

TRUSTEE ORIENTATION GUIDE

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

ENGAGEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS,
FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE PHYSICAL
& SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

EFFECTIVE POLICY
AND PROCEDURES

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The Education System

Structure of the System

The Education Act, 1995 and its accompanying regulations provides a framework for K-12 education in Saskatchewan. It describes processes that occur within the education system such as organization and management of schools, hiring and firing of teachers, school finance, and collective bargaining.

There are 28 school divisions in the province. School divisions fall into three categories: public, separate and Francophone.

Unless a taxpayer has designated otherwise, his or her property taxes are directed to the public board of education in the area.

Members of the minority faith who have established a separate school division pay their taxes to the separate system.

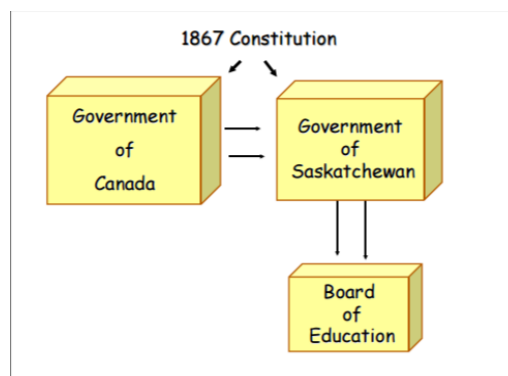
The separate school divisions cover the same geographic areas as some of the public-school divisions. For example, most Saskatchewan cities have both a public and a separate school division.

The Conseil des écoles fransaskoises (CEF) covers many Francophone schools throughout Saskatchewan.

School divisions are governed by an elected board of education (school board).

The elected members of a board of education are officially known as “members of the board of education,” but in everyday language, they are often called school trustees.

Section 140 of *The Education Act, 1995* sets out the terms and duties of school community councils which are primarily advisory. However, boards of education may delegate a wide range of responsibilities to school community councils.



Education Finance

School divisions are responsible for the operation of schools in their area and for the quality of the education program. Most of the money to operate schools comes from the provincial government.

Provincial grants to boards of education are provided through education funding.

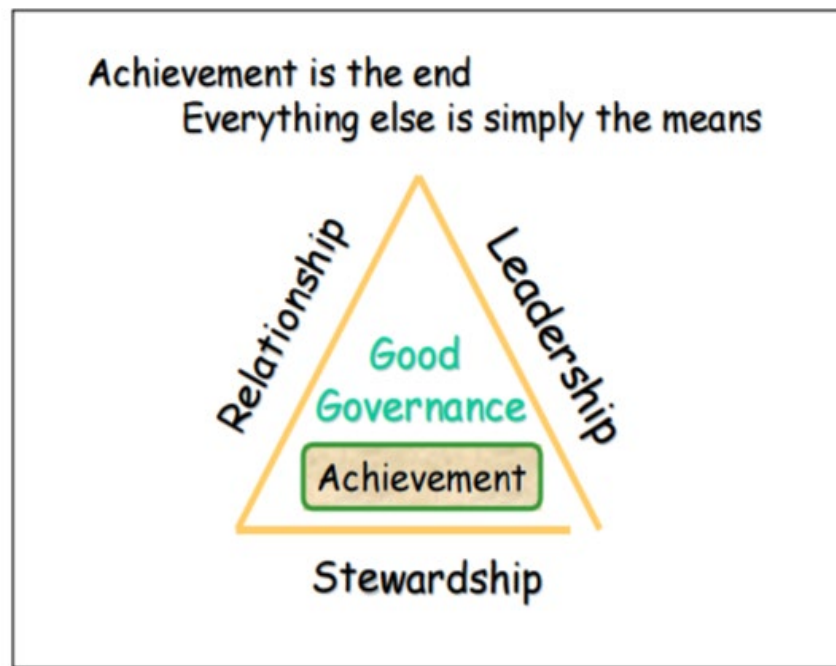
The financial operations of the school division are carried out in a fiscal year that begins on September 1 and ends on August 31. The provincial budget release date is mid-March, annually.

