

Accountability Topic: Early Literacy Partnership and Progress

Date of Board Meeting:

August 14, 2025

Strategic Priority:

- ☒ High Quality Teaching and Learning
- ☐ Engagement of All Students, Families, and Communities
- ☐ Effective Policy and Procedures
- ☐ Healthy, Sustainable Physical & Social Environments

Presented by:

Lisa Wotherspoon, GSSD Superintendent of Learning

Quality Indicator(s) (if applicable):

- QI 2.1 – Analyzing student achievement and ensuring the development of action plans to address concerns and gaps.
- QI 8.2 - Demonstrating the achievement of key results identified in the Division's Strategic Plan and the Provincial Education Plan.
- QI 8.3 - Reporting at least annually on results achieved.
- QI 11.1 – Providing effective educational leadership.

Key Measures:

- The Letter Name Sound (LeNS) Test
- The Castles and Coltheart 3 (CC3) Test

Targets:

By June 2025 80% or more Grades 1 to 3 students will be in the average range according to the Letter Name Sound (LeNS) test and the Castles and Coltheart 3 (CC3) test.

The chart below illustrates Spring reading data sent to the ministry:

Good Spirit SD 204 Preliminary Reading Results, 2024-25 (and comparator years)

		Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Students Reading At or Above Grade Level (AAGL)	2018-19	82.0%	79.3%	79.5%
	2023-24	69.7%	69.9%	70.4%
	2024-25	92.2%	88.4%	83.9%
Students Exempted from Results	2018-19	9.8%	9.2%	7.3%
	2023-24	19.3%	12.0%	11.0%
	2024-25	20.4%	16.8%	12.9%
Students Not Participating (recorded as 'na')	2018-19	0.8%	0.0%	0.2%
	2023-24	1.1%	1.9%	1.0%
	2024-25	1.8%	0.6%	1.1%
Percentage of Students Included in AAGL analysis	2018-19	89.4%	90.8%	92.5%
	2023-24	79.7%	86.1%	88.0%
	2024-25	77.8%	82.6%	86.0%

Key Partnership Strategies Employed:

- During the 2024-2025 school year, GSSD entered a partnership with Dr. George Georgiou from the University of Alberta and Dr. Matthew Kierstead, Principal at Fort Vermillion School.
- Through this partnership GSSD has received support in the following areas:
 - 6 hours of professional development for PreK-3 teachers on the 5 pillars of literacy
 - Support for the implementation, analysis, and response to reading screeners
 - Support for Grade 1-3 reading intervention
 - Ongoing consultation with the GSSD Early Years Interdisciplinary team
 - Shared research, professional development opportunities, and instructional resources
 - Professional development with in-school Administrators on understanding and responding to data at three admin meetings in alignment with assessment windows (Oct, Feb, June)
 - One-on-one meetings with several in-school administrators to analyze data, determine the next steps and assess teacher impact on student growth
 - Support to GSSD data analysts on how to collect and display data
- The GSSD Early Years Interdisciplinary team comprised of: Superintendent of Learning, Curriculum Consultants, Student Services Consultant, Speech-Language Pathologist, Ed. Psychologist have worked closely to integrate educational research, brain-based learning, and language development to ensure students receive the most effective instruction in learning to read.
- The GSSD Early Years Interdisciplinary team accomplishments include:
 - Working closely with Dr. Georgiou and Dr. Kierstead
 - Selection of resources grounded in the science of reading
 - Collaboration with “priority schools” to support school teams with the implementation of structured literacy
 - Development of Instructional Walkthrough: Look For documents to support administrators
 - Creation of Guide to Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction
 - Updated work on the GSSD Response to Intervention process
- GSSD has participated in the Ministry of Education Reading Advisory group throughout the 2024-2025 school year.

Future Partnership Strategies:

- GSSD will participate in a Gr. 2 Intervention research project conducted by Dr. Georgiou in the 2025-2026 school year
- Continued support for the implementation, analysis, and response to screeners
- Support for Grade 1-3 reading intervention as well as support for Grade 4-6 reading interventions
- Ongoing consultation with the GSSD Early Years Interdisciplinary team
- Continued support for the implementation, analysis, and response to screeners
- Continue with one-on-one support with in-school administrators to analyze data, determine next steps and assess the teacher’s impact on student growth
- Grade 1-3 teachers will also participate in professional development with Kim Lockhart, elementary teacher, and advocate for equitable access to evidence-based literacy instruction for students with reading disabilities.

