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AVAILABILITY

Access new release [PDF] ^[2]

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EXCERPTS

Chapter 5: Education—Evaluating the Early Learning Intensive Support Program

The Ministry of Education commits about a third of its \$13 million in annual federal funding for early years towards addressing the inclusivity of preschool-aged children experiencing disabilities. The Ministry addresses inclusivity through various pilot programs—one key program is its Early Learning Intensive Support Program. Since 2018, the Ministry has made this Program available in existing prekindergarten programs within selected school divisions. This Program is designed to help preschool-aged children requiring intensive supports to receive a good start on early learning and development.

While the Ministry has established a good foundation for future evaluations of its delivery of the Program, it needs to make a number of improvements in order to know whether the Program sufficiently supports the children. It needs to:

- Collect key data for determining whether children in the Program receive sufficient supports to enable them to learn and develop. The collection of key information, such as data about a participating child's progress and transition into kindergarten, can assist the Ministry in determining whether the Program provides children with sufficient support in their early learning and development.
- Regularly collect information about school divisions' actions to address the challenges identified in reviews of whether the Program was operating as expected. By ensuring school divisions appropriately address identified challenges (e.g., availability of specialized professional supports), the Ministry can improve the Program's ability to meet the early learning and development needs of children participating in the Program. Doing so can help improve the children's ability to be successful in school and life.

Effective processes to evaluate the Early Learning Intensive Support Program assists the Ministry in determining whether the Program helps preschool-aged children requiring intensive supports obtain a good start on their learning and development. Systematic and ongoing evaluation also enables the Ministry to identify early adjustments key to improving the Program, such as availability of training materials or funding for educational assistants.

Chapter 11: Saskatoon School Division No. 13—Monitoring Success in Readyng Students for Learning in the Primary Grades When Exiting Kindergarten

Since 2014, the Saskatchewan education sector established an early learning goal associated with kindergarten students' readiness to learn. The sector recognizes success in readyng kindergarten students for learning prepares them for future academic success.

In 2018–19, 79 percent of kindergarten students in Saskatchewan publicly funded schools were assessed as at an appropriate level of development; the attainment of self-declared First Nations, Métis, and Inuit kindergarten was significantly lower at 56 percent. This is below the provincial goal of 90 percent of students exiting kindergarten being ready for learning in the primary grades.

Saskatoon School Division No. 13 is one of three divisions with more than 1,500 kindergarten students each year. The percentage of the readiness of its kindergarten students to learn is similar to the provincial average. While it has taken many positive steps and actions, Saskatoon Public needs to do more to monitor its success in readyng students for learning in the primary grades when exiting kindergarten.

Saskatoon Public needs written expectations about the minimum frequency of assessing kindergarten students using standard assessment tools in all key areas of learning and development, and where teachers use alternate assessment tools, confirm their suitability.

Kindergarten teachers did not always assess students at least twice a year using standard assessment or suitable tools. In addition, the Division could not explain why some kindergarten students did not participate in required reassessments. Frequent standard assessments provide teachers with essential data about a student's progress—data that enables identifying and making instructional and other changes to help a student succeed.

Saskatoon Public needs to give kindergarten teachers additional support for using key instructional practices. Teachers did not consistently use key instructional practices as expected. For example, they did not always include students identified as having problems in

learning in their Sprint cycles.¹ Key instructional practices (like Sprint cycles) are used to improve student readiness in a focused way, particularly for those students identified as having problems in learning the subject matter (like numeracy, or word sounds). These are used in addition to normal classroom instruction.

Saskatoon Public needs to routinely analyze kindergarten assessment data to identify trends and common areas of struggle across all schools in the Division. Present data analysis is limited. Robust data analysis helps identify root causes at certain schools or division-wide gaps.

Related link: More thorough evaluation needed for Sask. early learning supports: provincial auditor ^[4]

Region: Saskatchewan ^[5]

Tags: children with special needs ^[6]

inclusion ^[7]

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