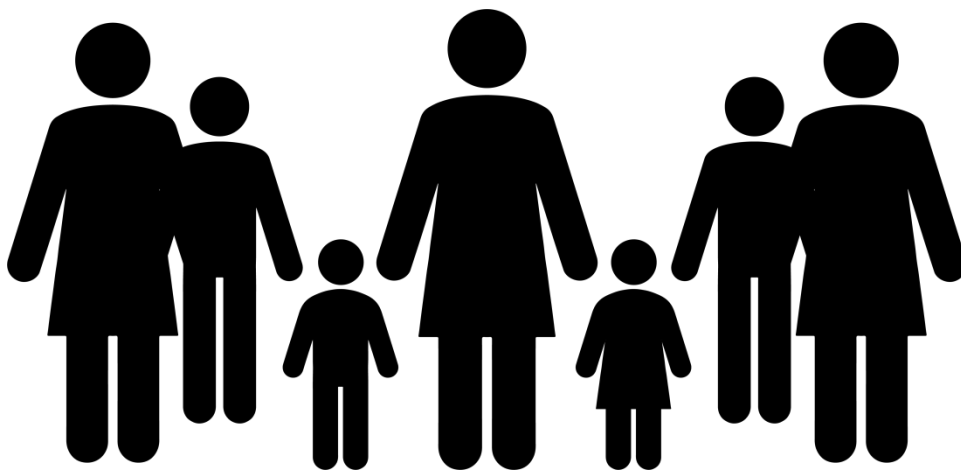


Public Engagement Informs SSBA Submission

Thousands of Saskatchewan residents provided the Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA) with responses that informed the organization's submission to the panel that is reviewing the governance of education in the province.

The SSBA encouraged people to "add their voice" to discussions happening about the future of the education sector based on the Government of Saskatchewan's "transformational change" agenda. The SSBA's two-point position – that school boards should remain locally elected and decisions should be made close to the communities they affect – was embraced and supported by many of the thousands of residents who liked, shared, commented and otherwise engaged with the campaign.

"Communities care deeply about the education system in our province and that was evident to us in the responses we received," said Dr. Shawn Davidson, president of the SSBA. "The valuable insights we gathered echoed what school board trustees hear every day in their work



The SSBA encouraged individuals and groups to share information and thoughts on the importance of local and community voice in education.

serving the residents they are elected to represent."

In addition to the feedback received from social media, meetings, letters, emails, etc., more than 1,400 people clicked through from social media and other forums to complete a brief online survey seeking endorsement of the SSBA's position. About 93 per cent agreed that boards should remain locally elected and about 93 per cent agreed that decision-making about

education should remain near to the communities affected. About 700 survey respondents also provided specific comments about their views. Highlights from those comments were distributed to media and are included on the next page of this newsletter.

"School boards are committed to continuing to improve education in the interests of all students and we think 'transformational change' is

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Public Engagement Informs SSBA Submission (continued)

→ best achieved through the success we are seeing with the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) and other initiatives – and not by eliminating local, democratic decision-making,” said Davidson. “We were buoyed to find broad support for this position among our constituents and will be taking forward their views.”

The SSBA provided an official submission to the panel appointed by Deputy Premier and Minister of Education Don Morgan to review options for education governance. Those options were summarized in

December in a report by governance expert Dan Perrins, who included cautions about the potential consequences of amalgamating school divisions and appointing boards instead of electing them. Other independent experts have also raised concerns.

“The longest-lasting and most-fundamental responsibility of school boards over the past 100 years has been to bring the voice of the public to public education,” said Davidson. “The decisions being made now about school board governance could drastically change the

historical roles in our system and the future of education.”

Members of the public were encouraged to continue adding their voice to the important discussion.



