

ANNUAL INTEGRATED AUDITS

Chapter 1

Municipal Potash Tax Sharing Administration Board

The Municipal Potash Tax Sharing Administration Board's 2017 financial statements were reliable and it had effective rules and procedures to safeguard public resources. The Board complied with authorities governing its activities related to financial reporting and safeguarding public resources, other than it did not submit its financial statements within the required timeframes nor obtain Minister approval of board remuneration rates.

Chapter 2

School Divisions

This chapter reports the results of the annual audits of the 28 school divisions for the year ended August 31, 2017. The 2016-17 financial statements of each of these school divisions are reliable, and each complied with authorities governing its activities related to financial reporting, safeguarding public resources, revenue raising, spending, borrowing, and investing.

Twenty-three school divisions had effective rules and procedures to safeguard public resources. We recommend improvements to five school divisions. Ile a la Crosse needs to independently review and approve monthly bank reconciliations. Prairie Spirit needs to independently review and approve purchase card transactions. Prince Albert Roman Catholic and Saskatoon need to follow their purchasing policies. Sun West needs to complete documentation of its IT disaster recovery plan. In addition, in 2016-17 two school divisions improved their financial-related controls.

PERFORMANCE AUDITS

Chapter 3

Corrections and Policing—Providing Primary Medical Care in Adult Secure-Custody Correctional Centres

The Ministry of Corrections and Policing's policy on *Healthcare Standards in Provincial Correctional Centres* states the quality of care that offenders receive in a provincial correctional centre should be similar to that experienced by those in the community.^{1,2}

This chapter reports the results of our audit of the Ministry's processes for the provision of primary medical care to adult inmates in Saskatchewan's four adult secure-custody correctional centres.³ Other than the following areas, the Ministry had effective processes, for the provision of primary medical care to adult inmates in its secure-custody correctional centres. The Ministry needs to:

¹ Saskatchewan Corrections and Public Safety Adult Corrections Branch Policy, *Healthcare Standards in Provincial Correctional Centres*, (2004).

² Providing inmates with primary medical care similar to that which the inmate would receive in the community is a requirement of the UN Nelson Mandela Rules. In 1975, Canada endorsed these standards and committed to implementing them.

³ Adults are individuals of 18 years of age or older. An inmate is a person who has been sentenced to a term of imprisonment and admitted to a correctional centre to serve the sentence or is otherwise lawfully detained or confined in the correctional centre. Sentenced inmates are those sentenced to imprisonment in an adult correctional centre for a term of less than two years (*Criminal Code*, s. 743.1(3)). They do not include remand inmates. Remand inmates are those lawfully detained (e.g., arrested) or confined and are awaiting trial or sentencing by the courts (*The Correctional Services Act, 2012*, s.2(p)).



- Regularly update provincial medical care policies and adult secure-custody correctional centre medical care directives. Regularly updating policies and directives keeps them relevant and fosters the use of a consistent approach to providing medical care that aligns with the Ministry's current priorities and strategic direction.
- Require staff to transfer inmate medical files between adult secure-custody correctional centres when it moves inmates between centres or former inmates re-enter the system. Having an inmate's complete medical file available at the correctional centre in which an inmate resides facilitates a continuum of care and avoids replication of tests (e.g., blood tests, specialists' reports).
- Respond to adult inmate complaints about medical care within timeframes required by *The Correctional Services Regulations, 2013*; and periodically analyze adult inmate complaints for trends. Providing timely responses may avoid the risk of an inmate's health being jeopardized, and helps keep inmates informed. Also, assessing trends in complaints could identify systemic or recurring issues in the delivery of medical care within centres, and provide opportunities to adjust processes.
- Deliver orientation training for the nurse manager positions and monitor the currency of first-aid certifications of correctional staff. Having trained staff helps ensure centres can appropriately respond to medical emergencies.
- Work with centres to develop and regularly report on measures to evaluate the provision of medical care to inmates. Through using measures, the Ministry would know whether inmates receive care consistent with its policy (i.e., medical care similar to that experienced by those in the community), and be better positioned to identify areas where its provision of medical care could improve.

The prevalence rate of infectious diseases in the correctional population is higher than in communities. Many inmates may enter the facility with unmet and untreated health conditions as they may have had little or no regular contact with health services before incarceration. Also, the majority of inmates are vulnerable and come from backgrounds that increase the likelihood of declining health. Primary medical care received in a correctional centre can play a role in reducing this health inequality, and the risk of introducing diseases into the community.

Chapter 4

Energy and Resources—Regulating Oil, Gas, and Pipeline Industry Incidents

Saskatchewan has a significant oil and gas industry. Saskatchewan has over 35,000 oil wells, which produce in excess of 450,000 barrels of oil a day.

