



# INTERNAL AUDIT TEAM

Toronto and Area Region

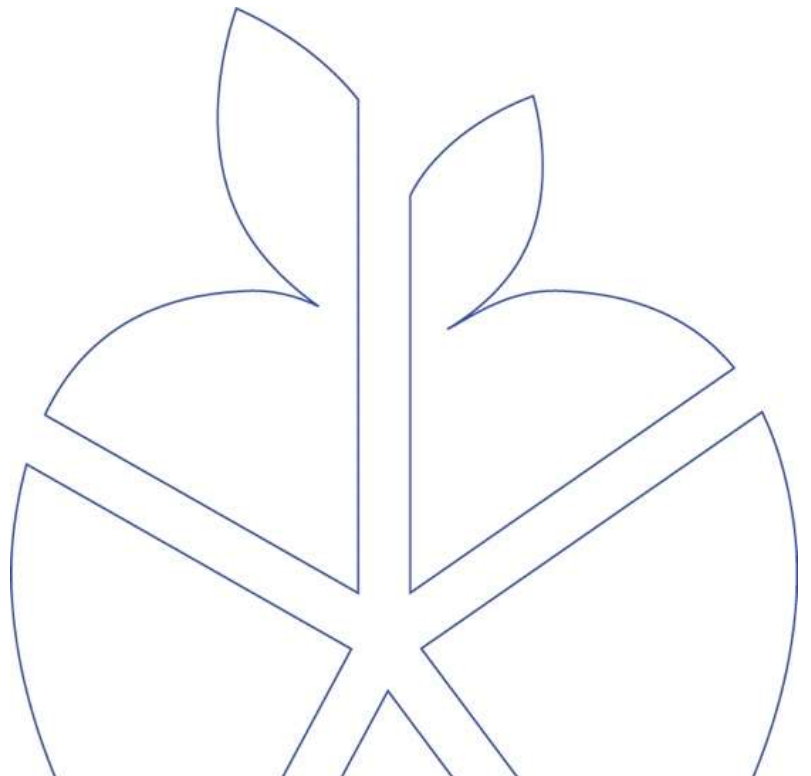
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## Regional Internal Audit Coverage: 2019-20 to 2021-22

Toronto District School Board

**Prepared by:**

Paula Hatt, CPA, CA, CIA, Senior Manager, Regional Internal Audit



## Purpose

The Regional Internal Audit Team (RIAT) provides independent and objective assurance and advisory services across six school boards<sup>1</sup> in the Greater Toronto Area. As requested by the Toronto District School Board's (TDSB) Audit Committee, RIAT is sharing engagement coverage throughout the region for the 2019-20 to 2021-22 period (the current three-year plan), as well as key issues, recommendations and leading practices identified.

## Audit Coverage

The following engagements are included in the current, three-year audit plan (2019-20 to 2021-22). These engagements are planned, in-progress or completed.

Planned Coverage by Board (2019-20 to 2021-22)						
Engagement	TDSB	Board A	Board B	Board C	Board D	Board E
Accounts Payable & Expense Data Analytics Review						
Attendance Management						
Benchmarking: Staff Utilization & Programming						
Cyber Security						
Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity						
IT Asset Management						
IT Assets - Review of Device Distribution to Students During COVID-19						
Managing Labour Relations						
Privacy						
Records Management						
Recruiting, Hiring and Retention						
School Audits - Enrolment and School Finance						
School Finance Audit						
School Renewal						
SIS Post-Implementation Review						
Special Education (Fully Self-Contained Classes)						
Strategic Workforce Planning - Phase 1						
Strategic Workforce Planning - Phase 2						
Usage of Schools (Permits & Leasing)						
Workflow Assessment - Payroll						

Engagement planned, not started

Engagement completed or in progress (fieldwork or reporting)



<sup>1</sup> The Toronto District School Board, Toronto Catholic District School Board, Peel District School Board, Dufferin-Peel District School Board, York Region District School Board and York Catholic District School Board.



Note that while the RIAT mandate is to complete two engagements per board, per year, not all boards have six engagements listed. This is due to the following factors:

- Engagement cancellation
- Postponement of an engagement to a future year's plan
- RIAT is currently revisiting the plan to ensure that it remains relevant and value-added

In addition, there have been delays to the start and/or completion of some audits due to the pandemic, as well as significant turnover in Senior Leadership. The RIAT is working to clear this backlog.

## Summary of Key Issues and Leading Practices

Based on the audit work undertaken to date, the following is a high-level summary of common issues, risks and recommendations identified across the region:

- In a number of engagements, inefficient practices have been noted (duplication of effort, excessive time spent on manual procedures, etc.). Time spent on these practices can intensify resource constraints and divert focus from higher-value tasks. In these cases, a workflow assessment has been recommended as a future consulting engagement. A workflow assessment is an outsourced engagement that involves reviewing specific processes with the goal of optimizing these processes (recommendations on where efficiencies can be realized, consideration of automating processes where benefits exceed costs). Areas previously reviewed by the RIAT include payroll and human resources.
- Outcomes of programming, professional development initiatives, etc., are not always measured. Although this is not always possible or easily achievable, it is recommended to do so, where feasible.
- Boards generally do not identify and actively manage critical positions (defined as a position where if the key tasks are not performed, there would be a significant impact to the Board's ability to conduct business). As a result, the risk of a sudden vacancy in such positions (due to resignation, serious illness, etc.) is high and not always specifically mitigated (through strategies such as succession planning, cross-training and employee engagement). An engagement to identify critical positions is currently being planned at TDSB.
- A number of common issues were identified relating to policies and procedures, which can lead to increased compliance and operational risk:
  - These are outdated or do not accurately reflect the processes and controls in place (should be reviewed on a set schedule).
  - Information across policies, procedures, guidelines, etc., is not consistent.
  - Inadequately/inconsistently communicated to schools or Board staff.
  - Guidance/training provided to schools or departments is insufficient, which can result in inconsistent/decentralized approaches.

A robust framework for key policy areas can help to mitigate risk.



In addition, the RIAT has identified the following leading practices, approaches and tools to mitigate risk:

- Employees sign off on their understanding and agreement to abide by key policies.
- Boards can benefit from using data analytics to review and continuously monitor a specific process (i.e. using procedures or tools to analyze the full population of a school's or the Board's data to look for adherence to controls, unusual patterns, red flags, etc.). This can be particularly useful where controls are decentralized, such as with school generated funds.
- In some cases, the RIAT has provided benchmarking data within an audit. This data can be used as supplementary information, to strengthen a finding or to help the Board gain support for an action plan to address a finding.