SISCC REPORT · SASKATCHEWAN

ACE SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC MONEY IN SASKATCHEWAN

Which Saskatchewan schools have taught Accelerated Christian Education, an American fundamentalist curriculum, and how much public money the province has paid them since 2012.

October 2026 · Built from Public Accounts of Saskatchewan (2011-12 to 2025-26), Corporate Registry filings, archived SAICS web pages, government reports and news coverage.

$27.4M
in direct provincial grants to eight ACE schools, fiscal 2012-13 to 2025-26

20
Saskatchewan schools tied to ACE, 1980s to today

12 → 5
schools in SAICS's own member directory, 2010 to 2024 onward

2002
earliest public funding to a school on SAICS's list, a decade before the 2012 category

SUMMARY WHAT ACE IS WHAT SAICS IS THE SCHOOLS THE MONEY YEAR BY YEAR CHARGES TIMELINE GAPS SOURCES

SUMMARY

No government body, and not ACE itself, publishes a count of ACE schools in Saskatchewan. The Ministry of Education registers independent schools by funding category, not by curriculum. Every number in this report is rebuilt from other records.

ACE arrived with a wave of about 30 church schools opened in Saskatchewan between 1975 and 1985. The earliest specific ACE school on record is Christian Centre Academy in Saskatoon, founded in 1982 and later renamed Legacy Christian Academy and then Valour Academy. We found no record of an ACE school operating in 1979 itself.

The Saskatchewan Association of Independent Church Schools (SAICS) is the umbrella group for these schools. Its website called its members "the largest group of church schools in Canada using ACE's individualized, mastery based program." It listed 12 member schools in 2010 and 5 from 2024 on.

Since qualified independent school grants began in 2012-13, between 5 and 8 ACE schools have received direct provincial grants each year, for a total of **$27,354,337** to 2025-26. Three more were funded through school divisions as associate schools. One of them, Harvest City Christian Academy, says it has had government funding since 2002.

Four former staff of these schools have been convicted of crimes against students: one at Victory Baptist School in Prince Albert in the 1980s, and three from Christian Centre Academy in Saskatoon since 2023. A fifth former leader of Christian Centre is awaiting trial. Two of those convicted went on to lead other publicly funded ACE schools.

BACKGROUND

WHAT ACE IS

Accelerated Christian Education (ACE), also sold as School of Tomorrow, is an **American** Christian curriculum company. Fundamentalist Baptist minister Donald Howard and his wife Esther founded it in Texas in 1970. It is now based in Hendersonville, Tennessee. It says it is used in over 6,000 schools in 145 countries, and it sells the same materials to homeschooling families. (Wikipedia)

- **Workbooks instead of lessons.** Students work alone through booklets called PACEs (Packets of Accelerated Christian Education). Each one has a scripture to memorize and a character trait. Students move at their own pace and must score 80–90% on each PACE test. (Wikipedia)
- **Little teaching.** ACE classrooms are rows of carrels for private individual study. ACE's own advertising said one teacher with two non-professional helpers could supervise 40–50 students of any grade in one room. (ERIC)
- **American content.** The materials are written for American students: American history, literature and units of measurement. A Canadian edition exists, but it is not the Saskatchewan curriculum. (Our Sask)
- **What it teaches.** Science is taught as young-earth creationism. ACE texts have presented the Loch Ness monster as evidence against evolution, defended South African apartheid, and taught that wives must submit to husbands. (Wikipedia) A biology text from Legacy's ACE/SAICS curriculum says humans and dinosaurs lived at the same time. (Global News)
- **Outside reviews.** In 2016, UK inspectors rated nine of ten ACE-linked schools "inadequate" or "requires improvement." In 2019, the University of South Africa warned that ACE's Grade 12 equivalent may not meet its admission requirements. (Wikipedia)

> In Saskatchewan, ACE schools use ACE PACEs up to grade 10, then SAICS's own high school PACEs. Legacy Christian Academy staff wrote those high school courses because the Ministry would not fund schools using ACE at the high school level. (Ministry of Education records obtained through freedom of information)

WHAT SAICS IS

The Saskatchewan Association of Independent Church Schools (SAICS) is the umbrella group for Saskatchewan's ACE schools. It writes and sells their high school curriculum from the Christian Centre / Legacy / Valour building at 102 Pinehouse Drive, Saskatoon.

