

## Chapter 29

### Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81 – English as an Additional Language Programming

#### 1.0 MAIN POINTS

This chapter reports the results of our audit of processes Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81 (Regina Catholic, Division) uses to provide English as an Additional Language (EAL) programming to support the academic success of immigrant<sup>1</sup> Kindergarten to Grade 8 students.

English-language proficiency is a key factor in students' academic success. The longer it takes students to learn English, the more they may fall behind in school.

Regina Catholic had, except in the following areas, effective processes to provide English as an Additional Language programming to support the academic success of immigrant Kindergarten to Grade 8 students. It needs to do the following:

- › Annually reassess its estimate for Kindergarten to Grade 8 EAL student enrolment
- › Rationalize the number of Kindergarten to Grade 8 EAL teachers required for its EAL program
- › Periodically analyze the results of the Kindergarten to Grade 8 EAL program

In addition, it needs to give its Board of Education periodic reports on the success of the Kindergarten to Grade 8 EAL program.

#### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

English-language proficiency of immigrants and their families is a key factor in not only attaining Saskatchewan educational goals<sup>2</sup> but in enabling immigrants and their families to contribute positively to Saskatchewan. Students new to Canada may struggle with language barriers that can hinder their academic success. The academic success of students has a significant impact on society and the economy. Future educational and employment opportunities of students who leave school before graduating from Grade 12 are limited.<sup>3</sup>

The education sector recognizes it plays a key role in helping immigrant students to develop English-language proficiency. *The Education Act, 1995 (Act)* sets out the duties of a board of education. These duties include approving and providing educational courses<sup>4</sup> to students in the school division. Under the Act, English is to be the language of instruction in schools, except where another language is specified (s. 180).

<sup>1</sup> Immigrants include all residents who were not born in Canada. There are two types of these residents: non-permanent and permanent residents. Non-permanent residents include temporary residents and international students.

<sup>2</sup> *The Ministry of Education Action Plan – English as an Additional Language and Immigration*, (2011), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> [www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Staffingstudents/Keeping-kids-in-school-At-a-glance/Keeping-kids-in-school-Preventing-dropouts.html](http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Staffingstudents/Keeping-kids-in-school-At-a-glance/Keeping-kids-in-school-Preventing-dropouts.html) (3 June 2016).

<sup>4</sup> The Ministry of Education sets out curriculum pertaining to courses of study with respect to Kindergarten and Grades 1–12 (Act, s. 3 (2)(c)).



Educational courses must include English-language programming, as needed, to enable students to be proficient in the English language.

## 2.1 Growing Enrolments in EAL Programming

Studies have found that EAL students are consistently over-represented in dropout statistics and failure rates.<sup>5</sup> The longer it takes students to learn English, the more they fall behind in school, which impacts their overall academic success.

To succeed in school, immigrant students need support in adapting to a Canadian curriculum, school environment, and culture. The *Education Sector Strategic Plan's* targets (e.g., achievement of established reading levels by Grade 3) focus on academic achievement during students' early years to help improve overall graduation rates.<sup>6</sup>

The *Ministry of Education Action Plan – English as an Additional Language and Immigration* highlights the role of the education sector in meeting the needs of immigrants and their families and in particular, building the education-sector capacity in EAL programs. It outlines key actions of the Ministry of Education (Ministry) to strengthen opportunities for learning English as an Additional Language.

As set out in **Figure 1**, the Ministry provides school divisions with various supports for EAL programming. EAL programming in provincially-funded schools helps build immigrant students' English-language proficiency.

**Figure 1 – Ministry of Education EAL Supports**

- The Ministry provides school divisions with the following supports for EAL programming:
- › Funds for the initial EAL assessment of immigrant students
  - › Guidance and support documents in the areas of reading and writing; these are aligned with the Common Framework of Reference (CFR)<sup>A</sup>
  - › Demographic data and related interpretation designed to inform local and provincial decision-making about EAL supports, resources, and funding

