

Education board approves program

By Matt Bellan
of The Leader-Post

The Regina education board has approved a program to improve education in poverty-stricken, largely native areas of the city.

The board approved introducing the education department financed-program at its weekly meeting Monday, and it now goes to the department for final discussion and approval.

The program is designed to improve students' achievement by getting parents and the rest of the community involved in school activities, hiring teaching aides and other extra staff to support teachers, and helping develop native and other course materials suited to student needs.

It has a budget of \$248,000 for 1980-81, to be paid for totally by the education department.

The main parts will be introduced at Kitchener and Connaught Schools, and a nutrition component will go to Albert School. All three are inner-city schools with large native enrolments.

Among the main features approved by the board Monday were:

- Hiring eight teaching associates for Kitchener and Connaught — four for each school. Their job will be to help teachers in the classroom and help them relate to students;

- Hiring one community school co-ordinator for each school. That person will co-ordinate the over-all program, encouraging development of programs to involve the community in the school. These will range from arranging adult education to working with local agencies and social services to improve community life;

- A \$10,000 local curriculum development grant to develop native and other course materials suited to student and community needs, ranging from local history projects to teacher-parent communication workshops;

- An \$8,000 community education budget to cover costs of community social or cultural events, meetings, workshops and other events, and

- The nutrition program at Albert School will have a budget of \$55,800 in 1980-81, including breakfasts, lunches or snacks, nutrition education and a food experience program with students shopping for, preparing and tasting a variety

of foods, among other activities.

The agreement approved Monday follows months of closed-door negotiations between the the public school board, the education department, community and native organizations.

It's one of several similar agreements the department has been negotiating with school boards in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert since last spring.

Ron Mitchell, board spokesman, said in an interview Monday he expects the provincial cabinet to discuss the program as amended by the board within the next few weeks. The program will be phased in starting before the end of the year and should be in place before the end of the school year.

Trustee Les Hammond and Mary Hicks, board chairman, voted against introducing the nutrition program, with the board's five other trustees supporting it.

Mrs. Hicks said better nutrition would help many children with their school-work but the social services department or other agencies should pay for such programs.

She said other schools in the area might also ask for nutrition programs. Parents might also "resent" the board's implying they're not feeding their children well enough.

Rejected program

The separate school board recently voted to reject a nutrition program from its own agreement for a community schools program with the province. It said the \$5,000 provided for capital costs wasn't enough to cover kitchen renovations the school introducing the program would require.

Ron Mitchell, of the public board, said Monday the program would involve serving simple foods like sandwiches and wouldn't require major renovations. The money the department was offering would cover costs adequately.

Trustee Susan Currie said the department wanted the nutrition program located at either Kitchener or Connaught Schools because it wanted to study the program in a school offering the whole community schools program.

But the North Central Community Society pressured strongly to have it at Albert School instead.

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