

Date September 25, 2013

Gabriel F. Sékaly
Assistant Deputy Minister,
Elementary/Secondary Business & Finance Division
Ministry of Education

Dear Mr. Sékaly,

We are pleased to submit the report and recommendations of the School Board Administration and Governance Grant Advisory Group.

Our recommendations are based on a careful review of the best information available about district school boards' expenditures on board administration. In carrying out this review and developing our recommendations, we have sought to achieve a balance between the priorities of achieving greater efficiency and ensuring that all school boards have the resources they need to fulfil their administrative responsibilities.

We believe that the approach we recommend will better reflect the key cost drivers and cost structures of school boards and achieve many policy goals and objectives including improving transparency and efficiency; and protecting against the impact of declining enrolment.

We are also committed to consulting with the most impacted boards prior to the implementation of the proposed model as recommended in this report and will look to your staff for assistance in completing this outreach.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the advancement of education in Ontario.

Sincerely,

Members of the School Board Administration and Governance Advisory Group

Present Advisory Group Members

Carolyn Bastien
Senior Business Official, CS Catholique Providence

Wally Easton (replaced P. Whitehead), Policy Advisor-
Finance, Ontario Catholic School Trustee Association
(OCSTA)

Françoise Fournier
Surintendante des affaires, CS Viamonde (ACEPO)

Isabel Grace
Senior Business Official, Peterborough Victoria
Northumberland Catholic District School Board

Susan La Rosa
Former Director of Education, York Catholic District School
Board

Wayne McNally
Director of Finance, Ontario Public School Boards'
Association (OPSBA)

Benoit Mercier
Directeur Général, Association franco-ontarienne des
conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC)

Laura Mills
Senior Business Official, Rainy River District School Board

Wanda Muirhead
Senior Business Official, York Region District School Board

Martha Rogers
Director of Education, Upper Grand District School Board

Former Advisory Group Members

François Benoit
Former Director, Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de
l'Ontario (CEPEO)

Carol Devine, Former Director of Political and Legislative
Affairs, Ontario Catholic School Trustee Association (OCSTA)

Carole Drouin
Former Directrice Général, Association franco-ontarienne des
conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC)

Paul Whitehead
Former President, Ontario Catholic School Trustee
Association (OCSTA)

Background of the Grant

At the time of the introduction of the School Board Administration and Governance Grant (Grant), public demand for accountability had increased with an emphasis on good value for the public investment in education. To create a more equitable and accountable education system, the provincial funding model was introduced and the board governance model reformed in 1998. The new Board Administration funding model capped trustee honoraria and linked funding for directors and supervisory officers and board administration costs to enrolment.

The Grant was designed to fund administration and governance costs, including the costs of operating board offices and central facilities, as well as all board based staff and expenditures, including academic supervisory officers and their secretarial support.

Since its introduction in 1998 there have been funding enhancements to the Grant, mainly to enhance support to small and low enrolment boards. New components have been added. These changes, however, have not significantly altered the structure of the Grant.

The current funding for the Grant provides a small base amount for each school board (for the fixed staffing and operational needs) with the rest of the funding driven by a per pupil benchmark amount to address differences in board size. As the bulk of the funding is driven by enrolment, in recent years, a number of boards have faced funding reductions due to declining enrolment.

Importance of School Board Administration

Effective and efficient administration is obviously as desirable in the publicly funded education system as in any other enterprise. While school board administration is often seen as an independent and isolated function of the board, it is in fact an important part of all school board operations – a support for all education initiatives and programs that boards deliver. Board administration and stewardship of resources should be integral parts of a board's multi-year strategic plan and annual operating plans. Effective planning will take on added importance if our recommendations are accepted, as boards will need to adapt their administration functions to the new funding approach.

