

Advocate for Children and Youth Tables 2017 Annual Report

REGINA – The Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth, Corey O'Soup, tabled his second Annual Report in the Legislative Assembly today. This report signifies the integration of the priorities and goals set out in his five-year Strategic Plan. The Advocate is also launching a new logo, featured on the cover, which represents the change in the office's priorities.

This year, the Advocate focused on several objectives related to fostering positive relationships with First Nations and Metis communities, education and mental health, and ensuring children and youth are supported to use their voice and to be advocates in their communities.

"The voice of children and youth needs to be a key determinant in decisions made that affect them. By helping the young people of this province use their voices and by providing them with opportunities to be heard, children and youth will not only influence change, they will drive," said O'Soup.

Last year's annual report foreshadowed some of the direction the Advocate's office would take regarding the systemic issues that impact the children and youth in this province. This year's report not only reflects the Advocate's work in this regard, but also recognizes promising programs, initiatives, and practices that can produce immediate and long-term change.

"We cannot continue to accept the low graduation rates of our First Nations, Metis, and Inuit youth who are graduating at 43.2% as compared to non-Indigenous youth who are graduating at 85.4%," says O'Soup. The report also highlights the shameful wait times for mental health services experienced by the children and youth in this province, which are exceeding two years for psychiatric services. "We must work harder to address the fact that young people in the northern, remote, and rural communities have fewer supports and face suicide rates that are significantly higher than the national average," said O'Soup.

The report focuses on the importance of meaningful change that includes collaborative work and support from all levels of government – federal, provincial, First Nations and local – to improve outcomes for all children and youth, and particularly our First Nations and Metis children who have historically been denied fair and equal treatment.

"My hope is that this report not only reflects our work but can also be used as a resource for the people of Saskatchewan. Our new logo signifies our strategic direction and symbolizes our commitment to support and empower Saskatchewan children and youth to reach their full potential," says O'Soup.

The Advocate for Children and Youth is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. He leads a team of professionals who work on behalf of the province's young people. Our vision is that the rights, well-being and voice of children and youth are respected and valued.

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To get an electronic copy of this annual report, please visit: www.saskadvocate.ca.

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