



News Release

November 24, 2006 – Support for immigrant and refugee students

Students from immigrant and refugee families now have the help they need to settle into their school and community thanks to the Settlement Support Worker in Schools (SSWIS) program. SSWIS connects newly arrived families to services and resources in the school and the community in order to promote settlement and foster student achievement.

Today an official letter of agreement was signed by the four partners involved in the program: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Saskatoon Open Door Society, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools and Saskatoon Public Schools.

“Citizenship and Immigration (CIC) is proud to support SSWIS, a program under the umbrella of the federal government's Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program,” says Mike Fitzpatrick, CIC Director, Saskatchewan. “Building on the success of this Ontario initiative, CIC will continue to support SSWIS initiatives which help to build bridges between parents, students, schools and communities.”

“The Saskatoon Open Door Society sees SSWIS as a community resource to support students, their families and schools for successful settlement and integration,” says Bertha Gana, Executive Director of the Saskatoon Open Door Society. “The program benefits not only newcomers to our city, but current school communities who benefit from the wealth of diversity brought by citizens from other parts of the world.”

“Saskatoon Public Schools are open to all children and youth and this program is critical to improving learning outcomes for our students from immigrant and refugee families,” says Dr. Jim Jutras, Director of Education for Saskatoon Public Schools. “We are very proud to be involved in this partnership.”

“At Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools we understand that building a new life in a new country has many challenges. Through the SSWIS program we have another way to offer support to newcomer students and their families,” said Bev Hanson, acting Director of Education for Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

Schools are often the first services that newcomers connect with in their community. With the cooperation of the schools, the SSWIS program helps immigrant and refugee families access appropriate and timely community services and benefits in their first language, or through translators; supports family involvement in the school life of students; and strengthens the ability of families to cope with the challenges of integration.

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