



# *Christ the Teacher*

ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL DIVISION #212  
Board of Education Submission to the Perrins Governance Review Panel

Christ the Teacher Catholic School Board appreciates this opportunity to provide a formal response to the Educational Governance Review Report.

Christ the Teacher Catholic School Board notes the following statements related to Structure of Saskatchewan's Education System (Perrins Report, page 4), "*Saskatchewan's system of education governance has its roots in Canada's Constitution, which gives responsibility for education to the provinces, except for First Nations students living on-reserve. The Constitution also protects the rights of people of minority faith (i.e., Protestant or Catholic) and official minority language (i.e., French in Saskatchewan).*" Christ the Teacher Catholic School Board recognizes the unique differences in Catholic education governance, as well as potential impacts with respect to the "Shifts in Governance" (Perrins Report, page 20-21).

Christ the Teacher Catholic School Board supports: a strong provincial education system; public school division colleagues and partners; elected boards of education; collective commitment to student achievement and to the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP).

## **Transformational Change in Action: Inspired by the Education Sector Strategic Plan**

The focus on and commitment to achieving the outcomes targeted in the ESSP are at the forefront for school boards. Student achievement is and has been the priority of Boards of Education predating the ESSP.

- The ESSP was transformational when it was established and continues to be transformational in the province.
  - The ESSP has created a sense of collective accountability with support for priorities such as *Saskatchewan Reads* and *Following Their Voices*.
  - The ESSP is a tool to increase effectiveness of the system across the province. The structure can be utilized to: achieve outcomes, measure success and increase accountability.
- Boards of Education continue to do comprehensive work in increasing effectiveness of education (measured in student outcomes). These increases will have long-term financial benefits for Saskatchewan and most importantly life benefits for each of our students. It is our moral imperative.
- Leadership by boards and administration has supported student learning; removal of leadership, coordination and focus will require supports from other sources.
- We are committed to working with the government and school divisions to ensure the best outcomes for students, and want to ensure that the focus in education stays steadfast on continuing the progress we are seeing with the ESSP.



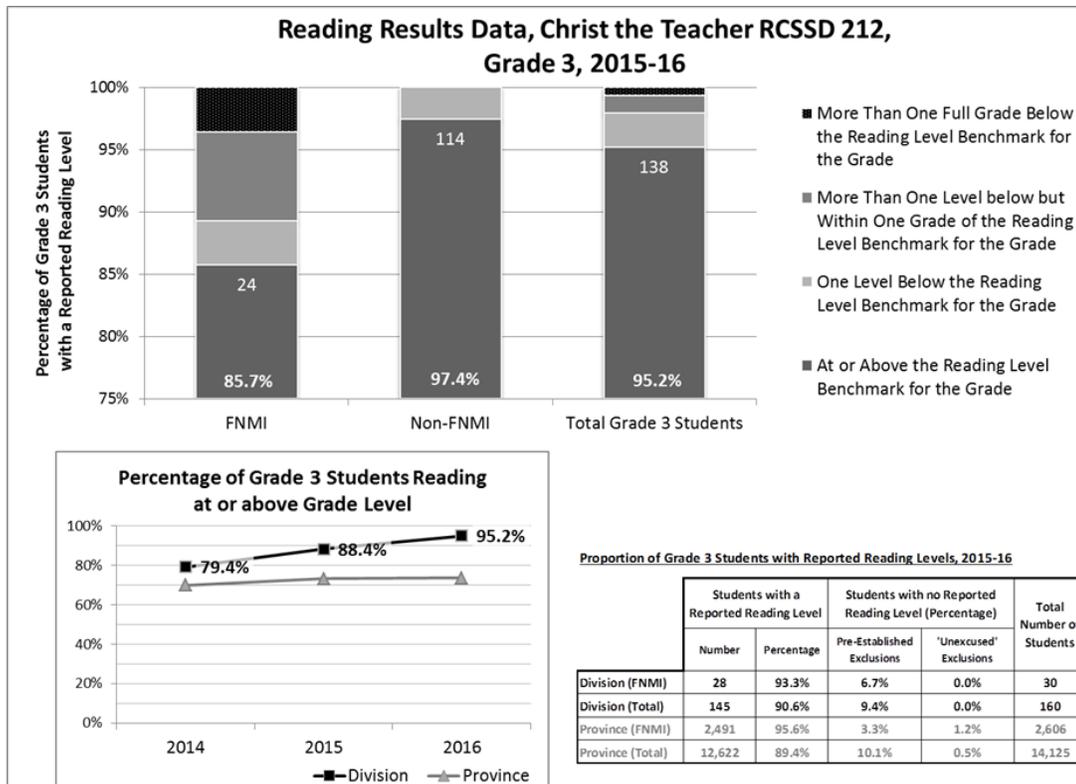
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## Results of Alignment: Passion and Persistence for Student Learning & Trusted Relationships