Indicators of Effective Board Practice

The Goals of Education for Saskatchewan provide a vision for the whole province. Most boards of education also develop a statement of vision, mission, and core values. These policy statements are part of defining what success looks like for the school division.

Good governance requires boards of education to:

- Provide leadership in developing plans that think creatively about the future of education in the school system.
- Demonstrate responsible stewardship through effective application of policy governance; and,
- Establish productive and successful relationships for the school system.



Overview of Good Spirit School Division

Foundational Statements

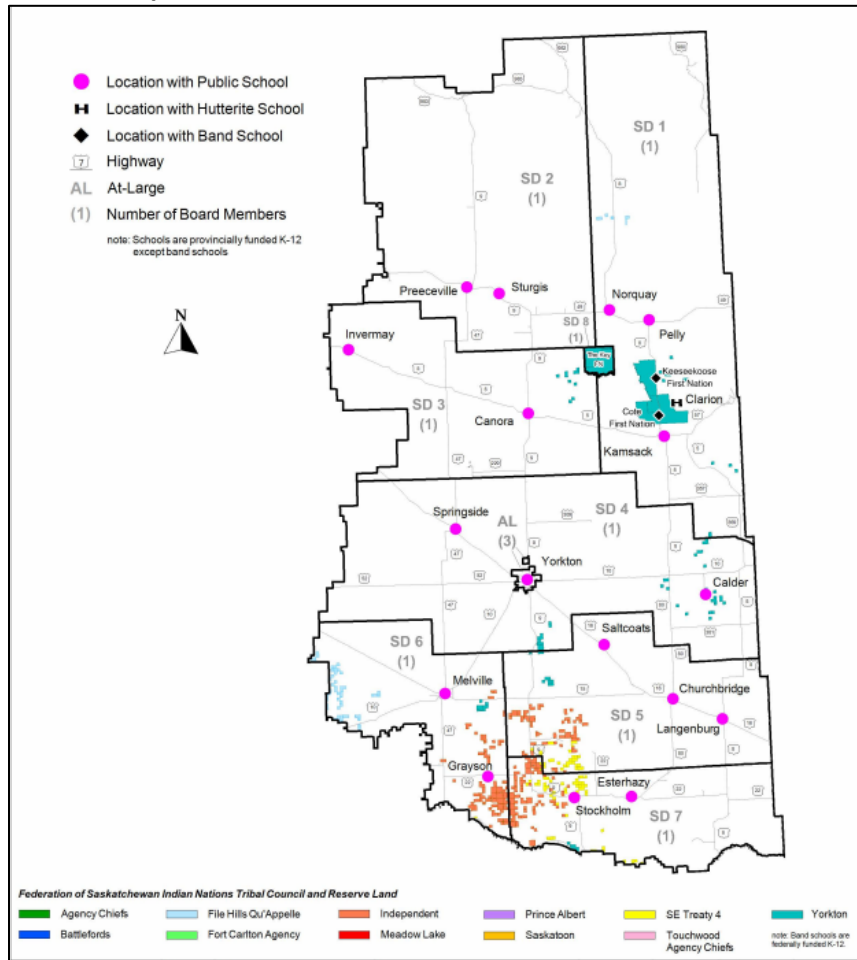
Our Motto ... Students Come First

Our Mission ... Building Strong Foundations to Create Bright Futures

Our Vision ... Learning Without Limits...Achievement for All

Our Values ... Belonging, Respect, Responsibility, Learning, Nurturing, and Perseverance

Division Map



Statistics

- Good Spirit School Division operates 28 schools in 15 communities
- The 28 schools include the Digital Learning School as well as three Hutterian colony schools:
 - Bear Stream School is in the Clarion Colony; Clarion is displayed on the map
 - Silver Stream School, located in the Silver Stream Colony, is located approximately 70 km south east of Yorkton
 - Hofer Colony School, is located 5 km west and 1 km south of Norquay
- As of September 30, 2020, the number of students enrolled within GSSD is 6,002
- There are 103 bus routes in GSSD: 100 rural routes, 6 routes within the cities of Melville and Yorkton
 - The total kilometers driven per day are 19,999
 - 2,843 students are transported daily; 194 of these students belong to Christ The Teacher Catholic Schools
- The division employs
 - 456 professional staff which includes teachers and professional service providers with teaching credentials: full time equivalency of 379.95
 - 356 support staff
 - 96 bus drivers

