

FROM THE BOARD

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE
April 24, 2025 BOARD MEETING



GSSD.CA

April 24, 2025, Regular Meeting

The Regular Board meeting on April 24, 2025, was held at the Good Spirit Education Complex. The following trustees were present: Vice Chairperson Nicole Pohl, Christopher Balycki, Shannon Leson, Cara Makort, Kelly Palmer, Jamie Smart-Sondergaard, Steve Variyan, Jan Morrison, Jay-Cee Brass and Kendra Stav. Also in attendance were division office staff, including Director of Education/CEO Quintin Robertson, Chief Financial Officer Keith Gervais, Communications Coordinator Lauren Denysek, and Superintendent of Indigenous Education Angella Pinay.

Meeting Opening

Vice Chairperson Nicole Pohl commenced the meeting at 9:24 a.m., Trustee Variyan then reviewed GSSD's meeting norms and respectfully recognized that the meeting was taking place on Treaty 4 Territory; the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Assiniboiné, and homeland of the Métis Peoples.

Approval of Minutes

The meeting package included the minutes for the March 27, 2025, Regular Board Meeting, which were prepared by Chief Financial Officer Keith Gervais. The approved minutes can be accessed on the GSSD website: [GSSD](#) | [Board](#) | [Board Meetings](#) | [March 27, 2025](#)

Accountability Report

Inspiring Success: Report on student well-being, engagement, and attendance rates.

Superintendent of Indigenous Education Angella Pinay, Superintendent of Schools Amanda Kornaga, and Mental Health Coordinator Michelle Goulden shared an in-depth presentation focused on student attendance, engagement, and well-being across the Division.

Attendance & Engagement Data

Amanda Kornaga began by sharing current attendance data, noting a clear gap between non-First Nation, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) and FNMI students. She emphasized the importance of intellectual engagement—when students are interested in what they're learning, they're more likely to attend school. Strategies to support this include creating meaningful learning experiences that connect with students' interests and needs.



Indigenous Education Initiatives

Angella Pinay highlighted several cultural and wellness initiatives from the Indigenous Education team. These include safe spaces for emotional regulation, equine therapy, elder guidance, and cultural activities like beading, powwow groups, drum circles, and storytelling. These efforts promote emotional safety, cultural pride, and mental health awareness while also improving student participation and leadership through intergenerational learning and family-inclusive events.

To address absenteeism, strategies like on-reserve programming, home visits, and transportation support are being used to strengthen family-school relationships and boost attendance.

Mental Health Programming

Michelle Goulden shared that the Mental Health Capacity Building (MHCB) program is designed to support entire schools rather than provide individual counselling. Initiatives include:

- Safe spaces for emotional regulation
- Mental Health First Aid training
- The “Roughrider Win with Wellness” initiative
- Family-centered events like gym nights, movie discussions, and craft evenings

These programs foster mental wellness, community involvement, and skill development among students and families.

Final Reflections

Trustees Morrison and Pohl both expressed appreciation for the collaborative efforts and insightful presentation from the team. The unified approach across departments highlights GSSD’s commitment to supporting student success through well-being, cultural connection, and consistent attendance.

To view the accountability report in its entirety visit: [GSSD](#) | [Board](#) | [Board Meetings](#) | [Board Accountability Report – Report on student well-being, engagement, and attendance rates](#)

Board Development

Collaboration with Other Elected Officials

During the recent Board meeting, Director of Education Quintin Robertson presented the Board Development on Collaboration with Other Elected Officials. He shared “10 Fast Facts” for strong governance, highlighting the importance of unified messaging, strategic relationships, meaningful engagement, and clear advocacy planning.

The session reinforced that trustees must act as one voice, prioritize transparency, and engage respectfully with School Community Councils (SCCs), Indigenous leadership, and political representatives. Trustees were reminded to stay within their governance role while collaborating where mandates align.

