

LITERACY STRATEGY UPDATE 2009-2010

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment recognizes the importance of literacy in fulfilling our vision of healthy, educated citizens participating in a strong and prosperous society. In 2009, we renewed our commitment to literacy by implementing the second Northwest Territories Literacy Strategy. The Strategy describes how we will increase the literacy levels of northerners of all ages, in all official languages. Today, I am pleased to provide you with highlights of the new Strategy.

In the area of Early Childhood literacy development, we support family literacy training for practitioners, numerous community-based family literacy workshops and programs, and the development of family literacy resources and promotional materials through a partnership with the NWT Literacy Council. We also funded nineteen early childhood programs to develop Aboriginal language immersion settings.

In literacy development we funded the Northwest Territories Seniors' Society and youth centres to host 13 events that brought youth and seniors together to learn from each other. We also held a literacy proposal writing workshop for youth centre staff from 12 communities. In literacy development for seniors, Education, Culture and Employment supported seven seniors' literacy projects in different regions of the territory.

In the area of literacy development for working age adults, we funded learning supports for disabled adults, literacy outreach centres at Aurora College campuses, and numerous community-based projects and programs, such as drop-in classes in the Beaufort-Delta, one on one tutoring in the Deh Cho, and the development of audio books for the visually impaired in the North Slave.

We funded Aurora College to facilitate distance learning opportunities and to deliver adult basic education at college campuses and Community Learning Centres

throughout the territory. The Department also coordinated the ongoing development of adult basic education curricula and resources.

In the area of literacy in the Official Languages of the Northwest Territories, local organizations developed books and resources in South Slavey, Tlicho and North Slavey. As well, we supported an Aboriginal Language Writers' Workshop.

Finally, in the area of building community capacity to meet literacy needs, increased funding to community libraries permitted an increase in hours of service and the purchase of additional materials.

I want to acknowledge the important work of the Literacy Strategy Advisory Committee. The Committee, which represents many of our literacy partners, meets annually to guide our staff in implementing the Strategy.

The Northwest Territories faces many challenges in the area of literacy. We still have much work to do but we are on track this year to meet our objectives and carry out the actions of the Literacy Strategy according to the goals of this Assembly.

Masi, Mr. Speaker