

FROM THE BOARD

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE
DECEMBER 12, 2024, BOARD MEETING



GSSD.CA

December 12, 2024, Regular Meeting

The Regular Board meeting on December 12, 2024, was held at the Good Spirit Education Complex. The following trustees were present: Chairperson Jaime Johnson, Vice Chairperson Nicole Pohl, Christopher Balyski, Shannon Leson, Jan Morrison, Steve Variyan, Cara Makort, Kelly Palmer, and Kendra Stav. Also in attendance were division office staff, including Director of Education/CEO Quintin Robertson, Chief Financial Officer Keith Gervais, Communications Coordinator Lauren Denysek, and Superintendent of Schools Amanda Kornaga.

Meeting Opening

Board Vice Chair Pohl commenced the meeting at 10 a.m. and reviewed GSSD's meeting norms. Trustee Pohl 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 21, 2024, 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 21, 2024](#)

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.

Accountability Report

Promoting Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in GSSD Schools

At the recent Board Meeting, Amanda Kornaga, Superintendent of Schools, presented the Accountability Report on Promoting Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion within Good Spirit School Division (GSSD). The report highlighted GSSD's ongoing efforts to create safe, inclusive, and equitable environments for all students and staff, aligning with provincial laws, mandates, and strategic priorities.



Amanda emphasized the Division's responsibility under the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission and the Right to Education (Section 13(1)), as well as relevant sections of the *Education Act, 1995*. She also outlined priority actions from the Provincial Education Plan, which include:

- Learning Assessment
- Indigenous Education
- Mental Health and Well-Being
- Student Transitions

These priorities, along with GSSD's Mission, Motto, Vision and Values, reflect the Division's commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility while aligning with the Ministry's *Inspiring Success* framework.

Creating Safe and Inclusive Schools

Amanda detailed GSSD's efforts to ensure students feel safe, valued, and protected at school, including:

- **Administrative Procedures:** Updated versions of AP 170 (*Respect in the Workplace*) and AP 172 (*Responding to Racism*) are nearing completion. These revised APs align with Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission standards and Ministry guidelines.
- **Words Matter Presentations:** These sessions educate students and staff on the power of words and their impact.
- **Student Voice Initiatives:** A Student Senate is being developed to provide students with a platform to share concerns, advocate for needs, and serve as a reference group for the Director of Education.
- **Trauma-Informed Walk-Throughs:** Administrators are encouraged to collaborate with stakeholders to assess school environments through a trauma-integrated lens.

Supporting Professional Development

Amanda highlighted ongoing professional development opportunities that support staff in advancing equity and inclusion. These include:

- **Becoming an Anti-Racist Educator** (introductory and advanced sessions)
- Presentations by **Tanya McCallum**, a nationally recognized land-based educator, for Indigenous Student Success Leads (ISLs) and Indigenous Community Workers (ICWs).

Recruitment and Accessibility

The report also touched on GSSD's commitment to recruiting, retaining, and promoting employees based on merit and creating inclusive hiring practices. Amanda referenced the recent release of Saskatchewan's first Accessibility Plan, which aims to reduce barriers and foster inclusive environments.

Through these initiatives, GSSD continues to prioritize student well-being, family engagement, and community input, ensuring every student feels seen, heard, and supported.

For a more comprehensive overview, please refer to the full report linked below. To view the accountability report in its entirety visit: [GSSD | Board | Board Meetings | Board Accountability Report – Promoting Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in GSSD Schools.](#)

Board Development

Governance Skills Development

Quintin Robertson, Director of Education, presented the Board Development on Governance Skills Development.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT
 TOPIC: GOVERNANCE SKILL DEVELOPMENT
 DECEMBER 12, 2024, REGULAR BOARD MEETING

STRATEGIC PRIORITY
 HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING
 ENGAGEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES
 EFFECTIVE POLICY AND PRACTICE PLANS
 HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE PHYSICAL & SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

Information for the Board - 10 Fast Facts
 These fast facts provide a foundation for trustees, particularly new ones, to understand their responsibilities, raised expectations, and the scope of their role within the Good Spirit School Division.

