



**SASKATCHEWAN SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION
EXECUTIVE SELF-EVALUATION
SEPTEMBER 1, 2009 – NOVEMBER 30, 2010**

December 2010

BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION

Current Executive Policy 2 (7.1) states:

The Executive will “annually conduct a facilitated self-evaluation, develop an improvement plan and implement this plan”.

The Executive agreed that for 2010, the Executive evaluation process would be a facilitated self-evaluation conducted on December 8, and would occur within a half-day time frame. The understanding was that the Executive Director’s evaluation would be facilitated in the morning, while the Executive’s self-evaluation would be facilitated in the afternoon.

In order to meet these requirements, the Executive further agreed that members would complete a self-evaluation pre-assignment package, and that the results would be collated and available for use during the Executive self-evaluation session.

In addition to the process and timelines, the Executive also agreed that the evaluation would focus on the Executive’s performance in relation to its defined roles, as defined in Executive Policy 2.

The Executive further agreed to review the summary of evaluations of Executive meetings as completed by members subsequent to each meeting.

The evaluation report would be based on a template designed to reflect these components. A statement of a positive path forward would also be created during the workshop.

EVALUATION PURPOSE

The purpose of the evaluation was outlined as being two-fold:

1. To increase accountability.
2. To improve performance.

EVALUATION PRINCIPLES

The following principles which form the basis for sound evaluation processes were reviewed:

1. A learning organization or a professional learning community is focused on the improvement of practice.
2. A pre-determined process for evaluation strengthens the governance function builds credibility for the Executive and strengthens the Executive Director/Executive relationship.
3. An evidence-based approach provides objectivity to supplement subjectivity.

CONTEXT

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association exists by authority of an act of the Legislature known as *An Act to incorporate Saskatchewan School Boards Association*. The Act empowers the Association to set bylaws in a general meeting, respecting, among other things, “the internal government of its affairs”. Bylaw 4.2 of the Association states, “The Executive shall govern the Association and provide oversight of the business and affairs of the Association and, subject to any special directions from members expressed in general meeting, may exercise all of the powers of the Association”. Bylaw 4.2 goes on to say in part that the Executive:

- ♦ shall do anything that it considers necessary for the promotion and attainment of the purposes and objectives of the Association.

There is broad delegation of authority to the Executive.

SELF-EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE

1. Member Services and Accountability

Based on a review of the Annual Work Plan and responses to the Role of the Executive questionnaire, the Executive believes that it has:

- 1.1 Established processes and provide opportunities for membership input.
- 1.2 Acted in good faith in accordance with the Bylaws and any directions given, on behalf of the entire membership.
- 1.3 Made unbiased, proactive and informed decisions that considered the needs, concerns and opinions of Association members and represented the interests of the entire organization.
- 1.4 Arranged for provision of relevant, well-researched information on public education issues to members.
- 1.5 Provided services that are valued by member Boards.
- 1.6 Modeled a culture of respect and integrity.
- 1.7 Approved materials to be presented at General Meetings in accordance with Association Bylaws and membership direction.
- 1.8 Brought recommendations for Bylaw amendments to the membership.
- 1.9 Respected the autonomy of its members.

The Executive believes that improvements are needed in the communication processes utilized by Members' Council.

The Executive also believes there is work to be done in enhancing ownership in the Association at Assemblies. This may be done by engaging Boards in Association strategic goals. This may also be done through more professional development opportunities.

The Executive believes that it may need to establish interim position statements on matters of uncertainty.

The Executive also believes that more role clarification around “constituency” representation will be helpful.

2. Executive Director Relations

Based on responses to the Role of the Executive and the Executive/Executive Director questionnaires, the Executive believes it has:

- 2.2 Provided clear corporate direction and value standards to the Executive Director.
- 2.3 Delegated, in writing, administrative authority and identify responsibility.
- 2.4 Respected the authority of the Executive Director to carry out Executive action and supported the Executive Director’s actions which are exercised within the delegated discretionary powers of the position.
- 2.5 Evaluated the Executive Director annually in writing (generally aligned with the written Executive Director’s job description).
- 2.6 Reviewed the Executive Director’s compensation package.

The Executive does well in this area.

The Executive further believes it can be even more specific in its goals.

3. Strategic Planning

Based on the Annual Work Plan and the responses to the Role of the Executive questionnaire, the Executive believes it has:

- 3.1 Provided overall direction for SSBA by establishing strategic priorities and key results for the SSBA strategic plan.
- 3.2 Monitored progress toward the achievement of key results by receiving regular accountability reports from the Executive Director.
- 3.3 Held the Executive Director accountable for achieving such key results annually.
- 3.4 Resourced the strategic plan.