- **Founded by the ACE schools.** Church schools and homeschooling families formed SAICS in June 1983. It incorporated as a charitable non-profit in 1988. Its bylaws reserve a membership seat for "the Accelerated Christian Education representative for the province." (SAICS; Corporate Registry)
- **Called itself an ACE group.** From 2010 to 2018 its website described its members as "the largest group of church schools in Canada using ACE's individualized, mastery based program." (SAICS, archived 2010)
- **Helped write the rules, then won the funding.** SAICS sat on the 1989 Minister's Advisory Board that drafted the independent school regulations. It says it "lobbied successfully for 'Qualified Independent School' status and corresponding partial funding," the category its member schools have been paid under since 2012-13. (SAICS)
- **Its own curriculum.** Because ACE alone does not meet provincial high school requirements, SAICS "developed Christian curriculum (where none other was available) to match Saskatchewan Learning objectives for high school courses." Legacy Christian Academy staff wrote these PACE-style courses and the Ministry approved them. Member schools buy them, and curriculum sales make up most of SAICS's revenue: $20,907 to $46,003 a year from 2005 to 2022. SAICS also recommends Bob Jones University textbooks. (SAICS; SAICS financial statements; Ministry FOI records; The Carillon)
- **Run from Legacy.** Its registered office is 102 Pinehouse Drive, its president is Legacy's principal, and its filings list a legacyacademy.ca contact.

WHO RUNS SAICS: THE FILINGS

Its registered office has been 102 Pinehouse Drive since at least 2018, the same address Valour Academy lists today. (2025-26 school list) Its president since 2018 is Lou Brunelle, Legacy's principal. (CTV News)

DATE	RECORD	WHAT IT SHOWS
Aug 2025	Notice of change of registered office	Office still 102 Pinehouse Drive; contact email now at Prairie Christian Academy
Aug 2023	Annual return for 2022 (filed late)	9 voting member schools, 2 associate members; contact email at legacyacademy.ca; directors Lou Brunelle (president), Duff Friesen (secretary/treasurer), Amber Boutin
May 2022	Annual return for 2021	Same three directors; 9 voting members
May 2019	Change of registered office and directors	Office filed as 102 Pinehouse Drive; filed from a Regent Academy email
Oct 2018	Restoral	SAICS restored after being struck off the corporate register; office 102 Pinehouse Drive; contact email at legacyacademy.ca
Feb 2018	Director records	Lou Brunelle becomes president; Amber Boutin (Prairie Christian Academy) joins the board
2009	Director records	Duff Friesen (Regent Academy, Prince Albert) becomes secretary/treasurer
2005–2022	Reviewed financial statements	Curriculum sales are most of its revenue, $20,907–$46,003 a year; every set of notes says it "develops and provides a source of educational curriculum materials for the use of church schools"
Apr 1988	Incorporation	SAICS Inc. registered as a Saskatchewan charitable non-profit, entity 208873

Source: Saskatchewan Corporate Registry filings for entity 208873, and SAICS financial statements for 2005–2008, 2011–2012, 2016–2017 and 2019–2022, reviewed by accountant Bryan L. Sly.

PART 1

HOW MANY ACE SCHOOLS

THE SCHOOLS

Twenty schools can be tied to ACE, once renamed schools are merged. Eight received direct provincial grants, three were funded through school divisions as associate schools, and nine never appear in Public Accounts. Queen City Church Christian Academy (Regina) and Kindersley Christian Academy appear in ACE Canada's own 2004 school locator for Saskatchewan. Victory Baptist School in Prince Albert and Living Hope Christian School in Estevan, both closed, come from SISCC's own information rather than public records. SAICS member schools are ACE schools. Directory years are the dates of archived captures of SAICS's website, not exact membership dates.

