



Government  
of  
Saskatchewan  
Minister of Education  
Legislative Building  
Regina, Canada S4S 0B3

JAN 23 2023

Jaimie Smith-Windsor, President  
Saskatchewan School Boards Association  
JSmith-Windsor@saskschoolboards.ca

Dear Jaimie Smith-Windsor: 

Thank you for your letter dated November 28, 2022, containing the three resolutions concerning the Ministry of Education that were adopted by the Saskatchewan School Boards Association's (SSBA) membership at their November 14, 2022 Annual General Meeting.

Our ministry has reviewed these three resolutions and provides the following responses:

**Resolution 22-05 – Bring awareness to the impacts of poverty on Saskatchewan students and prioritize poverty reduction advocacy in Saskatchewan schools.**

The Ministry applauds the SSBA's resolution to prioritize poverty reduction advocacy in Saskatchewan schools to help identify supports and reduce the impacts of poverty on education, thus helping students achieve success and break the negative cycles of poverty.

The Ministry continues to support *Taking Action on Poverty: The Saskatchewan Poverty Reduction Strategy*, which was released in February 2016. This strategy, led by the Ministry of Social Services, focuses on six priority areas: Income Security; Housing and Homelessness; Early Childhood Development and Child Care; Education, Skills Training and Employment; Health and Food Security; and Vulnerable Families and Individuals.

Saskatchewan's Early Years Plan is a key component of Saskatchewan's Poverty Reduction Strategy. Led by the Ministry of Education, this strategy aims to help all children be safe, healthy and develop to their full potential in strong families and supportive communities.

... 2

Some of the substantial progress made on realizing the elements of the plan includes province-wide expansion of the Maternal Wellness Program by the Ministry of Health; creation of child care centre spaces in communities across the province; development of supports to improve the quality of care provided by licensed child care; and, the creation of fifteen Early Years Family Resource Centres.

With funding made available through the *Canada-Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement*, Saskatchewan has:

- reduced parent fees by 70 per cent on average making life more affordable for Saskatchewan families;
- allocated 3,402 new child care spaces in 59 communities and added 598 additional spaces for application by centres;
- opened 1,166 new home spaces in regulated family and group family child care homes (April 1, 2021 to October 31, 2022);
- provided free Early Childhood Educator training opportunities in 2021-22 and 2022-23; and,
- created child care supports for vulnerable children.

This funding increases access to affordable, high-quality early learning and child care opportunities allowing parents to participate in the workforce or continue their education.

**Resolution 22-06 – SSBA Executive to begin discussions with the Ministry of Education to make joint recommendations relative to the education mill rate.**

The education property tax system (EPT) in Saskatchewan was redesigned and property taxes were lowered significantly in 2009. The province cut and capped EPT rates (mill rates) by setting province-wide tax rates for each of the three major property classes - residential, commercial, and agricultural. In turn, the provincial government substantially increased its share of funding to school divisions.

The Ministry of Education does not make recommendations to government regarding the determination of EPT revenue. The total EPT levied by the province is recommended by the Ministry of Finance, with the support of the Ministry of Government Relations, and is decided by Cabinet through the government's annual budget cycle.



Government has a number of revenue sources, including multiple sources of taxation, non-renewable revenue resources, and federal transfers that it uses to fund the operations of government. While EPT is one source of revenue for government, the amount paid to school divisions is calculated through the Prekindergarten to Grade 12 (PreK-12) Funding Distribution Model. This provides equity of funding, regardless of the size of any particular school division's tax base, to support the equity of opportunity for all students across the province.

The 2022-23 school year Operating Grant to the 27 school divisions is over \$2 billion. This far exceeds the \$800 million collected from EPT and the balance of school division budgets is provided through the province's General Revenue Fund.

**Resolution 22-07 – SSBA begin discussions with the Ministry of Education to jointly review and make recommendations on funding, oversight and accountability for all independent schools.**

The Ministry appreciates the SSBA's past input on the proposed changes to the regulations governing registered independent schools, and has included it in our summary of the feedback we received during the consultation process.

As part of the government's continued emphasis on improving student achievement, ensuring accountability from our education partners, and providing equitable opportunities for all Saskatchewan students, the Government of Saskatchewan provides funding to some categories of registered independent schools. In order to qualify for funding, registered independent schools are required to comply with a strict set of criteria which include, but are not limited to, employing teachers with a Professional A teaching certificate, providing approved courses of study in accordance with provincial curriculum policy, agreeing to be supervised by Ministry officials, and complying with all Ministry policies and directives.

On August 11, 2022, the Ministry of Education announced amendments to *The Registered Independent Schools Regulations* to increase accountability of qualified independent schools (QIS) and increase unannounced supervisory visits to a minimum of ten per school year. The Ministry also now has the authority to appoint an official trustee to oversee a school, put schools on probation, and require all QIS to notify the Ministry with 24 hours if there are allegations of criminal activity or a criminal charge of a staff member.

The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to ensuring that all students feel safe, protected and respected in our schools and our communities.

Jaimie Smith-Windsor, President  
Page 4

---

Thank you again for sharing the resolutions concerning the Ministry of Education that were adopted in your November 14, 2022 AGM. The Ministry looks forward to working with the SSBA to advance education priorities for Saskatchewan students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dustin Duncan", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dustin Duncan  
Minister of Education

cc: Donna Johnson, Deputy Minister, Education