During the production and transportation of oil and gas (e.g., operating oil wells, moving products using pipelines) unwanted events occasionally occur, known as incidents. Incidents generally relate to the uncontrolled release of substances (e.g., spill, release of gas, leaks), fires, and damage to or malfunction of equipment. These incidents may contaminate the air, soil, or water, and pose a threat to human health, public safety, property, and the environment, as well as domestic and wild animals.

The Ministry of Energy and Resources is responsible for licensing and regulating the oil, gas, and pipeline industry. Regulating reportable incidents is one part of the Ministry's overall regulatory structure for regulating oil and gas activities in Saskatchewan.

This chapter reports on the results of our audit of the Ministry's processes to regulate that oil, gas, and pipeline industry operators resolve incidents to protect public safety and the environment. The Ministry needs to improve its regulatory processes in the following three key areas:

- Document its classification of risks of reported incidents, and its expectations on the nature and timing of its involvement to regulate reported incidents. A formal process to classify the risks of reported incidents fosters consistent consideration of the consequence of an incident, and the likelihood of it posing an increased risk to the environment, public health, and safety. Taking the right action at the right time reduces the risk that industry operators fail to resolve immediate safety risks to the public or environment or fail to complete required reclamation work.
- Consistently inform industry operators when it is satisfied that industry operators have resolved reported incidents. Having a consistent approach for informing industry operators as to whether the Ministry is satisfied with the resolution of the incident will promote consistent communication and reduce the risk that industry operators may assume incidents are resolved when they are not.
- Set expectations for documenting its key activities for regulating reported incidents. Setting clear expectations for staff to follow would help ensure the Ministry keeps sufficient and complete records of its actions and decisions to regulate reported incidents.

Chapter 5

Government Relations – Recommending Infrastructure Projects for Funding

The Ministry of Government Relations administers, on behalf of the Provincial Government, various federal-provincial infrastructure funding agreements. As part of this administration role, it recommends infrastructure projects to the Federal Government for federal-provincial funding. The Ministry uses the same basic recommendation process for all federal-provincial infrastructure agreements it administers.

For the 12-month period ended January 31, 2018, the Ministry had, other than the following areas, effective processes to recommend eligible projects for funding under two federal-provincial infrastructure agreements. The Ministry needs to:

- Consistently document rationale for key decisions made (e.g., decisions on why a project is recommended over others). Documented rationale can help the Ministry defend its key judgements and readily show it treated applicants for funding fairly and equitably.
- Make publicly available the factors it uses to determine which eligible projects to recommend for funding. Making this information available helps the Ministry demonstrate that it has transparent processes and helps it ensure processes are sustainable (i.e., in the event of key personnel turnover).
- Independently review project ratings. Project ratings are a critical component of the Ministry's processes to recommend projects for funding. Independent review can help



reduce the risk of projects being rated inconsistently or incorrectly. In addition, it would help the Ministry continue its processes in the event of key personnel turnover.

- Have a strategy to notify unsuccessful applicants. Without timely communication, the applicant's ability to make timely decisions about their projects may be impaired.

Chapter 6

Labour Relations and Workplace Safety—Implementing Strategies to Reduce Workplace Injury Rates

By November 2017, the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety's targeted intervention strategies were making a difference. The Ministry has a goal to reduce provincial injury rates to 4.32% by 2020 (reduction of 50% from 2012 rate). The provincial rate of workplace injuries has declined from 8.65% to 5.25% between 2012 and 2017.

Since 2013, the Ministry's targeted intervention strategies include working directly with employers identified as having higher than industry average injury rates, proactively and reactively inspecting workplaces, implementing key enforcement activities (including issuing summary offence tickets), and promoting the importance of reducing workplace injuries. It has partnered with the Workers' Compensation Board on a number of these strategies.

Our Office found that the Ministry had effective processes to implement strategies to reduce provincial workplace injury rates, other than it needs to issue summary offence tickets for workplace violations faster. Promptly issuing summary offence tickets reinforces to employers with workplace violations the importance of addressing the identified violations.

Effective processes to reduce workplace injuries contribute to fewer Saskatchewan workplaces having unsafe practices that place workers at risk. In addition, lower workplace injury rates (along with lower total days lost) reduce the cost to businesses through lower premiums for workers' compensation insurance.

Chapter 7

Prairie Valley School Division No. 208—Monitoring Progress of Home-based Learners

In Saskatchewan, home-based educators have both the responsibility for educating their children, and the right to direct their children's education from their home. School divisions are responsible for registering and administering home-based education programs. This responsibility includes assessing programs' compliance with the law and related policies, and assessing the progress of learners in relation to the home-based education plans and learners' age and ability.

Prairie Valley School Division No. 208 is responsible for monitoring home-based education programs for almost 150 home-based learners. Over three-quarters of its home-based learners are in elementary and middle school grades (i.e., Kindergarten to Grade 8), with the remaining learners in high school grades (i.e., Grades 9 to 12).

