

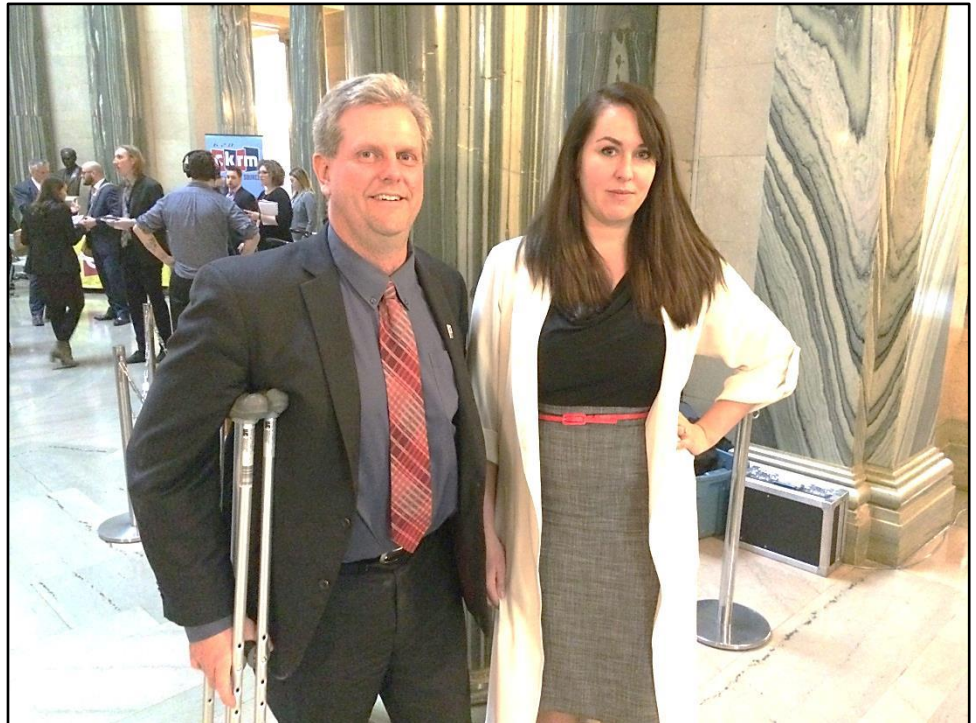
SSBA Responds to 2017-18 Provincial Budget for Saskatchewan

Reduced funding for education in Saskatchewan as a result of the 2017-18 provincial budget will limit the ability of boards of education to mitigate impacts to the classroom, according to the president of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA).

“School boards in Saskatchewan will be dealing with significant challenges as a result of reductions in this provincial budget,” Dr. Shawn Davidson, president of the SSBA, said on Mar. 22 when the provincial budget was released.

“While boards each have unique needs and circumstances, inflation and enrolment pressures – combined with the restraint measures in place as a result of the increasingly difficult provincial fiscal situation this past year – will have an impact,” he added.

Boards of education have partnered with the Government of Saskatchewan to work towards the priorities in the Education Sector Strategic Plan and the Saskatchewan Plan for Growth and the SSBA’s member boards want to continue to engage and collaborate to ensure



SSBA President Dr. Shawn Davidson and Vice-President Aleana Young attend at the Provincial Legislature on Mar. 22. President Davidson gave interviews to numerous media outlets in reaction to the 2017-18 budget.

education is the best it can be for students in our province.

“School boards will continue to do everything in their power to ensure students are not negatively affected, but every decision boards

of education make can affect the classroom,” Davidson said. “Our member boards firmly believe that all students should have the resources they need to succeed,

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SSBA Responds to 2017-18 Provincial Budget (continued)

→ regardless of where they live or their personal circumstances.

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association continues to work with its member school boards to understand how the budget is affecting them. There are 28 school boards in the province, each with unique circumstances, and they are continuing to identify what the budget will mean for them.