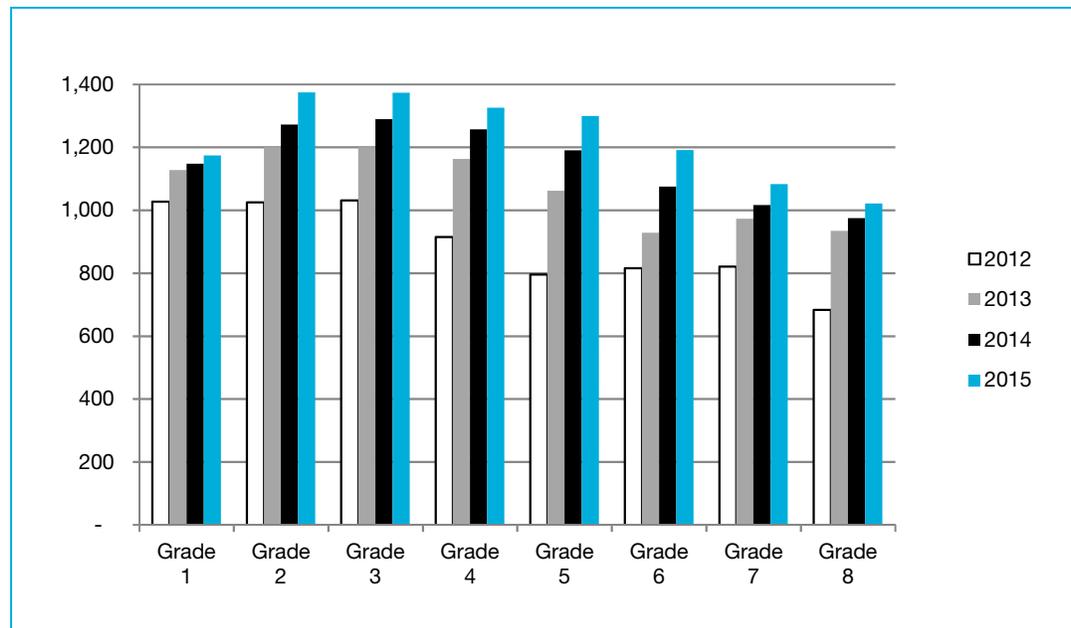
Source: Adapted from *The Ministry of Education Action Plan – English as an Additional Language and Immigration* and *Ministry of Education Annual Report for 2014-15*, p. 19.

<sup>A</sup> The Common Framework of Reference is a criterion-referenced performance scale that supports educators as they work with a growing demographic of learners that require EAL supports.

In 2015, almost 10,000 students were registered in Grades 1 to 8 EAL programming offered in Saskatchewan provincially-funded schools. From 2012 to 2015, overall enrolments of students registered in Grades 1 to 8 EAL programming increased by 38%. As reflected in **Figure 2**, enrolment has increased for each grade with the most significant increases in Grades 2, 5, and 6.

<sup>5</sup> <http://atkinsonfoundation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/class-struggles-public-education-and-the-new-canadian.pdf> (5 January 2016).

<sup>6</sup> The *Education Sector Strategic Plan* is a sector-wide strategic plan for the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 education sector that is intended to bring coherence and alignment to the priorities of the Government, the Ministry, the sector, and the classroom.

**Figure 2—Number of Saskatchewan Students Registered in EAL Programming<sup>A</sup>**

Source: Ministry of Education – Student Data System as of September 30, 2015.

<sup>A</sup> Total Grades 1 to 8 Saskatchewan students registered in EAL programming during 2012-2015 were as follows: 2012: 7,115; 2013: 8,587; 2014: 9,222; 2015: 9,841.

## 2.2 Significant Demand for EAL Programming in Regina Catholic

Regina Catholic's mission is to work with the community and the local church to provide a quality Catholic education that fosters academic excellence and the development of informed, responsible citizens.<sup>7</sup>

At August 31, 2015, Regina Catholic had net financial assets of \$16.8 million and tangible capital assets of \$39.1 million.<sup>8</sup> In 2015-16, Regina Catholic had budgeted revenues of \$110.9 million (2014-15: actual \$116 million) and budgeted expenditures of \$110.9 million (2014-15: actual \$107 million). It planned to spend \$83.8 million on instruction (2014-15: actual expenses \$80.0 million).<sup>9,10</sup> In addition, in 2015-16, the Division planned to spend about \$1.2 million on EAL instruction and support staff and \$70 thousand on other EAL resources (e.g., classroom materials, software, professional development).<sup>11</sup>

Regina Catholic operates 29 schools located in Regina. It is responsible for educating about 11,000 students including almost 2,800 EAL students.<sup>12,13</sup> Regina Catholic employs over 640 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers including 11 FTE EAL teaching

<sup>7</sup> Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81, *Annual Report 2014-15*, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81, *Annual Report 2014-15*, Audited Financial Statements, p. 54. 2015-16 budgeted information not available for net financial assets and tangible capital assets.

<sup>9</sup> Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81, 2015/16 Budget, dated June 1, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81, *Annual Report 2014-15*, p. 55.

<sup>11</sup> Adapted from information provided by Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81.

<sup>12</sup> Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81, *Annual Report 2014-15*, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81, EAL Enrolment Data for May 2016.



