

Registered Independent Schools Handbook How to Register a School in Saskatchewan

2025

Introduction

This handbook explains the registration process and answers some commonly asked questions for groups or individuals interested in starting a registered independent school in Saskatchewan.

In Saskatchewan, students of compulsory school age (6 to 15 years old inclusive) must attend a school with the public or separate school boards or the Conseil des écoles fransaskoises, a registered independent school, or be registered for home-based education. A registered independent school provides students of compulsory school age with an exemption from attendance at a public or separate school.

The Education Act, 1995 makes provision for the registration of independent schools by private groups or organizations. The purpose of these provisions is to recognize the right of parents/guardians to educate their children in accordance with their conscientious beliefs.

Categories of Independent Schools

Registered independent schools encompass a diverse range of philosophical and religious beliefs. There are six categories of independent schools in Saskatchewan.

1. Registered Independent School

Registered independent schools meet basic eligibility criteria as outlined in [*The Registered Independent Schools Regulations*](#). The registered independent school does not receive any funding from the Ministry of Education. Registered independent schools provide their students of compulsory school age with an exemption from attendance at a public or separate school.

2. Alternative Independent Schools

Alternative independent schools typically provide education programs and services to students who are wards of the province. The Ministry of Education is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate educational programming is in place. These students may require a wide range of supports and services and their family may need an integrated approach amongst human service agencies and ministries.

3. Associate Schools

Associate schools are registered independent schools which have a voluntary operating agreement with a school division. To qualify for associate school status, the school must:

- have been in operation as a registered independent school for at least two years; and
- hold an acceptable operating agreement with a school division.

The arrangement involves the school division employing the teachers and the registered independent school board providing the building, maintenance and course materials beyond those associated with the provincial curriculum. Funding is provided through the school division.

4. Historical High Schools

Historical high schools were established as “schools of necessity” at a time when public high schools were not always available. Historical high schools are funded because of the long-standing historical arrangements that were continued when legislation for independent schools was enacted in 1989. Only historical high schools listed at the time *The Registered Independent Schools Regulations* came into force hold this unique designation. No new schools will be added to this category. Historical high schools are approved to offer secondary credits and have agreed to supervision by ministry staff over and above the requirements for registered schools.

5. Qualified Independent Schools

Qualified independent schools are registered independent schools that become eligible to receive provincial funding if they meet specific additional criteria (see *The Registered Independent Schools Regulations*, subsection 10(1) for the complete list). Criteria include but are not limited to:

- operating as a registered independent school for a minimum of two consecutive years;
- employing only Professional A teachers as defined by the [Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Regulatory Board](#) (SPTRB);
- implementing Saskatchewan provincial curricula;
- participating in the provincial accountability framework;
- adhering to ministry directives and policies; and,
- financial reporting.

6. Certified Independent Schools

Certified independent schools are qualified independent schools that become eligible to receive a higher rate of provincial funding if they meet additional criteria (see *The Registered Independent Schools Regulations*, subsection 11.1 for complete list). Criteria include but are not limited to:

- operating as a qualified independent school for a minimum of five consecutive years;
- using core learning resources that are reviewed and approved for use by the Ministry of Education;
- enrolling and maintaining an enrolment of at least 150 full time equivalent students;
- employing at least one Professional A teacher for every classroom and maintaining a minimum pupil-teacher ratio of no more than 25 students per full time equivalent teacher; and,
- paying Professional A teachers and school administrators a minimum of 90 per cent of the amounts set out in the current provincial collective bargaining agreement for teachers, including allowances.

All qualified and certified independent schools are inspected and supervised by ministry officials.

Legislation, Regulations and Policies

The Education Act, 1995, section 2 & clauses 4(1)(x)(y)
The Registered Independent Schools Regulations, subsection 5(1)
The Registered Independent Schools Policy and Procedure Manual

All independent schools in Saskatchewan must be registered with the Ministry of Education prior to admitting students.

