



Date: August 28, 2024 **Agenda Item:** 7.5

To: Board of Trustees

From: Shawna Warren, Superintendent

Originator(s): Shawna Warren, Superintendent

Governance Policy: [Policy 700: Superintendent of Schools](#)

Additional Reference: *Education Act: Sections 8, 11(1), 52-53, 222, 223, 224*
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Superintendent of Schools Regulation 98/2019
Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard

Assurance Domain: Student Growth & Achievement
Teaching & Leading
Learning Supports
Governance
Local & Societal

Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS)

SLQS Competencies ([SLQS](#) / [Board Policy 700](#)):

Building Effective Relationships
Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning
Visionary Leadership
Leading Learning
Ensuring First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education for All Students
School Authority Operations and Resources
Supporting Effective Governance

Subject: **Superintendent Report**

Purpose:

For information.

Background:

A superintendent of schools, as referred to in the Education Act, as chief executive officer of the board and chief education officer of the school authority, provides the board with information, advice and support required for the fulfillment of its governance role, and reports to the Minister on all matters required of the superintendent as identified in the Education Act and other provincial legislation (SLQS). Quality superintendent leadership occurs when the superintendent's ongoing analysis of the context, and the superintendent's decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply, result in quality school leadership, quality teaching and optimum learning for all students in the school authority.

The Alberta government has a system for schools and school authorities to consistently assess progress and demonstrate success called the Assurance Framework. The framework has 5 assurance areas with related performance measures that enable schools and school authorities to show their communities how they are performing each year.

The Senior Administrative Leadership Team is committed to keeping the Board informed regarding progress in the Board's approved outcomes, measures and strategies articulated in the Division's Education Plan to meet our priority of Student Achievement. Using key insights from the Annual Education Results Report, the Division's Education Plan directs the work in schools and at a system level.

This report offers a concise overview of recent events and attended meetings that have influenced the Division's trajectory in the past month. By highlighting significant interactions and their implications, this report aims to provide the Board of Trustees with valuable insights into the Division's proactive leadership, collaborative partnerships, and ongoing operations enhancement.

Building Effective Relationships

A superintendent establishes a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment by building positive and productive relationships with members of the school community and the local community.

- ★ To foster a culture of trust and transparency, the Superintendent initiated the “Superintendent Week-at-a-Glance” calendar during the 2022-2023 school year. This calendar is sent every Friday afternoon to the Board, school-based leadership, and central office leadership to outline the Superintendent's activities for the upcoming week. The Superintendent has chosen to continue this initiative through the 2024-2025 school year.
- ★ On August 23, the Division hosted the first Administrative Council meeting of the 2024-2025 school year. This meeting brought together all Principals, Vice Principals, and Central Office leadership to provide department updates. The Superintendent focused on Self-Reflective Practices; working through building individual Leadership Constitutions (Scott O'Neil, 2021, *Be Where Your Feet Are*).
- ★ The Superintendent and Senior Executive team are planning a comprehensive road show on August 26 and 27. The team will visit all schools within the Division to welcome staff to the new school year. This initiative aims to foster a sense of unity and support, ensuring that all staff members feel valued and motivated as they embark on the 2024-2025 school year.
- ★ As we commence the 2024-2025 school year, the Superintendent is continuing the engagement meetings that were established in the 2022-2023 school year to encourage collaboration and professional development:

- Monthly Principal meetings will gather groups of similar schools (K-4, K-9, 5-9, and 10-12) along with the Superintendent and the Education Services leadership team. These meetings will provide a forum for meaningful discussions, idea exchange and the development of innovative strategies to ensure the success and well-being of both students and staff.
 - Weekly Senior Executive Committee meetings will streamline decision-making and ensure swift responses to emerging educational challenges.
 - Recognizing the importance of personalized communication and mentorship, the Superintendent will hold regular 1:1 meetings with direct reports. These individual sessions will offer a platform for dialogue, professional development and growth opportunities.
 - New this year is the addition of a leadership meeting at Central Office that will meet monthly for Leadership Strategic Planning meetings. These sessions will focus on discussing "Big Rocks" identifying, "Who is Impacted", determining "Who is the Most Responsible Party (MRP)", and evaluating "How the Department is Improving." This strategic approach aims to ensure that key issues are addressed, responsibilities are clearly defined and continuous improvement is achieved across all departments.
- ★ For the 2024-2025 school year, leadership will continue the initiative known as the “Joy Squad”. The primary mission of this Joy Squad is to promote a positive working environment in Central Office. Each month, the squad will distribute surprises to enhance the overall work environment and build team spirit.
- ★ To help families get ready for the new 2024-2025 school year, a blog post was posted on the website with important information such as Staggered Start Dates, a link to the school calendar, details on the new Limiting Distractions in Alberta Classrooms legislation, instructions for student transportation and school registration, a link to the PowerSchool Parent Portal, and other valuable resources. The blog is easily accessible and has been promoted on social media under the title "[Getting Ready for Back to School!](#)"
- ★ Over the summer months, the Superintendent actively worked to resolve several concerns raised by parents and stakeholders. Through open, clear communication, the Superintendent addressed issues and ensured that all voices were heard.

