

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release – March 1, 2017

Agreement creates new Professional Development School for Indigenous educators

A Professional Development School, housed at St. Frances Cree Bilingual School, was made official on March 1, when a memorandum of understanding was signed by Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools' Board of Education Chair Diane Boyko, the University of Saskatchewan's College of Education Dean Michelle Prytula, and Saskatoon Tribal Council Tribal Chief Felix Thomas.

The Professional Development School (PDS) provides a learning environment where students from the College of Education's Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP) at the U of S, teachers at St. Frances Cree Bilingual School, and ITEP professors and instructors create a collaborative learning environment that enhances the quality of teaching and student learning. It offers more immersive teacher training than a standard internship and will prepare future teachers with practical skills to teach all students, in particular First Nations and Métis students.

"The existing relationships we have with our partners in education are invaluable" said Diane Boyko. "This agreement is a natural progression to offer the best education we can to our students by offering an enhanced training experience for our future teachers. We're excited about the opportunities that lie before us."

"Through ITEP, the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan is committed to providing the best programming for Saskatchewan students, teachers, and communities. This partnership has created a unique opportunity to enhance teaching and learning for aspiring and current teachers, and as such, for each child who attends St. Frances," said Michelle Prytula.

"This program will give new and experienced teachers a deeper understanding of how to navigate complexities and tailor the learning environment for student needs," said Chief Thomas. "By setting teachers up for success we are ensuring greater success rates amongst Indigenous students."

The PDS has been in development for the past year, and the signing of the MOU paves the way for more collaboration and routine participation of College of Education students at St. Frances. The school will welcome the next cohort of ITEP students in the Fall of 2017.

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