



News Release

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Surrey School District's successful student suspension alternative program receives federal government funding extension

The federal government's National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) has provided the Surrey school district more than \$600,000 in funding to support the district's iR3 alternative-to-suspension program through to the 2012-2013 school year.

The total NCPS grant of \$637,410 extends the iR3 program and is in addition to a \$522,524 grant provided to the district in the 2007/08 school year to fund iR3 for its first three years.

"iR3 is innovative and successful, and was developed by our own district staff," says Surrey Board of Education chair Laurae McNally. "I appreciate that through the NCPS, the federal government recognizes the value of the iR3 program in helping young people get back on track and pursue healthy, productive activities. The NCPS funding is critical to maintaining iR3."

Launched in spring 2007, the Intervention, Rethink, Refocus, Reintegrate (iR3) program is offered to Surrey school district students through a partnership involving the district's Safe Schools department; Surrey Parks, Recreation & Culture; Surrey RCMP Youth Section and the Integrated Gang Task Force (IGTF) with funding support through the National Crime Prevention Strategy – a program established by the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

iR3 offers students in Grade 6 to 8 who are facing a suspension from school an alternative to serving their suspensions at home. While suspension can send an important message to students whose behaviour has been unacceptable, it can isolate students who already feel disconnected from their school communities and create problems for families needing to adjust work schedules on short notice.

Alternative-to-suspension programs are not unique; however, iR3's early-intervention and community approach is innovative. The program assists students who have been suspended for the first time by addressing the behavioural concerns resulting in suspension. School district and City of Surrey youth workers, as well as police officers with the RCMP and IGTF work with students one-on-one and in groups in a two-day program. Students participate in workshops, round-table discussions, presentations, video screenings and individual sessions covering a wide range of topics directly related to their suspensions.

Program staff members also connect with each student's parents to discuss the child's progress and provide information to each family about the program, staff contacts and community resources. Staff members also continue to follow-up with each iR3 "grad" as long as the student remains in the Surrey school district.

- 30 -

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