SCHOOL	CITY	EVIDENCE OF ACE	PROVINCIAL FUNDING	STATUS
Christian Centre Academy → Legacy Christian Academy → Valour Academy	Saskatoon	SAICS directory 2010–2026 under all three names; former students and news reports (CBC)	DIRECT 2012-13 to 2025-26	Operating as Valour Academy
Prairie Christian Academy	Saskatoon	SAICS directory 2010–2026	DIRECT 2012-13 to 2025-26	Operating
Morning Star Christian Academy	Regina	SAICS directory 2010–2026	DIRECT 2013-14 to 2025-26	Operating
World Revival Preparatory School → Canadian Revival Preparatory School → Elevation Academy	Prince Albert	SAICS directory 2010–2011 (World Revival), 2013–2018 (Canadian Revival), 2022–2026 (Elevation)	DIRECT 2014-15 to 2025-26	Operating
Northeast Christian Academy	Melfort	SAICS directory 2022–2026	DIRECT 2020-21 to 2025-26	Operating
Grace Christian Academy / Grace Christian School	Saskatoon	SAICS directory 2010 to Jan 2024	DIRECT 2012-13 to 2022-23	Registration cancelled 2022
LifeWay Christian Academy (also known as Pathways)	Saskatoon	SAICS directory 2010 to Jan 2024	DIRECT 2012-13 to 2022-23	Not on the 2025 school list
Prince Albert Family Church Academy → Regent Christian Academy (Regent Academy)	Prince Albert	SAICS directory 2010–2013 (Family Church), 2015 to Jan 2024 (Regent); operated by Embassy Church (see Charges)	DIRECT 2012-13 to 2023-24	Not on the 2025 school list
Harvest City Christian Academy	Regina	SAICS directory 2010–2018	ASSOCIATE Regina Public Schools; the school says it "operated without	Operating

			government funding until 2002" (HCCA)	
Heritage Christian School	Battleford	SAICS directory 2010–2018	ASSOCIATE Living Sky School Division (News-Optimist); start date not found	Operating
Meadow Lake Christian Academy	Meadow Lake	SAICS directory Oct 2013	ASSOCIATE Listed as an associate school on the 2026-27 list; division and start date not found	Operating
Almond Tree Christian Academy	Canora	SAICS directory 2013 to Jan 2024	NONE FOUND	Not on the 2025 school list
Yorkton Christian Academy	Yorkton	SAICS directory 2010–2018	NONE FOUND	Not on the 2025 or 2026-27 school lists
Westdale Christian School	Saskatoon	Reported using ACE for grades 1–9 (Our Sask)	NONE FOUND	Moved into the Legacy building in 2024
Nipawin Christian Centre (Nipawin Christian School)	Nipawin	ACE Canada school locator, 2004; SAICS directory 2010–2011; StarPhoenix independent schools list, 2007	NONE FOUND	Not on later lists
Victory Christian Academy	Saskatoon	SAICS directory 2010–2011	NONE FOUND	Not on later lists
Queen City Church Christian Academy	Regina	ACE Canada school locator, 2004 (archived)	NONE FOUND	Not on later lists
Kindersley Christian Academy	Kindersley	ACE Canada school locator, 2004 (archived)	NONE FOUND	Not on the 2006-07 list or later lists
Victory Baptist School	Prince Albert	SISCC information; a newspaper report names "the Victory Baptist Church school" and a student there in 1982 (see Charges)	NONE Closed before 2012 funding	Closed
Living Hope Christian School	Estevan	SISCC information; opening date not yet confirmed	NONE FOUND	Closed

"Direct" means grants paid by the province and listed by name in Public Accounts. "Associate" schools are funded at 80% of the per-student average through a school division. "None found" means no payment of $50,000 or more appears in any Public Accounts volume from 2011-12 to 2024-25.

COUNTS OVER TIME

Two counts are specific to ACE: SAICS's own member directory, and the schools receiving direct grants in Public Accounts. The other figures count wider groups of schools, for context.

PERIOD	COUNT	WHAT IT COUNTS	SOURCE
1975–85	about 30	Private religious schools opened (all curricula)	Making the Grade