The Education Act, 1995, states:

““independent school” means an institution:

- (a) in which instruction is provided to pupils of compulsory school age; and
- (b) that is controlled and administered by a person other than a public authority

4(1) The Minister may:

- (x) make provision for the registration of independent schools;
- (y) make provision for the inspection and supervision of registered independent schools

Registration of an independent school does not automatically grant the school the ability to provide students secondary level credits. Only registered independent schools that have received additional Ministry of Education authorization and approval of their educational program can provide secondary level credits.

The Registered Independent Schools Regulations state:

“5(1) In this Part, “**registered independent school**” means an independent school that:

- (a) is owned or operated by a corporation:
 - (i) that is incorporated or continued in Saskatchewan; and
 - (ii) that has a physical presence in Saskatchewan evidenced by the following:
 - (A) a school administration office located in Saskatchewan;
 - (B) a Saskatchewan postal address; and
 - (C) a Saskatchewan telephone number;
- (b) has a board that:
 - (i) exercises powers similar to those of a board of education; and
 - (ii) comprises a minimum of 3 adults representing 3 separate households;
- (c) subject to subsection (4), for the start of the next academic year, has enrolled at least 7 persons to attend the school:
 - (i) who have attained the age of 6 years but have not yet attained the age of 22 years;
 - (ii) who are from at least 3 separate households; and
 - (iii) the majority of who are enrolled at a grade level higher than kindergarten;
- (d) meets all applicable fire, health and safety standards in relation to its school facilities located in Saskatchewan;
- (e) has goals of education that are, in the opinion of the minister, not inconsistent with the goals of education for Saskatchewan;

- (f) has a name that, in the opinion of the minister:
 - (i) is distinct from the names of other existing educational institutions;
 - (ii) reflects the level of educational programming offered or proposed to be offered by the independent school; and
 - (iii) does not inaccurately reflect the location or geographical area to be served by the independent school;
- (g) is not owned or operated by, or for the benefit of pupils from, an Indian band within the meaning of the *Indian Act* (Canada); and
- (h) did not hold a certificate of registration that was suspended or cancelled within the 24 months preceding the date of application.”

The Registered Independent Schools Regulations and [The Registered Independent Schools Policy and Procedure Manual](#) provide the framework for independent schools in Saskatchewan. The policy manual is a resource for educators, parents/guardians and other interested parties outlining the policy and procedures for the operation of independent schools.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the registration, inspection and supervision of independent schools in Saskatchewan. For further information, contact:

Independent Schools and Home-based Education
Ministry of Education
409A Park Street
REGINA, SK S4N 5B2
Fax: 306-787-2029
Email: programsed@gov.sk.ca

Requirements

Before registration will be granted, there are a number of requirements that independent schools need to meet and continue to fulfill as a condition of ongoing registration. These requirements are outlined in *The Registered Independent Schools Regulations* and are described in more detail in *The Registered Independent Schools Policy and Procedure Manual*. Schools will not be registered unless they meet the criteria outlined in legislation. If the school no longer meets the registration criteria, the certificate of registration may be suspended or cancelled.

Requirements for registration include:

- 1) The owner or operator of the school must be incorporated in Saskatchewan. An application should be made to [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan, Corporate Registry](#), prior to submitting the registration form.
- 2) An independent school board must be comprised of a minimum of three adults from three different households.
- 3) An independent school must enrol a minimum of seven students between the ages of 6 and 21 from three different households in full time attendance, the majority of whom are enrolled in a grade higher than Kindergarten.
- 4) School facilities must meet recognized safety, health and construction standards. School officials are expected to contact local municipal fire prevention and health officials to arrange for inspections. Inspection reports must be submitted during the registration process as evidence of compliance.
- 5) An independent school must have goals of education that are consistent with the [Goals of Education for Saskatchewan](#). The goals of education must include the school's philosophy of education and purpose, a statement of goals, and address the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for life-long learning. The goals may also include information on the vision or role of the school in the context of the broader community that supports the school.
- 6) The school cannot be owned or operated by, or for the benefit of students from, an Indian Band within the meaning of the *Indian Act* (Canada).
- 7) The independent school must have a name that:
 - is different from the name of any existing educational institutions;
 - reflects the level of educational programming offered or proposed to be offered (i.e., elementary, middle or high school); and,
 - does not inaccurately reflect the location or geographical area to be served by the independent school.
- 8) Teaching the Saskatchewan curricula is not mandatory for registered independent schools. Registered independent schools are required to provide instruction on a full-time basis in the seven

required areas of study. The seven required areas of study include: language arts, mathematics, science, social studies/social sciences, health education, arts education and physical education.

