



News Release

October 11, 2007

Settlement Workers in Schools program well underway in Surrey School District with dedicated reception centre to open early next year

The Surrey School District has hired 11 full-time Settlement Workers with funding from the provincial government's Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program.

In addition, the Surrey Board of Education last month approved an agreement to lease 5,000 square feet of office space in the Newton area of Surrey to establish a Welcome/Reception Centre for new immigrant students and their families as part of the program. The centre is expected to open early next year.

"The learning and acceptance of each other's cultures and values are integral parts of building community harmony and ensuring the success of our students," says Surrey Board of Education chair Shawn Wilson. "The SWIS program and the district's Welcome Centre will help to support and celebrate the rich diversity of our community, as well as help students become settled and comfortable so they can focus on learning."

The 11 full-time SWIS workers will work collaboratively with the district's existing 15 full-time Multicultural Workers.

Settlement Workers are scheduled to visit schools by the end of October to contact new immigrant students and their families to assist in integration into the community and facilitate settlement. Brochures and information packages regarding community and school resources are currently being developed and will be available shortly in several different languages to schools and families.

Immigrant Services Society of BC reports between 2003 and 2006, 645 government-assisted refugees settled in Surrey.

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