SSBA “Add Your Voice!” Survey – Highlighted Comments

- “Each community has a unique culture that is only really understood by people who live, work and recreate there. This culture is mirrored in the schools. Our school boards need to understand and support the unique characteristics of the community.”
- “I am a teacher and am deeply concerned about the possibility of school boards being amalgamated.”
- “Locally elected trustees and school boards are critical to the governance process necessary to ensure local student needs are met and to ensure senior level officials are held accountable to supporting these needs effectively. We are seeing improvement in student learning and in efficiencies sector-wide. This practice needs to be maintained and a shift away will not support the growth the province is experiencing.”
- “I am in a support role and work with staff and students on the front lines. There is no one model or delivery method that works for every scenario and situation. Local boards are best at understanding the unique requirements of their communities and are therefore most qualified to implement education within their areas.”
- “As a principal from a rural school, I see no benefit in moving the boards farther away from the communities.”
- “Right now, local school board members see our children as children and if we change that I am almost sure my child will become just another number on a piece of paper. Things are going great as they are. Why try to fix something that is not broken? Leave well alone and keep our local school boards.”
- “Boards must represent local interests and must be elected. I believe that is called democracy.”
- “As a mother of two small children that will be entering the school system soon and as a teacher, it irritates me when I hear that there is consideration that school districts will amalgamate even more than they already are. I live in a very small rural area and even though we are small, we have an opinion, a voice, and our children’s education is very important.”
- “We must all work together to maintain our local school boards who support the complex and diverse needs of our schools, and most importantly, the needs of our students.”
- “I appreciate having a locally elected official as a school board trustee so that when there is an issue in my child’s school, I know who to talk to about it. A local face makes you feel someone is going to bat for you versus someone the government puts in place who may not understand the demographics of my area.”
- “A province-wide school board does not know what the smaller communities need. Locally elected school boards keep their finger on the pulse of what is happening in the schools. You take them away, you take away what students really need.”
- “Education is an investment and I believe the local taxpayer continues to pay between 50 per cent and 60 per cent of the cost of education in this province. As long as local ratepayers are paying the education portion of property tax, they should be choosing who governs the education system locally.”
- “If decisions are taken away from locally elected boards, many communities will be forgotten.”
- “Nothing is more inefficient than centralized bureaucracies that evade public input.”

Governance Report Echoes Concerns Heard by School Boards

The Educational Governance Review Report by Dan Perrins released in December raised concerns consistent with what school boards were hearing across the province about further forced amalgamations of divisions and the elimination of democratically and locally elected trustees.

“We have heard clearly from our communities that local voice and locally elected representation is important in education,” said Dr. Shawn Davidson, president of the SSBA. “We have heard that school divisions are big enough, especially for a province like ours that has such a large geographic area and unique local needs to consider.”

Community voice and locally elected boards contribute to a more democratic and transparent education system. Saskatchewan already has the fewest boards and fewest board members in western Canada. There are 60 boards in British Columbia, 63 in Alberta, 37 in Manitoba and 28 in Saskatchewan.

“The report describes a shared view in the sector that the focus needs to stay on student outcomes and the work of the Education Strategic Sector Plan,” Davidson said, referring to the sector-wide plan introduced in 2014 with the support of all boards and the government, and which is beginning to see successes.

“Our member boards couldn’t agree more and are willing to work together towards collective results. Mr. Perrins identified many of the challenges education faces and we feel strongly that the focus should be on ideas to strengthen and improve governance and not on

significant restructuring that doesn’t save money and is very disruptive for students and school communities,” Davidson added.

Davidson thanked Mr. Perrins for his work in preparing the report and listening to stakeholders. He also noted that school boards support – and, in many cases, are already working on – ideas from the report for optimizing and enhancing governance. Those include improving efficiency and consistency; preserving and strengthening the voice of communities; and, continuing to focus on student outcomes.

“We will continue this conversation and bring the voice of the communities represented by our

province’s 28 diverse boards of education to both the online submission process and the panel appointed by Deputy Premier and Minister of Education Don Morgan to conduct this consultation,” Davidson said. “Education belongs to community, school boards matter and governance matters.”