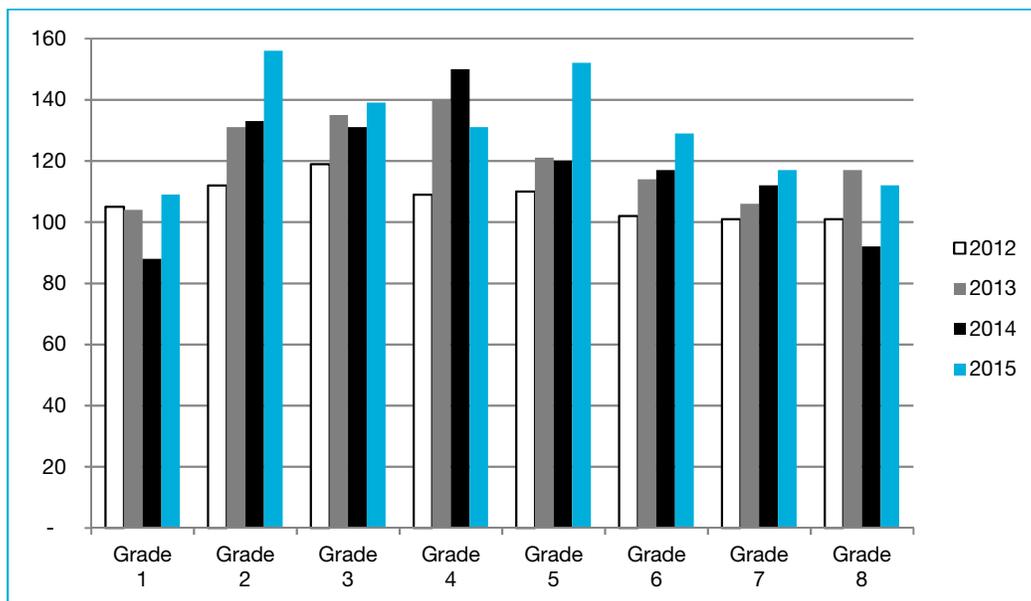
positions.<sup>14</sup> At the end of the 2015-16 school year, 72% of the Division’s EAL students were in Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 8.<sup>15</sup>

Regina Catholic offers EAL programs at each of its 23 elementary schools. Providing EAL programs at each elementary school enables students to learn English and curriculum at their neighbourhood school and in their local community.<sup>16</sup>

Regina Catholic informs immigrant families about its EAL programs through the operation of the Newcomer Welcome Centre in partnership with two other school divisions<sup>17</sup> and the Regina Open Door Society.<sup>18</sup>

From 2012 to 2015, enrolment in Regina Catholic’s EAL programming had increased by 22% as compared to the provincial increase of 38%. As reflected in **Figure 3**, Regina Catholic’s EAL programming enrolment has increased for each grade with the most significant increases in Grades 2 and 5.

**Figure 3—Number of Regina Catholic Students Registered in EAL Programming<sup>A</sup>**



Source: Ministry of Education – Student Data System as of September 30, 2015.

<sup>A</sup> Total Grades 1 to 8 Regina Catholic students registered in EAL programming during 2012-2015 were as follows: 2012: 859; 2013: 968; 2014: 943; 2015: 1,045.

Academic achievement during elementary school is essential to student success in high school. Not having effective processes to provide EAL programming to immigrant students in Kindergarten to Grade 8 places students at greater risk of not achieving their academic potential. Students may then be unable to effectively contribute to society and ultimately the economy of Saskatchewan as they may have limited employment opportunities.

<sup>14</sup> Adapted from information provided by Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81.

<sup>15</sup> Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81, EAL Enrolment Data for May 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81, *English as an Additional Language Brochure*.

<sup>17</sup> Regina School Division No. 4 and Conseil scolaire francoskois.

<sup>18</sup> The Regina Open Door Society is a non-profit organization that provides settlement and integration services to refugees and immigrants to help them transition to life in Regina.

### 3.0 AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, CRITERIA, AND CONCLUSION

The objective of this audit was to assess the effectiveness of Regina Catholic's processes for the period April 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016, to provide EAL programming to support the academic success of immigrant Kindergarten to Grade 8 students.

For the purposes of this audit, EAL programming is designed to help students whose first language is not English develop their English-language skills to enable them to succeed in school. We did not assess whether EAL students received sufficient EAL support.

To conduct this audit, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook – Assurance*. To evaluate Regina Catholic's processes, we used criteria based on our related work, reviews of literature including reports of other auditors, and consultations with management. Regina Catholic's management agreed with the criteria (see **Figure 4**).

We examined relevant legislation, Ministry and sector-wide guidance, and Regina Catholic's guidance and documentation related to EAL programming. We interviewed staff at Regina Catholic's Division Office and at six schools (i.e., superintendent, EAL consultant, principals, EAL teachers, classroom teachers). We tested a sample of EAL student files (e.g., cumulative records).<sup>19</sup> We worked with Regina Catholic to respect the confidentiality of student information throughout our procedures.

**Figure 4—Audit Criteria**

- 1. Forecast needs for English as an Additional Language programming**
  - 1.1 Determine program needs (e.g., levels of proficiency, nature of needs and supports, numbers of students with English-language needs)
  - 1.2 Identify resources available (e.g., qualified teachers, funding, tools, supports)
  - 1.3 Analyze the gap between existing resource capacity and program needs
- 2. Implement English as an Additional Language programming**
  - 2.1 Design English-language programming to address gaps
  - 2.2 Set English-language proficiency benchmarks (e.g., amount of time for students to achieve proficiency)
  - 2.3 Use consistent methods to assess English-language proficiency (e.g., standardized measurement processes)
  - 2.4 Monitor progress of students' proficiency relative to benchmarks
  - 2.5 Take action when student progress is not achieved (e.g., additional resources, supports)
- 3. Monitor delivery of English as an Additional Language programming**
  - 3.1 Assess delivery of the programs (e.g., obtain feedback, assess tools and supports used)
  - 3.2 Adjust programs as necessary
  - 3.3 Communicate results (i.e., senior management, Ministry, parents)

**We concluded that for the period April 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016, Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81 had, except in the following areas, effective processes to provide English as an Additional Language programming to support the academic success of immigrant Kindergarten to Grade 8 students.**

<sup>19</sup> Cumulative record is a file that compiles information about a student from year to year that is maintained by the schools the student attends from Kindergarten to Grade 12.



**Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81 needs to:**

- › **Annually reassess its estimate for Kindergarten to Grade 8 EAL student enrolment**
- › **Rationalize the number of Kindergarten to Grade 8 EAL teachers required for its EAL program**
- › **Periodically analyze results of the Kindergarten to Grade 8 EAL program**

**In addition, it needs to give its Board of Education periodic reports on the success of the Kindergarten to Grade 8 EAL program.**

## 4.0 KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, we set out the criteria (expectations) in *italics* and our key findings along with related recommendations.

### 4.1 Improved Forecasting and Analysis Required to Inform EAL Program Decisions

*We expected that Regina Catholic would determine program needs (e.g., levels of proficiency, nature of needs and supports, numbers of students with English-language needs). We expected Regina Catholic to identify resources available (e.g., qualified teachers, funding, tools, supports). We also expected the Division to analyze the gap between existing resource capacity and program needs.*

#### 4.1.1 EAL Program Forecasting Needs Revision

##### **Determining EAL Students' English-Language Proficiency and Current Needs**

When immigrant families register their children in a Regina Catholic school, Division staff assess the English-language proficiency of each child at the Newcomer Welcome Centre using the Common Framework of Reference (CFR) (see **Figure 5**). The CFR includes six levels of proficiency. See **Section 4.2** for a further description of the CFR methodology.

##### **Figure 5—CFR Levels: English-Language Proficiency Benchmarks**

- A1.1** – Student can understand and use very basic phrases to satisfy personal needs.
- A1.2** – Student can interact in a simple way provided the other person helps them by talking slowly and clearly.
- A2.1** – Student can understand basic information relevant to personal and family needs.
- A2.2** – Student can describe in simple language his/her background and interests.
- B1.1** – Student can understand the main points about familiar topics.
- B1.2** – Student can describe experiences and give explanations for opinions.

Source: Adapted from *A Guide to Using the Common Framework of Reference (CFR) with Learners of English as an Additional Language*, p. 4.

Division staff indicated that they also interview the students' families upon registration to help identify EAL supports required. For student files of 39 EAL students we sampled,

the Division measured each student's initial English-language proficiency using this methodology.

The Division's EAL program needs are driven, in part, by the number of EAL students and their English-language proficiency level. We found EAL teachers assess and track each student's CFR levels and the type of support provided throughout the school year. We also found EAL teachers reported this information monthly to the Division, along with enrolments, by school, on standardized forms. At the end of each school year, the Division updates the Ministry's Student Data System<sup>20</sup> with EAL students' CFR levels.

We found that Regina Catholic does not forecast individual EAL students' progress to English-language proficiency because of the following. The Division recognizes each student's EAL progress depends on many factors, including the student's literacy in their first language, the number of years they have attended school, and the pace of individual student progress throughout the school year. Not forecasting individual EAL student progress is consistent with best practice. Literature indicates some students may take between five to seven years to become proficient in an additional language.<sup>21</sup>

### **Forecasting EAL Student Enrolment Not Producing Reliable Estimates**

The Division informally estimates future EAL Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) student enrolment in conjunction with its forecasting of overall student enrolment. To forecast overall student enrolment, the Division engages an external consultant to provide it with predicted trends in overall future student growth.

To estimate future EAL K-12 student enrolment, the Division considers historical changes in EAL student enrolment, population data from external parties (e.g., Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program, Sask Trends Monitor), and local school administrator knowledge (e.g., the number of students enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten). The Division noted it revisits its forecast assumptions at the end of each school year. It also noted that it finds forecasting EAL student enrolment challenging. For instance, an increasing immigrant population in Regina does not always mean families register their children in Regina Catholic schools.

We found Regina Catholic informally forecasts increases in K-12 EAL student enrolment of about 300 to 350 EAL students each year. The Division noted that it determined this range based on analyzing its year-end enrolment reports for the last three to five years.

We found the Division did not revise its estimated range of increases in enrolment even though significant differences existed between its estimated and actual enrollment increases. As shown in **Figure 6**, for the last four years, the Division's estimated annual increase remained unchanged at between 300 to 350 students. Over the same period, we found that for two of those four years, the actual year-over-year increases in EAL student enrolment was over 30% higher than its estimate, and was 9% higher for one other year.

<sup>20</sup> The Student Data System is a database used for the administration and reporting of Kindergarten to Grade 12 student demographics, enrolment, registration, and marks.

