



# Creating Futures

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## News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **South Slave Student Achievement Continues to Climb**

*Results of 2007 Alberta Achievement Tests Suggests Initiatives Working*

Fort Smith, NT – The trend of improvement continues in most instances for South Slave students writing the Alberta Achievement Tests (AAT). The 2007 test results once again indicate that area schools are offering quality education programs, as the majority of students are meeting or exceeding Alberta and national standards<sup>1</sup> in language arts and math. Results of Functional Grade Level assessments are equally encouraging.

Overall, 58.7 per cent of SSDEC grade 3, 6 and 9 students achieved or exceeded the Alberta standard in language arts and math. Of those students, 7.8 per cent achieved the standard of excellence, the highest number of SSDEC students to reach that level yet. Other improvements over the multi-year average results include: 8.75 per cent more grade 3 and 6 students met or exceeded the Alberta standard in Language Arts, and 9.7 per cent more grade 3, 6 and 9 students met or exceeded the Alberta standard in math. While only 27 per cent of the grade 9 students had an attendance rate of 90 per cent or better, 46.6% of grade 9's met the Alberta standard. In comparison, 80 per cent of grade 3 students and 73 per cent of grade 6 students who wrote the tests attended school more than 90 per cent of the time.

Classroom teacher-based assessments show 79 per cent of grade 1-9 SSDEC students were working at grade level. This exceeds the NWT average by 10 per cent. As well, the GRADE Reading Assessment indicates 65 per cent of grade 1-12 students are reading at or above the Canadian average for their age group, with 17 per cent of those students rating an above average or superior score. The 79 per cent of grade 12 English 30-2 students who met the Alberta standard on the Diploma Exam is the SSDEC's highest success rate to date.

Superintendent Curtis Brown says that overall, he is pleased with the 2007 AAT results. "The upward trend in language arts and math results reinforces our regional focus on improving literacy and numeracy. I believe the initiatives we have put in place are paying off for our students. The data also confirms that students who don't attend regularly typically fall behind, become frustrated, and are often disruptive and/or they drop out."

Although standardized tests are an instructive tool, Brown reminds that each year, a different group of students writes the tests. "That's why we're comparing our yearly results to a multi-year average," notes Brown. "That way, we have a more accurate measure of trends over time." As well, he cautions that many important learning outcomes cannot be measured by time limited paper and pencil tests alone. He notes, "Ongoing classroom-based assessment gives us much more valuable information than a snapshot-in-time standardized test. We must strive to ensure that improving student achievement is not limited to just these test results."

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<sup>1</sup> Alberta literacy standards and results are ranked the highest not only in Canada, but in the world. 2004 Canadian Education Association (CEA) Policy Brief, *The Promise and Problem of Literacy for Canada: An Agenda for Action*, p5.