1987	48	Private schools of every kind, about 3,000 students	Making the Grade
Nov 2010	12	SAICS directory, headed "As of February, 2010, SAICS has twelve member schools. It remains the largest group of church schools in Canada using ACE's individualized, mastery based program."	SAICS, archived
Oct 2013	12	SAICS directory; Almond Tree, Meadow Lake and Canadian Revival added; Nipawin, Victory and World Revival gone	SAICS, archived
Feb 2015 – Aug 2018	11	SAICS directory, under the same 2010 heading still saying "twelve" and naming ACE, while listing 11 schools	2015, 2018
2012-13 to 2025-26	5–8	ACE schools receiving direct grants each year: 5, 6, 7, 7, 7, 7, 7, 7, 8, 8, 8, 6, 5, 5	Public Accounts, Vol. 2
2012-13 to 2017-18	19–20	Qualified (funded) independent schools of every kind	Cardus 2018
May 2022 – Jan 2024	9	SAICS directory, now headed "As of January 2019, SAICS has eight member schools, all of which use an individualized, multi-grade system of learning." ACE is no longer named.	2022, 2024
2021, 2022	9	Voting members reported in SAICS's annual returns	Corporate Registry
2022-23	63 / 19	Registered independent schools / qualified (funded) ones	Making the Grade
Jun 2024 – Apr 2026	5	SAICS directory: Valour, Prairie Christian, Morning Star, Elevation, Northeast	2024, 2026
Jan 2025	54 / 20	Independent schools / qualified plus certified (funded) ones	Provincial Auditor

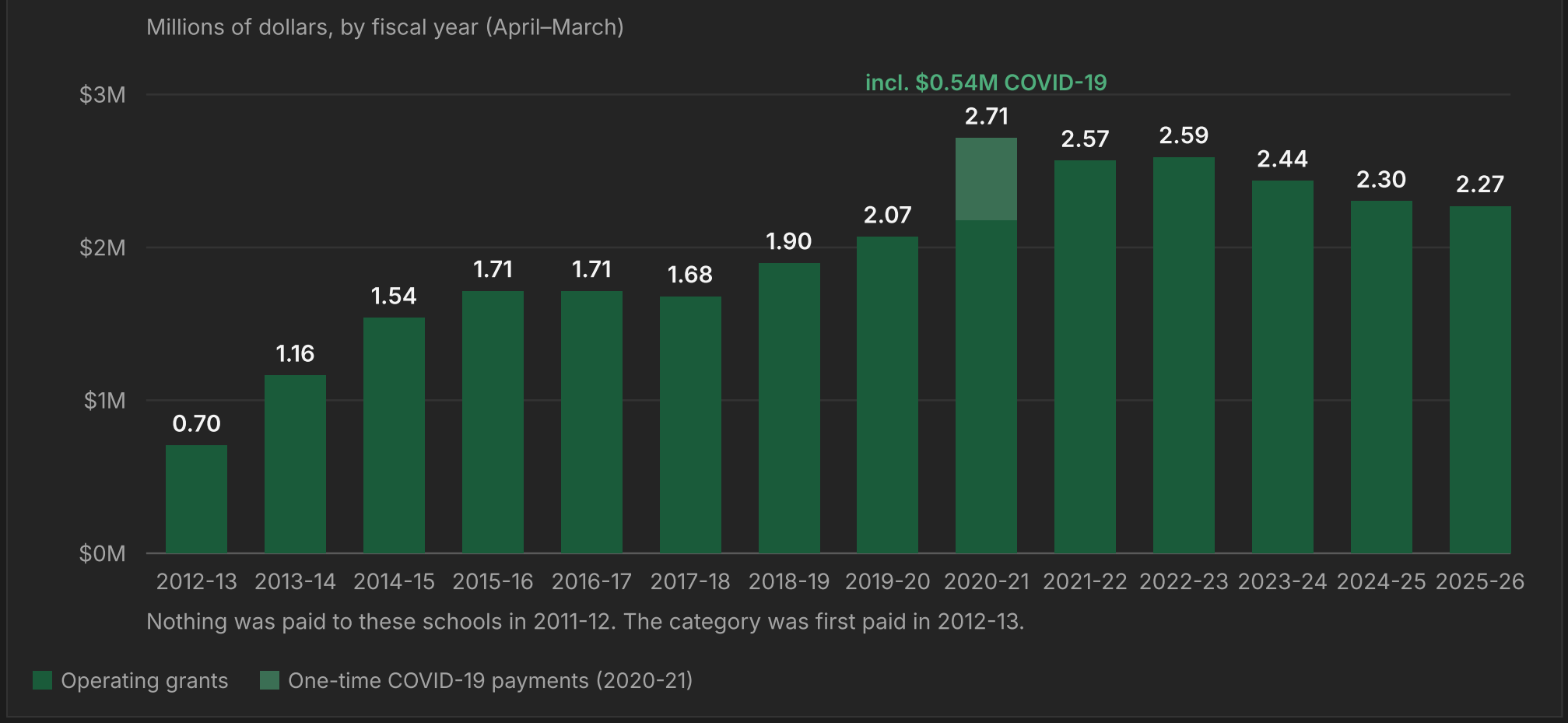
PART 2

HOW MUCH PUBLIC MONEY

THE MONEY

The Government of Saskatchewan paid **$27,354,337** in direct grants to eight ACE schools from fiscal 2012-13 to 2025-26, according to Public Accounts. Every one of them appears in SAICS's member directory. The total includes $539,211 in one-time COVID-19 payments in 2020-21.

