



**Board of Education**  
**Regular Meeting of the Board**  
**Monday, October 18, 2021 – 1:00 p.m.**

**AGENDA**

**1.0 Welcome**

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- 1.1 Call to Order – Chair D. Boyko
  - 1.2 Land Acknowledgement
  - 1.3 Opening Prayer – Trustee W. Stus
  - 1.4 Adoption of the Agenda
  - 1.5 Declaration of Conflict of Interest
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**2.0 Approval of Minutes**

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- Minutes of the September 13, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Board of Education
  - Minutes of the October 5, 2021 Special Meeting of the Board of Education
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**3.0 Delegations and Special Presentations**

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**4.0 Post Meeting Assignments**

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**5.0 Consent Items**

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The Chair will ask for a motion to receive the items, which are starred, and to approve all recommendations contained therein. Prior to approving the motion, any trustee may request a star(s) be removed.

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**6.0 Discussion/Decision**

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- 6.1 Improving Student Learning and Achievement Monitoring Report: Part 1
  - 6.2 2021-2022 Enrolment Report
  - 6.3 Pandemic Response Update
  - 6.4 Premier’s Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence in Education
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## **7.0 Correspondence**

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- 7.1 Expressions of Gratitude – posted on Bulletin Board
  - 7.2 Reading File – copies circulated at meeting
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## **8.0 Reports and Good News**

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- 8.1 Report of the Director of Education
  - 8.2 Board Activity
  - 8.3 Board Linkage
  - 8.4 Board Linkage – Catholic School Community Councils
  - 8.5 Convention Reports
  - 8.6 Committee/Partnership Reports
    - Joint Operations – Trustees D. Berscheid and W. Stus
    - Together in Faith and Action – Trustees T. Jelinski and H. Byblow
    - Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Foundation – Trustees S. Zakreski-Werbicki and B. Elliott
    - māmawohkamātowin/Saskatoon Tribal Council – Chair D. Boyko, Trustees S. Zakreski-Werbicki and D. Case
    - CUMFI and GSCS Educational Alliance – Chair D. Boyko, Trustees J. Carriere and W. Stus
  - 8.7 Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association – Trustee T. Jelinski
  - 8.8 Saskatchewan School Boards Association
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## **9.0 Committee of the Whole**

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## **10.0 Closing Prayer – Trustee W. Stus**

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## **11.0 Adjournment**

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## **12.0 Sign of Peace**

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**Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Education for St. Paul's RCSSD #20 held in the Boardroom at 12:00 p.m. on Monday, September 13, 2021.**

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**Present:** Chair Boyko, Vice-chair Boechler, Trustees Berscheid, Byblow, Carriere, Case, Elliott, Jelinski, Stus, Zakreski-Werbicki

**Also:** Director of Education Chatlain  
Superintendent of Education Gay (Secretary to the Board)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Boyko at 12:01 p.m. and began by acknowledging that we are on Treaty 6 Territory—traditional territories of First Nations including Cree, Dene, Nakota, Lakota, Dakota and Saulteaux—and homeland of the Métis Nation. We pay our respect to the First Nation and Métis ancestors of this place, and we reaffirm our relationship with one another in the spirit of Reconciliation.

The opening prayer was led by Trustee B. Elliott.

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**Adoption of Agenda**

**Motion:** Moved by Trustees R. Boechler and D. Berscheid that the agenda be approved as circulated.

**CARRIED**

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**Approval of Minutes**

**Motion:** Moved by Trustees S. Zakreski-Werbicki and T. Jelinski that the minutes of the regular meeting of June 28, 2021 be adopted as circulated.

**CARRIED**

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**Discussion/Decision**

**6.1 Financial Statements**

**Motion:** Moved by Trustees R. Boechler and D. Case that the Board of Education approve the accounts paid for the period May 1, 2021 to May 31, 2021 and June 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021 and receive the financial statements for the period ended June 30, 2021.

**CARRIED**

**6.2 2021-2022 Calendar Changes: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**

**Motion:** Moved by Trustees B. Elliott and D. Berscheid that the Board of Education receive the information as presented and approve the amendments to the 2021-2022 academic school year calendars as outlined in the report.

**CARRIED**

6.3 Board Representation: Division Committee on Reconciliation and Healing

Motion: Moved, as amended, by Trustees S. Zakreski-Werbicki and T. Jelinski that the Board of Education constitute as a Board Organizational meeting going forward. In the interim, Chair D. Boyko identified Trustee T. Jelinski to sit on the Division Committee on Reconciliation and Healing.

**CARRIED**

6.4 Pandemic Response

Motion: Moved by Trustees J. Carriere and W. Stus that the Board of Education receive the information as presented in the Pandemic Response report.

**CARRIED**

6.5 Catholic School Community Councils: 2021-2022 Engagement

Motion: Moved by Trustees Dana Case and T. Jelinski that the Board of Education receive the information as presented and provide direction for Catholic School Community Councils: 2021-2022 Engagement.

**CARRIED**

Motion: Moved by Trustees D. Berscheid and W. Stus that the Board of Education approve the 2021-2022 Trustee School Liaison Schedule as amended.

**CARRIED**

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[Motion: Moved by Trustee T. Jelinski that the Board move back into committee.]

**CARRIED**

[Motion: Moved by Trustee D. Berscheid that the Board move out of committee.]

**CARRIED**

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**Adjournment**

Motion: Moved by Trustees D. Case and R. Boechler that the meeting be adjourned at 2:41 p.m.

**CARRIED**

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**Secretary**

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**Chair**

**Special Meeting of the Board of Education for St. Paul's RCSSD #20 held in the Boardroom at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 5, 2021.**

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**Present:** Chair Boyko, Vice-chair Boechler, Trustees Berscheid, Byblow, Carriere, Elliott, Jelinski, Stus, Zakreski-Werbicki

**Absent:** Trustee Case

**Also:** Director of Education Chatlain  
Superintendent of Education Gay (Secretary to the Board)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Boyko at 4:01 p.m. and began by acknowledging that we are on Treaty 6 Territory—traditional territories of First Nations including Cree, Dene, Nakota, Lakota, Dakota and Saulteaux—and homeland of the Métis Nation. We pay our respect to the First Nation and Métis ancestors of this place, and we reaffirm our relationship with one another in the spirit of Reconciliation.

The opening prayer was led by Chair Boyko.

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[Motion: Moved by Trustee R. Boechler that the Board move into committee.]

**CARRIED**

[Motion: Moved by Trustee Jim Carriere that the Board move out of committee.]

**CARRIED**

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**Adjournment**

Motion: Moved by Trustee Tim Jelinski that the meeting be adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

**CARRIED**

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**Secretary**

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**Chair**

## 6.1 Improving Student Learning and Achievement Monitoring Report: Part 1

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### 6.1.1 Reading, Writing, and Mathematics

Board Priority:

- Improving Student Learning and Achievement

Presented by: Superintendent T. Fradette, Coordinators Cynthia Saleski and Lauren Willey and Consultants Lisa Kobelsky, Claire McTavish and Brian Boutin

Background Information:

The Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools' Student Learning Model ensures that all students have consistent and systematic access to the learning supports they require in order to help them achieve the greatest academic progress possible. The foundation of our Student Learning Model has supported how we respond when students struggle or require enrichment and has continued to serve us well as a framework for responding to pandemic-related disruptions in learning.

Within the Student Learning Model, we have developed a common language of Quality Core Instruction. Our Classroom Commitment defines Quality Core Instruction within the key aspects of curriculum, environment, instruction and assessment that we strive for within each of our classrooms. Culturally responsive and relational pedagogy is connected to criteria and indicators within Quality Core Instruction. Our commitment supports the actualization of a quality learning experience for all students.

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools uses the Student Learning Model and Quality Core Instruction to support professional practice that is guided by current research. Throughout the year, coordinators and consultants design and deliver professional learning opportunities for teachers supporting evidence-based professional practice in literacy and mathematics.

The pandemic response resulted in unprecedented growth in the use of technology to support teaching and learning effectively. Professional development opportunities were provided virtually as no in-person PD was conducted. Division coordinators and consultants were trained on resource development, digital video production, and various instructional design strategies to engage and support their continued work throughout the pandemic. Teacher resources and professional learning opportunities were created throughout the year and have been placed within a virtual resource hub that teachers are able to access at any time.

Each year a broad-based division committee works together to review the Board Goals and Priorities, the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) and division student assessment information in order to support strategic planning in the area of reading, writing and mathematics. The committee meets four times throughout the year to review student data and collaboratively develop and monitor actions to support teachers and students.

Schools continue to engage in strategic planning aligned to board goals. School teams annually collaborate to review student data and develop Learning Improvement Plans that support student achievement. School staff reflect on quality core instructional strategies and actualize

the selected strategies while monitoring the impact on student outcomes. This action research cycle is embedded within professional learning communities using short cycles of improvement called Sprints. Teacher professional learning within a job-embedded framework supports an ongoing student-centred development model.

Student achievement information is provided through a variety of assessments that support the division, school teams and teachers in monitoring student outcomes.

Student achievement in reading and mathematics is monitored using the Canadian Achievement Test 4 (CAT4) within Grades 4 and 7, providing a snapshot of how our students are doing relative to their Canadian peers at the same grade level (norm-referenced) as well as how students performed relative to pre-defined performance criteria (criterion-referenced). This assessment is administered in October each year.

Teachers use a variety of assessments within their classrooms to inform instruction throughout the year. Within reading, writing and mathematics the division collects additional information using the following assessments in June each year.

**Reading** – a comprehensive one-on-one assessment is used that provides teachers with valuable information regarding students’ accuracy, fluency and comprehension when reading leveled text.

**Writing** – a provincial writing rubric is used in Grades 4 and 7 to assess year-end student writing outcomes.

**Mathematics** – a provincial mathematics number strand rubric is used in Grades 2, 5 and 8 to assess year-end student mathematics outcomes within the number strand.

The report presented provides information on the division reading, writing and mathematics area of focus actions during the 2020-2021 school year, including student assessment information from June 2021 and the October 2020 CAT4 assessment.

As we move forward, our current area of focus plans continue to address pandemic-related disruptions in learning through the use of evidence-based approaches with targeted supports aligned to our division’s strategic commitment to Indigenous student success.

Recommendation:

***That the Board of Education receive the information as presented in the Improving Student Learning and Achievement Monitoring Report: Part 1 – Reading, Writing and Mathematics.***

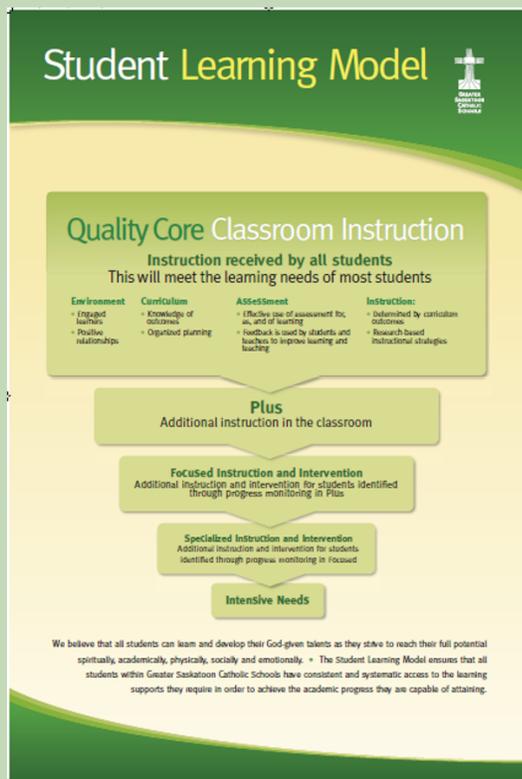


**GREATER  
SASKATOON  
CATHOLIC  
SCHOOLS**

# Improving Student Learning and Achievement

## Reading, Writing and Mathematics

October 2021



**Area of Focus Goal:**  
By June 2020, 80% of students will be at or above expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.

