

## Accountability Topic: Saskatchewan Distance Learning Centre

### Date of Board Meeting:

May 4, 2023

### Strategic Priority:

- High Quality Teaching and Learning
- Engagement of All Students, Families, and Communities
- Effective Policy and Procedures
- Healthy, Sustainable Physical & Social Environments

### Quality Indicator(s) (if applicable):

- QI 2.2 - The Director identifies trends and issues related to student achievement to inform the setting of yearly priorities and outcomes.
- QI 7.2 - Achieves the key results identified in the Strategic Plan

### Key Measures:

- Key measures associated with GSSD's participation in the Saskatchewan Distance Learning Centre (SDLC) as a satellite location can be summarized as follows:
  - Partnership with GSSD: SDLC's vision is to work closely with GSSD schools to provide online course opportunities for students from Kindergarten through Grade 12.
  - Expanded course options: SDLC will offer 120 course options to GSSD students, including a variety of electives, expanding the current online learning opportunities.
  - Location and facilities: SDLC has secured a lease at the Yorkton Regional High School, which will serve as one of the 10 satellite campuses across the province.
  - Staffing: SDLC staff will not be GSSD employees and will work under the Sun West School Division collective agreements. Current GSSD employees wishing to work in the SDLC will need to resign their position. Teaching staff must work on site; remote work is not permitted.
  - Technology and services: SDLC will secure its own internet and technology services within the Yorkton Regional High School.
  - Registration and approval: Students' registration in the SDLC must be approved by their attendance boundary school principal, based on factors such as the school's ability to offer the course, timetabling conflicts, graduation requirements, the course being an area of interest, and extenuating circumstances.
  - Tuition and funding: Part-time students will be charged \$500 tuition per course, while full-time students will not be charged tuition and will be calculated at the Home-Based Educators grant dollars. The tuition for part-time students will be held back from the following year's funding model.
  - Online facilitators: Applications can be made to the SDLC for online facilitators in major high schools, allowing for greater access to online learning opportunities for GSSD students.

**Targets:**

- GSSD currently offers online learning through the Distance Learning School. The full curriculum is available for students in Grade 7 -12.
- In October 2022, the Ministry of Education created the Saskatchewan Distance Learning Centre (SDLC). This crown corporation will replace all online learning opportunities in public school divisions. Yorkton has been named as one of 10 campuses across the province. The main hub will be Kenaston (Sun West School Division) while other campuses are in Estevan, La Ronge, Moose Jay, Neilburg, Nipawin, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and Swift Current.
- The vision for SDLC is to work in partnership with GSSD schools to provide online course opportunities for students in Kindergarten through Grade 12. 120 course options will be made available to every student in GSSD offering a variety of electives.

**Data:**

2022 -2023

- 757 credits offered
- 16 people for 6.6 FTE

2021- 2022

- 502 credits offered

2020 -2021

- 827 credits offered

**Key Strategies Employed:**

- SDLC has secured a lease at the Yorkton Regional High School.
- Staff working for SDLC are not GSSD employees. They will work under the Sun West School Division collective agreements. Current GSSD employees wishing to work in the SDLC will need to resign their position.
- Teaching staff will need to work on site. Work from home arrangements are not permitted.
- The SDLC will secure their own internet and technology services within the Yorkton Regional High School.
- Registration for the SDLC must be approved by the student's attendance boundary school principal. Approval will depend on:
  - a) The school's ability to offer the course
  - b) Timetabling conflicts
  - c) If the course is required for graduation
  - d) If the course is an area of interest
  - e) Extenuating circumstances
- Tuition for each course is \$500 for part time students. The total amount is to be held back from the following years funding model.
- There is no tuition for full time students in SDLC. Rather, these students are calculated at the Home Based Educators grant dollars.
- Applications can be made to the SDLC for online facilitators in major high schools.

**Future Strategies:**

- Updating of AP 240: Distance Learning.
- Changes to the registration process for online students
- Consideration to the courses being offered in small schools.

