

Chapter 18

Regina Public School Division—Delivering Prekindergarten Programming

1.0 MAIN POINTS

Prekindergarten is an early childhood education program targeting three- and four-year old children living in vulnerable circumstances and/or experiencing developmental delays.

At June 2025, the Regina Public School Division No. 4 delivered prekindergarten programming to about 630 students annually who attend half-day prekindergarten programs offered by the Division at 24 schools.

By January 2026, the Division implemented the seven recommendations we first made in 2024. The Division:

- Formally analyzed prekindergarten enrolment, including potential barriers and considered ways to address identified barriers
- Centrally monitored prekindergarten waitlists at its schools
- Assessed prekindergarten student achievement once they entered kindergarten
- Established a regular process for principals to formally evaluate prekindergarten learning environments
- Promoted teacher awareness of partnerships with outside agencies (e.g., health, social services) that can provide various supports to prekindergarten students
- Consistently tracked and maintained records of the required prekindergarten teachers' engagements with students' families throughout the year
- Revised its Board reporting to include a detailed analysis of prekindergarten enrolments and changes

Having effective processes to deliver prekindergarten programs reduce the risk of students from vulnerable situations not achieving their academic, financial, and social potential.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

The Education Act, 1995, sets out the duties of Boards of Education. The Act also makes Regina Public School Division responsible for providing educational instruction to students within its division, which includes prekindergarten programming.¹

¹ *The Education Act, 1995*, s. 85.



The Division educates almost 26,000 elementary school students in 44 elementary schools, including 633 prekindergarten students.² The Division spent \$2.9 million on prekindergarten programming in 2024–25.³

Figure 1 sets out the 24 schools (i.e., about half of its elementary schools) where the Division specifically offered prekindergarten programming as of June 2025.

Figure 1—Schools with Prekindergarten in Regina Public School Division

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Albert | Glen Elm | McDermid ^A |
| Arcola | Grant Road | McLurg |
| Connaught | Henry Janzen ^B | Plainsview |
| Coronation Park | Imperial ^A | Rosemont |
| Douglas Park | Judge Bryant | Seven Stones |
| Dr. George Ferguson | Kitchener | Thomson |
| Dr. L.M. Hanna | M.J. Coldwell | W.H. Ford |
| Elsie Mironuck | Marion McVeety | Walker |

Source: Adapted from Regina Public School Division records.

^A In September 2025, the Division merged Imperial and McDermid Schools together as Tawāw School.

^B Henry Janzen School offers a prekindergarten pilot program (i.e., Children Communicating, Connecting and in Community Pilot) to provide learning experiences and interventions for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. As this program is unique from the Division’s other prekindergarten programs, we did not include this program in our audit.

Prekindergarten teachers and associates use educational practices tailored to the individual and to the age of the students. They model language and behaviours, encourage and extend learning, and challenge students through play, exploration, and development of readiness skills that support learning.⁴

Prekindergarten is not a universal program available to all students in Saskatchewan schools. A student’s acceptance into prekindergarten depends on their level of vulnerability and spaces available. Outside agencies (e.g., KidsFirst Regina) can refer students to a prekindergarten program, or parents/guardians can apply for their child to attend.

2.2 Focus of Follow-Up Audit

This report describes our first follow-up audit of the Regina Public School Division’s actions on the recommendations we made in 2024.

We concluded, for the period ended January 31, 2024, Regina Public School Division No. 4 had effective processes to deliver prekindergarten programming except for areas in our seven recommendations.⁵

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 carry out our follow-up audit, we discussed actions taken with management and examined the Division’s procedures, and other documents, relevant to delivering prekindergarten programming.

² *Regina Public School Division Annual Report 2024–25*, p. 9.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁴ www.reginapublicschools.ca/early_learning (5 February 2026).

⁵ *2024 Report – Volume 1, Chapter 5*, pp. 85–106.

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 January 31, 2026, and Regina Public School Division's actions up to that date.

