

Public Service Staff Relations Board

**1999-2000
Estimates**

A Report on Plans and Priorities

Approved

Minister

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I: MESSAGES

- A. Chairperson's Message..... 1
- B. Management Representation Statement3

SECTION II: BOARD OVERVIEW

- A. Mandate, Roles and Responsibilities4
- B. Objective4
- C. Operating Environment4
- D. Financial Spending Plan6

SECTION III: PLANS, PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

- A. Summary of Key Plans, Priorities, Strategies and Expected Results7
- B. Details by Program and Business Line7
 - Objective.....7
- C. Consolidated Reporting.....9

SECTION IV: SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

- Table 1: Spending Authorities (Board Summary
Part II of the Estimates)..... 11
- Table 2: Organization Structure 12
- Table 2.1: Planned Full Time Equivalents (FTE's) by Program and
Business Line..... 12
- Table 3: Summary of Standard Objects by Expenditure..... 13
- Table 4: Program Resources by Program and Business Line
for the Estimates Year 14
- Table 5: Net Cost of Program for the Estimates Year 14

Table 6:	Listing of Statutes and Regulations Administered by the Public Service Staff Relations Board	15
Table 7:	References Listing of Statutory and Departmental Reports	15
	Contacts for Further Information	16
Index:	17

SECTION I: CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

As long as the government engages employees to furnish services to the public, it is appropriate and necessary to provide for the administration of its labour relations with those employees. In order for such a system to be effective it must, in fact, be impartial and neutral, and be perceived as such.

As an independent quasi-judicial statutory tribunal responsible for the administration of the systems of collective bargaining and grievance adjudication in the Public Service the Board contributes an essential support function to all programs of the federal government which are provided in whole or in part by federal public servants.

A staff relations regime should not be founded on or provide a framework for a test of wills and economic strength between labour and management. The Board's objective, therefore, is to administer a system which provides fairness to government employees and to the Canadian public. It is within this context that the Board strives to provide a flexible and multi-faceted array of tools to assist the parties in the conduct of their labour relations.

The activity of the Board affects the public interest by promoting and supporting a harmonious and regulated relationship between public servants and their employers. The cost of the activity is mitigated by the overall benefit of enabling the government to provide its services with a minimum of disruption.

As a federal operation that deals only with employees of the federal government the Board's functions cannot be re-aligned with other levels of government or with partnerships in the private sector.

The expeditious handling of proceedings referred to it in accordance with the rules of natural justice and fairness continues to be the chief priority of the Board. The essential functions performed by the Board are non-discretionary in nature and must be provided at the request of the parties. The Board, nevertheless, recognizes that it is imperative that these functions be provided in the most cost effective and timely manner.

In response to the client satisfaction survey undertaken in 1998 to guide efforts in improving service delivery, the Board has established a grievance mediation pilot project (GMPP) and improved electronic access to Board jurisprudence.

The GMPP will see Board members acting as mediators at the pre-hearing stage of references to adjudication for a period of approximately one year, likely commencing in September 1999. Our clients have enthusiastically welcomed this project. Already, two joint training sessions involving Employer and Bargaining Agent representatives as well as members of the Board and some of its staff have taken place.

Last fall, in the Board's Performance Report for the period ending 31 March, 1998, I mentioned the fact that the provisions of the Public Service Staff Relations Act (PSSRA) dealing with the designation process are ambiguous, cumbersome and incomplete. I further indicated the necessity to amend the designation process at the earliest possible opportunity. Serious concerns about the designation process have again been raised by our clients and Board staff in anticipation of the next round of collective bargaining. The system instituted in 1993, does not take into account the complex dynamics of staffing in the federal Public Service. It is therefore urgent that a complete review of the designation procedures contained in the PSSRA be undertaken in consultation with all concerned.

Collective bargaining will continue in 1999-2000. It is hoped that the parties will use their recent successes at the various bargaining tables to bargain collectively with accrued civility and openness.

Yvon Tarte
Chairperson

MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION

Report on Plans and Priorities 1999-2000

I submit, for tabling in Parliament, the 1999-2000 Report on Plans and Priorities (RPP) for the Public Service Staff Relations Board.

