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## NEWS RELEASE

### **Winnipeg School Division launches first of its kind in Canada teacher development program: “Build From Within – Ozhitoon Onji Peenjiiee”**

**November 13, 2018 (Winnipeg, MB)** – Winnipeg School Division (WSD) today launched a new program, the first in Canada, to develop Indigenous teachers for the future of education. The Build From Within - Ozhitoon Onji Peenjiiee program brings together WSD, the Faculty of Education at University of Winnipeg and Indspire in developing a path for Indigenous High School students.

“The Build From Within program is a unique approach to transitioning Indigenous students through high school and into University,” says Pauline Clarke, Chief Superintendent and CEO, Winnipeg School Division. “Our intention is clear – to provide the pathway and opportunities for Indigenous students within the division to become education leaders within our community.” Ms. Clarke says qualifying students for Build From Within must be dedicated student learners with excellent attendance, school participation, leadership and community involvement.

For Ayla Laforte, Build From Within offers an opportunity to fulfill a life-long dream.

“This means a lot to me, as I’ve always wanted to teach kids and be in a classroom for young people,” says Ayla. “It’s just amazing that I can do it all with it planned out, and have so much support from not only my peers, but also mentors.”

To launch the program, Build From Within will provide bridging for 60 Indigenous students, 30 in 2019 and 30 in 2020, who have identified they are interested in becoming classroom educators. Beginning in Grade 11, students work to earn their Education Assistant Diploma Program (EADP) while continuing to take programmed high school courses. After completing the EADP by the first semester of Grade 12, students continue earning high school credits to graduate with a Winnipeg School Division High School Diploma and EADP Certificate. Program Manager, Shane Bostrom, says bridging from high school to University is a key component in the success of the program.

“After graduating high school and with their EADP Certificate, the Build From Within students begin paid employment with Winnipeg School Division as half time Educational Assistants, while they begin their journey to complete their Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education Degrees,” says Mr. Bostrom. “Our primary goal is to build on Indigenous students’ own strengths and experiences to create competent and motivated teachers who want to give back as teachers in the division they graduate from.”

Build From Within students will work part-time as an Educational Assistant within WSD, while attending University of Winnipeg full-time. The rigorous program, which features classroom internships as well as cultural, familial, mentorship, employment and financial supports, is a challenge that student Raeden Bricklin embraces.

“This opportunity gives my family and me a chance for a better future and a chance for me to become a community leader,” says Raeden. “I want to be able to say I did something with my life and help out my community and lead our future youth to become outstanding men and women through education and sports.”

WSD was established in 1871 and currently has 78 schools, 33,000 students and 6,000 employees. Its purpose is to provide a learning environment that fosters the growth of each student’s potential and provide equitable opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and values necessary for meaningful participation in a global and diverse society.

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