



Connections:
Saskatchewan's Boards of Education
Vision Engagement Report



Submission to the Minister of Education
Prepared by the Saskatchewan School Boards Association
September 2019

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL



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Hon. Gordon Wyant
Deputy Premier and Minister of Education
Legislative Building
2405 Legislative Dr.
Regina, Sask., S4S 0B3

RE: Connections: Saskatchewan's Boards of Education Vision Engagement Report

Dear Minister Wyant,

In the spring of 2019, boards of education in Saskatchewan undertook extensive engagements with the public in support of the co-construction of a shared vision for education and a Provincial Education Plan beyond 2020. Saskatchewan's 27 school boards conducted more than 300 engagements, connected with more than 10,500 people across the province and received more than 36,500 comments.

The findings emphasize one overarching theme: Connections. Clear is the need to enhance and expand connections in the following three areas: Connections Among People and Relationships; Connections Between Systems and Structures; and, Connections to the Future and Navigating Technology. These themes are not new for Saskatchewan's education sector. In fact, they've been raised consistently over decades in the province as discovered in a review of foundational documents in the sector that was conducted in conjunction with this project. These re-occurring themes, and perhaps enduring strategies, persist over time, directing the education sector to attend to Indigenous education; to authentically engage and develop relationships between students, staff, parents, and community; to continuously develop relevant curriculum delivered by educators employing high-quality instructional strategies; to foster partnerships within and beyond the education sector and collaborate to support students' diverse needs; to give special consideration to the importance of early years education and Pre-Kindergarten; and, to create smooth transitions and pathways between systems to enable student success.

The recurrence of these themes over decades in the province should create a sense of urgency for all education partners in the province. As we continue to co-construct a vision for education and a provincial education plan beyond 2020, the sector faces a unique challenge, an incredible opportunity and a collective responsibility to act. The challenge – to identify the barriers that have impeded the education sector from successfully attending to these themes over time. The opportunity – to implement the strategies that will focus the education sector in the province on making the necessary Connections. The responsibility – to move forward with bold actions and a courageous vision for the future of education in this province based on what we've collectively heard, known and affirmed. With that in view, boards of education respectfully submit the following report. With many voices from across Saskatchewan, locally elected school boards are committed to the next stages of collaboration with the education partners in co-constructing a renewed vision for education in the province. Our member boards are calling for a commitment to continued engagement and shared accountability in guiding the future of the education system.

Thank you for your consideration of these findings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shawn Davidson'.

Dr. Shawn Davidson
President

INTRODUCTION: WHO WE SERVE

School boards are elected to govern Kindergarten to Grade 12 education in their school divisions and are essential members of local government. They ensure that the wishes of the community are reflected in the division's schools and make decisions that shape education in Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA) is a democratic and voluntary membership organization that supports boards in this very important work.

The 27 locally elected boards of education in this province engaged in a shared process about the future of education, which meant that the questions were consistent, but the approach of each board differed. This autonomy helped to bring forth the diverse and complex local circumstances of the students and communities they serve. The findings of the tens of thousands of local voices school boards heard from are captured in this report. The process began with conversations between education partners related to the future of publicly funded education in Saskatchewan. Recognizing that the plan guiding sector work was coming to conclusion, the sector partners began to reflect and work towards a shared vision for education beyond 2020. Each partner organization was responsible to carry out a consultation process with its members and stakeholders. SSBA staff worked to analyze and identify themes from data submitted from engagements held across the province by school divisions and by the SSBA. The findings are based on more than 300 engagement sessions involving more than 10,500 people – these included students, teachers and staff members, parents and family members, elders, community members, businesses, trustees and other elected officials and more. The passion and commitment for our education system in this province is evidenced in the more than 36,500 comments shared.

With many and diverse views represented, one theme emerged as common and foundational to the future of education in Saskatchewan: *Connections*. This report explores how this thread runs through the many ideas about the education system in the province that were identified and explored by thousands of people who engaged with this process.

The SSBA and its member boards present the following three main findings for consideration in working toward a shared vision and plan for education to guide collective efforts over the next decade:

- **Connections Among People and Relationships**
- **Connections Between Systems and Structures**
- **Connections to the Future and Navigating Technology**

Accountability to Who We Serve

- **Boards of education want to ensure there is a governance structure and process in place for accountability and oversight of the plan beyond 2020 that respects and includes local and provincial authority for education.**

BACKGROUND

In fall 2013, Directors of Education, First Nations educational authorities and the Ministry of Education set out to create the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP). Released in 2014, the ESSP is a plan to 2020 containing ambitious goals to improve student outcomes (reading, writing, math and graduation rates, as well as early-learning transitions), particularly for First Nations and Métis students. The goals were primarily derived from the provincial government's Saskatchewan Plan for Growth. Boards of education approved the ESSP and the Government of Saskatchewan accepted the ESSP.

In 2017, after significant funding cuts, uncertainty and multiple reviews in education, locally elected school boards, along with sector partners, were focused on the future and called for a renewed commitment to collaborative processes that included boards, partners, teachers and staff, moving forward on policy and goal development, legislation review, curriculum renewal and a plan for beyond 2020. In 2018, Deputy Premier and Minister of Education Gordon Wyant asked the Ministry to work collaboratively with stakeholders to begin developing, through a comprehensive research and consultation process, a shared vision for the education system in Saskatchewan.

A Provincial Education Plan Planning Team (Planning Team) was struck to guide the work. The Planning Team includes representatives from: Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN); League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents of Saskatchewan (LEADS); Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) / Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI); Ministry of Education; Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC); Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials (SASBO); Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA); and, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF).

An important first step took place in fall 2018 in Saskatoon, where more than 260 representatives from about 80 organizations came together for a Provincial Education Summit to begin developing the path for education to follow over the next 10 years. Organizations included representatives from, but not limited to: Pre-K to Grade 12 system, post-secondary system, First Nations organizations, Métis Nation, community, business, New Canadians organization, union, industry and provincial government. The theme of the two-day summit was *Shaping the Future of Education: A Shared Vision*.

