

It's raining books at King Edward

North End

BY AVI SAPER
STAFF REPORTER

Teachers at King Edward Community School are getting ready for a shopping spree, and their students can spend the summer preparing for a reading spree.

The Selkirk Avenue elementary school was one of 20 from across Canada to be selected as beneficiaries of Indigo's Love of Reading program. The payoff is \$110,000 over the next three years to be spent on library materials and programming to promote reading among the school's approximately 350 students.

The school's library budget was \$5,544 this year, or slightly more than \$15 per student.

Georgia Wells, who spends half her time as the school's librarian when she isn't teaching her Grade 6 class, is positively giddy over the prospect of replenishing King Edward's aging and worn collection of books.

"It's a big privilege and a significant job," Wells said. "The biggest thing is the love for reading. Fostering that and being able to provide books that are interesting to the kids will be a big thing."

Many students at King Edward aren't encouraged to read at home by their

parents for a variety of reasons, Wells said, but the school is trying its best to change that situation.

"We hold events to bring parents in for positive reasons, not just parent-teacher interviews, and play games and do things to encourage them to read to their kids at home," Wells said.

The school also wants parents to know they can use the school library as their own public library of sorts, since the nearest Winnipeg Public Library branch, on Salter Street, is a 20-minute bus ride away.

While King Edward reaps the benefits of being chosen for the Love of Reading program, many other Winnipeg schools will continue to do the best they can with minimal budgets.

Doug Edmond, director of research planning and systems management for Winnipeg School Division, said the division's schools are able to offer more than adequate materials to students.

"I think we do very well with the resources we're provided with," Edmond said. "Individual schools have avenues to decide how much they want to allocate to different resources (such as library collections)."

Edmond said the division pays close attention to the needs of each school, and gives additional funding to schools in communities where students are less likely to have books in the home.