Scope of Work

The scope of our work is limited to three of the seven allocations that make up the current Grant: the Directors and Supervisory Officers Allocation, the Board Administration Allocation, and the Multiple Municipalities Allocation. While the activities of a board's trustees do generate administrative costs, we excluded the Trustees Allocation because the essential role of trustees relates to governance rather than administration. We excluded the remaining three allocations – Reporting Entities Project Allocation, Internal Audit Allocation, and Parent Engagement Allocation – on the basis that these are targeted to specific purposes.

Current Board Administration Funding Formula

In 2013-14, the Grant includes seven components:

1. Trustees Allocation: supports trustee honoraria, expenses, meeting costs and professional development and is based on the number of trustees.
2. Directors and Supervisory Officers Allocation: supports the cost for one director per board and a number of supervisory officers reflecting board enrolment. This allocation is intended to cover salaries and benefits of these staff.
3. Board Administration Allocation: supports the business and other administrative functions of a board and the costs of operating and maintaining board offices and facilities. This allocation also covers expenses and support staff for the director, supervisory officers and trustees.
4. Multiple Municipalities Allocation: recognizes the additional costs incurred by boards that are required to interact with a large number of municipalities and other local governing agencies.
5. Internal Audit Allocation: supports school boards' increased focus on financial transparency and accountability. The Ministry is encouraging Boards to establish audit committees with external representation to oversee the overall controls and effectiveness of the board process and procedures.
6. Parent Engagement Funding Allocation: supports school boards in the implementation of a wide range of policies, programs, strategies and initiatives to involve parents.
7. Reporting Entity Project Allocation: supports school boards with the costs of preparing and reporting financial information to the Province for the implementation of generally accepted accounting standards.

The Directors and Supervisory Officers Allocation also includes \$10.4M in funding for Capital Administration which is allocated through a table in the GSN Regulations¹. This table amount was put in place to capture the Capital Administration grant amounts frozen in 2009-10 at the time of the capital wrap up of New Pupil Places (NPP). We believe that, similar to many aspects of the Grant, this table amount is out of date and needs to be modernized and updated to more closely reflect the actual cost structure and expenditures of boards.

Mandate and Process

Mandate

The Advisory Group was established in Fall 2010. The goal of the Advisory Group was to provide advice with respect to the development of a new grant allocation model for school board administration that:

- Better reflects the organization and cost structure of school boards;
- Improves the transparency and efficiency of the School Board Administration and Governance Grant allocation;
- Facilitates better business practises and the effective management of resources².

¹ See Table 16: Capital administration adjustment (O. Reg. 120/13)

² See complete Terms of Reference in Appendix A.

Meetings

The Advisory Group met 10 times between October 2010 and January 2013; one of these meetings, in January 2011, was by teleconference.

Extension of Timelines

The work of the Advisory Group began in October 2010 and a written report was to be submitted to the Assistant Deputy Minister in Spring 2011. This project timeline was extended twice. The first one-year extension (decided upon in December 2010) was requested by the Advisory Group because additional time was needed to collect and analyze a significant amount of school board data to develop a credible model. The second one-year extension (decided upon in February 2012) was initiated by the Ministry because staff felt it was critical for the Advisory Group members to have a clear understanding of the province's overall fiscal context, through the release of the 2012 Spring Budget, the 2012-13 Grants for Student Needs (GSN) and the Drummond Commission report, prior to making final decisions regarding the new Board Administration allocation model.

History of the Process

In Summer 2009, Ministry staff conducted an analysis of available data on school board administration. This data included publicly available organizational charts, administrative directory listings on board websites, and submissions by school boards to a 2009 organizational study (of payroll, finance, and purchasing functions only) by the Ontario Association of School Business Officials.

Despite its limitations, the purpose of this preliminary analysis was to understand the key core functions performed by school boards and to examine variances in how these functions were performed. The analysis showed that there was significant variability in the staffing levels and organizational structures for school boards in Ontario. The data confirmed our support for a new functional model that would better reflect the key cost drivers and cost structures of school boards, as determined by board-level data.