## Reading



- Benchmark Reading Assessments - Grade 1-8
- Wrap Around Literacy Grades 1-3 at St. Frances, St. Mary, St. Michael and St. Mark
- After school professional learning sessions for teachers
- Development of online professional learning sessions and resources
- Virtual job-embedded support
- Fountas and Pinnell Word Study and Phonics expansion
- Focused Intervention
- Partnerships - READ Saskatoon and the United Way

## Writing



- Grade 4, 7 and 9 teachers new to their grade level were provided professional learning on the provincial writing rubric, continuum and instructional strategies
- After school professional learning sessions for teachers

## Mathematics



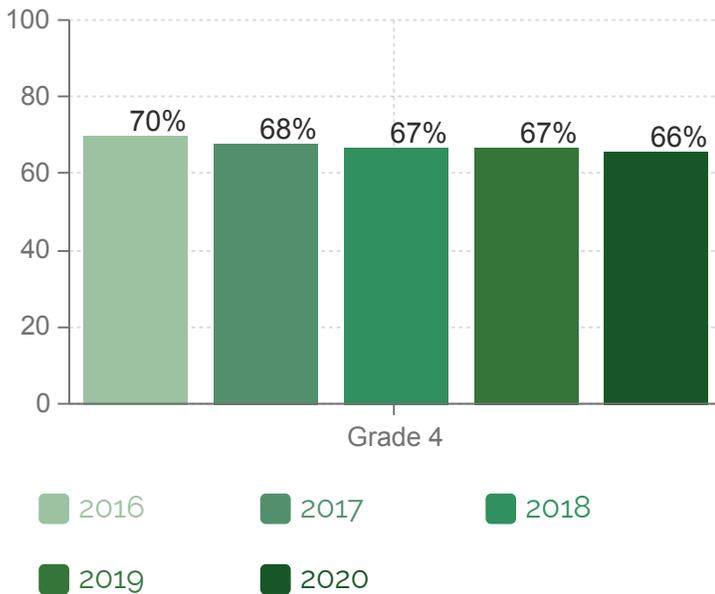
- Grade 2, 5 and 8 teachers new to their grade level were provided professional learning on the provincial number strand rubric and instructional strategies
- After school professional learning session for teachers
- Combined grade professional learning
- Development of online professional learning and resources
- Virtual job-embedded support
- Teacher resources purchased for the Number Strand
- Focused Intervention

The Canadian Achievement Test 4 (CAT4) is used to monitor student achievement in reading and mathematics within Grades 4 and 7, providing a snapshot of how our students are doing relative to their Canadian peers at the same grade level (norm-referenced) as well as how students performed relative to pre-defined performance criteria (criterion-referenced).

The following charts outline the norm-referenced outcomes over the past five years.

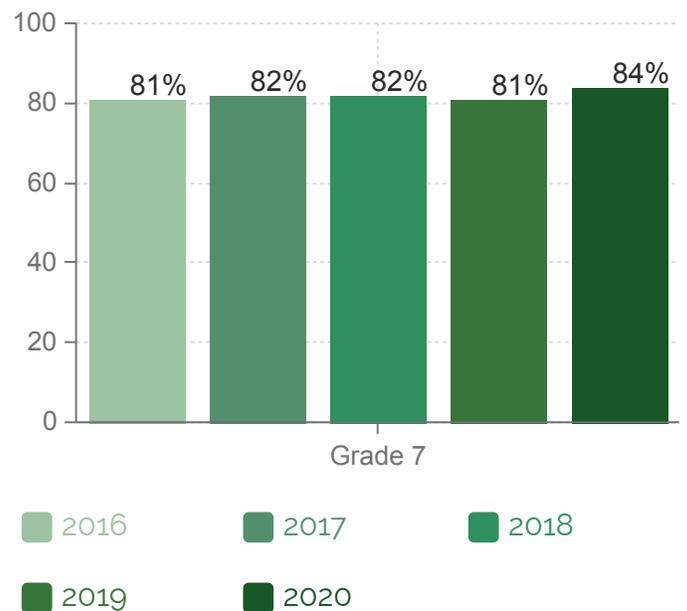
## CAT4 - Reading

% of Students at Stanine 4 and Above



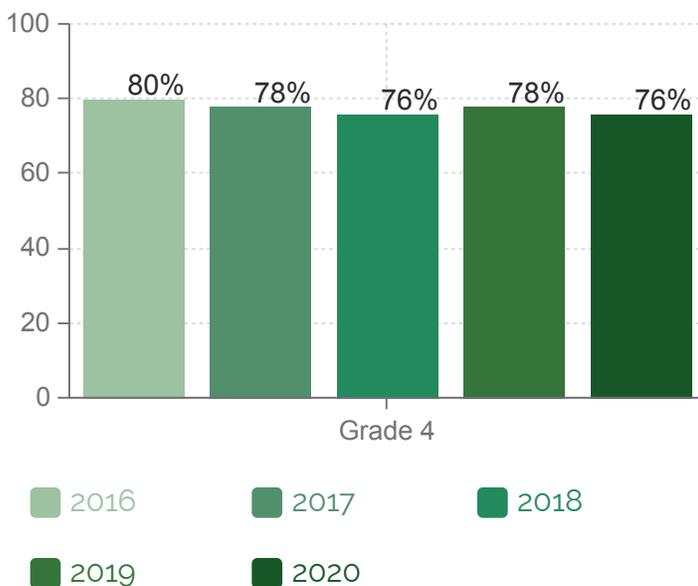
## CAT4 - Reading

% of Students at Stanine 4 and Above



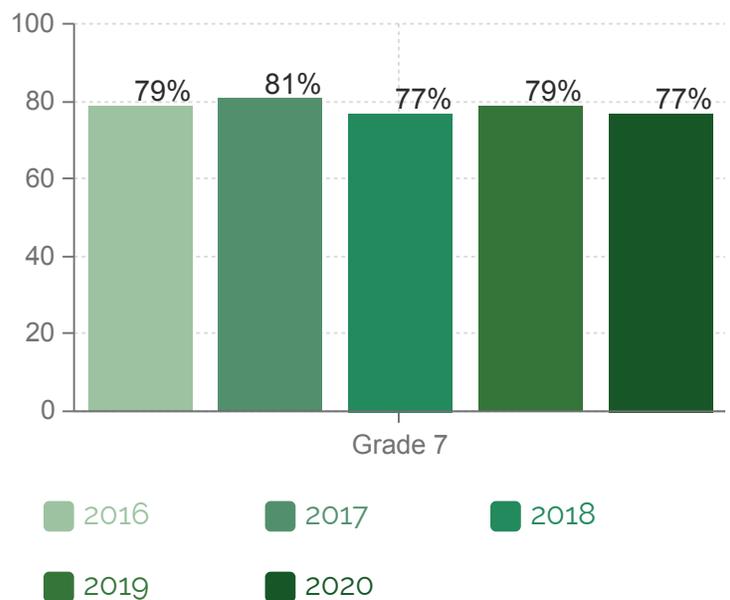
## CAT4 - Mathematics

% of Students at Stanine 4 and Above



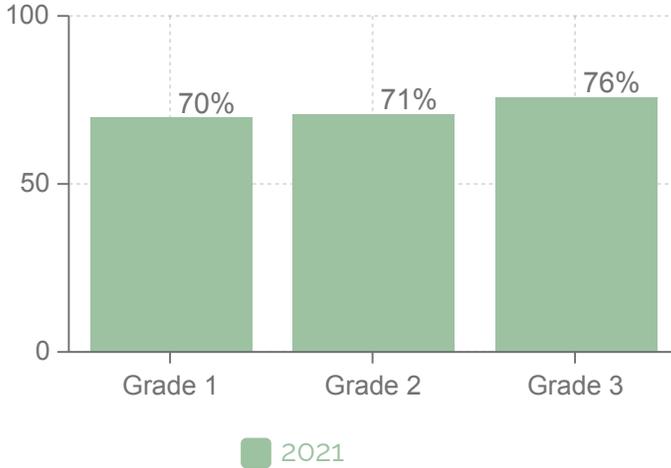
## CAT4 - Mathematics

% of Students at Stanine 4 and Above



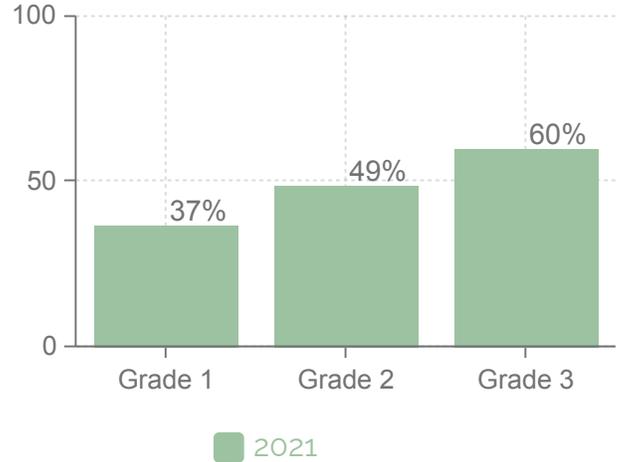
## Reading - All Students

% of Students At or Above Expected Level



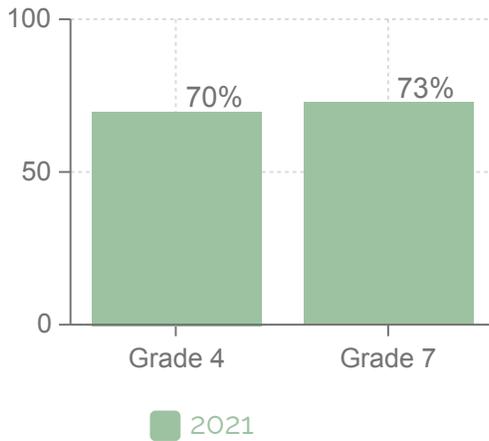
## Reading - FNMI Students

% of Students At or Above Expected Level



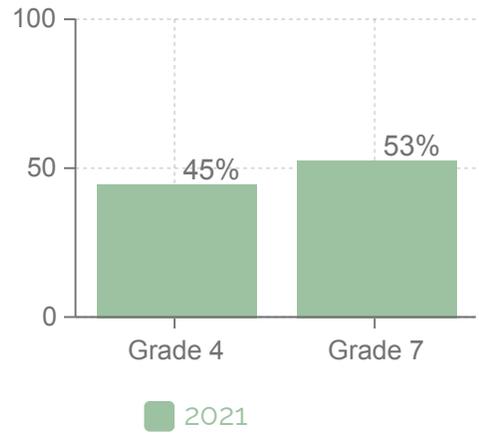
## Writing - All Students

% of Students At or Above Expected Level



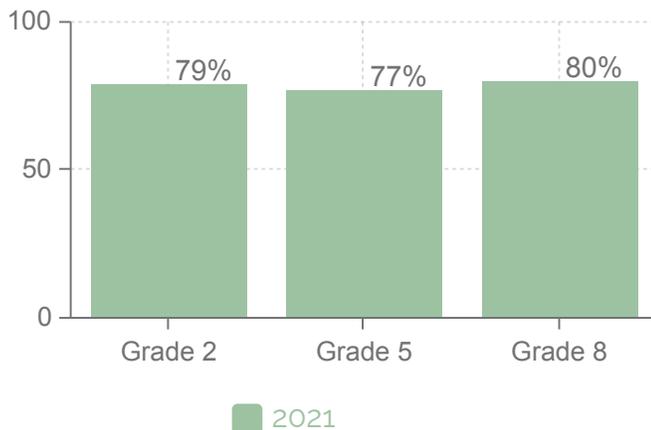
## Writing - FNMI Students

% of Students At or Above Expected Level



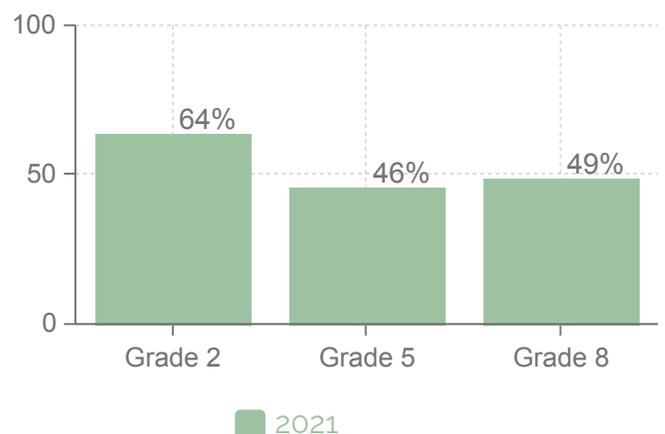
## Mathematics Number Strand - All Students

