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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Prairie Spirit receives provincial grants**

Prairie Spirit has received two provincial government grants designed to support partnership work between school divisions and local First Nations communities. These Invitational Shared Services Initiative (ISSI) grants recognize and provide financial support for the collaborative work that is already underway between Prairie Spirit School Division and two neighbouring First Nations.

According to the provincial government, these funds are designed to bring together the provincial education system and First Nations education organizations so that students living on reserve benefit from the same supports for students and teachers that are available in provincial schools.

The two grant applications were made jointly by Prairie Spirit School Division and two neighbouring First Nations: Muskeg Lake Cree Nation and Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation. The applications articulate the desire that everyone will have access to an education where "the student is the center and the learning experience is welcoming, relevant and demanding."

Teachers and staff members from Prairie Spirit and both First Nations have already begun to work and collaborate together to share instructional practices and monitor student achievement results.

"We believe this funding will support improved learning for all students as we work with our First Nations partners," said Kim Beaulieu, Learning Superintendent for Prairie Spirit School Division. The applications focused on meeting the outcomes of the new provincial Education Sector Strategic Plan.

As part of this partnership work, goals have been established for on-reserve students in the areas of literacy, numeracy and graduation rates. The funding provided by the grants will be used for instructional supplies, salaries and professional development costs.

The grants provide \$150,000 in funding each year for up to three years. The provincial government awarded a total of six ISSI grants earlier this month at a meeting in Saskatoon.

"We are pleased that the provincial government has awarded these grants to Prairie Spirit, as it acknowledges the good work that is already being done and the funds will support expanding this work in the future," said Larry Pavloff, Chair of the Prairie Spirit Board of Education.

These grants were created in 2014 by the provincial government in response to the recommendations of the Joint Task Force to support improved outcomes for First Nations and Métis students.

*Prairie Spirit School Division serves over 10,000 students in 45 schools and 28 communities surrounding the City of Saskatoon.*

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