



Memo No. 21-020

TO: Audit Committee

FROM: Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary of the Board
Brett Reynolds, Associate Director
Janice McCoy, Superintendent of Human Resources

DATE: 17 February 2021

RE: Leadership Succession Planning Strategy Update

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the members of the Audit Committee with an update with respect to leadership development and leadership succession planning in the District.

Succession planning and leadership development have been identified as strategic priorities in the District's current (2019-2023) strategic plan. In August 2020, following a short delay due to COVID, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) embarked on developing its leadership succession planning strategy with the Phelps Group, an external consultant selected through an extensive Request for Proposal (RFP) process.

The Phelps Group has developed the following four (4) phase plan to assist the District in achieving these strategic goals:

- Phase 1: environmental scan, context and discovery
- Phase 2: leadership succession planning strategy & imperatives
- Phase 3: develop & implement success & knowledge transfer strategy
- Phase 4: monitor progress/evaluate effectiveness

Below is a breakdown of each of the phases which includes the key deliverables for the 2020-21 school year.

Phase 1: Environmental Scan, Context and Discovery

Phase one of the project is focused on conducting a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the OCDSB's current succession planning, leadership development and performance

management processes. The intention of this phase is to identify gaps through the analysis of existing demographic data and feedback generated from qualitative interviews. Between December 5th, 2020 and January 15th, 2021, The Phelps Group were able to conduct 18 qualitative interviews, with both members of the OCDSB's senior staff, and in various academic and business/corporate leadership roles throughout the District.

Phase one of the project will conclude by the end of February, with the receipt of the first report prepared by the Phelps Group. This report, which is currently in draft, will include a series of recommendations that will help to inform the further development of our leadership strategies and succession planning initiatives, and will also seek to align our current practices and talent identification processes.

Some of the themes that were identified through the first phase include:

- Succession planning and leadership development must be integrated into an annual cycle of work and become more intentional.
- Formal identification of high potential employees and more active outreach to encourage applicants, particularly from underrepresented groups, to consider applying for formal leadership positions, is required.
- A formal and consistent leadership development program is needed.
- The need for accountability, commitment to succession planning across the District, sharing of best practices and increased communication.
- Simple and effective processes to keep employees engaged.

These themes/recommendation areas will help to inform the next phases of the project.

Phase 2: Leadership Succession Planning Strategy and Imperatives

Phase Two of the project is already partially underway and will focus on aligning, simplifying and streamlining the District's policies and procedures. In particular, this phase will examine the OCDSB's critical leadership roles, talent identification and risk mitigation strategies, and integrating diversity, inclusion and equity as foundational aspects of the District's recruitment practices.

Most notably in this phase, a Leadership Excellence Advisory Panel (LEAP) will be established. The LEAP will consist of approximately 16 leaders representing both the academic and corporate areas. It will be a representative leadership group focused on providing insights obtained from its members' knowledge and experience working within various roles at the OCDSB. Although the LEAP is being established initially to support the work being done with the Phelps Group, the LEAP will continue to play an important

role in terms of monitoring, supporting and implementing leadership succession within the OCDSB. This would include supporting the on-going development and implementation of a comprehensive leadership development program for aspiring Indigenous and Black leaders. The LEAP will also ensure that there is an on-going forum and opportunity for input and feedback from current leaders in the District, and that representative voices are included in the development and implementation processes for both succession planning and leadership development.

Interested OCDSB principals, vice-principals, supervisors and managers were asked to submit an Expression of Interest to be considered for the LEAP in January of 2021. Applications are currently being reviewed by senior staff and the inaugural LEAP meeting is scheduled to take place on February 22nd, 2021.

Phase Two of the project is on schedule to conclude at the end of March, 2021 with a second report that will focus on some additional recommendations pertaining specifically to equitable leadership selection and the integration of various related policies and procedures.

Phase 3: Develop and Implement Success and Knowledge Transfer Strategy

Phase three of the project will be focused on key metrics and measurements, the creation of a pool of high potential candidates, as well as a further integration and alignment of the performance management processes including a detailed implementation plan. This is of particular relevance for the selection of principals and vice-principals, where the District has struggled to ensure it has a sufficient number of successful candidates to meet its needs. Historically, the District has had success in attracting a large number of applicants to the principal and vice-principal postings, but has struggled to fill these positions. Therefore a strategy that focuses on identifying and developing high potential internal candidates for these roles will be critical to this phase of the project.

Further to this, onboarding processes and leadership strategies for the business side will also continue to be examined. During this phase, the Phelps Group will also assist the District in creating templates to allow for corporate knowledge sharing and transfer. This phase is expected to conclude at the end of April 2021 with a third report.

Phase 4: Monitor Progress/Evaluate Effectiveness - OCDSB Blueprint for Success

The final phase of the project consists of developing strategies for being proactive and frequently and consistently monitoring the progress and effectiveness of the leadership development and succession planning programs that have been, or will be, put in place. This includes renewing resources and learning strategies, and adapting and refreshing

templates based on feedback from the LEAP and the needs of the District. Phase four will conclude with a final report provided by the Phelps Group, entitled the OCDSB Blueprint for Success that will outline a detailed implementation plan with additional strategies to monitor effectiveness and measure success. The expected completion date for the project is June 30, 2021.

Further to this, the District will continue to work with the LEAP to enhance and expand the Leadership Development Program at the OCDSB. With the District's strategic goals in mind, the overarching goal of this initiative continues to be to grow, attract and retain a cadre of highly qualified, diverse candidates to fill leadership roles and to design programs that reflect the values and vision of the district. The OCDSB is dedicated to continuing to work towards creating a culture centered on collaboration, wherein we respect and honour diverse points of view, streamline processes, increase communication, build accountability and move towards holistic problem solving, critical thinking and appreciative inquiry.

At the conclusion of the District's relationship with the Phelps Group, the OCDSB will be in a better position to mitigate risk through the acknowledgement of current vulnerabilities and blind spots, the development of new processes and programs and the implementation of a long term strategy to build bench strength through a comprehensive leadership strategy. The Phelps Group has recommended that this will be achieved through the continuous assessment of our leadership needs and board-wise engagement wherein; the District's process and practices are formalized, there is a strategy in place to identify, prepare, develop and grow our leaders and that the OCDSB has the ability to transition and anticipate future challenges and needs that may arise.

Further information on the District's work in succession planning and leadership development will be provided through the normal reporting channels to Committee of the Whole and other committees. Should you have any questions, please contact Brett Reynolds, Associate Director of Education at brett.reynolds@ocdsb.ca or at ext. 8252 or Janice McCoy, Superintendent of Human Resources at janice.mccoy@ocdsb.ca or at ext. 8207.

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