



GSSD Presentation to the Governance Review Panel
January 25, 2017 – 2:30pm

Topics for Discussion	Presenter(s)	Role
<p>Who Are We?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good Spirit School Division is a combined rural and city school division with 29 schools located in 17 communities and 2 Hutterite colonies. The division is located in east central Saskatchewan and encompasses approximately 23,826 square kilometres. It spans a geographic area from Esterhazy in the south, Preeceville in the north, Calder in the east, and Springside in the west. <p>Division Philosophical Foundation</p> <p>Mission Statement: Building Strong Foundations to Create Bright Futures</p> <p>Vision Statement: Learning Without Limits ... Achievement For All</p> <p>Values: We Belong, We Respect, We are Responsible, We Learn, We Nurture</p> <p>Aspirational Goals focussing on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student Learning and Well-Being 2. Equitable and Balanced Opportunities 3. Accountability For All 4. People Engagement 5. Sustainable Infrastructure <p>The Board of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good Spirit School Division is governed by an eleven-person elected Board of Education. <i>The Education Act, 1995</i> gives the Board of Education to govern the school division. The school division is organized into nine subdivisions for purpose of elections, but once elected, the members of the Board of Education represent all students in the division and are committed to providing the very best education possible for each and every GSSD student. 	<p>Quintin Robertson</p>	<p>GSSD Director of Education</p>



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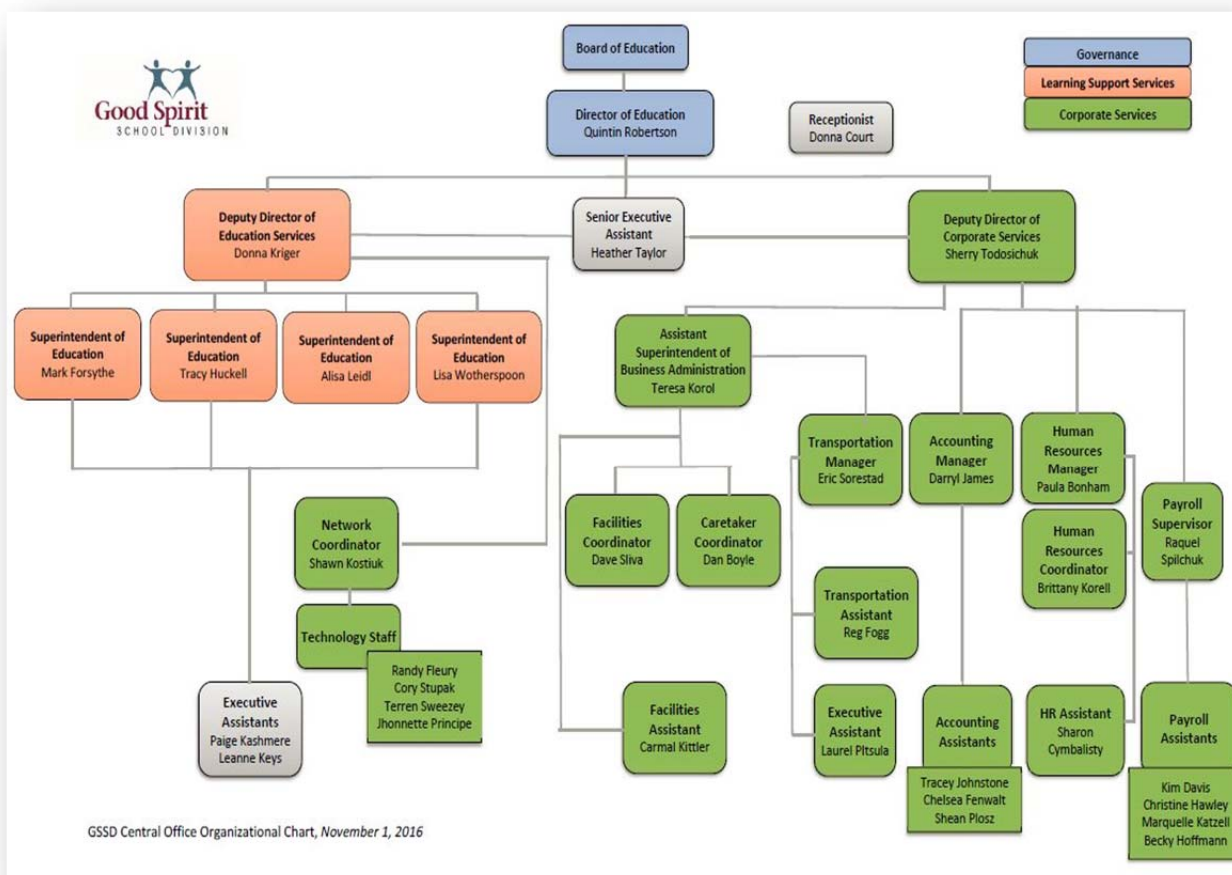
As of October 2016, the Board of Education members are:

- Subdivision 1 - Jaime Johnson (elected)
- Subdivision 2 - Christopher Balyski (acclaimed)
- Subdivision 3 - Shannon Leson (acclaimed)
- Subdivision 4 - Florence Stachura (elected)
- Subdivision 5 - Lois Smandych – Board Chair (acclaimed)
- Subdivision 6 - Robert A. Simpson – Board Vice Chair (elected)
- Subdivision 7 - Jade Anderson (acclaimed)
- Yorkton-At-Large - Gordon Gendur (elected)
- Yorkton-At-Large - Jan Morrison (elected)
- Yorkton-At-Large - Steve Variyan (elected)
- Subdivision 8 - Gilda Dokuchie (acclaimed)



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GSSD Organizational Chart





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GSSD Staffing (2015/16 Annual Report)

Job Category	FTEs
Classroom teachers	403.2
Principals, vice-principals	25.8
Other educational staff (positions that support educational programming) – e.g., educational psychologists, educational assistants, school community coordinators, speech language pathologists	152.7
Administrative and financial staff – e.g., accountants, Information Technology people, supervisors, administrative assistants, clerks	49.0
Plant operations and maintenance – e.g., caretakers, handypersons, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, gardeners, supervisors	60.0
Transportation – e.g., bus drivers, mechanics, parts persons, bus cleaners, supervisors	116.0
Senior management team (as described below) – e.g., chief financial officer, director of education, superintendents	7.0
Total Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Staff	813.7



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Student Enrolment (2015/16 Annual Report)

Grade	School Year		
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Kindergarten	458	481	474
1	460	472	484
2	452	464	468
3	427	450	465
4	468	438	440
5	441	479	438
6	460	447	467
7	467	460	455
8	444	475	464
9	504	461	488
10	559	521	477
11	499	507	499
12	500	491	498
Total	6139	6146	6117
PreK	144	149	146

Subpopulation Enrolments	Grades	School Year		
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Self-Identified FNMI	K to 3	259	273	278
	4 to 6	195	210	212
	7 to 9	184	208	209
	10 to 12	212	214	190
	Total	850	905	889
English as an Additional Language	1 to 3	23	44	54
	4 to 6	28	33	41
	7 to 9	28	31	32
	10 to 12	19	27	30
	Total	98	135	157



