

Metis Nation looks to fill gap in education system by expanding early childhood language program ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The Metis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) has announced that they will be expanding their Early Learning Language Program across the province.

Six new school divisions are partnering with the Early Learning and Child Care Ministry (ELCC) to bring the Michif and Dene languages to young students in all 12 MN-S regions.

At its March meeting, the Provincial Metis Council approved the expansion of the Early Learning Language Programs to six new school divisions including Living Sky, Northern Lights, Horizon, Good Spirit and Prairie Valley.

Cree language learning programs will also now be offered in the northern region of Saskatchewan by the Northern Lights School Division. Students in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten at the Pre Cam School in La Ronge and Ministik School in Cumberland House will be the first to participate in this new program.

MN-S President Glen McCallum said, "Our Metis Nation-Saskatchewan government partnered with the Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA) in 2018 and has been working in tandem along with elders to integrate distinctions-based Metis cultural content and perspectives in the classroom. The language programs are a result of that cooperation."

During its pilot year in 2020, the Michif and Dene Early Learning Language Programs (MELLP/DELLP) supported 130 pre-k and kindergarten students in six school divisions.

Since its expansion to 11 schools in the 2021-22 school year, the program has supported over 300 Metis children with Heritage Michif, Northern Michif, French Michif and Dene.

"To be able to nurture cultural revitalization through our children to their family unit is extremely gratifying," said McCallum.

According to an email response from MN-S, "Metis are often the forgotten people and there was a gap in Metis language and culture within the educational system. MN-S saw the need to ensure that there is access to Metis language and culture within the educational system."

The expansion of the Early Learning Language programs is expected to attract more than 600 young students province wide.

The MN-S partnership further support efforts to promote, preserve, protect and revitalize Indigenous languages, said MN-S.

Region: Saskatchewan ^[3]

Tags: Aboriginal (indigenous) ^[4]

expansion ^[5]

child care ^[6]

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