% of Students At or Above Expected Level



## Mathematics Number Strand - FNMI Students

% of Students At or Above Expected Level



### 6.1.2 Early Years Evaluation

Board Priority:

- Improving Student Learning and Achievement

Presented by: Superintendent J. Vangool

Background Information:

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools recognizes the importance of providing high quality early learning environments for all students, while purposefully engaging families in meaningful ways. We know that strong early childhood programs set the foundation for lifelong learning and optimal wellbeing. As a school division, our goals continued to align with the provincial Early Years Outcome, which states: By June 30, 2020, children aged 0-6 years will be supported in their development to ensure that 90% of students exiting Kindergarten are ready for learning in the primary grades.

Not only did the global COVID-19 Pandemic extend the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) goals beyond 2020, but it also changed daily life in many ways for many people. Child development, however, was not paused, and supporting children, families and care providers of all kind was as important as ever during the 2020-2021 academic year.

In an environment where spontaneity, sharing, singing, collaboration, movement and parent engagement was previously celebrated and encouraged, we had to adapt and plan for a new way of doing things. Much of August 2020 was spent creating safe COVID-19 protocols for early learning environments. The start of the school year was delayed and a staggered start was put in place, allowing for proper implementation and practice of risk mitigating protocols. Schools had to develop a parent pick up and drop off protocol that ensured physical distancing and minimized traffic flow. Home visits were put on hold and parents were not able to enter the school to see the classroom in which their child would experience their first year in a school setting. Children were put into small cohorts within the classroom to limit their bubble and parts of the classrooms were sectioned off to minimize interaction. All rugs and cozy furniture had to be removed from the classroom and teachers had to minimize both the materials available to children as well as the sharing of materials between children. All items had to be sanitized at the end of each school day and often left to sit for 48 hours before being used again. The task seemed overwhelming and so distant from what we knew early learning was intended to be.

Instead of focussing on what we could not do, we adapted and focused on what we could do! We lead every conversation with “We can if...” and we found a way.

Teachers planned for socially distanced family visits on the playground and set up virtual coffee time with parents to learn more about their child. Teachers used Seesaw or other digital platforms to communicate and share pictures with families on a regular basis. Each school created a virtual classroom tour to allow families to experience the classroom environment. Our Early Learning Team applied for and received Federal Pandemic Funding to further enhance learning opportunities for children during the pandemic. Much of it was used to support

creating a safe environment, which also meant taking learning outdoors. Mud kitchens, rakes, wagons, clipboards, garden tools, sand, animal tracks and other outdoor supplies were purchased and put into use (please see link to the Outdoor Learning slide show at the conclusion of the report).

With staff not being able to gather from one school to another, professional learning also took on a new look. An online Early Learning Hub was created as a central place to access Early Learning professional development, instructional strategies, assessment and pedagogical practices. We hosted a virtual Early Learning Symposium for both principals and vice-principals focusing on Responsive Teaching Practices and Assessment in Early Learning. Professional development and trainings were offered virtually to support teachers in Family Engagement During the Pandemic, Fountas and Pinnell Word Study, Spelling and Phonics, Creating Culturally Affirming Invitations and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Land Based Learning, New to EYE Assessment and Responding to the EYE, as well as a social and emotional program entitled Kids Have Stress Too. In partnership with Northern Lights School Division, teachers also had the opportunity to participate in an eight-week program to enhance both personal and professional well-being.

The pandemic also had an impact on Early Learning enrolment. In many cases, families either chose to keep their children home for safety reasons or parents had the opportunity to work from home and chose to delay their child's school start. This impact was greater in the Southwest Sector schools as we saw under utilization in our Prekindergarten programs and a 29% reduction in Kindergarten enrolment.

With the desire to support those children who did not attend, we collaborated with our partners at the Family Resource Centre to provide outreach, both virtually and in-person, to those young families and their children. The Resource Centre was able to connect with over 100 families, many who were new Canadians, who later enrolled with Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

We continued to support children with intensive needs who enrolled in one of our PreK Early Learning Support programs (ELIS) and served over 28 children during the 2020-2021 school year.

One source of assessment that resumed after being halted due to the pandemic was the Early Years Evaluation-Teacher Assessment (EYE-TA). This provincial assessment provides Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools with some baseline data to initiate discussion, reflection and provides direction for future programming needs.

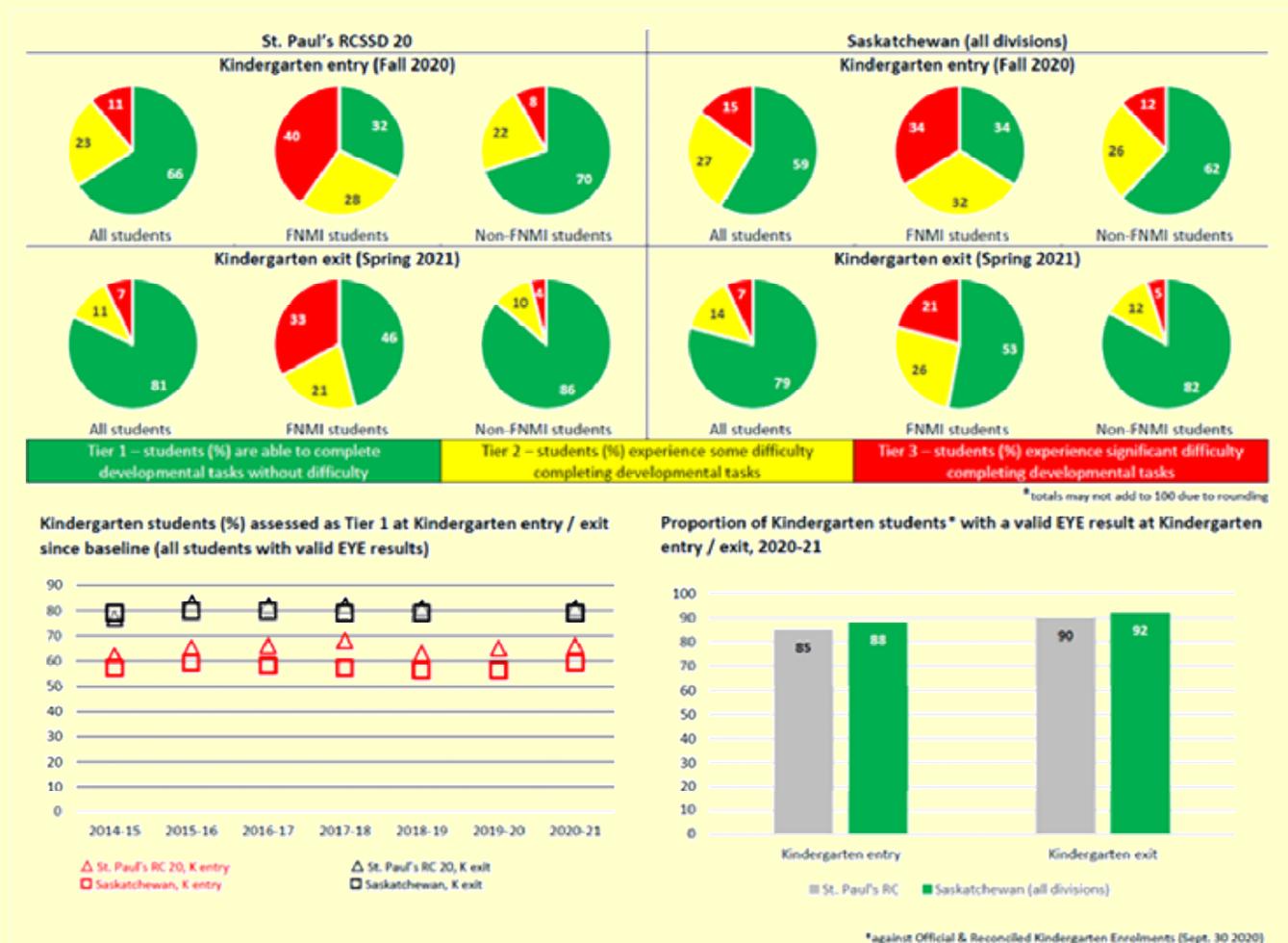
In response to our historical data, as well as considering both the pandemic disruptions in learning, as well as our commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action (specifically #12), a commitment was made to provide enhanced full-time programming in six Southwest Sector schools with a later commitment to extend that to all ten Southwest Sector schools for the 2021-2022 school year.

## Early Years Evaluation

The Early Years Evaluation-Teacher Assessment (EYE-TA) is a readiness-screening tool that provides information about each child's development and learning with a focus on reading readiness skills. The EYE assesses the following domains:

- Awareness of Self and Environment: including the community and the environment
- Cognitive Skills: skills with numeracy, literacy and problem solving
- Language and Communication: understanding of spoken language and how (s)he explains thoughts and feelings.
- Physical Development: hand-eye coordination and large movements using the arms, legs and body.

Kindergarten EYE is a statistically significant leading indicator of a student's likelihood of reading at grade-level in Grade 3. Longitudinal analyses in the province show children who begin Kindergarten with good skills (Tier 1) in key areas, or who develop good levels of skill during their Kindergarten year, are far more likely to become grade-level readers by the end of Grade 3 in comparison to students who leave Kindergarten programs with lower levels of assessed skills.



During the 2020-2021 school year, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools assessed 1297 students in the spring using the Early Years Evaluation (264 students less than the previous year in the fall).