Feedback from the Summit was synthesized and draft themes emerged. The important next step was to engage with the public and seek input going forward. The education sector partners worked together in the development and implementation of an engagement plan that included in-person engagements and an on-line survey. Interjurisdictional research is also being conducted and a review and analysis of foundational documents was also completed.

Focus of This Report

- **The findings of the engagements led by boards of education is the focus of this report and it is intended to provide local voice and representation into the process of co-constructing a framework for a future Provincial Education Plan for 2020 and beyond.**

FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

At the onset of the Planning Team’s work, a discussion occurred regarding foundational or direction-setting documents that have been written for Saskatchewan’s K-12 education system in recent decades. The intent in reviewing these documents was to determine key themes that emerge and remain over time for the sector in Saskatchewan. These sustaining themes would then be situated alongside the findings from the new engagement sessions as important pillars for the partners to remain mindful of while developing the vision and plan for 2020 and beyond.

Within the context of the four key questions being considered through the consultation process (described in the “Approach” section of this report), the Ministry of Education reviewed and completed summaries on 20 foundational documents, while the SSBA reviewed and completed analysis on nine additional documents (all foundational documents are listed in Appendix A). Building upon this, the SSBA conducted a further analysis of the content of all summaries and foundational documents to identify key themes that have remained notable over time, including:

- **Engagement and Relationships**
- **Indigenous Education**
- **Partnerships and Collaboration**
- **High Quality Instruction**
- **Relevant Curriculum**
- **Transitions and Pathways**

FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS -- THEMES	AEPAC 2005-2007	Building Communities of Hope	Building Partnerships	C21 (two documents)	Canada 2067	CCL	CMEC	Ed Governance Advisory Panel	Ed Governance Review Report	Education Equity Task Force	Finding the Balance	FNMEPAC	Howe Report	Inspiring Success	JTF	MIN-S Submission to JTF	OECD	Provincial Panel on Student Achievement	Role of the School Task Force	SASBO Project Plan	School ^{PLUS} Final Report	Strengthening Our Voice	Student First	Toward School ^{PLUS} High Schools	Toward School ^{PLUS} SCCs	TransformSK	TRC	Trends Shaping Education 2019 – OECD	TOTAL
Engagement and Relationships (parents, community, community schools, early learning programs, personal supports, communication, etc.)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	25
Indigenous Education (reconciliation, equity, inclusion, language, culture, etc.)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	22
Partnerships and Collaboration (levels of government, post-secondary, First Nations and Métis, business, etc.)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	21
High-Quality Instruction (professional development, teacher education, representative workforce, etc.)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	18
Relevant Curriculum (core academics, character education, entrepreneurship, digital literacy, financial literacy, STEM, life skills, global citizenship, etc.)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	16
Transitions and Pathways (between systems, career guidance, etc.)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	10

APPROACH

Overview

Education partners were tasked with engaging stakeholders to inform the development of a new vision and education plan. Consultation materials were created by the Planning Team to guide the process. The consultation process consisted of engaging stakeholders around four key questions:

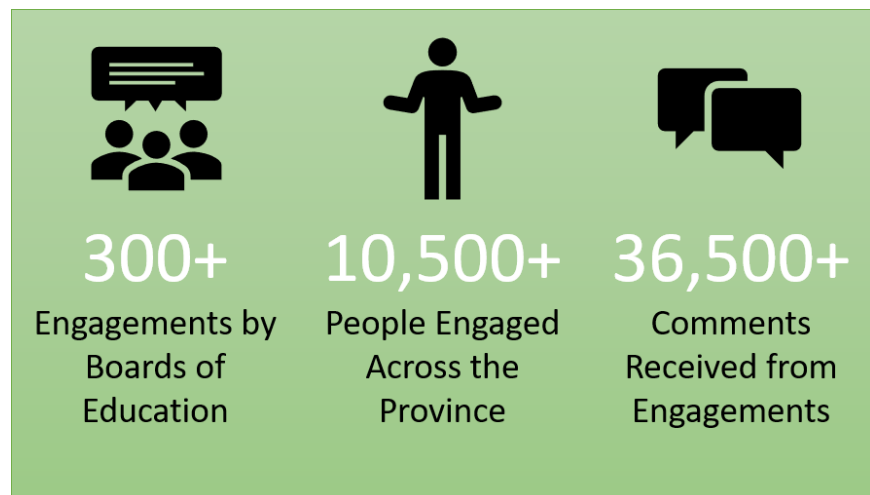
- 1. What knowledge, skills and abilities do students need to be prepared for their future life and learning? Why are these important?**
- 2. What gets in the way of student success and well-being?**
- 3. What is working well now in Saskatchewan's school system that prepares students for their future?**
- 4. What needs to change in Saskatchewan's school system to better prepare students for their future?**

Stakeholders were also asked to review the eight themes that emerged from the summit, to comment on which themes were most important and to identify if there were themes missed.

Data Collection

To guide this work, the SSBA formed a Working Advisory Group (WAG) consisting of: two Co-Chairs, Janet Kotylak (SSBA Executive Southern Constituency Representative) and Jaimie Smith-Windsor (SSBA Executive Central Constituency Representative); Dr. Shawn Davidson (SSBA President); Alpha Barry (representing the Francophone board); Duane Favel (representing Northern boards); Ray Morrison (representing Urban Public boards); and, Lisa Rathgeber (representing Catholic boards).

In February 2019, board chairs and designated project leads were brought together and the consultation process for boards of education was launched. Boards were provided with the consultation materials to conduct engagement sessions from February through May. Boards were asked to identify opportunities already in-place for engagements.



In total, Saskatchewan's boards of education conducted more than 300 engagements, involving more than 10,500 people and resulting in more than 36,500 comments.

