

The South Slave Divisional Education Council believes the key to an effective school is an ongoing school improvement process which the school principal coordinates with the DEA, the school staff and students, and other school partners. This process involves the identification of priorities based on agreed program and operational strengths and needs. Updated annually, a Community School Education Plan includes goals, action items, responsibilities, timeline and expected outcomes.

A Community School Education Planning process of setting priorities and building consensus toward a shared vision of the *best possible future* can be as much if not more valuable than the actual completed and implemented plan. A well facilitated process should result in the following benefits:

- provides focus – by identifying and anticipating needs, then monitoring plans... keeps people focused on what is really important—a move from a reactive posture (continually responding to issues) to a proactive posture (setting priorities, actively anticipating issues)
- builds relationships - brings community and the school closer together as staff, students, DEA members and other partners work cooperatively
- achieves consensus - keeps everyone in agreement in contrast to the polarizing effects of voting
- gives opportunity for community ownership - everyone is empowered by the same information... collaboration moves power out from the few in the know... every community is different... planning is likely to be more relevant and effective when done by people closest to the students and school (rather than by Divisional Council or principals alone)...
- by publishing them, it tells everyone and holds everyone accountable, to what the priorities are and who is doing what to address them
- provides a basis for staff individual development plans and staff evaluation
- provides continuity in school programs even with staff changes
- assists the South Slave Divisional Education Council to develop a set of goals and an agenda that builds on and supports the priorities of its DEAs and schools.

## **REGULATIONS**

The community school education planning process:

1. Should include a process of consultation and discussion with the DEA, the staff and students and other school partners. This process may include questionnaires, meetings, open houses, radio shows, written submissions, home visits, class teas, or any other strategies determined by the DEA and the school principal to encourage input and develop public support.

2. Should include a review of the aspects of the school operation and program which are working well, and identification of those areas which require improvement to ensure students are receiving the best possible education.
3. Should include a review of all relevant school and DEA documents such as previous school goals, minutes of DEA meetings, community concerns sent to the Council, etc.
4. Should reflect a commitment to finding creative solutions by forming working partnerships within the community, with businesses, and with various agencies, to achieve school goals.
5. Two days will be set aside each year in each community for the education planning process. These two days will be used for goal and action plan development and revision, and review of progress towards achieving goals and action plans. These two days may incorporate or may also serve as the Annual General Meeting of the District Education Authority. The two days will be built into the annual school calendar and will typically be scheduled in the winter and late spring so that the plan is in place for the coming school year—Time can be taken in a variety of ways, split-one in the winter, one in the spring, or 4 half days, and could also involve evening sessions.
6. Action plans will identify how the goals will be addressed over the school year, who will be responsible for carrying out various parts of the plan, a timeline for when those actions will be complete, identification of anticipated costs, if any, and expected outcomes.
7. Will result in a *Community School Education Plan* using the common SSDEC approved format.
8. Will include submission of the completed or updated plan to the SSDEC office by May 31st of each year to assist the Council in its work with principals, schools and DEAs, regardless of staff turnover, in the following school year, and to help guide planning at the Council level.

The process and level of consultation may not be as intense in every school and community each year. Subsequent years of a three year plan, for example, may simply require further efforts to review, update and carry on with implementation.

The Council will provide assistance to each DEA and principal, as possible given human and fiscal resources, to develop the Education Plan. This support will include facilitation training opportunities for school administrators and sharing of each community's education plans with other communities.

Reference: Education Act 117 (1), (D), (O), (P), (Q), (S), (F), (G), 118 (f), (g)  
Date: January 2001