- Using the measures of that tool, of the 1,297 students, 34% entered Kindergarten without the skills ready for school (scoring in either Tier 2 or 3 in the fall assessment). While only 18.5% exited without the skills required for learning in the primary years (scoring in either Tier 2 or 3). Therefore, according to the EYE assessment 81.5% of GSCS Kindergarten students have the skills needed for learning in the primary years. A difference of 15.5 percentage points from entrance to exit.
- Of the 123 self-declared First Nations and Métis students, 68% entered without the skills ready for school (scoring in either Tier 2 or 3 in the fall assessment using the EYE-TA standards). 54% of FNMI students exited without the skills required for learning in the primary years. 46% of FNMI students left with kindergarten with the skills needed for learning in the primary years. A difference of 14 percentage points from entrance to exit. Half-time programs do not allow enough contact time to close the readiness gap.
- In comparison to the provincial data in past years, the trend indicates that Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools' non-declared Kindergarten students do slightly better than the provincial results for that group of children, while results for self-declared First Nations and Métis children in Kindergarten in Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools are slightly lower than the provincial results for that group of children. As noted earlier, as part of our responsive planning to address this concern, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools implemented full-time targeted Kindergarten programming in six Southwest Sector schools during the 2020-2021 school year with the remaining Southwest Sector schools added for the 2021-2022 school year. We have also embraced a renewed commitment to engaging and inviting families to be collaborative partners in their children's learning.

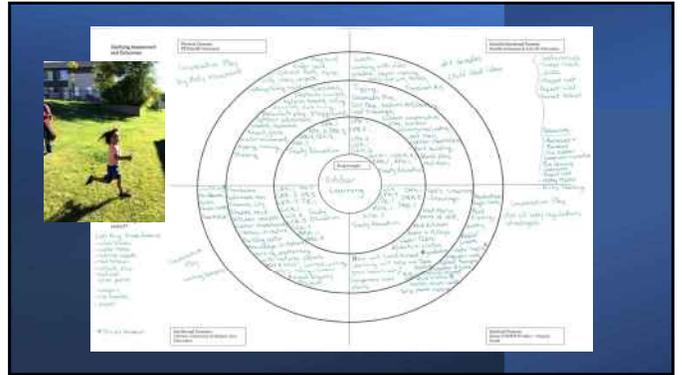
Recommendation:

***That the Board of Education receive the information as presented in the Improving Student Learning and Achievement Monitoring Report: Part 1 – Early Years Evaluation.***

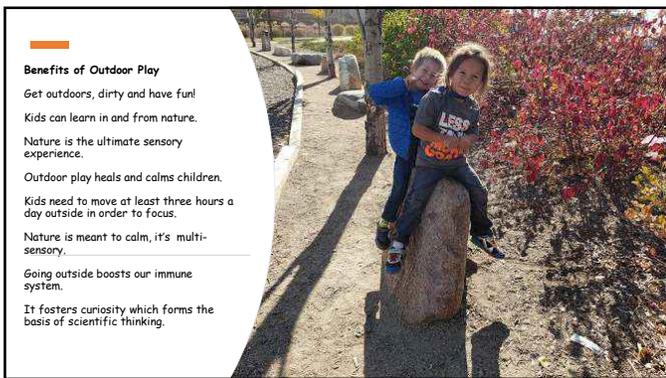
Outdoor Learning



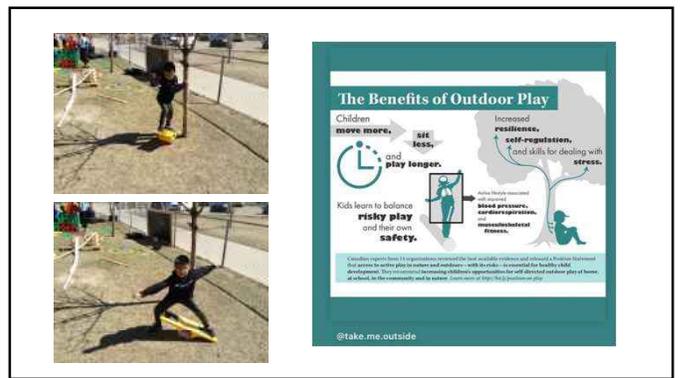
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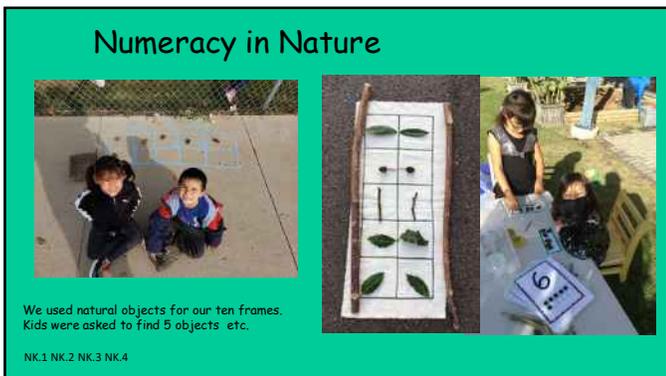
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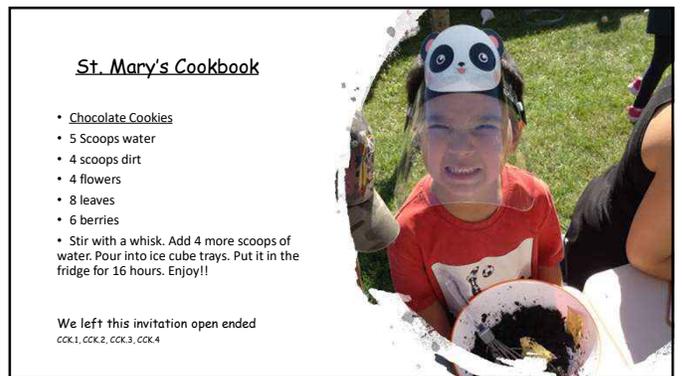
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10



11



12

**Dramatic Play**  
 We went outside on a cold Winter Day. We thought it would be fun to take the dinosaurs on an adventure. First, we climbed a mountain. Next, we went skating on top of the mountain. Finally, we finished off the hike with a swim in the pool. Along the way we found some Penguins and Polar bears frozen in time.

Curriculum Connection  
 CPK.2

13

**Dramatic Play naturally leads into Story-Telling and Art**

Narrative Skills- Represent an event or story in Art

Students used items from a basket to tell a story. Kids used words like first, then, next, so, all of a sudden, and finally to tell a story with a beginning middle and an end. Students followed up their stories with a directed drawing

Curriculum Connections: CCK.1 CCK.2 CCK.3 CCK.4 CPK.4

14

**Dramatic Play - Fort Making Play**  
 • Curriculum Connections: CPK.2,

First they were hunting for their food. Then they brought it back to the fire to cook it.

15

**Preparing A Hide**  
 We learned about deer hide traditional uses and how to prepare the hide.

16

**City Shapes in Nature Adventure Walk**

Today I went for a walk outside and brought my clipboard along. I am learning to represent what I see. We looked for shapes in nature and shapes in our city. We saw rainbow, circle, oval, rectangle, square, heart, X and cross shapes!!!

17

**Kylani, Kylani, what do you see?**

A power point slide was created to help reinforce classmate names and to make connections to shapes within our city environment

18



I see a circle staring at me.

19



### Adventure Walk

NOT A STICK

Connecting Stories with Nature  
CPK1, CCK2, CCK3,

We went on a search for our own special sticks.

Olivia said, "This is not a stick, it's a sword." A journal entry concluded our creative adventure!

Transient Art Pieces with sticks and rocks

20

### Adventure Walk Transient Art



We read the story *Stick and Stone* and then we took our wagon and collected a variety of natural objects to create our masterpieces !!!

21

### Eagle Creek

Our students went on a hike and we saw tipi stone circles.



22

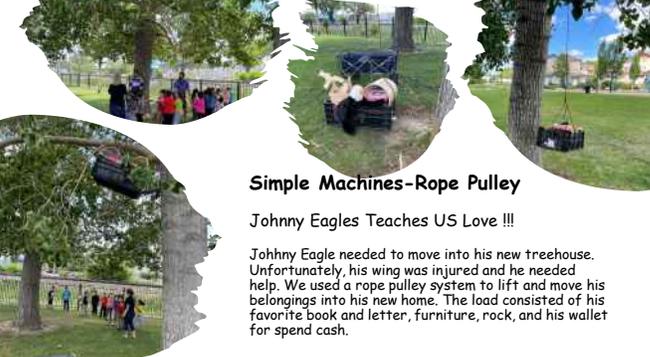
### Eagle Creek



Students learned about cattails and made mats.

Students went on a scavenger hunt and explored and discovered water bugs.

23



### Simple Machines-Rope Pulley

Johnny Eagles Teaches US Love !!!

Johnny Eagle needed to move into his new treehouse. Unfortunately, his wing was injured and he needed help. We used a rope pulley system to lift and move his belongings into his new home. The load consisted of his favorite book and letter, furniture, rock, and his wallet for spend cash.

24

**Using Natural Objects to Represent What We See**  
 Art in Nature Painting  
 Curriculum Connections CPK.4

25

**Using Natural Objects to Represent What We See**

We read the story Red Leaf Yellow Leaf  
 We raked and played in the leaves  
 We drew pictures of leaves

The students picked different colored Fall leaves and were asked to draw them. This is what your child drew! We are learning to represent what we see.

26

**Art and Nature- Bring the Outdoors Inside**  
 Leaf Man Portraits

We talked about body parts and positioning of body parts using natural objects. Students created fish, people, and a variety of animals.

27

**Bring the Outdoors Inside**

**Art with Nature**  
 CRK.1

Students used snow, bleeding art tissue paper, handy scoopers, water colour paper, pastels. Rip up the tissue paper, scoop snow, let dry, draw concentric hearts, cut out

28

**Bring the Outdoors Inside**  
 Sensory/Fine Motor Play/Dramatic Play/Science

29

**God's Creation Nature Walk**  
 Curriculum Connections CPK.4

Today I went for a walk outside and brought my clipboard along. I learned all about God's creations. God made the Earth, the land, the sky and us! I am learning to represent what I see. This is what I saw

We read the Creation Story. Next we tapped into kids prior knowledge and brainstormed ideas from the story. We went for a walk to enjoy God's beauty and drew pictures from what we saw

30

**Student Directed-Drawing**




**Earth Day Earth-Yay !!!**

- Earth Day Activities
- Earth day Adventure Walk
- Go hug some trees and tell them you love them
- Look for signs of Spring
- Garbage clean up

31

**Google Virtual Classroom**  
Happy Earth Day!!!!



32

**Winter Animals Inquiry Project**  
Penguins, Polar, Bears, Foxes.

We went for a walk before Christmas in our school field and found rabbit tracks! Students were very excited to find so many tracks and followed the trails all over the school property. We wondered where these rabbits lived, where they slept, and how they survived out in the cold winter? This led to an inquiry project on animal homes and how they survive in the winter.

First we talked about the animals that we wanted to learn about, the list included: polar bears, bears, penguins, rabbits, and foxes. Next students told us what they wondered about the animals and what they thought they already knew. As we gathered together each day for our morning meetings we focused on one animal and either read a book or watched a video to gather information on the animal.



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**Hunting for animal tracks**

Students paired up with their animal track guides and set out to find out what animals are wandering through our community by identifying their tracks in the snow. LTK1

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**Winter Block Play**

**Block Play**  
Blocks can be used indoors and outdoors. Students can use their surroundings as inspiration for their creations. Building outdoors adds another layer of representational play as they are able to use nature and architecture as an aid in their creativity. Block play allows for a full sensory experience and dramatic play.

**Curriculum Connections**  
Social/emotional - turn taking, working together  
Math SSK1 - shape, size, balance, symmetry

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**Ramps- Exploration of Newton's Law of Motion**

**Inquiry Questions to Foster Children's Research**

- What makes the ball move fast?
- Why do you think that ball when faster/slower?
- How can you test which ball moves faster?