Leading Learning

A superintendent establishes and sustains a learning culture in the school community that promotes ongoing critical reflection on practice, shared responsibility for student success and continuous improvement.

- ★ On July 4th, the Superintendent, along with Dan Requa, Principal, and Colleen Symyrozum-Watt, CASS Consultant, facilitated a session called "Leadership from Within" at

the 2024 CASS Leading for Learning Program for Experienced School Leaders in Olds, Alberta presenting to a group of principals and vice principals from across the province.

- In today's rapidly evolving world, leadership isn't about positional authority; it's about influence, inspiration and impact. True leadership stems from within, from a deep understanding of oneself and a commitment to continuous growth and development. "Leadership from Within" emphasizes that leadership is not just a role or a set of skills; it's a way of thinking and living. There are no shortcuts on the journey to authentic leadership. It requires introspection, courage and a willingness to challenge oneself.
 - In this session, participants gained practical insights, tools and techniques to lead with authenticity, integrity and resilience. Whether seasoned leaders or emerging talents, "Leadership from Within" challenged participants to unlock their full potential and make a positive difference in their schools and beyond. Through a series of interactive exercises, discussions and reflective practices, participants discovered how to cultivate their unique leadership style, harness their inner resources and lead with purpose and authenticity.
- ★ On August 16, 2024, school administrative assistants and office clerks met at the Central Office in Morinville for a professional development session. Facilitated by the Student Information Coordinator, Student Information Specialist and Executive Assistant of Corporate Services, the agenda included updates from Central Services, a review of student records management, custody and guardianship protocols and Alberta Education demographic and enrolment data.
- ★ School Assessment Plans - This is the first year each school is starting with an Assessment Plan (created over the course of the 2023-2024 school year). Each school's Assessment Plan is or will be posted on the school website and Principals will review with all teachers during start-up PD days in August.
- ★ August 23rd afternoon - School Leadership Teams (Principals and Vice Principals) professional development focus was *Let Compassion Lead the Way*. Professional development that explored emotional intelligence to help leaders move from being simply empathetic to compassionate, and ultimately, to practicing wise compassion. Leaders learned how to do difficult things and have hard conversations in a humane way in their role as a leader to help teams thrive at work.

Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning

A superintendent engages in career-long professional learning and ongoing critical reflection, identifying and acting on research-informed opportunities for enhancing leadership, teaching, and learning.

- ★ In July and August, the Superintendent has focused on enhancing her leadership skills and knowledge by reading five insightful books. These books delve into the core aspects of personal and professional development, providing valuable lessons on self-leadership, overcoming self-deception and staying grounded in the face of challenges:
 - "Leadership from Within" by Peter Urs Bender: This book emphasizes that leadership starts with leading oneself. It distinguishes between leaders driven by external pressures and those motivated by a desire to help and grow. The five key steps to personal and professional leadership outlined include knowing oneself, having vision and passion, taking risks, effective communication, and tracking progress and results.
 - "Leadership and Self-Deception: Getting Out of the Box" by The Arbinger Institute: Through an engaging story, this book reveals how individuals often sabotage their own efforts by justifying their actions. It teaches readers to recognize and overcome these self-deceptions to improve relationships and achieve greater happiness.
 - "Be Where Your Feet Are" by Scott O'Neil: Sharing personal experiences and lessons from various influential figures, this book offers seven principles for staying present, grounded, and thriving. It highlights the importance of authenticity, connection, and gratitude, providing a framework for personal growth and resilience in the face of challenges.
 - "How The Way We Talk Can Change The Way We Work - Seven Languages For Transformation" by Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey. Why is the gap so great between our hopes, our intentions, even our decisions and what we are actually able to bring about? Even when we are able to make important changes in our own lives or the groups we lead at work, why are the changes so frequently short-lived and we are soon back to business as usual? What can we do to transform this troubling reality? This book is a carefully guided journey designed to help answer these very questions. The book provides the tools to create a powerful new build-it-yourself mental technology.
 - "The Imperfect Board Member" by Jim Brown. This book unfolds governance concepts into the journey of a fictional CEO as he navigates governance challenges on two boards: the one in his own company and the other a non-profit.