3.1 Prekindergarten Program Enrolment Analyzed

We recommended Regina Public School Division No. 4 formally analyze its prekindergarten enrolment to help identify and mitigate barriers to students entering the program and full space utilization. (2024 Report – Volume 1, p. 92, Recommendation 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement October 17, 2025)

Status—Implemented

Regina Public School Division formally analyzes its prekindergarten enrolment and barriers to enrolment monthly, including identifying possible ways to address barriers.

The Division receives funding from the Ministry of Education to operate its prekindergarten program, with each prekindergarten classroom having spaces for 16 students. In 2025–26, the Division had 738 prekindergarten spaces available at 22 schools across Regina through three half-day programs in one school, two half-day programs in 17 schools, and one half-day program in four schools.⁶

In fall 2024, the Division began requiring prekindergarten teachers to submit a monthly online form to update the Division and support its regular monitoring of enrolment numbers and space utilization. To limit the administrative burden on teachers, the Division could reduce the frequency of reporting to quarterly. The form requires prekindergarten teachers to provide the following information:

- Number of prekindergarten programs offered at the school
- Number of students enrolled in the prekindergarten program at the school (including both prekindergarten and Early Learning Intensive Support Program students)
- Total prekindergarten students enrolled for the current school year (i.e., “ins”)
- Total withdrawals for the current school year (i.e., “outs”)
- Barriers identified by schools and families (i.e., why did a family not apply, not enroll, or withdraw from the program)
- School's plan to mitigate enrolment barriers
- Waitlist information

⁶ The Regina Public School Division's 738 prekindergarten spaces in 2025–26 includes 82 spaces designated for students participating in the Early Learning Intensive Support Program (ELISP) and 656 spaces for non-ELISP students. The Ministry of Education makes this Program available to children with intensive needs who require a significant level of support to participate in an early learning program in select schools.



We reviewed prekindergarten enrolment information as of November 2025 and found no schools with waitlists had unused prekindergarten spaces (i.e., spaces were full).

We tested a sample of three monthly forms submitted by prekindergarten teachers and found that forms were adequately updated and shared within the Division.

The Division exports the monthly forms to a spreadsheet, which it uses to analyze enrolment and identify barriers. We found the Division reviews both enrolment and waitlist data to assess demand and consider adjustments to program offerings across schools. For example, in December 2024, the Division analyzed whether schools (i.e., W.F. Ready, Wascana Plains, Harbour Landing, Argyle, and Ethel Milliken) that currently do not have a prekindergarten program, would benefit from one if those schools had readily available space (i.e., meets requirements or requires some renovations to accommodate a prekindergarten program classroom). The review found all schools either required significant renovations to existing spaces or did not have available space to accommodate a prekindergarten program.

We found all prekindergarten teachers submitted a list of barriers in monthly forms and ways they planned to mitigate the identified barrier (see **Figure 2**).

Figure 2—Identified Barriers and Mitigation Strategies

| Barrier | Mitigation Strategy |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hesitation of families to allow children to join prekindergarten program | Have families meet the teacher on the playground, and continue family engagement in the classroom setting |
| Transportation | Identify other families in the program who would be willing to assist in transportation |
| Parent work schedules | Move child to a different offering (e.g., afternoon rather than morning) |
| | Allow for late drop-off to accommodate parent schedule |
| Families moving | Encourage family to look for prekindergarten program offered in other schools |

Source: Adapted from Regina Public School Division records.

We also found the Division discusses potential strategies to address barriers with senior management, the Ministry during annual Early Years meetings, and annually with its Board.

Transportation is one of the commonly identified barriers experienced by families choosing not to enroll in a prekindergarten program. The Division conducted a cost analysis for transportation services in February 2025. The analysis found transportation services to be unfeasible as it would cost \$100,000 per school for an additional bus to provide transportation to prekindergarten students.⁷

With the implementation of the monthly forms, the Division is now also able to track information about students moving in and out of its prekindergarten programs. Students may leave the program for various reasons, such as an inconvenient location or issues with program expectations. In addition, families may relocate, transfer to another school division, or begin attending another early learning/childcare program (e.g., French immersion prekindergarten). Gaining an overall understanding about the reasons students

⁷ Transportation estimate of \$100,000 per school included costs of bus usage, retrofitting the bus to include belts to safely transport small children, staff to operate the bus, and time to complete the bus route drop off and pick up.

leave prekindergarten provides the Division with helpful information about common possible barriers to full utilization of its program.

