

# Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board Strategic Plan 2012





# Contents

Preface .....	3
Board Members .....	4
Messages – Board Chair / Superintendent .....	5
Overview .....	6
Organizational Chart .....	7
Mission Statement / Beliefs .....	8
Strategic Plan Process .....	9
Four Critical Issues .....	10
Governance .....	11
Pathways to Success .....	13
Integrated Curriculum/Instruction .....	15
Demographic Dynamics .....	17

# Preface

The Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board was formed in 1996, as the result of the merger of the Cape Breton District School Board and the Northside-Victoria Amalgamated School Board. On September 26, 1997, the Board formally approved its first Strategic Plan. This plan was the result of extensive consultation over a number of months with representatives from all stakeholders.

On February 27, 2008, the Board approved a motion to formally review and update the Plan. Dr. Mike Foster of Canmac Economics Ltd. was contracted as external facilitator and the Director of Programs and Student Services was identified as the internal facilitator.

This report presents the updated Strategic Plan. This Plan provides the Board with a vehicle for managing change. The plan also provides a sense of direction for all staff who serve our students through the identification of the Board's primary needs and priorities.

The Strategic Plan is closely connected and related to the Board's annual Business Plan. The Strategic Plan is the Board's policy framework for the annual Business Plan.



# Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board

## Members

Lorne Green, Board Chair

Joan Currie, Board Vice-Chair

Fred Tilley

Darrell Flynn

Gary Fraser

Darren Googoo, First Nations Representative

Charles Keagan

Darren MacNeil

Sandra Margettie

Barbara Mercer

Darlene Morrison

Jackie Organ

Stephen Parsons

Cathi Pierrard

Kevin Ruelland



## Chair's Message



*"The Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board fosters a caring, dynamic and creative environment that provides educational opportunities and promotes a love of learning, respect for others, and challenges all persons to develop their full potential to become confident, versatile, lifelong learners and thinkers".*

To this end we have developed an upgrade to our Strategic Plan. We have consulted with the Board, staff and parents/community Focus groups. All stakeholders helped to re-establish our priorities and develop new ones.

On behalf of the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board, I want to thank Board staff and stakeholders for their dedication and commitment in the development of the Strategic Plan.

Sincerely,  
Lorne Green, Board Chair

## Superintendent's Message



Today, the problems that we face are complex and require that many stakeholders have a responsibility in the process of solving them. Our strategic planning process has given us an opportunity to evaluate our system, to identify the critical issues and to prepare a process whereby all stakeholders have a say in how our future unfolds.

We are very cognizant of the environment in which we as the regional board fulfill our obligations. We must adhere to the Education Act, the Regulations to the Act and specifically the mandates coming from the Department of Education. Within the last number of years, we are further obligated to render a yearly 'Business Plan' that draws an alignment between our proposed yearly goals and obligations and the resources that will be expended to achieve these outcomes.

As Superintendent, I am proud of our 'Strategic Plan' and the process that was used to develop it. Dr. Mike Foster, through his company, Canmac Economics Ltd., played an integral role in its development. I would also like to acknowledge the work of senior staff in respect to the successful completion of the 'Strategic Plan' 2012. I look forward to working with you on behalf of our children.

Yours in Education,  
Ambrose White, Superintendent

# Overview

The Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board is a vast area, encompassing urban and rural settings in two municipalities – Cape Breton Regional Municipality and Victoria County and covers approximately 3,238 square kilometers. The Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board has 13,774 students in 53 sites.

We are one of the largest employers on Cape Breton Island employing 1067 full time teachers, 923 CUPE staff, and 29 Confidential staff. In addition, the Board employs 331 casual CUPE staff and 628 substitute teachers.

