

FROM THE BOARD

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE
DECEMBER 14, 2023 MEETING



GSSD.CA

December 14, 2023, Regular Meeting

The Regular Board meeting on December 14, 2023, was held at the Good Spirit Education Complex. The following trustees were present: Chairperson Jaime Johnson, Vice Chair Nicole Pohl, Christopher Balyski, Gilda Dokuchie, Jan Morrison, Bob Simpson, Jade Anderson, Gord Gendur, Shannon Leson, Lois Smandych and Steve Variyan. Also in attendance were division office staff, including Director of Education/CEO Quintin Robertson, Chief Financial Officer Keith Gervais, Assistant to the Director Lauren Denysek and Superintendent of Schools Mick Parmar.

Meeting Opening

Board Chair Johnson commenced the meeting at 10 am. Board Member Anderson reviewed GSSD's meeting norms and respectfully recognized that the meeting was taking place on Treaty 4 Territory; the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Assiniboine, and homeland of the Métis Peoples.

Approval of Minutes

The meeting package included the minutes for the November 16, 2023 Regular Board Meeting which were prepared by Chief Financial Officer Keith Gervais. The approved minutes can be accessed on the GSSD website: [GSSD](#) | [Board](#) | [Board Meetings](#) | [November 16, 2023 Minutes](#)

Delegation

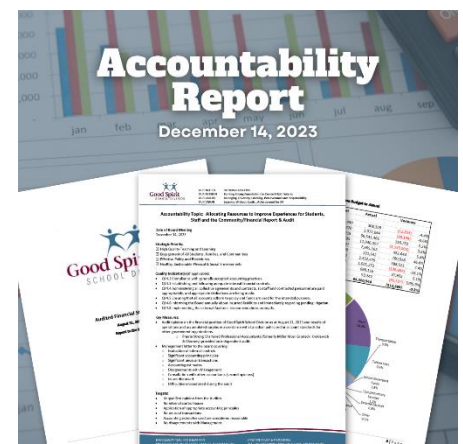
As outlined in Board Policy 7, the Board will make provision for a delegation to make a presentation at a Board meeting in the interest of improving the education provided in Division schools.

There were no delegations at the Regular Meeting on December 14, 2023.

Accountability Report

Allocating Resources to Improve Experiences for Students, Staff, and the Community/Financial Report & Audit

Keith Gervais, Chief Financial Officer, and Quintin Robertson, Director of Education/CEO, presented the accountability report on Allocating Resources to Improve Experiences for Students, Staff, and the Community/Financial Report & Audit.



Keith presented a comprehensive overview of the Good Spirit School Division Board of Education's budget utilization, highlighting a strong alignment with strategic priorities. The recently conducted audit affirmed the preparedness and cooperation of the staff, with no significant issues identified during the verification process.

The key areas of focus encompassed resource allocation for high-quality teaching and learning, promoting healthy and sustainable environments, engaging students, families, and communities, implementing effective policies and procedures, fostering innovative approaches to learning, integrating technology, and encouraging community and family involvement programs.

Underpinning these efforts is a commitment to improving student outcomes, implementing the "Inspiring Success" initiative, developing leadership, ensuring consistent practices, delivering quality teaching resources, and providing equitable technology access. These endeavors are consistently assessed against Board Policy 1 and GSSD's Foundational Statements, indicating effective resource utilization.

Notable budget details include variances in Governance, Administration, Instruction, Plant, Transportation, Tuition Fees, School Generated Funds, Complementary Services, and External Services. Positive variances in Instruction, Transportation, and External Services stand out, signaling efficient resource management.

In summary, the budget utilization underscores the Board's dedication to aligning resources with strategic priorities. This approach ensures a comprehensive and effective approach to education and community engagement, reflecting the vision of "Learning Without Limits...Achievement for All."