- School officials in registered independent schools must notify parents/guardians if the registered independent school does not offer the Saskatchewan curricula and is not approved to offer secondary level credits.

9) Registered independent schools must ensure all teaching staff employed are certified teachers that:

- are registered with the SPTRB; or,
- hold a [Letter of Eligibility](#) as issued by the Ministry of Education.

Registered independent schools may limit employment to teachers with unique training or who share the faith and practice of the organization that owns or operates the registered independent school. For more information regarding teacher qualifications please contact the SPTRB.

10) Registered independent schools are required to employ a director and a principal in the school.

The registered independent school director is the chief executive officer and is responsible for the general management of the registered independent school, but not necessarily for the oversight of teachers in the educational sense. The registered independent school principal oversees the provision of instruction to students and is required to be a certified teacher. The registered independent school board may appoint the same person to be both the director and the principal.

11) The registered independent school must agree to annual ministry inspections, which involve checking compliance with:

- government regulations;
- eligibility criteria for registration of an independent school; and,
- operational requirements such as the school calendar, the hours of instruction, student records storage and secure location, and the instruction provided to students.

12) The registered independent school must agree to annual reporting requirements. The information gathered includes updates to the school's initial registration and additional information on the current operation of the school.

Procedures for Registering an Independent School

The following are deadlines for the procedures and submissions required in order for the registration process to be completed prior to the school opening for September of the following school year.

1. Notify the Ministry of Education of intent to register an independent school and schedule a meeting to determine eligibility requirements (prior to completing registration forms) by **November 30**.
2. Submit by **December 31**:
 - An Independent Schools Registration (Form A).
 - The school's goals of education.
 - Incorporation documents from the Information Services Corporation. The school name must reflect the school's educational programming.
 - Names and contact information of the school director and board members.
3. Submit by **March 31**:
 - The finalized physical location of the school.
 - Approved fire and safety inspection reports.
 - Township/city zoning approval letter.
4. Submit by **June 30**:
 - Course outlines for all courses in all grades taught. These will be reviewed by the ministry to ensure adherence to Saskatchewan curricula or that all seven required areas of study are adequately taught.
 - Principal and teacher names, certification types and numbers.
 - Letter of Eligibility applications (if applicable).
 - Annual calendar and hours of daily instruction form.
 - All applicable administrative procedures.

Also by June 30: Schedule site visit with the ministry. Schools will be inspected for compliance with fire, safety and health inspections.

5. Ensure all teaching staff are registered with the SPTRB or hold a Letter of Eligibility as issued by the ministry by **August 31**.
6. Prior to the first day of school for students:
 - Obtain recent and clear criminal record checks/vulnerable sector checks from all non-teaching staff and volunteers. These are to be kept in a secure location that is available for ministry staff as requested.
 - Arrange for secure storage for student files.
 - Develop a parent-student handbook for families.

Please note incomplete applications, late submissions or missed deadlines will result in the application package being denied for the upcoming academic year.

Independent Schools Registration (Form A)

Policy		Guidelines	
<p>Registration of an independent school represents a notice of intent to operate. An independent school that meets the eligibility criteria in subsection 5(1) of <i>The Registered Independent Schools Regulations</i> has the right to be registered as an independent school.</p> <p>Registration of an independent school does not, in and of itself: confer eligibility of its students for secondary level credits or secondary level standing; or, establish the grade, level or year in which its students are entitled to be enrolled in public/separate schools or les écoles fransaskoises.</p>		<p>This form and all supporting documentation must be received by the Ministry of Education by December 31 in order for the school to be able to begin operations at the beginning of a school year.</p> <p>New independent schools must include the Goals of Education when submitting their intent to register the school.</p> <p>The completed form is submitted to: Independent Schools & Home-based Education Ministry of Education 409A Park Street REGINA, SK S4N 5B2 Email: programsed@gov.sk.ca</p>	
School Information			
School Name		Intended start date	
Mailing Address	City/Town	Province/Postal Code	Phone Number
Street Address (if different)	City/Town	Province/Postal Code	Phone Number
Corporate Name of the School Owner		Operating Name of the School	
Grades Taught			
<p>Does the school intend to enrol international students? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Implementing Saskatchewan curricula <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Student residential facilities (check one) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>			
		If yes, for how many students?	
Affiliations			

