

Board Development Topic: Role of the Director of Education/CEO

Date of Board Meeting:

February 27, 2025

Strategic Priority:

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

Quality Indicators:

- **QI 1.1** - Facilitating environments where students feel a sense of belonging and have high levels of intellectual engagement.
- **QI 1.6** - Utilizing performance metrics to monitor and evaluate operational performance relative to student learning and well-being.
- **QI 2.1** - Analyzing student achievement and ensuring the development of action plans to address concerns and gaps.
- **QI 2.6** - Championing Calls to Action by promoting reconciliation events and initiatives.
- **QI 3.1** - Facilitating professional learning for in-school administrators and division office leadership staff as required.
- **QI 5.1** - Quality recruitment, orientation, onboarding, staff development, disciplinary, evaluation, and supervision processes are developed and effectively implemented.
- **QI 7.1** - Establishing and maintaining a positive, professional working relationship with the Board.
- **QI 8.2** - Demonstrating the achievement of key results identified in the Division's Strategic Plan and the Provincial Education Plan.
- **QI 10.1** - Representing the Division in a positive, professional manner.
- **QI 10.3** - Ensuring that Board initiatives and priorities are disseminated to inform the community.
- **QI 11.2** - Providing effective educational leadership.
- **QI 11.5** - Demonstrating a high commitment to the needs of students.
- **QI 11.8** - Effectively solving problems.

Information for the Board (10 fast facts):

1. The Director of Education serves as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Good Spirit School Division (GSSD) and is directly accountable to the Board. As the highest-ranking educational leader in the Division, the Director is responsible for overseeing all operational, financial, and academic functions to ensure high-quality learning environments and student success. [Click here to view GSSD's Organizational Charts](#)
2. The Director's role encompasses strategic planning, governance, and compliance with Ministry of Education mandates while fostering collaboration among all stakeholders, including school administrators, staff, students, and community members.

3. **Strategic Oversight:** The Director ensures alignment between GSSD's strategic goals, the Provincial Education Plan, and school operations, providing leadership for 27 schools across 15 communities and over 6,300 students.
4. **Educational Leadership:** The Director guarantees that all students receive high-quality education by implementing policies, supporting inclusive learning environments, and addressing student achievement gaps through targeted strategies.
5. **Governance & Compliance:** As the liaison between the Board and the Division, the Director upholds governance policies, ensures financial accountability, and adheres to provincial education regulations.
6. **Human Resource Management:** The Director leads staffing decisions, ensuring that recruitment, retention, and professional development align with the Division's mission and values.
7. **Community & Stakeholder Engagement:** The Director fosters positive relationships with the Ministry of Education, Indigenous communities, local agencies, and families to enhance educational outcomes and operational effectiveness.
8. **Leadership & Stability:** The Director provides overarching guidance for administrators and schools, ensuring continuity in policies and long-term planning.
9. **Accountability & Transparency:** The Director ensures responsible fiscal management, policy compliance, and continuous reporting to the Board and stakeholders.
10. **Student-Centered Decision-Making:** Every initiative under the Director's leadership prioritizes student well-being and achievement.

Partnerships:

- Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA)
- Saskatchewan Ministry of Education
- League of Educational Administrators, Directors, and Superintendents (LEADS)
- Saskatchewan Professional Teachers' Regulatory Board (SPTRB)
- Indigenous and Community Organizations
- Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF)
- Saskatchewan Association of School Boards Official (SASBO)

Risk Assessment:

Impact Categories	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Financial	The 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
Comments & Mitigation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inefficient Budget Management – Poor oversight can lead to misallocation of funds, unnecessary expenditures, or failure to maximize available resources. 				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Legal and Compliance Costs – Mismanagement may result in policy violations, labor disputes, or legal challenges that require costly legal services. • Higher Staff Turnover and Recruitment Costs – A lack of leadership can decrease staff morale, leading to increased resignations and the need for frequent recruitment and training. • Declining Student Enrollment & Funding Loss – Ineffective leadership may lead to reputational damage and declining student enrollment, directly impacting per-student government funding. • Missed Grant and Funding Opportunities – Failure to proactively seek and manage grants and external funding can reduce potential revenue streams. • Poor Financial Oversight & Fraud Risk – Weak leadership can result in inadequate financial controls, increasing the risk of financial mismanagement or fraud. • Reduced Operational Efficiency – Without strategic leadership, inefficiencies in transportation, maintenance, and administrative services can lead to higher operational costs. • Negative Impact on Collective Bargaining & Labor Relations – Poor management of labor negotiations can lead to increased labor costs, grievances, or strikes. • Declining Student Outcomes Leading to Long-Term Funding Reductions – Poor student performance may result in decreased government support, funding cuts, or additional remediation costs. • Damage to Public Trust & Potential Litigation Costs – Poor communication and leadership failures can lead to loss of public confidence, resulting in increased scrutiny, audits, or lawsuits. • Mitigating Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strong Senior Leadership Team – Superintendents and managers can help maintain operations despite gaps in leadership. ○ Board Oversight & Governance – Active engagement by the Board of Education can help mitigate risks and maintain accountability. ○ Clear Policies & Procedures – Established guidelines for financial management, HR, and operations can sustain stability. ○ Collaboration with Ministry of Education – External oversight and support can ensure continued adherence to educational priorities and funding structures. ○ Strong School-Level Leadership – Effective principals and administrators can ensure continuity of student learning and operational stability. 				
Reputational	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
Comments & Mitigation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of Public Trust & Confidence – Community members, parents, and stakeholders may lose faith in the division’s leadership, impacting enrollment and partnerships. • Negative Media Attention – Poor decision-making, financial mismanagement, or operational failures can attract negative press, damaging the division’s image. • Declining Employee Morale & Retention Issues – If staff feel unsupported, undervalued, or directionless, turnover may increase, further harming the division’s reputation. • Legal & Compliance Failures – Non-compliance with educational policies, labor laws, or financial regulations can result in lawsuits or government intervention. • Student Performance & Safety Concerns – If academic outcomes decline or safety concerns arise due to weak leadership, public confidence in the division will erode. • Mitigation Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proactive & Transparent Communication – The Board should regularly update stakeholders, acknowledge challenges, and outline corrective actions. 				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strengthening Internal Controls & Accountability – Ensuring strong financial, HR, and operational oversight will prevent major failures. ○ Engaging with Community & Stakeholders – Open forums, surveys, and advisory groups can help maintain positive relationships and trust. ○ Focusing on Student Success & Well-being – Prioritizing core educational goals, including student achievement and safety, will reinforce the division’s commitment to excellence. 				
Managerial Effort/Capacity	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