Enrolment Breakdown by School as of September 30, 2020

School Name	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Totals
Bear Stream School	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	7
Canora Composite School	0	0	0	0	0	36	32	38	30	24	26	29	27	242
Canora Junior Elementary	20	26	23	33	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	132
Churchbridge Public School	16	13	26	24	14	19	19	17	15	9	13	9	14	208
Columbia Elementary	27	24	28	36	35	42	30	33	43	0	0	0	0	298
Davison School	21	21	18	15	16	29	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	161
Dr. Brass Elementary	13	20	16	14	15	28	16	22	16	0	0	0	0	160
Esterhazy Central High School	0	0	0	0	0	0	45	47	40	45	33	43	53	306
GSSD Digital Learning School	28	26	29	29	28	34	41	29	40	27	27	20	24	382
Grayson School	1	4	4	7	8	3	2	5	6	5	0	0	0	45
Hofer School	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Home-based Students	5	23	14	17	16	12	23	14	15	10	8	5	6	168
Invermay School	11	3	6	7	5	9	7	6	7	7	6	4	10	88
Kamsack Comprehensive Institute	0	0	0	0	0	24	31	39	30	34	34	25	28	245
Langenburg School	21	24	28	22	30	33	26	17	30	25	14	26	33	329
M.C. Knoll School	29	22	28	37	35	41	26	43	32	0	0	0	0	293
Macdonald School	10	11	11	12	8	12	19	9	10	8	0	0	0	110
Melville Comprehensive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	43	39	75	73	85	347
Miller School	10	20	16	14	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	82
Norquay School	12	17	19	16	12	17	15	15	14	10	12	11	14	184
P.J. Gillen School	36	42	33	34	46	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	226
Preeceville School	13	13	20	17	16	28	17	20	18	25	11	20	15	233
Saltcoats School	12	13	13	21	13	14	14	13	21	0	0	0	0	134
Silver Stream School	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	7
Springside School	14	10	4	13	13	16	13	10	6	0	0	0	0	99
Sturgis School	14	9	7	15	11	16	10	14	17	12	11	22	8	166
Victoria School	27	20	22	37	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	136
Yorkdale Central School	47	43	42	47	35	54	50	53	49	0	0	0	0	420
Yorkton Regional High School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	191	192	210	196	789
	388	408	409	468	440	503	479	477	484	471	463	498	514	6,002

Educational Organizations

League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents (LEADS)

The League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents (LEADS) is a professional association of educational administrators who work at the school division level.

Membership

All individuals who are employed by a board of education in a supervisory or administrative capacity and have an out-of-scope designation are required to be members of LEADS. Members include directors, assistant directors, superintendents, assistant superintendents, and other similar positions.

LEADS specify that its members must have certain training and experience and must meet other criteria. LEADS also:

- Provides professional development for its members such as a compulsory summer short course.
- Offers networking opportunities to its members and represents its members' interests in various forums.
- Administers the disciplinary powers that are an integral part of the legislation that created LEADS.

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education is the provincial department responsible for K-12 education. The Ministry is responsible for ensuring the quality of education in Saskatchewan. Key activities include:

- Developing curricula for all grade levels.
- Providing in-service to support curricula.
- Approving and recommending textbooks and resource material for use in the schools.
- Supervising independent schools and home-based education.
- Providing for teacher education.
- Administering legislation relating to education.
- Providing provincial grants to school divisions; and,
- Maintaining student records.

In addition to these responsibilities which are defined in the *The Education Act, 1995*, the Ministry of Education also provides leadership in several other areas. For example, it regularly conducts province-wide student and program evaluations.

