



**AD HOC POLICY COMMITTEE**  
**Report 24-013**

**4 April 2024**

**APPROVAL OF NEW RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY**

**Key Contact: Richard Sinclair, General Counsel, ext. 8232**

**PURPOSE:**

1. To seek approval for the proposed Policy P.143.GOV Risk Management.

**STRATEGIC LINKS:**

2. A new risk management policy is intended to minimize the risk exposure of the District and the Board, reduce uncertainty, and maximize opportunities for staff and students. This will eventually improve the overall governance and decision making and enhance our ability to achieve the strategic objectives of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan through reducing business interruptions and enhancing business continuity.

**CONTEXT:**

3. The management of risk has been consistently integrated to system-level decisions made across the District in compliance with the International Standards Organization (ISO) 31000. However, there is a need to ensure that all processes involved in risk management are followed by every decision maker in a unified way. A policy is crucial to raising awareness about a culture of risk management and clarifying the Board's principles that will guide implementation.

On 07 December 2023, a draft Risk Management Policy was presented to the Ad Hoc Committee for Policy Review for initial feedback. The proposed draft was also posted on the District Consultation webpage for public feedback. The feedback received was incorporated into the revised draft policy. Following the adoption of the Risk Management Policy, a procedure will be developed, including the implementation of a Strategic Enterprise Risk Management (SERM) tool.

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS:**

4. Received Feedback and Key Changes  
The following key areas were raised for consideration and have informed the changes to the proposed policy:

- adding “inactions” to actions as both of which could carry risks to the organization (Section 3.1);
- adding “should” to Section 3.1 in order to align with the definition of risk which includes risks that could positively impact the organization;
- adding “opportunities” to “benefits” in Section 4.2 to account for the uncertainty associated with risks;
- adding “physical safety risk” to the list of designated risk categories (Section 4.3);
- replacing “risk mitigation” with “risk response”, which includes mitigating, avoiding, transferring, or accepting risks;
- replacing “risk tolerance” with “risk appetite” throughout the document; and
- adding the definition of “risk appetite” to Appendix A.

5. OCDSB Risk Register

Staff have a Risk Register that identifies risk scores and assigns risk ownership to appropriate individuals responsible for identifying, evaluating, mitigating, and reporting risk exposures. The owners’ response to the identified risks is informed by their associated scores which are determined by the likelihood, the severity, and the speed of each risk occurring.

The feedback from the Audit Committee suggested that some changes need to be made to the way the Risk Register is maintained, updated and reviewed, as well as to the designated risk categories. The Risk Register will be a living document as it will continuously be updated in response to the evolving operational environment of the District. At its 21 February 2024 meeting, the Audit Committee welcomed their assigned responsibility of cyclically reviewing the Risk Register in order to assess current and emerging risks and updating the Risk Appetite, and reporting back to the Board.

6. Risks Associated with Emerging Technology

Feedback from the Ad Hoc Policy Review Committee and the Audit Committee raised concern of the emerging risks associated with the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) products and other emerging technology. Because the field of AI is so quickly developing and transforming, there is an expressed need for the Board to develop their knowledge and understanding of AI as well. In February 2024, the Director of Education and senior staff attended a conference on AI in education, looking to gain knowledge on both the risks and opportunities of incorporating AI into OCDSB schools and classrooms. Staff are of the view that the risks and opportunities associated with the use of AI and other emerging technologies can be incorporated into the OCDSB Risk Register. As stated, the Risk Register provides the Board with the opportunity to update and address these developing concerns as staff gain a deeper understanding of the field.

**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

7. Risk Management is integral to a socially responsible leadership and therefore must be appropriately resourced to manage and mitigate top risks faced by the

OCDSB. Financial resources will be required to continue to implement and train District staff and trustees on risk management once a new policy is in place.

## **COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:**

8. The draft policy was shared on the District website to collect public feedback between 01 December 2023 and 05 January 2024, and with the Audit Committee at its 21 February 2024 meeting. Limited feedback was received which has been integrated in Appendix A.

Upon adoption of the new policy, information and resources will be provided to system leaders, including principals and vice Principals as well as Managers' Council, and feedback will be collected to inform the creation of a Risk Management procedure.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

THAT the proposed Policy P.143.GOV Risk Management, attached as Appendix A to Report 24-013, be approved.

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Richard Sinclair  
General Counsel

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Pino Buffone  
Director of Education/  
Secretary of the Board

## **Appendices**

Appendix A - Policy P.143.GOV Risk Management