



**Holy Trinity Catholic School Division Board of Education**  
**Online Response to Educational Governance Review Public Consultation Process**  
**January 23, 2017**

**Governance Structure**

- Holy Trinity Board believes governance structure is not the issue. Perrins Report makes reference to “challenges” related to each of the four options and these challenges represent risks which will have a negative impact on education in the province.
- Many school divisions are large geographically. Amalgamation will create further isolation for rural communities. Rural communities may pay the biggest price of further amalgamations.
- Cost out saving before further amalgamation.
- The critical recommendations Perrins has noted as adopting regardless of any organizational option can be addressed within the present governance structure.
- In the present situation when the province finds itself making severe financial decisions related to wage cuts, the focus should be on protecting essential priorities in education, not restructuring.

**Locally Elected Board Members**

- Elected and acclaimed board members submit nomination papers in good faith and are willing to serve. Appointed board members would be shoulder-tapped, some of whom may not have considered educational governance. Elected board members have a passion for education. They are a part of the democratic fabric of Saskatchewan.
- School board experience is transferrable to other elected positions such as MLAs and MPs. Many trustees “cut their political teeth” at the school board level (examples: MP Kevin Waugh; current MLAs -Lisa Lambert, Nicole Sarauer, Carla Beck, Bronwyn Eyre, Don Morgan, Doyle Vermette, Gordon Wyant, and Colleen Young); school board experience is valuable to their ability to represent their constituents.
- Stakeholders know their board members and value the local connection. This is extremely important in rural Saskatchewan.
- Elected school boards help keep government accountable. There are times when school boards challenge government, and these moments of respectful discord strengthens the democratic decision-making process. Providing feedback/reaction to government decisions related to education provides government with valuable information from the Saskatchewan people that inform their decisions. Non-appointed voices who are democratically removed from government create a healthy provincial educational system.

**Perrin’s Report – Shifts in Governance Key Challenges**

**1. Strategic Direction and Accountability**

- Cost savings related to Governance can be met with a student population / trustee governance ratio within the present division structure. Legislation re: quorum, number of members, etc. would have to be updated.

- The Johnson Shoyama modules are expensive. Board competency modules could be developed, provided, and monitored via SSBA resources to assure accountability plus not be as costly.

## 2. **Effectiveness**

- **ESSP:** Our board is committed to the ESSP work. The work has put extra pressure on division personnel and removed the ownership from the Ministry. There has been no additional funding provided to do the work in the divisions. In light of the “stop and pause related to curriculum development” there should be an appropriate shift in resources so that boards are able to protect and support the continued work being done by division senior and curriculum staff. The ESSP is a priority and we need to prove it through appropriate resourcing.
- **Education Quality Council:** Accountability and transparency are reflected in board work and policies. We are open to a standard provincial system performance monitoring structure. SSBA should be a part of the construction and monitoring for three reasons: present boards will have value to add to this work, they have “skin in the game”, and co-construction of assessments will create a better assessment. Plus this process may also help defray costs.

## 3. **Efficiency**

- The board would be in agreement to discussions related to some centralization such as payroll, accounts payable, HR or IT **only IF** present service levels can be retained.
- There is a concern regarding moving rural jobs to urban centres; thus diminishing rural economies and populations. We are not in favour of less jobs in rural Saskatchewan.

## 4. **Consistency/Standardization**

- The board is open to standardization of governance costs and administration pay grid. How present contracts are renegotiated and impact on retention and succession should be carefully considered.
- Good people who value education work in our divisions and we would recommend sensitivity to their job security.
- Standardization of locally bargained terms and conditions should be considered only if it can be done in a sensitive and diplomatic manner. There will be losers and winners. Can a solution be found at a consultative table where all voices are heard and the rationale for such a decision is shared and focused on the best interest of students and teachers?

## 5. **Participation**

- School Community Councils are the best volunteers in the province. They do not see their roles as governance. Our concern is that SCC roles will be redefined so that they are “voluntold” to be the local governance representative. Are MLAs ready to be the governance representatives?
- We agree that First Nation representation on boards may have to initially be appointed members.

## **Final Comments:**

- There is a sense of anxiety in the education sector due to the provincial financial situation. A quality education program needs to be provided no matter what the financial circumstances. Saskatchewan children deserve a good education at all times even when there are fiscal restraints.
- Do not create more anxiety by making unnecessary changes. We recommend adjusting where needed within the present context; update legislation where needed and refocus on curriculum.

- We recommend the Government hire a national educational expert, perhaps Michael Fullan, a critical friend of the Ministry of Education in Ontario who has experience at all levels of education, to complete a Saskatchewan Provincial Education Structure Audit before making any radical changes to any area of education. Take the time necessary for complex change.