

The School Trustee

SSBA Reacts to 2024-25 Budget Announcement

The 2024-25 provincial budget is expected to help school boards catch up on growth and to offer a path forward to providing stability in the sector, but whether this budget ultimately leads to a level of funding that is sustainable and provides much-needed investment will be determined by boards as they unpack the numbers.

“School boards have long been calling for predictability, sustainability and investment in education,” Jaimie Smith-Windsor, president of the SSBA, said on budget day. “This budget acknowledges enrolment growth, inflationary costs, non-teacher

salaries, rising costs of fuel, and includes unprecedented plans for multi-year funding, which is welcome and will support boards in planning for the future.”

“School boards are dealing with the pressures of a growing province, which is a good thing, but we need facilities and operating budgets to support increasing numbers of students,” said Smith-Windsor.

“With record growth comes challenges in terms of diversity and we know education funding needs to keep pace with both growth and diversity in our province.”

Increased operating dollars for classroom supports will help meet

needs that differ from community to community and division to division throughout the province.

“This is the kind of budget we need to see on a regular basis to ensure stability,” said Smith-Windsor, noting that inflation continues to be a significant pressure throughout the province. “The multi-year commitment for classroom supports represents a floor, not a ceiling, for funding.”

The SSBA will be working with its member boards going forward to understand the implications of their budgets in the local context. Boards are now preparing their budgets for the 2024-25 school year.

National School Food Program

WHAT IS THE ISSUE AND THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SASKATCHEWAN?

We believe in the critical importance of a vibrant school food program to reduce the impacts of food insecurity and poverty and ensure children are not hungry or worried about their next meal. Canada is the only G7 country without a national school food program.

A 2022 Statistics Canada report found:

- Almost 1.8 million children live in households struggling to afford the food they need.
- Saskatchewan has the 2nd highest child poverty rate among the provinces, with 19.7% of children experiencing poverty.

SOLUTIONS:

- **Dedicated federal funding** to support a National School Food Program. We know that provinces and territories are ready to work out agreements with the federal government on a cost-shared National School Food Program (described by students in school boards).
- **Governmental commitment to school food and student nutrition** through resources from both federal and provincial governments to work with boards of education that are already positioned to respond, provide and implement locally designed food programs that meet the needs of our school communities.
- **Community by community approach** to continue leveraging and building upon the many existing partnerships along with cultural and spiritual expertise.

Universal Full-Time Kindergarten

WHAT IS THE ISSUE AND THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SASKATCHEWAN?

Early childhood education plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of our children and our province. Currently, Saskatchewan is one of only two provinces/territories that do not provide funding for universal full-time kindergarten. Lack of the kindergarten program in Saskatchewan is a barrier to providing a path for young children to attend school and to meet the needs of our province's growing population.

The opportunity to improve upon the current level of funding for universal full-time kindergarten is a critical issue for Saskatchewan schools and the province as a whole.

SOLUTIONS:

- **Strategic shift** in commitment to the highest quality of universal full-time kindergarten in the province of Saskatchewan.
- **Funding sufficient** to ensure that all school boards can provide high-quality, full-time kindergarten in their K-12 budgets.

BENEFITS OF FULL-TIME KINDERGARTEN:

- Children are better prepared for school.
- Improved communication skills.
- Enhanced social skills.
- Stronger language development.
- Improved cognitive skills.
- Enhanced social skills.

Our members adopted a resolution in 2023 to advocate with the Canadian School Boards Association for the development of provincial and national healthy, universal, cost-shared school food programs, funded by the federal and provincial governments in consultation with all school boards.

Our members adopted a resolution in 2023 to advocate provincially to the Minister of Education for a commitment to improving early learning outcomes in Saskatchewan by allocating sufficient resources to fund universal full-time kindergarten in all Saskatchewan schools.

View our one-pager on the [SSBA website](#).

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SSBA Services

Did you know that members of the SSBA have access to high-quality, cost saving, professional services that support good governance, board development and advocacy through a collective voice? Some of these services include the following:

Employee Benefits Plan

The SSBA Employee Benefits Plan is available to all permanent non-teaching employees and to trustees of member boards. The plan's group insurance offers a full range of Life, Disability, Health and Dental benefits to member school boards and their employees across Saskatchewan. The products have been uniquely customized over the years to fit the needs of school boards and the education sector. The SSBA is the third-party administrator and the policyholder responsible for the management of the plan on behalf of participating member school boards. In addition to offering the benefits plan, the SSBA Employee Benefits Services team administers the plan and its policies, communicates and coordinates information and updates about the plan, supports school divisions with their benefit plan administration, and offers presentations and seminars on the Employee Benefits Plan and related topics. For more information on the benefits plan or to inquire about seminars, please visit the [SSBA website](#).