**Inquiry Questions to Foster Engineering Play Behaviors**

- What do you need to do to keep the rubber ramp stable?
- How can we make the ball go all the way to the end of the rubber ramp course?
- How can you create a tunnel, loop, or other element in this?



Key Vocabulary- Momentum, Speed, Angle, Elevation, Energy, Sphere, Flexible, Incline, Decline, Design, Architect

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## Ramps- the opportunities to connect to the curriculum are endless and deeply rooted in play opportunities.

### Rubber Ramp Curriculum Connections

#### Early Literacy

Children connect content from books to applied practice.  
Development of new vocabulary (momentum, speed, energy, angle, incline, elevation, sphere, flexible, loop)  
Opportunities to write and record ideas in letters, words, numbers, and pictures

#### Early Mathematics

Children explore concepts of shape, weight, speed direction, distance, and height  
Children build understanding of measurement and physical attributes  
Opportunities to practice comparisons of attributes and observations (short vs. Tall, fast vs. Slow)  
Authentic problem-solving opportunities

#### Science

Opportunities to build cause and effect understanding  
Children gain understanding of force, speed, motion, and incline  
Children make predictions and analyze results  
Children may write and record predictions and results in letters, words, numbers, symbols, and pictures

#### Social-Emotional

Opportunities abound to work collaboratively with other children  
Opportunity to practice expressing ideas to others and listening to ideas of others  
Children work on managing emotions, such as frustration, and work through trial and error processes  
Problem solving can encourage the development of persistence to try new ideas until desired outcome

#### Language Development

Designing and building a ramp course encourages verbal expression of ideas  
Opportunity to practice expressing ideas to others and listening to ideas of others  
Inquiry based investigations encourages questions and communication of ideas



### Rubber Ramp Curriculum Connections

#### Physical Development

Children practice fine motor skills while manipulating the rubber ramp  
Children practice gross motor skills while writing or drawing as it relates to rubber ramp investigations  
Children work on gross motor, balance, and body control as they position the rubber ramp and use various materials they create elevation  
Children actively practice applications of vocabulary (momentum, speed, energy, angle, incline, elevation, sphere, flexible, loop)

#### Social Studies

Practice making and following rules  
Opportunities to listen, take turns, and collaborate to reach shared goal  
Children can research how ramps, inclines, and roadways are used in the community

#### Creative Arts

Naturalistic opportunity for community helper, artist, construction worker, engineer and associated dramatic play roles  
Opportunities to encourage artistic depictions of ideas and connections

#### Technology

Use digital cameras, tablets, and calculators  
Discuss how different technologies are used in different occupations  
Children can research and make connections to ramps and inclines in the real world

#### Look and Listen for Learning

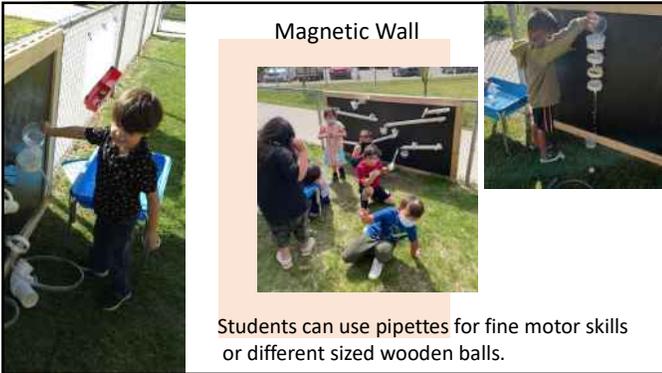
Force and Motion  
Cause and Effect  
Data Collection  
Problem Solving



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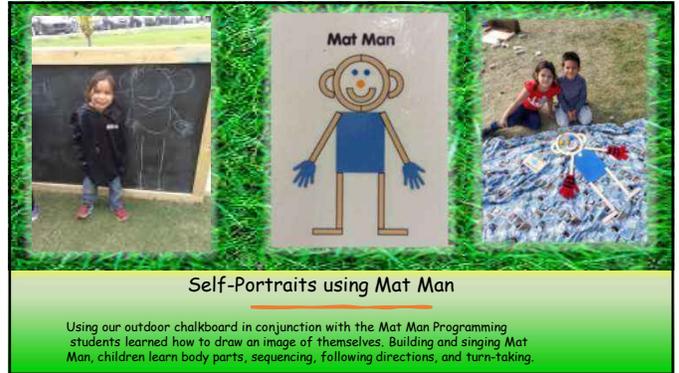
## Magnetic Wall



Students can use pipettes for fine motor skills or different sized wooden balls.

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## Mat Man



## Self-Portraits using Mat Man

Using our outdoor chalkboard in conjunction with the Mat Man Programming students learned how to draw an image of themselves. Building and singing Mat Man, children learn body parts, sequencing, following directions, and turn-taking.

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## Sand Play

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Planting  
Gardening

## 6.2 2021-2022 Student Enrolment



### Board Priority:

- Celebrating and Promoting Catholic Identity
- Improving Student Learning and Achievement

Presented by: Superintendent F. Rivard

### Background Information:

The following enrolment report is based on actual students served as of September 30, 2021. These enrolment numbers are part of the official numbers submitted to the Ministry.

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools had an overall enrolment of 19,571 students which is an increase of 102 students from September 30, 2020.

### Saskatoon City Schools

The Saskatoon city schools have a combined enrolment of 18,108 students.

The breakdown of the enrolment is as follows:

	Sept. 30, 2020	Sept. 30, 2021	Difference
<b>Elementary Schools (PreK to 8)</b>	12,317	12,379	+62
<b>High Schools (Grades 9-12)</b>	5,361	5,366	+5
<b>Home School</b>	310	327	+17
<b>Students 22 years and older</b>	39	36	-3
<b>Totals</b>	18,027	18,108	+81

### Greater Saskatoon Area Schools

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools operates five schools surrounding the city of Saskatoon. St. Augustine (Humboldt), St. Dominic (Humboldt), St. Gabriel (Biggar), École Holy Mary (Martensville), and Holy Trinity (Warman) have a combined enrolment of 1,463 students. This is an increase of 21 students year over year.

The enrolment is as follows:

	Sept. 30, 2020	Sept. 30, 2021	Difference
<b>Elementary Schools (PreK to Grades 9)</b>	1,442	1,463	+21

## Language Program Enrolments

Data illustrating our language programs is presented below. The number of English Language Learners that were new to Canada would have exceeded this number; however, existing students exit the program once they achieve academic language proficiency or graduate.

Area	Sept. 30, 2020	Sept. 30, 2021	Difference
French Immersion Program	3,418	3,382	-36
Cree Bilingual Program	457	495	+38
Ukrainian Bilingual Program	160	163	+3
English as an Additional Language	2,275	2,215	-60

In addition, Humboldt Collegiate Institute (HCI) has 384 Grade 9-12 students. This is an increase of 15 students year over year. Humboldt Collegiate Institute is a jointly run school between Horizon School Division and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools. This total is not factored into our overall division enrolment.

Our elementary online numbers have remained stable at 205 students.

Listed below are the determinations attributed to the lower than projected increase of students year over year.

- Prekindergarten to Grade 1 numbers are below projections.
- We currently have received 131 fewer registrations in the Newcomer Welcoming Center for June 2021-September 2021 compared to the same time in 2019. We are at 30 more than in 2020.
- Schools and our Attendance Care Team continue to connect with families that have not registered with us.

Recommendation:

***That the Board of Education approve the 2021-2022 Student Enrolment report as presented.***

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### Board Priority:

- Promoting Stewardship

Presented by: Director G. Chatlain and Executive Council

### Background Information:

This October update on the division's pandemic response has our schools' level of risk mitigating protocols quite like last year at this time, with the major exception of families having access to schools. Despite this level of restriction in place at schools, the amount of COVID activity in school-aged children and youth is high. It should be noted, though, that youth activity and sport (both in and outside of school) is fully functional and provincial-level restrictions (on household gathering size for example) are not currently in place. The vaccine passport system for non-essential business access has recently been implemented, and therefore we have not seen measurable changes in cases numbers yet.

### Current State

Since the beginning of the school year, COVID case activity in school-aged children and youth has been much more active than the previous year. With the delta-variant fuelled fourth wave, case rates are very high. Two iterations of a public health order providing the impetus for contact tracing and isolation orders have been implemented (released mid-September). The orders have been constructed to prioritize children and youth access to in-person education with close-contacts exempted from isolation in order to attend school. Details regarding these orders have been previously communicated.

Despite the many layers of protections (swiss cheese model), with lots of activity in the community, our schools are reflecting the broader community that is heavily impacted by the virus.

### Next steps

The board and administration are constantly examining the situation and considering what else it can do to help provide as safe a classroom environment as possible. To that end, as per the direction of the Board of Education, administration has been working on developing a policy that would require staff to provide proof of negative test or proof of vaccine.

The logic guiding the policy's development is the fact that vaccination has proven to be the most effective measure to mitigate the spread and prevent severe outcomes of COVID-19. Vaccinated individuals are less likely to get infected and are therefore less likely to spread COVID-19 to others. By way of example in our own setting, the number of positive cases in our high schools (a population eligible for vaccination with a fully vaccinated rate as of October 12 at 68.4% in Saskatoon), accounts for less than 10% of cases we see this year in schools despite representing 27% of our population (with full extra-curricular programs under way). Last year, prior to vaccine availability and no extra curricular programs, this same 27% of our population represented 40% of our cases.

Since the goal is to keep COVID-19 out of our schools, and prevent its spread within schools, as much as we can, a variety of safety measures are in place. Because of its effectiveness, vaccination should naturally be one of those measures. If individuals opt to not pursue the most

effective preventative measure (vaccination), regular monitoring is a reasonable alternative to be used in its stead. Staff have had access to voluntary rapid tests for some time, and that option remains for vaccinated individuals as a monitoring tool.

The board will have the opportunity to review a draft policy and provide guidance and direction to administration.

### Communication

As we grapple with responding to the high case numbers and associated impacts, communication to families has been changing rapidly in response to the changing Public Health Orders. The division has been trying to streamline the communication to not overwhelm families, but yet provide enough, timely information. This is a difficult balance to achieve. With the addition of the rapid test option for some families, this has added an additional possible point of communication as some families will inform the school of a positive rapid test prior to confirming through the PCR test process. We will continue to try to find a good balance of communication to families.

### Rapid Test Kits for Families

The provincial Test to Protect program provided school divisions with rapid test kits to send home with families who have children ages 11 and under (unable to be vaccinated). The initial allotment equalled 15% of the enrolled population at the elementary school level. These kits were received the week of September 27 and released to families that week. Administration believes that all kits have been sent out. Schools are reporting a long wait list of families hoping to receive kits. This has been a frustrating experience for many families and for school administration as requests far outstrip supply. Everyone's patience is appreciated.

It is our understanding that the province is receiving a new shipment of tests that should arrive next week. We anticipate receiving more kits that can be sent to families, but we have no confirmation nor numbers available yet. Any kits received will be allocated and sent to families as soon as possible.

### Looking Ahead

As we look ahead, this forth wave appears to be here for a while (as it has been already). We will continue to work with our local MHOs and sister boards as we collaborate on our responses.

We are hearing more positive news, now, regarding the coming availability of a vaccine approved for use in children aged 5-11. However, there is no confirmation, timeline nor indication from Canadian health regulators regarding vaccine approvals. It is likely approvals may be forthcoming late this calendar year for distribution early next calendar year.