Figure 3 provides details about the Division's utilization of its available prekindergarten spaces from 2023 to 2026. Utilization remained relatively similar for the past three years.

Although 2025–26 shows a slight decrease in overall space utilization from prior year, we found specific schools that had historically less than 50% of their prekindergarten spaces utilized increased to at least 67% of spaces utilized, except for one school located in north-central Regina. Also, by November 2025, space utilization increased to 84% overall (see **Figure 4**), which shows the schools undertook efforts between September and November to increase the number of prekindergarten students in available spaces.

Figure 3—Regina Public School Division Prekindergarten Space Utilization 2023–25^A

| | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|-----------------------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Prekindergarten spaces available ^B | 708 | 708 | 738 |
| Unused prekindergarten spaces | 149 | 126 | 174 |
| Space utilization | 79% | 82% | 76% |

Source: Adapted from information provided by Regina Public School Division.

^A Prekindergarten utilization at September 30 of each year.

^B Includes spaces designated for students participating in the Early Learning and Intensive Support Program (ELISP) and non-ELISP students. ELISP students and non-ELISP students learn together in the same prekindergarten classrooms.

Formally analyzing space utilization mitigates the risk of the Division not appropriately responding to possible barriers (e.g., program locations) affecting full prekindergarten program enrolment. Maximizing utilization of prekindergarten spaces is key to ensuring that public funds are used efficiently and more children benefit from the program.

3.2 Waitlists Centrally Monitored

We recommended Regina Public School Division No. 4 centrally monitor and analyze its prekindergarten waitlists. (2024 Report – Volume 1, p. 94, Recommendation 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement October 17, 2025)

Status—Implemented

Regina Public School Division centrally monitored prekindergarten program demand and waitlists at its schools since fall 2024.

The Division's demand assessment, along with its ability to meet demand, is a critical aspect of delivering successful prekindergarten programming. To meet the needs of families across Regina, the Division needs to offer prekindergarten in the right schools at the right time. Any new prekindergarten classrooms approved by the Ministry creates 16 spaces for prekindergarten students. No new prekindergarten classrooms were approved in 2025–26; however, 15 schools added two additional Early Learning and Intensive Support Program (ELISP) spaces to their prekindergarten programs (i.e., 30 new ELISP spaces).



With the Division's implementation of the monthly reporting process outlined in **Section 3.1**, the Division now centrally analyzes waitlist data. Schools provide waitlist data monthly, which include:

- Applications received
- Applications under review
- Applicants eligible for enrolment but waitlisted, and
- Waitlisted applicants willing to attend another school

We found the Supervisor of Education analyzes and shares waitlist information with senior management, which is also used in budget discussions with the Ministry of Education, and presented to the Division's Board in an annual accountability report. Reporting provides information on waitlist numbers and barriers to enrolment. At November 2025, the Division reported 47 students on prekindergarten waitlists, which is a marked improvement from February 2024 (original audit) where 75 students were waitlisted.

Centrally tracking and analyzing waitlists allow the Division to better determine locations that require additional spaces or locations that may benefit from a prekindergarten program to address demand.

3.3 Performance Measures Specific to Prekindergarten Developed

We recommended Regina Public School Division No. 4 use sufficient measures to assess and report on the delivery of its prekindergarten programming. (2024 Report – Volume 1, p. 95, Recommendation 3; Public Accounts Committee agreement October 17, 2025)

Status—Implemented

Regina Public School Division developed measures to specifically assess the performance of its prekindergarten program, which assist the Division in assessing the quality of its program and in identifying potential areas for improvement.

From its monthly reporting (**Section 3.1**), the Division collects information on program enrolment, waitlists, and students who joined (i.e., “ins”) as well as who left (i.e., “outs”) the prekindergarten program during the year.