**Risk Assessment:**

Impact Categories	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
<b>Financial</b>	Financial impact of the event is less than \$50,000	Financial impact of the event exceeds \$50,000, but less than \$150,000	Financial impact of the event exceeds \$150,000, but is less than \$250,000	Financial impact of event exceeds \$250,000, but is less than \$500,000	Financial impact of the event exceeds \$500,000
<b>Comments &amp; Mitigation Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The annual budgeting process will consider the tuition fees and student grant dollars using the year prior.</li> <li>Financial implications: The tuition fee of \$500 per course for part-time students and the funding model adjustments may raise concerns about affordability and financial transparency. If not properly communicated, this could lead to a negative perception of GSSD's commitment to affordable education.</li> </ul>				
<b>Reputational</b>	One negative article in a publication	Negative articles in more than one publication	Short term negative media focus and concerns raised by stakeholders	Long term negative media focus and sustained concerns raised by stakeholders	Stakeholders lose faith in management or Trustees
<b>Comments &amp; Mitigation Strategy</b>	<p>As with any new initiative, GSSD's participation in the Saskatchewan Distance Learning Centre (SDLC) comes with potential reputational risks that should be considered and managed. Some of these risks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of education: As an untested system in Saskatchewan, there might be concerns about the quality of education provided by the SDLC compared to traditional schooling. If students struggle with the new format or experience reduced learning outcomes, it could negatively impact GSSD's reputation.</li> <li>Technical issues: As the SDLC relies heavily on technology and internet services, any technical difficulties or poor user experience could reflect poorly on GSSD, even if they are not directly responsible for these services.</li> <li>Student engagement and satisfaction: Online learning may not be suitable for all students, leading to disengagement or dissatisfaction. If a significant number of students face such challenges, it could affect GSSD's reputation as an education provider.</li> <li>Staffing and employee relations: As the SDLC operates under the Sun West School Division collective agreements, and GSSD employees must resign their positions to work for the SDLC, there may be concerns about staff morale, attrition, and the potential loss of experienced educators. This could affect the public's perception of GSSD's stability and attractiveness as an employer.</li> <li>Accessibility and inclusivity: There may be concerns about the accessibility of online learning for students with disabilities or those who lack the necessary technology or internet access. If GSSD and the SDLC do not address these issues effectively, it could lead to accusations of inequality or discrimination.</li> <li>Financial implications: The tuition fee of \$500 per course for part-time students and the funding model adjustments may raise concerns about affordability and financial transparency. If not properly communicated, this could lead to a negative perception of GSSD's commitment to affordable education.</li> <li>Privacy and data security: The online nature of the SDLC's platform raises concerns about student privacy and data security. Any data breaches or mishandling of student information could significantly damage GSSD's reputation.</li> </ul>				

	To mitigate these reputational risks, GSSD should focus on clear communication with stakeholders, effective implementation, and monitoring of the SDLC program, and a commitment to continuous improvement based on feedback from students, parents, educators, and the wider community.				
<b>Managerial Effort/Capacity</b>	Impact can be absorbed through normal activity	Some management effort is required to manage the impact	Can be managed under normal circumstances with moderate effort	With significant management effort, can be endured	Potential to lead to the collapse of the organization
<b>Comments &amp; Mitigation Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A set of guidelines will be developed for administrators to assist with the registration process. Families denied registration will be afforded the opportunity to appeal the decision to the Superintendent of School Operations.</li> <li>GSSD will apply for an Online School Support person in each of its high schools.</li> </ul>				
<b>Government Relations</b>	Routine ministerial inquires	In-depth ministerial inquires	Concerns raised by Ministry of Education	School division's ability mandate is questioned	Ministry of Education loses faith in the organization
<b>Comments &amp; Mitigation Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SDLC is new. The procedures and processes will evolve as the successes and challenges become better known.</li> </ul>				
<b>Legal</b>	Legal action threatened	Civil action commenced/small fine assessed	Criminal action threatened/moderate fine assessed	Criminal lawsuit commenced/significant fine assessed	Jail term of any length for a Trustee/Director; multiple significant fines assessed
<b>Comments &amp; Mitigation Strategy</b>	N/A				
<b>Student Outcomes</b>	Immaterial impact on student achievement	Student achievement metrics begin to show a decline	Parental complaints submitted related to student achievement	Overall student competency levels are below standards	Inability to satisfactorily deliver curriculum or key programs
<b>Comments &amp; Mitigation Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School transition teams are in place for students registering in schools. Responsive teaching will support students coming into face-to-face classrooms from individual online courses.</li> </ul>				

<b>Likelihood</b>				
The likelihood of identified risks is to be assessed by estimate the probability of the risk occurring during the planning horizon.				
Rare	Unlikely	Moderate	Likely	Almost Certain
Extremely rare in the sector. Once in more than 10 years at the school division.	Has occurred occasionally in the sector. Once in 5 to 10 years at the school division.	Periodic occurrence in the sector; possible occurrence. Once in 3 years at the school division.	Has occurred previously and could reasonably occur again. Once in 1 to 2 years at the school division.	Extremely likely to occur. Multiple times per year at the school division.

**Summary Comments:**

GSSD's participation in the SDLC as a satellite location aims to expand and enhance online learning opportunities for students in the division while collaborating closely with the SDLC for a more comprehensive and accessible education experience.

**Recommended Decision/Motion:**

“That the Board approve the accountability report on Online Learning and acknowledge the report met the requirements of QIs 2.2 & 7.2, based on the evidence within the report.”

Respectfully submitted,

Quintin M. Robertson, Director/CEO  
Good Spirit School Division