



School programs to be maintained at St. Paul, Sister O'Brien and Saskatoon French Schools

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, February 16, 2005

Following a consultation process involving the communities of St. Paul, Sister O'Brien and the Saskatoon French schools, the Board of Education for Saskatoon Catholic Schools decided, at a regular board meeting on Monday, February 14, to maintain the current school programs at these schools.

“Seeing the great commitment of the parent communities to maintaining and growing the programs at these schools, the trustees believe it is appropriate to retain the programs currently in place,” explained Jim Carriere, Board Chair. “We were very pleased with the extensive consultation process undertaken with these communities. It was an opportunity for trustees to listen, to get to know the communities better and to better understand the educational needs of the students and families in these areas.”

Consultations were undertaken as a result of changing demographics in the neighbourhoods from which St. Paul and Sister O'Brien draw their students. An aging population base has resulted in decreased enrollments in the French Immersion programs at these schools during the past few years, although overall French Immersion enrollments in the school division have been steady for a number of years. The Saskatoon French School became part of the consultation process so that its parent community would have an opportunity to examine potential scenarios that might provide them with an alternate facility.

The consultation process was based on guiding principles regarding school programs and locations, which were previously established by the Board. The four principles are: access to Catholic education; program excellence; responsible stewardship of resources; and collaborative consultation and relationships.

“We expect that these school communities, with the support of the Board of Education, will continue in their efforts to maintain excellence in programs and instruction,” added Carriere. “We also look forward to future collaboration with each school community in the effort to enhance and promote these programs and see them grow in the future.”

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Students of Saskatoon Catholic Schools who leave their home attendance area to attend second language programs are provided transportation at no cost. Parents are invited to visit Catholic schools to explore and learn more about second language opportunities. Kindergarten registration is ongoing at all Catholic elementary schools.

St. Paul is a Kindergarten to Grade 8 French Immersion elementary school, located in Richmond Heights, which serves the surrounding neighbourhoods. Sister O'Brien is a Kindergarten to Grade 8 dual-stream English/ French Immersion elementary school, located in Silverwood Heights. The Saskatoon French School is a Kindergarten to Grade 8 Type A French Immersion elementary school. This associate school is located in Holiday Park and serves students from across the city.

Saskatoon Catholic Schools has more than 15,000 students in five high schools, 34 elementary schools and two associate schools. The division employs approximately 1,600 teaching, service and support staff. The purpose of Saskatoon Catholic Schools is to assist parents and the local church community in the formation of students in heart, mind, body and spirit.

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