- Alignment exists between provincial goals (Vision 2020 and ESSP), division goals, school goals and School Community Council (SCC) targets. The Provincial Learning Team (PLT), Boards of Education, Directors, central office staff, school staff and SCCs have built and continue to nurture relationships that focus on working together to support students, school communities, and local priorities. The momentum is hard to capture in words but necessary to understand if we are considering interrupting this culture!
- The support that occurs at a division level is also difficult to capture in words, but measurable *affectively* and *effectively* in results. Removing support from systems may prove detrimental to the educational lives of students as local voice and support are diminished.
- Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division experiences an additional level of support from local clergy and parish organizations. This relationship is noted by consistent attendance of clergy at board meetings, Electors' meetings, division and school functions; it is also noted by long-standing support from parish organizations. We are blessed with many layers of support.
- The alignment of priorities and supports summarized have resulted in the achievement of the following learning outcome results in Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools:

## Reading Achievement



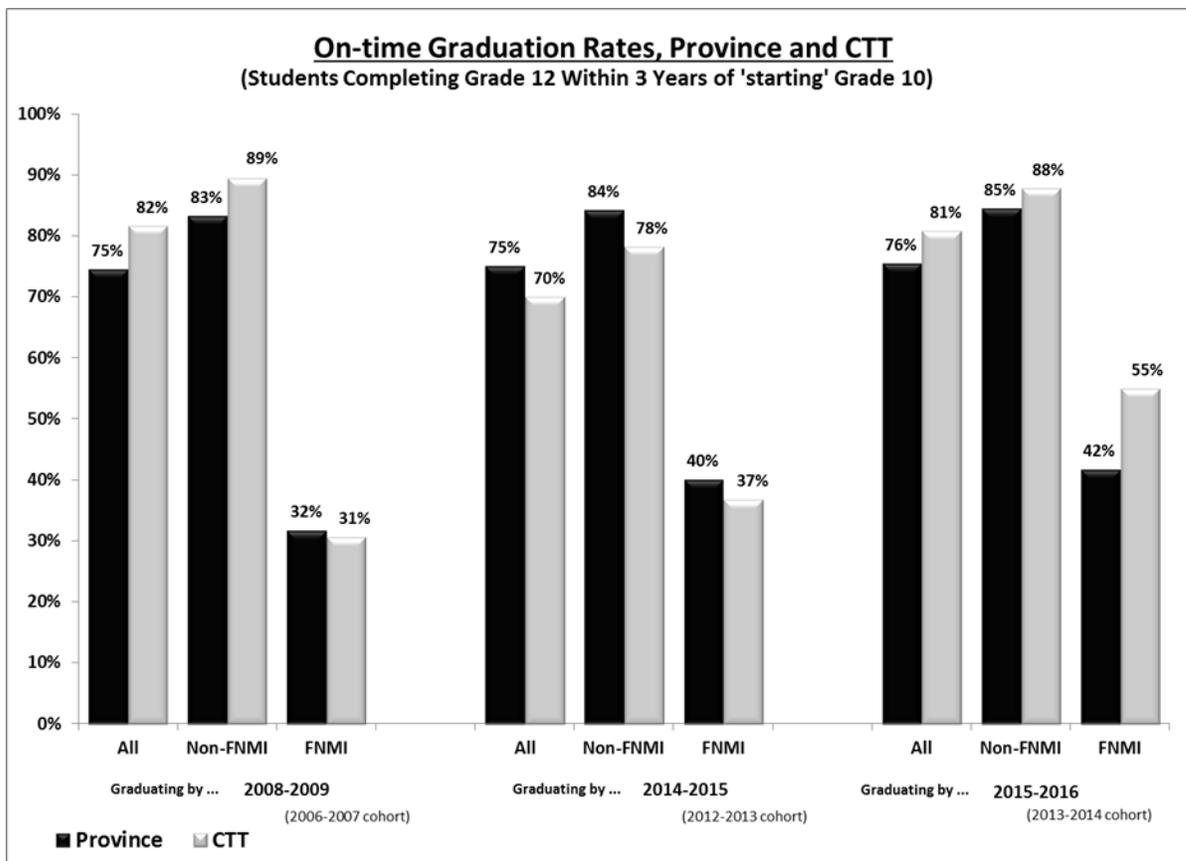


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- 95.2% of grade 3 students are reading at or above the reading level benchmark (approximately 20% higher than the provincial results).
- When these results are disaggregated, 85.7% of FNMI grade 3 students are reading at or above the reading level benchmark.
- Achievement is indicative of the focus our Board has had in providing a variety of necessary supports for students and teachers.

## Graduation Rates



- On-time graduation rate for all students in 2015-16 was 81% (5% above provincial results).
- On-time graduation rate for FNMI students was 55% (13% above provincial results; an increase of 18% from 2014-15 in Christ the Teacher).



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- The achievement results identified are the current state of a long-term vision, investment and process. The work to accomplish these achievements has established a high degree of trust and commitment among staff. The investment, commitment and support for the actions needed to achieve the outcome targets must remain in place.
- It is worrisome that progress towards the goals of the ESSP may be paused or jeopardized by substantial change in governance. Time, energy, fiscal and mental resources will necessarily be redirected to reorganization and away from leading improvements to student learning.