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Other Possible Topics

Student Wellness

- Marx, Wooley and Northrop (1998) suggest through their research that when schools do not deal with children's health (i.e., substance abuse, mental health) by design they deal with it by default. Within the Good Spirit School Division, we are committed to addressing student's health as directly as we do math, reading and science so that we will produce healthy and productive citizens.
- Adopting the Comprehensive School Community Health framework, the Good Spirit School Division has committed to creating environments within its schools where healthy behaviours are the norm. Good Spirit School Division has embarked on creating policies and procedures that reflect the unique needs of its students and where all students have access to appropriate supports. It also ensures that teaching and learning strategies are grounded in research and evidence as best practice.
- Good Spirit School Division has committed to a partnership with the Canadian Center for Substance Abuse and members of the University of Regina Faculty of Education, to develop a Mental Health toolkit which will provide teachers within the Good Spirit School Division with tangible ways to deal with the ever increasing mental health issues our students face.
- Initial assessments have been carried out within five pilot schools across the division. Administrators, Health and Wellness teachers as well as school counsellors have been part of the direction setting moving into the next several years. Training of front line workers, development of key policies and supports related to mental health and substance abuse, as well as educating teachers, students and other stakeholders remains a key priority. Ultimately the goal of this work is related to the Education Strategic Sector Plan outcome of achieving a graduation rate of 85% by 2020.



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Provincial & National Skills Competitions

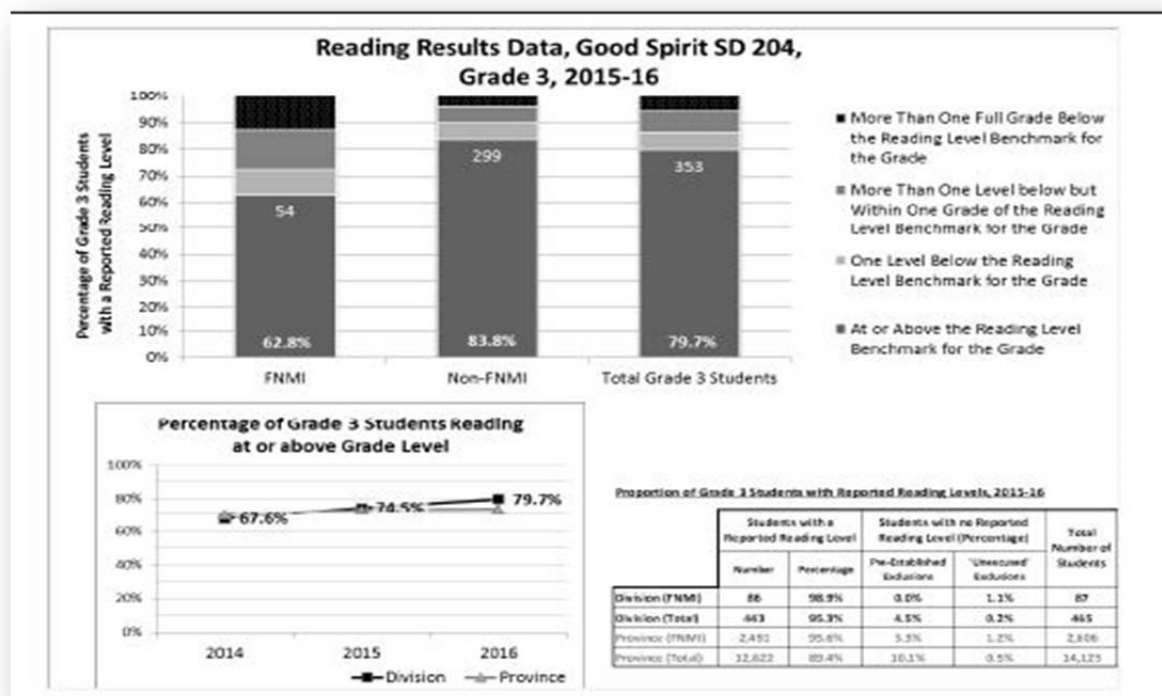
- Good Spirit School Division has set several learning focus areas or targets. One such focus outlines that the division exists to provide the highest level of student learning. All students will experience learning environments rich in the opportunities and experiences necessary to promote intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical well-being. Good Spirit School Division believes that this can only be accomplished by extending student learning beyond the classroom. In the area of Practical and Applied Arts, our division has supported student participation in Provincial and National Level Skills Competitions.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet making • Precision machining • Public speaking • Robotics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor power & recreational equipment • Outdoor power & recreational equipment • Creative braiding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welding • Electrical wiring • auto service • Aesthetics • Photography • Bridal hairstyling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carpentry • Photography
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- Several of the students from Good Spirit School Division were selected to participate in the National Skills Canada competition in Moncton, New Brunswick. Good Spirit School Division proudly achieved a 4th place finish in outdoor power and recreational equipment category and the gold in robotics during this national event. The Robotics team from the Yorkton Regional High School earned the opportunity to compete at the World's Skill Competition in Abudhabi, United Arab Emirates in October 2017.

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Literacy



- Good Spirit School Division maintained a division Literacy Team made up of 4.5 FTE literacy coaches. The coaches were tasked with supporting the division in its implementation of the Balanced Literacy Framework as outlined in the Saskatchewan Reads document. The majority of the work for the 2015-16 school year focused on the refinement of 6 key areas: modelled reading, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, assessment and intervention. A



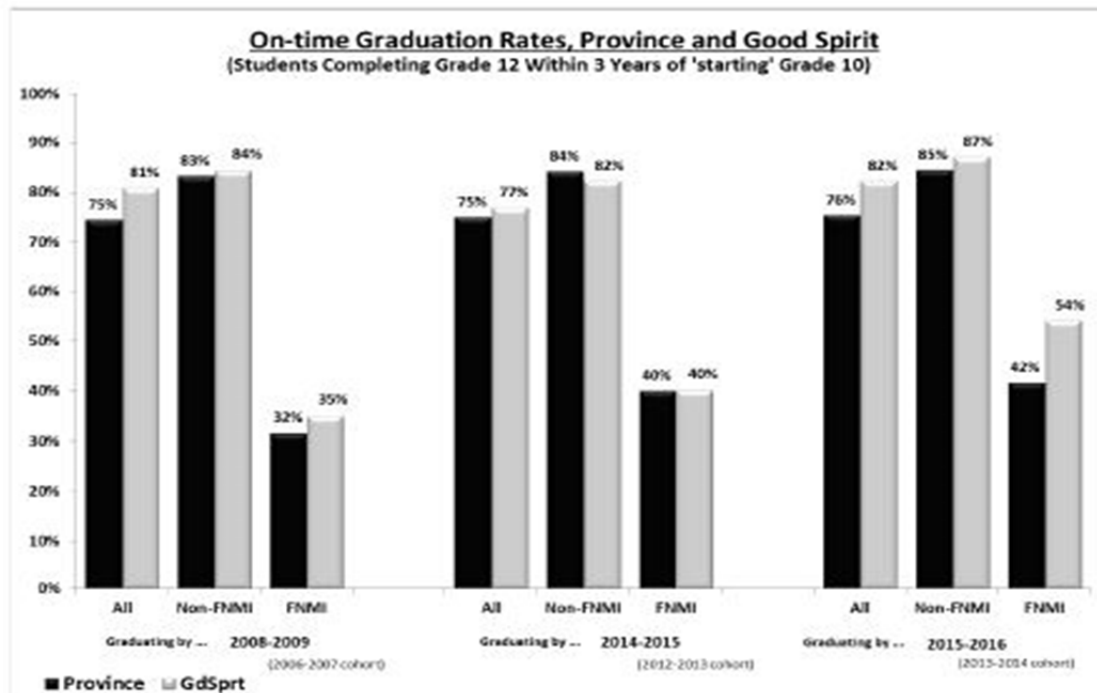
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consistent approach involving the co-construction of criteria with classroom teachers and administrators was utilized during the school year to increase consistency of practice. The Literacy Team also facilitated the development of self-assessment and administrator “look fors” in each key area. Grade one and two teachers received the Pinnell & Fountas word study resource with an in-service and follow-up support. Word study self-reflection and look-for documents were created.