<sup>21</sup> Ministry of Education, *A Guide to Using the Common Framework of Reference (CFR) with Learners of English as an Additional Language*, (2013), p. 11.

**Figure 6—Regina Catholic’s EAL Student Enrolment Estimate and Actuals**

School Year	EAL Enrolment Increase Estimate (K-12)	Actual EAL Enrolment Increase (K-12)	Difference <sup>A</sup>	% Difference
2012-13	300-350	486	136	38.9%
2013-14	300-350	477	127	36.3%
2014-15	300-350	382	32	9.1%
2015-16	300-350	305	-	-

Source: Adapted from information provided by Regina Catholic. The Division does not separately forecast EAL enrolment for Kindergarten to Grade 8.

<sup>A</sup> Difference between actual increase and top of the range of estimated increase.

Reliable estimates of student enrolment would provide Regina Catholic with better information to help it determine resources (teachers and other supports) needed for EAL programming. Without reliable forecasts of students, it may not assign the right amount of resources to provide EAL students with appropriate support.

- 1. We recommend that Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81 annually reassess its estimate for Kindergarten to Grade 8 English as an Additional Language student enrolment.**

## 4.1.2 Determination of EAL Teaching Resources Not Documented

### Credentials for EAL Teachers Set

Regina Catholic requires EAL teachers to have a teaching degree, and preferably be specialized in teaching EAL (e.g., hold a Master’s degree, specialization in linguistics, speak a second language). It provides Regina Catholic EAL teachers with training to teach EAL (e.g., using the Teaching English as a Second Language [TESL] and Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol [SIOP] methodologies).<sup>22</sup> We found that the Division’s Kindergarten to Grade 8 (K-8) EAL teachers each received training in using SIOP.

### Basis of the Number of Teachers Assigned to EAL Program Not Documented

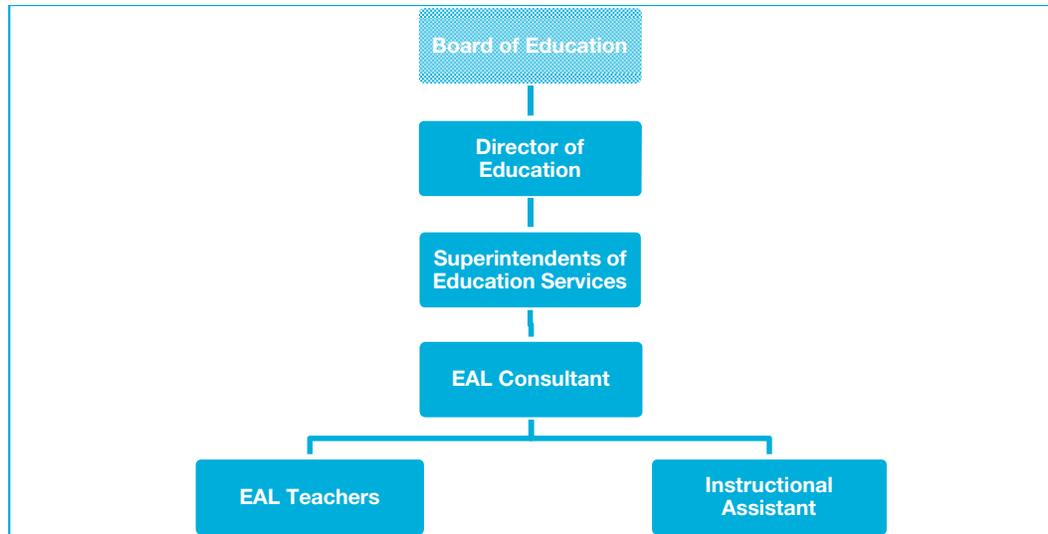
Regina Catholic identifies resources available for its EAL programs through its annual budgeting process. During its budget process, it decides on the number of EAL staff, nature and extent of professional development for those staff, and other EAL resources (e.g., computer programs, books).

During the 2015-16 school year, the Division had an EAL consultant, 11 FTE EAL teachers (7.5 FTEs assigned to Kindergarten to Grade 8), and an instructional assistant to deliver EAL programs (see **Figure 7**).

<sup>22</sup> See **Figure 10** for description of TESL and SIOP models.

Regina Catholic K-8 EAL teachers work in multiple schools to provide support to EAL students in the Division. They provide EAL students assessed at CFR levels at or below B1.2 with direct support (e.g., in-class support, pull-out support).<sup>23</sup>

**Figure 7—Regina Catholic’s EAL Organizational Chart**



Source: Adapted from information provided by Regina Catholic.