Prairie Valley did not have effective processes to monitor the educational progress of home-based learners. To improve its monitoring processes, the Division needs to:

- Fully exercise its authority to monitor home-based education programs and make sure home-based learners receive education appropriate for their age and ability.

- Register home-based education programs in accordance with established requirements. Reinforcing registration requirements would help the Division hold home-based educators accountable for the education of home-based learners, and help ensure home-based learners receive an adequate education.
- Take action to encourage home-based educators to submit all required program documentation. This would help ensure the Division has sufficient information to monitor effectively.
- Better align forms, templates, and checklists with home-based education requirements. This would help home-based educators comply with legislative and Ministry requirements, and help the Division show how it has fulfilled its regulatory role.
- Maintain all correspondence with home-based educators, and consistently give them feedback on their learners' annual progress reports. This would enable Division staff to better support home-based educators and learners.

Effective monitoring of home-based education programs is key to Prairie Valley fulfilling its regulatory role. It helps ensure home-based programs assist home-based learners in making sufficient educational progress for their age and ability, and provide them with a quality education.

Chapter 8 Saskatchewan Health Authority (Prince Albert Parkland)— Providing Timely Access to Mental Health and Addictions Services

This chapter sets out the results of our audit of the processes that the Saskatchewan Health Authority had for providing timely access to mental health and addiction services in the former Prince Albert (PA) Parkland Health Region.

PA Parkland provides three types of mental health and addiction services: inpatient (services provided in a hospital), outpatient (services provided outside a hospital), and community rehabilitation and residential, with most services offered in the city of Prince Albert.

In mental health services, ready access to continuity of care has long been considered to be essential for good clients outcomes for those with severe and persistent mental illness. Continuity of care is associated with improved quality of life, community functioning, and satisfaction with services. Mental health and addictions clients getting the right treatment at the right time is important to recovery.

For the 12-month period ending January 31, 2018, the Saskatchewan Health Authority had, other than in the following areas, effective processes for providing timely access to mental health and addiction services in the former PA Parkland Health Region. It needs to:

- Formally assess whether mental health and addictions services are meeting client demand and adjust where necessary.

Demand for its mental health and addictions services is outpacing PA Parkland's capacity to supply them. Consequently, PA Parkland did not always provide mental health and addictions services in a timely manner. Doing comprehensive reassessments of client demand relative to mental health and addictions services available will support getting the right services at the right place at the right time.



- Establish a provincial integrated mental health record system and develop a strategy to collect key mental health and addictions client information from healthcare professionals. This will help ensure timely information is readily available for client care.
- Collaborate with the Ministry of Social Services to enhance access to housing options for mental health and addictions clients. Stable housing can lead to better outcomes for people living with complex mental health and addictions issues and avoid using costly hospital-based care when such care is no longer necessary.
- Use a model to assist staff in better matching appropriate services to mental health and addiction clients' needs.

Treating clients at the lowest appropriate service tier in the first instance, only 'stepping up' to intensive/specialist services as clinically required will move PA Parkland towards having the right service in the right place, at the right time delivered by the right person.

- Assess alternatives to decrease the number of clients that do not show up for scheduled appointments or treatment, and document evidence of follow-up when clients do not maintain their scheduled mental health and addictions treatment. Recovery is less likely if people wait too long for their first appointment, or quit therapy too early.

Ready access to mental health and addictions services when most needed helps minimize and avoid adverse events. Long waits can lead to people's conditions getting worse, and in some cases, waits can even contribute to death.

Chapter 9

Saskatchewan Impaired Driver Treatment Centre— Delivering the Impaired Driver Treatment Program

This chapter sets out the results of our audit of the processes that the Saskatchewan Impaired Driver Treatment Centre used to deliver its impaired driver treatment program to reduce recidivism (i.e., drive impaired again).

The Centre provides a residential treatment alternative to incarceration for adults convicted of a second or subsequent impaired driving offence. The Centre runs a three-week treatment program and can accommodate up to 28 co-ed clients.

For the 12-month period ended November 30, 2017, the Centre had, other than the following, effective processes to deliver the treatment program to reduce recidivism. The Centre needs to:

- Regularly review its program objectives and set measurable expectations to evaluate and report on the success of the program. This would allow the Centre to know whether its treatment program is effective and whether its activities are reducing recidivism.
- Regularly refresh its treatment program to incorporate relevant good practices (e.g., components based on client gender and cultural background). This would reduce the risk of the program not effectively supporting clients in permanently changing their behaviour.
- Consistently collect and complete client information to inform treatment (e.g., intake information, assessments, prior treatment information, individualized treatment plans, and relapse prevention plans). This information would allow the Centre to provide the appropriate treatment that will help clients to not drive impaired again after leaving the Centre.