- 1 Strategic Decision-Making:** Effective governance ensures that Board decisions align with the division's vision, mission, and strategic priorities. Trustees evaluate data, stakeholder input, and long-term implications to make informed decisions that promote student success, fiscal responsibility, and community engagement. This includes regular review and alignment with the division's foundational statements.
- 2 Conflict Resolution:** Building skills to navigate conflicts positively and constructively promotes a collaborative and unified board. Trustees must foster open communication, active listening, and mutual respect to address disagreements. Conflict resolution begins with trust and the ability to be honest while prioritizing the division's goals over individual interests. Tools like mediation, professional development, and shared agreements can support this process.
- 3 Team Building:** Strengthening trust and relationships within the Board enhances decision-making and the Board's overall effectiveness. Through regular retreats, workshops, and social interactions, trustees build rapport and shared vision. Effective team building fosters a culture of collaboration, respect, and unity, even when facing complex challenges.
- 4 Role Clarity:** Trustees focus on governance, not management, by setting direction and overseeing outcomes, while administration manages day-to-day operations. This allocation ensures that the Board remains strategic, while superintendents and school staff handle operational matters. Trustees focus on policy development, accountability, and resource allocation rather than micromanagement.
- 5 Policy Oversight:** Board policies guide the division's operations and are a key tool for governance, accountability, and transparency. Trustees are responsible for reviewing, updating, and approving policies to ensure they are aligned with provincial regulations, divisional goals, and emerging needs. Clear and well-communicated policies provide consistency and accountability for all stakeholders.
- 6 Equity and Inclusion:** Promoting equity and inclusion at the governance level reflects the division's commitment to ensuring all students, staff, and families feel valued and respected. This involves actively addressing barriers to equity, fostering inclusive practices, and modeling respect for diversity. It aligns with GSSD Board Policy 20 - Respect for Human Diversity and includes regular evaluation of division practices to promote equitable outcomes.
- 7 Strategic Plan Alignment:** Governance decisions should always support the division's strategic plan and long-term goals. Trustees must ensure that resolutions, policies, and initiatives are aligned with the priorities outlined in the strategic plan, such as improving student achievement, fostering well-being, and advancing innovation. Progress should be monitored regularly through measurable benchmarks.
- 8 Effective Communication:** Transparent, concise, and respectful communication builds trust between the Board, division administration, and the broader community. Trustees should establish clear channels for sharing information, fostering well-being, and providing guidance on Board actions. Communication should reinforce the Board's commitment to accountability and openness.
- 9 Risk Management:** The Board's role includes identifying and mitigating risks through annual reviews and informed decision-making. Trustees should analyze risks related to finances, operations, governance, and reputational issues.
- 10 Continuous Improvement:** Ongoing governance training ensures trustees are prepared to address emerging challenges and opportunities effectively. Professional development sessions, mentorship programs, and regular evaluations help trustees stay informed about best practices, legislative changes, and evolving educational needs. This commitment to learning fosters resilience, adaptability, and informed decision-making.

LEARNING WITHOUT LIMITS...ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL

The discussion emphasized the importance of strategic decision-making, ensuring that all Board actions align with the Division's mission, goals, and long-term plans. Trustees explored strategies for constructive conflict resolution, promoting open communication, trust, and collaborative problem-solving.

The presentation reinforced the need for role clarity, with trustees focusing on governance, policy development, and accountability, while administration manages day-to-day operations. Equity and inclusion were highlighted as key responsibilities, reflecting GSSD's commitment to valuing diversity and removing barriers to ensure all students and families feel respected and supported. Continuous improvement also emerged as a priority, with a focus on ongoing governance training and professional development to prepare trustees for evolving challenges. The session highlighted the Board's role in effective policy oversight, risk management, and transparent communication, ensuring student success and organizational resilience remain at the forefront of decision-making.

To access the full document of the 10 fast facts visit [GSSD | Board | Board Meetings | Board Development – Governance Skill Development](#)

[Click here to enlarge the image!](#)

New Business

Review Communication Strategies

Lauren Denysek, Communications Coordinator, presented an overview of GSSD's Communication Strategies. Highlights included the division's commitment to delivering timely and clear communication to students, families, staff, and community members.

