



## Provincial Auditor's 2022 Report—Volume 1: Improvements Needed to Boost Sun West's Distance Learning Centre Students' Course Completion Rates

Sun West School Division needs to establish course completion-rate targets and improve some engagement processes for students learning solely online

**REGINA—June 7, 2022:** In her *2022 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 8, Provincial Auditor Tara Clemett made seven recommendations after examining Sun West School Division's processes to support students in completing Grades 10–12 distance education courses.

Provincially, between 2017–19, there were 13,000 Grades 10–12 students on average registered in distance education courses, which doubled in 2021. Sun West has the highest proportion of Grades 10–12 distance-education course registrations compared to the other individual distance education schools in Saskatchewan with 31 staff directly involved in teaching online high school courses. More than 2,100 students registered in distance education courses at the Distance Learning Centre take an average of three courses per year.

“Although Sun West utilizes supports such as student orientation, graduation plans, and ongoing communication to help students successfully complete distance education courses, it has a few areas to improve,” said Tara Clemett. “In setting, and striving to achieve, course completion targets, monitoring timeliness of teachers grading coursework, and establishing periodic course reviews and updates, Sun West may better support students to graduate from high school.”

Sun West has not set course completion targets for its students learning solely online (60% of Distance Learning Centre students). This group of students represent the largest portion of Sun West's distance education students. Its average distance-education course completion rate for the 2020–21 school year was 61% for all distance education students, including those who take some online courses to supplement their in-person classes.

Course completion rates directly influence graduation rates. While Sun West's divisional goal was that by June 2021, 60% of its distance education students will graduate within three years of starting Grade 10, the on-time (e.g., 2021: 26%) and extended-time (e.g., 2021: 52%) graduation rates for Distance Learning Centre students lag behind their in-person learning counterparts, and did not meet the 60% goal.

Sun West also needs to:

- Improve its IT system to help monitor the timeliness of grading coursework to identify those teachers who are critically behind in grading.
- Follow its student inactivity phasing process to engage students who are behind in coursework, and to help increase successful course completion.
- Implement a course development policy that includes frequency of course reviews and updates. Sun West last updated around 19 Grades 10–12 courses between four and 14 years ago. Teachers use online courses year after year.
- Assess the need for ongoing, focused professional development for teachers educating students in a distance education environment.

The full Provincial Auditor's *2022 Report – Volume 1* available online at [auditor.sk.ca](http://auditor.sk.ca).

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