- Actively connect clients with specific support upon completion of the treatment program. This would reduce the risk of client relapse and repeated impaired driving.

Chapter 10

Saskatchewan Water Corporation—Purchasing Goods and Services

Over 100 Saskatchewan Water Corporation staff, located throughout the province, are involved in purchasing goods and services. In 2016-17, SaskWater purchased over \$45 million of goods and services.

This chapter sets out the results of our audit on the Saskatchewan Water Corporation's processes to purchase goods or services over \$25 thousand.

In 2017, SaskWater had generally effective processes to purchase goods or services over \$25 thousand. It needs to make improvements in the following areas.

- Clarify its policies over the use of sole sourcing methods of procurement, and report on the use of those methods. Sole sourcing is a non-competitive method of buying goods and services. Clear policies identify when it is appropriate to use this method, and require staff to document reasons for use of non-competitive methods. This helps ensure potential suppliers are treated fairly and consistently.
- Consistently follow its established procurement policies when approving the purchase of goods and services. This includes obtaining prior written approval of the procurement decision, and attaching support for the procurement decision to the invoice submitted for payment. This enables monitoring of compliance with procurement policies.
- Require SaskWater staff involved in buying goods and services to confirm, each year in writing, compliance with its conflict of interest policy. Annual confirmation of staff's compliance with its conflict of interest policy helps reinforce the importance of identifying and avoiding conflicts of interest, and reminds staff to declare conflicts.
- Track supplier performance in a way that makes this information available for future purchasing decisions.

Strong processes to buy goods and services supports transparency, fairness, and achievement of best value in purchasing activities.

Chapter 11

Saskatoon School Division No. 13—Supporting Students with Intensive Needs

In Saskatchewan, school divisions are required to accommodate students with intensive needs in the regular program of instruction or provide special programming to meet those students' learning needs. Students with intensive needs are those assessed as having a capacity to learn that is compromised by a cognitive, social-emotional, behavioral, or physical condition.

In 2016-17, 7.3% of Kindergarten to Grade 8 students in Saskatoon School Division No. 13 (Saskatoon Public or Division) were students identified as having intensive needs. The number of its Kindergarten to Grade 8 students with intensive needs is increasing.



Saskatoon Public had, other than the following, effective processes to support the learning of students with intensive needs. Saskatoon Public needs to:

- Formally estimate future enrolment of the Kindergarten to Grade 8 students with intensive needs; analyze trends in the number of Kindergarten to Grade 8 students with intensive needs, and their categories of intensive needs; and determine staff needed to support Kindergarten to Grade 8 students with intensive needs. This would allow Saskatoon Public to confirm it has the right amount of resources necessary to support students with intensive needs.
- Maintain documentation of the key consultations, discussions, decisions, and steps taken for supporting Kindergarten to Grade 8 students with intensive needs; retain evidence of agreement on learning plans for those students; and also maintain their assessment information in the student cumulative files. This would help ensure continuity of supports provided and reduce the risk of repeated, overlooked or forgotten actions to support a student's learning needs.
- Give staff guidance on expected timelines for completing requested intensive-needs assessments of Kindergarten to Grade 8 students. This would help avoid delays in implementing learning supports for students with intensive needs.
- Regularly monitor progress in achieving learning goals of Kindergarten to Grade 8 students with intensive needs, and centrally monitor whether schools sufficiently support these students to enable progress towards their learning goals. This would include agreement on the students' learning plans and with students' progress. As well, it would allow the Division to evaluate deployment of resources and determine whether it is providing sufficient support to students with intensive needs.
- Give senior management and the Board of Education enough information to determine the sufficiency of learning supports for Kindergarten to Grade 8 students with intensive needs. This would enable evaluating whether the Division provides students with educational services consistent with those students' individual educational needs and abilities.

Chapter 12

Water Security Agency—Regulating Drainage

Saskatchewan has over 1,800 miles of organized drainage ditches, draining an estimated 4.5 million acres of farmland. The Water Security Agency estimates approximately 1.6 million to 2.4 million acres of land have unapproved drainage works.

The Agency is responsible for regulating drainage on agricultural lands in Saskatchewan. In 2015, the Agency began implementing a new Agricultural Water Management Strategy to encourage effective drainage while protecting the environment, and bring unapproved drainage works into compliance with the law.

The Agency is in the early stages of implementing its new strategy. It has identified four strategic priorities as critical to its success: strong public education campaign, success in implementing the new strategy in the watershed basins it assessed as highest risk to demonstrate the strategy works, completing and implementing policies that support the strategy, and strategic enforcement.