The Ministry of Education is responsible to the Minister of Education. A deputy minister, assistant deputy minister and several executive directors administer the department. The Ministry head office is in Regina.

Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials (SASBO)

Secretary-treasurers and certain administrators employed by school divisions are required to be members of SASBO. SASBO provides professional development and networking opportunities for its members.

Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Regulatory Board (SPTRB)

SPTRB is an independent organization charged with the responsibility of regulating the teaching profession in Saskatchewan.

SPTRB serves the public interest by ensuring registered teachers meet professional standards for certification, conduct and competence.

Within The Registered Teachers Act on July 1, 2015 the government of Saskatchewan granted the teachers of Saskatchewan the privilege of becoming a self-regulating profession.

Self-regulating professions are granted the authority to license and the ability to discipline licensees.

The licensing power is the authority to decide who shall be permitted to earn their living by the pursuit of a particular calling. This means that a self-regulating profession acts as gatekeeper to its profession in the assessment of the qualifications of prospective members. Once an individual becomes a member of a profession, the self-regulating profession has the power to regulate the conduct of the licensee by establishing rules of practice and standards of conduct enforceable through a discipline process.

Professions granted self-regulating status are charged with the responsibility not only to see that persons licensed are qualified, but that all qualified applicants are licensed. The public has a genuine and very real interest in knowing that the members of self-regulating professions are properly trained and have good ethical standards. That being so, it is the responsible and experienced members of a profession who are in the best position to set the standards and qualifications to be met by those wishing to practice the profession.

Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA)

Overview

The SSBA is a non-profit organization dedicated to excellence in public education by providing leadership and services to Saskatchewan school boards. The Association represents all school boards in Saskatchewan.

School boards are elected to govern K-12 education in their school divisions and so are essential members of local government. They ensure that the wishes of the community are reflected in the community's schools and make decisions that shape the education of Saskatchewan's children. The Saskatchewan School Boards Association supports boards in their very important role.

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association has served boards of education since 1915. It was founded in that year under its previous name – the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association. The Saskatchewan School Trustees Association was incorporated by a special act of the legislature in 1952.

The current governance structure gives school boards multiple pathways for representation. The Provincial Executive of the Association consists of a President, Vice-President and 7 representatives. Seven constituencies are represented to include the following groups: The Catholic Section, Public Section, Conseil Scolaire Fransaskois, Aboriginal, and south, central, and northern boards.

Provincial Executive members are the Board of the Association and act as advocates for education, addressing local and provincial issues, and also represent the Association on various inter-organizational committees involved in education.

Advocacy, board member development and member services are the major activities of the Association.

Time is spent working with the government and opposition members of the legislative assembly, senior officials, other local governments, partners in education, agencies and bodies who can or do have an impact on school boards and publicly-funded education in Saskatchewan. A larger portion of the Association's work is representative in nature and reflects the desire of boards of education to have the Association act as an advocate for boards of education in the service of children.

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF)

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF) is a professional organization that serves and represents teachers. Teachers must belong to the STF as a condition of employment.

The structure of the STF follows the general pattern of government in Saskatchewan. Teachers in constituencies (local associations) select representatives who form a teachers' parliament (Council), which is the major policy-making body of the federation. A cabinet (Executive) presides over the affairs of the organization and a full-time staff implements policy decisions.

The STF offers its members a wide range of comprehensive services including teacher welfare and professional development services.

The Saskatchewan Teacher's Federation is a member of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF). The CTF is a national organization comprised of provincial teachers' associations. It provides a national voice for teachers.

Trusteeship

Roles and Responsibilities

This section provides detailed listings of items that boards are responsible for. Ultimately, however, boards of education are responsible not for buildings, bargaining, budgets or buses, but for results.

Boards of education are responsible for realizing the Goals of Education, for ensuring that children in their community stay in school and achieve at high levels. They are responsible for ensuring that local schools reflect the community's values and expectations. The many duties and powers listed in *The Education Act, 1995* are means to these ends.

Many aspects of the education system are in the provincial sphere and beyond the direct control of boards of education. These include teacher salaries and benefits, teacher certification, some elements of the school program, and occupational health and safety regulations.