To view the accountability report in its entirety visit: [GSSD](#) | [Board](#) | [Board Meetings](#) | [Accountability Report – Allocating Resources to Improve Experiences for Students, Staff, and the Community/Financial Report & Audit](#)

Board Development

How Federal Students are Funded in the Provincial System

BOARD DEVELOPMENT
TOPIC: HOW FEDERAL STUDENTS ARE FUNDED IN THE PROVINCIAL SYSTEM
DECEMBER 14, 2023, REGULAR BOARD MEETING

STRATEGIC PRIORITY
ENGAGEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES
EFFECTIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Information for the Board - 10 Fast Facts

- Funding for First Nations Students on Reserve**
 - Jurisdiction Managed federally by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)
 - Source: Direct federal funding
 - Allocation: Based on factors like student numbers, often criticized for being less than provincial funding per student.
 - Use: Covers educational expenses such as teacher salaries, school facilities, materials, cultural programs, and potentially Regulation 18 tuition for provincial schools.
 - Challenges: Notable underfunding, especially in infrastructure, maintenance, and transportation needs.
- Provincial System Funding**
 - Jurisdiction: Governed by provincial governments for students, including First Nations living off reserve.
 - Source: Primarily provincial funds, supplemented by property taxes. Public schools receive operating grants without collecting education tax mill rates.
 - Allocation: Based on enrollment, special needs, and socio-economic factors of the school's location.
 - Use: Funds a broad range of needs including teacher salaries, infrastructure, resources, extracurricular activities, and transportation.
 - Challenges: Disparities between funding levels and inflationary pressures, with insufficient increases to match inflation.
- Key Differences**
 - Jurisdiction and Funding Source: Federal for on-reserve First Nations, provincial for others including off-reserve First Nations.
 - Funding Levels: First Nations on reserves generally receive lower funding per student compared to provincial counterparts.
 - Administration: Variation in on-reserve funding and administration can significantly differ between communities.
- Efforts to Bridge the Gap**
 - Government Initiatives: The Canadian government commits additional funds to narrow the funding disparity for First Nations education.
 - Empowerment Moves: Discussions aim to give First Nations more control over their education systems and asset-based funding models.
 - Soniar's Principle: Addresses funding shortfalls, particularly for Educational Assistants. It helps provide resources for students with special needs where high-cost funding is unavoidable.
- Recommendations**
 - Further Investigate Transportation Issues: Especially in on-reserve education where it remains a significant challenge.
 - Advocate for Inflation-Adjusted Funding: For provincial schools to better manage budgets without depleting reserves.
 - Enhanced Coordination: Between federal and provincial bodies to ensure a more uniform and equitable funding mechanism across all systems.
- Regulation 18 Tuition and Its Implications**
 - Examination: Assess if federal funds cover Regulation 18 tuition costs and transportation for students attending provincial schools.
 - Equity in Funding: Ensure that First Nations receive comparable funding levels as their provincial counterparts, particularly for off-reserve education.
- Administrative Consistency**
 - Standardize: Aim for a more consistent administration of funds across different First Nations communities to avoid disparities.
- Enhanced Data Collection**
 - Gather Comprehensive Data: To better understand the nuances of funding disparities and address them more effectively.
- Public Awareness**
 - Increase Awareness: Among stakeholders about the differences in funding mechanisms and challenges faced in both systems.
- Ongoing Policy Review**
 - Regularly Review: Education funding policies to ensure they meet the evolving needs of all students, particularly those in First Nations communities.

LEARNING WITHOUT LIMITS...ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL

Quintin Robertson, Director of Education and Angella Pinay, Superintendent of Indigenous Education, presented to the Board on the topic of How Federal Students are Funded in the Provincial System.

