currently being provided to the Board on an as required basis. • To be further reviewed.
28	That the ministry provide clear expectations to districts for how to present financial information.	x		
29	That VSB continue to seek opportunities to achieve economies of scale; specific actions should include consolidation of district procurement and banking		x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation of district procurement was in progress prior to the appointment of the Special Advisor. • The banking recommendation will be considered.
30	That the ministry consider establishing a standard chart of accounts for school districts that would allow meaningful comparison of revenues and	x		

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	expenditures between districts.			
31	That the ministry take a leadership role in facilitating the development of shared service arrangements for school districts.	x		
32	That VSB ensure the development of a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehensive district wide facilities plan; and long term district-wide information technology strategy 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Development of a Facilities Plan was in progress prior to the appointment of the Special Advisor. The development of an IT Strategy was in progress prior to the appointment of the Special Advisor and continues to be developed.
33	That VSB support closer working relationships with the City of Vancouver through the establishment of an MOU.		x	The development of closer working relationships with the City of Vancouver was in progress prior to the appointment of the Special Advisor and continues to be developed.
34	That VSB ensure partnerships continue to be actively explored as part of a broader strategic planning effort		x	This initiative was in progress prior to the appointment of the Special Advisor.
35	That VSB ensure existing school space across the school district is maximized as part of a comprehensive district wide facilities plan.		x	This initiative was in progress prior to the appointment of the Special Advisor.
36	That VSB consider the consolidation of selected secondary school programs as part of a comprehensive district wide facilities plan.		x	This recommendation is to be considered as part of the long term District Wide Educational Plan and in alignment with recommendation #22.
37	That VSB review and assess the Garibaldi School community plan.		x	This initiative was in progress prior to the appointment of the Special Advisor. As per Board motion this matter will be presented to the Board in September 2010.
38	That VSB consider closing schools, followed by consolidation, where it is warranted by enrolment and capacity data, and where it is clear that the educational fit and physical condition of the building are no longer useful		x	This initiative was in progress prior to the appointment of the Special Advisor. A list of schools to be pre-notified of possible closure to be brought forward in June 2010.
39	That VSB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> approve rental rate increases identified 		x	This initiative was in progress prior to the appointment of the Special

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	<p>within the budget submission;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approve the proposed childcare rate increases to achieve full cost recovery; • implement annual childcare rate increases as a revenue generating opportunity; • ensure new leasing arrangements are at fair market value; and • ensure revenue opportunities and cost containment strategies through leases and consolidation of alternate school properties are part of a comprehensive district wide facilities plan. 			<p>Advisor. The current status of this recommendation is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental rate increases currently in budget proposal. • Childcare rates increases currently being considered by Committee II (Planning & Facilities). • Leasing arrangement changes – considered upon lease renewals. • Initiatives already underway and additional revenue and cost containment opportunities will be considered as part of the District Strategic Plan.
40	<p>That VSB, based on Trustees’ explicit support and as part of a strategic plan, develop a revenue generating strategy, for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Students; and • Distributed Learning. 		x	<p>These initiatives were in progress prior to the appointment of the Special Advisor. This recommendation to be reviewed as part of long term strategic planning in conjunction with a review of the program models.</p>
41	<p>That the ministry consider expanding distributed learning internationally</p>	x		
42	<p>That VSB, as part of a strategic plan, consider cost containment strategies for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Education; • Continuing Education; and • Review the compensation and staffing levels of the in-house cafeterias and seek to renegotiate the related collective agreement terms when possible, or consider contracting for services at the 3 non-teaching cafeteria sites. 		x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Education and Continuing Education cost containment initiatives were in progress prior to the appointment of the Special Advisor, and are being considered in the budget proposals for 2010/11. • Cafeteria recommendation to be reviewed.