As shown in **Figure 8**, 7.5 FTE EAL teaching positions for the 2015-16 school year<sup>24</sup> reflected an increase of 1.4 FTEs from the 2014-15 school year—an increase of 23%. This increase reduced the total EAL student-to-teacher ratio from 299:1 at the end of the 2014-15 school year to 242:1 at the beginning of the 2015-16 school year. Over the same period, it reduced the ratio of EAL students requiring direct support to teachers from 158:1 to 129:1.<sup>25</sup>

Also as shown in **Figure 8**, from the end of the 2014-15 school year to the end of the 2015-16 school year, Regina Catholic increased its total number of Kindergarten to Grade 8 teachers by 9.6 FTE (i.e., 3.4%). Division officials advised us that the Division did not increase its overall teaching staff to accommodate the increased need for EAL teachers. Rather the Division may reassign existing classroom teaching positions to EAL teaching positions as necessary. The Division acknowledged that increasing the number of EAL teachers by reducing the number of classroom teachers increases the student-teacher ratio in classrooms.<sup>26</sup>

Regina Catholic noted that it had identified the need for additional EAL teachers for the 2015-16 school year based on increases in the number of EAL students over the 2014-15 school year, and its forecasted increase of EAL students for the 2015-16 school year.

We found this consistent with the increases in total number of EAL students and number of students requiring direct EAL supports as shown in **Figure 8**. As illustrated in **Figure 3**, each year since 2012, EAL student enrolment has increased at Regina Catholic.

<sup>23</sup> Per *A Guide to Using the Common Framework of Reference (CFR) with Learners of English as an Additional Language*, students assessed above CFR level of B1.2 can work more independently on improving English-language proficiency.

<sup>24</sup> The school year runs from September to June. Regina Catholic uses the number of EAL students at the end of June as the basis of the start of its next school year.

<sup>25</sup> Regina Catholic advised us that it does not base the number of teachers allocated to the EAL program on EAL student/teacher ratios.

<sup>26</sup> Regina Catholic noted that increasing the number of EAL teachers may also reduce the number of support staff (e.g., learning resource teachers, counsellors) available.



However, as noted in **Section 4.1.1**, we found the Division often underestimated the annual increase in the number of EAL students.

While Regina Catholic had increased resources for EAL programming in the 2015-16 school year to help address increases in the number of EAL students, it did not assign resources to make sure all EAL students assessed as requiring EAL support would receive it.

As shown in **Figure 9**, at the beginning of the 2015-16 school year, 145 K-8 EAL students assessed as requiring support did not receive it (i.e., 14.9% of total K-8 EAL students). At the beginning of the 2015-16 school year, Regina Catholic did not develop specific plans to address the needs of these students. As described below, the Division reassigns EAL teachers among its schools during the year.

Also, the Division was unable to provide us its analysis or explain to us its basis for the number of EAL teachers, how it determined the increase of 1.4 FTE in EAL teachers for the 2015-16 school year, or how it determined whether its existing EAL teacher complement of 7.5 FTE was sufficient.

**Figure 8—Regina Catholic Kindergarten to Grade 8 EAL Student-Teacher Ratios**

School Year	K-8 Teachers FTE	EAL K-8 Teachers FTE	Total # of K-8 EAL Students	EAL Student-Teacher Ratio	# of K-8 EAL Students Requiring Direct Support	EAL Student Requiring Direct Support-Teacher Ratio
End of 2014-15 school year	281.1	6.1	1,825	299:1	961	158:1
Beginning of 2015-16 school year	291.2	7.5	1,816	242:1	970	129:1
End of 2015-16 school year	290.7	7.5	2,002	267:1	1,009	135:1
% change (between end of school years)	3.4%	23.0%	9.7%		5.0%	

Source: Adapted from information provided by Regina Catholic.

Typically, Regina Catholic does not change the number of teachers it has assigned to the EAL program during the school year. As shown in **Figure 8**, the number of EAL teachers assigned during the 2015-16 school year remained constant at 7.5 FTE.

Regina Catholic knows the need for EAL programs continually changes throughout the school year because of its continuous intake of students and changes to individual EAL students' English-language proficiency. To monitor these changes, the Division required EAL teachers to submit (using standardized forms) monthly information. Monthly reports included information about enrolments, types of support provided, and EAL students' CFR levels, by school. Each month, the Division tracked the total number of EAL students by school, number of EAL students that teachers had identified as requiring direct EAL support, and number of those students not receiving direct EAL support.

As shown in **Figure 9**, during the 2015-16 school year, the Division's K-8 EAL student enrolment increased by 10% (i.e., 186 students) with a 4% increase in the number of EAL students requiring direct support.

To respond to changing EAL program needs, the Division uses its monitoring of actual EAL student enrolment to reassign EAL teachers among its schools during the school year.

We found, during the 2015-16 school year, for three elementary schools, the Division increased each school's EAL teacher time by a half day. These schools had the following changes to the number of their EAL students from the beginning of the school year:

- › One school had an increase of eight EAL students
- › Another school had an increase of three EAL students
- › The third school had no change in the number of EAL students

To achieve the increase in EAL teacher time assigned to each of these schools, the Division reduced EAL teacher time in a school with a decreased number of EAL students since the start of the school year, and reduced EAL teacher administration time. Regina Catholic indicated that it reassigns EAL teacher time based on the needs of EAL students (e.g., English-language proficiency). The Division was unable to provide us with analysis to support its EAL teaching reassignment decisions during the 2015-16 school year.