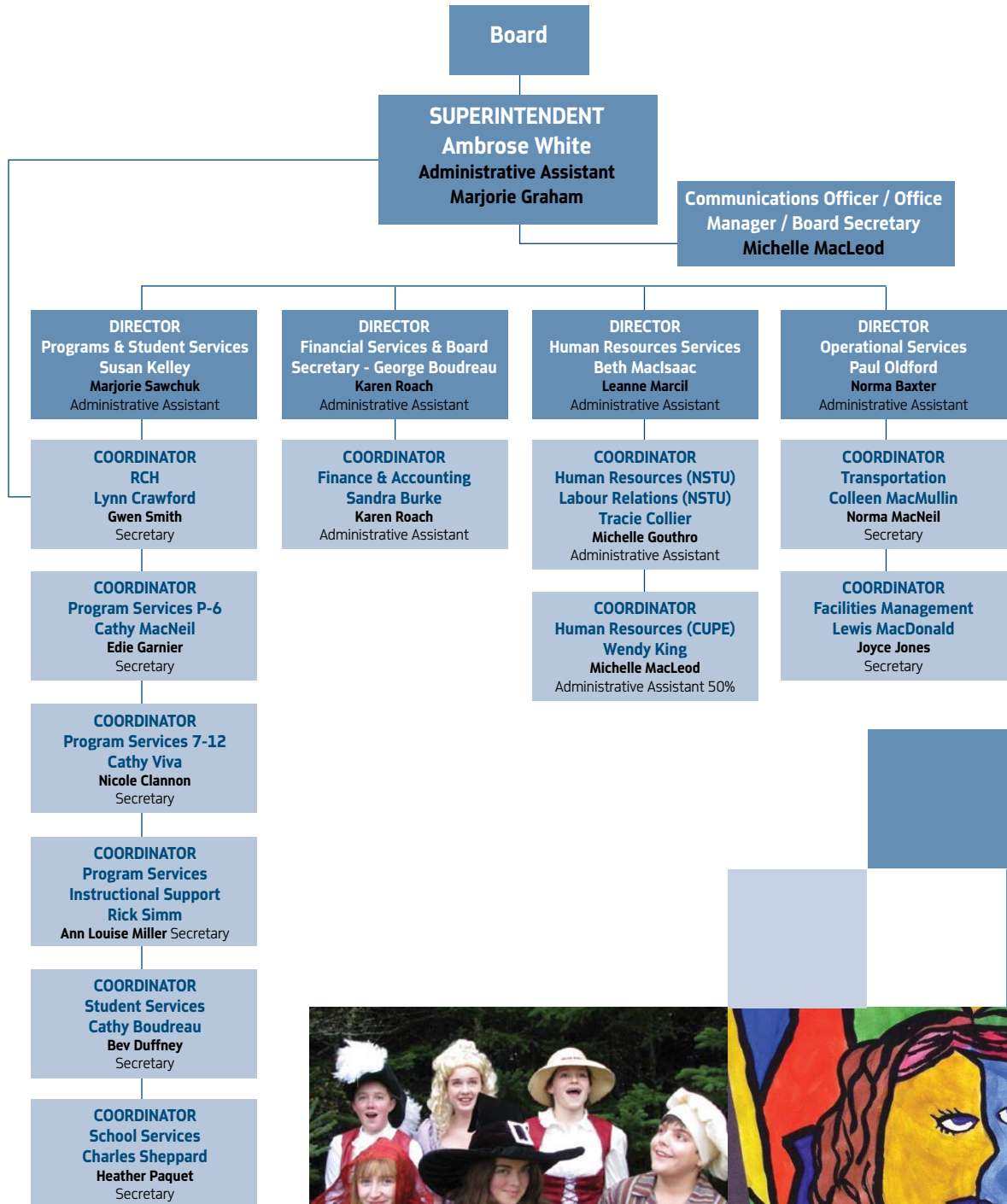
The Cape Breton-Victoria Regional public school system is unique in many ways. Some include:

- We have one of the highest teachers' licenses ratio per total faculty in Canada;
- The first Home and School Association in Canada was formed in Baddeck;
- Memorial High, Sydney Mines, is the only composite (academic and vocational) high school in the Province of Nova Scotia;
- The most northerly located school in Nova Scotia is North Highlands in Aspy Bay;
- We are the first school board to implement Native Studies curriculum at the high school level.

School	Principal
Adult High Schools	Heather Patterson
Baddeck Academy	Jerry McNeil
Boularderie School	Stephen MacDougall
Bras d'Or Elementary	Trevor LeBlanc
Breton Education Centre	Bruce MacDonald
Bridgeport School	Firman McCormick
Brookland Elementary	Stephanie Campbell
Cabot Jr/Sr. High	Barb Costelo
Cape Smokey Elementary	Maxine Hardy
Coxheath Elementary	Anne Sajatovich
Cusack Elementary	Donna Dunn
Dr. T.L. Sullivan Jr. High	Charles Yorke
Donkin-Gowrie Complex	Brenda Jackson
Ferrisview Elementary	Barb Read
Florence Elementary	Michelle Stubbart
George D. Lewis School	Paul Gartland
Glace Bay Elementary	Roberta Sheppard
Glace Bay High	Theresa MacKenzie
Greenfield Elementary	Joyce Morrison
Harbourside Elementary	Stephanie Black
J.B. Croak VC Memorial Elem	Tamalah Ettinger
Jubilee Elementary	Jack Humphries
Macdonald Elementary	Brian Doue
MacLennan Jr. High	Redmond MacDougall
Malcolm Munroe Jr. High	Eileen Burns

