



AUDIT AT A GLANCE

Performance Audit of Ministry of Education: Overseeing Independent Schools

Why It Matters

Given that an independent school is owned and operated by a person or an organization other than a public authority or government, operational requirements may be more stringent or less, or inconsistent with, a school operated by a school division. As of January 2025, 54 independent schools across Saskatchewan instructed over 5,400 students.

Why We Did This Audit

The Ministry of Education is entrusted with ensuring all students in Saskatchewan have access to proper education and schools adhere to established standards.



Effective oversight of independent schools helps to ensure students receive quality education and public funds are used for intended purposes.

Key Facts and Figures

- Different categories of independent schools exist in the province: registered, alternative, historical high school, qualified, certified, and associate
- \$31 million in Ministry funding for some categories of independent schools in 2024–25
- Ministry conducts onsite school inspections based on level of risk; risk assessments incomplete for eight schools
- 14 religiously based schools do not employ certified teachers
- Staff appropriately handle complaints, which must be reviewed within two business days of receipt and investigations completed within 10 business days



What We Found



The audit found the Ministry needs to analyze and report on key indicators of student achievement (e.g., students' reading levels, graduation rates) at independent schools to make informed decisions or provide additional supports (e.g., training to uncertified teachers).

We also found the Ministry did not consider student achievement as part of its risk assessment process or complete school risk assessments for all independent schools (i.e., alternative independent schools).

We Made Four Recommendations

The Ministry of Education needs to:

- Analyze key indicators of student achievement (e.g., students' reading levels, graduation rates) at independent schools
- Complete, and centrally track, risk assessments for all independent schools and use them to prioritize resources and focus on schools presenting higher risks to educational quality, student safety, and regulatory compliance
- Centrally compile notices of identified non-compliance for all independent schools to improve the Ministry's tracking and analysis, which facilitates effective monitoring and can strengthen its regulatory oversight of the independent school system