- ★ On August 13, the Superintendent, the Associate Superintendent Human Resources, Chair Gibbons and Trustee Buga attended the 2024 Education Law Day seminar. This in-person event featured an informative discussion on the impacts of construction law, labour and employment, human rights and privacy within the education sector. Topics covered included a review of construction law, a 2023 overview of education law and human rights issues affecting both students and staff.

- ★ The Superintendent attended the CASS/ASBOA Summer Learning Conference from August 14-16, 2024. This conference piloted the CASS Continuing Education Program (CEP) courses. Regulated CASS members who participated earned one course towards their five-year mandatory accreditation requirement of five courses.

During the conference, the Superintendent participated in and was a guest presenter at the "Leading to Support Effective Governance" professional learning course. This course was designed to guide participants through readings, discussions and reflections on their roles and responsibilities in supporting effective governance, a critical competency for superintendents. Through scenarios and practical activities, participants developed concrete actions and applied tactics for developing trustee understanding of governance, communication skills and creating a roadmap for productive collaboration with the Board.

- ★ The Superintendent was invited to participate in an Executive Coaching Program for a period of two months, offered pro bono by an individual completing their Executive Coaching Certification in August 2024. This opportunity allowed the Superintendent to engage in focused leadership development, gaining insights into strategic decision-making, effective communication and personal growth.
- ★ On August 21, the Superintendent attended an online session offered by the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta (PSBAA) regarding the PEP initiative, which stands for Promote, Elevate, and Protect Public School Education in Alberta. PEP is a non-partisan effort aimed at strengthening perceptions of public schools among K-12 stakeholders and Albertans. The initiative focuses on promoting positive views of public schools, elevating their efforts by addressing challenges such as funding inequities and achievement gaps and protecting the public school system from legislative and financial threats. Through advocacy and communication, PEP aims to improve support for public education across the province.

Visionary Leadership

A superintendent engages with the school community in implementing a vision of a preferred future for student success, based on common values and beliefs.

- ★ August 13, 2024, the Division Principal attended a Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Summit initiated by a neighboring school division. The summit included leaders from neighbouring school divisions and was led out by Advanced Learning Partnerships. Topics included: understanding Generative AI, how AI will impact society and education, tool utilization and practical next steps. The team is working closely with other school divisions to ensure consistent sharing and learnings on Generative AI to support student success. What is Generative AI? Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Algorithms that can be used to create new content, including audio, code, images, text, simulations and videos.

- ★ The Communications team played a pivotal role in promoting registration at Guthrie School in June by launching a targeted ‘edgy’ campaign to increase awareness and engagement. Through a variety of channels, including social media, newsletters and community outreach, the team ensured that families were well-informed about the registration process and the unique programs offered at the school. Their efforts created a clear and welcoming message, encouraging more families to consider Guthrie School as an educational choice for their children.

Ensuring First Nations Métis and Inuit Education for all Students

A superintendent establishes the structures and provides the resources necessary for the school community to acquire and apply foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit for the benefit of all students.

- ★ July 10, 2024, the Deputy Superintendent and the Director of Education Planning facilitated the second Indigenous Parent Advisory meeting as a follow-up to the June 26th initial meeting at St. Height’s School. The Division is working towards forming an Indigenous Advisory Council. The purpose of these two meetings was to gather valuable insight and guidance around future learning opportunities and improving schools for Indigenous students and families. Due to the enthusiasm that came out of the first meeting on June 26th, despite it being summer vacation, the group wanted to meet again to keep momentum going. The next meeting will be scheduled after the start up of the school year to ensure we create the opportunity for all stakeholders to participate.
- ★ A collection of “hubs”/websites were designed in the 2023-2024 school year to bring together resources and information around a common theme, need, or team. The Indigenous Education Hub provides resources and guiding documents to teachers and staff. The focus for September is the History and Legacy of Residential Schools with the week of September 23-27, 2024, being designated as Truth and Reconciliation Week.
- ★ Sturgeon Public School teachers continue to indicate advancing their own Indigenous Foundational knowledge and weaving Indigenous ways of knowing throughout their teaching as a top priority.
- ★ This year’s team includes:
 - Director, Education Planning
 - Métis Learning Coach
 - Indigenous Coordinator
 - Indigenous Student Counselor
- ★ Expectations for All Schools:
 - Provide time during school-based staff meetings for TQS 5 and Call to Action.
 - Cohort Leads to share information regarding monthly themes and resources.