APPROACH

Data Collection (continued)

Boards were also asked to include any relevant engagement data from work with stakeholders during the past 24 months. Two boards provided such information. The Public and Catholic sections of the SSBA also provided submissions. The SSBA conducted one engagement session with Government MLAs and one with Opposition MLAs. Taken together, the board of education and additional engagements provided the data for analysis informing this report submitted by the SSBA on behalf of school boards. (The raw data from board of education engagements, with personal identifiers redacted, is attached to this report via a link in Appendix B.)

The following chart provides estimates for board of education and additional engagements.

Division Name	Groups Engaged	# of Engagement Sessions	# of People Engaged	# of Comments Received
Conseil scolaire	Board, Parents, Staff, Students, Community	3	129	1,065
Chinook	Board, SCCs, Staff	2	215	469
Christ the Teacher	Board, Parents, SCCs, Staff, Students	20	250	507
Creighton	Parents, SCCs, Staff, Local Authorities	1	16	310
Good Spirit	N/A	3	N/A	855
Holy Family	Board, Parents, Teachers, Faith Community	5	46	64
Holy Trinity	Parents, Staff, Students	2	84	1,137
Horizon	Parents, Staff, Students, Community	1	168	583
Ile a la Crosse	Public Meeting	1	60	332
Light of Christ	Board, Parents, Staff, Community	1	16	177
Living Sky	SCCs, Parents, Staff, Students, Young Adults, Community	3	269	677
Lloydminster Catholic	Parents, Staff, Community	7	40	363
Lloydminster Public	Parents, Staff	3	165	98
North East	SCCs, Local Organizations	1	30	182
Northern Lights	Parents, Staff, Students, Local Authorities	10	147	1,307
Northwest	Parents, Staff, Students, Community	19	200	108
Prince Albert Catholic	Parents, Staff	8	300	335
Prairie South	SCCs, Local Authorities	2	171	388
Prairie Spirit	Encouraged participation in provincial survey	N/A	N/A	N/A
Prairie Valley	Board, SCCs, Staff, Students, Community, Elders	16	325	2,412
Regina Catholic	Board, SCCs, Parents, Staff, Students, Faith Community	9	319	2,246
Regina Public*	SCCs, Parents, Staff, Students, Community	3	325	795
Saskatchewan Rivers	SCCs, Staff, Students, Elders	5	160	152
Saskatoon Catholic	SCCs, Staff, Students	29	453	2,306
Saskatoon Public*	Board, SCCs, Staff, Students, Community, Local Authorities	40	5,500	12,465
South East Cornerstone	Parents, Staff, Students, Community	72	873	7,077
Sun West	SCCs, Staff, Students, Colony Schools	42	300	87
Additional Engagements	Public Section Trustees, Catholic Section Trustees, Government MLAs and Staff, Opposition MLAs and Staff	4	127	169
TOTAL		312	10,688	36,616

* conducted engagements using own question format

APPROACH

Data Analysis

SSBA staff conducted the analysis of the data that was submitted. The analysis included identifying patterns or themes, organized around the four key questions in the consultation process. SSBA staff read each comment and coded comments by each of the four questions into themes that emerged.

The following charts provide the analysis and scoring by themes. Higher scores indicate more submissions identified the same or similar themes within the submitted data. These charts indicate which submissions identified specific themes (conclusions drawn from the scoring and rankings will be explored in the “Findings” section of this report).

A total of six themes were identified for Question 1, with Core Academic Subjects; Life Skills Contemporary; and, Character Education identified in the most submissions.

Question 1 - What knowledge, skills and abilities do students need to be prepared for their future life and learning? Why are these important?	Conseil scolaire	Chinook	Christ the Teacher	Creighton	Good Spirit	Holy Family	Holy Trinity	Horizon	Ile a la Crosse	Light of Christ	Living Sky	Lloydminster Catholic	Lloydminster Public	North East	Northern Lights	Northwest	Prince Albert Catholic	Prairie South	Prairie Valley	Regina Catholic	Regina Public	Saskatchewan Rivers	Saskatoon Catholic	Saskatoon Public	South East Cornerstone	Sun West	Additional Engagements	TOTAL
Core Academic Subjects (math, reading, literacy, science, practical and applied arts)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	3	28
Life Skills Contemporary (critical thinking, budgeting, people and comms skills, tech, transitions, entrepreneurship)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2	27
Character Education (resilience, empathy, taking responsibility, citizenship, respect, compassion, diversity, social justice, leadership, faith)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2	26
Mental Health / Wellness (mind and body)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	24
Life Skills Traditional (vehicle maintenance, meal prep, cooking)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		21
Language / Culture (identity, reconciliation)	*				*				*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		14

A total of 12 themes were identified for Question 2, with Mental Health and Wellness; Basic Needs; and, Technology Distraction and Misuse identified in the most submissions.

Question 2 - What gets in the way of student success and well-being?	Conseil scolaire	Chinook	Christ the Teacher	Creighton	Good Spirit	Holy Family	Holy Trinity	Horizon	Ile a la Crosse	Light of Christ	Living Sky	Lloydminster Catholic	Lloydminster Public	North East	Northern Lights	Northwest	Prince Albert Catholic	Prairie South	Prairie Valley	Regina Catholic	Regina Public	Saskatchewan Rivers	Saskatoon Catholic	Saskatoon Public	South East Cornerstone	Sun West	Additional Engagements	TOTAL
Mental Health and Wellness (stress, anxiety, pressure, intergenerational trauma)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	26
Basic Needs (poverty, housing, food)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2	26
Technology Distraction and Misuse	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	25
Inadequate Personal Supports (home, financial, teen pregnancy)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		23
Perceptions of Academic Performance and Policies (no failure, entitlement of expectations by parents)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2	23
Attendance / Low Engagement / Transiency (sense of belonging)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	21
Addictions	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		19
Lack of Flexibility in School Structure (programs available in small schools / rural, inflexible staff, compulsory courses)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	19
Curriculum and Instruction (curriculum outdated and irrelevant, teacher lack of tech use)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		15
Bullying (safety)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		13
Student-Teacher Relationships	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	11
Racism / Discrimination	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		10

APPROACH

Data Analysis (continued)

A total of 13 themes were identified for Question 3, with Programs, Initiatives and Reconciliation; Relationships; and, Division Supports identified in the most submissions.