This chapter reports on the Agency’s processes to regulate the drainage of water on agricultural lands in the geographic areas assigned to the Yorkton and Weyburn regional offices. These areas have the highest risk of flooding. While the Agency is doing some things well, this chapter identifies four key areas for improvement. The Agency needs to:

- Finalize, approve, and follow its policies for bringing unapproved drainage works into compliance
- Have robust policies for assessing water quality and wetland retention
- Have a prioritization plan to address existing high-risk unapproved drainage works
- Report its progress in regulating drainage on agricultural lands

Leaving unapproved drainage works in high-risk areas increases the risk of flooding of neighbouring farmland and the receiving water body, water quality issues in the receiving water body, and loss of wetlands.

AUDIT FOLLOW UPS

Chapter 13

Advanced Education – Working with Advanced Education Sector

The Ministry of Advanced Education improved its processes to work with the advanced education sector to achieve Ministry strategies by implementing one recommendation, and partially implementing the other recommendation we made in 2015.

By March 2018, the Ministry analyzed its oversight tools and used this analysis to determine how to best engage post-secondary institutions to contribute to meeting sector expectations. The Ministry established a common set of expectations for the advanced education sector, and communicated these expectations to post-secondary institutions.

In September 2015, the Ministry initiated the post-secondary indicators project to establish consistent and comparable sector-wide reporting. The Ministry and post-secondary institutions are establishing indicators for use across the advanced education sector. The Ministry aims to have all institutions report on a common set of indicators by September 2020.

Chapter 14

Education Ministry and School Divisions – Transporting Students Safely

By January 2018, the Ministry of Education and the five school divisions (Northwest, Chinook, Good Spirit, St. Paul’s Roman Catholic Separate and Prince Albert Roman Catholic Separate) had further improved their processes to safely transport students—they implemented all of the remaining recommendations from our *2014 Report – Volume 2*, Chapter 44 follow-up.

The Ministry took a co-ordination and oversight role in helping school divisions to transport students safely. It established processes for providing all school divisions with a summary of legislation related to the transportation of students. It instructed school divisions who contract



transportation services to obtain sufficient information to determine whether their contractor meets legislated requirements for safe student transportation. In addition, the Ministry established a transportation working group to assist in identifying effective strategies to manage the condition of vehicles, the performance of drivers, the behaviour of students on the bus, and collision risks.

The five school divisions have improved their processes to transport students safely. All school divisions provided their contracted transportation providers with all of the applicable transportation-related legislation, set clear expectations, and received reports on safe student transportation. The five school divisions also appraised driver performance, and carried out bus evacuation drills. Such strategies are key to keeping students safe while they are being transported to and from school.

Chapter 15

eHealth Saskatchewan—Implementing Electronic Health Records

By February 2018, eHealth implemented the one outstanding recommendation we initially made in 2009 related to guiding, monitoring, and reporting on implementation of the electronic health records (EHR) system. eHealth has processes in place to adequately monitor costs and timelines for enhancements to the EHR system.

Chapter 16

eHealth Saskatchewan—Procuring IT Services

eHealth Saskatchewan has implemented the two outstanding recommendations from our 2010 audit related to its processes to buy IT services. eHealth assessed its IT vendors' performance, and kept a record of vendors' evaluations.

Systematically assessing and tracking the performance of vendors will assist eHealth in managing existing vendor relationships and making future vendor selection decisions.

Chapter 17

Energy and Resources—Managing Future Cleanup of Oil and Gas Wells

By law, the oil and gas industry remains responsible for the cleanup of oil and gas wells in Saskatchewan including inactive and legacy wells. The Ministry of Energy and Resources uses four programs to regulate the future cleanup of wells.

By February 2018, the Ministry had improved its processes to regulate the future cleanup of oil and gas wells by implementing four of six remaining recommendations made in our 2012 audit of this area. But more work remains.

Key improvements included:

- Dedicating more resources and skills to manage its oil and gas well cleanup programs, and cleaning up orphan wells sooner.
- Assessing the reasonableness of cleanup work cost estimates it uses to determine the financial risks of licensees (oil and gas companies) not being able to pay for cleanup of wells

for which they are responsible. The Ministry uses this risk assessment to determine which licensees should provide security deposits and the amount of the deposit.

- Extending its auditing of licensees' reclaimed well sites to include audits of reclamation reports that did not identify anomalies and/or discrepancies.
- Giving legislators and the public better information about its regulation and management of the risks related to future cleanup of oil and gas wells and facilities.

Key areas where further work is needed include the following:

- Considering how best to address long-term financial risk to industry from the associated environmental risks related to the increasing number of inactive wells and facilities. The total number of inactive wells increased by almost 90% between 2005 and 2017.

As of February 2018, the Ministry had not completed its analysis to determine if its programs adequately protect industry from financial risks related to cleanup of inactive wells. This includes the risk of licensees with financial difficulties passing costs of cleanup onto the rest of the industry.