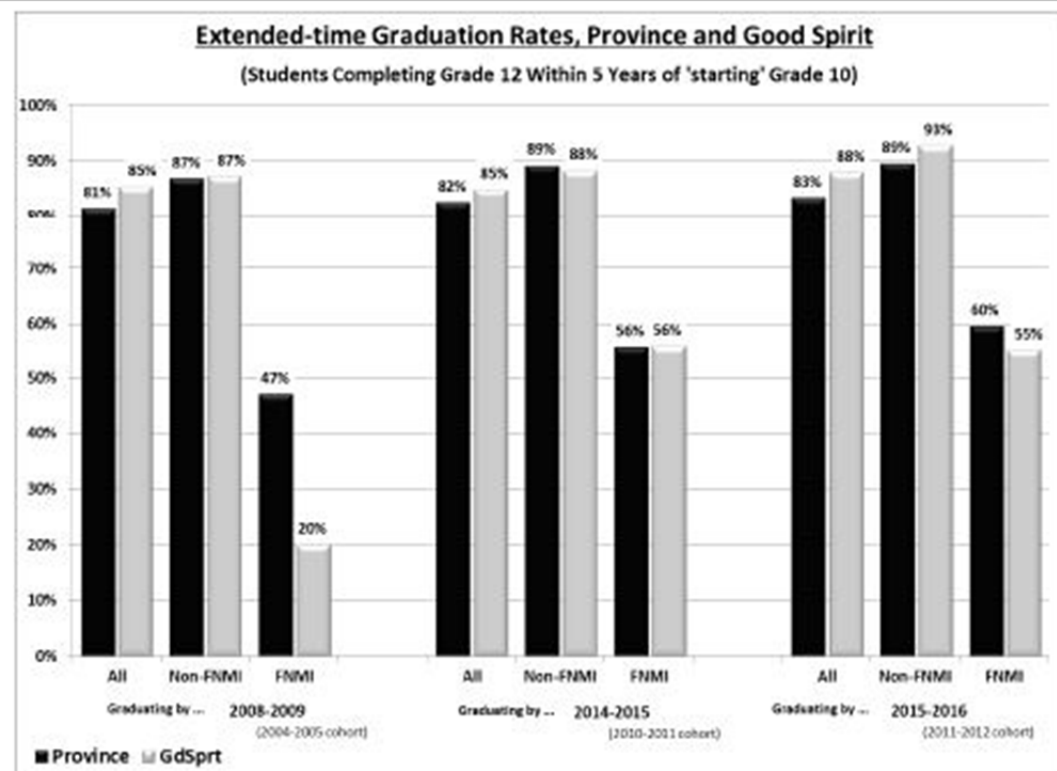
- The Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System was used from grades 1–6 across the division to monitor students’ growth in reading. Literacy coaches supported new teachers and instructional practices according to the students’ reading results. Levelled Literacy Intervention (LLI) was implemented for students in need of intervention. LLI teams were supported with student selection and groupings. Interventionists were trained to track student progress using the CLEVR data system.
- In addition, dialogical learning was introduced to grade 7 and 8 teachers. This highly engaging teaching stance was modelled along with a complete Understanding by Design (UbD) unit and resource support. Grade 11 teachers worked with UbD units supported by McGraw Hill iLit resources. Finally, the GSSD Centralized Library was created for teachers to access professional and student resources from a central location.

Following Their Voices Initiative

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- Good Spirit School Division has embarked on a journey with support from the Ministry to implement the Following Their Voices Initiative (FTV). FTV is an initiative that is being led by the education sector partners. There are 17 schools in the province both provincially and



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federally participating. Schools were chosen on size, grade allotments and demographics. This initiative is supporting the ESSP priority of increasing graduation rates for our First Nations/Métis/Inuit (FNMI) students. FTV is designed to focus on relationships, environment, and interactions between our teachers and our FNMI students. GSSD has one school, the Kamsack Comprehensive Institute (KCI), involved in the initiative. FTV is implemented over a three-year period. During the 2015-2016 school year KCI completed year one of the FTV initiative. Following Their Voices focuses on FNMI culture where students have a sense of belonging and are encouraged to bring their culture in the classroom and be proud of where they came from.

- The KCI Following Their Voices team is comprised of a Strategic Change Leadership Team (SCLT) including administrators, a lead facilitator teacher, two lead teachers and a central office representative. The SCLT team supported 10 teachers in the building during the 2015-16 school year.
- There is a significant amount of professional development involved in FTV which the SCLT was deeply involved in. During the professional development sessions, the team acquired background knowledge of FNMI culture and the struggles and issues that FNMI people have gone through and were in-serviced on assessment and monitoring tools crucial to the collection of FTV data.
- The goals are to accelerate the learning in the classroom for our FNMI students by co-constructing criteria so students can acquire the outcome or learning in a variety of ways, to actively listen so the students' voice is heard, and to know and understand the students in a personal way through conversation and community. Fostering positive relationships with students means increased engagement for our students which equals better attendance and ultimately increased graduation rates for our FNMI students. At KCI they are seeing significant decreases in the number of behavioural issues as outlined below by the Lead Facilitator.
- *"Prior to FTV the actual reduction in incidents decreased from 258 incidents in the fall of 2014 to around 28 in the fall of 2015. Most of the behavior incidents were submitted by one teacher."*



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The teacher explained that the differences were their own mindset. They came into the year with a different mindset about the students. Many of the challenges the students faced were beyond their control, the teacher recognized. Through the staff goal at the beginning of the year, the teacher got to know the students and adjusted her/his attitude towards behavior, and it changed everything."

- The Vice-Principal also noted, *"We have had 1065 behavior incidents compared to 1871 in the same time frame last year, so we have basically seen the number of incidents drop by half."*
- This simple collection of one piece of data details that relationships are being developed and students are coming to school because they feel they belong. The collection of further data on credit attainment and attendance will be monitored and collected in 2016-17 as KCI embarks on its second year of Following Their Voices.

Tell Them From Me Data

- Good Spirit School Division students, once again participated in the Tell Them From Me Survey. The data which has been collected suggests some areas of celebration as well as some areas of concern. Our students have reported:
 - Increased Teacher – Student Relationships.
 - Doubled Intellectual Engagement in the courses they are enrolled in.
 - An increase in valuing school outcomes.
 - An increase in the number of students who aspire to continue at a Post-Secondary Institution.
 - High numbers of students aspiring to complete High School.
 - Increased levels of relevance to courses being taken.
 - Reduction in bullying.