Jeff McNaughton
*Director,
Employee Benefits and
Insurance Plans*

General Insurance Plan

The SSBA General Insurance Plan offers member boards group insurance coverage. The strength of the program comes from the large number of boards participating, allowing spread of risk, sharing of resources, and optimizing purchasing power. In addition to offering the insurance coverage, the SSBA Insurance Plan provides many services including managing the annual insurance renewal, administering insurance claims, providing risk management and loss prevention support to school divisions, and offering presentations and seminars on insurance and risk related topics. For more information or to inquire about presentations, please visit the [SSBA website](#).



Innocent Ihenyen
*Manager,
General Insurance Plan*

Legal Services

SSBA Legal Services comprises a small team of lawyers and a Senior Consultant, Employee and Labour Relations, who provide advice to member boards in areas specific to the education sector. Legal Services provides advice and support to boards of education on a variety of issues, including employment and labour law issues, student issues, parent issues, family law issues, accommodation and human rights matters, investigations, discipline, termination, matters arising under The Education Act, 1995 and its regulations, privacy and access (LAFOIP), board of education matters including conflict of interest, SCC, school closures, Charter questions, collective bargaining, contracts, and other legal matters with a unique educational component. For more information about Legal Services, please visit the [SSBA website](#).



Jolene Horejda
*Director of
Legal Services*

2024 Saskatchewan School Boards Association **Spring General Assembly**

Members gathered in Saskatoon in April.
Presentations are available on the SSBA website.



*President's Address,
Jaimie Smith-Windsor*



*Executive Director's Address,
Darren McKee*



*Greetings, Hon. Jeremy
Cockrill, Minister of Education*



*Keynote Speaker
Murray Mandryk,
Regina Leader-Post*



*Saskatchewan
Broadband Action
Committee*



*Land-Based Learning:
Ile-a-la-Crosse School
Division*



*Working Towards a
National School Food
Policy in Canada: Dr.
Rachel Engler-Stringer*



*Equitable Education for Students
with Reading Disabilities: Sask.
Human Rights Commission, Chief
Commissioner Trena Sikora*



*Student Assessment in
Saskatchewan: Dr. Scott Tunison*



Learning From Each Other



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

President:

Jaimie Smith-Windsor

Vice-President:

Dr. Shawn Davidson

Catholic Constituency:

Jerome Niezgoda

Central Constituency:

Christine Gradin

Conseil scolaire fransaskois Constituency:

Élizabeth Perreault

Indigenous Constituency:

Kimberly Greyeyes

Northern Constituency:

Nathan Favel

Southern Constituency:

Robert Bachmann

Urban Public Constituency:

Donna Banks

Executive Director:

Darren McKee

Board Development and

Indigenous Education:

Ted Amendt, PhD

Communications and Strategic Services:

Jill Welke

Corporate Services:

Catherine Vu

Employee Benefits and Insurance Plans:

Jeff McNaughton

Legal Services:

Jolene Horejda

Saskatchewan School Boards Association

400-2631 28th Ave.,

Regina, Sask., S4S 6X3

Phone: 306-569-0750

Fax: 306-352-9633

Email: admin@saskschoolboards.ca

The School Trustee is published approximately five times per year (September to June).

If you would prefer to receive *The School Trustee* by hard copy, please contact the Association at the email address above.

Calendar Update

Upcoming application / submission due dates in 2024:

National Reconciliation Partnership Award

May 15

Education Scholarships

Aug. 31

Award of Distinction and Premier's Award

Sept. 30

Association Activity



The 2024 General Insurance Plan Seminar was held in Saskatoon in March. 32 delegates from 23 school divisions were in attendance. Areas covered included water loss mitigation strategies, fire safety and prevention in buildings, student accident insurance coverage/limitations, and GIP post renewal.



In April, the SSBA met with Métis Nation-Saskatchewan President Glen McCallum (R) and Darryl Bazylak, Director of Education (L). Also pictured are SSBA President Jaimie Smith-Windsor and Indigenous Constituency Representative Kimberly Greyeyes.