

Preparing the groundwork for a new funding model

The Advisory Committee has undertaken important discussions since the last Update in July. Issues have included the principles that will guide the development of the funding distribution system and an overview of funding methodologies.

Principles: An ad hoc committee worked on a common understanding of principles that was presented to the Advisory Committee at the February meeting. The committee members agreed that the principles could be presented to the minister; who has since returned them to the chair for use by the Advisory Committee, subcommittee, and technical committee members.

Funding methodologies: Three funding methodologies have been discussed: foundation grant, prototype school, and resource cost. Advisory committee members provided feedback on the pros and cons of each methodology. Data management, horizontal and vertical equity, and opportunities to blend methodologies were issues brought up by education partners. The issues raised will inform further discussions that are taking place at the sub and technical committees before the issue returns to the Advisory Committee.

Subcommittees at work to support Advisory Committee

Six subcommittees and two technical committees made up of ministry and education partner representatives are providing feedback to the Advisory Committee on issues that arise through the project activities, such as stakeholder meetings. Ministry of Education staff chair the subcommittees as well undertake the bulk of research and development of policy options. This approach is intended to mitigate the amount of effort required by external partners who contribute their expertise by reviewing findings, participating in discussions about the issue and findings, as well as providing comments for consideration and making recommendations to the Advisory Committee.

Special thanks go to subcommittee members for their time and expertise as well as to their organizations for accommodating member participation. The input of members is extremely valuable as we move forward.

This publication is produced by the Ministry of Education to inform school divisions and stakeholders as we move forward on changes to how education is funded in Saskatchewan.

Please email suggestions, submissions, or comments to dianne.shannon@gov.sk.ca

School divisions will know budgets for 2010-11 on March 24

Education Finance and Facilities branch met with school divisions from October 16-November 2, 2009 to find out what expenditure pressures are anticipated in the coming fiscal year. Discussions focused on enrolment, staffing, local agreements, debt, potential efficiencies, and capital. School divisions will learn how much they will receive for their 2010-11 budgets on March 24, when the provincial government's budget is announced.

Financial reporting changes

Presentations were made by the Ministry of Finance's Provincial Comptroller's Division as well as the Provincial Auditor to the Advisory Committee in January to clarify the roles and responsibilities of boards of education and the ministry. The change to *The Education Act, 1995* allowing government to set mill rates for education property tax has resulted in government having control of generating funding for school divisions.

As a result, the ministry and school divisions are now required to consolidate financial information within [summary financial statements](#) that are provided to the Ministry of Finance. Directors of education learned about the change in July 2009 and a presentation to school division staff followed in September. Additionally, *The Provincial Auditor's Act* requires all accounts related to public money, including government's summary financial statements, be examined by the auditor.

Efficiency Secretariat and government third parties

At the November Advisory Committee meeting, the Ministry of Finance's newly formed [Efficiency Secretariat](#) was discussed. At that time, it was understood that the work of the Efficiency Secretariat, which was established to assist government ministries ensure their services remain relevant, responsive, and affordable, would extend to third parties such as health regions and school divisions. The secretariat has since communicated that it will not be assessing programs delivered by third parties.

Important dates:

Provincial budget announced March 24

Ministry contact information:

School division budgets	787-4658
Advisory Committee and subcommittee information	787-9892
Information data management	787-7856
Facilities	787-5631
Communications/media	787-6291

Data management: preparing for the future

Data systems subcommittee chair Roy Chursinoff provided the Advisory Committee with an overview of technology and data systems components that make up the data management project to support the new funding distribution system. The project includes seven areas: funding distribution modeling and calculation solution, information collection, business intelligence solution, payment management solution, data management, school division financials, and treaty land entitlement tax loss compensation fund tracking.

Two recent developments in data collection from school divisions that will be in effect for the 2010-11 school year are: the discontinuation of the Principals' September Statistical Report (PSSR) and the personnel data collection in the SG/SE system; and, the use of the Student Data System and the Teacher Services System as the systems of record for enrolment and personnel data.