**Figure 9—Number of Regina Catholic Kindergarten to Grade 8 EAL Students Not Receiving Direct Support**

School Year	Total Number of EAL K-8 Students	# of EAL K-8 Students Requiring Direct Support	# of EAL K-8 Students Requiring but Not Receiving Direct Support	% of K-8 EAL Students Requiring but Not Receiving Direct Support
End of 2014-15 school year	1,825	961	270	28.1%
Beginning of 2015-16 school year	1,816	970	145	14.9%
End of 2015-16 school year	2,002	1,009	96	9.5%
Change between end of school years	177	48	(174)	
% change between end of school years	9.7%	5.0%	(64.4)%	
Change during 2015-16 school year	186	39	(49)	
% change during 2015-16 school year	10.2%	4.0%	(33.8)%	

Source: Adapted from information provided by Regina Catholic.

The Division kept its Board of Education (Board) aware, throughout the school year, of the number of EAL students requiring but not receiving direct support. As shown in **Figure 9**, while this percentage improved throughout the 2015-16 school year, at the end of the 2015-16 school year, 96 K-8 EAL students assessed as requiring direct support (i.e., 9.5% of total K-8 EAL students) did not receive such support. At June 30 2016, Regina Catholic did not have specific plans to address the needs of these



students. In October 2016, the Division indicated that it plans to offer SIOP training to classroom teachers at schools with increased EAL student enrolment.

Not having sufficient EAL teachers could result in EAL students not progressing in their English-language acquisition. The longer it takes EAL students to learn English, the harder it is for them to succeed in their academic studies, which can impact when and if they graduate.

2. **We recommend that Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81 rationalize the number of Kindergarten to Grade 8 EAL teachers required for its English as an Additional Language program.**

### Other EAL Resources Determined

The Division's EAL Consultant determines the Division's other EAL resources used to deliver its EAL programs (see **Figure 10**) through discussions with teachers and research (e.g., networking with other school divisions).

**Figure 10—Other EAL Resources**

**EAL Program Manual** – includes descriptions of Common Framework of Reference levels, roles and responsibilities for EAL staff, and EAL program-related forms (e.g., EAL student support plan). EAL staff can use this manual to help design EAL programming.

**Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL)** – internationally recognized certification for teaching English as an Additional Language.

**Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model** – methodology of teaching EAL students to help deliver the curriculum while they develop English-language proficiency. The Division trains its EAL teachers and some classroom teachers on this methodology. The SIOP Model is used by the four major urban school divisions in Saskatchewan.

**Settlement Support Workers in Schools (SSWIS)** – SSWIS is an outreach program co-ordinated by the Regina Open Door Society that operates in schools to help immigrant students and their families settle into their school and community.

**EAL Library** – is located at the Division office and includes bilingual dictionaries and bilingual books that EAL teachers can provide to EAL students to help improve English-language proficiency.

Source: Adapted from information provided by Regina Catholic.

## 4.2 Individual Student EAL Programming Designed to Achieve Benchmark Level of English-language Proficiency and Division Tracks Progress

*We expected that Regina Catholic would do the following. It would design English-language programming to address gaps in English-language proficiency levels of individual students. It would set overall English-language proficiency benchmarks. It would use consistent methods to assess individual students' English-language proficiency. We also expected Regina Catholic would monitor progress of students' proficiency relative to benchmarks and take action when student progress is not achieved.*

Regina Catholic uses two methodologies to assess the English-language proficiency of students whose first language is not English—the Common Framework of Reference (CFR) and the Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey – Revised test (Woodcock-Muñoz test).

- › CFR is based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages, first officially published in 2001 after three decades of research on language teaching, learning, and assessment.<sup>27</sup> The CEFR has validity and reliability as a global scale of reference; many countries around the world use CEFR. In January 2010, the Council of Ministers of Education in Canada recommended use of the CEFR as a reference tool for languages in Canada.<sup>28</sup> As shown in **Figure 5**, the CFR uses six levels of proficiency.
- › The Woodcock-Muñoz test measures proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and language acquisition. Division staff can use the Woodcock-Muñoz test for further assessing English-language proficiency, making modifications to EAL student support plans, and investigating learning difficulties.<sup>29</sup>

The Division's EAL Program Manual sets out a number of expectations for personnel involved in the design, delivery, and monitoring of EAL programming. The Division expects EAL teachers to:

- › Design EAL programming specific to individual EAL student needs using guidance from the manual along with the results of EAL students' assessments.
- › Regularly monitor student progress relative to benchmarks and student's peers, using approved assessment methodologies, and report student's progress (e.g., report cards) to students and parents.
- › Modify support provided to students depending on the student's progress (or lack of progress). Typical modifications include providing pull-out support (e.g., EAL teacher provides student with support outside of the classroom), or offering small group reading programs.
- › Create student-specific EAL support plans at the end of each school year to document the EAL supports students received during the year, and help guide the support that may be required in the upcoming year.
- › Maintain a file for each EAL student for inclusion in the student's cumulative record (student file). Per the Ministry of Education's *Student Cumulative Record Guidelines*, student files are to include results of assessments that inform program planning for students. This would include EAL assessments (i.e., CFR, Woodcock-Muñoz test) and EAL support plans.