“Education is the most important investment for our province,” Davidson said. “School boards recognize that our province is in a challenging fiscal situation, but our

member boards believe that there must be continued investment in students and education to ensure a strong future for our province.”

Investment in education over recent years has increased primarily for capital projects and this certainly has helped with the aging infrastructure and growth many school divisions are dealing with, Davidson noted.

He thanked the province for continued commitment to preventative maintenance and renewal funding that was included in the 2017-18 budget.

Regarding education governance, the SSBA heard clearly in recent months from Saskatchewan residents that people want to keep school boards locally elected and keep decision-making close to the communities served.

The SSBA and its member boards know the government heard the same messages and are pleased that a broad commitment was made along with the budget announcement to preserve school boards in the province as democratically elected by the local communities they serve.

Statements on Education Funding Cuts and Bill 63

The following statements were made to media in Regina by SSBA President Dr. Shawn Davidson on April 7, 2017.

On Education Funding Cuts in Saskatchewan:

“We have some great concerns about some of the things that are going to be happening in the upcoming months as school divisions make difficult decisions connected to this year’s budget. We want the public to understand that all of the member boards around this province are going through a process right now where they are making those difficult decisions and we are very hopeful that all of our partners in education will respect those decisions and understand the situation that has been handed to us.

“As boards currently have the responsibility to make decisions surrounding the allocation of resources for their school divisions, we have been given resources that are considerably less than they were last year. In fact, our per-student funding on average across the province is down almost \$500 a student for the upcoming school year. That’s really significant. And we think it would be remiss of our organization not to let the public know that this is going to cause some pain.

“The decisions don’t come easy. And when there are cutbacks, they are felt by our kids and by our classrooms. We are here to represent the public and to advocate for the kids. We understand what the province is experiencing financially and we’ll work through this, but we owe it to the public to let them know that we are going to find more efficiencies – we’re working on that every day – but we’re not going to find \$55 million worth. There will be changes. That’s the reality.”

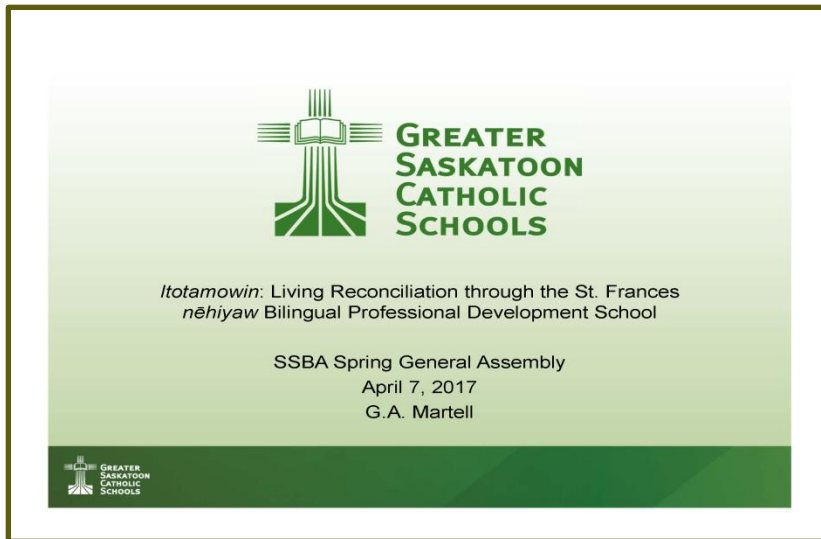
On Bill 63, *The Education Amendment Act, 2017*:

“Bill 63, in essence, moves away the responsibilities of boards from law, which must be changed during the day in a legislative process, into regulations, which are essentially the rules that can be changed in the dark. We have some grave concerns with that. The bill also significantly enhances the responsibilities of the Minister. Had boards been consulted from the beginning on this, Bill 63 would not look as it does.