Independent School Board Information	
Chairperson Name	Email/Phone
Other Board Members (attach a list if additional space is needed)	
Name	Email/Phone

Independent School Administrative Staff	
Name of Independent School Director	Name of Independent School Principal

Declarations	
<p>We <i>affirm</i> that our school has enrolled or intends to enrol students between the ages of 6 and 21 from a minimum of three different households and at least 50 per cent of the enrolled students are of compulsory school age (6 to 15 years old inclusive).</p> <p>We <i>affirm</i> that our school facilities meet recognized safety, health and construction standards.</p> <p>We <i>affirm</i> that, once registered, our school intends to comply with <i>The Education Act, 1995</i>, and <i>The Registered Independent Schools Regulations</i> as these apply to our school.</p> <p>We understand that a false affirmation represents grounds for denying an initial registration, or for suspending or cancelling a registration at some future date.</p> <p>We <i>affirm</i> that the above information is complete and correct.</p>	
_____	_____
Chairperson	Date
_____	_____
Independent School Director	Date

For Ministry of Education Use Only	
Proceed with application:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Comments:	
_____	_____
Director, Independent Schools & Home-based Education	Date

Registered Independent Schools: Goals of Education

Policy		Instructions	
<p>Each registered independent school must have goals of education that are not inconsistent with the <i>Goals of Education for Saskatchewan</i>.</p> <p>The Ministry of Education will receive the goals of education for an independent school before issuing a certificate of registration. The responsibility is on the Ministry of Education to demonstrate that the goals of an independent school are inconsistent with the <i>Goals of Education for Saskatchewan</i>.</p>		<p>Goals of education may be stated in terms of the independent school itself, or of the broader community that supports the independent school.</p> <p>Attach a statement of your goals of education in accordance with the following format. The preamble and the statement of goals are mandatory, while the vision for the registered independent school is optional.</p>	
Preamble		Statement of Goals	
<p>At a minimum, this should include the school's philosophy of education and the school's purpose, springing from its philosophy of education. This may also include the school's overall philosophy or world view from which the school has derived its particular philosophy of education.</p> <p>This preamble may be written from the perspective of the independent school itself; of the broader community (e.g., the church, denomination or society) that supports the independent school; or of the role of the school in the overall Saskatchewan community.</p>		<p>Goals of education are a more concrete, concise and focused expression of the philosophy and purpose of a school, or of the broader community that supports the school.</p> <p>Since the <i>Goals of Education for Saskatchewan</i> embody a student-centered approach to education, which recognizes the inherent worth and potential of each individual student, a school's goals of education should be stated in terms of student outcomes (i.e., in terms of what the students are expected to learn).</p> <p>The goals should address the main aspects of child development – spiritual, ethical, intellectual, emotional and physical – found in the <i>Goals of Education for Saskatchewan</i>.</p> <p>The goals should address the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for life-long learning and for living in society.</p> <p>The goals should be organized into categories, which need not necessarily correspond to the same categories as the <i>Goals of Education for Saskatchewan</i>.</p>	
Vision for the Independent School (optional)			
<p>Not only the school, but also the home, the church and the community play a role in the education of children. The school may articulate its vision of its role in education its students in the context of the broader community that supports the school or of the overall Saskatchewan community. This may indicate how the community or the school has defined responsibility for achieving goals of education among the home, the church and the community.</p>			
For Ministry of Education Use Only			
Goals of Education:		Received	Not Received
Comments/Reasons:			
Supervisory Official		Date	

Goals of Education for Saskatchewan

The goals of education recognize the inherent worth and value of each individual. Education, then, should develop the potential of each person to the fullest extent. It should also enhance the ability of each individual to cope effectively in a changing physical, economic and social environment.