For more than 100 years, the longest lasting and most fundamental responsibility of locally elected school boards in Saskatchewan has been to bring the voice of the public to publicly funded education so that all children – regardless of where they live or their personal circumstances – have the resources and supports they need to achieve and succeed.



The report by Dan Perrins on governance in the education system for the province of Saskatchewan presented four options for the future of the sector. It also describes the context and the changing environment. It also outlines key challenges as well as the considerations Perrins used in developing and analyzing those options, noted its letter of transmittal.

Mosaic Extreme School Makeover Challenge 2017

THE **Mosaic** EXTREME SCHOOL MAKEOVER CHALLENGE IS BACK!



YOUR SCHOOL COULD WIN 1 OF 10 PRIZES OF
\$10,000!

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association and The Mosaic Company are thrilled to announce that The Mosaic Extreme School Makeover Challenge is back! Once again Mosaic has generously provided **\$100,000 in total cash prizes.**

Schools are invited to submit nutrition-related action plans prior to April 17th, 2017. Entries will be judged on the quality of nutritional programming, as well as potential benefits and impact on the school community. Upon completion of judging, **10 successful schools will be selected to receive a \$10,000 cash prize.**

For more information about The Mosaic Extreme School Makeover Challenge, or to download an application form, visit saskschoolboards.ca.



Spring Members' Council – Feb. 2-3, 2017



SSBA President Dr. Shawn Davidson addressed trustees gathered for Members' Council in Regina.



Attendees listened to greetings from Hon. Don Morgan, Deputy Premier and Minister of Education.



A SASBO panel discussed School Division Efficiencies. Members were Curt Van Parys and Elena Chase, Regina Catholic Schools; Kevin Garinger, Kim Junk and Marilyn Flaman, Horizon School Division.

Presenters at 2017 Spring Members' Council

Hon. Don Morgan – Greetings



Deputy Premier and Minister of Education

Ray Morrison – Presentation



Education Governance Review Panel Chair

Curt Van Parys – SASBO Panel



Regina Catholic Schools CFO

Dr. Shawn Davidson – Address



SSBA President

Darren McKee – Remarks



SSBA Executive Director

Jeff McNaughton – Insurance 101



SSBA Employee Benefits and Insurance Plans

School for New Trustees – Jan. 11-13, 2017



Newly elected board members participated in a “Get to know each other activity” during the Introductory Session of the School for New Trustees in Saskatoon.



Attendees listened to the President's remarks.



An Education Partners panel presented. Its members included: Rob Currie, Ministry of Education; Gwen Dueck, STF; Naomi Mellor, SASBO; Bill Cooke, LEADS.

Dr. Shawn Davidson



SSBA President

Darren McKee



SSBA Executive Director



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

President:

Dr. Shawn Davidson

Vice-President:

Aleana Young

Aboriginal Constituency:

Duane Favel

Catholic Constituency:

Jerome Niezgoda

Central Constituency:

Jaimie Smith-Windsor

Conseil scolaire fransaskois Constituency:

Martin Prince

Northern Constituency:

Joe Daigneault

Southern Constituency:

Janet Kotylak

Urban Public Constituency:

Donna Banks

Executive Director:

Darren McKee

Communications Services:

Jill Welke

**Corporate Services and
Enterprise Risk Management:**

Catherine Vu

**Employee Benefits
and Insurance Plans:**

Jeff McNaughton

First Nations and Métis Education:

Jamie Lerat

**School Board Development,
Strategic Human Resources
and Legal Services:**

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

Calendar Update

Upcoming Events in 2017:

Spring General Assembly

Apr. 6-7

Regina (DoubleTree)

Employee Benefits Plan Seminar

May 10-12

Saskatoon (Sheraton Cavalier)

For more information, see the SSBA website under Events.

SSBA Aboriginal Council

Aboriginal Council Strategic Planning Session



Presentation to Education Governance Review Panel