Question 3 - What is working well now in Saskatchewan's school system that prepares students for their future?	Conseil scolaire	Chinook	Christ the Teacher	Creighton	Good Spirit	Holy Family	Holy Trinity	Horizon	Ile a la Crosse	Light of Christ	Living Sky	Lloydminster Catholic	Lloydminster Public	North East	Northern Lights	Northwest	Prince Albert Catholic	Prairie South	Prairie Valley	Regina Catholic	Regina Public	Saskatchewan Rivers	Saskatoon Catholic	Saskatoon Public	South East Cornerstone	Sun West	Additional Engagements	TOTAL
Programs / Initiatives / Reconciliation (TRC, FTV, FNMI, work placement, Indigenous studies, inclusion, Pre-K, French immersion)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2	28
Relationships (education partners, community, staff-student, staff-staff, staff-parents / community, SCCs, teacher commitment)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2	27
Division Supports (PD, elders, intensive needs, collaboration time, appropriate class size)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	23
Student First (student centered learning, breakfast programs, safe school environments)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		22
Sports and Extracurricular	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		19
Effectively Using Data and Technology	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		19
Engagement (community-school partnerships, student engagement, relationships [student-staff-family], SCCs)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		19
Ancillary Programs and Partnerships (day care, driver's ed, university programs, ABE, MyBlueprint)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	19
Focus on Core Academics	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		17
Individualized Learning and Instruction (effective teaching strategies)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		15
Character Education	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		13
Local Board Autonomy (local context, decision-making)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	12
Faith Education / Parent Choice (homeschooling)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	10

A total of 15 themes were identified for Question 4, with Responsive and Student-Centred Curriculum; Adequate Funding; and, Expanded Students Supports identified in the most submissions.

Question 4 - What needs to change in Saskatchewan's school system to better prepare students for their future?	Conseil scolaire	Chinook	Christ the Teacher	Creighton	Good Spirit	Holy Family	Holy Trinity	Horizon	Ile a la Crosse	Light of Christ	Living Sky	Lloydminster Catholic	Lloydminster Public	North East	Northern Lights	Northwest	Prince Albert Catholic	Prairie South	Prairie Valley	Regina Catholic	Regina Public	Saskatchewan Rivers	Saskatoon Catholic	Saskatoon Public	South East Cornerstone	Sun West	Additional Engagements	TOTAL
Responsive and Student-Centred Curriculum (more relevant and flexible programs / curricula, work placements, budgeting and money management, pathways)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2	28
Adequate Funding (intensive needs, EAs, PTR, PD, facilities, early years)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	3	28
Expanded Student Supports (supports for learning, early intervention, transitions, expanded mental health programs)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	25
Expanded Community Services (role of the school and engagement, hub model, community schools, partnerships, housing, interministerial cooperation)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2	25
Technology (education and access)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		22
Student Attendance and Accountability	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	20
Improving Instruction and Relationships (use of data)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		20
Role of Parents and Engagement	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		19
Character Education	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	17
Local Board Autonomy (local taxation, unique needs, decision-making)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		16
Language / Culture / Reconciliation	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		15
Student Engagement	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		12
Improve Societal Value on Education	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		12
Teacher Wellbeing	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	8
Teacher Recruitment and Preservice (representative workforce)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		6

APPROACH

Data Analysis (continued)

Generally, most engagements focused on the four key questions described in this section. However, two school boards that submitted engagement information utilized their own system of questions. Additionally, some engagements focused on only certain questions or combined questions.

The SSBA's analysis sought to distribute comments among emergent themes in relation to the four key questions – these efforts were supported by the organization, categorization and summation that was in some cases already provided by various divisions through their processes.

Estimations of engagement participation are generally low as information was not available in some categories for some engagements. Overall, these findings have been validated by school divisions as described in the following sub-section.

Validity

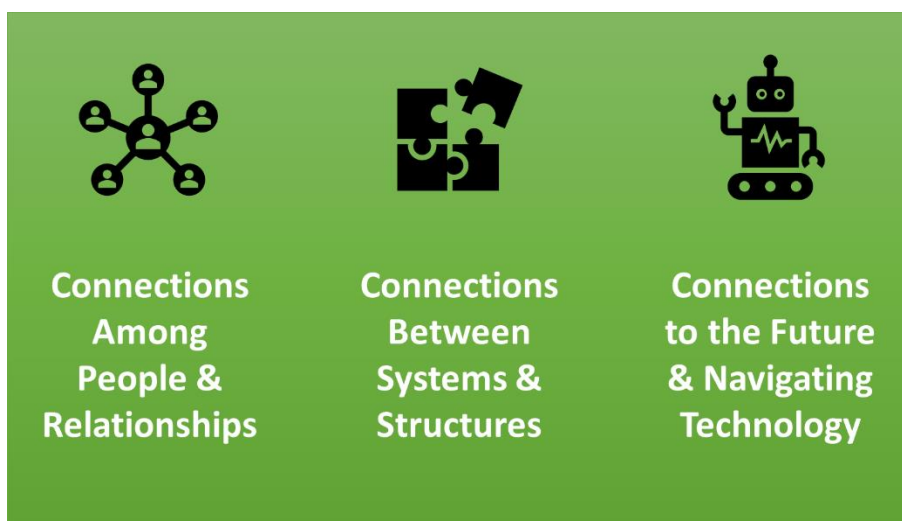
Validity in the SSBA submission was attained in the following ways:

- **A representative Working Advisory Group (WAG) provided oversight to this work.**
- **Participation was voluntary in the engagement sessions conducted by boards of education, Public and Catholic sections and the SSBA.**
- **Notes were recorded during the engagement sessions and were submitted to the SSBA. These formed the data analyzed for the SSBA submission.**
- **When completed, the data analysis was shared with boards of education to identify any concerns or suggest edits.**
- **The WAG and Board Chairs' Council were engaged in the development of this report and boards of education received a draft for review, feedback and verification.**
- **This submission was ultimately approved by the SSBA Executive on behalf of Saskatchewan's boards of education.**

FINDINGS

Main Findings – Connections

Taken together, analysis of the themes identified most often across engagements can be summed up in one word: *Connections*. More specifically, all the themes identified from the engagements support the following three categories of main findings: Connections Among People and Relationships; Connections Between Systems and Structures; and, Connections to the Future and Navigating Technology. Connections Among People and Relationships refers to interpersonal connections, while Connections Between Systems and Structures refers to organizational connections, and Connections to the Future and Navigating Technology reflects forward-looking connections.



Every theme identified from engagements supports one or more of these main findings and the top themes identified in relation to each of the four questions asked in engagements support all three of these main findings.



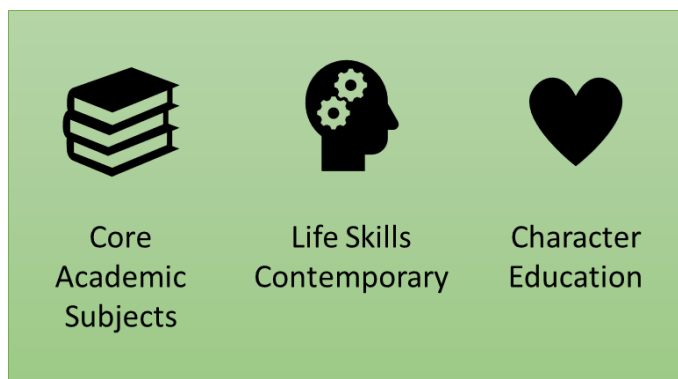
FINDINGS

Question 1

Question 1 asked “**What knowledge, skills and abilities do students need to be prepared for their future life and learning? Why are these important?**”. The three

themes identified most often across engagements were: Core Academic Subjects (includes comments related to math, reading, literacy, science, practical and applied arts, etc.); Life Skills Contemporary

(includes comments related to critical thinking, budgeting, people and communications skills, technology, transitions, entrepreneurship, etc.); and, Character Education (includes comments related to resilience, empathy, taking responsibility, citizenship, respect, compassion, diversity, social justice, leadership, faith, etc.). All these themes support the three main findings of Connections Among People and Relationships, Connections Between Systems and Structures and Connections to the Future and Navigating Technology.



Question 1 - What knowledge, skills and abilities do students need to be prepared for their future life and learning? Why are these important?	TOTAL	Connections Among People and Relationships	Connections Between Systems and Structures	Connections to the Future and Navigating Technology
Core Academic Subjects (math, reading, literacy, science, practical and applied arts)	28	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Life Skills Contemporary (critical thinking, budgeting, people and comms skills, tech, transitions, entrepreneurship)	27	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Character Education (resilience, empathy, taking responsibility, citizenship, respect, compassion, diversity, social justice, leadership, faith)	26	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mental Health / Wellness (mind and body)	24	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Life Skills Traditional (vehicle maintenance, meal prep, cooking)	21	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language / Culture (identity, reconciliation)	14	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional themes identified under Question 1 included: Mental Health and Wellness (includes comments related to health of the mind and body, etc.); Life Skills Traditional (includes comments related to vehicle maintenance, meal preparation, cooking, etc.); and Language and Culture (includes comments related to identity, reconciliation, etc.).

FINDINGS

Question 2

Question 2 asked “What gets in the way of student success and well-being?”. The three themes identified most often across engagements were: Mental Health Issues (includes comments related to stress, anxiety, pressure, intergenerational trauma, etc.); Basic Needs (includes comments related to poverty, housing, food, etc.); and, Technology Distraction and Misuse (includes comments related to cell phones, video games, etc.). The Mental Health and Basic Needs themes support all three main *Connections* findings, while Technology supports the main finding of Connections to the Future and Navigating Technology.



Question 2 - What gets in the way of student success and well-being?	TOTAL	Connections Among People and Relationships	Connections Between Systems and Structures	Connections to the Future and Navigating Technology
Mental Health Issues (stress, anxiety, pressure, intergenerational trauma)	26	☑	☑	☑
Basic Needs (poverty, housing, food)	26	☑	☑	☑
Technology Distraction and Misuse	25			☑
Inadequate Personal Supports (home, financial, teen pregnancy)	23	☑	☑	
Perceptions of Academic Performance and Policies (no failure, entitlement of expectations by parents)	23	☑	☑	
Attendance / Low Engagement / Transiency (sense of belonging)	21	☑	☑	
Addictions	19	☑	☑	
Lack of Flexibility in School Structure (programs available in small schools / rural, inflexible staff, compulsory courses)	19		☑	
Curriculum and Instruction (curriculum outdated and irrelevant, teacher lack of tech use)	15	☑	☑	☑
Bullying (safety)	13	☑	☑	
Student-Teacher Relationships	11		☑	
Racism / Discrimination	10	☑	☑	

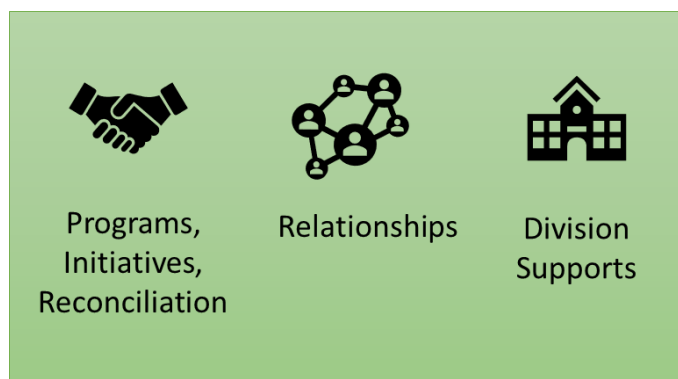
Additional themes identified under Question 2 included: Inadequate Personal Supports (includes comments related to home life, financial circumstances, etc.); Perceptions of Academic Performance and Policies (includes comments related to no-failure policies, entitlement, expectations of parents, etc.); and, Attendance, Low Engagement and Transiency (includes comments related to sense of belonging, etc.) Six other themes were also identified across lower numbers of engagements.