Insights were presented regarding the funding structures for education in First Nations communities, both on and off reserves. For on-reserve First Nations students, federal funding managed by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) is the primary source, allocated based on factors such as student numbers. However, challenges persist, with notable underfunding, particularly in infrastructure, maintenance, and transportation. In contrast, off-reserve First Nations and other students fall under provincial jurisdiction, relying primarily on provincial funds supplemented by property taxes. While off-reserve education receives better funding than on-reserve counterparts, disparities in urban-rural funding and inflationary pressures remain challenges.

Key differences in jurisdiction, funding sources, and funding levels were highlighted, emphasizing the need for efforts to bridge the gap.

Government initiatives, empowerment discussions, and the implementation of Jordan's Principle were acknowledged as steps toward addressing funding shortfalls and achieving equitable funding models. The presented recommendations included further investigation into transportation issues, advocating for inflation-adjusted funding, enhanced coordination between federal and provincial bodies, examination of Regulation 16 tuition costs, standardization of administrative practices, comprehensive data collection, increased public awareness, and ongoing policy reviews to meet the evolving needs of all students, especially those in First Nations communities. These insights underscore the importance of addressing funding disparities and fostering a more equitable education system for all.

To access the full document of the 10 fast facts on How Federal Students are Funded in the Provincial System, visit [GSSD | Board](#) | [Board Meetings](#) | [Board Development – How Federal Students are Funded in the Provincial System](#).

Advocacy Session

Relationship Building with a Focus on Funding

Following lunch, the GSSD Board of Education convened with local MLAs Greg Ottenbreit and Warren Kaeding, Yorkton Tribal Council (YTC) Director of Education Bryant Cote, and Saskatchewan School Board Association (SSBA) Executive Director Darren McKee (virtually). Quintin Robertson, Director of Education, initiated the session by acknowledging the meeting's location on Treaty 4 Territory, the traditional land of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Assiniboine, and Métis Peoples.



The discussion commenced with an overview of funding pressures, diving into topics such as expenses related to buses, food programs, and the impact of inflation. The conversation extended to the diverse needs of food programs across the Division, recognizing their vital role in ensuring students have nourished bodies for engaged minds.

Concerns were raised about inflation affecting school supplies, particularly in Practical and Applied Arts, where consistent access to materials is crucial across classrooms and grades. The rising costs directly impact students.

Darren McKee, SSBA Executive Director, underscored the significance of partnerships between local MLAs and School Divisions. Bryant Cote, YTC Director of Education, highlighted the critical role of transportation, noting its impact on students attending school and the funding challenges associated with it.

All attendees reaffirmed their dedication to shared responsibilities and policies, underscoring the collaborative approach to decision-making around the table that includes school boards. Quintin concluded the session by emphasizing the importance of speaking as one voice. GSSD values its partnerships and relationships, committing to championing necessary initiatives. Through collaborative consultation, solutions can be identified, and initiatives can be successfully executed.

New Business

Review Community and Family Engagement Strategies

Board members assessed the effectiveness of current strategies and identified areas for improvement. Positive narratives about engagement were shared, with a specific emphasis on the success of Division and School engagement. There was a desire among board members to spotlight classroom-specific engagement more prominently, similar to the level of engagement observed in kindergarten and the early years.

Review Communication Strategies

Board members value GSSD's transparent and consistent communication. They emphasized the importance of school-level communication for families, and the Division expressed its commitment to supporting school-level communication.

Approval of Risk Registry

The Good Spirit School Division's [Enterprise Risk Management \(ERM\) Framework](#), outlined in its Board Policy Handbook, aims to anticipate and respond to changes in the business environment, manage risks according to leading practices, and provide a comprehensive understanding of the need for enterprise-wide risk management. The ERM Framework consists of five stages: Risk Identification, Risk Assessment, Risk Response and Action, Risk Monitoring, and Risk Reporting. The Director annually identifies and recommends top risks. Risks are assessed based on likelihood and impact. The Board integrates the top risks into strategic, business, and operational plans. The ERM framework requires periodic monitoring, with the Board engaging in an annual review of the Risk Registry.