- 3.5 Approved the Annual Report for distribution to the members.
- 3.6 Approved or provided feedback annually relative to the draft strategic plan prepared by the Executive Director designed to address the strategic priorities and achieve the key results previously identified by the Executive.

This is an area of strength for the Executive.

4. Fiscal Accountability

Based on the Annual Work Plan and on responses to the Role of the Executive questionnaire, the Executive believes it has:

- 4.1 Approved the budget assumptions at the outset of the budget development process.
- 4.2 Reviewed the draft budget and provide feedback.
- 4.3 Approved the final budget.
- 4.4 Recommended the final budget to the membership at the Annual General Meeting.
- 4.5 Selected the external auditor, approved the terms of engagement, and received the audit report and management letter annually.
- 4.6 Annually met with the auditor independently of the Executive Director and staff.
- 4.7 Ensured the recommendations of the auditor were acted upon by the Executive Director and that any deficiencies are remediated in a timely manner.
- 4.8 Reviewed fiscal accountability reports and responded when
 - 4.8.1 Budget assumptions were no longer valid;
 - 4.8.2 Costs or revenues would significantly vary from projections; or
 - 4.8.3 Identified key results were in jeopardy.

This was an area of growth for the Executive during this evaluation period. Policies are in place to move forward.

5. Advocacy

Based on the Annual Work Plan and on responses to the Role of the Executive questionnaire, the Executive believes it has:

- 5.1 Developed an annual plan to advocate to the government and other decision makers and education stakeholders on behalf of membership.
- 5.2 Promoted the building of relationships with key contacts outside the organization.
- 5.3 Undertaken direct advocacy activities.
- 5.4 Monitored progress of advocacy initiatives.
- 5.5 Supported the Association's involvement in the Canadian School Boards Association.

The Executive initiated receipt of Committee reports at Executive meetings.

The Executive engaged in conversations internally to present key messages to external stakeholders.

The Executive believes a focus on internal advocacy may be beneficial.

6. Position Statements and Executive Policy

Based on the Annual Work Plan and on responses to the Role of the Executive questionnaire, the Executive believes it has:

- 6.1 Established a well-defined process for the determination of Association position statements for approval by the membership.
- 6.2 Adopted interim Association position statements between General Meetings, as and when required.
- 6.3 Directed and inspired the Association through the careful establishment of broad written policies reflecting the Executive's values and perspectives. The Executive's major policy focus was on the intended long-term impacts outside the operating organization, not on the administrative means of attaining those effects.
- 6.4 Identified how the Executive was to function through the adoption of Executive policies to supplement Association Bylaws.

- 6.5 Defined in Executive policies the role of individual Executive members, including the offices of President and Vice-President.
- 6.6 Monitored Association position statements and Executive policy effectiveness.

The Executive believes it has positioned the Association well through its policy work.

The Executive believes a process for position statement validation on a regular basis will be helpful. This may require a one-time consolidation. This activity is to be incorporated into the Annual Work Plan.

The Executive believes that more understanding is required around Association by laws.

7. Self-Evaluation and Development

Based on the responses to the Role of the Executive questionnaire, the Executive believes it has:

- 7.1 Annually conducted a facilitated self-evaluation, developed an improvement plan and implemented this plan.

The Executive believes there is work to be done in the development area.

8. Meetings

The Executive has approved of the completion of evaluations of meetings by individual members subsequent to each regular meeting. The compilation of responses is provided at the next regular meeting as part of the Executive Director's report.

All commitments were rated relatively high.

Those commitments rated most highly:

- ◆ making decisions collectively
- ◆ encouraging diversity of viewpoints

Those commitments rated as least:

- ◆ focusing on Ends

- ◆ being proactive

Most behaviours were rated as not requiring improvement.

Three behaviours received improvement ratings from two individuals:

- ◆ internal preoccupation
- ◆ focus on present and/or past
- ◆ reactivity

The October 21-22, 2010 meeting was reviewed most positively.

Based on responses to the Role of the Executive questionnaire and the summary of the compilation of meeting evaluations, the Executive believes this aspect of its role is handled satisfactorily.

The Executive has requested changes to the meeting evaluation format to generate additional feedback.