We found that Regina Catholic has set a desired overall English-language proficiency benchmark for each EAL student based on one of its two English-language proficiency methodologies—a benchmark of CFR level B1.2. This benchmark is consistent with guidance provided by the Ministry.

<sup>27</sup> Ministry of Education, *A Guide to Using the Common Framework of Reference (CFR) with Learners of English as an Additional Language*, (2013), p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Woodcock-Muñoz tests are to be administered not less than six months apart.



EAL teachers monitor students with CFR levels above B1.2 to determine whether they require additional support as the student progresses through school. It intends to provide students with a CFR level at or below B1.2 with direct support. As noted in **Section 4.1.2**, in practice, the Division does not provide direct EAL support to all students assessed as requiring it (i.e., students with a CFR level at or below B1.2). Regina Catholic was unable to explain to us how it was decided which students were not provided with direct support.

For student files of 39 EAL students we tested:

- ▶ The Division measured each student's initial English-language proficiency using the CFR, and most files included evidence of Woodcock-Muñoz assessments. We found that EAL teachers maintain a spreadsheet to track current English-language proficiency and the supports provided to these EAL students.
- ▶ Four files did not contain a current EAL support plan, but in each case, the individual student's CFR level and the type of support provided (e.g., in-class support) was tracked on the monthly reports EAL teachers prepared and provided to the Division Office.
- ▶ Each file contained information showing the assessing and monitoring of student progress (e.g., report cards, EAL progress reports, CFR assessments).
- ▶ Each file included evidence of modifications (e.g., pull-out support, small group reading programs) made to EAL student support plans, where applicable (e.g., modifications provided to EAL students where their CFR level did not increase).
- ▶ Each file showed Regina Catholic regularly communicated EAL students' progress and results to students and parents through report cards (distributed in November, March, and June) and letters home to parents.

Thereby, based on the student files we tested, Regina Catholic did a reasonable job of providing EAL programming to individual students it provided with direct support.

### **4.3 Analysis of EAL Program Results Needed**

*We expected that Regina Catholic would assess delivery of the programs (e.g., obtain feedback, assess tools and supports used) and adjust programs as necessary. It would also communicate results of the program.*

Regina Catholic uses primarily informal mechanisms to assess the delivery of its EAL programs.

We found that the EAL Consultant facilitated regular meetings with EAL teachers including discussions about programming and feedback about resources (e.g., library resources, translation software). The Division told us it also obtained informal feedback from principals and EAL teachers about the EAL program (e.g., discussions at monthly administration meetings). Division staff we interviewed felt that more EAL teaching time would benefit students, but felt the EAL program was effective given the number of EAL teachers assigned.

The Division last conducted a survey of school administrators to obtain feedback on the EAL program in 2010. At June 2016, it did not have plans for another survey.

The Division has made significant changes to its EAL program since 2010 and its EAL student enrolment has grown significantly since then. For example, as shown in **Figure 3**, from 2012 to 2015, enrolment in Regina Catholic's EAL programming increased by 22%.

We found that, each month, the Board received information on EAL student enrolment (e.g., number of EAL students per school, number of students receiving and not receiving needed support).

In January of 2016, it received information about EAL staffing comparisons among the four major urban school divisions in Saskatchewan.<sup>30</sup> This comparison indicated Regina Catholic had a higher EAL student to teacher ratio<sup>31</sup> than the other school divisions. The report also indicated Regina Catholic management did not know how comparable the responsibilities of EAL teaching positions were across the divisions (e.g., whether EAL teachers of other divisions had responsibilities in addition to delivering EAL programming).

While the Division expects individual students to succeed, it has not set overall expectations or goals specifically for its EAL program (e.g., percentage of EAL students progressing, percentage of students achieving B1.2 over a period of time). Without clear program expectations, the Division cannot assess the overall success of its EAL program (e.g., percentage of students progressing, struggling, or achieving CFR level B1.2, graduation rates of EAL students).

This information would help the Division and the Board to periodically (e.g., every three to five years) evaluate the successful delivery of the program (e.g., if expectations were met), identify challenges (e.g., sufficient EAL instruction resources) and resulting program changes (e.g., other supports or resources).

**3. We recommend that Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81 periodically analyze the results of the Kindergarten to Grade 8 English as an Additional Language program.**

**4. We recommend that the Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81 provide its Board of Education with periodic reports on the success of the Kindergarten to Grade 8 English as an Additional Language program.**

<sup>30</sup> The four major urban school divisions in Saskatchewan are Regina Catholic, Regina School Division No. 4, Saskatoon School Division No. 13, and St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 20.

<sup>31</sup> The comparison reported number of EAL students requiring direct support.



## 5.0 SELECTED REFERENCES

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