Northland School Division

Government Response to Inquiry Team Recommendations and Community Engagement Team Recommendations

Inquiry Team Report Recommendation	Implementation Responsibility		
and Community Engagement Team Response	Northland School Division	Alberta Education	Response
Recommendation #1: That the provincial government maintain the current boundary structure of Northland School Division, except for the circumstances set out later in recommendations #44 and #45; and that Northland School Division be clearly identified and recognized as a special purpose school authority for Aboriginal education that is focused around capitalizing on its unique opportunity to provide excellence in First Nations and Métis education. CET Response to Recommendation #1: No response		√	Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept recognizing Northland School Division as a jurisdiction with a "specific" purpose rather than as a "special" purpose jurisdiction as reflected in the preamble to the amended Northland School Division Act where Northland School Division is recognized as being culturally, geographically, and historically unique. Recommendation #19 of the Inquiry Team Report (pp. 31-32) also addresses this issue.
Recommendation #2: That Alberta Education implement a mandated progress review process to occur at three-year- intervals; further, that if there is no or only limited progress in implementing the recommendations of this report and in improving measures in the Annual Educational Result Reports after nine years, the need for further interventions, including possible radical boundary change, be reconsidered. CET Response to Recommendation #2: No response	✓		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation; responsibility lies with Northland School Division with support from Alberta Education.

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Inquiry Team Report Recommendation	Implementation Responsibility		
and Community Engagement Team Response	Northland School Division	Alberta Education	Response
Recommendation #3: That Northland School Division implement an improvement strategy requiring an action-oriented leadership structure that is centred on strategic governance and effort focused on the following three central priorities over the next nine to 12 years: • English language and numeracy development. • Improved student attendance. • Strengthening parents' engagement with their schools through improving communication and levels of trust. In this regard, it is recommended that Northland School Division take the lead in implementing the FNMI Services Branch parent-engagement initiative. CET Response to Recommendation #3: • No response	~		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept both recommendations. Initiatives are underway within Northland School Division to address the three central priorities.
Recommendation #4: That as part of the process to improve parent and community engagement with the school, Northland School Division: • Encourage and facilitate appropriate teacher involvement with their community, and where possible, develop extracurricular activities with students. • Establish the practice of schools and their staffs regularly hosting community supper gatherings at the school as a means of developing awareness and engagement. CET Response to Recommendation #4: • No response	V		This recommendation has been implemented by Northland School Division.
Recommendation #5: That Northland School Division more effectively utilize locally developed measures within the Accountability Pillar to better tailor the accountability process to the unique characteristics of the jurisdiction (for example regarding grade level of achievement). CET Response to Recommendation #5: No response	√		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation.

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Inquiry Team Report Recommendation	Implementation Responsibility		
and Community Engagement Team Response	Northland School Division	Alberta Education	Response
Recommendation #6: That Northland School Division engage teachers and parents in a process of ongoing review of Provincial Achievement Tests as they are released in an effort to: • build greater awareness and understanding of the tests, and • provide feedback to Alberta Education where there is agreement that particular test items may in fact be biased either culturally or because the items assume background experiences that students living in remote communities may not have. CET Response to Recommendation #6: • No response	✓		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation.
Recommendation #7: That Northland School Division review and update its grade promotion policy and take steps to ensure that the revised policy is well communicated to parents. Northland School Division should make every effort to ensure that parents understand the distinction between grade placement and academic grade level of achievement. CET Response to Recommendation #7: No response	√		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation.

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Inquiry Team Report Recommendation and Community Engagement Team Response	Implementation Responsibility		
	Northland School Division	Alberta Education	Response
Recommendation #8: That Northland School Division place sustained emphasis on strengthening languages (English and Aboriginal) by multiple strategies that are tailored to the contextual needs of each community. In this regard specifically that Northland School Division leadership research a successful approach for the acquisition of Aboriginal languages, English language and numeracy. Further, that Northland School Division leadership establish baseline data on these areas and train all staff in effective teaching of selected programs or approaches. That Northland School Division also maintain longitudinal data to track student progress, adjust strategies as needed and carry out ongoing assessment.			Note: Alberta Education has provided funding and implementation support to address this recommendation.
No response			
Recommendation #9: That library enhancement for the purpose of supporting reading be an integral part of the effort to strengthen languages. CET Response to Recommendation #9: No response	✓		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation. Status: Alberta Education provided and continues to provide funding to support developing and implementing a comprehensive library development plan focusing on print and digital material.
Recommendation #10: That it be mandatory for Northland School Division schools to offer full-day kindergarten programs.	√		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation.
CET Response to Recommendation #10: No response			Note: • Full-day ECS programs already operate in 18 of the 22 schools.