- Continuing to assess the environmental risks posed by 9,000 legacy well sites to confirm the Ministry's preliminary risk assessment of low. As of February 2018, because assessment work was not yet complete, the environmental risks of legacy well sites are unknown.

Chapter 18

Environment—Regulating Landfills

As of December 2017, the Ministry of Environment had made progress in addressing the seven outstanding recommendations we initially made in our 2013 audit of its processes to regulate landfills. The Ministry had implemented four of seven remaining recommendations and made progress on the other three.

The Ministry moved to monitoring landfills based on the results of environmental risk assessments of the landfills. It requires owners of landfills with assessed risks to monitor groundwater. In addition, the Ministry actively confirmed new constructions, expansions, and landfill closures were done in accordance with its requirements and approved plans. It worked with owners that did not comply with requirements or plans until they achieved compliance or issued sanctions.

The Ministry needs to:

- Finalize and approve guidance for landfill design and operation. Without consistent guidance, landfills may not be built or operated to the required environmental standard.
- Finish the renewal of landfill permits to include requirements for groundwater monitoring. Not monitoring groundwater at landfills increases the risk that groundwater contamination may not be detected in a timely manner.
- Conduct inspections on landfills as scheduled. Timely inspections determine whether landfills operate in compliance with permit requirements and the law.



Clear and consistent guidance for landfill owners along with better monitoring of operating and closed landfills will strengthen the Ministry's processes to regulate landfills and will help to prevent groundwater contamination.

Chapter 19 Finance—Internal Audit in Ministries

By December 2017, the Ministry of Finance strengthened, in part, internal audit in ministries. It implemented all but one recommendation outstanding from our *2012 Report – Volume 2*, Chapter 30 audit on the effectiveness of internal audit activities of government ministries.

Finance evaluated several options for organizing internal audit in ministries. Based on its evaluation, Finance decided to continue with a decentralized internal audit model across ministries.

Finance took a co-ordination role in setting up a Best Practice Focus Group to support and promote the use of internal audit and risk management best practices within ministries. The Group typically met quarterly and shared methodologies and tools to support risk-based internal audit planning.

Government ministries with an internal audit branch have not yet developed effective quality assurance programs for internal audit as suggested in the Government of Saskatchewan's *Financial Administration Manual* and professional standards to ensure continuous improvement in internal audit activity.

Chapter 20 Finance—Use of Continuous Improvement Processes

By January 2018, the Ministry of Finance had implemented the intent of all of the recommendations first made in our 2015 audit of processes for co-ordinating the use of Lean across government ministries and certain other agencies (e.g., SaskBuilds, school divisions).⁴

Since September 2016, Finance is responsible for providing support and guidance to government ministries and those agencies on continuous improvement processes. Lean is now one of many continuous improvement tools available for their use. Using continuous improvement is part of a larger Planning and Accountability Management System.

This System's objective for using continuous improvement processes is to improve government effectiveness, efficiency, and services by embedding continuous improvement as a business practice across the public service. The Government no longer has an objective of achieving a return on its investment in Lean.

Finance trained ministries and certain other agencies on continuous improvement processes based on assessed needs. Also, the ministries of Education and Advanced Education gave agencies in their sectors timely feedback on their efforts in using and promoting continuous improvement.

⁴ These certain other agencies include school divisions, certain post-secondary institutions, Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority, Water Security Agency, SaskBuilds, and Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation.

Finance has set measures and some targets to enable the assessment of the overall success of the use of continuous improvement in ministries and certain other agencies. It gathered information related to these measures and targets, and used it to assess and report on the overall success in implementing the Planning and Accountability Management System.

Chapter 21

Government Relations—Co-ordinating Emergency Preparedness

By January 2018, the Ministry of Government Relations had made some progress in improving its processes to co-ordinate emergency preparedness for provincial emergencies. It had implemented one of four recommendations made in our *2015 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 12, and was working on implementing the remaining three recommendations.

The Ministry documents deliberations and decisions of its Provincial Emergency Management Committee. It was working with stakeholders to update risk assessments and was developing a process to confirm that stakeholder plans align with the Provincial Emergency Management Plan. The Ministry still needs to give guidance to key stakeholders to help them determine which infrastructure is critical to the province overall.

Having effective processes to coordinate emergency preparedness will help the government respond to emergencies in the province in a timely, efficient, and coordinated manner. This can help reduce the human and financial impact of emergencies and support the recovery process.

Chapter 22

Highways and Infrastructure—Addressing Road Safety Concerns on Existing Highways

By November 2017, the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure had improved its processes to address safety concerns raised on existing provincial highways by implementing three of four recommendations we originally made in 2015, and made progress on the fourth recommendation.