Risk Assessment:

Impact Categories	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Financial	Financial impact of the event is less than \$50,000	Financial impact of the event exceeds \$50,000, but less than \$150,000	Financial impact of the event exceeds \$150,000, but is less than \$250,000	Financial impact of event exceeds \$250,000, but is less than \$500,000	Financial impact of the event exceeds \$500,000
Comments & Mitigation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GSSD has invested considerable resources to support early learning, reading and credit attainment. Schools are allotted diversity factors to support interventions and grad coaching. The division has invested in professional staff and paraprofessional staff to support in these areas 				
Reputational	One negative article in a publication	Negative articles in more than one publication	Short term negative media focus and concerns raised by stakeholders	Long term negative media focus and sustained concerns raised by stakeholders	Stakeholders lose faith in management or Trustees
Comments & Mitigation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GSSD's achievement levels tend to be comparable or exceed the provincial average, however, the achievement levels of Indigenous Students continues to be significantly lower than non-indigenous students. GSSD continues to exceed provincial standards for credit attainment. 				
Managerial Effort/Capacity	Impact can be absorbed through normal activity	Some management effort is required to manage the impact	Can be managed under normal circumstances with moderate effort	With significant management effort, can be endured	Potential to lead to the collapse of the organization
Comments & Mitigation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considerable attention, effort and human resources have been dedicated to enhancing achievement levels in these areas. 				
Government Relations	Routine ministerial inquires	In-depth ministerial inquires	Concerns raised by Ministry of Education	School division's ability mandate is questioned	Ministry of Education loses faith in the organization
Comments & Mitigation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These results are reported on yearly within GSSD's Legislated Annual Report. 				
Legal	Legal action threatened	Civil action commenced/small fine assessed	Criminal action threatened/moderate fine assessed	Criminal lawsuit commenced/significant fine assessed	Jail term of any length for a Trustee/Director; multiple significant fines assessed
Comments & Mitigation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 				
Student Outcomes	Immaterial impact on student achievement	Student achievement metrics begin to show a decline	Parental complaints submitted related	Overall student competency levels are below standards	Inability to satisfactorily deliver curriculum or key programs

			to student achievement		
Comments & Mitigation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening partnerships with community organizations and families of 0-5 years old. • A renewed focus on early literacy based on the Science of Reading. • Strengthening partnerships with First Nations in our area • Review of attendance data and the impact this has on achievement in these areas 				

Likelihood The likelihood of identified risks is to be assessed by estimate the probability of the risk occurring during the planning horizon.				
Rare	Unlikely	Moderate	Likely	Almost Certain
Extremely rare in the sector. Once in more than 10 years at the school division.	Has occurred occasionally in the sector. Once in 5 to 10 years at the school division.	Periodic occurrence in the sector; possible occurrence. Once in 3 years at the school division.	Has occurred previously and could reasonably occur again. Once in 1 to 2 years at the school division.	Extremely likely to occur. Multiple times per year at the school division.

Summary Comments:

- GSSD's collaboration with Dr. George Georgiou and Dr. Matthew Kierstead provided evidence-based professional learning for teachers and administrators, including training on the five pillars of literacy, support for screening and intervention, and leadership development focused on data-informed instruction.
- Building on this year's progress, GSSD will expand its literacy strategy by participating in a Grade 2 intervention research project, extending intervention into Grades 4–6, continuing targeted administrator coaching, and partnering with Kim Lockhart to provide professional development on equitable, evidence-based instruction.
- The GSSD Early Years Interdisciplinary Team, combining expertise in education, psychology, and language development, has led key initiatives to strengthen early reading instruction through collaboration with leading researchers, school support, and the creation of tools and resources grounded in the science of reading.
- GSSD surpassed its 2024–25 goal of having 80% or more of Grade 1–3 students reading within the average range according to the LeNS and CC3.

Recommended Decision/Motion:

"That the Board approve the accountability report on Fall Early Literacy Data and acknowledge the report met the requirements of QIs 2.1, 8.2, 8.3 and 11.1, based on the evidence within the report."

Respectfully submitted,

Quintin M. Robertson, Director/CEO
Good Spirit School Division