No ACE school received a direct grant in 2011-12. The qualified independent school category was announced in December 2011 and first paid in 2012-13. The total leaves out the three associate schools, whose funding flows through school divisions and is not shown by school.



Payments rose every year but two until 2020-21, as more ACE schools joined and payments per school grew. They eased after 2022-23 as Grace, LifeWay and Regent left the funded list, partly offset by growth at Elevation Academy. In 2025-26 the five schools still funded received $2,268,999, including $630,374 to Valour Academy.

BY SCHOOL

Christian Centre Academy, renamed Legacy and then Valour, received the most: $8.59 million over 14 years, nearly a third of the total.

SCHOOL	CITY	TOTAL RECEIVED	FISCAL YEARS PAID
Christian Centre Academy → Legacy → Valour Academy	Saskatoon	$8,592,752	2012-13 to 2025-26 (14)
Prairie Christian Academy	Saskatoon	$5,332,415	2012-13 to 2025-26 (14)
World Revival / Canadian Revival / Elevation Academy	Prince Albert	$4,744,234	2014-15 to 2025-26 (12)
Grace Christian School	Saskatoon	$2,476,966	2012-13 to 2022-23 (11)
Regent Academy (formerly Prince Albert Family Church Academy)	Prince Albert	$1,960,562	2012-13 to 2023-24 (12)
LifeWay Christian Academy (Pathways)	Saskatoon	$1,631,303	2012-13 to 2022-23 (11)
Morning Star Christian Academy	Regina	$1,526,149	2013-14 to 2025-26 (13)
Northeast Christian Academy	Melfort	$1,089,956	2020-21 to 2025-26 (6)
Total		**$27,354,337**	

Totals include 2020-21 COVID-19 payments to Legacy ($188,156), Canadian Revival ($161,511), Grace ($99,286) and Prairie Christian ($90,258). Renamed schools are counted once: Legacy was paid as Valour partway through 2024-25, Regent was paid as Prince Albert Family Church Academy in 2012-13, and no payee named Pathways appears in any volume.

YEAR BY YEAR

Every figure is a payment listed in Public Accounts Volume 2, under Education → K-12 Initiatives transfers, in dollars. Page numbers are the PDF page of each year's volume. A dash means no payment of $50,000 or more was listed.

FISCAL YEAR	CHRISTIAN CENTRE / LEGACY / VALOUR	PRAIRIE CHRISTIAN	REVIVAL / ELEVATION	GRACE	REGENT	LIFEWAY	MORNING STAR	NORTHEAST	TOTAL	PDF PAGE
2011-12	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0	none listed
2012-13	299,394	106,114	–	79,586	126,958 (e)	92,850	–	–	704,902	79
2013-14	430,304	206,030	–	148,791	161,447	104,782	110,859	–	1,162,213	76
2014-15	437,944	281,510	160,965	202,449	151,265	123,668	181,652	–	1,539,453	74
2015-16	451,786	311,476	235,711	224,488	154,333	140,310	196,432	–	1,714,536	69
2016-17	406,211	329,059	252,240	269,993	148,717	156,005	151,863	–	1,714,088	71
2017-18	427,153	325,100	244,494	266,551	136,471	180,385	98,946	–	1,679,100	69
2018-19	563,563	363,548	295,899	262,211	151,926	181,712	77,790	–	1,896,649	78
2019-20	699,587	382,532	286,338	261,082	167,998	181,100	89,892	–	2,068,529	76
2020-21	736,274 + 188,156 (a)	382,862 + 90,258 (a)	271,751 + 161,511 (a)	259,703 + 99,286 (a)	171,351	182,061	96,384	74,970 (b)	2,714,567	65; 96
2021-22	909,035	400,618	371,170	305,353	204,974	169,309	91,119	113,771	2,565,349	64
2022-23	936,303	477,177	497,282	97,473	213,530	119,121	84,966	163,266	2,589,118	69–70
2023-24	806,682	523,333	637,645	–	171,592	–	98,482	198,093	2,435,827	69
2024-25	228,031 + 441,955 (d)	568,108	713,012 (c)	–	–	–	109,394	240,507	2,301,007	73–74
2025-26	630,374 (f)	584,690	616,216	–	–	–	138,370	299,349	2,268,999	79
Total	**8,592,752**	**5,332,415**	**4,744,234**	**2,476,966**	**1,960,562**	**1,631,303**	**1,526,149**	**1,089,956**	**27,354,337**	

