



Creating Futures

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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South Slave Student Achievement Continues to Climb

Results of 2010 Alberta Achievement Tests Confirm Initiatives Working

Fort Smith, NT – The trend of improvement continues in most instances for South Slave students writing the Alberta Achievement Tests (AAT). The 2010 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 standards¹ in language arts and math. Results of Functional Grade Level assessments are equally encouraging.

Overall, 63.2 per cent of SSDEC grade 3, 6 and 9 students achieved or exceeded the Alberta standard in language arts and math, an increase of two percent over 2009 and a further five percent more than 2008. Of those students, 6.0 per cent achieved the standard of excellence. Other improvements of note are:

- 70.8 percent of students in grades 3,6 and 9 achieved the standard in English Language Arts (ELA) – about ten percent higher than the historical average;
- Grade 3 and 6 scores showed strong gains in ELA compared to historical averages – grade 3 ELA scores are the highest yet, with 72.6 percent achieving the Alberta standard;
- Grade 6 scores in both ELA and Math are the highest South Slave results yet;
- Grade 9 ELA scores were two percent higher than the historical average.

Superintendent Curtis Brown says that overall, he is pleased with the 2010 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 attendance has improved during the past several years, it remains a critical factor in determining student achievement and success. Overall, only 54 percent of South Slave students attended classes at least 90 percent of the time.

Classroom teacher-based assessments show 79.2 per cent of grade 1-9 SSDEC students were working at grade level. This is 3.8 percent higher than in 2008-09, and exceeds the NWT average by ten per cent. As well, the GRADE Reading Assessment indicates 77 percent of Grade 1-12 students are reading at or above the Canadian average for their age group, with 19 percent of those students rating above average or superior. Of the students assessed in both 2008-09 and 2009-10, 33 percent achieved more than one year’s growth in reading.

Brown says he is particularly pleased with the success that has been seen in the primary grades. “Evidence shows that at least half of South Slave students enter the school system less prepared to handle the Kindergarten and Grade 1 curriculum than their peers across the country. There is a lower awareness of and exposure to print than is generally expected. However, the majority of South Slave students are catching up to the Canadian norms as they move through the grades. This speaks volumes for the excellent work being done by our teachers and leadership teams.”

¹ 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.

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: “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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