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Operational Spending & Efficiency		
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In 2015-16, Good Spirit School Division began the work of reviewing all administrative procedures with the aim of updating them to match revised processes and to develop appropriate forms to improve work flow, communications and consistency of operations. As of the end of August, approximately 60% of all administrative procedures were reviewed and updated. During the year, a complete review of central office support positions was carried out and resulted in balancing of the workload for all positions and streamlining roles and responsibilities to provide these employees with opportunity to be more efficient. Beginning in January 2016, each budget manager reviewed and identified budget plan resources on a monthly basis that would be available to address emergent needs which were collaboratively prioritized by the team. This allowed the division to financially support division wide priorities and resulted in redirecting resources on a division wide basis. | | |
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Early Years		
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To meet the education sector early learning goal, Good Spirit School Division used the Early Years Evaluation (EYE-TA) pre-assessment in the fall of 2015 to identify students who were in the yellow and red zones and proactively support them to be ready for Grade 1.• Interdisciplinary teams met to review the data collected and determine domain areas that required support. Our Professional Service Providers collaborated with Kindergarten teachers to offer targeted classroom based interventions to address the areas of difficulty. Students in the yellow and red were reassessed using the EYE-TA in spring of 2016 to monitor their progress toward development of readiness skills for Grade 1.• Good Spirit School Division also focused on having the Prekindergarten programs use an interdisciplinary approach to identify students for Prekindergarten to ensure programming was offered to the most vulnerable children and families in our communities. Good Spirit participated in various networking opportunities to refine the partnerships and practices with | | |
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agencies that support early learning such as the Yorkton Family Resource Centre, SIGN, Sunrise Children's Therapy Program, Parkland Early Childhood Intervention Program (PECIP), and Kids First.

GSSD PreK. Locations (6 Communities with targeted/provincial PreK Program)

Canora PreK - Canora
Columbia PreK - Yorkton
Davison PreK - Melville
Dr. Brass PreK - Yorkton
Langenburg Central PreK - Langenburg
PPEP Program Esterhazy
Victoria PreK - Kamsack

Other Local Priorities

Good Spirit School Division developed a number of action plans to support and actualize the local priorities outline in our level 2 strategic plan for the 2015/16 school year. The following represent a sampling of the various department work plans in each focus area:

- GSSD provided all teachers and administration in the division opportunity to listen to Tom Hierck regarding the Response to Intervention (RtI) Road Map.
- GSSD continued to work towards the actualization of our 5 Year PD Plan. The continued focus being classroom environments, UbD Planning (curriculum knowledge, assessment and instruction).
- GSSD provided targeted professional development in the area of assessment - providing descriptive feedback to students and instruction - providing student choice to administrators, coaches, and early adopter teachers.
- Our Library Learning Coach worked with school libraries that require the need to transition toward compliance with the GSSD school and classroom environment recommendations.
- Educational assistants new to GSSD were orientated to the position through the TEAM Orientation



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<p>Process. On-going professional development was provided during the year from internal and external providers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All GSSD Schools utilized Review 360 (R360) consistently to record incidents regarding students' behaviour. <p>GSSD Delegation Presentation Order Rod Steciuk - GSSD In-School Administrator Perspective Michelle Andrews & Don Fogg – LCS Community Partnership Kelsey Shields & DJ Cairns – PJ Gillen Partnership with Mosaic Lois Smandych – CPS Millwright Program Melissa Johanson – Macdonald School Outdoor Classroom Amanda Kornaga - Ag. Partnerships in our Rural Communities Bob Simpson – FLS School Closure/Sturgis School Consolidation Thad Swidzinski – Distributed Learning Debbie Ivanochko – GSSD Classroom Teacher Perspective Trustee Wrap-Up – Steve Variyan, Florence Stachura, Bob Simpson & Lois Smandych</p>		
<p>Story 1: In-school Administrator Perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My name is Rod Steciuk. I began my Education Career in 1990 working for the Northern Lights School Division at Ducharme Elementary School in La Loche. After 5 years (the last 3 as Vice-Principal), my wife and I decided to return to the area we considered as “home”, and I was fortunate enough to be offered the opportunity to work with Sturgis School Division as the Principal at Endeavour school. In 1997 I moved <u>within</u> the Division to Canora Junior Elementary School and have been the Principal there ever since. The first 10 years back “home” saw a great deal of amalgamations. We went from Sturgis School Division, to Canora School Division, to Timberline School Division, to Crystal Lakes School Division to Eastland Lakes School Division, to Good Spirit School Division. As you can see, I have done very little moving around during my career, yet have taught in <u>many</u> School Divisions. In order for a school to be truly successful, it is critical to have a school community that feels they are heard at the Board level and it is critical to have a Central Office staff that knows the school and the staff & students 	<p>Rod Steciuk</p>	<p>Canora Jr. Elementary School (CJES) Principal</p>