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Inquiry Team Report Recommendation	Implementation Responsibility		
and Community Engagement Team Response	Northland School Division	Alberta Education	Response
Recommendation #11: That Northland School Division promote and maintain close coordination with Head Start programs as means of helping alleviate the readiness for school deficiencies experienced by many students, and further, that in communities where no other agency offers a Head Start program, Northland School Division should consider offering such a program. CET Response to Recommendation #11: No response	~		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation. Status: Northland School Division and the Kee Tas Kee Now Tribal Council are working together to address supports for First Nations.
Recommendation #12: That Northland School Division strengthen the Aboriginal cultural content within the curriculum; and further that more emphasis, including staff development and support, be placed on Aboriginal content infusion as provided for in the Alberta curriculum. CET Response to Recommendation #12: The CET supports this recommendation and further recommends: Resources be allocated to develop community-based content that reflects Aboriginal history, language, culture, beliefs and world views. Elders be recognized and used to support learning in the education system. Curriculum, supports and tools be developed regarding the experience of Aboriginals in Canada's residential school experience should be a mandatory part of the school curriculum throughout the province. Educators and communities work together to determine how to best assess a student's Aboriginal knowledge (pp. 20-21 of CET report).			Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept both recommendations.

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Inquiry Team Report Recommendation	Implementation Responsibility		
and Community Engagement Team Response	Northland School Division	Alberta Education	Response
Recommendation #13: That Northland School Division strengthen professional leadership for Aboriginal language instructors and provide training for Aboriginal language instructors to increase the capacity to deliver quality Aboriginal language programs. CET Response to Recommendation #13: No response	√		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation. Note: Northland School Division has developed a five-year (2012-2017) proposed implementation plan for language development.
Recommendation #14: That there be recognition of the reality that not all parents support Aboriginal language and cultural instruction within the school environment by providing an opt-out arrangement similar to the manner in which public schools generally deal with religious instruction.	√		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation.
CET Response to Recommendation #14:No response			
Recommendation #15: That Northland School Division establish a system-level to system-level administrative liaison process with neighbouring school jurisdictions providing instruction to students from Northland School Division communities to address student and program articulation issues and other considerations.	V		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation.
CET Response to Recommendation #15: No response			
Recommendation #16: That Northland School Division endeavour to improve communications with schools and jurisdictions offering junior-senior high school services to Northland School Division students. Further, that Northland School Division assign staff to monitor the performance of, and act as an advocate for, all students pursuing junior-senior high school programs in schools outside of Northland School Division.	V		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation.
CET Response to Recommendation #16: No response			

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Inquiry Team Report Recommendation	Implementation Responsibility		
and Community Engagement Team Response	Northland School Division	Alberta Education	Response
Recommendation #17: That Northland School Division give planning consideration to establishing a combined regional and virtual high school to serve students in the smaller communities, as an alternative to existing boarding arrangements.	√		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation.
 CET Response to Recommendation #17: The CET supports this recommendation and further recommends: Resources be allocated to establish a regional and virtual high school in partnership with other organizations. The school have enhanced programs that are community-based. A homework hotline be available to students and parents. The school include housing for students (pp. 22-24 of CET report). 			
Recommendation #18: That Northland School Division initiate and sustain discussions with Northern Lakes College and any other post-secondary institution that has a presence in communities served by Northland School Division to capitalize on potential joint efforts in high school programming. CET Response to Recommendation #18:	✓		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation.
Recommendation #19: That as Northland School Division is re-defined as a special purpose system for Aboriginal education, there be a requirement, over time, for persons in leadership roles to have First Nations, Métis, and Inuit heritage and Aboriginal language fluency along with demonstrated skill in dealing effectively with Aboriginal cultures. CET Response to Recommendation #19: No formal response (see comments column)	✓		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept these recommendations but recommend that Northland School Division be recognized as a jurisdiction with a "specific purpose" rather than as a "special purpose" jurisdiction by a statement in the in the preamble to the amended Northland School Division Act where Northland School Division is recognized as being culturally, geographically, and historically unique. The CET supports the concept of a "special" purpose jurisdiction with a focus on excellence in FNMI education.