The Executive will focus on agenda setting using a strategic and proactive approach.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Based on its Annual Work Plan, the responses to the Accomplishments, Regrets, Opportunities, Threats questionnaire, the Executive has identified the following as major accomplishments during the evaluation period:

- ◆ Refinement of Executive policies
- ◆ Inclusion of aboriginal action plan in the strategic plan
- ◆ Quality responses received in bargaining process
- ◆ Enhanced participation in Association processes
- ◆ Working Advisory Group establishment and participation
- ◆ Relationship building and enhanced understanding amongst organizations
- ◆ Public engagement initiative
- ◆ Public/Catholic mediation
- ◆ Funding Model involvement
- ◆ Opportunities for trustee group work

POSITIVE PATH FORWARD SEPTEMBER 23, 2009

The Executive identified the following as continuous improvement priorities for the next evaluation period:

- ◆ Approve by motion the rescinding of the existing Executive Director evaluation process and the approval of the one adopted verbally in December 2008.
- ◆ Approve the role of the Executive and the Executive evaluation process as approved verbally in December 2008. (Rescind old process and job description if one exists.)
- ◆ Jointly develop with the Executive Director a briefing note format to be utilized for action items included in the Executive meeting agenda packages.
- ◆ Approve an Executive Annual Work Plan which documents the Executive decisions which must be placed before the Executive in the formal agenda on an annual basis and the meeting at which these items are to be brought forward. (Executive Director to bring draft to December meeting for edit and approval.)
- ◆ Jointly refine with the Executive Director the roles played by the Executive Director and the Executive relative to strategic planning and reporting. (Executive approves the strategic priorities and related key results to be incorporated in the Strategic Plan, approves the level of resourcing provided for these priorities, approves the Strategic Plan, requires accountability reporting by the Executive Director on a schedule mapped out in the Annual Work Plan and evaluates the Executive Director relative to the achievement of results. The Executive Director provides recommendations and options relative to possible strategic directions and key results, ensures funds allocated are expended to achieve the key results, assigns staff and modifies job descriptions of staff to ensure the strategic priorities are addressed, includes accountability for strategic results in the evaluation of staff, presents accountability reports to the Executive as indicated in the Annual Work Plan to document results were achieved.)
- ◆ The Executive Director and Executive will conduct a review of fiscal accountability tools to ensure the Executive has in place those required to hold the Executive Director accountable and to keep the Executive informed in an easily understood manner. Such tools must provide the Executive with evidence of the fiscal health of the SSBA, appropriate fiscal controls and processes and that the resources of the Association are being expended as directed (Alberta resource materials).
- ◆ Provide direction re annual report content and format.

- ◆ Clarify in policy naming of representatives, whether President, Executive Director or combination. Entrench mandate for reps and committees in policy including reporting back to Executive and creation of SSBA positions.
- ◆ Consider compensation review recommendations.
- ◆ Develop a fiscal health report format acceptable to the Executive.
- ◆ Provide for an opportunity to have the Executive and auditor meet without staff.
- ◆ Complete the “we asked – you said - so we did” loop and commence a second cycle.
- ◆ Prepare for executive search for an Executive Director in a timely manner.
- ◆ Avail ourselves of opportunities provided by the government for input e.g. funding, student achievement.
- ◆ Establish mechanisms to work cooperatively to accomplish measurable results related to aboriginal education (e.g. common funding of aboriginal students at provincial rates.)
- ◆ Maintain vigilance relative to possible erosion of governance authority as a result of the government change in taxation authority and funding of school boards.
- ◆ At a regional meeting, investigate the feasibility and desirability of the SSBA acting as a vehicle for sharing directions boards are proposing to take.
- ◆ Continue to support the work of the mediation table re Catholic/public boards.

The majority of these items have been accomplished. Those not accomplished are continuing to be addressed.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES 2010/11

1. Examine constituency structure
2. Examine regional geographical meeting possibilities
3. Explore a process for promoting a culture of togetherness amongst school boards and the association
4. Consider development of interim position statements on emerging issues
5. Consider refinement of strategic plan results
6. Maintain vigilance re Board autonomy
7. Refine fiscal accountability tools
8. Explore possibilities of enhanced ownership by the membership of the association at assemblies
9. Explore enhanced website interactivity
10. Enhance Direct Board/trustee development
11. Examine possibilities for executive development
12. Explore a process for position statement validation and updating
13. Monitor agenda effectiveness
14. Review annual work plan timelines for evaluations

CONCLUSION

The Executive established a number of foundational elements of successful governance during the evaluation period. It redeveloped Executive policies, reshaped the strategic plan and put in place fair and rigorous processes for its CEO evaluation and its own self-evaluation. It has continued to redefine its requirements for accountability reports. In short, it has utilized its “power tools”.

The Executive established solid relationships with elected and appointed government officials. It has fostered relations with provincial organizations who have mutual interests. In so doing, it has positioned the Association well for internal and external advocacy initiatives.

Date

Sandi Urban-Hall
President

Executive motion:

That the SSBA Executive approve the Executive self-evaluation report as developed during the evaluation workshop of December 8, 2010 as an accurate accounting of the Executive's performance for the period September 1, 2009 – August 31, 2010 and further that the President be authorized to make any required technical edits and to sign the report on the Executive's behalf.