

Positive Developments through Partnership

Mr. Speaker, partnerships are a key priority in developing a strong and effective government. The importance of partnerships with Aboriginal Governments, non-government organizations and community agencies, industry, communities and families has been highlighted in the priorities of this 16th Legislative Assembly and in Education, Culture and Employment's Strategic Plan. Today, I would like to highlight some recent developments in education that involve cooperation and collaboration with many of these key groups.

One particular example of success is the Lutsel K'e Dene School. The Lutsel K'e Dene School has made great strides in improving student literacy and incorporating the community into the school. A dedicated and creative group of teachers has created a genuine culture of learning in the school. They have incorporated parents, elders, on-the-land activities and with the help of Aurora College and ECE have streamlined programs for high schoolers and adults. The South Slave Divisional Education Council's "Leadership for Literacy" initiative, along with the placement of a full-time Literacy Coach, has resulted in almost every student at the school experiencing significant gains in reading achievement. Ninety per cent of students achieved more than what is average in a full year of learning. The Lutselk'e Dene School is a shining example of how teachers, parents, students and education authorities can come together and effect positive change in a school and community.

During the last session, I spoke about the Aboriginal Student Achievement initiative. Since then, a committee has been formed, with representation from the Dene Nation, industry, corporate business, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Metis, the Native Women's Association, the NWT Teacher's Association, Superintendents of schools, and the GNWT. This committee met in early May and reviewed our consultation and research work to date, and determined some broad areas for focus in the coming year, around public awareness of the education system, tutoring, and focused research.

The Northern diamond mines have allowed us to extend our adult education and training resources in many ways. Our Memorandum of Understanding around the Northern Workforce ensures that Northerners across the NWT have access to skills training and job opportunities in mining. The Mine Training Society, which is made possible through a funding partnership with the federal government and Diavik Rio Tinto, DeBeers and BHP Billiton, is an organization that builds projects with other partners including government departments, Aboriginal governments, and Aurora College, based on targeted needs.

We would not be making the inroads we have made in developing a strong and prosperous society without the work that is done through these and many other partnerships with families and communities, Aboriginal governments, non-government organizations, industry and other governments. I would like to close by thanking all our partners for their shared commitment to the future of the Northwest Territories.

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