Policy Review

The Board conducted a thorough review of Policy 5 Role of the Board Chair, Policy 6 Role of the Vice Chair, and Policy 7 Board Operations. Policies 5 and 6 remain unchanged, with the addition of the indication of their recent review, which has been reflected in the versions available on the website. Similarly, Policy 7 Board Operations, had minor revisions, and the latest version has been published on the GSSD website for public access.

The updated Policies can be viewed on our website: [GSSD](#) | [Board](#) | [Board Policy Handbook](#)

- [Policy 5 Role of the Board Chair](#)
- [Policy 6 Role of the Vice Chair](#)
- [Policy 7 Board Operations](#)

Director's Report

Professional Development Opportunities

Quintin Robertson, the Director of Education/CEO, provided an overview of the professional development (PD) initiatives undertaken during the current school year and highlighted upcoming opportunities for GSSD staff. To date, more than 25 professional development sessions have been conducted since the commencement of the school year. Notably, a significant milestone was achieved with the recent Mental Health First Aid – First Nations Training held on December 4, 5, and 6, 2023, at the Good Spirit Education Complex. This marked the inaugural occurrence of such training within the GSSD. Attendees included GSSD Indigenous Student Success Leads, Indigenous Community Workers, GSSD's Cultural Advocate, GSSD's Kici-Anishinabe and the Superintendent of Indigenous Education. A few members of GSSD's Indigenous Advisory Committee were also in attendance.

Armed with the insights gained from this training, GSSD is actively aligning its efforts with the "Inspiring Success" objectives outlined by the Ministry. Additionally, these initiatives are in harmony with GSSD's Foundational Statement, healthy, sustainable physical, and social environments.



A breakdown of all PD Sessions that have occurred during November and December of 2023 will be available in GSSD's upcoming November/December In Focus Media Release! This media release will be available around December 22, 2023 and will be posted to GSSD's socials and website.

Transportation Update

Ryan Hall, GSSD Transportation Manager, provided a comprehensive update on transportation matters at the December 14, 2023, Regular Board Meeting.

GSSD began the school year with 96 regular bus routes and plans to recruit drivers in Esterhazy and Yorkton to reinstate one route in each area, bringing the total to 98. While all 96 routes have permanent drivers, substitute driver availability remains limited. Ryan and the Board engaged in a conversation about bus driver recruitment, both past and future strategies.

During the bus driver in-service meetings held in August 2023, the training encompassed documentation, processes, and procedures. The sessions included instruction on wheelchair lift operation, bus evacuation procedures, and concerns related to student behavior. Ryan specifically emphasized the positive feedback received regarding the participation of the Student Services team, who presented on student behaviors, and GSSD's Occupational Therapist Maureen Blight, who provided training on bus evacuations involving students with mobility limitations. The Transportation Team is already formulating plans and ideas for the 2024 Bus Driver in-service.

This summary provides a snapshot of the comprehensive transportation update discussed during the December board meeting, reflecting ongoing efforts to enhance efficiency and meet the evolving needs of the school division.

Financial Update

Chief Financial Officer Keith Gervais presented the financial report to the board members, emphasizing that the reports are proceeding as planned. Additionally, Keith provided an update on the ministry's funding adjustment for the 2023-2024 period. Changes in funding are subjected to a specific formula, and the allocated funds are evenly distributed across various areas.

Administrative Procedures

The Board was informed of the Administrative Procedures that have undergone revision and review since the Regular Board Meeting on November 16, 2023. These procedures are now available on the [GSSD website](#):

- AP 220 - Additional Education Program - Alternative Education
- AP 220-1 - Parent Acknowledgment of Enrollment in an Alternative Education Program
- AP 220-2 - Student Acknowledgement of Enrollment in An Alternative Education Program
- AP 361 - Student Progress and Placement
- AP 221 - Locally Modified Basic Courses
- Form 221-1 Parent Acknowledgment of Enrollment in a Locally Modified Course
- Form 221-2 Student Acknowledgement of Enrollment in a Locally Modified Course
- AP 319 Gender Sexual Diversity
- Form 319-1 Authority for Use of Preferred Name or Pronouns



Conclusion

School Community Councils and Celebrations

The December 14, 2023 Regular Board Meeting concluded with Board Members sharing information about their school community councils. Board members brought feedback, support, and celebrations to the meeting.