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<p>in it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every time we amalgamated and got bigger, less and less local representation on the Board of Education was evident. Every time we amalgamated Central office got further away. Will the next round of amalgamations be that breaking point where we are too far removed from <u>both</u> critical needs for school success?• At this point, Central Office is close enough that face to face Admin. meetings are still a possibility. We can still phone someone in Yorkton that isn't just a name, but we are able to put a face to that name. The Director can come into the school and know the names of the staff and our Superintendent knows a large number of our students by name ... the students sure know our Superintendent's name. Our elected Board member knows all of our staff and is very visible in our town. The Community that it takes to raise a child is still there, right from the top.• Today, Canora Jr. Elem. School is a PK to 4 school with 214 students. It was originally built for roughly 150 students and as enrolments were going up quickly in 2011 and 2012, the room in our building was at a premium. Our school was way over capacity and everyone was cramped. Two teachers taught 40 Grade 4 students out of one class and Outside agencies had no office space to meet with students, parents or staff. Hallways were used as learning areas.• We were lucky to have a great deal of local knowledge about the need for room in our building as people at Central Office and at the Board Level stayed informed as to how we were doing with little space. They also knew the community was growing and that by simply moving a portable over from another school would not be enough to meet needs in the very near future. Our elected Board members were able to work with Central Office and Local Government and in 2013 we had a Grand Opening to welcome 3 beautiful classrooms that were constructed on site as additions to our school. One of those classrooms was divided up into 5 different offices. What a huge difference this made for the education of students at Canora Jr. Elem. School.• Our Board member currently attends all of our School Community Council meetings and is actively involved with helping our school be a better place. Our SCC recently took on the project of tying all of our Learning Improvement Plan Goals together (Literacy, Nutrition and Student Well-Being), by developing a garden right on our playground. The timeline was tight but with Central Office support and our elected Board member physically bringing in his little track hoe so we didn't have to use shovels in such a small area, a huge amount of dirt filled the planters in a short time and by June 2015 every student was able to get their hands dirty and plant items that were harvested this fall for a Borscht and Perogy supper that will be served at the school in March.		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A kitchen was also recently added to our school, another project that came about by those close to our school having a local perspective, and seeing the need for a breakfast and snack program as well as an after school “cooking-club”. • Our SCC recently took on a huge project involving 4 sections of new swings (4 swings per section), picnic tables, a large play structure with all the fun stuff, tire swings and a “buddy bench”. Our Board of Education was able to supply an interest free loan payable over the next 5 years to our SCC making this \$130,00.00 project possible. Our students are currently enjoying this new equipment even though there is still approximately \$30,000.00 owing. • Our Superintendent and our elected Board member get involved with as many special functions as possible. Sometimes this means putting on an apron and greeting parents and student and staff as they cook at a Grandparents Day Literacy Luncheon, or at a St. Patrick’s Day Pancake breakfast. I have even known them to participate on a dunk tank at our Playday (with their suits on), to the delight of everyone. They have built genuine relationships with the school community. • Our most recent Tell Them From Me Data indicates that 96% of the Grade 4’s are “Interested and Motivated”, 89% felt a “high sense of Belonging”, 86% have “positive relationships”, and a 100% believed that education will benefit them personally and economically, and will have a strong bearing on their future. ...There is something currently working with the parent/student/teacher/elected Board member and visible Central office dynamic. • High Levels of Learning are also critical to the success of a school. Whenever an amalgamation takes place there is inevitably a lot of conversation at the Senior Administrative level regarding business items relating to amalgamation. Depending on how large scale the amalgamation is, student achievement eventually comes to the forefront. The question is, how long will this take? • Schools using different practices from varying legacy Divisions would now be in the same Division or Region. They must now come together with a unified approach to meet the Education Sector Goals. Which approach is the better practice? What resources do we need to use this better practice? How much time will it take to get teachers that haven’t used this better practice trained? Many conversations need to take place before there is a strategic stage even set for <u>real</u> learning. • Using Literacy as an example, Good Spirit School Division currently has a system approach as to how and when students are tested on reading. The Division has built capacity for teachers and RTI teams to analyze data and make decisions to close the gaps. Good Spirit School Division uses a tool called Fountas and Pinnell 		
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<p>to do this testing and all Elementary teachers are trained to use it. Other testing tools are used for Literacy in the Province, how long would it take to train our teachers to use something else, or teachers using something else to learn F&P?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is just a very small example of all the huge decisions around student achievement that need to happen before schools pick right back up where they left off. • Where would Canora Jr. Elem. School be leaving off? Using the GSSD Literacy and Intervention guidelines and with some freedom for making some things work locally (depending on individual school needs), we are happy to share that for our Fall 2016 testing period 91% of our grade 3 students are reading at or above grade level – 52% of those students are reading at the “exceeding grade level” gradients (we have 44 grade 3 students). • I want to thank you for your time today, and for considering the positive impact of Local elected Representation on the Board, the need to continue our work with the Education Sector Strategic plan without disruptions and for a Central Office that builds relationships with the staff, parents and students...thank-you. 		
<p>Story 2: LCS Building Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a community we look at our schools as the foundation for our youth to receive their education. And in Langenburg as we continued to try and maintain our aging facilities, it became very clear that they were past the point of repair, a request was made for a new Prek-12 facility. This request was major and we knew it was something our community would need to get involved in. The Langenburg Central School project is one that will be a part of our communities history and I am honored to have had the opportunity to be a part of it. The day the announcement was made that our community would be receiving a new facility was one we will never forget. • A new build is exciting no matter where it’s located but the partnerships, bonds and relationships that were created along this journey were amazing. Planning began very quickly with the local school division, central office and the staff to engage the community and motions were put in place to begin this engagement. Our community was invited to an open public meeting that filled the local school gymnasium. Attendance included a mixture of local school board, central office staff, architects, staff, students and community members. This provided the opportunity to discuss the project and provide input for the future. After this meeting a diverse committee was formed and would continue with the planning stages. Our community was 	<p>Michelle Andrews</p> <p>Don</p>	<p>Former Langenburg High School (LHS) SCC Chair and Fundraising Committee Chair for Langenburg Central School (LCS) Project</p> <p>Langenburg</p>



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<p>very thankful for the opportunity to identify some enhancements that we wanted to partner on. We recognized that due to our local industries and the focus on trades we wanted to increase the size of the Practical Applied Arts area. We also recognized the focus of fitness and strong sports skills of our youth and wanted to increase the size of the gymnasium and take some undeveloped space and turn it into a community fitness centre. Each of these spaces provided students amazing opportunities for both group and individual activities for health and education benefits. Through discussions and meetings with Lois and central office they too supported these important features and shared our passions for these enhancements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our community feels that because our local board rep (Lois) and central office staff live here they truly understood our unique needs, interests and resources and immediately agreed to these requests. Through additional planning our committee set a goal and began our fundraising needs and just over 2 years we were able to raise \$1.4Million dollars to construct these enhancements. This fundraising came from a community of just over 1500 people and in a short time. This success is due to the collaboration of many stakeholders. The local understanding of our needs was extremely important and was key in bringing in our major donors like Mosaic Company. We were able to propose a project and comply with their donation requests when the local board approved the naming rights to them of the PAA Lab. Without support of our local board and central office this company may not have got involved and we wouldn't have been able to secure these funding dollars.• The personal component also added to our projects success. The committee had a direct connection with both the local board and central office. With very short notice we are able to complete tasks sometimes on a very quick turn-around which in a project like this was required. Whether it was a phone call or meeting we always had the attention and devotion of whoever we needed direction or consultation with. This provided a very close trust that the decisions above our requirement were being made with our best interest at heart and deep understanding of our community. It was clear the people making these decisions knew us, they understood our community and they understood our students' needs.• As the timeline continued and the school physically began the construction phase the excitement continued to build. With continuous discussion and meetings our new school was becoming a reality. We began experiencing the "last events" of our aging facilities and the summer of 2016 came filled with activity of	Fogg	Mayor
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<p>getting the new school student and community ready. The true meaning of teamwork came together as this facility was prepped for its unveiling. An example of the dedication and support our community received from central office and the local board was when one of the central office staff members actually began to sleep in the old school so he wouldn't lose anytime commuting back and forth and was able to work later into the evening and be up working earlier in the morning. This is just one example of amazing dedication to this project and our community and we will forever be grateful for the work that was completed. The local board and central office were the key component in this projects success. They really understood our community and a larger governing body would not be able to provide that personal understanding. This project was a lifetime opportunity and we are so appreciative to our local board and central office staff to recognizing our need and working so diligently to ensure its completion. These relationships are established and we are confident in the people who are invested in our community.</p>		
<p>Story 3: PJ Gillen Mosaic Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PJ Gillen school is a K-5 elementary school within the Good Spirit School Division (GSSD) with 270 students in the rural community of Esterhazy. In September 2012, air quality testing revealed high levels of airborne contaminants and it became necessary to seal off the in-ground ductwork and abandon the existing heating system in our school. Our school was then equipped with temporary electric heat, rugs were removed, and furniture thrown out that was exposed to the airborne contaminants. GSSD applied annually for capital funding and awaited Ministry approval. Our school stayed in this state for over 4 years. • The environment of our school was not conducive to a safe and positive learning environment due to the physical environmental challenges we were facing over a long period of time. The electric heaters were very loud and distracting for students, the heat was not consistent as some rooms were too hot and some were too cold to the extent our students were learning in their winter coats and mitts, illness in our school was quite high likely due to the lack of air ventilation, and our library remained a concrete floor with glue residue. 	<p>Kelsey Shields</p> <p>DJ Cairns</p>	<p>PJ Gillen School Principal</p> <p>Former GSSD Trustee/Vice Chair</p>