Comments & Mitigation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of Strategic Direction – Without a strong leader, the division may struggle to set or execute long-term goals, leading to stagnation or reactive decision-making. ● Ineffective Decision-Making – Delays, inconsistent policies, or uninformed decisions can create operational inefficiencies and erode confidence in leadership. ● Breakdown in Communication & Coordination – Poor leadership can result in miscommunication between the Board, senior administration, and school leaders. ● Diminished Employee Engagement & Productivity – Unclear expectations, lack of support, and weak leadership can lower morale, leading to disengaged staff. ● Failure to Address Performance Issues – Without strong oversight, underperformance at various levels may go unchecked, affecting student outcomes and division effectiveness. ● Inefficient Resource Allocation – Weak financial planning and resource management may lead to budget shortfalls, staffing issues, or operational inefficiencies. ● Increased Workplace Conflict & Grievances – Poor leadership can lead to disputes between staff, labour unions, or community stakeholders, increasing HR challenges. ● Non-Compliance with Policies & Regulations – Failure to enforce policies and comply with legal obligations can lead to audits, penalties, or government intervention. ● Mitigation Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strengthen Board Oversight & Governance – The Board should set clear priorities, establish accountability measures, and provide direct oversight in the absence of strong leadership. ○ Empower Senior Leadership Team – Delegating responsibilities to superintendents and key administrators can help maintain operational stability. ○ Improve Decision-Making Structures – Implement clear processes for financial management, HR policies, and administrative decisions to ensure consistency. ○ Enhance Internal & External Communication – Regular updates to staff, parents, and stakeholders will help maintain trust and clarity on division priorities. ○ Implement Performance Management Systems – Strengthening staff evaluations and accountability measures can ensure educational and operational standards are met. ○ Prioritize Staff Well-being & Professional Development – Investing in leadership training and staff support can mitigate morale and productivity issues. ○ Regular Risk Assessments & Compliance Checks – Conducting periodic reviews of policies, finances, and operational risks will help prevent major failures. 				
Government Relations	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
Comments & Mitigation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Loss of Funding or Grants – Weak leadership can lead to mismanagement of funding applications, failure to meet reporting requirements, or a loss of government trust, impacting financial support. 				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory Non-Compliance – Failure to adhere to provincial education regulations, policies, or financial reporting requirements could result in audits, fines, or corrective action from the Ministry of Education. • Reduced Influence on Policy Decisions – Without strong leadership, the division may lose its voice in provincial education discussions, affecting funding models, curriculum changes, and legislative decisions. • Increased Government Oversight & Intervention – A lack of confidence in local leadership could lead to increased provincial scrutiny, direct interventions, or the appointment of external administrators. • Delayed Approvals for Capital & Infrastructure Projects – Poor relationships with government agencies may slow down approvals for school construction, renovations, or transportation funding. • Reputational Damage & Public Scrutiny – If government officials publicly question the division’s leadership, it can erode trust among stakeholders and impact future funding decisions. • Mitigation Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintain Strong Board-Government Communication – The Board should engage regularly with the Ministry of Education, MLAs, and SSBA representatives to ensure alignment with provincial priorities. ○ Ensure Compliance & Transparency in Reporting – Proactively meeting financial and operational reporting requirements will build trust with government agencies. ○ Advocate for Division Priorities – The Board should participate in provincial education consultations, submit policy recommendations, and collaborate with other divisions to strengthen advocacy efforts. ○ Strengthen Strategic Planning & Performance Metrics – Demonstrating a clear plan for student success, financial responsibility, and operational efficiency will reinforce the division’s credibility. ○ Engage in Proactive Public Relations – Regular updates to stakeholders, positive media stories, and public acknowledgment of government support can improve perceptions and relationships. 				
Legal	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
