

Early Learning Opportunities & Access

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 three provinces/territories that do not provide funding for universal full-time kindergarten. Most of the kindergarten programming in Saskatchewan is provided on a part-time basis, starting at age 5 (although students are not legally required to attend school until age 6). Students enter Saskatchewan schools with varying levels of learning readiness.

The opportunity is compelling when considering the long-term positive impacts enhancements to early learning in Saskatchewan would have on student achievement. The role of boards of education is to provide leadership to maximize student achievement

for all learners and to set educational priorities and policy based on evidence and shared principles such as equity.

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 across Saskatchewan schools.

“Equitable and inclusive access to early learning opportunities in Saskatchewan ensures that all children, regardless of their socioeconomic background, can benefit from high-quality early education. School boards share a strong belief that all students can achieve at high levels, given the right supports, resources and learning opportunities. This resolution is rooted in boards’ enduring efforts to have a strong publicly funded education system, eliminate educational gaps & address systemic inequities.”

SOLUTIONS:

Strategic Shift – expansion of early learning programs including phased-in implementation of universal full-time kindergarten.

Funding Sufficiency – commitment of additional funding through the Provincial Operating Grant to provide for early learning opportunities and full-time kindergarten.

BENEFITS OF EARLY LEARNING:



Children are better prepared for school



Improved communication skills



Stronger language development



Enhanced social skills