To access the full document of the 10 fast facts visit [GSSD](#) | [Board](#) | [Board Meetings](#) | [Board Development – Collaboration with Other Elected Officials](#)

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BOARD DEVELOPMENT
TOPIC: WORKING WITH OTHER ELECTED OFFICIALS & STAKEHOLDERS
APRIL 24, 2025, REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Strategic Priority
HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING
STRONG COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS
EFFECTIVE POLICY AND DECISION-MAKING
CULTURAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Information for the Board - 10 Fast Facts
(These fast facts provide a foundation for trustees, particularly new ones, to understand their responsibilities, ethical expectations, and the scope of their role within the Grand Rapids School Division.)

- 1 The Board is a Corporate Body, Not Individual Voices**
 - Trustees represent the Board collectively. When working with MHA, MBO, Chair & Council, or SCCs, speak from Board-approved direction, not personal opinion.
- 2 Build Relationships with Purpose**
 - Regular communication with MHA, MBO, Chiefs, and SCCs. Executives help shape educational policy and funding. Be seen as solution focused, respectful, and proactive.
- 3 Engagement + Endorsement**
 - Engaging stakeholders—especially SCCs and Indigenous leadership—means listening and learning, not always agreeing. It's about dialogue over division.
- 4 Advocacy is a Board Responsibility**
 - The Board must review and approve an annual advocacy plan: Who will we speak up about, what, and how will we measure progress?
- 5 Support the Director as Spokesperson**
 - While the Director leads public communications, trustees may engage when appropriate—but should do so in alignment with the division's messaging and protocols.
- 6 Community Trust is Earned Through Transparency**
 - Model respectful dialogue, be honest, and clearly explain complex decisions in plain language. Maintain confidentiality but communicate with clarity.
- 7 Leverage SSBA as a Strategic Partner**
 - The SSBA Partnership and staff are not just advisors—they're resources for messaging, media support, governance advice, and negotiating provincial discussions.
- 8 SCCs Are Your Front Line for Public Voice**
 - SCCs represent the heartbeat of school communities. Consult with them early, often, and meaningfully.
- 9 Engagement Isn't Optional—It's Your Job**
 - The Board must establish, monitor, and model processes for public participation, collaboration, and co-creation of solutions, especially during times of tension or change.
- 10 Boards Guide, Others Govern**
 - MPs and MHA designate Chiefs, lead their Nations. Trustees govern, public education in their division. Stay in your lane, but collaborate to improve outcomes for all learners.

ADVOCACY

LEARNING WITHOUT LIMITS...ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL

Advocacy Session

School Community Council (SCC) Chairs

School Community Council Chairs were invited to attend an advocacy session with the Board. The session was available both in-person and through Teams. The session focused on introductions and then led into conversations regarding student support in place in schools, the new mandated



washroom & changeroom administrative procedure, and GSSD's Budget Planning for 2025-26. In attendance was Deb Schmidt representing Melville Comprehensive School, Davison School Chair Carma Cechanowicz, Macdonald School Chair Tammy Oryschak, Canora Junior Elementary School Chair Melissa Scheltgen, Yorkdale Central School Chair Julie Gabriel, Dr. Brass School Chair Lisa Shauf, and Sturgis Composite School Chair Sandra Johnson.

The session was a wonderful collaboration and discussion around upcoming initiatives and how to continually improve schools and support students. The Board was extremely thankful to all who attended, as everyone was very engaged and provided wonderful insights and leadership.

Action Items Arising from Closed Session

Electoral Boundaries

During Closed Session, Trustees reviewed proposed updates to the Division's electoral boundaries. The new boundaries would align with current student attendance areas to ensure consistency and clarity.

The Board passed the following motion: *"That the Board approve the electoral boundary amendment, as presented at the April 2025 Board meeting."*

Updated boundary maps will be submitted to the Ministry for approval. Once finalized, the changes will be shared publicly and posted on the Division's website.