The Ministry developed and followed processes for tracking the receipt of and responding to complaints about road safety. It set out criteria, in writing, for selecting safety improvement projects to complete in the upcoming year. It required staff to keep analysis and rationale for selecting these safety improvement projects.

It also began reporting to senior management on whether its road safety improvements had helped reduce the frequency and severity of collisions. However, that reporting only includes analysis on a small number of safety improvement projects. Without complete analysis and information, management may not know if the Ministry is focusing its resources on the right safety improvement projects. Also, the Ministry may not know if the resources spent on road safety improvement projects were worthwhile.

Chapter 23

North East School Division No. 200—Increasing Grade 3 Students Reading at Grade Level

North East School Division No. 200 has improved its processes to increase the percentage of Grade 3 students reading at grade level by implementing four of five recommendations, and



partially implementing the remaining recommendation made in our 2016 audit. North East still needs to periodically evaluate the effectiveness of all the tools it uses to assess student reading levels.

By January 2018, North East documented all of its key risks and strategies for managing these risks related to increasing the percentage of Grade 3 students reading at grade level. It had sufficient guidance for exempting students from provincial reading level assessments. The Division also publicly provided data and analysis of Grade 3 student reading levels.

Grade 3 reading levels are considered a leading indicator of future student performance. Grade 3 students who do not make the transition to comprehending what they read fall behind, impacting their overall success. In the Education Sector Strategic Plan, Saskatchewan's education sector jointly established a goal of 80% of Grade 3 students reading at grade level by 2020.

While North East School Division No. 200 has not yet reached the education sector plan goal, it has seen improvement in the number of Grade 3 students reading at grade level. At June 2017, 74% of North East Grade 3 students were reading at or above grade level,⁵ as compared to 65% at June 2015.⁶

This improvement is supported by the Division's processes to improve reading outcomes for the approximately 1,500 Kindergarten to Grade 3 students from Nipawin, Tisdale, Hudson Bay, Melfort, and the surrounding area.⁷

Chapter 24

Prairie South School Division No. 210—Equipping the Board with Knowledge and Competencies to Govern

This chapter describes our first follow-up of Prairie South School Division No. 210's actions on the four recommendations made in our 2015 audit of its processes to equip its Board with the knowledge and competencies necessary to govern the Division. By January 2018, the Division had strengthened those processes; it implemented all four recommendations.

Prairie South set out the baseline knowledge and competencies necessary for the Board to govern the Division. It maintains a listing of its current Board's individual and collective assessments for the necessary competencies and knowledge. In addition, Prairie South gives Board members opportunities to learn from each other by deliberately partnering experienced Board members with lesser experienced ones. The Board Chair monitors whether the Board is addressing gaps in individual and collective Board knowledge and competencies. Furthermore, Board members periodically self assess their knowledge and competencies. Results of these assessments help it determine its progress in developing Board governance knowledge and competencies.

Chapter 25

Regina School Division No. 4—Promoting Positive Student Behaviour

Regina School Division No. 4 has improved some of its processes to promote positive student behaviour. It has implemented two recommendations and partially implemented three recommendations we made in 2016.

⁵ North East School Division No. 200, *2016-17 Annual Report*, p. 14.

⁶ North East School Division No. 200, *2014-15 Annual Report*, p. 13.

⁷ North East School Division No. 200, *2016-17 Annual Report*, p. 29.

Since 2015, the Division implemented a student supports IT system to monitor student behaviour. It retains documentation of incidents, referrals, and discussions held with school staff and parents for behaviour issues.

For high school students, the Division directs staff to retain documentation of contact and communications with parents on attendance issues, but staff did not do so consistently. For elementary school students, the Division indicated that it is currently developing an attendance strategy. Keeping documentation of actions taken to address attendance issues helps provide a consistent course of action and monitor steps taken to promote regular attendance.

By March 2018, the Division had not reviewed all of its administrative procedures related to student behaviour. Periodically reviewing administrative procedures helps ensure their continuing relevance and applicability.

Each school year, the Division communicates to staff, in writing, training expectations for key initiatives to promote and support positive student behaviour. The Division implemented software that allows school administrators to easily review which of their staff are trained in key initiatives to promote positive student behaviour.

In 2017-18, the Division started collecting data on behaviour incidents and supports. It plans to use this to determine goals related to student behaviour. Once these goals are determined, it expects to report to its Board of Education on the overall success of its initiatives to promote positive student behaviour and whether its initiatives are making a difference.

Chapter 26

Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation—Determining AgriStability Benefits

By January 2018, the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation had implemented our recommendation initially made in 2013; it set targets related to five performance measures related to the AgriStability benefit program. Use of targets enables the Corporation to better determine and show its success in managing the AgriStability program.