From this analysis, Ministry staff identified ten core functional areas. The purpose of defining the core functions was to ensure a common understanding of what falls under the scope of the Grant.

The list of core functions includes:

1. Director of Education.
2. Senior Administration function includes the associate directors, superintendents, senior business officials and other senior supervisory officers who report to the director of education.
3. Director's Office function includes direct administrative support for the director and any other senior executives including associate directors, superintendents, senior business officials and other senior supervisory officers.
4. Human resources function includes the management of employee files, recruitment, calculation of employee wages, labour relations, performance management, benefits, learning and development, attendance management, and staffing allocation.
5. Finance function includes budgeting and planning, accounting, financial reporting and analysis, treasury management, non-grant revenue / receivables, and transaction processing.
6. Payroll function includes processing periodic pay cheques, reconciliation, withholding taxes, updating vacation and sick pay.
7. Purchasing/Procurement includes determining purchasing needs, selecting suppliers, ensuring compliance with procurement directives, negotiating prices and follow-up.
8. Administration and other supports includes research, communications, community and government relations, office services, reception, and so forth, which are not captured under any of the other core functions.
9. Information Technology function delivers a number of services and supports to school boards and would include infrastructure services, application support and design and desktop support, but would exclude IT costs that are school/classroom based such as hardware and software used for instructional purposes and centralized attendance system costs that are charged back to schools.
10. Non-Staff function covers all non-staff expenditures with the exception of IT.

We agreed with this list of core functions and, based on our board experience, proposed cost drivers for each core function that included the following: Number of schools, Average Daily Enrolment (ADE), Board budget, Geographic (dispersion, area and urban/rural), Number of board staff, Number of Board Administration staff, Number of Senior Administration staff, Number of facilities, Number of T4 forms processed annually by the school board, Number of municipalities, GSN Operating funding, and Number of EPO programs/funding/reporting requirements.

Data Template and Data Collection

Although the preliminary analysis of available data completed in Summer 2009 was helpful and informative, it was clear to us that we needed more detailed data than was currently available to ensure that a new funding approach would be based on information that reflected the realities facing school boards.

On June 10, 2011, the Ministry sent a memorandum to boards advising that the data collection tools, developed by the Advisory Group and the Ministry of Education, were available through EFIS. The Ministry asked all school boards to complete and submit a Data Collection Template (based on School Boards 2009-10 Financials), School Board Administration Survey and Board Organizational Charts by July 15, 2011.

The goal of the data collection exercise was to gain a more comprehensive picture of Board Administration costs and expenditures for use in the development of a new funding model. The data collection tools were designed to capture accurate and detailed staffing, non-staffing and expense information, further broken down into core functions. The template had been field tested by the eight school boards represented on the Advisory Group, and modified accordingly.

Findings

By September 2011, the Ministry had received completed data templates from 69 of the 72 school boards, which represented 96% of the system. As such, the dataset was considered representative, comprehensive and unbiased.

To develop the model, with the assistance of Ministry staff, we assessed which cost drivers had the strongest correlation with each core function across a representative sample of boards. Correlation is a statistic representing how closely two variables move together. It can vary from +1 (they move perfectly together) through 0 (the movement of one has no bearing on the other) to -1 (they move perfectly in opposite directions).

An important criterion of identifying cost drivers is that they need to be measurable and quantifiable. For example, the need to meet statutory requirements in areas such as health and safety and succession planning do drive costs, but it is difficult if not impossible to quantify these as cost drivers for the purposes of a funding formula. A second consideration is that, the more readily available the data about the cost driver is, the more useful that driver will be in a formula. This approach to cost drivers is consistent with the overall approach used in components of the GSN funding formula.

We developed formulas for each core function, which we recommend to the Ministry as the basis for changes to the Grant. We say "basis" because we recognize that, between now and the time when the new approach might be implemented, there may be a need for further changes and refinements to the parameters stated in this report.