In the meantime, the stresses and challenges in our schools and our communities are significant. We thank, in a special way, our board, staff and senior administration for their dedication and service during this challenging time. Our pathway forward is straight ahead, meeting each new challenge with our best planning and efforts.

Recommendation:

***That the Board of Education receive the information as presented in the Pandemic Response Update and provide direction regarding the policy reviewed.***

## 6.4 Premier's Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence in Education

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### Board Priority:

- Improving Student Learning and Achievement
- Building Relationships and Partnerships

Presented by: Director G. Chatlain and Superintendent G. Martell

### Background Information:

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association annually calls for nominations to the Premier's Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence in Education. The board was pleased to submit the Southwest Sector Attendance Care Team as its nomination for 2021. The complete nomination package is attached.

The board wishes to acknowledge the many staff members that have worked so hard to make this program successful. This nomination is to honour the great work that has been accomplished to date.

### Recommendation:

***That the Board of Education receive the information as presented in the Premier's Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence in Education report.***

Rooted. Growing. Reaching. Transforming.



## Not Lost, but Part of a Caring and Loving Family

**The Southwest Sector Attendance Care Team**

**A Nomination by:**

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools

**for the**

**2021 Premier's Board of Education Award for  
Innovation and Excellence in Education**

**September 30, 2021**

Board Chair: Diane Boyko

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## Preface

Schools within Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools were historically divided into geographic sectors for administrative purposes. While geographic association of schools is less pronounced, one sector of schools remains so. The Southwest Sector of schools is comprised of the division's community schools. These schools typically serve communities with lower socioeconomic status, higher proportions of Indigenous students, and higher rates of student mobility and absenteeism. Still, these characteristics do not define the schools or the families.

The Southwest Sector schools have expert staff and administrators delivering high-quality learning programs. These schools are also characterized by holistic responses to learning with robust community partnerships to address mental, physical, spiritual and emotional growth and development. There are many community development initiatives underway in the Southwest Sector schools, including focuses on food security, links to employment, housing and community wellness.

The Southwest Sector principals are part of a strong and committed learning community. Together, they examine evidence of student and community outcomes, and develop high-yield strategies to achieve enhanced student and community outcomes. One of the most challenging aspects of their work is re-engaging students with high absenteeism. The belief is that students need to be present to benefit from the relationships and quality learning opportunities in schools. The Southwest Sector principals have a longstanding commitment to collaborating in addressing issues of concern. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, principals witnessed many more students who were not engaged in school, and came together to advance a plan to address this new reality.

The resulting Southwest Sector Attendance Initiative adopted a new perspective on student absenteeism and aimed to implement new practices to engage with families to encourage and support school attendance. The principals petitioned the Board to resource and support an Attendance Care Team for this purpose. The result is a family and school-level Attendance Initiative built on positive presuppositions and relationships. All families want what's best for their children. Respecting this belief, schools and families can make great strides in ensuring students benefit from the best of what schools have to offer, and that students and families gain resiliency skills to build on their commitment to their children, and continue to navigate the pandemic to advantage their children. No child should feel lost, but should know that they are part of a caring and loving family. Families weather storms and grow together so that all members of the family continue to benefit from participation in the family. Together we are better.

## About the Project

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all aspects of society in extraordinary ways. Normal operations of schools have also been greatly affected, and the results of those interruptions manifest in many ways. Student engagement with school and school attendance are concerns that, if left unchecked, may have long-term negative effects on learning and social goals.

The greatest gaps in school attendance within Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools are concentrated in schools that typically serve more vulnerable students and a higher proportion of Indigenous students. These communities require specific supports to remain engaged with school. The Attendance Initiative strategies and resources help to address the unique needs of students in some schools, as well as students experiencing sporadic attendance in all schools.

To define the scope of the problem it was important to examine four interrelated sets of data (The following statistics are from November 2020):

- **Attendance rates by school** identifies trends but, more importantly, identifies individual students who required connections and re-engagement supports. The attendance of all elementary students was examined within the four attendance categories described below. The black, red, and yellow categories represented over 1,100 students combined.

Category	Category Totals
Black: 0%-25%	96
Red: 26%-50%	197
Yellow: 51%-75%	818
Green: 76%-100%	11,037
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,148</b>

- The number of **students who have enrolled in online learning but have not engaged**, or have engaged sporadically, was also assessed. Students whose online teachers identified them as *hard to engage*, with typically little or no participation in online learning were identified. There were a total of 183 students registered online with little or no attendance.
- Students who have **withdrawn but have not engaged elsewhere** were also identified. Students who withdrew with intent to register in another provincial or First Nations school typically surface in the provincial student data system, or have a cumulative folder requested shortly after leaving the division. During the pandemic, it was noted that either these students were not actually re-registering elsewhere, or there were

delays with records transition. There were a total of 143 students who withdrew from an elementary school in the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools' division with no evidence of re-registering elsewhere.

- High school attendance rates were also examined. The following table identified the distribution of the current 227 students in the categories of concern in the high schools:

Category	Student Count
Black: 0%-25%	40
Red: 26%-50%	70
Yellow: 51%-75%	117
Green: 76%-100%	4,203
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,430</b>

With the 1,111 elementary students attending 75% or less, 183 online students with sporadic or no attendance, 143 students whose whereabouts were unknown, and 227 high school students attending 75% or less, **there were a total of 1,664 students in need of specific supports to re-engage with school.**

Southwest Sector principals came together to develop a responsive plan to locate and support those students to re-engage in school. The principals brought their proposal to the Board, which approved the formation of an Attendance Care Team, and resourced the development of the Team. The Team, who started their work in mid-January 2021, consists of three members working towards meeting the expectations of the Attendance Initiative:

- **Social Worker:** The Social Worker is a key process navigator and is acutely aware of the people and organizations that can assist students and families.
- **Aboriginal Student Achievement Coordinator:** The ASAC is knowledgeable of Indigenous community and kinship models and is skilled in building and maintaining relationships with students and families.
- **Teacher:** The Teacher is able to assess learning needs and structure a learning support strategy that builds student confidence and sustains learning whether students are at home or in school.

### Program Goals

The Attendance Initiative aims to identify the whereabouts of students and the causes of absenteeism, reclaim students not attending school, and enhance the attendance of students of concern. The specific goals of this initiative are as follows:

- Establish a data framework to identify trends in student attendance.

- Provide information on specific students to facilitate appropriate interventions and supports.
- Establish the whereabouts of students who have not registered elsewhere, or who are not currently attending school.
- Determine causality for students with attendance patterns of concern.
- Establish relationships with families and students not attending school or experiencing poor attendance.
- Provide learning supports for students with impediments to regular school attendance.
- Create pathways to reconnect students with a school and classroom context.
- Assist students to incrementally improve their attendance.

The work of the Attendance Care Team is generally categorized as follows:

- **Step 1 - Community Outreach:** Connect with school administration and student support teams, reach out to families/students by phone, email, social media, and home visits.
- **Step 2 - Student Re-engagement:** Support schools to develop a concrete plan regarding student re-engagement.
- **Step 3 - Monitoring:** The Attendance Care Team continues working with schools on a weekly basis regarding students who are in the black and red categories.

### **Board Influence and Participation**

During the pandemic, the Board of Education received regular reports on the effects of, and responses to the pandemic. The Board consistently inquired with administration regarding students who were not fully engaged. Administration drew connections between the Board's imperative for ensuring that all children were engaged and the principals who imagined and expected a more robust response to student absenteeism. Once the connections were made and the Attendance Initiative was developed, the Board received regular reports on the operations of the Attendance Care Team (Appendix A). In addition, the Attendance initiative committed to an extensive list of routine reporting as follows:

- **Student:** Decisions that pertain to students will be communicated to them based on maturity and developmental level.
- **Families:** Families will be aware of, and consent to, collaborations with other agencies.
- **Teachers:** Teachers will be made aware of any progress on plans for student re-engagement.
- **Principals:** Principals will be kept informed about plans that impact school personnel and resources.
- **Board and Executive:** The initiative Board and Executive Council will receive regular reports on interventions and progress.

## Innovations

The pandemic saw the emergence of like-initiatives to support student attendance during the pandemic around the world. Indeed, a major catalyst for the initiative taking shape was a CBC National report on a similar team constituted in Florida schools. The touching narrative of youth managing extremely difficult circumstances to sustain their school attendance moved the Southwest Sector principals to act. While the initiative is innovative in the provincial context to have a dedicated three-person team of professionals to support attendance, the real innovation is not necessarily in constituting an Attendance Care Team, but in re-framing school attendance from truancy to engagement. The Attendance Initiative has identified four key themes that are acutely impacting student attendance, as follows:

- **Family Instability:** Homelessness, transportation issues, addictions, incarceration, and financial difficulties.
- **Mental Health Concerns:** Death of multiple family members, anxiety, depression, disrupted sleep patterns.
- **COVID–19 Related Concerns:** Multiple family members isolating, students living with immunocompromised family members, young parents not feeling safe taking their children to daycare or using public transit, heightened feelings of helplessness, boredom, and loneliness.
- **Lack of Timely and Current Information:** Families and students not understanding educational options, families not understanding schools safety protocols.

Given these realities, renewed school division attendance support strategies are characterized by relationship-building, connecting families with resources and supports, facilitating family connections, and seeking to understand the complexity of families enduring specific challenges.

A significant innovation that emerged from the work of the Attendance Care Team was the development of a re-engagement progression. This tool serves as a template to guide student engagement initiatives:

<b>Student Re-engagement Progression</b>
<b>Locate Students</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students are identified as being at home, in the city or elsewhere.</li></ul>
<b>Establish Relationships</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish rapport and engage families as allies in learning.</li></ul>
<b>Assess Needs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student safety, social, learning and return to school needs are identified.</li></ul>
<b>Develop Communication</b>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans are made to maintain contact on a routine schedule.</li> </ul>
<b>Facilitate Supports</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources to support wellness and learning are identified and deployed.</li> </ul>
<b>Deploy Technology</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technology supports are identified and deployed.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustain Learning</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Books and digital and hard copy learning resources are provided.</li> </ul>
<b>Initiate Return Plan</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A return to school plan, including modified attendance, is collaboratively developed.</li> </ul>
<b>Support Reintegration</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student and family contact and support accompanies a return to school.</li> </ul>

The Initiative also produced a Process Map (Appendix B) to guide the efforts of school and division-level supports. The Process Map helps to create continuity and align efforts as all stakeholders are aware of strategic directions and expectations of the Attendance Care Team.

Another innovation that emerged from the Attendance Initiative was the implementation of Family Support Summer Programming. The programming, delivered throughout July and August of 2021, was developed to engage with students of concern and their families. Each week of summer programming followed a learning theme (Living off the Land, Family and Friends, My Community, Animals). The themes aligned reading and learning materials with the family outings. Specifically, the programming aimed to:

- Maintain students and family engagement.
- Ensure students of concern were registered for the fall.
- Work at closing academic gaps caused by a lack of attendance.
- Support students to feel comfortable and confident when returning to school.

To support learning, students received books and other learning materials, as well as one-on-one and small group instruction. Students and their families were also provided opportunity to engage in community learning activities, such as family gatherings at the Forestry Farm Park and Zoo, the Remai Modern Art Gallery, and community swimming pools to increase family and community connections.

These innovations are part attitudinal and part practice, meaning that we've learned to think about attendance in a different way, and address absenteeism in a different way. Rather than engagement and collaboration being a consideration in addressing attendance, these characteristics have become the norm.