## **RESPONSES TO SPECIFIC TOPICS/SECTIONS OF PERRINS REPORT**

### **Letter of Transmittal (page 2):**

Christ the Teacher Catholic School Board highlights the common themes from the *Letter of Transmittal* provided with the report.

- Unanimous consent for elected boards
- Unanimous support for no more amalgamation
- Unanimous support for the ESSP as the mechanism to ensure achievement of student outcomes, noting progress has been made since the plan was approved; concern if energy is lost due to transfer of energy required to reorganize
- Agreement that more can be done by schools divisions to find sector-wide efficiencies

### **Shifts in Governance (page 20-21):**

#### ***Strategic Direction and Accountability***

- Christ the Teacher Catholic School Board would be open to participating in future dialogue regarding changes to legislation and redefining Minister roles.
- Engaging in dialogue regarding number of board members and efficiencies that could be realized in governance are realistic actions. Flexibility and recognition of local needs may be important considerations during dialogue.
- Mandatory Board Training: Christ the Teacher Catholic School Board has embraced Governance Training: (Brown Governance/Johnson Shoyama modules), Saskatchewan School Boards Association governance training, and Board development opportunities such as the School for New Trustees. The Board recognizes value in processes to review and develop increased competencies for elected board members.

#### ***Effectiveness***

- As noted previously, the focus on the ESSP with emphasis on educational outcomes is a focus of boards. Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division has noted a steady increase in reading and graduation rates, while modelling that we are stewards of our resources. Christ the Teacher Catholic School Board has promoted and supported initiatives that support professional learning for staff, which has resulted in increased student achievement “Investing in Teachers Five Year Plan”. Good governance is effective!



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- Christ the Teacher Catholic School Board expresses uncertainty regarding the Education Quality Council noted in the report. The Board shares the following questions:
  - Who will sit on this council? Would it create another level of bureaucracy? What type of leadership, administration, and staff would this entity require? What is the mandate of the Council? Who will have input in the development of required standards?
  - This appears to be a huge undertaking, with little detail provided in the report.

## ***Efficiency***

- Christ the Teacher Catholic School Board supports the focus of lowering the cost curve, creating enhanced value in the system and improving services to students through efficiency, shared services and continuous improvement initiatives.
- Centralizing services, such as purchasing and payroll *may* see efficiencies; ensuring quality level of service must be at the forefront. This is a complex process requiring effective planning and management to realize the intended efficiencies.
- Human Resource management is best overseen by local staff; the local context and relationships are critical to effective human resource management.
- Boards of education in Saskatchewan understand the fiscal challenges in the province. We are committed to continuing to find efficiencies.

## ***Consistency/Standardization***

- Christ the Teacher Catholic School Board is willing to engage in dialogue regarding governance costs.
- Dialogue regarding central office staff costs and numbers is realistic; flexibility for local differences should be reflected in decisions.
- Standardization of locally bargained terms and conditions: Our board values its relationship with our local teachers and also recognizes that conditions for teachers vary throughout the province. This is a sensitive area that should be handled in that manner.

## ***Participation***

- School Community Councils (SCCs) work diligently to support school community initiatives and are valuable in knowing local needs and collaborating with local parishes and community organizations. SCC capacity related to governance varies as interest in this level of involvement varies per member and SCC. Any changes to enhance the role of SCCs may require additional training and professional development.
- We acknowledge the value of First Nations representation on SCC and Board.



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## **Governance Options**

- Past experience would indicate the impact on schools and front-line services, and therefore students, should not be underestimated when governance and management changes are contemplated.
- No predictable savings to amalgamation; possibly more costs.

## **Importance of Locally Elected School Boards**

- Given the history and geography of this province, boards of education believe that local democratic processes are the foundation of high-quality education.
- Each school division has a local culture and locally elected school boards allow for the local culture and needs to be acknowledged and accommodated within each school with each child.
- Elected trustees have a dual responsibility and accountability, to those who elect them and to the Minister (of Education).
- Locally elected boards are the voice of the people and provide a connection and accountability with the school community while also ensuring accountability to the Minister.

## **Conclusion**

- Christ the Teacher Catholic School Board believes that careful consideration of the magnitude of the changes occurring and/or potentially occurring should be critically considered by decision-makers:
  - Uncertainty of funding levels in upcoming budget
  - Adjustments within allocated funding which may be necessary as a result of the Education Funding Model Review
  - Bargaining; potential for significant tensions
  - Uncertainty of the resolution of the Teacher Time matter
  - Curriculum renewal
  - Ongoing commitment of resources; time and energy into achieving outcomes of priorities identified in the ESSP are required; i.e., Graduation Rates
- Further distractions from the core work of school divisions will impact student outcomes; the goal of contemplated changes must put students first.
- Consideration of the important element of democracy in our country and province cannot be overlooked. Immigrants continue to seek Canada and Saskatchewan as a place of hope and optimism. Locally elected school boards have been a fabric of our communities even before the province was formed.