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Inquiry Team Report Recommendation and Community Engagement Team Response	Implementation Responsibility		
	Northland School Division	Alberta Education	Response
Recommendation #20: That Northland School Division re-establish an effective orientation program for new hires, with a substantial emphasis on community and cultural components, and further, that the placement of new employees into communities be arranged with sufficient time for them to experience community-level orientation and settling-in prior to the start of teaching duties.	✓		This recommendation has been implemented.
 CET Response to Recommendation #20: The CET supports this recommendation and further recommends: Orientation and cross-cultural awareness be available division-wide, and local community orientation be provided on an ongoing basis. Resources be allocated to Northland School Division to develop orientation materials with community input. Resources on the history of residential schools be developed to support the orientation of teachers and administrators (as referenced in Recommendation 12(5) on page 21 of the CET report) (pp. 25-26 of CET report). 			
Recommendation #21: That Northland School Division implement and maintain staff development activities that enhance teachers' skills at individualizing, differentiating instruction, employing more experiential-based learning activities and devising learning activities that include formative assessment skills, in recognition of the diverse learning levels and needs of Northland School Division students. CET Response to Recommendation #21: No response	✓		This recommendation has been implemented.

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Inquiry Team Report Recommendation and Community Engagement Team Response	Implementation Responsibility		
	Northland School Division	Alberta Education	Response
Recommendation #22: That Northland School Division ensures strengthened responsibility and accountability relationships among students, teachers, principals and the superintendency. In particular, that the human resources management function (recruitment and termination of personnel) become clearly a management activity with appropriate community input only; it must cease to be regarded as a governance function subject to political processes. CET Response to Recommendation #22: No formal response.	✓		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation. Note: Consultations on the principles and values of an amended Northland School Division Act will provide direction in this regard.
Recommendation #23: That Northland School Division re-establish central, regionally based, administrative and pedagogical roles by re-directing some resources away from classroom-based positions. These re-established roles should provide direction, assistance and support to principals and teachers for Northland School Division-wide approaches, implementation and assessment of core literacy and numeracy programs. CET Response to Recommendation #23: No response	√		 Note: A full complement of pedagogical supervisors was in place for the 2011/2012 school year. A literacy coordinator was engaged for the 2012/2013 school year.

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Inquiry Team Report Recommendation and Community Engagement Team Response		entation nsibility	
	Northland School Division	Alberta Education	Response
Recommendation #24: That Northland School Division establish and sustain over time a school-community development function within the organization. This function should include a staff position whose job is to regularly and systematically facilitate school-based meetings with parents and community members to develop the school's strategic role within the future of the community. This staff position must take the lead in implementing the parent engagement process, including reflecting the concepts behind the former Community Schools program and the Integrated Services delivery model. Further, that this function also include designated resources to enable school staff to regularly host community gatherings (such as community suppers) at the school. CET Response to Recommendation #24: No response			Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation.
Recommendation #25: That Northland School Division establish and sustain over time an internal communications function. This would include a staff position whose job is to ensure that key messages about the system's priorities are directed to internal audiences through all appropriate channels. These key messages include the importance of: schooling, regular attendance, consistent parental support and the inclusion of Aboriginal culture. CET Response to Recommendation #25:	*		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation.
No response Recommendation #26: That Northland School Division continue to maintain and enhance records of the levels of training of paraprofessional/support staff. CET Response to Recommendation #26: No response	✓		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation.

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Inquiry Team Report Recommendation and Community Engagement Team Response	Implementation Responsibility		
	Northland School Division	Alberta Education	Response
Recommendation #27: That where paraprofessional/support staff members have not completed a level of training commensurate with their assignments, each staff member develop a training plan that leads to a recognized credential relating to their assignments and that Northland School Division encourage and assist staff with inservice programs tied to course requirements.	V		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation.
CET Response to Recommendation #27: No response			
Recommendation #28: That when new paraprofessional/ support staff are hired, they be required to commit to an upgrading program/plan that leads to a recognized credential related directly to their assignment.	·		Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation.
CET Response to Recommendation #28: No response			
Recommendation #29: That Northland School Division ensure appropriate personnel and internal arrangements are in place for systematic quarterly financial reporting to the Board of Trustees.	√		This recommendation was implemented in the 2010/2011 school year.
CET Response to Recommendation #29: No response			
Recommendation #30: That Alberta Education and Northland School Division jointly explore supporting Northland School Division teacher housing through an armslength entity (some type of housing authority) acting on Northland School Division's behalf, and perhaps on the behalf of other public sector employers in northern Alberta communities, in order to get away from the staff relations issues associated with the employer being the landlord; further that innovative, ongoing provincial funding be implemented to enable such an arrangement to be viable.		✓	Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation as part of an overall strategy for teacher attraction and retention. Note: Northland has developed a plan to enhance 100 of its teacherages beginning in summer 2014. Alberta Education will continue to work with Northland to address housing in light of a broader strategy of teacher attraction and retention.
CET Response to Recommendation #30: No response			

