

In September 1998 KPMG Peat Marwick LLP (“KPMG”) completed a performance audit for the Portland Public School District (“District”). The audit was intended to take a broad look at the District and identify areas where some form of change might result in improved delivery of educational services or in cost savings to the District.

It should be emphasized that this was a performance audit, not a fiscal audit. Though fiscal information has been identified where available, the emphasis was how does the District increase its performance.

The audit included 233 recommendations in ten different areas. The areas of focus were:

- Achievement
- Administration
- Bond
- Communication
- Facilities
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Inventory and Purchasing
- Strategic Planning

In November 1998 the District recruited 152 volunteers to serve on either the Audit Implementation Steering Committee (“AISC”) or one of nine Task Force groups consistent with the issue areas listed above. The only exception to this was that it was determined that the Strategic Planning recommendations could best be done in context with the District’s larger strategic planning efforts. That entire effort is being coordinated and funded by the Portland Public Schools Foundation.

The volunteers serving on the Task Force groups have had significant expertise in the areas that they were reviewing. Each Task Force also included a parent representative and a teacher. Other District personnel served as resources for the Task Forces. To facilitate the process an outside consultant also staffed each Task Force. Collectively over 2,400 volunteer hours were contributed to the review of the KPMG performance audit.

The purpose of the AISC and the Task Force groups was to review the recommendations made by KPMG and decide if they should be sent to the Superintendent for his consideration and possible implementation. The Task Force groups spent a great deal of time reviewing the recommendations, looking at the background notes provided by KPMG and in many cases conducting additional research. In some cases the Task Force formed subgroups and recruited additional members with specific knowledge in certain subjects so that further study could be done. After the research and discussion phase, the Task Force members determined if they: (1) supported each recommendation, (2) did not support the recommendation but wanted to submit an alternative recommendation or (3) did not support the recommendation and had no further recommendations, and (4) referred the recommendations on without consideration by the AISC due to lack of information. The Task Force work was presented to the AISC over the course of 12 meetings. The AISC discussed and voted on each recommendation and made their own determination for referral to the Superintendent.

Introduction

In addition to involving the public in the Task Force and AISC process, considerable efforts were made to include the public at each step in the process. Superintendent Canada sent a letter to all the parents encouraging their involvement; all Task Force and AISC minutes and meeting notices were posted on the District's Web page and all meetings were open to the public. Additionally, *The Oregonian* reported on key decisions made by the AISC and Facilities Task Force.

This report is one step in the process of assuring that each student achieves their maximum potential. The ability to realize that goal and the implementations of these recommendations is going to be largely dependent on the quality of the District's Strategic Plan and its ability to integrate the findings of this report into its daily operations.