



Speech-Language & Audiology Canada
Orthophonie et Audiologie Canada
Communicating care | La communication à cœur

Mr. Kevin Tonita
Director, Student Achievement and Supports
Saskatchewan Ministry of Education
7th floor, 2220 College Avenue,
Regina, SK,
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September 11, 2025

Dear Mr. Tonita,

We are reaching out today at the suggestion of Minister Everett Hindley, as mentioned in our last correspondence following our meeting with him in February. During this meeting, we shared our recommendations to strengthen student success through improved speech, language, literacy, and hearing support in Saskatchewan schools.

We are very pleased to hear that in the 2025-2026 school year, a provincially approved reading screener will be implemented in every publicly funded school to help teachers identify students who may have difficulties learning to read, and that resources are being developed to build teacher expertise in reading instruction. As noted in our new Position Paper, “The Role of the Speech-Language Pathologist in School-Based Literacy”,

”It is not possible to separate literacy from its basis in, and bidirectional relationship with, language. While rooted in orality, literacy can be broadly defined as the coding of language in its standardized form. Strong (speech and) language skills, namely the use and perception of the acoustic characteristics of sounds and their phonology (speech sounds), morphology (smallest units of meaning), syntax (which is part of grammar), semantics (word meanings), and pragmatics (social use of language), are consequently fundamental to reading and writing success.”

Phrased differently, children who have difficulties with speech and language will have a much more difficult time decoding and producing language in its written form. Unless

speech, language, and hearing are consistently screened at or before school entry, we will not be able to maximize literacy acquisition in the classroom.

Speaking, listening, reading, and writing are fundamental skills required for academic success as well as social and emotional well-being. Difficulties linked to these areas are central to many disorders that can impact educational outcomes (e.g., dyslexia, developmental language disorder, autism). Although staffing is decided at the school-board level in Saskatchewan, ensuring the provision of adequate S-LP services is critical for the well-being of these students. Systemic change cannot occur without sufficient personnel to deliver the necessary services.

We'd be very grateful if we could arrange a meeting in the near future to discuss how SAC, both through our organization and through our membership, can support the Ministry in the review of K-3 language arts curricula, and help to ensure that literacy support can be maximized throughout the province.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Cameron-Turley
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