(a) One-time payment under Finance, "Emergency Pandemic Support for K-12 Education," 2020-21 Vol. 2, PDF page 96.

(b) Paid to Northeast Christian Fellowship Inc., the academy's operator.

(c) $204,800 to Canadian Revival Preparatory School plus $508,212 to Elevation Academy of Prince Albert Incorporated.

(d) $228,031 paid as Legacy Christian Academy plus $441,955 paid as Valour Academy Incorporated.

(e) Paid as Prince Albert Family Church Academy, Regent Academy's earlier name.

(f) Paid as Valour Academy Incorporated. 2025-26 Public Accounts, released October 29, 2026.

HOW TO READ THESE NUMBERS

- **They are a floor.** Public Accounts lists only recipients paid $50,000 or more in a year, so smaller payments do not appear.
- **Fiscal, not school, years.** Public Accounts runs April 1 to March 31. The Ministry said Legacy got $759,825 for the 2023-24 school year (CTV News); Public Accounts shows $806,682 for fiscal 2023-24.
- **Not counted:** property-tax or charitable-status benefits, capital grants, funding to the three associate schools (Harvest City, Heritage and Meadow Lake), and funding to other Christian independent schools with no ACE evidence, such as Saskatoon Christian School or Curtis-Horne Christian School.
- **Scale.** In 2022-23 the province budgeted about $9.4 million for all qualified independent schools (CJWW). ACE schools took $2.59 million that fiscal year, roughly 28%.

PART 3

CRIMINAL CHARGES AND OTHER EVENTS

CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST STAFF

Criminal charges have been laid against six people who worked at two of these schools. Four were convicted, one is awaiting trial, and one charge was withdrawn. Five of the six were at Christian Centre Academy / Legacy Christian Academy (now Valour Academy) in Saskatoon. The earliest known conviction involves Victory Baptist School in Prince Albert. A charge is not a finding of guilt.

PERSON	SCHOOL AND ROLE	CHARGES	OUTCOME
Elwood Wenig	Victory Baptist Church school, Prince Albert; "Christian educator." The student lived with his family.	Indecent assault on a male (2 counts) and gross indecency (2 counts), against a 12-year-old former student in 1982	CONVICTED Guilty of both counts of indecent assault by a Queen's Bench jury; not guilty of gross indecency (newspaper report held by SISCC)
Aaron Benneweis	Christian Centre Academy; athletic director and coach	Sexual assault and sexual exploitation of a student, 2008–2012, beginning when she was 13. Charged Feb 2023.	CONVICTED Pleaded guilty Oct 2023; two years less a day and three years' probation, Jan 2024 (CBC)
John Olubobokun	Christian Centre Academy; director 2003–2007; later at Grace Christian Academy (SISCC information)	12 counts of assault with a weapon for hitting students with a wooden paddle. Charged June 2023.	CONVICTED Guilty of 9 counts at trial; 18-month conditional sentence, Nov 2025. Pleaded guilty to 5 more; further 5-month conditional sentence, Dec 2025 (CKOM)
Duff Friesen	Christian Centre Academy; principal 2003–2004; later principal of Regent Academy, Prince Albert, until 2022	11 counts of assault with a weapon for paddling students. Charged June 2023.	CONVICTED Guilty of 1 count, May 2025 (six-month conditional sentence); guilty of 3 more, Sept 2026, sentencing pending (CKOM; PA Herald)
Ken Schultz	Christian Centre Academy; director and vice-principal; church elder	Sexual assault and assault with a weapon (2023); sexual assault, invitation to sexual touching and assault with a weapon (2024); historical	CHARGED Pleaded not guilty and denies the allegations. Trial set for March 2027. Not proven (CKOM)
Terra MacEwan	Legacy Christian Academy; educational assistant; not a certified teacher	Assault with a weapon on a seven-year-old student with autism, May 16, 2024, two years after the province appointed an administrator	WITHDRAWN Charge withdrawn Nov 2024 after restorative justice; no conviction (CKOM)