FINDINGS

Question 3

Question 3 asked “What is working well now in Saskatchewan’s school system that prepares students for their future?”. The three themes identified most often across engagements were: Programs, Initiatives and Reconciliation (includes comments related to Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Following their Voices, First Nations and Métis education, Indigenous studies, work

placements, pre-Kindergarten, French immersion, etc.); Relationships (includes comments related to relationships among staff, students, parents, community, etc.); and, Division Supports (includes comments related to professional development, elders, intensive needs, class size, etc.). The Programs, Initiatives and Reconciliation theme supports all three main *Connections* findings, while the other two themes support the findings of Connections Among People and Relationships and Connections Between Systems and Structures.



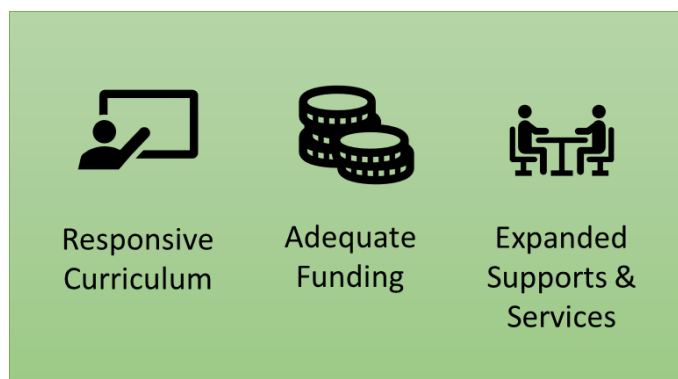
Question 3 - What is working well now in Saskatchewan’s school system that prepares students for their future?	TOTAL	Connections Among People and Relationships	Connections Between Systems and Structures	Connections to the Future and Navigating Technology
Programs / Initiatives / Reconciliation (TRC, FTV, FNMI, work placement, Indigenous studies, inclusion, Pre-K, French immersion)	28	✓	✓	✓
Relationships (education partners, community, staff-student, staff-staff, staff-parents / community, SCCs, teacher commitment)	27	✓	✓	
Division Supports (PD, elders, intensive needs, collaboration time, appropriate class size)	23	✓	✓	
Student First (student centered learning, breakfast programs, safe school environments)	22	✓	✓	
Sports and Extracurricular	19		✓	
Effectively Using Data and Technology	19			✓
Engagement (community-school partnerships, student engagement, relationships [student-staff-family], SCCs)	19	✓	✓	
Ancillary Programs and Partnerships (day care, driver’s ed, university programs, ABE, MyBlueprint)	19		✓	✓
Focus on Core Academics	17	✓		✓
Individualized Learning and Instruction (effective teaching strategies)	15	✓		✓
Character Education	13	✓	✓	✓
Local Board Autonomy (local context, decision-making)	12	✓	✓	
Faith Education / Parent Choice (homeschooling)	10	✓	✓	✓

Additional themes identified under Question 3 included: Student First efforts; Sports and Extracurricular programs; Effectively Using Data and Technology; and, Engagement at various levels. Six other themes were also identified across lower numbers of engagements.

FINDINGS

Question 4

Question 4 asked “What needs to change in Saskatchewan’s school system to better prepare students for their future?”. The two themes identified most often across engagements were: Responsive and Student-Centred Curriculum (includes comments related to more relevant and flexible programs, work placements, money management, pathways, etc.) and Adequate Funding (includes comments related to intensive needs, educational assistants, student-teacher ratios, facilities, early years, etc.). The themes of Expanded Student Supports and Expanded Community Services were equally identified third-most under Question 4. The top two themes support all three main *Connections* findings, while Expanded Student Supports supports Connections Among People and Relationships and Connections Between Systems and Structures; and, Expanded Community Services supports Connections Between Systems and Structures.



Question 4 - What needs to change in Saskatchewan’s school system to better prepare students for their future?	TOTAL	Connections Among People and Relationships	Connections Between Systems and Structures	Connections to the Future and Navigating Technology
Responsive and Student-Centred Curriculum (more relevant and flexible programs / curricula, work placements, budgeting / money management, pathways)	28	☑	☑	☑
Adequate Funding (intensive needs, EAs, PTR, PD, facilities, early years)	28	☑	☑	☑
Expanded Student Supports (supports for learning, early intervention, transitions, expanded mental health programs)	25	☑	☑	
Expanded Community Services (role of the school and engagement, hub model, community schools, partnerships, housing, interministerial cooperation)	25		☑	
Technology (education and access)	22	☑	☑	☑
Student Attendance and Accountability	20	☑		
Improving Instruction and Relationships (use of data)	20	☑		☑
Role of Parents and Engagement	19	☑		
Character Education	17	☑		☑
Local Board Autonomy (local taxation, unique needs, decision-making)	16	☑	☑	
Language / Culture / Reconciliation	15	☑	☑	
Student Engagement	12	☑		
Improve Societal Value on Education	12		☑	
Teacher Wellbeing	8	☑		
Teacher Recruitment and Preservice (representative workforce)	6	☑		

Additional themes identified under Question 4 included: Technology; Attendance and Accountability; and, Improving Instruction and Relationships (including through use of data). Eight other themes were also identified across lower numbers of engagements.