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DJ Cairns, the GSSD Board Representative during this time, worked very closely with the school Administration team, school SCC, and community members to bring the environmental concerns of our school and student safety to the forefront. DJ spent many hours attending our school based meetings to hear the concerns of staff, attended SCC meetings that were held to discuss and develop a course of action, and listened to the concerns of our staff, parents and community members whose children and grandchildren were attending our school. DJ was persistent in sharing the stories of our staff members and students with prevalent community members who were able to take our concerns to the largest employer in our community, Mosaic. Mosaic listened to our concerns, and agreed with the severity of the need to ensure our students receive the best possible education. 		
<p>Story 4: CPS Millwright Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Churchbridge area is a hub of Saskatchewan industry. Local potash mines and manufacturing industries in the area lends itself to educational discussions around providing high school students opportunities in the trades. As a school division trustee, I am a member of the School Community Council (SCC) and I am happy to be able to advance their unique causes. Eight years ago, two members of Churchbridge Public School’s Community Council (one a retired millwright and one a current MLA) brought an idea to the table. They wanted to establish an innovative, pure Practical and Applied Arts program at Churchbridge Public School— Industrial Millwright Mechanic levels 10, 20 and 30. Despite having no curriculum, instructor, or even a facility, these SCC members had a passionate vision and despite the obstacles, were determined to make this dream a reality. I became very involved in the project and helped the group navigate the procedures and protocols in order to make the dream a reality. This is what our journey looked like: The first step was to guide the team in preparing presenting a proposal to the Good Spirit Board. I was able to advocate on their behalf, and they received the go-ahead to proceed. I helped to navigate the process that resulted in the group securing a loan from the board to start making the millwright program a reality. All the components of this project took a great deal of work to piece together. The team sought sponsorships from industrial partners in the area, secured and renovated a nearby facility, and purchased the required tools and equipment. Curricula was written and rewritten many times to ensure approval by the Ministry of Education. 	Lois Smandych	GSSD Trustee/Chair



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We had hoped to have the program ready for the start of the 2012-13 school year, but needed to delay to the second semester in order to have the facility ready for students. • As the target date neared, the group had a huge setback. The students were registered, the space and equipment was on track to be ready, but we did not have a permanent instructor. • I attended an emergency SCC meeting on the Sunday before the new semester was to begin. Our director attended via speakerphone to help the group decide if there was any way the course could proceed. After a nerve-wracking conversation, the group decided to start the program using a temporary instructor. We were determined on being able to fill the instructor position- failure was not an option. • After chasing many leads and holding numerous conversations, the team was able to secure a permanent instructor. The millwright 10, 20 and 30 courses continue to run in Churchbridge and we have extended the opportunity to students in our neighboring communities of Langenburg and Esterhazy. Despite the hard work and setbacks, I am proud to have had an opportunity as a trustee to connect with our communities to listen and respond to their needs in order to provide valuable and authentic opportunities to the students in our school division. 		
<p>Story 5: Macdonald School Outdoor Classroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On behalf of Macdonald School - I am here to share our story with you all today. I am here to provide an example of how the Good Spirit School Divisions structure can really make a difference! Our story would not have unfolded as positively if it were not for the many people sitting in this room today! • Good Spirit School Divisions Motto is: Students Come First. As educators, when we consider a child/student - we want to provide the best opportunities for student learning. We want to set students up for success. We want to inspire and help spark a passion to learn and guide students towards rich and meaningful experiences. • As we all know Benjamin Franklin's very familiar quote: "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." This was our next step! We as a staff wanted to step beyond the 4 walls of our school to get our students involved in their learning! It is a good fit with the students of our school, staff and the community of Stockholm was the perfect setting for this to take place! Real authentic experiential education was our path and we were determined to follow it - we needed to take our learning outdoors. We needed to provide our students with authentic and experiential learning experiences. All of the educational benefits along with mental health and physiological well-being benefits were far too great to ignore. And as we know and are supported by Comprehensive School Community Health - Happy and Healthy Children = Better Learners! 	Melissa Johanson	Macdonald School Classroom Teacher



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our Dream was to create - enough outdoor spaces that would house full classes and 1 space that would house the entire population of our school... AND we wanted to do this in 1 year! We were ready to share and we wanted to begin with our very dedicated School Community Council. Among our SCC members, DJ Cairns (our local board trustee) was in attendance. I have had the privilege of knowing DJ for many years now. I know DJ as a well-respected board member, I know her as a well-respected community member, and as a well-respected parent in our school. DJ attended many of our SCC meetings every year and was always a strong advocate for our school and in this case our DREAM. Our dream wouldn't fit into just any school but DJ knows our school very well, and community well enough to know that our "dream" fits our school, our students and staff, and our community very well! DJ commented many times about how she shares our stories, our initiatives and other information with her fellow board trustees. As well, we know how well the board of trustees and our local central administration communicates very well! It was a good decision to share because it was a snowball effect from here forward!• Our Board strongly supports Comprehensive School Community Health and the wellness in our schools! At this point, we were advised to submit an application with Donna Kriger, our Deputy Director of Education, who oversees and is a strong advocate for Comprehensive School Community Health! With much gratitude - we received the grant and we were able to start moving ground! Our first project was to create an outdoor classroom that can seat all students of our school, a large brick amphitheatre and presentation area, and a mini-barn that allows easy access to necessary learning materials for teachers and students. (Show Outdoor Classroom picture). When members of the community heard about our Outdoor Classroom project - we had businesses and individuals of our community coming forward with over \$5000.00 in donations because they were in full support of our project!• Donna Kriger always shows her strong support in our Outdoor Education program but one day in particular really stands out to me. Donna planned to head out for her day earlier than normal. She was travelling to a neighbouring school from us but she wanted to "pop in" to see us all and witness how things were progressing with our outdoor classroom. I was very excited to walk Donna to our Outdoor Classroom but she didn't have the appropriate footwear for our walk as it was a very muddy day! Now - that didn't stop Donna! She happily put on my spare rubber boots and out we went through mud on our way to see the Outdoor Classroom and it's progress. That day, Donna saw and experienced our outdoor classroom, she walked our nature trail and all the while she gave very genuine, supportive and motivating words the entire way! I stood tall that day! Donna's words and encouragement only sparked a larger fire in me. Knowing that what we were doing was right and that we had genuine support from our local central administrators - so...we plowed | | |
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HARD last year. Thanks to many grants and the support from Central Office, Board of Trustees, and Stockholm community we are happy to report:

- Macdonald School's outdoor classroom is complete. It can seat up to 90 people, a large brick amphitheatre and presentation area, and a mini-barn that allows easy access to necessary learning materials for teachers and students.
- Macdonald Schools Practical and Applied Arts (PAA) class created a teepee in the woods in consultation with GSSD's Cultural Advocate and the teepee is often used by students as a place to learn and to experience nature.
- The Grade 5/6/7 class researched native plants, insects, and animals, and then created a nature/interpretive trail in the wooded area which includes informative signs for people of the community and students to read when hiking the beautiful trail.
- In the front school yard, we received a grant to build five raised container gardens so each class could plant and maintain their own garden.
- In the front yard, community members donated their time to build beautiful tree benches around the large pine trees, which are used daily by children and teachers.
- A cooking space in the school was also created with the addition of Practical and Applied Arts as a class this past year. The PAA class was excited to harvest the produce from their gardens this school year. The PAA class and the School Community Council use this wonderful new space for food preparation, learning, and to facilitate community engagement in school events.
- The latest addition to the front school yard is a wood book-drop box where students, staff and community members alike can leave a book with a note on it in exchange for another book that someone else has left for them to read. This project is an example of community collaboration and connectedness; and it supports sharing a love for literacy across generations.
- I have had a conversation with every central administrator about our outdoor education initiatives. They all know about it and support it! When we attended the rural congress conference last year - we presented on Outdoor Education and both Lois Smandych and Bob Simpson were in attendance. When our question and answer period began - I was amazed when both Lois and Bob were able to answer questions and provide insight regarding our program! Every member of central office has stepped foot in our outdoor classroom, walked our nature trail and have had their picture taken in our teepee. Our staff members and Tell Them from Me survey data from students indicate that our school is alive with happy, peaceful, and content students. The completion of the projects above in just one school year are an example of what can be



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<p>achieved when division board trustees, central office administration, dedicated community members, staff, and students work together and have a common vision to improve their school environment.. As a collaborative whole, we have all invested deeply in the learning of our most treasured asset; students!</p>		
<p>Story 6: Ag. Partnerships in our Rural Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good afternoon, my name is Amanda Kornaga and I have the privilege of being the vice principal at Churchbridge Public School. CPS is a K-12 school and as Lois indicated earlier a large percentage of our students come from farming and/or mining families. • As any administrator or teacher will tell you our main objective is to create meaningful learning experiences for our students and to do that you need to know them. This deep knowledge of our learners does not come from a CUME folder or report but through interactions and conversations. • After my first year at CPS it became very evident that our students thrived off of everything the out of doors had to offer. As a result, we began creating an outdoor classroom with the students. Throughout the ever evolving construction of the area, each grade has been given an opportunity to create components within the space that directly connect not only to their curricula but also interests. As well as permanent seating for outdoor instruction we have had a borscht garden, a mini wheat field, apple trees, and even a chicken coop pop up in the space. • Most recently we connected with some community members in the field of agriculture as well as Macdonald school to develop a Learn Ag initiative. When the idea of developing a school crop that could be used as a learning space was brought to the SCC and our superintendent they both supported the project wholeheartedly despite the risks and unconventional teaching strategies that were associated with it. With the help of community members, local businesses, and our SCC, every grade in our school utilized agriculture as a vehicle to learn at least one unit. We also took two days, one in the spring and one in the fall to have a school wide Ag day. In the spring we focused on teaching the students about the different components of seeding and in the fall every student was bussed to our school field to learn about harvest and watch the field be combined. With the help of our local Credit Union the grade ten class is currently learning about investments and will eventually decide the best place for our profits. • At first glance our Learn Ag projects seemed counterproductive to achieving the goals set out in the 	<p>Amanda Kornaga</p>	<p>Churchbridge Public School (CPS) Principal (on-leave)</p>



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<p>Education Sector Strategic Plan. Therefore, our outdoor classroom and Learn Ag projects were risky areas to approve but our board member and superintendent, who are both in our school regularly knew the importance of connecting the students at CPS to their community, nature, and industries that so heavily impact them and gave us the green light upon consultation. When the students were surveyed we found that the risk paid off. Not only did they enjoy learning the units taught in and about the out of doors but they retained the content exceptionally well. Without the support of a board member and superintendent that knew the dynamics of our school I am not sure that we would have experienced the same level of success and for that I am extremely grateful.</p>		
<p>Story 7: FLS School Closure/Sturgis School Consolidation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the things a centrally located school division like GSSD performs very well in is their communication with all their schools and communities. Each elected trustee is entrusted in attending a minimum of 2 SCC meetings at each of their schools in their elected areas. Usually they try to attend all 5 to 6 meetings each school holds. At these meetings, they listen to concerns of each school, hear what is happening in the school with reports from the Principal, students, and local groups, and find out what may be lacking in courses provided in the community. The trustee reports on what is happening in the Division and in the province in education. This working relationship builds a strong bond with the SCC groups and the Principals. Whether it is a city, town or village, citizens are very protective of their schools. They feel that the death of a community becomes a reality when a school is closed. Each year, a Division looks at each school to reflect on present and future viability, and what best serves students. When you have a locally elected trustee who has the concerns of the community at heart, and has earned their trust, it makes for a smooth transition. • Fort Livingstone School in Pelly is an example. The local trustee and the Director met with the SCC and presented all the current statistics, and the future prospects. The initial visit did not sound promising. However, working with the SCC and holding a few meetings with the community lead to actions approved by the community. First, Grades 9 to Grades 12 were moved to Norquay, the nearest community that could easily handle these students. This was partially accomplished by realizing that Norquay would need an addition to the school before it could handle the influx of more students. The old part of the school was demolished, and an addition was done. • The school population in Pelly continued to decrease. Parents of high school children from Pelly saw the successful integration of students into Norquay, and their successes. The SCC still had trust issues with GSSD management and trustees from Yorkton. They felt that large communities did not care about their 	<p>Bob Simpson</p>	<p>GSSD Trustee/Vice Chair</p>



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<p>community. A few more meetings with their local trustee and members of management lead them to accepting the closure of the school. It avoided the bad press from forced closure. The Ministry and the government did not have to face angry citizens of the Pelly community as it was a local decision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another example of how a community embraces their locally elected trustee was in our community of Sturgis. They had two schools and declining student enrolments. Past Boards had discussed trying to consolidate the two schools in the community. Provincial legislation prevented the Board from attempting this. The local trustee worked with management and the Sturgis SCC. They presented them with the future look of the new school and how it would benefit all students. The SCC passed a motion to accept this proposal. This would not have occurred if they were not presented this with participation from a local elected trustee. The trust must be built over time. Small communities will not accept provincially directed consolidations and closures without a long drawn out fight. The media thrives on the anger of communities, and puts the Ministry and the government in a bad light. Many of these issues do not become a problem due to the work of local trustees. • Some other issues I thought about that might be mentioned. Churchbridge SCC - the positive action of the Board in accepting their proposal of a new community program. The local trustee and management were close to the community and realized the long term benefits. Many actions of a Board need more information prior to enacting procedures. Long distances will deter the electorate from giving this vital information to the Board. Christ the Teacher and GSSD - This may seem like a dumb thing to discuss. However, when I got on the Board in mid. 2005, Yorkton and Melville had initiated a court action, and there was a lot of mistrust between the two boards. I was one of the Board members who came with a fresh presentation of ideas. While we were in court proceedings, we also realized that we were from the same communities, and working together would save us both monies, and also be wonderful for students. We provide transportation for their rural students. We share many resources, and have two Directors that work well together. Our Boards meet twice a year to discuss common concerns. At provincial conventions and seminars, our two Boards get together and are very comfortable in discussing issues. It has made things easier for each Board to see how we can get our students the best education by working together. 		
<p>Story 8: Responding to Grad Rates/Student Engagement/Student Wellness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When an intervention is required there are several people involved. Online teacher, student, facilitator, the principal at that school and myself. 	Thad Swidzinski	GSSD Distributed Learning Coach