## Sustainability

With any new initiative, the question of sustainability needs to be addressed. The Attendance Initiative was originally conceived of as a short-term response to pandemic conditions. While the pandemic continues, the first test of sustainability is that the Initiative was sustained beyond the availability of extraordinary provincial pandemic funding. The benefits of the Attendance Care Team have been recognized and endorsed by school principals. Notwithstanding any unforeseen circumstances, the division has committed to a post-pandemic continuation of the team commensurate with the scope of the ongoing need. The size of the Attendance Care Team can be scaled up or scaled back, depending on what the data says about the scope of the need.

Another consideration for sustainability is the role of the team beyond the initial triaging of acute attendance issues. The Care Team has also engaged in long-term, sustainable activities such as the following:

- Continuing to monitor the schools with students that the team is supporting.
- Monitoring and strategically engaging with all students on their case-load using weekly teacher feedback for students in the black and red.
- Re-starting the student contact process for all high school students in the black and red categories, as well as students in the withdrawn category.

These commitments embed the initiative within the routine operations of schools, providing the best evidence for the sustainability of the Attendance Initiative.

## Cost-benefit Analysis

In a January 2021 news item (Wong, 2021) quoted a UNESCO representative saying that “more than 450 million students around the globe have been unable to access education during the pandemic, including many excluded from online learning due to lack of internet access at home... UNESCO currently projects that about 24 million children and youth are at risk of dropping out of school worldwide.” These unsettling statistics might typically be attributed to developing countries, but the reality is that students in our schools also experience these same risks. It is the most vulnerable who are at greater risk as the article goes on to say that, “it’s about ... those who were already behind being left behind more...” The article identifies UNESCO’s call to protect and increase investments in education. This recognition of the scope of the challenge and the call for action is a call to spend to avert downstream societal costs.

Another CBC article (Birak & Cuttler, 2019) identifies that “as early as kindergarten, missing more school affects things like third-grade reading scores... [and] ...third-grade math scores ... missing school in younger grades leads to missing school in older grades, and missing school in older grades is linked to school dropout.” The costs of school “dropouts” is well-evidenced in the Canadian context. As it relates to Indigenous youth transitioning to post-secondary education, the Strengthening Attendance and Retention of Indigenous Youth in Elementary and Secondary Schools in Canada and Beyond Environmental Scan states, “the best way to close the

post-secondary education gap is to look at the feeder systems to colleges and universities, and ensure that Indigenous youth are graduating at the same rate as non-Indigenous youth, with the same level of preparedness for further studies (p. 4).”

The attendance-learning-graduation-post secondary-labour market attachment continuum is clearly established, and directly related to the Southwest Sector Attendance initiative.

### **Client Support for the Innovation**

The most compelling support for the Attendance Initiative is the response of students and families. When engaged within the context of a caring and supportive relationship, families have expressed relief, feelings of self-worth, and hope. The following statements represent the feedback that is typical of interactions with parents and guardians (additional comments appear in Appendix C). The following parent comment benefits from some context. The parent who provided the comment is a single dad with two young children. A member of the Attendance Care Team, working with community partners, was able to find the family a home in a matter of days after the family had been living in a hotel for 6 months. With **support of** the home school, the family received donations of furniture and other household items. The Care Team was able to provide air mattresses, food hampers and transportation via taxi for the children to get school. One of the children’s attendance increased from 25% to 79%.

“OMG the impact, we were homeless and the support from the school and the Attendance Care Team was phenomenal! We were praying for a miracle every night before we went to bed. It brings tears to my eyes, the emotion that I felt, not having a home for my children. It was heartbreaking but the only ray of light for them was to go to school. The moment the school and the Attendance Care Team stepped in and helped us, we were extremely excited and grateful for all the donations and a home. My children love their backyard and love their room. There are a lot of friendly faces at the school and my children are safe and happy there.

Students also provided feedback on their experience with the Attendance Care Team. A grade 8 student commented as follows:

“This program helps me to always get to school on time. It helps make my attendance way-way better. The program makes going to school a lot easier in the mornings. The program has helped me and my mother by paying for cabs so I can get to school and work hard. Thank you.

Although the Initiative is oriented to serve students and families, the Attendance Care Team is also an instrumental support to school teams. A sampling of feedback received from a principal is as follows:

“The Attendance Initiative was such a huge support for our families. There were three families at my school that benefited from working with the Attendance Care Team. For

each of these families we thought transportation was an issue. They were within transportation boundaries so they had to find their own means to get to school. Communication was difficult as we were unable to do home visits last year and their phones were not working. The Care Team dropped off some door knockers with their information on it and these families reached out! We found out that transportation was a barrier for only one family and for the other two it was more about anxiety and sending their children to school during the pandemic. The Care Team was able to provide cabbng for the one family and attendance improved after that. School materials were collected and dropped off for the other two families that were unsure about sending their children to school during the pandemic. Once it warmed up and we were able to spend more time outside, we saw attendance improve for the other two families and I believe this is because of the initial contact from the Care Team and we were able to maintain that connection for the year.”

Those most directly affected by the work of the Attendance Care Team have consistently reported feelings of support and empowerment. These narratives translate into incremental and meaningful improvements that constitute the real successes of the Initiative.

### Partnerships

While the Attendance Initiative is situated within Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, it relies heavily on partnership supports, as well as supporting the missions and objectives of partner organizations. A sampling of the key partnerships that the Attendance Initiative interfaces with and the types of services and supports that these collaborations precipitated are as follows:

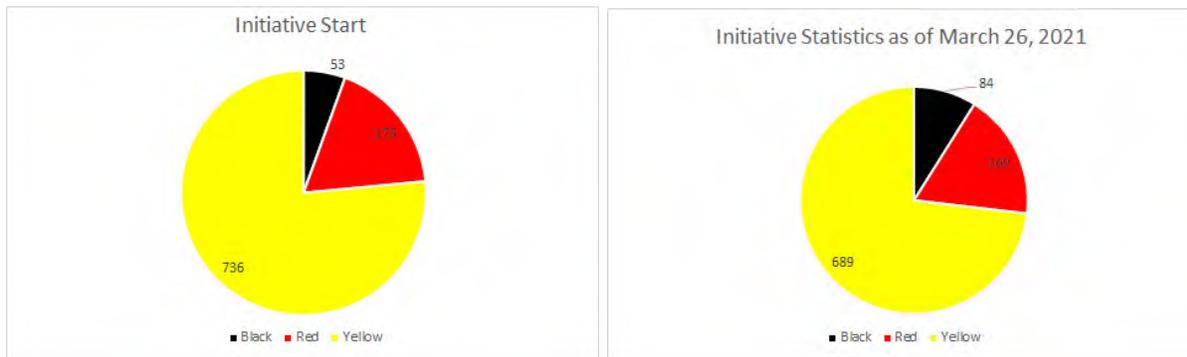
- **Ministry of Social Services:** Financial support for emergent issues such as unexpected moves.
- **Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre:** Securing food hampers in times of need.
- **St. Mary’s Wellness & Education Centre:** Accessing mental and physical health supports for children and youth.
- **Saskatchewan Health Authority:** Facilitating access to mental health supports.
- **Saskatoon Housing Authority, Cress Housing Corporation and Sasknative Rentals:** Support in securing housing or improving living conditions.
- **Saskatoon Tribal Council Pathways to Education:** Tutorial support for high school students.
- **Saskatoon Hub Table:** Wraparound supports for families experiencing acute challenges.
- **EGADZ:** Outreach supports for vulnerable youth.
- **Kilburn Hall Youth Centre:** Supports for students transitioning from the justice system.
- **Jordan’s Principle:** Supporting families to secure resources for students.
- **Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan:** Accessing diagnosis and support for students with learning challenges.

Partner interface is a strong component of the work of the Attendance Care Team and it is through these supports that the Initiative is able to demonstrate successes.

### Evidence of Improved Student Achievement

With the goal of reconnecting students to a learning context, the Initiative assumes a causal link between school attendance and academic outcome. The role of the Attendance Team is to reconnect students and collaborate with teachers to maintain supports so that school attendance is more likely. The first tier of evidence of success is the contacts made with families. Between January and August 2021, the Attendance Care Team made over 4,000 contacts with families (home visits, phone calls, social media, etc.).

The evidence of improved student achievement via school attendance that the Initiative is able to demonstrate positive movement of students within attendance categories. Enumerating gains is complicated as when the Initiative returned hundreds of students to school, some categories grew from the increase in overall numbers. From November 2020 to March 2021, the number of elementary students in all categories grew from 12,027 students to 12,560. Students in the black grew from 53 to 84, the red dropped from 173 to 169, the yellow dropped from 736 to 689, and the green grew from 11,065 to 11,618. This information is represented graphically in the following charts:



The net effect is 533 more children in face-to-face learning, with an increase of 31 students in the black, a decrease of 4 students in the red, a decrease of 47 students in the yellow, and an increase of 553 students in the green. The increase in overall numbers served is also a result of an increase in engagement of online learners, students returning from online to in-person learning, and the re-enrolment of withdrawn students in the division or elsewhere.

Another measure of attendance improvement consistent with the intervention is movement within categories. Students may demonstrate growth but not move up a full category. By way of example, the following data is specific to a single school:

- **Movement of students in the black (0-25%):**
  - 27 students stayed in the black with an increase in attendance
  - 5 students stayed in the black with a decrease in attendance

- 6 students moved from black to red
- 1 student moved to the yellow
- **Movement of students in the red (26-50%):**
  - 12 students stayed in the red with an increase in attendance
  - 5 students stayed in the red with a decrease in attendance
  - 1 student moved from red to black
  - 6 students moved from red to yellow

Finally, the Initiative measured many successes through narrative and experience resulting from strengthened relationships with families. Following are anecdotes shared from members of the Attendance care team:

**Narrative 1:** “The attendance team was able to support 2 students who were on the online truant list, the students were not engaging in learning of any form. I called and spoke with their mom and she said that the online learning was not working for the boys and that she wanted them to return to in-person learning. I spoke with the principal at the school and even though it was not within a transition period, he was more that happy to have the students return. A concern that mom had was that the boys did not have any school supplies. She was very grateful when I let her know that we would be able to help with that. I went out and bought school supplies and the boys started the next week. They went from 0% engagement to attending about 65% in June. I wanted to make sure the boys were set up for success for the 2021 school start up, so I reached out to mom to see what they needed, I again provided school supplies. I spoke with the principal and the boys have been happily attending.”

**Narrative 2:** “One family that was really struggling with education during the pandemic was at a loss of what they could do for learning. Mom did not feel that online was a viable option for their family because their internet was very spotty and also because mom and dad are both hearing impaired. A data device was offered but both parents felt that it would still be too much of a challenge to do online learning. Dad was adamant that the girls would not attend in-person school during the pandemic. A member of the Attendance Team worked with the family to provide learning opportunities such as reading materials, grade-appropriate workbooks for Language Arts and Math, as well as games and manipulatives. A team member also offered to come to the house and complete a reading and math assessment with the children to determine their academic levels. Knowing the academic level allows the team to tailor resources for each girl. The attendance team will continue to work with the family to ensure their needs are being met for the 2021-2022 school year.”