FINDINGS

Provincial Eight Themes

Most participating boards who conducted engagement sessions utilized the four questions (two used their own question formats.) In addition to the four questions, engagements were supported with materials related to eight themes that were identified provincially through discussions at the education summit in 2018.

Fewer than half of engagement sources provided feedback on these themes in addition to comments on the four questions. Among those that did provide feedback, most indicated support for the eight themes generally. In some engagements, respondents discussed emphasizing certain themes over others or suggesting certain themes should be merged or separated.

It is therefore difficult to conclude if the findings described in this report support the eight themes.

EIGHT THEMES -- CONNECTIONS	Connections Among People and Relationships	Connections Between Systems and Structures	Connections to the Future and Navigating Technology
1. Graduation requirements are current and flexible, preparing students for their futures		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. The education system is equitable and sustainable		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3. Early learning and literacy are foundational to future learning and success		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Indigenous languages, cultures and identities are affirmed and reconciliation is advanced	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Inclusive and safe school environments support diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Strength-based approaches support mental health and well-being	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
7. Curriculum, instruction and assessment are relevant, engaging and culturally affirming	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Students, parents, teachers and communities are engaged in respectful relationships	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

However, the eight themes do relate to the *Connections* findings of this report.

FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS AND CONNECTIONS

The intent in reviewing foundational documents was to honour the previous work and to compare the themes with those from the engagement sessions that occurred as part of the current work.

Indeed, there are re-occurring themes, and perhaps enduring strategies, that persist over time. These have consistently directed Saskatchewan's K-12 education sector to attend to Indigenous education; to authentically engage and develop relationships between students, staff, parents, and community; to continuously develop relevant curriculum delivered by educators employing high-quality instructional strategies; to foster partnerships within and beyond the education sector and collaborate to support students' diverse needs; to give special consideration to the importance of early years education and Pre-K; and, to create smooth transitions and pathways between systems to enable student success.

These same, or similar, themes emerged again through the engagements of boards of education in this process and align directly to the *Connections* findings described in this report.

FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS -- CONNECTIONS	TOTAL	Connections Among People and Relationships	Connections Between Systems and Structures	Connections to the Future and Navigating Technology
Engagement and Relationships (parents, community, community schools, early learning programs, personal supports, communication, etc.)	25	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Indigenous Education (reconciliation, equity, inclusion, language, culture, etc.)	22	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Partnerships and Collaboration (levels of government, post-secondary, First Nations and Métis, business, etc.)	21		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
High-Quality Instruction (professional development, teacher education, representative workforce, etc.)	18	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Relevant Curriculum (core academics, STEM, life skills, character education, entrepreneurship, digital literacy, financial literacy, global citizenship, etc.)	16		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Transitions and Pathways (between systems, career guidance, etc.)	10		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Seeing repetition in these themes presents both challenge and opportunity to education partners. The challenge is to identify the barriers that impede the sector from successfully attending to these themes. The opportunity is to learn from previous attempts and develop and adapt strategies that will focus Saskatchewan's education sector in ways to successfully address the necessary *Connections*.

CONCLUSION: WHAT WE HEARD

Recommendations

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association and its locally elected members look forward to continued engagement and shared accountability in guiding the future of publicly funded education in Saskatchewan. In moving forward toward the development of a shared vision and plan for beyond 2020, school boards will provide leadership and bring forth local voice in education.

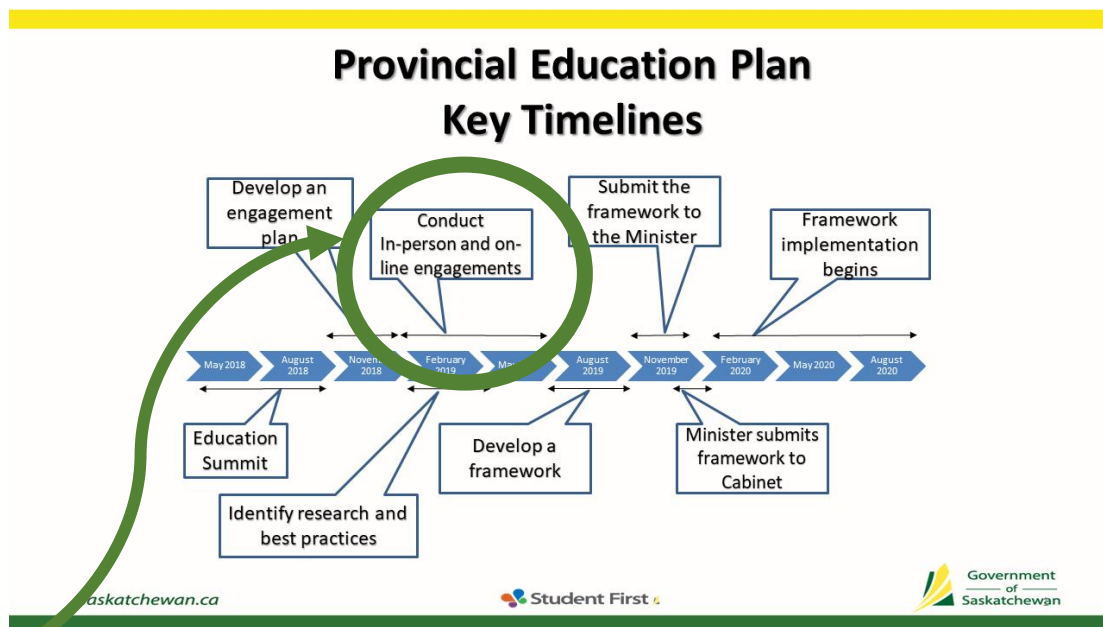
The need to enhance and expand *Connections* in education is clear. Boards are committed to bringing forth the following recommendations. These recommendations have been distilled from the engagement findings and foundational documents described in this report, with the guidance of the of the Education Vision Working Advisory Group, in order to contribute some initial concrete suggestions for the education sector as the co-construction of a new plan for education evolves.