New Business

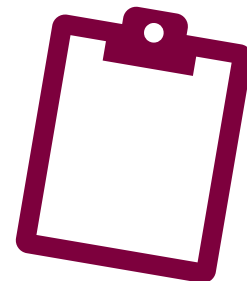
Review Facilities 3 Year Preventative Maintenance and Renewal (PMR) Plan

Facilities Manager Pat Morrison presented the Division's updated three-year Preventative Maintenance and Renewal (PMR) Plan, a requirement reviewed and approved annually by the Board before submission to the Ministry of Education by May 31.

This year's plan outlines projects for the 2026–27, 2027–28, and 2028–29 school years, covering areas such as:

- **Architectural:** roof repairs, building accessibility, safety upgrades
- **Mechanical:** HVAC, plumbing, fire suppression
- **Electrical:** lighting, power doors, electrical systems
- **Site:** drainage, retaining walls
- **Environmental:** asbestos remediation
- **Studies:** feasibility and accessibility reviews, grade configuration

Projects are identified through regular inspections, facility or administrator requests, and third-party assessments. Prioritization is based on need, safety, and system performance.



For 2025–26, GSSD will receive \$2.835 million in PMR funding—a \$737,145 increase from the previous year. These funds must be used for approved projects, though they can be carried forward if aligned with the plan.

Proposed annual budgets:

- 2026–27: \$2,938,500
- 2027–28: \$2,800,500
- 2028–29: \$2,743,000



This plan supports safe, efficient, and sustainable learning environments across the Division. To wrap up the presentation, Pat shared the PMR project list for 2026–27, 2027–28, and 2028–29. Highlights included planned renovations to classrooms, labs, and gymnasiums across the Division. Gym floor upgrades and improvements to surveillance systems—such as security cameras, monitoring, and front door access—were also noted as priorities at multiple schools.

Board Development Survey (Skills Matrix)

Every two years, the Board of Education conducts a self-evaluation to assess its performance and identify opportunities for growth. In 2025, trustees participated in two key surveys: an anonymous skills matrix to highlight strengths and areas for development, and the OneSmartWorld survey, which provided insights into individual decision-making styles and leadership traits.

The combined results will inform future Board development and guide professional learning that supports the Division’s overall success. A consultant will review the findings with the Board at a special meeting on August 13, 2025.

Policy Review



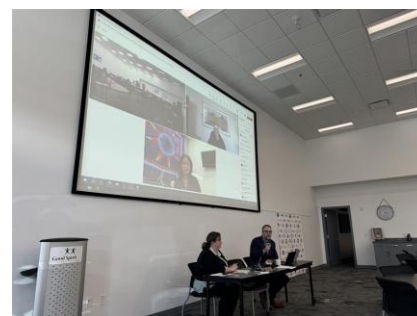
The Board reviewed and approved updates to Board Policy 9, 12, 12A, 12B, 12C and 13. The reviewed policies are now available on the website:

- [Policy 9 Board Representatives](#)
- [Policy 12 Director/CEO Roles and Responsibilities](#)
- [Policy 12 Appendix A Director Evaluation Process, Criteria and Timelines](#)
- [Policy 12 Appendix B Director/CEO Role Expectations](#)
- [Policy 12 Appendix C Leadership Practices Interview Guide](#)
- [Policy 13 Appeals and Hearings Regarding Student Matters](#)

[GSSD](#) | [Board](#) | [Board Policy Handbook](#)

Foundation Presentation – Saskatoon Public Schools Foundation

The Board was joined virtually by Zeba Ahmad, Executive Director of the Saskatoon Public Schools Foundation and Shane Skjerven, Director of Education from Saskatoon Public Schools to present an initial presentation on their Foundation. They provided insights into their initiatives and how they have grown over the years in supporting their communities and students. The Trustees were grateful for their time and took away some great ideas from the meeting.



Director's Report

Transportation Update

Transportation Manager Ryan Hall provided an update on student transportation for the reporting period of March 1 to April 28, 2025.

Route & Staffing Overview

- GSSD currently operates 98 bus routes.
- One route is temporarily unstaffed but has been covered by nearby routes. Staffing for the Langenburg area will be in place by April 28, resolving ride time and capacity concerns.
- Bus driver recruitment remains a challenge, though incentives are helping. Five potential drivers are currently in the licensing process.
- Technician recruitment at the Yorkton garage continues, following the departure of one staff member.

