

Chapter 23

St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 20—Adapting Technology for Learning in Elementary Schools

1.0 MAIN POINTS

St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 20 implemented the one outstanding recommendation we originally made in our 2019 audit related to adapting technology for learning in elementary schools.

By February 2024, the Division implemented an IT system to track the location of educational technology devices such as iPads, Chromebooks, and laptops. The Division completed a count of devices in 2023 to confirm their location. The Division appropriately plans to conduct these counts annually.

Regularly checking the accuracy of technology device listings minimizes the risk of missing devices, and verifies their actual location. Verifying device locations helps to ensure teachers and students have technology available for use in the classroom.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

The Education Act, 1995, assigns Boards of Education (school boards) responsibility for administration and management of schools, with oversight from the Ministry of Education.¹ The Act makes school boards responsible for exercising general supervision and control over the schools in the school division.

St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 20 (with 43 elementary schools located in Saskatoon, Martensville, Warman, Humboldt, and Biggar) recognizes that technology is a significant aspect of modern education. Its educational technology mission is to be a faith-based community adapting technology to enrich learning and promote excellence in education.²

Each year, the Division spends about \$1.1 million on computer hardware and audio-visual equipment used in schools.³ As shown, in **Figure 1**, at February 2024, it supplied schools with a variety of devices for student use.

¹ *The Education Act, 1995*, s. 85(1).

² Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Administrative Policy: *Technology Acceptable Use*.

³ Information from St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 20 annual reports (2021–22 and 2022–2023) and Division records. This cost does not include costs of internet, agreements with service providers (e.g., Microsoft), software, and human resources or parts needed to fix devices.

**Figure 1—Number of Technology Devices by Type at February 2024 in Division**

| Device Type | Device Quantity |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Desktop Computers | 3,391 |
| Chromebooks | 4,761 |
| Tablets | 4 |
| Laptops | 4,647 |
| Classroom iPads | 5,045 |
| Smartboards | 739 |
| 3D Printers | 25 |

Source: Based on data from St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 20's Snipe IT system.

2.2 Focus of Follow-Up Audit

This chapter describes our second follow-up audit of management's actions on the recommendations we first made in 2019.

In 2019, we assessed St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 20's processes to adapt technology for learning in elementary schools. Our *2019 Report – Volume 2*, Chapter 25, concluded that for the 16-month period ended June 30, 2019, St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 20 had, except for the areas of our recommendations, effective processes to adapt technology for learning in elementary schools. We made six recommendations.

By June 2022, the Division had implemented five of the six recommendations.⁴

To conduct this audit engagement, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook—Assurance* (CSAE 3001). To evaluate the Division's progress toward meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. Division management agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

To perform our follow-up audit, we discussed actions taken with Division staff and reviewed key documents such as device inventory reports. We confirmed the location of technology devices at a sample of elementary schools and compared to the Division's central tracking IT system.

3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out each recommendation including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the recommendation at February 29, 2024, and St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 20's actions up to that date.

⁴ *2019 Report – Volume 2*, Chapter 25, pp. 223–236 and *2022 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 27, pp. 257–264.

3.1 Existence and Location of Devices Periodically Confirmed

We recommended St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 20 periodically verify the existence and location of educational technology devices available in its elementary schools. (2019 Report – Volume 2, p. 233, Recommendation 4; Public Accounts Committee agreement January 12, 2022)

Status—Implemented

By February 2024, St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 20 implemented an IT system that tracks the existence and location of its educational technology devices such as iPads, Chromebooks, and laptops.

The Division implemented a comprehensive tracking IT system in 2023 called Snipe. The Division uses several online tools to support the Snipe IT system in synchronizing device locations in real time.⁵ This helps the Division verify the devices exist and identify their location.

We tested the locations of 40 devices across three elementary schools to verify the Division accurately tracked their location in Snipe. We found the Division accurately recorded the location of these items.

The Division also completed an inventory count of its educational technology devices in 2023 to confirm devices still exist and their location. It appropriately plans to conduct these inventory counts annually.

Regularly checking the accuracy of device listings assists in detecting missing devices and verifying device locations. This helps to ensure that teachers and students have the technological resources available to use in classrooms.

⁵ These automated tools periodically check each device's location and uses this information to update Snipe.