Board member Johnson shared news regarding Victoria School’s Christmas Store where gently used items could be donated to create an opportunity for every child to shop for their immediate family members for the Christmas Holidays. Victoria’s Christmas Store will help brighten many children’s Christmases this year. Victoria also hosted a complimentary holiday meal on December 15, 2023.

Board member Pohl highlighted Yorkdale’s Student Leadership Council (SLC) for organizing a successful Street Market, raising approximately \$1,500 to contribute towards a variety of causes such as the Stockings for Seniors program which spreads warmth and cheer to the elderly members of the community as well as donated a portion to the school’s Breakfast program.

Board member Smandych mentioned the ongoing preparations for Christmas concerts across schools and praised Yorkton Regional High School’s recent band concert.

Board member Variyan reported that Columbia’s School Community Council (SCC) reviewed the SCC training modules on the GSSD website. Variyan also highlighted the great work of Columbia School’s administration team. At Columbia School, the SCC January meeting is “Bring a Friend”, fostering a welcoming environment and encouraging engagement.



Upcoming Important Dates

December 20, 2023	Last Day of School for Students before the Winter Break
December 22, 2023	Open Office Time with Quintin – 9:00am-12:00pm – GSEC
December 25, 2023	Christmas Day
January 1, 2024	Happy New Year!
January 4, 2024	National Ribbon Skirt Day
January 4, 2024	Students Return to School
January 25, 2024	Regular Board Meeting
February 19, 2024	Family Day
February 15, 2024	Public Section Executive Meeting – 1:00p.m. – 2:30 p.m. – via zoom
February 29, 2024	Regular Board Meeting
March 28, 2024	Regular Board Meeting
March 29, 2024	Good Friday
April 1, 2024	Easter Monday



April 11, 2024	Public Section Executive Meeting – Time TBD (SSBA Spring Assembly April 11/12, Saskatoon)
April 25, 2024	Regular Board Meeting
May 20, 2024	Victoria Day
May 23, 2024	Special Board Meeting
June 6 & 7, 2024	Public Section General Meeting and Professional Development Event June 6 – 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. June 7 – 8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Saskatoon – Location TBD
June 13, 2024	Regular Board Meeting
June 21, 2024	National Indigenous Peoples Day
August 15, 2024	Regular Board Meeting



Information

Board Meeting Attendance

Board meetings are held throughout the school year (excluding July). At times, and only as needed, special meetings of the board may be called. Regular meetings are open to public attendance except for the in-committee (closed) portion of discussions. To address the Board an [Application for Delegation to Board Meeting](#) must be filled out and returned at least seven days prior to the meeting. If you have any questions, please contact our Administration Office via phone (306) 786-5500 or through email at info@gssd.ca.

Upcoming Board Meetings: January 25, February 29, March 28, April 25, May 23 (Special Meeting), June 13, August 15

Location & Time: Good Spirit Education Complex at 10am. 5B Schrader Drive, Yorkton, SK S3N 3Z4

To review Board Policy 7 Board Operations, [GSSD](#) | [Board](#) | [Board Policy Handbook](#)

Submissions and Feedback

To submit photos or stories regarding the Board of Education or an individual Trustee in your school community, please contact lauren.denysek@gssd.ca.

Contact Us:

Good Spirit School Division #204

www.gssd.ca

(306) 786-5500

@gssd_204

@gssd204

Good Spirit School Division 204

Students Come First.

For more information related to the Board of Education, visit our website at: GSSD.CA | Board