



Chapter 39

Public Service Commission – Developing Leaders Follow Up

1.0 MAIN POINTS

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is the Government's central agency for human resources. This chapter describes management's actions on the recommendations we made in 2009. In 2009, we assessed PSC's processes to develop employees in various ministries for leadership positions. We made three recommendations calling for a mentorship program, developmental experiences to build leadership capacity, and a reporting progress of deputy ministers. As of August 31, 2012, PSC had implemented all three recommendations.

Effective May 2012, PSC is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Central Services.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Under *The Public Service Act, 1998*, PSC is the central human resources agency for about 12,000 staff employed primarily by Government ministries. PSC provides policies and leadership for the development of a professional public service. PSC works with ministries in the delivery of human resources services.

Saskatchewan government ministries employ about 900 managers and about 200 senior leaders (e.g., executive directors, assistant and associate deputy ministers, and deputy ministers).¹ PSC anticipates that half of ministries' senior leaders could retire by 2014 as well as nearly half of the managers who would usually replace them.²

Effective senior leadership is essential for ministries' success. Gaps in leadership could result in delayed services or poorly designed changes to government programs. Strategic coordination would help PSC develop leaders to effectively fill key leadership positions across all ministries.

3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2009, we assessed PSC's processes to develop leaders. Our 2009 Report – Volume 1, Chapter 9 concluded that, as of December 31, 2008, PSC's processes to develop leaders for senior management positions in government ministries were adequate, except for its processes to:

- › Provide potential leaders with developmental work experiences and mentoring opportunities

¹ MIDAS information system *Discover Report* as of March 31, 2012.

² *2006-10 Human Resource Plan for the Saskatchewan Public Service*, p.8 as updated by PSC.

- › Monitor and report on the readiness of ministries to meet their future leadership needs

We made three recommendations.

The following section sets out each of these recommendations and PSC's actions up to August 31, 2012. We found that PSC has implemented our recommendations.

3.1 Mentorship Program Used Actively

We recommended that the Public Service Commission use mentorship programs to help develop potential leaders in government ministries. (2009 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 1, 2009)

Status – Implemented.

PSC designed a Mentorship Program in 2010-2011 and implemented it in 2011-2012. Under this Program, a mentor is paired with a mentee for a twelve month period. A mentor is an experienced public sector leader (e.g., a deputy minister) and a mentee is an employee with at least twelve months public sector experience. The Mentorship Program focuses on supporting the mentee's professional developmental and leadership skills. As of July 31, 2012, there were 110 mentors and 162 mentees participating in the Program. Over twenty-one ministries and Crown agencies participate in the Mentorship Program.

3.2 Coordinating Developmental Work Experience

We recommended that the Public Service Commission coordinate programs that provide potential leaders in government ministries with suitable developmental work experiences. (2009 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 1, 2009)

Status – Implemented.

Throughout 2010 to 2012, PSC worked with senior leaders in ministries to identify staff considered to have high leadership potential. PSC assessed the readiness and willingness of these potential leaders. It found 55 potential leaders ready to accept senior leader positions. It met with deputy ministers to explore suitable development experiences to help these potential leaders further prepare for senior leader assignments. Of these 55 potential leaders, 15 were appointed during 2011-2012 to positions that were more senior or provided greater experience across government.



3.3 Reporting on Leadership Capacity

We recommended that the Public Service Commission monitor and report regularly to deputy ministers on the readiness of government ministries to meet their future leadership needs. (2009 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 1, 2009)

Status – Implemented.

PSC collects information about senior leader vacancies (e.g., retirements and separations for other reasons) in its MIDAS information system. This system enables it to compare trends in separations (i.e., vacancies) to trends in potential leaders available. This helps PSC to identify and manage leadership risks and will help ministries to prepare for future leadership needs.

PSC met three times during 2011 and 2012 with deputy ministers and the Deputy Minister to the Premier to discuss trends in vacancies and the number of potential leaders who were ready for assignment to senior leader positions.

PSC expects to report annually to senior leaders on leadership readiness and capacity to fill anticipated senior leader vacancies. It also updates senior leaders (e.g., May 2012) on leadership training opportunities available to government employees and the number of participants. In 2012-2013, PSC plans to assess the results of its mentorship program and report its progress to senior leaders.