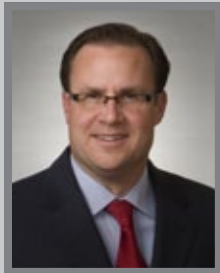




# Saskatchewan's Regional Colleges: Towards a New System

## Minister's Message



Saskatchewan's regional colleges provide valuable education and training opportunities that allow people to engage in, and benefit from our growing economy. Each year, the system is accessed by more than 24,000 students.

Over the next decade, our province is projected to need about 80,000 new skilled workers in order to meet our labour market demand. The regional colleges play a vital role in helping Saskatchewan address this talent challenge, and Dr. Atkinson's recommendations are key to that work. In fact, Government has already undertaken several actions to address these recommendations.

This is a positive step in moving us forward in our collaborative efforts to strengthen the regional college system. The priorities include:

- Meeting the needs of students by strengthening the relationship between AEEI and regional colleges;
- Improving governance in regional colleges with a focus on training of board members;
- Establishing performance measures for regional colleges to inform planning and decision-making; and
- Building on the regional college system's capacity to respond effectively to local, regional and provincial labour market demands.

Over the coming months and years, we all look forward to seeing the results of this good work.

The Honourable Rob Norris  
Minister of Advanced Education,  
Employment and Immigration

## Background

The regional college system is comprised of seven colleges in over 40 locations.

The regional colleges' mandate is to provide services and programs that fall within four broad areas: adult basic education; vocational/technical training; university courses; and non-credit programming.

In accordance with provincial legislation, a review of the system must be undertaken at least once every five years. The 2010 Regional College Review focused on:

- The effectiveness and efficiency of the system in relation to its legislated mandate;
- The system's alignment with government objectives, including the needs of Saskatchewan learners; and
- Colleges' planning and governance arrangements.

The 2010 Review was led by Dr. Michael Atkinson, Executive Director and Professor, the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, and consisted of a series of stakeholder consultations, key interviews and analysis of additional government reports and research.

Dr. Atkinson's report makes 20 recommendations. AEEI has begun working with the Regional Colleges to determine the key areas to address first.



## Actions to address Dr. Atkinson's Recommendations

### 1 AEEI should give regional colleges responsibility for system level educational needs assessment

#### Underway

- Providing funding to the regional colleges to help determine programming needs.

#### The Road Ahead

- Recommending ways to more efficiently and effectively determine local, regional and provincial programming needs.

### 2 AEEI should expedite the development of a Saskatchewan labour market analysis

#### Underway

- Sharing regional and sectoral labour market information at an annual forum.
- A task force has been struck to assist in development of a provincial Labour Market Strategy.

#### The Road Ahead

- Creating easier access to online labour market information.
- Achieving and reporting measurable progress based on the Labour Market Strategy.

### 3 Regional colleges should work with universities regarding enrolment planning for courses offered

#### The Road Ahead

- AEEI and the regional colleges to develop a strategic work plan to identify opportunities for university-level course offerings at regional colleges.

### 4 Regional colleges should continue to broker programming developed by SIAS, but also seek low-cost alternatives from out-of-province suppliers for programs that SIAS does not offer

#### Underway

- The new Skills Training Allocation policy allows regional colleges to seek other brokering options when SIAS is not available.

### 5 AEEI should develop an Adult Basic Education (ABE) Strategy in conjunction with other ministries of government

#### Underway

- Implemented the ABE-Essential Skills for the Workplace program to help low literacy learners transition to the workforce.
- AEEI and the Ministry of Education are developing funding options for 18 to 22 year olds in ABE programming.
- Conducting annual ABE roundtables with stakeholders to address continuous improvement and learner retention.
- Reviewed promising practices in ABE across Canada.

#### The Road Ahead

- Completing a review of on-reserve ABE programming in Saskatchewan and implement recommendations.
- Finalizing a funding formula for 18 to 22 year olds in ABE programming.





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Actions to address Dr. Atkinson's Recommendations



**6** Regional colleges should develop a set of system-wide performance indicators consisting of financial and non-financial measures

### Underway

- ⦿ AEEI is working with the regional colleges and SIAST to develop common data definitions for reporting progress.
- ⦿ Reviewing program plans and financial statements for Skills Training and ABE programs.
- ⦿ Aligning regional college plans and processes with Government's strategic direction.

### The Road Ahead

- ⦿ Ensuring regional college strategic plans and processes align with AEEI's mandate and Government priorities.
- ⦿ Ensuring strategic planning processes align with best practices.
- ⦿ Developing and implementing a performance management framework.

**7** AEEI should develop and introduce a database to monitor the implementation of Government's strategic goals and measure progress against performance indicators

### Underway

- ⦿ Reviewing regional college plans to ensure alignment with strategic goals.
- ⦿ AEEI is working with the regional colleges and SIAST to develop common data definitions for reporting progress (as per recommendation 6).

### The Road Ahead

- ⦿ Working with regional colleges to develop a common set of performance measures.
- ⦿ Improving information systems used to monitor outcomes.

**8** AEEI should develop a student identification system

### The Road Ahead

- ⦿ AEEI will work with the regional colleges to evaluate the current student identification system and determine future options.

**9** AEEI should permit regional colleges to move funds between budgets

### Underway

- ⦿ Skills Training funding has blended three funding envelopes into one to increase effectiveness and accountability.

### The Road Ahead

- ⦿ Developing alternative funding options.

**10** AEEI should develop a model set of by-laws for use by regional college boards

### The Road Ahead

- ⦿ AEEI is working with the regional colleges to develop and approve a model set of by-laws that:
  - outline board member duties and responsibilities;
  - provide criteria for board composition; and
  - refine means to identify potential board members.

**11** AEEI should develop a training program for all board members

### Underway

- ⦿ Developing and implementing a formalized board member training and certification program.

**12** The Association of Saskatchewan Regional Colleges (ASRC) should create and make public an annual report

### Underway

- ⦿ AEEI is tasking the ASRC to address this recommendation.

**13** ASRC should replace current website with an integrated student-centred portal

### Underway

- ⦿ AEEI is asking the ASRC to address this recommendation.

For more information, contact AEEI's Program Innovation Branch at 306-787-2354 or email [programinnovation@gov.sk.ca](mailto:programinnovation@gov.sk.ca).