“We hope we will have opportunity to work with the Ministry and the Minister in coming up with a bill that amends *The Education Act* in a way that works for boards and works for government. All we’re asking for is to be involved to ensure the law that governs education is appropriate for school division governance. Essentially, the act has preserved elected boards as existing; what it has not preserved is the responsibilities of those elected boards. When that happens, elected boards become the face of public education, instead of the voice of public education.

“We heard loud and clear through the consultation process that the public wants elected trustees to be the voice of the public in public education. We are committed to continue to do that, but we fear that an act that moves away those responsibilities will not effectively preserve boards in being that true voice. We’ve got, as trustees, those connections to the places we live and the communities we represent – and it is vital those connections be preserved in law, permanently.”

Showcasing Reconciliation in Saskatchewan Education



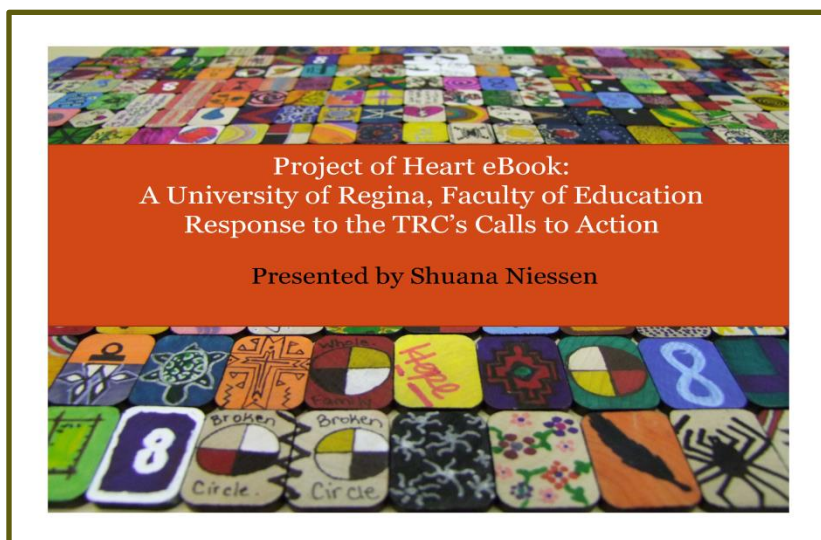
Greater
Saskatoon
Catholic
Schools

<http://saskschoolboards.ca/wp-content/uploads/Showcasing-Reconciliation-Saskatoon-Catholic.pdf>



Prairie
Valley
School
Division

<http://saskschoolboards.ca/wp-content/uploads/Showcasing-Reconciliation-Prairie-Valley.pdf>



University of
Regina,
Faculty of
Education

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"The mission of the SSBA is to provide leadership, coordination and services to member boards of education to support student achievement."

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Dr. Shawn Davidson

Vice-President:

Aleana Young

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Duane Favel

Catholic Constituency:

Jerome Niezgoda

Central Constituency:

Jaimie Smith-Windsor

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Calendar Update

Upcoming Events in 2017:

Employee Benefits Plan Seminar

May 10-12

<http://saskschoolboards.ca/event/ebp-seminar-may17/>

National Trustee Gathering on Aboriginal Education & CSBA Congress

July 5-8

<http://csba2017.ca/>

For more information, see the SSBA website under [Events](#).

Spring General Assembly

Keynote Address:

Are School Boards Essential for an Effective Democracy?

Dr. Murray Scharf and Dr. Herve Langlois



Dr. Herve Langlois and Dr. Murray Scharf pose with SSBA President Dr. Shawn Davidson after a keynote presentation to the SSBA's Spring General Assembly in Regina on April 6. Dr. Scharf is a former Dean of Education at the University of Saskatchewan and Dr. Langlois is a former Deputy Director of Education with Saskatoon Public Schools and a former employee of the SSBA. They presented an address entitled "Are School Boards Essential for an Effective Democracy?"