

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK

November 12 – 16, 2018

#LGWSK

The first-ever Local Government Week has been proclaimed for November 12-16 in Saskatchewan. The call to recognize Local Government Week with an official proclamation from the province emerged through discussions between the partner organizations as an excellent opportunity to increase awareness and engagement in the systems of local democracy.

The partner organizations representing local governments include:

- Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations <https://www.fsin.com/>
- Métis Nation – Saskatchewan <https://www.metisnationsk.com/>
- Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) <https://sarm.ca/>
- Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA) <https://saskschoolboards.ca/>
- Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) <https://suma.org/>

### Quick Facts:

- School boards are locally elected to govern K-12 education in their school divisions.
- The longest lasting and most fundamental responsibility of schools boards has been to bring the voice of the public to publicly funded education.
- The province of Saskatchewan is divided into 27 geographical areas called school divisions; which offer Kindergarten to Grade 12 schooling. There are 18 public school divisions, eight Catholic school divisions and one Francophone school division
- The election of school boards in Saskatchewan is governed by *The Local Government Election Act, 2015, The Education Act, 1995 and The Education Regulations, 2015*. These are the laws or rules that boards follow.
- An individual member of a board of education is sometimes referred to as a “trustee.” A trustee, acting individually, has no authority to make decisions. A trustee works as part of a team, the board of education.
- There are approximately 246 locally elected trustees in Saskatchewan. Approx. 48% are women, 52% men and 11.8% of sitting trustees are self-declared Aboriginal Members.
- There are more than 23,000 people employed by school boards in Saskatchewan.
- School boards – the elected board of trustees – are responsible for student achievement and well-being, for ensuring effective stewardship of the board’s resources and for delivering effective and appropriate education programs for students.
- The next municipal and school board election will be held on Monday, November 9, 2020.

## Did you know....?

- School boards are elected to govern K-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 the education of Saskatchewan's children. The Saskatchewan School Boards Association supports boards in this very important work.
- Locally elected school boards have a vital role in serving Saskatchewan's publicly funded education system. The longest lasting and most fundamental responsibility of schools boards has been to bring the voice of the public to publicly funded education.
- The province of Saskatchewan is divided into 27 geographical areas called school divisions; school divisions contain Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools.
- A board of education is a form of local government and has the legislative authority to govern the education services provided to children resident within the school division. Boards must consider various issues in making a decision, but in the end decisions are based on the best interests of all children in the school division.
- Boards of education have an obligation to provide educational services and operate schools. Boards involve their communities by informing, listening, and considering the communities' values when making decisions.
- Local autonomy and governance have been foundations of education since – and even before – Saskatchewan officially became a province. Local people came together to build a school, elect a school board and hire a teacher to educate the children in the community. More than 100 years later, local autonomy and governance of education continue to underpin the roles and responsibilities of Saskatchewan's 27 locally elected boards of education.
- The election of school boards in Saskatchewan is governed by *The Local Government Election Act, 2015*, *The Education Act, 1995* and *The Education Regulations, 2015*. These are the laws or rules that boards follow.
- There are three different types of school boards that make up all 27 locally elected school boards in Saskatchewan:
  - Public - 18 boards
  - Separate - 8 Catholic boards
  - Conseil scolaire fransaskois (CEF) – 1 board
- An individual member of a board of education is sometimes referred to as a "trustee." A trustee, acting individually, has no authority to make decisions. A trustee works as part of a team, the board of education.
- There are three kinds of trustees:

- 1) Trustees elected every four years during municipal and school board elections
  - 2) First Nation Trustees appointed to the board by their First Nation
  - 3) Student Trustees
- The Kindergarten-Grade 12 education sector is the second-largest recipient of provincial funding, after healthcare. The overall budget for school divisions in 2018/19 is \$1.9 billion.
  - The next municipal and school board election will be held on Monday, November 9, 2020.

### **About Saskatchewan's Publicly Funded Education System:**

Everyone has a stake in the success of education in our province. When schools are strong and students succeed, we all benefit. The more people who care about and get involved with their local schools, the stronger they become. Students and families, community members, social agencies and business people all have a role to play, whether it's in the classroom, the boardroom or at the ballot box at election time. Locally elected school boards have a vital role in serving Saskatchewan's publicly-funded education system.