Key Takeaways:

- Internal Communication Tools:** GSSD employs tools like a Thursday Admin Email, Friday File Email, and Edsby announcements to share updates efficiently with staff. Specialized updates, such as the Wellness @ Work newsletter, focus on staff well-being and work-life balance.
- External Communication Efforts:** Social media platforms, the GSSD website, and newsletters like the *In Focus* ensure timely sharing of information, celebrations, and updates with stakeholders, including parents, local businesses, and government officials.



- **Stakeholder Engagement:** The presentation highlighted the diverse groups served by the division and the importance of tailoring communications to meet their unique needs. Efforts include multilingual website features and proactive messaging to ensure inclusivity.
- **Challenges Addressed:** The division acknowledged difficulties such as information overload, technology gaps, and social media management. Strategies like timed messaging, print materials for key updates, and maintaining a respectful online presence were shared as solutions.
- **Consistent Branding:** GSSD's recognizable identity is supported by uniform colors, fonts, and high-quality graphics, fostering trust and cohesion across communications.

This comprehensive strategy supports the division's values and ensures stakeholders remain informed and involved.



Approve the Annual Risk Registry

Director of Education Quintin Robertson presented the Annual Risk Registry, outlining strategies to identify and mitigate risks that impact safety, security, and operations across GSSD.

Key priorities include:

- Technology and Privacy: Cybersecurity training, response protocols, and data protection measures.
- Pandemic Preparedness: Flexible learning models and emergency plans.
- Leadership Development: Structured succession planning to ensure continuity.
- Staff and Student Safety: Wellness initiatives, recruitment strategies, and crisis communication plans.

The Division remains committed to monitoring risks, ensuring accountability, and maintaining safe, inclusive learning environments for all. Regular updates will keep the Board informed of progress and emerging challenges.

Policy Review

The Board reviewed and approved Policy 2 Appendix A and Board Policy 3 Appendix A as presented. The amended policies are now available to view on our website.

- [Board Policy 2A Annual Work Plan](#)
- [Board Policy 3 Appendix A Services, Materials and Equipment Provided to Trustees](#)

The Board also reviewed Board Policy 4 and its appendices, approving them with minor edits. Updates to Board Policy 4 and its appendices will continue, and the finalized versions will be posted once completed.

[GSSD](#) | [Board](#) | [Board Policy Handbook](#)

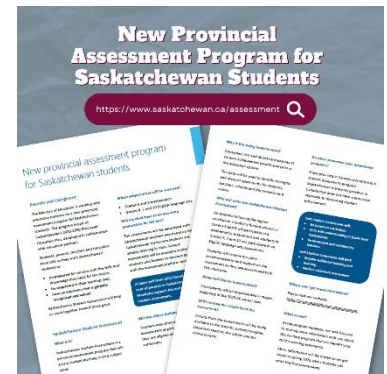
Director's Report

Provincial Education Plan Updates

Quintin Robertson provided the Board with an update on the new Saskatchewan Student Assessment Plan and the Provincial Education Plan (PEP). The Board will continue to receive updates to ensure GSSD's Strategic Plan aligns with the Provincial Education Plan.

[Click here to read more about the Provincial Education Plan](#)

[Click here to read more about the new provincial assessment program for Saskatchewan students](#)



Financial Update

Chief Financial Officer Keith Gervais provided an update on the Division's financial position. Revenues are on track, and expenditures are progressing as planned, with 26% of the budget spent, which aligns closely with expectations at this point in the year.

The Ministry provided additional funding to accommodate higher-than-anticipated enrolment. The Division utilized the additional funds to support schools and create extra positions where needed, ensuring continued support for students and staff.

The budget will continue to be closely monitored to maintain financial stability throughout the year.

Transportation Update

Transportation Manager Ryan Hall presented the latest transportation report for August 15 to December 15, 2024.

Some key highlights included:

- GSSD added a new bus route in the Stockholm area, now operating 98 routes.
- Staffing: Bus driver recruitment remains a challenge, but incentives have improved the availability of spare drivers.
- Fleet Updates: The final buses from a 2023 order arrived, and a new skid steer was purchased for maintenance. A tender for new buses was also approved to keep the fleet renewal plan on track.
- Driver Recognition: Bus Driver Appreciation Day on November 25 celebrated drivers with gifts and school-led events. Recruitment efforts were also highlighted during Yorkton's Santa Claus Parade. *(pictured to the right)*
- Winter Weather: The unpredictable and extreme winter conditions often result in bus cancellations during this time of year to ensure student safety.