Two of those convicted moved on to other publicly funded ACE schools after Christian Centre Academy: John Olubobokun to Grace Christian Academy (SISCC information) and Duff Friesen to Regent Academy, where he was principal until the Ministry removed teachers named in the lawsuit for 2022-23 (PA Herald). Both schools faced provincial action in 2022. A search of news reports and Saskatoon Police releases for every school in this report found no charges against staff of any other Saskatchewan ACE school; older cases may only be found in print newspapers.

OTHER INCIDENTS, BY SCHOOL

Each of these schools is run by a church, in the church's building, under the church's pastors and elders. SISCC therefore includes church leaders as well as school staff.

Prairie Christian Academy, Saskatoon: Les Semchuk, principal. Police search; no charges laid. On Sunday, October 20 [2002], Semchuk, 46, put his canoe into the South

Saskatchewan River near the Gathercole Centre, saying he was scouting a route for a school trip. His canoe was found capsized near the weir, and police, the fire department's dive team and a plane hired by his family searched for three days. He then phoned his family. He told The StarPhoenix that "stresses" had led him to "apparently fake his own death." Police told him the case was closed and no mischief charge was laid. The school then had about 30 students and was housed at Faith Alive Family Church (StarPhoenix clippings held by SISCC).

Regent Academy (Embassy Church), Prince Albert: how the church and school are one. Regent Academy is "a private Christian school operated by Embassy Church" (PA Herald). They share 888 Central Ave., and Regent's phone number is the one listed for P.A. Family Church Academy, the school's earlier name, in 2006-07. Embassy Church Inc.'s charity returns list a "Christian Day School (K-12)" among its own programs from 1997 to 2020. Its directors have included Glen R. Stead (president), Joan Stead and Paulette Stead; Meghan L. Mayer (president since 2017); Waine H. Thiessen; Duff Friesen (since 2018, while principal of Regent); and Richard A. Potratz (2002–2012) (CRA filings via OpenGovCA).

Regent Academy (Embassy Church), Prince Albert: Ken Schultz's philosophy, adopted from Christian Centre Academy. Family Church Academy published *Mandate to Educate* by Gary Mason, an Embassy Church director, "Adapted from 'Mandate To Educate' by Ken Schultz," the Christian Centre director now facing charges. The file, dated October 2006, was recovered from the school's old website through the Wayback Machine. It states that "the government has been given no place in the educational process" and that the school is "dedicated to the conditioning of our students in these Biblical standards of morality to the point where they are followed instinctively."

Regent Academy (Embassy Church), Prince Albert: Richard Potratz, church director and elder. Impaired driving conviction. On March 14, 2025, while driving for a charter company, Potratz, 71, drove a bus carrying 52 children from a Saskatoon public school with a blood alcohol level more than twice the legal limit, having also taken prescribed fentanyl and hydromorphone. He pleaded guilty to impaired driving and in January 2026 was sentenced to six months in jail; the judge called it "breathtaking in its recklessness" (CBC). The children were not Regent students. His role as an elder is SISCC information.

Regent Academy (Embassy Church), Prince Albert: Meghan Mayer, lead pastor. 2014 blackface school play; no charges. In 2014, while working at Regent Academy, Mayer directed a school play in which a student actor was put in blackface. It became public in July 2024, when she was seeking the Saskatchewan Party nomination for Prince Albert Carlton. She withdrew and apologized (PA Herald; CTV). No charges were involved.

TIMELINE

ACE schools went from unregulated church schools in the early 1980s, to registered schools after 1989, to publicly funded schools from 2012-13.

- **1970** — ACE founded in Texas.
- **1975–85** — About 30 private religious schools open in Saskatchewan, unregulated until 1989. (Making the Grade)

1977 Harvest City Christian Academy opens in Regina with 33 students. (HCCA)

1982 Pastor Keith Johnson moves from Texas to Saskatoon to start Christian Centre Academy on the ACE curriculum. (Canadian True Crime)

JUN 1983 SAICS founded. Its bylaws give a membership seat to "the Accelerated Christian Education representative for the province." (SAICS)

1987 The Dirks review counts 48 private schools with about 3,000 students.

1989 Education Act amended: independent schools must register. SAICS sits on the Minister's Advisory Board that drafts the rules.