In addition to collecting prekindergarten student enrolment information from schools, in June 2025, the Division implemented a digital tool to track and differentiate student achievement between students who attended a prekindergarten program and those who did not. This digital tool gives the Supervisor of Assessment the ability to extract specific student achievement data. It helps measure the progress of different prekindergarten student cohorts based on a variety of indicators such as cognitive skills, language, and communication skills once they enter kindergarten.

In its 2025–26 Annual Early Learning and Accountability Report to senior management and the Board, the Division reported kindergarten student achievement for students who attended prekindergarten compared to those who did not. The data showed 73% of students who had taken prekindergarten programming were considered Tier 1 (i.e., able to complete learning concepts without assistance) at kindergarten exit in June 2025.

Beginning in January 2026, the Division also started reporting on newly developed measures for prekindergarten to its Board. **Figure 4** shows the new measures and results at September 30 and November 30, 2025, reported to the Board. For example, only 6% of students enrolled in a prekindergarten program since September left the program. This shows teachers are finding ways to keep students and families in the program once they register.

Figure 4—Prekindergarten Performance Measures and Results

| Measure | Description | September 30, 2025 | November 30, 2025 |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Enrolment | Percentage of students in prekindergarten programs (i.e., utilization rate) compared to total spaces available | 76% | 84% |
| Ins | Percentage of students who joined a prekindergarten program since September compared to unused spaces in September | N/A ^A | 89% |
| Outs | Percentage of students who left a prekindergarten program since September compared to total spaces available | N/A ^A | 6% |
| Waitlist | Number of students eligible to attend prekindergarten, but waiting for an available space to open | N/A ^A | 47 |

Source: Adapted from Regina Public School Division records.

^A Items listed as N/A do not apply because it is the start of a school year.

Having measures specific to prekindergarten allows the Division to effectively assess and report on the performance and success of its prekindergarten programming.

3.4 Classroom Learning Environments Monitored

We recommended Regina Public School Division No. 4 periodically conduct formal assessments of prekindergarten classroom environments.

(2024 Report – Volume 1, p. 99, Recommendation 4; Public Accounts Committee agreement October 17, 2025)

Status—Implemented

Regina Public School Division established appropriate expectations for prekindergarten classroom learning environments and formally assesses whether learning environments meet those expectations.

Classroom environments can teach children the classroom is a place where they are valued as people capable of exploring materials and learning with the teacher and each other.⁸

⁸ Ministry of Education, *Play and Exploration—Early Learning Program Guide*, p. 44.



In fall 2025, the Division began requiring principals to meet with prekindergarten teachers in the fall and spring to document a classroom environment assessment. The Division expects principals to complete this assessment once every three years (for existing teachers) or as new principals or prekindergarten teachers start with a school. The form asks principals to document areas of strength, areas for growth, and next steps.

Using the monthly forms, schools inform the Division when a classroom environment assessment has been completed. We tested a sample of four schools and found that all principals completed the assessments as required.

Periodically assessing the prekindergarten learning environment enables the Division to better meet student needs and improve their educational setting.

3.5 Key Partnerships Shared with Prekindergarten Teachers

We recommended Regina Public School Division No. 4 communicate with prekindergarten teachers about its partnerships with other agencies providing support services to children. (2024 Report – Volume 1, p. 102, Recommendation 5; Public Accounts Committee agreement October 17, 2025)

Status—Implemented

Regina Public School Division has partnerships with several outside agencies in relation to prekindergarten and has introduced ways to increase prekindergarten teachers' awareness of these partnerships and the benefits they provide.

By partnering with outside agencies in the community, additional services (e.g., health, mental health, social services) can further support prekindergarten students.⁹

Figure 5 outlines the community partnerships the Division has in relation to its prekindergarten program.