Comments & Mitigation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment & Labor Disputes – Poor leadership may result in grievances, wrongful termination claims, or disputes over labour agreements, leading to arbitration or litigation. • Failure to Uphold Duty of Care – If student safety, staff well-being, or mental health supports are mismanaged, the Board could face negligence claims. • Contractual Breaches – Mismanagement of vendor agreements, transportation contracts, or partnerships with First Nations or private entities could lead to legal disputes. • Human Rights & Equity Complaints – Poor handling of DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) initiatives or discrimination cases could result in human rights tribunal complaints. • Privacy & Data Security Violations – Mishandling student or staff records, failing to comply with LAFOIP (Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act), or data breaches could lead to legal penalties. • Non-Compliance with Educational Regulations – Failure to follow provincial policies, reporting obligations, or curriculum standards may result in ministry intervention or loss of funding. • Student Discipline & Legal Challenges – Inconsistent application of student discipline policies (suspensions, expulsions) could result in legal challenges from parents or advocacy groups. • Liability for Facilities & Transportation Issues – Poor oversight in building maintenance, safety protocols, or school transportation could lead to accidents, injuries, and subsequent legal claims. • Defamation & Social Media Risks – Misinformation, staff or parent complaints, or social media disputes could result in legal actions against the division for defamation or harassment. 				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Education & Accessibility Violations – Failure to provide adequate support for students with disabilities may result in legal action under provincial or federal accessibility laws. • Mitigation Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure Strong Legal Counsel & Policy Adherence – Regular consultation with legal experts and SSBA legal services to ensure compliance with labour, privacy, and education laws. ○ Strengthen HR & Labor Relations Policies – Clear documentation, transparent hiring practices, and proactive dispute resolution to prevent grievances. ○ Implement Robust Privacy & Security Measures – Ensure strict compliance with LAFOIP, regular staff training, and cybersecurity measures to protect student and staff data. ○ Review & Strengthen Student Safety Protocols – Proactive risk assessments, emergency response plans, and school-based training to prevent negligence claims. ○ Develop Clear Public Relations & Social Media Guidelines – Provide staff and leadership with guidance on responding to public concerns, media inquiries, and online issues. ○ Improve Training on Equity & Inclusion – Proactive DEI training for staff and leadership to minimize discrimination risks and human rights complaints. ○ Ensure Proper Oversight of Facilities & Transportation – Regular safety inspections, clear maintenance procedures, and compliance with occupational health and safety standards. ○ Enhance Communication with Parents & Stakeholders – Proactive engagement and transparent decision-making to reduce legal disputes and misunderstandings. 				
Student Outcomes	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
Comments & Mitigation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline in Academic Achievement – Without strong leadership, curriculum implementation, assessment practices, and instructional quality may suffer, leading to lower student performance. • Inconsistent Implementation of Educational Strategies – Schools may lack clear direction in literacy, numeracy, and high-quality teaching strategies, leading to gaps in student learning. • Decreased Graduation & Credit Attainment Rates – A lack of focus on student transitions, credit recovery, and alternative learning pathways may result in lower high school completion rates. • Reduced Focus on Equity & Inclusion – Ineffective leadership may lead to a lack of targeted supports for diverse student populations, including Indigenous, EAL (English as an Additional Language), and students with disabilities. • Decreased Student Engagement & Well-being – Weak leadership may result in fewer extracurricular activities, social-emotional supports, and mental health resources, leading to disengagement. • Higher Absenteeism & Dropout Rates – Without proactive attendance strategies and student intervention supports, absenteeism and dropouts may increase. • Ineffective Use of Data for Student Improvement – Schools may lack direction on analyzing and responding to assessment data, leading to missed opportunities for student growth. • Reduced Career & Post-Secondary Readiness – Without a strong focus on career education, work experience programs, and post-secondary transitions, students may be unprepared for future pathways. • Gaps in Early Years & Foundational Learning – Inconsistent implementation of early years assessments and interventions can negatively impact long-term student success. • Loss of Parent & Community Confidence in Schools – If student outcomes decline, families may seek alternative education options, impacting enrollment and school funding. • Mitigation Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintain Focus on Data-Driven Decision-Making – Ensure administrators and teachers use student data (e.g., literacy and numeracy assessments) to guide instruction and interventions. 				