Findings by Core Function

1. Director of education - this core function is straightforward. The director of education is the chief education officer and the chief executive officer of the board, and every district school board is required to have a director of education under section 279 of the Education Act. Each board requires one FTE for a Director of Education regardless of size or other factors.
2. Senior Administration – both ADE and GSN Operating had high correlations. We ultimately selected ADE as the cost driver because it is immune to reductions to other grants in the GSN and is more easily predicted by school boards. Dispersion is the other cost driver as it captures the fact that, in geographically extensive boards, Senior Staff have longer travel times and therefore increased travel costs.
3. Director's Office – the relationship to this core function was not very strong for any potential cost driver. We selected number of funded senior executives as it was the most logical choice, since Director's Office staff are meant to provide support to senior executives.
4. Human Resources – the number of original T4s issued for work done in the calendar year was the cost driver selected as it more accurately reflects the workload of Human Resources staff and captures all staff including part time and occasional staff.
5. Finance – the Finance function is complicated, as this captures a number of workload drivers including capital planning, financial reporting and analysis and treasury management. The finance function has two cost drivers. The first with the highest correlation analysis is ADE. The second is the number of Municipalities; this recognizes the additional costs incurred by boards that are required to interact with a large number of municipalities and other local governing agencies. The majority of the Boards included their capital expenditures under the Finance function. To modernize the allocation of capital administrative funding, the \$10.4M for Capital Administration previously allocated through a table in the GSN Regulations is flowed through this function.
6. Payroll – number of original T4s issued for work done in the calendar year was the cost driver selected as it most accurately reflects the workload of Payroll staff.
7. Purchasing/Procurement – ADE had a high correlation and was strong enough to be considered as a stand alone cost driver.
8. Administration and Other – ADE was the cost driver with the highest correlation. Although most smaller boards reported little or no administration and other staff, the formula ensures that small boards are funded for a reception position regardless of size.
9. Information Technology – since IT exists to serve the needs of other staff, the cost driver is the number of board administration staff "funded" by the model as this is a proxy for the software users (payroll, Accounting, HR, e-mail). Therefore, the IT allocation will be indirectly determined by all the other drivers from the other eight core functions.
10. Non-staff costs – all non-staffing expenditure categories are aggregated into a single line item (i.e. no distinctive core function or non-staffing categories maintained) as this option gives the boards the most flexibility to respond to local needs. ADE had a very high correlation and was selected as the cost driver. The formula has a base amount and an amount per ADE.

New Data Inputs for the Model

The Human Resources and the Payroll functions have the number of original T4s issued for work done in the calendar year as a cost driver. As the number of T4s issued is not currently collected or verified by the Ministry, the current reporting requirements will need to be adjusted to include T4 data. An audit approach for T4 reporting will need to be developed as part of the Ministry's EFIS reporting system. The Ministry should monitor this new data over time and, if issues are identified, re-assess this cost driver.

Compensation Benchmarks

Most education funding is directed to the funding of staff who deliver, or support the delivery of, education programs and services. This is as true of board administration funding as of other grants in the GSN: of the ten core functions we recommend, only one does not provide funding for staff. An important consideration in the design of education funding formulas, then, is how to state the assumptions the formulas contain about the number of staff and their compensation. While the data collection exercise provided extensive data on compensation for different types of staff, it is more effective for purposes of a funding formula to keep benchmarks at a higher level of aggregation. This provides boards with flexibility in deciding how to use resources and how to staff the various administration functions. We therefore recommend that the new approach to funding board administration in general use aggregate levels of staff and compensation in its formulas. This approach is consistent with the approach taken in other grants in the GSN.

We recommend four separate compensation benchmarks for the Director of Education, Senior Administration function, Director's office function and the Information Technology function. The five remaining core functions will share common compensation benchmarks. Consistent with the GSN framework, these benchmarks will apply to all school boards and reflect the median actual average salaries and benefits reported by school boards.