1991 Independent Schools Regulations take effect.

2002 Harvest City Christian Academy, later listed by SAICS, begins receiving government funding; it is now an associate school of Regina Public Schools.

2010 SAICS lists 12 member schools as "the largest group of church schools in Canada using ACE's individualized, mastery based program."

DEC 2011 Province announces the qualified independent school category, funded at 50% of the per-student average. (Government of Saskatchewan)

2012-13 First year of qualified independent school grants. 20 schools join, including ACE schools. (Cardus)

AUG 2022 A proposed class action is filed over Legacy; its allegations have not been tested in court. The province puts administrators into Legacy, Grace Christian School and Regent Academy, and cancels Grace's registration. (CTV News, Global News)

2023 Saskatoon Police charge four former Christian Centre Academy staff: Aaron Benneweis (February), Duff Friesen and John Olubobokun (June) and Ken Schultz (July). Benneweis pleads guilty in October.

DEC 2023 The Children's Advocate reports 63 registered independent schools in 2022-23, 19 of them qualified (funded). (Making the Grade)

JUN 2024 Legacy Christian Academy is renamed Valour Academy, the school's third name. News reports described it as Westdale Christian School moving into the building. SAICS's directory shrinks to five schools. (CTV News)

SEPT 2024 A Legacy educational assistant is charged with assault with a weapon on a seven-year-old with autism; the charge is later withdrawn after restorative justice.

JAN 2025 54 independent schools: 17 qualified, 3 certified, 14 unfunded registered (all religious, none with certified teachers). (Provincial Auditor)

2025 Duff Friesen is convicted of assault with a weapon (May). John Olubobokun is convicted at trial and receives conditional sentences (November, December).

MAR 2026 The 2026-27 budget holds qualified independent schools at $7.725M and certified at $9.5M. (Legislative committees)

SEPT 2026 A jury finds Friesen guilty of three more counts of assault with a weapon for paddling students.

OCT 2026 The 2025-26 Public Accounts show $2,268,999 paid to five ACE schools, including $630,374 to Valour Academy, the former Legacy Christian Academy.

GAPS IN THE RECORD

- **1979–2010.** Private schools did not have to register until 1989, and the earliest archived SAICS directory is from 2010. The 1987 Dirks review and the 1990 Advisory Board report may name schools; both are cited in the Advocate's report but are not online.
- **Associate school funding.** Harvest City, Heritage and Meadow Lake are funded at 80% of the per-student average through school divisions, and became associate schools at different times. Public Accounts does not show those amounts by school, so they are not in the $25.1 million.
- **Small or unfunded schools.** Schools paid under $50,000 a year never show in Public Accounts, so the direct-grant counts undercount ACE schools.
- **Older criminal cases.** Most of these schools operated in the 1980s and 1990s, before news went online. Cases like Victory Baptist's are only found in print newspapers, so the charges listed here are a minimum.
- **Curriculum by school.** A freedom of information request to the Ministry for each school's approved learning resources would document ACE use school by school. Since 2023 the Ministry reviews core resources every five years. (Provincial Auditor)

SOURCES

1. Government of Saskatchewan, *Public Accounts, Volume 2: Details of Revenue and Expenditure*, fiscal 2011-12 through 2025-26 (Education → Transfers → K-12 Initiatives; 2020-21 also Finance → Emergency Pandemic Support for K-12 Education). Examples online: 2016-17, 2023-24.
2. Saskatchewan Corporate Registry, Saskatchewan Association of Independent Church Schools Inc. (entity 208873): annual returns for 2021 and 2022, restoral (Oct 2018), notices of change of directors and registered office (May 2019, Aug 2025).
3. SAICS reviewed financial statements, years ended December 31 2007, 2008, 2012, 2017, 2020 and 2022 (each with prior-year comparatives).
4. Ministry of Education records obtained through freedom of information.
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Survivors of Independent Schools Coalition Canada (SISCC) · Report compiled October 2026 from public records and documents obtained by SISCC. Figures are as listed in the sources; corrections welcome.