School	Principal
Marion Bridge Elementary	Janet MacVicar
Memorial High	Brendan Dugas
Middle River Elementary	Angela Currie
Mira Road Elementary	Paul Mombourquette
Mount Carmel Elementary	Lowell Cormier
Mountainview/East Bay Complex	Jeannie Stone
North Highlands Elementary	Marie Barry
Oceanview Education Centre	Paul McNeil
Rankin School of the Narrows	Theresa MacNeil
Riverside Elementary	Donna Sullivan
Riverview High	Joe Chisholm
Robin Foote Elementary	Andy Culligan
Seton Elementary	Garland Standing
Sherwood Park Education Centre	Bernie McVeigh
Shipyards Elementary	Betty Melanson
Southside Learning Centre	Danielle Aucoin
St. Agnes Elementary	Joyce Lively
St. Anne Elementary	Donna Andrecyk
St. Joseph Elementary	Amber Orychok
Sydney Academy	Kevin Deveaux
Sydney Mines Jr. High	Donnie Holland
Sydney River Elementary	Michelle Armishaw
Thompson Junior High	Bernadette MacNeil
Tompkins Memorial Elementary	Kelly McNenly
Whitney Pier Memorial Jr. High	Art MacDonald

# Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board 2012-13



# Mission Statement

The Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board fosters a caring, dynamic, and creative environment that provides educational opportunities, promotes a love of learning, respect for others, and challenges all persons to develop their full potential to become confident, versatile, lifelong learners and thinkers.

## Beliefs

### We believe

- in life-long educational opportunities;
- in providing educational opportunities which enable each student to reach his or her potential;
- in a caring, accepting, safe, and healthy school environment;
- in a school environment that promotes the self esteem of the individual;
- in an interactive partnership between and among the family, the community and the school;
- in a curriculum that addresses the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and ethical needs of students;
- in a learning environment to which expression of the individual's opinion is encouraged;
- that respecting and acknowledging individual differences enhances personal growth;
- that diligence is essential in realizing an individual's full potential;
- that self-discipline is the most effective method of shaping acceptable behavior.



# Strategic Planning Process

Strategic plans are living documents that require adjustments and mid-course corrections to reflect changing external circumstances and internal priorities. Development of this strategic plan included input from various partners and community groups. The outline below provides a description of the activities undertaken to ensure a successful strategy.

**Project Mobilization:** the Board approves a steering committee and appoints facilitators. An initial group met and, with the assistance of an external facilitator, reviewed and evaluated the current plan.

## **Visioning Workshops:**

- Planning sessions with Steering Committee to review and affirm critical issues
- Designation of Issue Chairs
- Formation of focus groups for each issue
- Focus groups with principals

A random survey was conducted of households in the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board to gather input from parents as well as the broader community.

## **Strategic Objectives and Actions:**

- Draft of issue position papers with objectives
- Presentation and approval of strategic objectives to steering committee
- Working sessions by focus groups and chairs to finalize draft objectives and actions.

Based on all of the information gathered, four critical issues with corresponding actions were developed and make up this strategic plan.

# Four Critical Issues

Based on the data gathered during the strategic planning process, the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board has identified four critical issues that will be the focus of its energies and efforts.

**Governance**

**Pathways to Success**

**Integrated Curriculum/  
Instruction**

**Demographic Dynamics**

**Governance:** Effective governance will require the Board to adopt a collaborative governance model.

**Pathways to Success:** Pathways to success for all students involves all dimensions of the services provided by the CBVRSB.

**Integrated Curriculum/Instruction:** This is reflected in our vision/mission to provide a learning environment that challenges all students to succeed.

**Demographic Dynamics:** Declining enrollment impacts all areas of our work and is directly linked to funding thereby creating fiscal pressures.





# Critical Issue - Governance

Effective governance is based on the understanding of the changing environment and the best way to respond to these changes.

## Performance

In a random sample of households, the quality of public education provided to children in the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board was rated as very high – an average score of 7.3 on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 as excellent.

## Moving Forward

To both maintain and improve upon its high performance level, the Board must develop a governance model appropriate for the times. Based on strategic planning discussions and focus groups, it is clear that effective governance will require the board to adopt a collaborative governance model. Increasingly, the environment will require the Board to adopt collaborative decision making – one where the views of other stakeholders in the community will have to be taken into account.