Impact of the Changes to the Model

The new model will replace the current enrolment-based allocation approach with a functional model that better reflects the key cost drivers and cost structures of school boards, as determined by board-level data. In addition, to modernize the allocation of capital administrative funding, the \$10.4M for Capital Administration (previously allocated through a table in the GSN) will be flowed through the finance function.

While the new approach achieves many policy goals and objectives including improving transparency and efficiency; and protecting against the impact of declining enrolment it has redistributive impacts for the 72 boards. As with past changes to various Grants in the GSN, some boards will gain funding, while others will have less funding. In developing our recommended funding approach, we have sought to limit these effects. Still, some redistribution is inevitable.

To mitigate the redistributive effects, we recommend that the changes be phased in over two years. This would give boards additional time to make any necessary adjustments to the new funding approach. We also recommend that prior to implementation, Ministry staff commit to pursue outreach with the most impacted boards to review and discuss the specific causes for the changes in funding.

Education Programs – Other (EPO) Reporting

In addition to the funding allocated to school boards through the GSN, boards receive funding from the Ministry's Education Programs – Other (EPO) budget line. EPO funding is generally made available for specific purposes and projects, while the GSN funds the ongoing operations of school boards. However, unlike the GSN, where school boards report on the revenue and expenditure from every grant through EFIS, each EPO allocation requires a separate agreement between the Ministry and each recipient board and has its own reporting requirements. In some cases, these requirements are extensive even though only a relatively small amount of money is involved.

At the first meeting of the Advisory Group, many members stated that there are too many EPO programs and that the related reporting requirements create a significant burden for board administration staff and takes time away from boards' work to achieve the Ministry's objectives for the education sector.

To explore this issue further, Ministry staff from the Strategy, Performance & Change Management Unit made a presentation on EPO Reporting Requirements and the steps the Ministry has taken to address outstanding issues.

We highlighted the need to make the reporting process easier, while still ensuring accountability. We also suggested that tying the reporting requirements into EFIS would be a fruitful avenue to consider.

Trustee Association and Membership Fees

Currently school boards are using funding from the Grant allocation to pay for the incremental costs of Trustee association fees and membership fees charged to the boards. Some members of the Advisory Group felt that for many boards these costs created a financial hardship and that funding through the non-staffing costs should be realigned to pay these costs. Representatives from the Trustee Associations cited that in the current environment they were being given additional responsibilities and their workload is increasing without a commensurate increase in funding. At this time, the Ministry is not prepared to recommend extra funds be allocated to the Grant for these fees. This issue may need to be discussed in another context, for example, the annual GSN consultations.

General Recommendations

The Advisory Group recommends that:

1. The Ministry of Education introduce a new grant allocation model for school board administration that provides funding on the basis of core functions. This new allocation would replace the Directors and Supervisory Officers Allocation, Board Administration Allocation, and Multiple Municipalities Allocation of the current School Board Administration and Governance Grant.
2. Recognizing that the funding formula generates a funding envelope for school board administration and governance, we recommend that school boards retain flexibility in organizing school board operations and staffing. While funding is generated for each of the ten core functions, boards are not required to match expenditures to funding by core function. Funding for each core function should not be enveloped and school boards should continue to have the flexibility to use revenue from sources other than the Grants for Student Needs to support board administration expenditures. The formulas should not prescribe staffing levels or the mixture of staffing categories (for example, managers, professional staff, clerical/technical staff) for boards.

Formula:

3. The following set of formulas are recommended as the basis for change to the School Board Administration and Governance Grant.