Recent Developments

- 10 new Thomas buses were delivered following a December 2024 tender.
- SGI conducted its routine inspection on March 25, with strong positive feedback for Yorkton garage staff.
- GSSD attended the Melville Career Fair on March 26, focusing on recruiting new drivers.
- Planning is underway for a large GPS system changeover for all school buses and certain fleet vehicles this summer.

Professional Development

- On April 23, 2025, GSSD technicians and the driver trainer attended a PD event hosted by the Student Transportation Association of Saskatchewan, featuring presentations from SGI and bus manufacturers.
- Preparations are in progress for the August bus driver in-service, with presenters already confirmed.

Looking Ahead

- A few bus drivers have announced retirement at the end of this school year. Planning for 2025–26 staffing is now underway.

The update reflected continued focus on safety, recruitment, and long-term planning to ensure reliable transportation for GSSD students.

Financial Update

Chief Financial Officer Keith Gervais provided an overview of the Division's current financials. A slight increase in instructional spending was noted, primarily due to Saskatchewan Distance Learning Centre (SaskDLC) payments and a new monthly invoicing schedule. As SaskDLC was introduced last year, the Division is now seeing a more accurate picture of the ongoing costs.

Overall revenue remains consistent with projections.

On the capital side, spending varied due to the purchase of four buses. Although these buses were ordered in the previous year, they were delivered and paid for in the current fiscal year.



Closing Items

School Community Councils & Celebration

Trustee Stav shared that Davison School has initiated a tender process for a new fence project, aimed at enhancing playground safety for all students. Trustee Stav also recognized a remarkable act of generosity from a School Community Council (SCC) member at Melville Comprehensive School (MCS). During a recent SCC meeting, a topic that arose was the need for new ovens. In response, the SCC member personally donated six ovens to the school. They also purchased two wooden playhouse kits for the MCS construction class to build, which will be raffled off to support SCC initiatives.



Trustee Morrison shared that MC Knoll School is currently fundraising for a new outdoor learning space. This exciting project will provide all students with a valuable opportunity to learn, explore, and grow in a natural environment.

Upcoming Important Dates

May 19, 2025	Victoria Day
May 22, 2025	Special Board Meeting
May 26, 2025	Board Chairs Council Meeting – virtual, 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.
June 4-6, 2025	Employee Benefits Plan Seminar, location TBD
June 5 & 6, 2025	Public Section General Meeting & Professional Development Event - Regina DoubleTree by Hilton
June 5, 2025	Good Spirit Retirement Gala, St. Mary’s Cultural Centre
June 12, 2025	Regular Board Meeting
August 13, 2025	Evaluation & Special Board Meeting
August 14, 2025	Regular Board Meeting
September 18, 2025	Board Chairs Council – In-person, Regina, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
September 30, 2025	Deadline for Submissions for the 2025 Premier’s Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence & the 2024 Award of Distinction – 4:30 p.m.
October 1, 2025	Deadline for Bylaw Amendments (for the AGM) – 4:30 p.m.
October 16, 2025	Deadline for Resolutions (for the AGM) - 4:30 p.m.
October 20, 2025	Board Chairs Council Meeting – virtual, 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.
November 16, 2025	Board Chairs Council Meeting – In-person before Fall Assembly, Regina 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. - Directors are invited to this meeting
November 16-18, 2025	Fall General Assembly and AGM – Regina, Delta Hotel

Upcoming Board Meetings: May 22/25 - Special Board Meeting, June 12/25, August 13/25 - Evaluation & Special Board Meeting, August 14/25

Location & Time: Good Spirit Education Complex at 9 a.m. 5B Schrader Drive, Yorkton, SK S3N 3Z4

To submit photos or stories regarding the Board of Education or an individual Trustee in your school community, please contact lauren.denysek@gssd.ca.

Board Policy 7 Board Operations: [GSSD](#) | [Board](#) | [Board Policy Handbook](#)