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We can be very responsive and adjust on the fly. • Students pick up on this team approach and feel supported - This would not happen in a bigger organizational structure. • We have so many success stories to share relating to students “crossing the stage” at graduation and credit recovery options <p>I want to end by talking about one student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 year old First Nation Student with three kids • 3 credits required • Simple option is to enrol her online • Excellent relationship with her students • Spent most of her time at home, but was accessing blended resources of her face to face teachers, would come in every couple weeks • Graduation Rates <p>We are very proud of our success, but we are also very concerned about the future and potential changes to the size of our division and the role of elected boards , and how this could jeopardize the success we have made in alternative delivery methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging our students with additional electives • Increasing our Graduation Rates by customizing solutions for our students • FTE efficiency gains by offering core and electives to our smaller schools 		
<p>Story 9: CUPE Relationships/Successes with GSSD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My name is Karla Sastaunik and I am the president of CUPE Local 4784. We represent 250 school support workers in the Good Spirit School Division. Our members work as educational assistants, caretakers and maintenance workers, journey-person trades, administrative assistants, library technicians, food services workers and a school counselor. • Our CUPE local is very lucky to have a strong working relationship with our division; which includes both senior administrators and the board. Our amicable relationship is built on the philosophy of putting the 	<p>Karla Sastaunik</p>	<p>LCS Educational Assistant and CUPE 4784 President</p>



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<p>needs of students first. We endeavor to work together to solve issues before they become problems and turn into grievances, which are costly and can create a climate of mistrust. In the past 10 years, since amalgamation, we have only had 2 grievances which we solved during the process, and have had only 2 issues that resulted in arbitration, a record which I think underscores the relationship we have with our employer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One example that comes to mind is a situation last spring, when a student entering kindergarten in the fall required some specialized medical care. The local and the division did not agree on who should provide the needed services. We worked together to research all options, then together, reached a compromise that we all agreed was putting this young student first as well as staying within the terms of our collective agreement and meeting the needs of the employer.• This is not an uncommon result, we have also come up with compromises that have resulted in Letters of Understanding being attached to our CA; this means that issues are dealt with in a timely manner and not left to cause problems. I feel it is easier to go forward, rather than repair damage that has already been done. This is a philosophy that our division shares with me.• Another example of the respectful relationship the local has with the board is our annual meet and greet. The local CUPE executive and division board members, along with senior administrative staff gather for an evening that includes a supper and socializing. This has been taking place for many years with the two parties taking turns hosting the event. This allows our local executive, staff and board members to get to know each other on a more personal level, which allows for a much stronger working relationship which translates into a staff who understands the board's direction and are committed to achieving the outcomes set by the board for our students.• Our members take pride in the role they play in the education of our students.....our local believes that a quality education is the greatest gift we can give the youth of our province. We fear that the achievements that Good Spirit School Division has reached will be lost with the proposed changes to education in Saskatchewan.• We feel strongly that any changes to the boundaries of school divisions will result in significant labour relations issues, and more importantly, will have a negative impact on the quality of education. School divisions that are geographically too large will be less responsive to students, their families and communities. With appointed school division trustees, there will be less engagement and accountability for education services at the community level.• In conclusion, our CUPE Local is concerned with the impact that the proposed restructuring will have on		
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<p>students, labour relations and the communities we all live in. I urge this panel, and the government to put the needs of students first and to not move forward with this misguided reorganization.</p>		
<p>Story 10: GSSD Classroom Teacher Perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My name is Debbie Ivanochko and I'm here to speak from a teacher's perspective. I'd like to start by sharing a little bit of my teaching background to give you some context for the remarks I am about to make. I have been teaching for twenty seven years and I have taught in a variety of schools. This includes everything from a school with thirty students in which my classroom included grades K, one, two, and three, to the school I am currently in that has approximately 500 students and staff and where I teach a ½ split with very diverse needs. What I have experienced is very different from what a teacher teaching in a large city has experienced in their teaching career. I have a strong rural perspective on the changes in education. • I have experienced two amalgamations in the time I have taught. The first was when the small rural division I worked in amalgamated with the city of Yorkton schools. The second amalgamation occurred in 2006 and led to my working in a considerably larger school division. • The first half of my career was spent in rural schools that had local boards. I taught in small schools where often local school board members' children were part of my class or part of our school community. Their understanding of our community was naturally already there. Then, as we amalgamated, I also taught in a school division where, initially, many board members may not even have known my name. But the important piece of this is that even as the school divisions got larger their size still allowed for board understanding of the communities in their division. • Our current school board and local administration, because of the relatively manageable size of our division, has continued to be part of our school and local community. Every year in June my class has an "Authors' Tea", the purpose of which is to celebrate the growth in their writing skills. The students, ages 6 and 7, write, illustrate, and present their stories to their families, an audience of approximately 100 people. These students, in the short span of ten months, evolve from not knowing the difference, sometimes, between a number and a letter, a letter and a word, and a word and a sentence, to being able to express their thoughts in complete sentences, using creative ideas, in often highly entertaining stories. Because I want to celebrate the growth they have shown I always put on display examples of their attempted efforts from the first day of school as well as the most recent year end examples of their writing. The growth is unbelievable! A few years ago I decided to invite our school board members and central office staff to our Authors' Tea. We wanted to show off our writing skills! As many as possible came (someone had to stay back and man the office), and 	<p>Debbie Ivanochko</p>	<p>Yorkdale Central School Classroom Teacher</p>



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their response was amazing. They hadn't realized what students that age were capable of doing, and they were extremely impressed by the growth the students had shown. Attending our "Authors Tea" gave them a different perspective on student learning. It gave a face to the data they see at board meetings. There is still one school board member who comes every year because he enjoys it! When board members and local administration are able to be part of events like this it helps them to know our reality! The influence and support of our local board is often evident. We have had portable classrooms in our school for many, many years and they were in dire shape. Our local school board's persistence eventually led to significant renovations in those portables. They listened to our concerns, spent time touring our school, even experienced the freezing cold, and the curling and missing flooring, and fixed a major problem in our building. The fact that they are part of our local community impacts the supports they provide for us. We run the risk of sacrificing these types of relationships and supports if our school divisions become too large and I believe these relationships are critical to the learning of the children. And building relationships takes time. Every time we amalgamate we have to start building relationships all over again.

- I've been exposed to a lot of change over the course of my career. I believe change can be good as long as it has a positive effect on student learning. I'm not scared to embrace change. I've done so many times. But there is a limit to how much change a person can understand and implement before change burn out takes effect. Change takes time to understand, and to implement in the classroom, and then it takes time to see the effects and benefits of the change. Change can be good but too much change creates disruption in student learning for a long period of time. When change comes that is not guided by student learning it creates situations where it is difficult to see the positive side.
- I believe that our current system is already working well for our students. Our results speak for themselves. I also believe that at its heart education is about relationships – relationships between student and teacher, relationships between teachers and central administration teams, and so on. At some point we can get too big for these relationships to be built and to be sustained. At that point the education of our students will unquestionably be compromised.