



NEWS RELEASE

WSD to offer new bilingual language programs

Dec. 7, 2015 (Winnipeg, MB) – The Winnipeg School Division (WSD) Board of Trustees is pleased to announce plans to establish three new language programs and an additional French bilingual school in the division effective September 2016.

“Trustees recognize the importance in today’s global economy of providing WSD students with opportunities to learn a second language,” said WSD Board Vice-Chair Sherri Rollins and a Trustee Representative on the WSD Advisory Council of Indigenous Education. “We’re excited to be the first division in Winnipeg to offer bilingual language programs in Indigenous Cree and Ojibway, as well as Spanish.” Rollins notes that adding another French Immersion dual track school is part of WSD’s longer term strategy to address the increasing demand for French language studies in Winnipeg.

Indigenous Cree and Ojibway bilingual language programs will be established at Isaac Brock School on Barratt Avenue; a Spanish bilingual language program will be established at Earl Grey School on Cockburn Street; and an additional French Immersion dual track language program will be established at Luxton School on Polson Avenue, bringing the total number of French Immersion dual track and Milieu schools in WSD to 17.

The level of community interest for Indigenous Cree and Ojibway suggests multiple Kindergarten classes will be required. Director of Aboriginal Education and Newcomer Services, Rob Riel, says preschool programs in these languages will be the main source of registration.

“We’ve had discussions with five organizations that offer Cree and/or Ojibway Headstart Programs for preschool children,” said Riel. “Based on those discussions, we expect to fill two kindergarten classrooms of each language, Cree and Ojibway, in the fall of 2016 with one grade being added per year.” Riel said Isaac Brock School has the space to house the language programs and is also in a well-placed central location in WSD.

WSD will soon begin an advertising awareness campaign and open registration for Kindergarten students for the new language programs. A minimum of 23 students is required to register for each language program by no later than January 2016. Registration will drive a number of next steps, including hiring teachers and approval of curriculum by Manitoba Education. If all requirements are met, the programs will begin in September 2016.

WSD is the largest school division in Manitoba with more than 33,000 students and 77 schools.

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