To the best of my knowledge the information :

- Accurately portrays the Board's mandate, plans, priorities, strategies and expected key results of the organization.
- Is consistent with the disclosure principles contained in the *Guidelines for Preparing a Report on Plans and Priorities*.
- Is comprehensive and accurate.
- Is based on sound underlying departmental information and management systems.
- I am satisfied as to the quality assurance processes and procedures used for the RPP's production.

The Planning and Reporting Accountability Structure on which this document is based has been approved by Treasury Board Ministers and is the basis for accountability for the results achieved with the resources and authorities provided.

Name: _____

Yvon Tarte,
Chairperson

Date: February 1999

SECTION II: BOARD OVERVIEW

A. Mandate, Roles, and Responsibilities

The mandate of the Public Service Staff Relations Board is to effectively and efficiently administer the systems of collective bargaining and grievance adjudication established under the *Public Service Staff Relations Act* and the *Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act*, as well as certain provisions of Part II of the *Canada Labour Code* concerning occupational safety and health applicable to employees in the Public Service. The Board also administers the *Yukon Public Service Staff Relations Act* and Part 10 of the *Yukon Education Act*.

The mission of the Board is to promote and support harmonious employer employee relations in the federal Public and Parliamentary Service. In support of this mission the Board assists the parties, where possible, to resolve their own differences; ensures that all processes are impartial and open; consults regularly with the parties to facilitate and improve the Board's processes; informs clients and the public on the Board's role, services and jurisprudence; promotes a work environment that fosters the development of a knowledgeable and co-operative staff and ensures efficient and effective use of its limited resources.

In order to do so, the Board provides a mediation and conciliation service to assist the parties in the resolution of their differences. This service enables many matters to be settled without resort to formal proceedings before the Board.

In addition, the Board provides physical premises and administrative support services to the National Joint Council which is an independent consultative body of representatives of employers and employees created for the determination of service-wide issues that do not lend themselves to unit by unit bargaining. However, the Board has no direct involvement in the operations of the National Joint Council.

B. Objective

The Board's objective is to administer the legislative framework within which labour relations are conducted in the federal Public Service in a fair, expeditious and efficient manner.

C. Operating Environment

Ultimately the everyday concerns of public servants, normally expressed through their bargaining agents and the concerns of the Public Service employers in managing the Public Service and implementing the programs approved by the government of the day become the factors determining the workload of the Board, both in quantity and type of dispute requiring attention. The continuing re-organization of government operations and reduction in the number of

employees, while at a significantly lower rate than in previous years, continues to create an atmosphere of uncertainty and stress in the work force. The introduction of the Universal Classification Standard (UCS) in fiscal year 1999-2000 has the potential of bringing about disagreement over work descriptions, pay rates and classification thereby increasing the workload of the Board. It is expected that the introduction of UCS will result in a vastly increased number of grievances submitted to the Board for adjudication. Some estimates place the number in the tens of thousands.

The implementation of the UCS will also lead to the re-organization of bargaining units in the Public Service. This will certainly impact on the size and membership of some, and possibly several, bargaining agents. The amendment of existing bargaining certificates and perhaps the granting of new ones will greatly increase the Board's work in this area. It is foreseen that the volume of applications for amended or new bargaining certificates will be greater than at any time since the 1960's when collective bargaining was first introduced for federal public servants.

Collective bargaining resumed in 1997-1998 after a six year freeze. By the end of calendar year 1998 collective agreements had been negotiated for over 85% of unionized employees in the Public Service. Only 5 negotiations in the central administration as well as negotiations between several separate employers and their unionized employees remained unsettled. However, all these negotiated settlements are due to expire during calendar year 1999. Thus the Board's role in responding to requests for the appointment of conciliators and establishment of conciliation boards will resume in 1999 and continue into 2000.

When a new classification standard is introduced the new pay rates attendant on the implementation of changed classifications for employees' position must be negotiated between the employer and the bargaining agents. This has the potential to make negotiations during the upcoming round of bargaining more difficult, resulting in increased requests for the Board's assistance and intervention.