- Recognize Sep 23-27, 2024: Truth and Reconciliation Week and Orange Shirt Day - TRC Resources & sign-up, SPS Indigenous Education Hub.
- Recognize Nov 18-22, 2024: Métis Week celebrations.
- Recognize June as National Indigenous Peoples Month.
- Recognize June 21, 2025: National Indigenous Peoples Day.
- Monthly Themes for teaching and learning:
 - September - History and Legacy of Residential Schools
 - October - Indigenous Role Models/Leaders
 - November - Métis Culture and History
 - December - Treaties/Land Agreements
 - January - Inuit Culture and History
 - February - Indigenous Authors and Literature
 - March - Nehiyawak (Cree) Culture
 - April - Connections to the Land
 - May - Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples
 - June - National Indigenous Peoples Month

School Authority Operations and Resources

A superintendent directs school authority operations and strategically allocates resources in the interests of all students and in alignment with the school authority's goals and priorities.

- ★ Over the summer, teams at Central Office worked on relocating the Boardroom and the Morinville Learning Centre (MLC). This change allows the MLC to be situated in its originally desired location which is in the best interests of students.
- ★ On August 28th, a mandatory training day is organized for all Educational Assistants (EAs) at Sturgeon Composite High School. The objective of this training will be to ensure that all EAs have a consistent understanding of their roles and responsibilities and receive the same foundational training. The sessions will cover topics such as bias, universal strategies for regulation, lifts and transfers and communication systems and visuals. Additionally, EA coaches will collaborate with EAs in August to share up-to-date information.
- ★ The Superintendent provides a monthly report - 2024-2025 Superintendent Discretionary Fund - highlighting strategic resource allocation in line with Division goals and priorities to ensure staffing and resources are allocated to schools to support optimal student success.
- ★ In May, Sturgeon Public Schools announced plans to consolidate its digital platforms into a single system by adopting Google Workspace, aiming to streamline operations and enhance collaboration. However, due to concerns that have since emerged, the initiative has been paused. The team will spend the coming school year addressing these issues and refining the transition process, with the goal of implementing the system in the summer of 2025.

This delay ensures that the Division can fully address potential challenges before moving forward with the platform change.

- ★ A temporary staff member has been hired in the Transportation Services Department to provide extra support during their busiest period. For the next month, this new team member will assist with managing the increased workload, ensuring smooth operations and timely responses to transportation needs across the Division. This temporary staffing will enhance the department's efficiency and help maintain a high level of service during this critical time.

Supporting Effective Governance

A superintendent of schools as referred to in the Education Act, as chief executive officer of the board and chief education officer of the school authority, provides the board with information, advice and support required for the fulfillment of its governance role, and reports to the Minister on all matters required of the superintendent as identified in the Education Act and other provincial legislation.

- ★ The Superintendent is supporting the Board Retreat scheduled for September 12 and 13, 2024, by ensuring that the Board has all necessary information, resources and strategic guidance to facilitate effective governance discussions. This support includes preparing relevant reports, advising on key issues and aligning the retreat's agenda with the Division's goals and priorities.
- ★ Over the summer months, the Superintendent and Senior Executives updated Administrative Procedures in response to new legislation from the Government aimed at limiting distractions in the classroom. This work ensures that the Division's procedures align with provincial requirements and supports distraction free learning environments for students in the new school year. A draft policy has also been created for the Board's consideration.
- ★ Throughout the summer months, the Superintendent maintained ongoing communication with the Board of Trustees, providing timely updates whenever new information became available. This included sharing announcements from Alberta Education regarding additional funding opportunities and informing the Board about measures being taken to support students impacted by wildfires. By keeping the Board informed on critical developments, the Superintendent ensured that the Trustees were well-prepared to respond to emerging issues and make informed decisions in alignment with the Division's priorities.

- ★ The Superintendent has created a “Big Rocks” list which includes items under the Board’s Fiduciary responsibility for 2024-2025 school year. These items will be shared and discussed at the August 28, 2024, Committee of the Whole to support the Board in their governance role.

Administration is prepared to respond to questions at the August 28, 2024, Public Board meeting.

Attachment(s):

Not applicable.