**An atmosphere of collaboration is required that promotes an inclusive decision-making process with checkpoints along the way. Clarification is required in the roles and responsibilities of School Advisory Councils (SACs) which have been evolving since the creation of such councils. The following should be considered:**

- Clarification on the roles and responsibilities of the SACs as per section 22 of the Education Act (what they are responsible for and what they are not responsible for);
- Development and deliverance of Professional Development (PD) and literature to Principals, Board members, Board staff, and members of SACs on their roles and responsibilities to ensure consistency in all schools;
- Development and implementation of monitoring methods to ensure consistency and effectiveness of SACs within the School Board.

A random sample of households concluded that more collaboration between government agencies and the school board is desirable. More specifically, households believe it is important for schools to provide space for community organizations that offer services to students. A score of 1.7 was given for this question with 1 = strongly agree to 4 = strongly disagree.

**The Board should increase the level of collaboration with other stakeholders in the community.**

**This includes:**

- Providing space, in a cost effective manner, for other jurisdictions (Health, Justice, etc.) at schools.
- Working at the interdepartmental committee level to ensure effective communication and common purpose in realizing the full potential of students.



# Critical Issue - Pathways to Success

In the recent past, for many, the hallmark of success was driven by financial achievement. There is a change toward the hallmark of success being personal well-being, and positive relationships. The commodity is changing from money to quality of life. The strategy for providing “Pathways to Success” needs to focus on quality of life issues. The areas to be considered as listed in the scope of this document are intended to be used as a starting point for discussion.

There is a need for discussion around the concept of individual and organizational responsibilities. A framework to allow individuals to assume responsibility and recognize accountability for oneself should be included within the board’s strategy. This framework should be clear with regard to the organization’s role in supporting and promoting personal responsibility with all stakeholders.

## Performance

The overall performance of the CBVRSB with respect to enabling pathways to success is in general scored highly by the community. When asked to rate the quality of education, households gave an average score of 7.3 (1 is poor and 10 is excellent).

## Moving Forward

It is acknowledged that pathways to success for students involve examination of all dimensions of the services provided by the CBVRSB from basic infrastructure to communications with parents. Households were queried on a number of factors that impact on pathways to success. Note: (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, 4 = strongly disagree)

In response to the statement “Schools are safe in your area”, the average response was 1.8. Households scored this attribute as high.

In response to the statement “School buildings are adequately maintained”, the average response was 2.0. Households scored this attribute as moderate.

In response to the statement “Schools are too focused on field trips and extracurricular activities”, the average response was 3.2. Households scored CBVRSB’s performance as high.

In response to the statement “Enough time is being spent in the classroom teaching the subject areas”, the average response was 2.1. Households scored CBVRSB’s performance as moderate.

In response to the statement “Substitute teachers should be brought in to keep schools open for students during teacher professional development days”, the average response was 2.8. Households scored this policy as moderate.

**Clearly for the more rural areas, there are fewer opportunities for both increased courses and extracurricular activity. Extra efforts are required in these areas. There is a need for improvement in providing sufficient programs and services to ensure inclusionary practices for all students with special needs.**

- Distance education should be pilot tested as a means of increasing course offerings.
- School consolidation efforts should be examined as a means for increasing other activities.

**Improved methods of keeping parents informed on issues are required. Suggested improvements are:**

- increased use of the internet; such as, School Board website and the Student Information System.
- provide more information on the student’s progress through increased use of Powerschool and the parent portal.





# Critical Issue - Integrated Curriculum/ Instruction

## Background

Having each student in the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board reach his or her potential is the goal of all educators. Integral to the attainment of this goal is the establishment of educational environments that support the learning styles of all children. At the same time, it is critical that teachers are provided with knowledge specific to the most appropriate strategies and pedagogical practices for classroom instruction through the approach of an integrated curriculum.

There are three contextual influences affecting the current educational system. The first is the need by society for a very skilled and highly educated workforce in a global knowledge economy. The second is the reality that students and families' life circumstances are undergoing profound changes. The third, which most directly affects student learning, is the increased understanding of brain processes that neuroscience has afforded educators, thus allowing for a more informed basis for classroom practice.

Teachers are being asked to craft curriculum and learning experiences in a much different way than a decade or two ago. We know from recent research that an integrated curriculum helps students apply skills, encourages depth and breadth in learning, provides more quality time for curriculum exploration, and promotes positive attitudes in students. By having an integrated knowledge base, students are better able to retrieve information, see the interconnectedness and interrelationships among disciplines and transfer their learning to new situations.

## Performance

Based on survey analysis, households rate the CBVRSB's curriculum and teachers highly. Overall, households rate the courses offered at above average (7.1) and the quality of teachers above average (7.5).

## Moving Forward

Based on focus group sessions, household surveys and planning sessions there is a desire to provide a broader range of courses, increase preparation for post-secondary opportunities, workforce preparation and increased computer technology.

