



Creating Futures

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 26th, 2004

SSDEC Approves 2004-05 Budget Council Continues to Chart Sound Fiscal Course

Fort Smith, NT – At its regular meeting this past weekend in Fort Smith the 2004-2005 school year budget was accepted as per the Department of Education’s funding formula, with an adjustment for unfunded and under-funded programs. According to Ann Pischinger, the Council’s Chairperson, the budget decision is fair and equitable to all South Slave communities and schools. Pischinger notes, “Our focus has remained on how best to improve student learning in all our schools.”

The SSDEC has a very decentralized budgeting model, whereby the Council ensures that community based DEAs have the power to make important funding decisions. As a 2001 government report states, “Very few resources are held at the SSDEC level with most flowing directly, under formula, to the community level.” 2004-2005 budget highlights include:

- \$16.5 million for DEAs to directly control how best to spend those dollars
- \$3.5 million devoted to schools for school infrastructure {fuel, electricity, etc.}, program and staff development, bussing and substitute teacher costs
- \$1 million for regional administration and Council meetings

SSDEC Superintendent Curtis Brown indicates, “We are pleased to hear that our regional administration costs, less than 5%, continue to be lower than most other school boards.”

The decentralized budgeting approach requires that the Council pass a budget early enough to allow DEAs to develop their own budgets and begin staffing while there are still quality teacher applicants available. Even when considering the current financial uncertainty with the territorial government, the Council remains on a strong financial footing. “With a balanced budget, the Council continues to remain in a stable position to continue to provide quality educational programming”, comments Brown.

The next regular meeting of the Council is scheduled for April 17th in Fort Resolution.

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