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Inquiry Team Report Recommendation and Community Engagement Team Response	Implementation Responsibility		
	Northland School Division	Alberta Education	Response
Recommendation #31: That Alberta Education provide one-time catch-up funding to Northland School Division for upgrading to current standards school libraries and facilities, particularly with respect to old portable classrooms, and the teacher housing inventory. CET Response to Recommendation #31: No response		√	Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation in principle, pending final costing. Note: Funding has been provided to Northland School Division to enhance its library collections.
Recommendation #32: That Northland School Division obtain title to, or an enforceable long-term interest in, land prior to commencing construction of any capital project. CET Response to Recommendation #32: No response	√		This recommendation has been implemented and protocols are in place. Changes were made to existing leases to provide better protection to government on its capital investments by extending the lease term and addressing the clause providing for a two-year lease termination without cause.
Recommendation #33: That Northland School Division ensure it has appropriate leases in place for all its schools situated on Métis settlement lands. CET Response to Recommendation #33: No response	√		This recommendation has been implemented and protocols are in place.
Recommendation #34: That prior to releasing funds for the construction of new school facilities, Alberta Education verify that the recipient school jurisdiction has obtained title to, or an enforceable long-term interest in, the land for the building site. CET Response to Recommendation #34:		√	This recommendation has been implemented and protocols are in place.
No response Recommendation #35: That Alberta Education facilitate negotiation of a new, omnibus Education Agreement between Northland School Division and Treaty 8 First Nations within the context of the Memorandum of Understanding on First Nations Education in Alberta, to replace the dated tuition agreements currently in place. CET Response to Recommendation #35: No response		✓	Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division do not accept this recommendation. Note: Strategies are being developed to address issues within the First Nations MOU Agreement.

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Inquiry Team Report Recommendation and Community Engagement Team Response	Implementation Responsibility		
	Northland School Division	Alberta Education	Response
Recommendation #36: That Alberta Education take a leadership role in the establishment of a regional service and support consortium for First Nations and Métis education, involving Northland School Division with neighbouring school jurisdictions and the First Nations education authorities operating in northern Alberta; further that funds from the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit grant be considered to enable initiatives in this area. CET Response to Recommendation #36: The CET supports this recommendation but recommends as well that this be a Centre of Excellence for First Nations, Métis and Inuit education in the north (pp. 27-29 of CET report).			Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation.
Recommendation #37: That Alberta Education entrench Northland School Division's governance policies and protocols in a Ministerial Order to ensure that those in governance roles focus on governance activities and delegate management activities to staff, subject to effective accountability, reporting and oversight processes in a manner that cannot be unilaterally revised by Northland School Division. CET Response to Recommendation #37: • The CET supports this recommendation.		√	Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation in principle, but do not support "entrenching" Northland School Division governance policies and protocols in a ministerial order. Note: Consultations on an amended Northland School Division Act are planned for Northland School Division communities. The Alberta School Boards Association will undertake a comprehensive policy review in conjunction with the Northland School Division board of trustees and will provide governance support to a newly elected board of trustees.

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Inquiry Team Report Recommendation and Community Engagement Team Response	Implementation Responsibility		
	Northland School Division	Alberta Education	Response
Recommendation #38: That the provincial government amend the Northland School Division Act to establish a nine-member Board of Trustees; seven elected by direct election (ward system), one other a First Nations' representative nominated pursuant to an Education Agreement (with Treaty Eight) and one other a Métis representative nominated by Métis Settlements General Council, both of the latter appointed to the Board by the Minister of Education. CET Response to Recommendation #38: The CET supports this recommendation and further recommends: Elders have a formal role in governance. A seven ward structure using geography and student population as guides to develop the boundaries for the wards (pp. 29-31 of CET report).		\	Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation and the recommendation from the CET to include a role for Elders in the governance of Northland School Division.
Recommendation #39: That a term limit of not more than two consecutive three-year terms be established for members of the Board of Trustees to ensure effective representation from throughout the system over time and to minimize the potential of factional politics and inappropriate concentrations of power. CET Response to Recommendation #39: The CET rejects this recommendation and believes that school trustees should serve for as long as they continue to be elected (pp. 29-32 of CET report).		√	Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division do not accept this recommendation. Note: No such prohibition exists for trustees in other Alberta school authorities.

