



SCO AND BRANDON SCHOOL DIVISION CREATE JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE COORDINATOR POSITION

More Support for Children and Youth in Southwestern Manitoba

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ANISHINAABE AND DAKOTA TERRITORY, MB — The Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) and the Brandon School Division (BSD) have come together to improve outcomes for First Nation students based in Brandon. The BSD becomes the latest school division to add an SCO Jordan's Principle Coordinator to its team.

"We know our children continue to face barriers when it comes to accessing education, health care, and social service supports," said Grand Chief Daniels. "The new Jordan's Principle Coordinator in western Manitoba will focus on ensuring First Nation students have equitable access to the full scope of services needed to ensure they achieve the best possible educational outcomes alongside their non-First Nation classmates."

Jordan's Principle is named in memory of Jordan River Anderson, a child from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba. Jordan was born in 1999 with multiple disabilities and when he was two years old, doctors said he could leave the hospital and move to a special home for his medical needs. However, the federal and provincial governments could not agree on who should pay for his home-based care and as a result, Jordan passed away at the age of five in the hospital without having spent even a single night at home.

In 2007, the House of Commons passed Jordan's Principle, a commitment to ensure First Nation children would receive the products, services, and supports they need, when they need them. That commitment is still being brought to life.

"Those of us with leadership roles in public education have the opportunity to play a pivotal role when it comes to our country's continued push towards true and meaningful reconciliation with our First Nation partners," said BSD Superintendent and CEO Mathew Gustafson. "By creating this position, our First Nation students in the Brandon School Division will more easily be able to access the supports they need and so richly deserve. The Jordan's Principle initiative will help address past systemic wrongs and result in even more success for our students."



SCO believes improved access to supports for success will increase graduation rates. Manitoba's four-year high school graduation rate is 81.9 per cent (2019 data). For non-Indigenous students the rate is 89.9 per cent and for Indigenous students it drops to 50.7 per cent.

"I've stated many times, that one of my foundational principles is empowering and advocating for our children and youth to ensure a relevant and respectful education that includes equitable access to supports and services," concluded Grand Chief Daniels. "I want to commend the Brandon School Division for sharing that vision and joining us in making it become reality."

SCO and BSD welcome Sheryl Playford, who has joined the team as the Jordan's Principle Coordinator at the division. Sheryl is very familiar with the Brandon education system, having worked for the division for the past eight years as a certified counsellor and previously as a teacher. Sheryl is a member of Pimicikamak Cree Nation and holds a Master of Education from Brandon University.

The SCO Jordan's Principle Coordinator at BSD can be reached by phone at 204-946-1869 ext. 203 or by emailing jpbsd@scoinc.mb.ca.

For more information on all Jordan's Principle Services offered by SCO, please go to: scoinc.mb.ca/jp-program/

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The Southern Chiefs' Organization represents 34 First Nations and more than 81,500 citizens in what is now called southern Manitoba. SCO is an independent political organization that protects, preserves, promotes, and enhances First Nations peoples' inherent rights, languages, customs, and traditions through the application and implementation of the spirit and intent of the Treaty-making process.

For Media Inquiries:

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