



MEDIA STATEMENT

August 30, 2022

Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth Launches Investigation into Service and Oversight in Registered Independent Schools

SASKATOON – The Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth, Dr. Lisa Broda, has launched a full investigation into the services and oversight of registered independent schools. As per her statement released August 19, 2022, the Advocate has reviewed all information received from the Ministry of Education to date and determined that a full independent investigation is required.

“The magnitude of the allegations of abuse and the number of concerns raised in both the public forum and identified in my office’s review of the information gathered over the past few weeks, has informed my decision to conduct full independent investigation,” said Broda.

While the Advocate’s legislation does not extend jurisdiction to investigate criminal matters, the Advocate acknowledges that individuals impacted by these allegations have taken the avenues available to have these critical matters addressed. “I admire the strength and courage of those who have brought these matters forward in advocating for themselves and also for the children and youth currently served by the education system,” said Broda.

The Advocate’s mandate and jurisdiction is defined by *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act* (the Act) which sets out the legislative authority to investigate any matter relating to services to children and youth by any ministry, agency of the government or publicly-funded health entity.

“The matters pertaining to registered independent schools have been a paramount concern since our office became aware of the allegations of abuse in early August. My legislative mandate is to ensure all services to children are in accordance with the legislation, regulations, and policies through which they are provided – and that those documents and services respect, protect and fulfill the rights of children,” said Broda.

Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child affirms that institutions responsible for the care of children – including schools – “conform with standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health [...] and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.”

Pursuant to the Act, the scope of the Advocate's investigation will broadly include, but not limited to an examination of the historical and current services provided to children and youth within the various categories of registered independent schools in Saskatchewan and the oversight and accountability mechanisms established and implemented by the Ministry of Education.

"It is critical that young people are being educated in environments that respect their inherent dignity and their full range of human rights," said Broda. "Although there are several processes currently underway examining the issues raised by these allegations from various perspectives, an independent, child-rights lens is required to ensure the education system in Saskatchewan – in all its forms – is operating with the best interests of the child at its centre."

Under the authority of *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act*, the Advocate can make recommendations to the Ministry and agencies of the government to strengthen service delivery to children and youth in registered independent schools.

Any child or youth can call our office confidentially if they have concerns with public services, inclusive of education at 1-800-322-7221.

The Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth is an independent office of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. The Advocate leads a team of professionals who work on behalf of the province's young people to ensure accountability of the entities that serve them. Our vision is that the rights, well-being, and voices of children and youth are respected, valued, and supported to assist young people to reach their full potential. Follow us on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook @saskadvocate.ca

- 30 -

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