- **Strengthen Student Support Services** – Maintain a focus on mental health, attendance, and academic interventions to support vulnerable students.
- **Ensure Professional Development for Staff** – Continue training in structured literacy, numeracy, and differentiated instruction to maintain instructional effectiveness.
- **Prioritize Equity & Inclusion Initiatives** – Ensure targeted support for diverse learners, including Indigenous, EAL, and students with disabilities.
- **Maintain Strong Community Partnerships** – Collaborate with local businesses, post-secondary institutions, and community organizations to enhance student learning opportunities.
- **Enhance Career & Post-Secondary Planning** – Support career education, work placements, and graduation coaching to improve student transitions.
- **Regularly Communicate Progress to Stakeholders** – Keep families, staff, and the Board informed about student achievement goals and improvement efforts.
- **Continue Early Years Interventions** – Support Kindergarten readiness programs and early literacy initiatives to build strong foundational skills.
- **Monitor and Address Attendance & Engagement Trends** – Implement proactive strategies to reduce absenteeism and increase student participation in learning.

Likelihood

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.

Board Implications:

- Trustees must continue to support and oversee the Director’s role in ensuring alignment with GSSD’s values, mission, and strategic priorities. Regular performance evaluations and structured discussions will ensure the Director continues to lead effectively in achieving divisional and provincial goals.
- Quick Talking Points
 - The Director of Education is essential to the Good Spirit School Division, acting as the executive leader who ensures high-quality education, operational stability, and strategic growth. The role includes:
 - **Strategic Leadership:** Overseeing division-wide planning, student success initiatives, and governance compliance.
 - **Educational Excellence:** Ensuring every student has access to safe, inclusive, and high-achieving learning environments.
 - **Operational and Financial Management:** Maintaining fiscal responsibility and resource allocation to meet division priorities.
 - **Community & Stakeholder Engagement:** Collaborating with provincial, local, and Indigenous partners to strengthen GSSD’s educational impact.

Administration Implications:

- The Director provides leadership and direction to school administrators, ensuring that they are equipped to support student success and operational efficiency. This role is crucial for advancing the Division’s goals while maintaining accountability and sustainability.

Financial Information:

- The Director of Education plays a pivotal role in financial management and strategic allocation of resources within the Good Spirit School Division (GSSD). Their responsibilities directly influence budget priorities, financial sustainability, and operational efficiencies.
- Budget Oversight & Strategic Planning
 - The Director assures that the \$90.5 million GSSD budget aligns with the division's educational priorities and the Provincial Education Plan. Their role is not only to oversee financial expenditure but also to balance fiscal responsibility with student success. Key decisions include:
 - Allocating resources to high-impact areas, such as classroom instruction, student services, and teacher professional development.
 - Managing financial risks, including fluctuating enrolments, funding uncertainties, and capital infrastructure costs.
 - Setting financial priorities and ensuring funds are directed toward initiatives that improve student learning, equity, and inclusion.
- Leadership in Administrative Expenditures
 - The Director directly influences the administration salary budget, which grew by \$317,000 in 2024-25 due to salary adjustments and staffing changes. This includes:
 - Supervising the Senior Administration Team, ensuring leadership effectiveness and operational efficiency.
 - Managing administrative costs, balancing the need for leadership positions (e.g., Superintendents, HR, Indigenous Education) with fiscal responsibility.
- Operational Efficiency & Cost Management
 - The Director plays a crucial role in ensuring operational efficiency across all aspects of the division. They lead initiatives to:
 - Maximize financial resources while maintaining service quality.
 - Control administrative spending to ensure funds are directed to student learning and school-based needs.
 - Implement cost-saving measures, such as internal funding for capital projects to reduce reliance on debt.
- Advocacy & Government Relations
 - The Director is the primary advocate for GSSD's funding needs, working with the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders to:
 - Secure adequate government funding and grants for the division.
 - Justify budget allocations in alignment with provincial funding models.
 - Respond to provincial directives, ensuring compliance with education funding requirements.
- Accountability & Financial Transparency
 - The Director ensures that GSSD meets financial accountability standards by:
 - Overseeing budget reporting and financial statements.
 - Ensuring compliance with auditing requirements and Ministry expectations.
 - Supporting data-driven decision-making, using financial analysis to guide spending and program effectiveness.
- The Director of Education is the key financial strategist for GSSD, responsible for ensuring fiscal sustainability while prioritizing student achievement. Their decisions shape the division's budget priorities, administrative expenditures, operational efficiencies, and government relations, directly impacting the education quality provided. Without effective leadership in this role, financial mismanagement and resource inefficiencies could hinder the division's long-term success.

- The Director of Education is the most influential financial and strategic leader within the Good Spirit School Division (GSSD). Their ability to align budget priorities with student success, operational efficiencies, and compliance requirements ensures that the Board fulfills its governance mandate effectively.
- An effective Director of Education is not an expense but an investment. The Director drives financial stability, student achievement, and operational excellence while ensuring the Board fulfills its fiduciary and governance responsibilities. Without strong leadership in this role, GSSD risks financial inefficiencies, funding losses, and reputational damage that could undermine its long-term success.

Respectfully submitted,

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