



Speaking notes:

Perrins Report on Educational Governance Review

- On December 21, the Government of Saskatchewan released the *Educational Governance Review Report, Kindergarten to Grade 12*. (search: “Perrins Report” at www.saskatchewan.ca)
- Dan Perrins was commissioned to write this report based on the question, “What system of governance and structure is needed in Saskatchewan’s K-12 education sector to achieve the outcomes established by the Saskatchewan Plan for Growth and the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP)?”
- The report provides **four options for education governance structure**, which include changes to school division borders or the number of school divisions.
- The four amalgamation scenarios range from moving to one public school division with four regional branches, to making some changes to only a few school division boundaries.
- **Prairie Spirit would be affected by all four of the options** if they were implemented as detailed in the report (starting on page 21 of the report). *An overview of the four options is provided on the last page of this document.*
- The four **options do not include any such changes for separate school divisions.**
- The **government is seeking input from stakeholders** following the release of the report. Stakeholders are invited to make submissions and provide feedback either through an online forum or through an email submission by **Monday, January 23**.
- In addition, stakeholders have been invited to make a formal presentation to the Perrins Report panel. The panel will provide a summary of the presentations it received to the Minister in February. **Prairie Spirit made a presentation to the Perrins Report panel on January 11**, focusing on concerns and recommendations regarding educational governance, best practices for supporting student learning and highlighting the strengths of the current governance model. Some of the points that Prairie Spirit made in its presentation to the panel were:
 - For Prairie Spirit, it is impossible to respond to governance model options without first considering what it is that we most desire for our students. **Deep and meaningful student learning and ongoing adult learning** must remain the priority for education and guide any governance or organizational restructuring. The process that will be used by the Ministry to support system-wide **student learning improvement** is not addressed in this report, yet it is the most important component of governance.

- According to the Ministry's statistics, **Prairie Spirit is one of the most efficient school divisions in the province.** Prairie Spirit has low governance and administration costs and is one of the highest performing school divisions. The graduation rate for Prairie Spirit students—both aboriginal and non-aboriginal—is well above the provincial average. In terms of efficiencies, Prairie Spirit's PTR is one of the highest in the province (student to teacher ratio).

The Perrins Report identified that the reason for restructuring school divisions is to improve effectiveness and efficiencies. This has caused us to wonder why Prairie Spirit is included in these conversations, because **in addition to its effectiveness and efficiencies, Prairie Spirit is also the fourth largest school division in the province with over 10,000 students.**

- The Perrins Report also identified that the Minister would like a **new education governance model, to follow the change in education funding** which began in 2009. According to the report, the Minister does not have the authority to direct and hold elected boards of education accountable for their expenditures, efficiencies and student achievement results.

The Prairie Spirit response described the importance of **preserving a democratic process** that includes elected trustees to represent communities at the board table. High levels of accountability are embedded in the current governance structure. The relationship and close ties to community are important in guiding the work of the Board. Elected Board officials are also a direct voice to government. **Boards are accountable to government and their communities.** In addition, **Boards hold their administration accountable** to ensure the school division operates effectively and efficiently.

- In its presentation to the panel, the Board said that government could satisfy most of its needs by **changing regulations and legislation**, avoiding large scale changes to school division structure. The amalgamation of school divisions is not cost effective and is disruptive to the learning improvement initiatives in school divisions.
- The Board's presentation to the panel voiced concern that the proposed changes include only public school divisions. If the goal is to improve efficiencies within the education sector, **all school divisions—including separate school divisions—should be included in the restructuring process** as described in each of the options.
- A copy of Prairie Spirit's comprehensive presentation to the panel will be posted and shared once it has been formally submitted to the panel.

| Options as detailed in Perrins Report | | |
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| Model | Overview* | Impact on Prairie Spirit |
| Provincial Model | Consolidation of 18 public school divisions, with 4 - 6 regional service areas | Absolute |
| Regional Model | Four regional public boards of education | Absolute |
| Division Model – A | Restructuring of public school divisions to between 8 - 14 divisions | Significant, though unclear |
| Division Model – B | Realigning boundaries, possibly to align with health | Significant, though unclear, as areas around Saskatoon and Regina are specifically mentioned |

**in each model, the report states that the board could be either elected or appointed.*