Core Function	Driver	Formula	Salary & Benefits Benchmark
Directors: The director of education is the chief education officer and the chief executive officer of the board, and every district school board is required to have a director of education under section 279. of the Education Act.	None	1	\$204,890
Other Senior Admin: includes the associate directors, superintendents, senior business officials and other senior supervisory officers who report to the director of education.	ADE & Dispersion	1.6802 + 0.1334/1000 [ADE] + Dispersion 0 for the first 20 D 0.007762/1000[ADE] for D up to 50 0.003881/1000[ADE] for D above 50.	\$164,221
Director's Office: includes direct administrative support for the director and any other senior executives, including associate directors, superintendents, senior business officials and other senior supervisory officers.	# Funded SENIOR EXEC	2.5601 + 0.60493[# Funded SENIOR EXEC]	\$65,279
Human Resources: includes the management of the employee files, recruitment, determining employee wages, labour relations, performance management, benefits, learning and development, attendance management, and staffing allocation.	T4s	MAX(0, -0.1084 + 2.308/1000 [T4s])	\$76,753
Finance: includes budgeting and planning, accounting, financial reporting and analysis, treasury management, non-grant revenue receivables, and transaction processing.	ADE & # Municipalities	3.4333 + 0.1910/1000 [ADE] + # Municipalities 0 for the first 20 MM 0.02156 FTE per MM above 20	\$76,753
Payroll: includes processing periodic pay cheques, reconciliation, withholding taxes, updating vacation and sick pay.	T4s	MAX(0, -0.4720 + 1.1834/1000 [T4s])	\$76,753
Purchasing/Procurement: includes determining purchasing needs, selecting suppliers, ensuring compliance with procurement directives, negotiating prices and follow-up.	ADE	0.8915 + 0.07406/1000 [ADE]	\$76,753
Admin and Other: includes research, communications, community and government relations, office services, reception, and other services that are not captured under any of the other core functions.	ADE	MAX(1, -1.6828 + 0.6639/1000 [ADE])	\$76,753
IT: includes the provision and management of administrative information technology throughout the board office.	Funded Board Admin (FBA) staff	0.9453 + 0.08907[FBA]	\$96,602
Non-Staff: includes all non-staff expenditures with the exception of IT.	ADE	\$153,126 + \$63.33[ADE]	

4. The salary and benefits benchmarks in the formulas above reflect the median actual average salaries and benefits reported by school boards. Like staff levels in the formulas, in general the salary and benefits benchmarks should be at an aggregate level. Five of the core functions share common compensation benchmarks. The Director of Education, Senior Administration function, Director's Office function and the Information Technology function have different salary and benefits benchmarks.

While funding is generated for each of the ten core functions, none of the recommendations prescribe how funding should be allocated by the boards and boards would not be required to match expenditures to funding for each core function. In other words, if a board received funding for nine supervisory officers through the Senior Administration function, it is free to spend less funding on supervisory officers, or to spend more by using funds generated by other core functions. Under the new model, boards will remain subject to the current enveloping provisions for the School Board Administration and Governance grant and will continue to be allowed to use revenue from sources other than the GSN to meet administration expenditures.

This flexibility is an essential part of the new funding approach that we are proposing. Under the new approach, school boards should continue to have the same level of flexibility to make decisions about how to use resources for administration as they currently have. This flexibility is necessary in light of the different circumstances and challenges boards face. Without this flexibility, the new approach would quickly become a "one size fits all" model that would not be responsive to each board's reality.

Implementation:

5. Ministry staff with one or more of the Advisory Group members [Françoise Fournier, Wayne McNally, Benoit Mercier or Paul Whitehead (replaced by Wally Easton)] will outreach to the most impacted boards prior to implementation to review and discuss the specific causes for the changes in funding. Boards to be consulted include but are not limited to: Dufferin-Peel Catholic DSB; Peel DSB; Thunder Bay Catholic DSB; Toronto Catholic DSB; and CSD catholique du Nouvel-Ontario.

6. The Ministry phase in this new grant allocation model over two years to mitigate the redistributive effects.
7. The Ministry review this new funding approach five years after full implementation, with special attention to other policy changes made by the government.

