

Staff hired for schools program

Wk of Nov 10/80

Staff has been hired for the Regina separate school board's community schools program.

But it's too soon to tell what impact the program, designed for poor native and other residents, is having on the community, trustees were told at a board meeting Wednesday.

The program started a month ago at Sacred Heart, Holy Rosary and St. Michael Schools and is being paid for totally by the provincial government, a report from the board's administration said. Other community schools programs are being introduced by the Regina public school board and school boards in Saskatoon and Prince Albert.

It's designed to improve educational opportunities for students and to bring about a closer relationship between community and school through adult education, increased communication be-

tween home and school and other activities.

A community schools co-ordinator has been hired for each of the schools involved. Described as a professional community worker, the co-ordinator carries out activities under the school principal's direction.

Activities so far included visits to homes to discuss student problems at school, counselling students, helping teachers identify community resources and co-ordinating after-school activities for students.

Co-ordinators also developed a "good working relationship" with parish priests and took part in parish councils and general parish activities.

Six community teaching associates, or para-professionals, were also hired for the program, with three assigned to Sacred Heart, two to St. Michael and one to Holy Rosary.

The majority are native, and they generally serve as classroom aides providing support services to teachers and helping them understand students' backgrounds.

The board expects to hire one more associate in the near future for St. Michael School.

Trustee Leo Frison asked whether teachers have noticed any changes in student attitudes since the program started.

Ray Tourigny, assistant superintendent, said it's far too early to make any judgment because it's only been operating one month.

Wendel Herle, education director, said one of the first indicators of success would be an improvement in attendance. "It will be kind of interesting after six months to compare attendance rates this year and last year."

[Handwritten scribbles]