Chapter 27

Saskatchewan Government Insurance—Confirming Only Qualified Drivers Remain Licensed

By January 2018, Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) made a number of improvements to its processes to confirm only qualified drivers remain licensed to operate motor vehicles. It made good progress in addressing five recommendations we initially reported in 2016. It fully implemented four and partially implemented one of our recommendations.

SGI gave its staff written guidance about timeframes to enter driver traffic offence and medical information, grant extensions to drivers to complete required driver courses, and complete manual reviews of information of high-risk drivers. It updated the IT system it uses to administer driver's licences (AutoFund system) consistent with legislation in effect.

At times, SGI entered driver information it received into the AutoFund system later than expected. Delays in entering the traffic offence information can delay the commencement of SGI's disciplinary process for unsafe drivers.

**Chapter 28****Saskatchewan Health Authority (Kelsey Trail) –
Maintaining Medical Equipment**

By December 2017, the former Kelsey Trail Regional Health Authority improved some of its processes to maintain medical equipment but more improvements are needed. It implemented two of three recommendations first made in our 2010 medical equipment maintenance audit. It properly updated its medical equipment listing, and regularly gave senior management sufficient information to facilitate meaningful discussions about the equipment.

Further work remains to make sure all medical equipment is maintained consistent with policy and required manufacturers' standards. Properly functioning medical equipment supports the health system in providing safer, patient-centred care.

Chapter 29**Saskatchewan Health Authority (Prairie North) –
Preventing Resident Falls in Long-Term Care Facilities**

By February 2018, the former Prairie North Regional Health Authority had improved its processes for preventing resident falls in its long-term care facilities. It fully addressed the 12 recommendations we initially made in our 2015 audit. Prairie North:

- Maintained a safe environment for its residents (e.g., placed chairs in hallways at regular intervals, maintained bed alarm systems, completed fall-prevention safety checks)
- Trained staff on the new falls-prevention program and updated key fall-prevention policies
- Completed regular fall risk re-assessments
- Consistently aligned individual care plans with identified fall risk factors
- Investigated significant resident falls in accordance with policy
- Collected, assessed, and reported additional information on fall-related injuries to monitor performance related to fall prevention

Chapter 30**Saskatchewan Health Authority (Sun Country) –
Administering Medications in Hospitals**

As of December 2017, the Saskatchewan Health Authority had not yet fully addressed the one remaining recommendation made during our 2013 audit at the former Sun Country Regional Health Authority. The recommendation related to completing patient medication profiles at two district hospitals by documenting patients' weights.⁸

Since our 2015 follow-up, the Authority had made some progress. Management of the district hospitals previously administered by Sun Country routinely assessed whether patient weights are documented in hospital patient medication profiles. They found patients' weights were not consistently documented. We tested patient files and found the same result. Hospital staff

⁸ The two district hospitals are Weyburn General Hospital and St Joseph's Hospital (located in Estevan).

documenting patients' weights reduces the risk of prescribing improper medication doses to patients.

Chapter 31

Social Services – Minimizing Absenteeism

By February 2018, the Ministry of Social Services had partially implemented three of the four recommendations made in our 2015 audit regarding minimizing employee absenteeism and had further work to do on the remaining recommendation.

Since our 2015 audit, the Ministry has expanded its attendance management training, hired a disability management consultant, and is piloting a new program — *Be at Work*, which is under development by the Public Service Commission. In 2016-17, the Ministry's average sick leave usage per full-time employee was 10.19 days, about 0.2 days lower than the prior year.

The Ministry needs to do more in the following areas. It needs to encourage its supervisors to take available attendance management training. In addition, it needs to determine the causes of employee absenteeism, use targeted attendance management strategies to address those causes, and report to senior management on them.

Effective processes to minimize employee absenteeism support effective service delivery to the public, minimize costs, and support the well-being of public sector employees. Unplanned employee absenteeism like sick leave can also impact the Ministry's ability to deliver services to vulnerable citizens.

Chapter 32

Tourism Saskatchewan – Managing the Use of Social Media

By January 2018, Tourism Saskatchewan had made significant improvements regarding the management of its use of social media. It had implemented four of five recommendations made in our 2015 audit, and had partially implemented the remaining recommendation.

Tourism Saskatchewan has a social media strategy that links its social media channels to its business objectives. Also, it has an overall performance measure and target for its use of social media.

In addition, Tourism Saskatchewan requires all staff who represent it on social media to formally agree to its social media policies on an annual basis. It posts approved terms of use of its various social media channels. In addition, it tracks and reports the results of the use of social media to the Board and senior management periodically.

While it has approved social media policies, these can still be improved. Tourism Saskatchewan should mitigate potential risks associated with the use of social media by finalizing a risk assessment, and incorporating the assessment into its policies. Having comprehensive social media policies will help ensure Tourism Saskatchewan has addressed the different risks that arise when using social media.