GSSD remains focused on driver recruitment, fleet upgrades, and ensuring safe, efficient transportation for students.

Administrative Procedures

The Board was informed of Administrative Procedures that have undergone revision and review since the Regular Board Meeting on November 21, 2024. At this time, there weren't any new Administrative Procedures posted.

Closing Items

School Community Councils & Celebration

Trustee Palmer shared highlights from Churchbridge Public School. The School Community Council has been busy hosting events, including a successful Oktoberfest auction that raised over \$6,000 and a football game with canteen sales bringing in over \$1,000. Palmer humorously noted that "the goats are being overfed," a nod to the school's agricultural activities.

Trustee Balyski celebrated Jake Soltys of Sturgis Composite School, who won first place in the Norquay Legion's annual Remembrance Day literacy contest for his poem "*A Tribute to the Brave*." Jake's work earned recognition at the Branch, Zone, District, and Provincial levels, and he had the honor of attending the National Remembrance Day Ceremony in Ottawa. Trustee Balyski also noted Sturgis' support for Cheyenne, a 17-year-old facing a brain tumor, with "Shine for Cheyenne" on December 12. The school and many supporting community members wore pink to show support. *(pictured to the right)*



Trustee Makort attended a Dr. Brass School Community Council meeting and was impressed with the tour, particularly the sensory rooms and the mental health initiatives. She also noted the school's rich cultural programming, including planned meals and student reports, describing the visit as a great experience.



Trustee Johnson highlighted Norquay School's outreach efforts, where staff traveled to the Key First Nation for student-led conferences. The event was a success, with 20 out of 23 families attending, helping to build bridges and strengthen relationships between the school and community.

Trustee Leson shared that Canora Composite School has been making great use of its new kitchen for Christmas events and meals. The school and community expressed gratitude for the work done by the facilities team to bring the kitchen to life.

Saskatchewan School Boards Association Annual General Meeting Recap

Trustees reflected on their recent attendance at the Saskatchewan School Boards Association's Annual General Meeting. Trustee Brass shared that he enjoyed the valuable discussions and found the event to be a great learning and bonding experience. Trustee Palmer noted the conference was well-organized, interesting, and highly beneficial. Trustee Pohl highlighted the keynote speaker, Jody Wilson-Raybould, and her powerful message on *Courageous Leadership*.

Overall, the event provided an excellent opportunity for new trustees to build knowledge and relationships, while returning trustees strengthened their connections and continued their professional growth.

Upcoming Important Dates

December 24, 2024	The Good Spirit Education Complex (GSEC) will close at 12pm
December 25, 2024	Christmas Day
January 1, 2025	Happy New Year!
January 2, 2025	GSEC will reopen at 8:30am
January 8, 2025	The Role of the Director & Sr. Staff in Working with an Elected Public Sector Board (in-person event in Regina)
January 23, 2025	Regular Board Meeting
January 25, 2025	2 nd Annual GSSD Round Dance for Truth & Reconciliation – Hosted by GSSD
January 30 & 31, 2025	SSBA School for New Trustees - Saskatoon
February 13, 2025	Public Section Executive Meeting – via Zoom, 9:00-10:30 am
February 27, 2025	Regular Board Meeting
March 27, 2025	Regular Board Meeting
April 3, 2025	Public Section Executive Meeting, Time TBD, Sheraton Cavalier Hotel, Saskatoon
April 24, 2025	Regular Board Meeting
May 22, 2025	Special Board Meeting
June 5 & 6, 2025	Public Section General Meeting & Professional Development Event
June 12, 2025	Regular Board Meeting
August 13, 2025	Evaluation & Special Board Meeting
August 14, 2025	Regular Board Meeting



Upcoming Board Meetings: January 23/25, February 27/25, March 27/25, April 24/25, May 22/25 - Special Board Meeting, June 12/25, August 13/25 - Evaluation & Special Board Meeting, August 14/25

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

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

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Students Come First.