Boards of education do have a mandate for many aspects of education, however. These include the organizational culture of the school division, the quality of the teachers and principals they hire, some aspects of the instructional program, and issues that are bargained locally such as sabbatical and educational leave for teachers. By directing their energies into those elements they can control, boards can help ensure success for all students.

Boards of education govern by creating policies and setting goals and then holding directors of education, principals and other staff responsible for implementing policies and achieving goals. Boards of education don't become involved in the day-to day elements of school operations such as supervision of teachers or support staff, ordering equipment and supplies, or establishing timetables and schedules. All of the tasks are the job of paid staff.

Most importantly, school trustees are elected members of boards of education and play a very important role in their communities.

Trustees are Members of a Team

Individual board members are members of a team – the board of education. Only the team has authority. Individual board members cannot make decisions or take action on behalf of the school division. Only the board of education can act.

Getting Off to a Good Start

The board of education is responsible for overseeing the operation of the school division. Having this responsibility does not mean that board members have to know how to teach school, administer a building, or develop a curriculum.

It does mean that each board member must carefully read material on a variety of subjects prepared by the staff, draw preliminary conclusions from the reading, and be ready to ask clarifying questions during board meeting discussions before voting on each agenda item. It does mean that the board must be prepared to articulate the vision, mission and goals that will guide the work of the school division staff.

Be Prepared

Prepare for board meetings by reading all the materials before the meeting. In some cases, the material will contain information and educational terms unfamiliar to you. When this happens, keep a note pad on hand and jot down questions when they come up. Once you've read all the materials contact either the board chair or the director to discuss your questions. When topics come up for discussion at the board meeting, jot down additional questions that are not answered to your satisfaction and ask questions before voting. Listen to and get involved in the discussions and keep asking questions until you understand the issue.

Know Your Policy

Review board policies and the administrative procedures used in the division. Don't expect to read everything in one sitting but refer to these as questions or concerns arise. Take notes about particular areas needing clarification or which are of concern to you. Discuss these questions and concerns with the director to get his perspective. As board and division operations become more familiar, it may become apparent that some policies need to be changed or clarified. Find out when the board reviews policies and what the process is for revisions.

You and the Director of Education

Building a mutually supportive relationship between the board and director is essential for a successful and effective school system. If the working relationship between the board and the administration is not good, the entire division will suffer and the educational program will not be a priority. If there is a general lack of support of the director, the director deserves fair treatment, honest and open evaluations, and a chance to improve the situation. Board members who want to change administrators and hope that the perfect director will apply will probably be disappointed. The board, not the individual members, needs to give direction to the administration about what it wants done.

Personal Agendas

Everyone has "personal agendas." However, personal agendas that waste board time and interfere with the division's operation can be a problem. New board members need to be honest about their concerns, but it should not be a surprise if the rest of the board will not support these concerns at the very first meeting. In most cases, new members will find it wise to wait a few months before beginning any campaigns to change things. Board members who are patient, who thoroughly study the issues and

who support their arguments with convincing evidence may succeed in turning campaign issues into board issues sometime during their first term.

It's The law

Conduct legal board meetings. The board meeting is where the board accomplishes its work. Meetings must be public, approve motions and maintain appropriate minutes. Ask your director or Association staff for ideas about working within the law.

Listen

Handle complaints professionally. Be prepared to hear a lot of opinions and problems from the public. Being familiar with board policy and procedure will help to answer specific questions, but many complaints from the public will be difficult to handle. The best advice is to listen and thank the person for calling. Encourage the person to talk to the division employee who can help them with the problem. Resist the urge to promise that "something will be done."

You Can Make a Difference

People run for office because they want to make a difference and can become overwhelmed by all the restrictions placed on a school division. Take the time to learn about the division. Be patient, persistent and keep in mind that the public has entrusted you, together with your fellow board members, the responsibility to ensure that each child in your division is served.

Reference:

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association, 2009, *The Way Things Work: An Orientation for New Board Members*