Other Recommendations:

8. The Ministry undertake a comprehensive review of the reporting requirements for funding it allocates through Education Programs-Other, in consultation with the School Boards, with the goal of simplifying and harmonizing these requirements so that reporting is more cost-effective while continuing to ensure accountability. Consideration might be given to tying the reporting requirements into EFIS.
9. The Ministry of Education complete some technical work required to implement the new model. Revisions to some definitions in the code of accounts and corresponding changes to the EFIS forms may be required to validate the new inputs used in the new funding model to ensure fairness across the boards.

Terms of Reference³

Background

The School Board Administration and Governance Grant (the Grant) allocates funding to school boards, largely on the basis of enrolment, to cover administration and governance costs, such as operating board offices and central facilities, board-based staff and expenditures, including supervisory officers and their secretarial support. Total projected funding for Board Administration in 2010-11 is \$541 million, which includes a reduction of \$8.6M. As announced on March 26, 2010, savings targets against the board administration allocation will increase to \$15.4M in the 2011-12 school year, growing to a total reduction of \$21.8M in the 2012-13 school year.

Even though benchmarks in the current formula have been adjusted over the years to reflect the impact of collective agreements and changes in accounting and reporting requirements, there has been no major structural change to this grant since the introduction of the funding model in 1998-99. In addition, over time, the Ministry of Education has initiated processes to support improvements in board administration.

Current analysis suggests that:

- Enrolment is not the only, or the key, driver in board administration. This is exemplified by the fact that board administration spending and staffing has been growing against a backdrop of declining enrolment.
- School boards vary greatly with respect to their board administration staffing and spending, and patterns have been diverging.
- There is little uniformity in roles and responsibilities of board administration staff across boards.
- A generalized approach to allocating funding, such as the current approach that allocates funding to school boards on the basis of enrolment, may not be the best approach to meeting cost structure of school boards in the area of board administration.

The Ministry intends to do a detailed review of the Board Administration Grant allocation with the goal to transition to a successor model.

Purpose and Guiding Principles

The School Board Administration and Governance Grant Advisory Group (Advisory Group) is established to provide advice with respect to the development of a new grant allocation model for school board administration that:

- Better reflects the organization and cost structure of school boards;
- Improves the transparency and efficiency of the School Board Administration and Governance Grant allocation;
- Facilitates better business practises and the effective management of resources.

Mandate

To help support the development of the new Board Administration Grant allocation, the Advisory Group will be asked to:

- Share information on the range of activities that are currently included in Board Administration expenditures and staffing;
- Identify core business functions and key cost drivers;
- Share leading practises, including opportunities for collaboration between and among school boards on a local/regional basis;
- Examine ministry processes designed to support improvement in board administration;
- Examine best practices for an efficient management structure for school boards of various sizes; and
- Examine linkages to other grant allocations that support board administration.

The advice and recommendations of the Advisory Group must:

- Respect the constitutional and statutory framework for education in Ontario, which includes public, Catholic and English-and French-language school boards; and
- Take into account the current fiscal environment and live within the Board Administration Grant envelope.

Membership

The membership of the Advisory Group will include representatives from the four sectors (Public English, Public French, Catholic English and Catholic French) representing both rural and urban areas.

- Trustee Organizations – Trustee organizations will be invited to nominate one representative each, with technical knowledge of the grants and school board administration experience. (Up to 4 members)
- Senior Business Officials – 4 members invited to attend (exact number to be confirmed upon decisions re: inclusion of Directors of Education).
- Directors of Education – Up to 4 members invited to attend.

Staff Support

Administrative and policy support will be provided by staff of Education Finance Branch and other Ministry staff as appropriate.

Timelines

The review will begin in October 2010 and provide its advice and recommendations in a written report to the Assistant Deputy Minister of Education in Fall 2012.

³ Terms of Reference as amended on May 23, 2012.