While the process for the designation of positions the duties of which are necessary in the interest of the safety or security of the public has been largely completed, requests for amendments to the existing lists of designated positions are anticipated. This will require appointment of designation review panels to aid the parties in resolving disputes regarding designated positions. It will also result in increased work for Board personnel in the administration of the designation process and for the Board's Mediation Services in assisting the parties to resolve their differences prior to a designation review panel being established.

D. Financial Spending Plan

(thousands of dollars)	Forecast Spending 1998-1999*	Planned Spending 1999-2000	Planned Spending 2000-2001	Planned Spending 2001-2002
Public Service Staff Relations	6,045	5,661	5,758	5,658
Plus				
Cost of Services provided by other Departments	1,263	1,226	1,225	1,225
Less				
Revenue credited to the Vote and to the Consolidated Revenue Fund	-	-	-	-
Net Cost of the Board	7,308	6,887	6,983	6,883

*Forecast includes funding received via Supplementary Estimates "B" and funding sought in Supplementary Estimates "C".

A. Summary of Key Plans, Priorities, Strategies and Expected Results

CHART OF KEY RESULTS COMMITMENTS

The Public Service Staff Relations Board	
Provides Canadians with:	To be demonstrated by:
An environment that fosters harmonious labour relations in the federal public service workplace, thereby minimizing the possibility of labour unrest which could result in the disruption in the implementation of government programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* timeliness, fairness and openness of Board processes* client satisfaction* guidance to the parties* quality of Board decisions

B.

The following are the strategies the Board will employ over the planning period in support of its key results commitment:

Maintaining a framework for the timely administration of the systems of collective bargaining and grievance adjudication in the Public Service.

The expeditious handling of proceedings referred to the Board in accordance with the rules of natural justice and fairness is fundamental to maintaining the integrity and credibility of the Board. The Board has set standards for the handling of proceedings referred to it from the initial application to final disposition. The Board expects to continue to achieve a high compliance rate with performance standards related to the handling and disposition of proceedings referred to it.

The implementation of a grievance mediation pilot project.

A recent review of the Board's Mediation Services and a 1998 Client Satisfaction Survey have identified a strong interest on the part of Board clients to include mediation as a function of the adjudication process.

As a result the Board has decided to embark on a grievance mediation pilot project using full-time Board members as mediators. As an initial part of the pilot project the Board has already provided its Board members, some of its staff and clients with training sessions in the art of dispute resolution.

Board members will receive further training through a mentorship system using the Board's in house mediators as resources.

The pilot project which is expected to run until the fall of the year 2000 has received funding from the Department of Justice Alternate Dispute Resolution Fund.

From the outset the program will be monitored and evaluated by external consultants. The data collected will assist in making any required modifications during the course of the project and ultimately in determining if mediation should remain as a permanent element in the adjudication process.

The grievance mediation pilot project will allow the Board and its clients to assess the benefit of including grievance mediation as a formal step in the adjudication process.

Training for Board members

The Board provides training for newly appointed Board members through the Canadian Centre for Management Development. Ongoing in-house training using internal and external resources is provided to Board members during regularly scheduled sessions to discuss evidentiary and procedural issues as well as new trends in administrative and labour law. Members also regularly attend conferences sponsored by the Canadian Council of Administrative Tribunals to exchange views and discuss common issues with members of other federal and provincial labour boards and agencies.

Training for Board members contributes to Board decisions of a high quality.

Improved Access to Board decisions

The client satisfaction survey identified electronic access to Board decisions as an issue. The Board currently provides its decisions to its major clients on diskette as well as in hard copy. During fiscal year 1999-2000 the Board will explore the most cost effective means of improving electronic dissemination of Board jurisprudence.

C. Consolidated Reporting

Year 2000 Initiatives

In 1997 the Public Service Staff Relations Board (PSSRB) developed an action plan to address the Year 2000 (Y2K) readiness issue.

Under that plan, an inventory was made of all software and hardware components that would require assessment and certification for Y2K compliance. The Staff Relations System (SRS), a case management application, which was developed specifically for the PSSRB is Y2K compliant. All other applications considered mission critical to the PSSRB have been certified compliant by their originators. Most major network components which could cause a Y2K problem have been tested and/or replaced. The PSSRB is on track with respect to certification and testing of the remaining components of its software and hardware inventory. Non-IT items (access control system, telecommunication system, etc.) that are date sensitive have been identified and are either certified compliant or will be prior to the millennium.