- **Connections Among People and Relationships**
 - Adopt, in every school in Saskatchewan, community education philosophy and practices to create a welcoming environment where students, staff, parents and communities are engaged in the pursuit of student achievement.
 - Commit (by all education partners) to actions to address reconciliation in the development of the new education vision and provincial plan.
 - Strengthen the communication and engagement around student achievement by making student success reporting more meaningful and consistent for students, parents and families.
- **Connections Between Systems and Structures**
 - Create an advisory panel (that includes student and parent voices) on the delivery of student supports to align efforts between different ministries, agencies and partners to ensure that every child has what they need to succeed in our schools.
 - Ensure there is sufficient, predictable and sustainable funding for publicly funded education.
 - Ensure there is a governance structure and process in place for accountability and oversight of the plan beyond 2020 that respects and includes local and provincial authority for education.
- **Connections to the Future and Navigating Technology**
 - Renew graduation requirements and create more diverse pathways and opportunities for students to graduate.
 - Create responsive and student-centred curriculum and resources and expand innovative instructional practices.
 - Conduct an external expert review and analysis of the outcomes of the Education Sector Strategic Plan that concludes in 2020 to invite ideas, validation, verification and global direction for the plan being developed for beyond 2020.
 - Create an ongoing task force (that includes student and parent voices) to look at evidence-based recommendations and leading practices for technology opportunities and appropriate use.
 - Modernize the provincial Goals of Education and *The Education Act*.

CONCLUSION: WHAT WE HEARD

Next Steps

School boards are committed to continuing to improve education in the interests of all students. We want to ensure we are creating an environment for success and working together – and believe strongly boards of education and the SSBA play a key role in supporting future success. The SSBA and our member boards know that the delivery of education is complex. We value and respect the role of all education and community partners and strongly believe that the path forward is about listening to what we have heard and working together to adapt and change for the benefit of all students.



- The work described in this *Connections* report represents the conducting of engagements by school boards as input into the process of developing a new plan for the future of education. This report culminates this part of the process for boards of education and will lead into the next stages of the vision and plan development, with many voices from throughout Saskatchewan to provide direction.

APPENDIX A

List of Foundational Documents (in alphabetical order)

- 2015-2020 Project Plan – SASBO First Nation and Métis Engagement. Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials (SASBO). 2018.**
- Bridging the Aboriginal Education Gap in Saskatchewan: Eric Howe for Gabriel Dumont Institute. 2011.**
- Building Communities of Hope: Effective Practices for Meeting the Diverse Learning Needs of Children and Youth – Community Schools Policy and Conceptual Framework. Saskatchewan Learning. 2004.**
- Building Partnerships: First Nations and Métis Peoples and the Provincial Education System – Policy Framework for Saskatchewan’s Prekindergarten to Grade 12 Education System. Saskatchewan Learning. 2003.**
- Canada 2067 Learning Roadmap. Let’s Talk Science. 2017.**
- Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). Information taken from: Global Competencies; CMEC Indigenous Education Plan 2016-2019; and CMEC Strategic Plan 2017-2021.**
- Educational Governance Advisory Panel Review: Kindergarten to Grade 12. March 2017.**
- Educational Governance Review Report – Kindergarten to Grade 12. Perrins. 2016.**
- Finding the Balance. Boughen. 2003.**
- First Nations and Métis Education Provincial Advisory Committee: Final Report to the Minister of Education. June 2013.**
- Inspiring Success: First Nations and Métis Education Policy Framework. Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. 2018.**
- Provincial Panel on Student Achievement: Final Report. Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. February 2010.**
- Redefining How Success is Measured in First Nations, Inuit and Métis Learning: Canadian Council on Learning. 2017. The State of Aboriginal Learning in Canada: A Holistic Approach to Measuring Success. Canadian Council on Learning. 2009.**
- Restructured Saskatchewan School Division Boundaries – Report of the Education Equity Task Force to the Minister of Learning. Herron, Batters, & Klassen. 2004.**
- School^{PLUS}: A Vision for Children and Youth: Task Force and Public Dialogue on the Role of the School Final Report. February 2001.**

APPENDIX A

Securing Saskatchewan's Future: Ensuring the Well-Being and Educational Success of Saskatchewan's Children and Youth. Provincial Response – Role of the School Task Force Final Report. Government of Saskatchewan. 2002.

Shifting Minds 3.0: Redefining the Learning Landscape in Canada. C21 Canada. 2015.

Shifting Minds: A 21st Century Vision of Public Education for Canada. C21 Canada. 2012.

Strengthening Our Voice: A Guide for Engaging First Nations and Métis Peoples in Public Schools. Saskatchewan School Boards Association and Gabriel Dumont Institute.

Student First Engagement Discussion Guide: Ministry of Education. September 2014.

Submission to the Joint Task Force on Improving First Nations and Métis Education and Employment Outcomes. Métis Nation-Saskatchewan. February 2013.

The Future of Education and Skills: Education 2030: The Future We Want. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2018.

The Learning Community in Aboriginal Education: Priorities Report, 2005-2007. Aboriginal Education Provincial Advisory Committee. March 2005.

The Upstream Economy: A Generational Dialogue for Transformative Change. Saskatchewan Construction Association; Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce; Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan; Saskatchewan Mining Association; Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters. 2017.

Toward School^{PLUS}: Empowering High Schools as Communities of Learning and Support. Saskatchewan Learning. 2005.

Toward School^{PLUS}: Policy Directions for School Community Councils – Provincial Response to the Local Accountability and Partnerships Panel, Final Report. Saskatchewan Learning. 2005.

Trends Shaping Education 2019. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2019.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. 2015.

Voice, Vision and Leadership: A Place for All. The Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment Outcomes for First Nations and Métis People Final Report. March 2013.

APPENDIX B

Submissions Data

<https://saskschoolboards.ca/publications/reports/vision-engagement-report-submissions-data/>