Basic Skills

- Read, write and compute.
- Acquire information and meaning through observing, listening, reading and experiencing.
- Process information through intellectual and technological means.
- Solve problems by applying basic principles and processes of the sciences, arts and humanities.
- Communicate ideas through written and spoken language, mathematical symbols and aesthetic expression.

Life-Long Learning

- Seek and value learning experiences.
- Act as self-reliant learners.
- Base actions on the knowledge that it is necessary to learn throughout life.

Understanding and Relating to Others

- Act on the belief that each individual is worthwhile.
- Base actions on the recognition that people differ in their values, behaviours and lifestyles.
- Interact and feel comfortable with others who are different in race, religion, status or personal attributes.
- Develop a sense of responsibility toward others.

Career and Consumer Decisions

- Develop an awareness of career opportunities.
- Develop interests and abilities in relation to vocational expectations.
- Adapt to shifts in employment patterns and technology.
- Make informed consumer decisions.

Membership in Society

- Assume responsibility for own actions.
- Work with others to achieve individual and group goals.
- Participate in the democratic processes of government and perform the duties of citizenship.
- Respect the rights and property of others.
- Act with honesty, integrity, compassion and fairness.
- Develop a sense of national pride and acknowledge the need for international understanding.
- Work toward greater social justice.
- Assume responsibility for dependent persons in a manner consistent with their needs.
- Respect law and authority.
- Exercise the right of dissent responsibly.

Self-Concept Development

- Perceive themselves in a positive way
- Appreciate own abilities and limitations.
- Set and work toward personal goals.
- Assess praise and criticism realistically.
- Present themselves with confidence.

Positive Lifestyles

- Practice appropriate personal hygiene, engage in sufficient physical activity and maintain a nutritionally balanced diet.
- Avoid harmful use of alcohol and other drugs.
- Cultivate interests that may be the basis for personal development and leisure pursuits.
- Recognize the importance of productive activity.
- Display initiative and pursue tasks diligently.
- Maintain a safe and healthful community.
- Respect and seek to enhance the environment.
- Appreciate beauty in its many natural and constructed forms.
- Express themselves creatively.

Spiritual Development

- Seek an understanding of the purpose and worth of human existence.
- Develop a knowledge of God.
- Respect family, religion and culture in a pluralistic society.

Growing with Change

- Work toward immediate and long-term goals.
- Base actions on an understanding that change is a natural process in society.
- Select workable alternatives in response to changing conditions.
- Develop confidence in making decisions that involve risk.

Registered Independent School Registration Checklist

Deadline	Requirement/Submission
November 30	<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule a meeting with Ministry of Education Independent Schools and Home-based Education unit to determine eligibility requirements (prior to completing registration forms)
December 31	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Registered Independent Schools Registration Form (Form A)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Goals of education <input type="checkbox"/> Incorporation documents from Information Services Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> Names and contact information of school director and board members
March 31	<input type="checkbox"/> Finalized physical location of school <input type="checkbox"/> Approved fire and safety inspection reports <input type="checkbox"/> Township/city zoning approval
June 30	<input type="checkbox"/> Course outlines for all courses in all grades taught <input type="checkbox"/> Principal name, certification type and number <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers' names, certification types and numbers <input type="checkbox"/> Set up site visit with the ministry <input type="checkbox"/> Annual calendar and hours of daily instruction form <input type="checkbox"/> All applicable administrative procedures
August 31	<input type="checkbox"/> All teachers registered with SPTRB <input type="checkbox"/> If applicable: Letters of Eligibility completed <input type="checkbox"/> All non-teaching staff/volunteers have recent and clear criminal record checks on file
Prior to first day of school	<input type="checkbox"/> Obtain recent and clear criminal record checks/vulnerable sector checks from all non-teaching staff and volunteers <input type="checkbox"/> Arrange for secure storage for student files <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a parent-student handbook