**Narrative 3:** “The Attendance Care team was introduced to a student who needed many supports, as this student faced many challenges. The student often had to leave school early to babysit younger siblings. He also experienced severe learning difficulties. An Attendance Team member was able to set up free counselling for this child and drove

him to and from his appointments, when possible. The team member did this in order to help build a relationship with the child. In this case different family members were contacted to help in supporting this boy to prevent him from being put into the care of the Ministry of Social Services. The Attendance Team member also met with the school support team. This included the principal, learning assistance teacher, occupational therapist, and teacher. The team member worked as a liaison between the school team, family, and outside agencies. Outside agencies included the HUB, a social worker from MSS, and outside counselling. The team member provided the student with learning resources to help aid the student's learning gaps. Support for this student will be an ongoing effort as he transitions into a new school for the 2021-2022 school year.”

### **Conclusion**

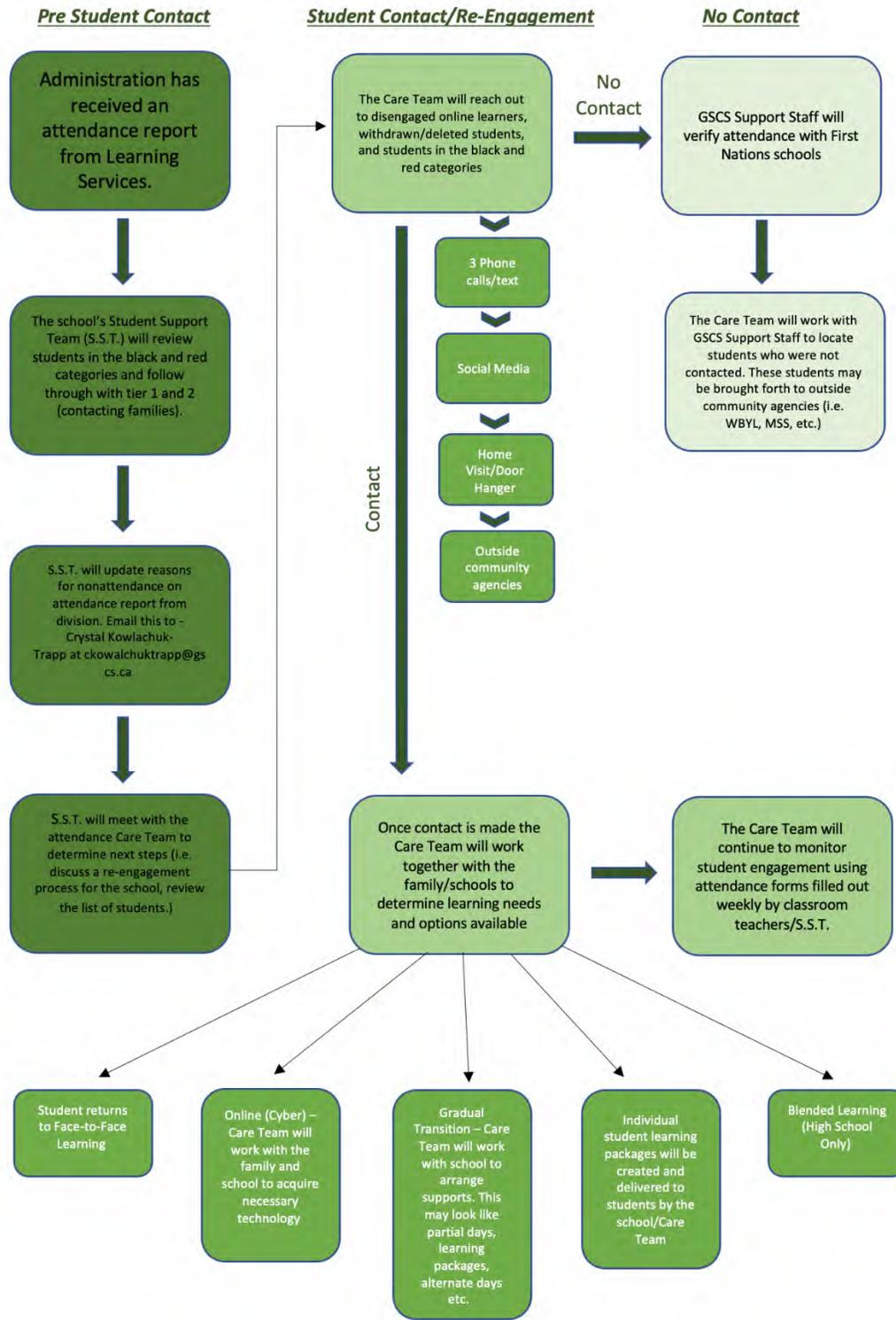
The Southwest Sector Attendance Initiative is a vital response to students who have been most impacted by the pandemic. The work of the Attendance Care Team exemplifies an ethic of care and ensures that students and families know that they are not lost, but that they are a part of a caring and loving family of schools.

### Appendix A: Evidence of Board Influence and Participation

Date	Item	Detail
October 19, 2020	Regular Meeting of the Board, committee of the whole	2020-2021 enrolment update
December 14, 2020	Regular Meeting of the Board, public item	Pandemic response update
April 19, 2021	Regular Meeting of the Board	Southwest sector attendance Initiative
May 17, 2021	Regular Meeting of the Board, committee of the whole	Budget 2021-2022 update

## Appendix B: Attendance Care Team Process Map

### GSCS Attendance Care Team Process



## Appendix C: Additional Client Support Statements

### Students:

- When asked why having an attendance initiative is important one grade 9 student responded "because every student needs to learn. I was out of school for 2 years before someone contacted me."
- "It was good to know someone cared and that they (students) got encouragement not received outside of school."

### Parents/Guardians:

Another parent of two students attending school online commented as follows:

- "I really appreciated the help and support with the Attendance Initiative. The homework packages and activities for the children have been a blessing. During this time of online learning, it has been difficult for the children not being in school, but with the Attendance Initiative they felt included and seen. We loved and appreciated the support so much. Thank you!"

### Principals:

- "In the last 18 months, the pandemic caused significant disruption to students' learning and in many cases, led to many students experiencing disengagement and poor attendance. School teams did the best they could to reach out and connect with families to encourage consistent attendance, however, this proved challenging in circumstances where families were not reachable. Once the Care Team was established, they were able to fill a need in re-engaging many families back in school in ways in which school teams were not able to. They were able to connect and re-engage primarily by working with families directly in the community, collectively problem solving barriers, and supporting student transitions back to school. We have very much appreciated the support the Care Team was able to provide to so many of our families who would have otherwise remained disengaged from school with poor continued attendance."
- "As principal, I was able to witness the incredible impact the Care Team had on the lives of our students and families. One specific story exemplifies not only their dedication, but illustrates their compassionate response in coming to the aid of students who were struggling to attend school. Having access to a home that will serve as a permanent residency is a huge barrier for some of our families. We had a child in grade one whose family was living between hotel rooms because they could not qualify for rental housing and, as a result, their child was unable to come to school. After connecting with the Team and explaining the family's situation, they were able to make a few phone calls

and have the family view a couple of rental properties that day. Needless to say, with their efforts the child and his family not only had a home but a home that was furnished through the efforts of this team and our school staff. The experience left me feeling that this was the closest thing to doing God's work that you can witness especially during the uncertain times of this pandemic. The attendance team should be commended for the exemplary service they have brought to the education and well being of our children and their families – well done!"

Appendix D: Door Hanger




**SORRY  
WE  
MISSED  
YOU!**

**PLEASE REFER TO THE BACK OF THIS CARD  
FOR SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION.**

**~GSCS STUDENT CARE TEAM**




Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools has established a Student Care Team within our division. Our team was created to support students in our division who are facing reduced attendance. A member of our team was here to visit you today.

Our team is here to support you and your student; we would like to discuss options for re-engagement.

**Did you know that there are many options for student education within our division?**

Elementary School
Face-to-face learning in a classroom
Online (Cyber) Classroom Learning
Gradual Transition Options
Individual Student Learning Packages
High School
Face-to-face learning in a classroom
Online (Cyber) Classroom Learning
Gradual Transition Options
Individual Student Learning Packages
Blended Learning Options

**Which option is right for you? We would love to hear from you.**

Please contact one of the GSCS Care Team to chat and discuss which learning option may be best for your family.

TEAM MEMBER	EMAIL	PHONE
Coryn Digness	cdigness@gscs.ca	306-659-6403
Lauralee Sutherland	lsutherland@gscs.ca	306-659-6403
Stan Tu'Inukuafe	stuinukuafe@gscs.ca	306-659-6403

Every GSCS school is following COVID-19 safety protocols to help keep our students and families safe. These protocols include increased cleaning, hand hygiene and sanitizing, physical distancing, mask use, and cohorting (grouping) of classes.

**Appendix E: Data Wall Template Sample**

<b>Student Name</b>	<b>Home School</b>	<b>Current Status (Colour Key)</b>	<b>Key Contacts</b>	<b>Causality</b>	<b>Communication Strategies</b>	<b>Learning Supports</b>	<b>Re-Engagement Strategy</b>	<b>Last 7 Day Attendance</b>	<b>Status Summary</b>
John Smith	St. Elsewhere		Teacher 1/week  Mom on cell  Friend in class	Fear of infection  No interest in online school	Mom committed to weekly call	Division laptop, no internet access. Request for data in progress.  Left 4 books on Jan 12  Asked for spelling and math worksheets, in progress	Mom will re-assess after February break	0	In-progress

## References

Wong, J. (2021, January 31). Disrupting schooling, learning loss will have effects long after pandemic, says education experts. *CBC News*. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/pandemic-learning-gap-unesco-report-1.5888860>)

Birak, C. & Cuttler, M. (2019, February 7). School absenteeism can set off troubling chain of events, pediatricians say. *CBC News*. (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/school-absenteeism-pediatrics-1.5005670>)

**Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association (SCSBA) Board of Directors Meeting:**

September 17-18 was the first meeting of the SCSBA board of directors. As a follow up to that meeting, the directors of education from the Catholic boards were asked to work together to enhance our respective and SCBSA responses to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission 94 Calls to Action. The initial planning was held on October 15. There will be more to come as we set forth response plans.

**Principal Fall Seminar:** The annual seminar for principals and executive members was set to take place on September 23-24. With the widespread COVID activity in our community and very busy workloads at the schools and Board Office, the decision was made to cancel this seminar. We look very much forward to having the opportunity to resume this work soon.

**National Day for Truth and Reconciliation:** The recent proclamation of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30) provided the division with a wonderful opportunity to support our staff in deepening our understanding and capacity to respond, both personally and professionally, to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission 94 Calls to Action. Thanks to the leadership of Superintendent G. Martell, Coordinator C. Laliberte and the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education team, a 2-hour package of video presentations was prepared. This was a great learning opportunity for our teaching staff, as our team put together a series of four speakers for our elementary and high school staff (two were the same for each and one was unique to high school/elementary). The presentations were pre-recorded and then put together with emcees, song, prayer, etc. Each school staff then went through the two hours, then there were discussions and planning protocols for school staff. The presentations were very well done. Special thanks as well to our presenters: Dr. Niigaan Sinclair, Dr. Kevin Lamoureux, Etienna Moostoos-Lafferty, and Dr. Sean Lessard who shared generously with us. We look forward to accessing these presentations during this year as we continue to deepen our understanding and capacity.

**Orange Shirt Day:** With the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30, our division observed Orange Shirt Day on September 29. Across the division there were a wide variety of activities including walks, art displays, classroom projects etc. Thanks to all of our schools for providing these opportunities for everyone to learn, understand, and remember.

**Provincial Education Plan:** Planning for the provincial education plan set to begin next academic year continued on both October 5 and October 13. At this stage, general outcomes are being surfaced under the four main pillars: skills and knowledge; mental health and wellbeing; inclusive, safe and welcoming; and connections and relationships.