During the planning year the Board will further test its mission critical systems on an isolated network set to year 2000 and beyond.

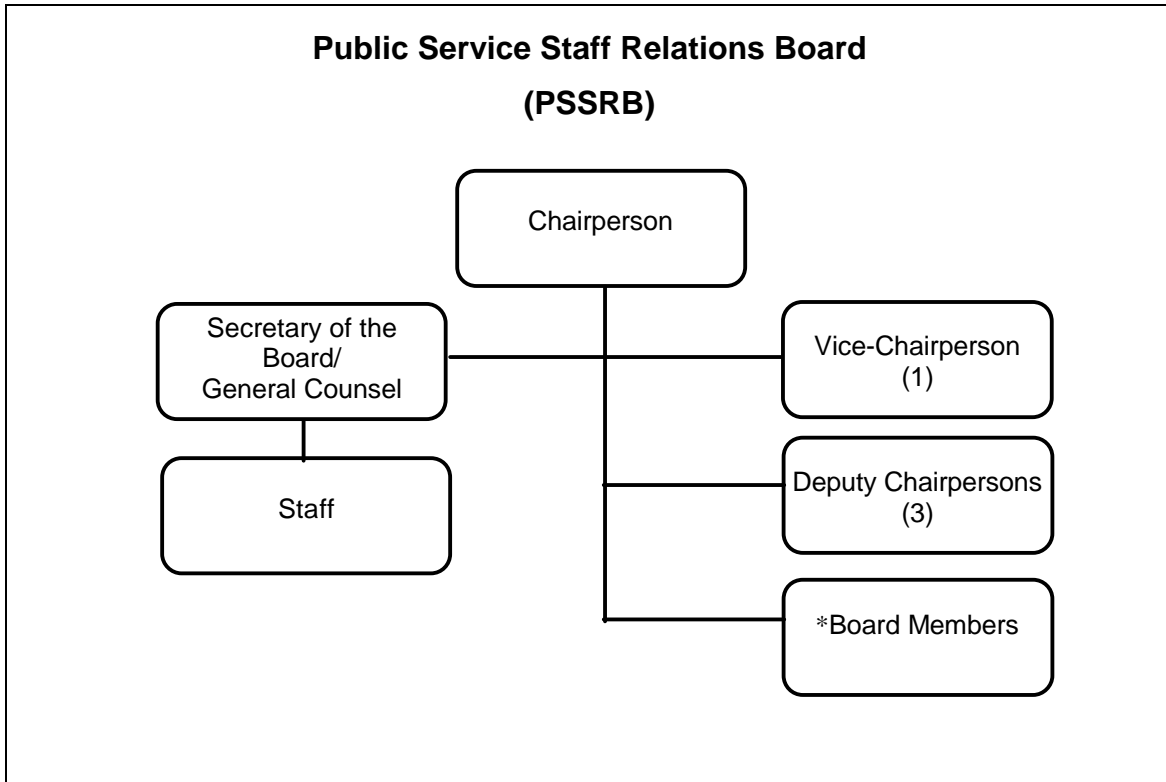
While the PSSRB is not responsible for any government wide mission critical systems, it is dependent on three government shared systems (Common Departmental Financial System (CDFS), Human Resource Information System (HRIS) and On-line Pay. The Board will be testing these shared systems under the co-ordination of Public Works Government Services Canada, the Department responsible for their Y2K compliance.

SECTION IV: SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**Table 1: Spending Authorities (Board Summary Part II of the Estimates)**

Vote (thousands of dollars)	1999-2000 Main Estimates	1998-1999 Main Estimates
Public Service Staff Relations Board		
45 Program expenditures	4,993	4,800
(S) Contributions to employee benefit plans	668	682
Total - Public Service Staff Relations Board	5,661	5,482

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

Table 2: Organization Structure



* The number of Board members is determined by the Governor-in-Council. Members may be appointed on a full-time or part-time basis.

