

R(16)294

GNWT Announces Aboriginal Student Achievement Projects

YELLOWKNIFE (November 9, 2009): New funding being provided to education authorities across the NWT is designed to promote greater academic success among Aboriginal Students. The money is being provided through the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT)'s new Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, which is dedicated to closing the achievement gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

Pilot projects in each region are focusing on developing partnerships between schools and community members to increase attendance amongst Aboriginal students.

“We know there is a clear link between good attendance and academic achievement. There is no one solution to improving student achievement, but I believe projects like these will help many students reach their full potential,” said Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Jackson Lafferty.

In the Dehcho region, the money is funding a regional counsellor who will visit all communities and schools in the region. Working closely with students and families, the councillor will help them overcome barriers to good attendance and improve their success in school.

In the Sahtu, schools and communities are partnering to ensure students have healthy food each Friday, the day when attendance is lowest. They are also incorporating creative weekly and monthly incentives for perfect attendance.

The Yellowknife Catholic School Board (YCS) is offering a mentorship program connecting students with community members. Mentors will model healthy lifestyle choices and act as an additional support to students wishing to improve in school. As well, YCS is rewarding improved attendance by offering students monthly rewards when improvement is shown.

Students in the Tlicho region are preparing video presentations and print materials highlighting the benefits of school attendance. Each school will host a film festival to share their work with the community. Tlicho schools are also working with elders to assist students who have difficulty making it to school, and will have rewards for students with good attendance.

The new Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative reflects the 16th Legislative Assembly's goal of developing healthy, educated people and supports investments made under the *Building Our Future* Initiative to promote the long term well being of NWT residents.

.../2

For specific information on the above pilot projects and others, please contact:

Amy Doerksen

Manager, Public Affairs

Education, Culture and Employment

Tel: (867) 920-6222

Email: Amy_Doerksen@gov.nt.ca