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Inquiry Team Report Recommendation and Community Engagement Team Response	Implementation Responsibility		
	Northland School Division	Alberta Education	Response
Recommendation #40: That an ex officio (non-voting) member of the Board of Trustees be appointed by the Minister of Education as a process observer and coach to facilitate organizational change and ensure that the participants of the new structure remain true to intent. CET Response to Recommendation #40: The CET rejects this recommendation and believes that an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees should be appointed only at the direction and request of the Board of Trustees (pp. 29-32 of CET report).		*	Alberta Education and Northland School Division accept this recommendation: Note: The Northland School Division board of trustees has the responsibility to determine if a mentor/coach is needed. Northland School Division will engage, at its own expense, an ex-officio mentor/coach as appropriate.
Recommendation #41: That Alberta Education support a governance structure that fosters a sense of ownership at the community and parent levels without impinging unduly on school operations and teachers' professional practice. CET Response to Recommendation #41: The CET supports this recommendation (pp. 29-31 of CET report).		√	Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation.
Recommendation #42: That the provincial government amend the Northland School Division Act to expand Local School Board Committee membership to include parent and teacher representation and that its role be consistent with that of a School Council as set out in the School Council Regulation. CET Response to Recommendation #42: The CET recommends retaining the Local School Board Committees in their present form. Local School Board Committees would be elected from within the community and each would select its own chair who would serve in an advisory capacity to the corporate board. The CET recommends using the community engagement framework to define roles and responsibilities (pp. 29-32 of CET report).		•	Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division do not accept the Inquiry Team's recommendation or the CET's recommendations to retain Local School Board Committees in their present form and functions. Note: Planned consultations in Northland School Division communities will identify principles and values that will be used to develop amendments to the Northland School Division Act.

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Inquiry Team Report Recommendation and Community Engagement Team Response	Implementation Responsibility		
	Northland School Division	Alberta Education	Response
Recommendation #43: That a council of chairs of the newly constituted Local Boards meet twice yearly with the Board of Trustees in a legislative advisory role. CET Response to Recommendation #43: The CET supports this recommendation (pp. 29-31 of CET report).		√	Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation. Note: The amended Northland School Division Act will need to address this issue so that Northland school Division, through its own policy structure, can establish these mechanism s
Recommendation #44: That Alberta Education appoints a facilitator to work with the Anzac School community and Ft. McMurray PSD representatives regarding realignment of Anzac School to Fort McMurray Public School District jurisdiction. CET Response to Recommendation #44: No formal response (see comments column)		✓	Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division accept this recommendation. Note: CET discussed the need to engage in community consultations in relation to moving Northland School Division schools to a different school division.
Recommendation #45: That Alberta Education initiate a process for transferring Red Earth Creek School to Peace River School Division jurisdiction. CET Response to Recommendation #45: No response		√	This recommendation was implemented and Red Earth Creek School was transferred to Peace River School Division effective September 1, 2011
Recommendation #46: That Northland School Division initiate school closure proceedings at Keg River. CET Response to Recommendation #46: No response	√		This recommendation has been implemented.
Recommendation #47: That Alberta Education establish a process for Métis Settlements to periodically determine by plebiscite if they wish to remain part of Northland School Division or transfer to a neighbouring school jurisdiction or vice- versa. CET Response to Recommendation #47: No response		√	Alberta Education and the Official Trustee of Northland School Division do not accept this recommendation. Note: The Minister has the authority under Section 239 of the School Act to add lands to or delete lands from a district or a division. There is no need to establish a separate procedure for Métis settlements to withdraw from Northland School Division.

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Inquiry Team Report Recommendation and Community Engagement Team Response	Implementation Responsibility		
	Northland School Division	Alberta Education	Response
Recommendation #48: That Alberta Education create a multi-stakeholder implementation team including representation from all its branches involved with Northland School Division operations; Northland School Division leadership; the external agencies and organizations involved with Northland School Division to engage in developing and delivering strategies, including those for community engagement with this report's recommendations, which are necessary to bring about positive change in Northland School Division. CET Response to Recommendation #48: The CET developed a community engagement framework and recommends that it be implemented across Northland School Division (p. 37 of CET report).		•	Note: The CET was formed in February 2011 and presented its final report to the Minister in March 2012.

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