Table 2.1: Planned Full-Time Equivalent (FTE's) by Program and Business Line

	Forecast 1998-1999	Planned 1999-2000	Planned 2000-2001	Planned 2001-2002
Public Service Staff Relations	50	55	55	55
Board Total	50	55	55	55

ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Table 3: Summary of Standard Objects by Expenditure

(thousands of dollars)	Forecast* 1998-1999	Planned 1999-2000	Planned 1999-2000	Planned 2001-2002
Personnel				
Salaries and wages	3,354	3,338	3,336	3,336
Contributions to employee benefit plans	704	668	667	667
	4,058	4,006	4,003	4,003
Goods and Services				
Transportation and communications	420	403	403	403
Information	59	58	58	58
Professional and special services	1,208	845	945	845
Rentals	21	31	31	31
Purchased repairs and maintenance	31	47	47	47
Utilities, materials and supplies	157	179	179	179
Other subsidies and payments	-	-	-	-
Minor Capital	91	92	92	92
Total Operating Expenditures	6,045	5,661	5,758	5,658

*Forecast includes funding received via Supplementary Estimates "B" and funding sought in Supplementary Estimates "C".

Table 4: Program Resources by Program and Business Line for the Estimates Year

(thousands of dollars)	Budgetary Operating	Non budgetary	Total
Public Service Staff Relations Board	5,661	-	5,661
Total	5,661	-	5,661

Table 5: Net Cost of Program for the Estimates Year

(thousands of dollars)	Public Service Staff Relations
Gross Planned Spending	5,661
Plus	
Services Received Without Charge	-
Accommodation provided by Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC)	1,042
Contributions covering employees' share of insurance premiums and costs paid by TBS	184
	1,226
Total Cost of Program	6,887
Less	
Revenue Credited to the Vote and to the Consolidated Revenue Fund	-
Net Cost of Program	6,887

OTHER INFORMATION

Table 6: Listing of Statutes and Regulations Administered by the Public Service Staff Relations Board

- *Public Service Staff Relations Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. P-35
- P.S.S.R.B. Regulations and Rules of Procedure, 1993
- *Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act*, R.S.C. 1985 (2d Supp.), c. 33
- P.E.S.R.A. Regulations and Rules of Procedure
- Certain provisions of Part II of the *Canada Labour Code*, R.S.C. 1985, c. L-2
- *Yukon Education Act* - Part 10 - Teachers Staff Relations, S.Y. 1989-1990, c. 25
- Yukon Teachers Staff Relations Board Regulations and Rules of Procedure
- *Yukon Public Service Staff Relations Act*, R.S.Y. 1986, c. 142
- Regulations and Rules of Procedure of the Yukon Public Service Staff Relations Board

**Table 7: References
Listing of Statutory and Departmental Reports**

- Public Service Staff Relations Board Annual Report
- Public Service Staff Relations Board Performance Report
- *Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act* Annual Report
- Yukon Public Service Staff Relations Board Annual Report
- Yukon Teachers' Staff Relations Board Annual Report
- *Access to Information Act* Annual Report
- *Privacy Act* Annual Report
- Annual Management Report on Official Languages
- PSSRB Decisions (a summary of decisions of the Public Service Staff Relations Board issued twice yearly)
- Operational Review of Legal and Mediation Services
- Public Service Staff Relations Board - Client Satisfaction Survey

Contacts for Further Information

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Index

B

Bargaining Agents 5

Bargaining Units 5

C

Canada Labour Code Part II 4, 15

Client survey 1, 8, 15

Collective bargaining 1, 2, 5

Conciliation 4

D

Decisions 7, 9

Designations - safety or security 1, 5

E

Exclusions - managerial or confidential 7

G

Grievance adjudication 1, 4, 8

Grievance Mediation Pilot Project (GMPP) 1, 8

I

Internet 16

M

Mediation 4, 5, 8

N

National Joint Council 4

P

Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act 4, 15

Public Service Staff Relations Act 2, 4, 15

R

Reports 15

T

Training 9

U

Universal Classification Standard (UCS) 5

W

Web Site 6

Y

Year 2000 (Y2K) 9

Yukon Education Act - Part 10 - Teachers Staff Relations 4, 15

Yukon Public Service Staff Relations Act 4, 15