### Teacher quality and overall performance are rated above average. Continue to maintain a high quality of teachers by:

- assigning teachers to courses appropriately
- providing professional learning opportunities on new pedagogy and course content

### Increase preparation for secondary opportunities and the workforce by:

- offering a broader range of secondary courses through Nova Scotia Virtual School
- increasing opportunities for students in Co-op, O2, and Skilled Trades courses
- continuing to work with community colleges and university partners to ensure students have a broad range of opportunities available to them.

### Continue to improve student achievement by:

- analyzing provincial assessment results and school/classroom data and utilizing this data to develop site-based instructional strategies
- ensuring continuous school improvement goals focus on improving student learning
- providing opportunities for teachers to work in collaborative learning teams







# Critical Issue - Demographic Dynamics

## Background

Declining enrolment continues to be a serious concern for the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board. Each year the Board graduates 1600 students in Grade 12 and enrolls 1000 new students in grade primary. Since 1996, the school population has declined from 25,275 to 15,640 in 2010-2011.

The enrolment issue is a critical one for the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board because of its impact on so many areas. The number of schools, teachers and staff required continues to decline with less enrolment and the Board's ability to respond to fiscal pressures lessens. Funding to the Board continues to be tied to enrolment and, as a result impacts every facet of the Board's operations.

## Performance

In the past, the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board has attempted to respond in a positive manner, to lessen the effects of declining enrolments.

The Nova Scotia International Students Program is one such response. In the 2010-2011 school year, the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board was home to 114 students from countries all over the world. The province of Nova Scotia, through all eight boards, was able to accommodate 972 students.

The Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board has also initiated four Adult High Schools in an attempt to provide a needed service for adult learning in Cape Breton. There were 187 students registered in the Adult High Schools in the 2010-2011 school year.

The issues around declining enrolment are complex and varied. The implications of the continued decline effect virtually all operations of the Board. There is a need to explore all options as a means to provide for the delivery of services in efficient ways. In addition, new means of retaining existing students until graduation need to be addressed.

Because the decline in enrolment has such a significant impact, there is an opportunity to seek input and ideas from all stakeholders. Students, teachers, administrators, staff and individuals from the communities where the schools operate, need to come together with ideas of ways to continue to deliver services to fewer people. At the same time, there is a need to examine ways to attract additional students to our area and to our schools.

### **Moving Forward**

The demographics issue will remain with the CBVRSB over the foreseeable future. Actions are required to minimize its impact and maximize alternatives to increase enrolment in non-traditional areas.

**Staff should continue efforts to have the funding formula revised to reflect accurately the costs to the CBVRSB of declining enrolment.**

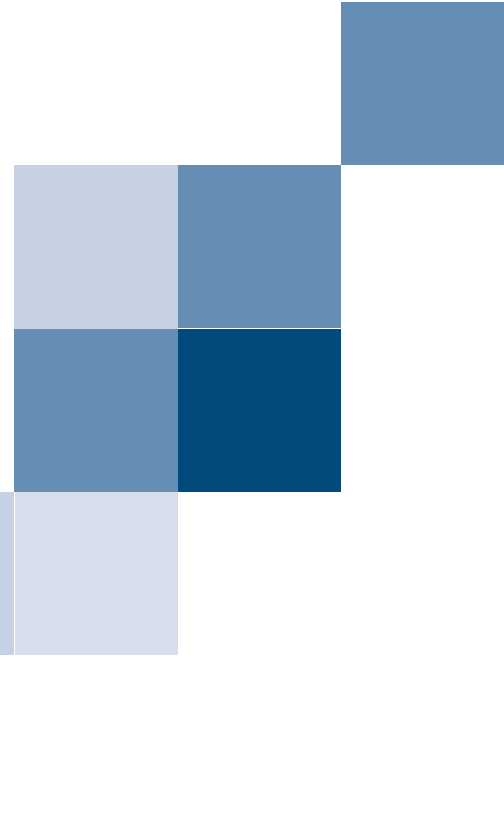
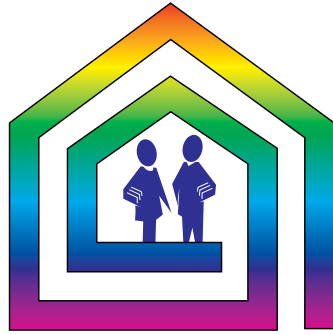
**Staff should develop an updated costing model that assesses the total costs to the CBVRSB of declining enrolment.**

**Efforts should continue to increase enrolment from non-traditional areas.**

**Staff should continue to engage in the process of School Review for possible closure.**







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