

DATE: June 19, 2018

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Shared School Design Models in Saskatchewan
(Response to Request for Information #018)

ORIGINATOR: Dr. Lorne Parker, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE STAFF: Josephine Duquette, Ashley Kwan, Roland Labbe, Jennifer Thompson, Christopher Wright

REFERENCE: April 10, 2018 Board meeting (Trustee Johner)
[Joint-Use Schools Project \(Government of Saskatchewan\)](#)

ISSUE

The following information was requested:

That Administration provide a brief report on how shared school design models or operations between Public and Catholic School Boards are operating in Saskatchewan.

BACKGROUND

In 2017, the Government of Saskatchewan opened 18 schools on nine shared use sites in the municipalities of Saskatoon, Regina, Warman, and Martensville, using a public private partnership (P3). The Public and Catholic School Divisions share the buildings with the community.

Initial research from the Government of Saskatchewan's website included information on funding, school locations, and participating school boards. Administrators responsible for facilities and maintenance from Regina Public Schools, Regina Catholic School Division, Saskatoon Public Schools, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, and Prairie Spirit School Division were interviewed, as well as staff from one of the shared schools in Regina.

CURRENT SITUATION

Interviews were conducted over the telephone and the interviewees were given the opportunity to share their perspectives on the shared schools project that they participated in, including operation and maintenance. The interviews resulted in a number of reoccurring themes: division of maintenance, site configuration, project design process, and school division partnerships.

Maintenance for the shared P3 schools is provided by the P3 service provider directly or contracted out to a third party by the P3 service provider. The school boards are responsible for cleaning and other minor work like painting and drilling of walls. All maintenance is paid for through an annual maintenance allowance given to each board by the provincial government. Typically, when there are maintenance repairs or replacements which need to be completed, schools submit work orders to the P3 service provider, who then determines who the responsible party is. Administrators with several boards have expressed frustration over this process, as there are often disagreements as to who the responsible party is, and it is an inefficient use of time for all parties. The cost for services provided by the P3 service provider to replace something includes a 30-year maintenance fee up front. School board administrators interviewed all mentioned that it would be more time and cost effective if their own maintenance

personnel were to perform all service requests. There was also speculation that the P3 construction was actually not cost-effective.

Site configuration was another theme present throughout the interviews with administration from various boards. Site configuration can limit play and parking spaces for students, teachers, parents, and the community. Neighbourhood design had a large impact on some schools as the roadways leading to the school were not of sufficient width. Administrators expressed that open collaboration with the city and developers are crucial in order for the neighbourhood to successfully accommodate an operational school. In order to overcome these challenges, the site would need to be larger and the roads should be wider, however, this makes any savings in land irrelevant as it would be almost the same size as if the site had two separate buildings.

The recent P3 shared schools process was new to all the school boards, which resulted in an adjustment to their operations. The administrators mentioned some differences in understanding between the contractors and the school boards. Expectations were not clearly defined early in the process, there was little consideration of the school boards' input, and large meetings between the various stakeholders were time consuming and not cost-effective. The completed shared buildings are up to building codes but education experts consider the buildings as "very standard", since contractors did not fully understand the value and concept of a 21st Century learning environment. It was mentioned in one interview that at the same price, the boards could have built two schools that better fit with 21st Century learning environments concept.

Though there are maintenance challenges, time inefficiencies and traffic concerns, the communities and administrators were able to collaborate and acquire new working relationships with each other. Additionally, the administrators acknowledged that in the future, the P3 model could be more successful as a design-build P3 model. Principals included in the project design process better understood how to fully utilize their new space and collaborate with their neighbouring principal. Though each school functions independently within the same building, staff at each school worked together to stagger their schedules to alleviate traffic pressures and supervision issues, and to share the third gym and community space. Staff and students in the schools also supported one another by attending each other's musical and theatrical performances. The communities are able to utilize the space by registering through an online system. In addition, schools' administration engaged the local communities by inviting them out to events such as a joint barbecue hosted by the two schools.

KEY POINTS

- School administrators will stagger school schedules to accommodate each other; however, function independently of each other for the most part.
- Principals collaborate with each other and the community to share gym and multifunctional space.
- Administrators indicated support for a design-build P3 model that excludes maintenance.
- Maintenance is largely completed by the P3 service provider or contracted out to a third party. There are often disagreements between the P3 service provider and the school boards' administrators as to who the responsible party is.
- Administrators noted that the cost of maintenance was much higher and the process was more time consuming at these schools because of the P3 model.
- Project expectations were not clearly defined and stakeholders did not believe that their input was given much consideration by the builders. The stakeholders believe that this led to the completion of school buildings with very standard features that could have been built with 21st Century learning environment elements for the same price.
- The school design process was time consuming and costly for school boards' administration to participate in.

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