Figure 5—Key Community Partnerships for Prekindergarten Student Support

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| <p>KidsFirst Regina: a home-visiting program designed to support children and families by enhancing parenting knowledge, providing support, and building on family strengths</p> <p>Regina Early Childhood Intervention Program: provides specialized services to families of children aged 0–6 years who are either at risk for, have a diagnosis of, or exhibit developmental delay or disability</p> <p>Saskatchewan Health Authority's Wascana Rehabilitation Centre: provides intensive support programming (e.g., physical therapy, occupational therapy, exercise therapy, music therapy)</p> <p>Métis Nation Saskatchewan: funds the Michif Early Learning Program offered at Tawâw School</p> <p>Regina Early Years Family Resource Centre: offers a development centre for families and children to foster the healthy development of children from prenatal to five years of age</p> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Source: Adapted from Regina Public School Division records.

The Division lists all community partnerships on an internal website used by Division staff and teachers. Additionally, at its fall start-up meetings, the Division incorporated ways to assist prekindergarten teachers in learning about community partnerships. For example, at its fall 2025 start-up meeting, it provided prekindergarten teachers with an exercise to learn about community partnerships and their respective supports available.

⁹ Ministry of Education, *Essential Learning Experiences*, p. 17.

Informing prekindergarten teachers about partnerships with outside agencies helps them provide additional learning supports to students.

3.6 Family Visits Tracked

We recommended Regina Public School Division No. 4 implement a consistent method for prekindergarten teachers to track family visits.

(2024 Report – Volume 1, p. 104, Recommendation 6; Public Accounts Committee agreement October 17, 2025)

Status—Implemented

Regina Public School Division consistently tracked and maintained records of its required prekindergarten teachers' engagements with students' families throughout the year.

Family engagement in children's learning creates significant benefits, such as improved intellectual functioning to greater school success with teachers benefitting from direct contact with families, gaining greater knowledge and understanding of the children, their families, and the communities in which they teach.¹⁰

The Division requires prekindergarten teachers to engage with students' families throughout the year, including two family visits and monthly family engagement events.

In 2025, the Division implemented a form for prekindergarten teachers to track and document family visits and engagement events, including information on the type of activity conducted (e.g., visits, events, conferences) and the number of families in attendance.

We tested four schools and found each school adequately completed these forms for the fall 2025 family visits. The Division entered the forms into a tracking sheet. For three of the four schools we tested, all families participated in the family visit. The remaining school had most parents attend but is in a vulnerable area of the city that struggles to have parents participate in family engagement.

Having an effective method to track family visits ensures prekindergarten teachers conduct family visits for all students, as expected.

3.7 Improved Reporting to Board on Prekindergarten

We recommended Regina Public School Division No. 4 provide its Board with detailed analysis of changes to its prekindergarten enrolment.

(2024 Report – Volume 1, p. 105, Recommendation 7; Public Accounts Committee agreement October 17, 2025)

Status—Implemented

Regina Public School Division began providing its Board with a detailed analysis of prekindergarten enrolments annually, including enrolment changes and barriers to families joining prekindergarten programs.

¹⁰ Ministry of Education, *Prekindergarten Essentials—Effective Practices, Policies, and Guidelines*, p. 16.



The Division provides information annually to its Board about student enrolment for all grades (including prekindergarten students). Prior to January 2026, this information related to the number of schools with prekindergarten programs across the Division (including the number of programs as some schools offer more than one), number of students enrolled in prekindergarten programs at a point in time, student achievement data for children entering and exiting kindergarten, and the benefits of prekindergarten programming.

We found the Division expanded this annual reporting in January 2026 (see **Figures 2 and 4**) to include:

- Prekindergarten enrolment data (actual students versus total available spaces)
- Number of students who enrolled in prekindergarten since September
- Number of students who left a prekindergarten program since September
- Prekindergarten program waitlist numbers
- Barriers families face to enrolling children in a prekindergarten program (e.g., transportation, family expects to be out of country for an extended period)
- Kindergarten student achievement data broken down by students who attended a prekindergarten program versus those who did not

Providing analysis about possible causes for changes in prekindergarten enrolment throughout the year provides the Board with sufficient information to make informed decisions such as on resource allocations for prekindergarten programming.