

## Chapter 5: Regina Public School Division—Delivering Prekindergarten Programming

### Why It Matters

Prekindergarten is an early childhood education program targeting three- and four-year old children living in vulnerable circumstances and/or experiencing developmental delays. Certain studies found prekindergarten prepares students for kindergarten and learning in the primary grades as well as continues to provide lasting advantages to children later in life.

Regina Public School Division offers prekindergarten to about 10% of prekindergarten students province-wide. Effective processes will result in as many prekindergarten children benefitting from this programming as possible.

### Why We Did This Audit

Quality early childhood education such as prekindergarten programs can help vulnerable children from all backgrounds, with proven long-term benefits in academic, mental health, and social outcomes.

### Key Facts and Figures

- The Division offers prekindergarten in 24 schools attended by about 560 students.
- The Division spent \$2.85 million on its prekindergarten programming in 2022–23.
- We found 75 students waiting for acceptance in prekindergarten across the Division's schools with almost 70% (over 50 students) waiting at three specific schools (i.e., Arcola, Grant Road, Marion McVeety) at February 2024.
- The Division last relocated an existing prekindergarten classroom to another school in 2018–19.
- Each half-day program has one teacher, one teacher associate, and up to 16 students. A student's acceptance into prekindergarten depends on their level of vulnerability and spaces available.

### What We Found

We found Regina Public School Division did not utilize 149 of 708 planned spaces (or 21% of its spaces) in 2023–24.

It needs to analyze and report on changes in its prekindergarten enrolment, as well as centrally monitor and analyze its prekindergarten waitlists.

Underutilized prekindergarten spaces mean fewer students benefit from the Division's spending on prekindergarten programming and is an inefficient use of public funds.

### Our Recommendations

Regina Public School Division needs to:

- Determine and use adequate measures to assess and report on the performance and quality of its prekindergarten programming, such as student achievement and enrolment
- Help teachers consistently track required family visits
- Improve communication to prekindergarten teachers about partnerships with outside agencies—for example, KidsFirst Regina or Regina Early Childhood Intervention Program—that may provide specialized support services to prekindergarten children and their families
- Formally assess prekindergarten classroom environments periodically against established expectations (e.g., physical classroom organization, natural light, child-sized furniture)
- Improve reporting to senior management and its Board of Education to inform programming decisions (e.g., resource allocations, classroom locations)