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The Sun West School Division response to the:

EDUCATIONAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW REPORT
by Dan Perrins

Current governance structures have allowed the Sun West School Division to develop and provide equitable educational programming for its rural students. It did take 5 years to create this collaborative innovative culture in Sun West after the 2006 amalgamation of 6 legacy boards. However, the necessary building blocks are now in place to continue transforming educational practices to meet 21st Century student learning needs. We believe it would be extremely detrimental to this transformational change if there were to be any significant shifts in Saskatchewan K-12 governance structures. Please allow us to highlight the advances that have been implemented in Sun West due, in large part, to the flexible local representative governance structures presently in place.

- 1) Sun West has been able to be fiscally responsible, and will continue to do so, within whatever funding structures are provided by government.
- 2) Locally elected trustees have provided the knowledge of local context and promoted the necessary relationship building that allowed us to bring about transformational change in our schools.
- 3) The present governance model allowed our Board the freedom to identify the skills deemed necessary in a new CEO to properly move the system forward.
- 4) The synergy between senior administration and trustees promotes a collaborative approach to strategic planning while providing necessary accountability within the system.
- 5) The present governing structure promoted the development of a strong Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) shared by provincial stakeholders.
- 6) Local governance has led us to align strategic planning and Board policy with the *ESSP* and the provincial government's *Vision 2020* while at the same time incorporating Canadian 21st Century learning research through our association with C21 – Canadians for 21st Century Learning & Innovation.

- 7) Our *Policy 18* is the foundation of a new model of education responding to new world views on requisite student skills. This model is replicable anywhere in the province.
- 8) The present governance structure allowed Sun West to build a state of the art Distance Learning Centre (DLC) that has 55 teachers delivering more than 130 online K-12 courses available to all Saskatchewan students.
- 9) The present independent flexible governance structure allowed us to establish a *Sun West Initiative for School Improvement* (SWISI) fund that spawned research and development of new learning models. This model was subsequently adopted by the North East School Division.
- 10) Three models of learning: online; blended; and, personalized were developed and then merged into Sun West's *Personalized electronically Blended Learning* (PeBL) model.
- 11) PeBL is a student directed process that allows student voice and choice in meeting curricular outcomes while helping them become proficient in 21st Century skills required to be successful in today's new world.
- 12) PeBL has gained Canadian recognition garnering 4 national awards in the last 3 years.

We believe we are on the right track in our pursuit of new learning models in Sun West. We must seek transformational change in our educational models in order to maintain our lifestyle we have become accustomed to. Our biggest fear is that possible changes in governance of our education system might jeopardize the progress achieved thus far by our PeBL journey! How can we be assured that this journey will be allowed to continue?

Sincerely,



Karen Itterman
Chair of the Sun West School Division No. 207