The longest lasting and most fundamental responsibility of schools boards has been to bring the voice of the public to publicly-funded education. The work of the SSBA and its member boards remains deeply rooted in the belief that every child in Saskatchewan, regardless of where they live or their personal circumstances, must have the resources and supports they need to achieve and succeed. Collectively, the women and men who serve on Saskatchewan's boards of education are committed to serving children, youth, families and communities.

While many First Nations and Métis students attend the publicly funded education system, there are First Nations on reserve that have a separate funding source for education. We are working together to support better outcomes for all students.

First Nations and the Métis Nation have their own local governments. More information is available online at:

- <https://www.fsin.com/>
- <https://www.metisnationsk.com/>

## **Guiding Principles:**

Publicly funded education is best governed by locally elected accountable boards of education who:

- Require valid and reliable information to guide the decisions they make in setting and monitoring the strategic direction.
- Receive the supports they require to ensure all students have the opportunity to learn.
- Have the autonomy to make decisions in the best interests of the students and communities they serve.
- Require sufficient, equitable, sustainable, predictable, transparent funding to fulfill their mandate of educating students.
- Value and respect the role of all education and community partners.

## **What are the Responsibilities of a School Board?**

School boards – the elected board of trustees – are responsible for student achievement and well-being, for ensuring effective stewardship of the board’s resources and for delivering effective and appropriate education programs for students.

In Saskatchewan there are different kinds of school divisions: large geographic divisions that combine an urban centre and expansive rural areas; large urban public divisions; the Conseil des écoles fransaskoises; northern school divisions; and, Roman Catholic separate school divisions. Every division however, is governed by a locally elected board of education.

Trustees, as members of boards of education, have many important responsibilities.

Establishing the vision, priorities and overall educational plans for the school division by:

- Approving the educational program for the school division including special programming needs such as practical and applied arts, music and second language instruction.
- Overseeing and holding the division accountable for results.
- Determining financial priorities, adopting the annual budget, and ensuring accountability for school division expenditures.

Establishing the strategic policies of the school division by:

- Maintaining school facilities as healthy and safe places to learn.
- Working with the school division administration and in consultation with parents, caregivers, students, teachers and support staff.
- Supporting positive environments for students and staff.
- Communicating effectively by informing and listening to their communities.
- Advocating for education, ensuring that the educational needs of students are always considered first.

## People in a School Board:

- **Elected Trustees** play a key leadership role in ensuring that schools operate within the standards established by the province, and that the programs and services remain responsive to the communities they serve.
- The **Director of Education** is the chief executive officer and chief education officer of the school division. The director is the sole employee who reports directly to the board.
- **Superintendents** are accountable to the director of education for the implementation, operation, and supervision of educational programs in their schools.
- **Principals** are the educational leaders within their school communities and ensure that the programs that are in place are effective and align with board and ministry policies.
- **Teachers** are the front-line representatives of the education system.
- **School Division Staff** are the specialized experts in transportation, facilities, technology, human resources, payroll, communications, finance and procurement that support school divisions.
- **Education Workers** include a whole range of people that support students and keep a safe and healthy school environment. Educational Assistants, Early Childhood Educators, Caretakers, Administrative Assistants, Social Workers, and Speech and Language Pathologists are just some of these.
- **Parents/Caregivers** are critical in the support they provide in the overall education of our students.
- **Students** are the most important stakeholders in our system.

## Important and Current Issues in Education:

- Restored and Renewed Investment in Education
- Importance of local voice and engagement – education belongs to community
- A vision for education beyond 2020
- Student mental health and well-being
- First Nations and Métis education – Reconciliation in action
- Curriculum renewal
- Capital funding and Preventative Maintenance and Renewal (PMR) funding for facilities (Repair and Backlog)

## **Questions/Discussion points for School Board Members:**

- Why did you become a school board trustee?
- Describe a day in the life of a school board trustee?
- What qualifications are required to be a school board trustee?
- What kinds of responsibilities do you have in your position?
- Do you feel your job is rewarding? Why?
- What are the greatest impacts that school boards have?
- What are some of the challenges you encounter in carrying out your responsibilities?
- What are some of the current policies your board table is discussing?
- Highlight some of the biggest successes from your board table.
- What are the top three issues or concerns for your school board?

## **Questions for the students/class:**

- Why do you think people run for public office?
- Why is it important to vote in elections?
- What do you think school trustees do?
- What do you think my office looks like?
- Why is it important to have a school board?