



NEWS RELEASE

Thursday, Feb. 4, 2010

Partnerships enhance First Nations and Métis education

SASKATOON, Feb. 4, 2010 – Leaders from Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, Saskatoon Tribal Council Inc. (STC) and Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI) today formalized two separate partnerships that have seen their organizations work together in several key areas to enhance the success of First Nations and Métis students.

The organizations also announced the official name of the partnerships: *māmawohkamātowin*, which is a Cree word meaning co-operation. It was selected by Elders from the school division, STC and CUMFI.

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools had been working with STC and with CUMFI since Spring 2007, when they pledged to work together more closely to enhance achievement of First Nations and Métis students and to raise awareness of First Nations, Métis and Inuit culture within the division.

“Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools is committed to seeing all students reach their full potential,” said Diane Boyko, Chair of the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Board of Education. “The initiatives undertaken to date are making a difference in the lives of our students.”

“CUMFI is honored to be part of a partnership that works toward student success for aboriginal students. We believe that pride in your culture is a large component of success in education and achieving life’s goals,” said Shirley Isbister, president of CUMFI.

“Our goal with the *māmawohkamātowin* partnership is to promote an inclusive, respectful and welcoming environment that is conducive to learning, parental involvement and community engagement.”

The *nêhiyawak* Cree Bilingual Program at St. Frances School, established in September 2007, is one project undertaken as a result of the partnerships. It has since expanded to Grade 1 and Grade 2.

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Other initiatives include:

- First Nations and Métis student assessment – research done in partnership with University of Saskatchewan, St. Micheal Community School and Muskoday First Nation;
- Métis cultural education programming; and
- Development of teacher resource guides for integration of First Nations, Métis and Inuit content into curricular areas.

During the event today at St. Michael, Boyko signed two separate Memorandums of Understanding: one with Tribal Chief Felix Thomas of the STC; the other with Shirley Isbister, president of CUMFI.

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools is the province's largest Catholic school division. It serves approximately 15,000 students in 45 schools.

Saskatoon Tribal Council is an alliance of seven member First Nations: Kinistin Saulteaux Nation, Mistawasis First Nation, Muskeg Lake First Nation, Muskoday First Nation, One Arrow First Nation, Whitecap Dakota First Nation and Yellow Quill First Nation. Programs and services that are offered both at the community level and in the Saskatoon urban centre.

Central Urban Métis Federation Inc., (CUMFI) is a community based Métis owned and operated non-profit, charitable organization located in Saskatoon. It has become a leader locally, provincially and nationally in the area of urban Aboriginal issues and challenges.

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