

SSDEC LITERACY PROJECT

Recipient of the 2002-03 NWT Ministerial Literacy Award

To improve student literacy in the South Slave...

BACKGROUND

School Principals of the South Slave region, representing their schools, in the winter of 1999, identified literacy as the region's number one priority.

The South Slave Divisional Education Council endorsed the focus by approving the staffing of a regional Literacy Coordinator. A working committee, consisting of one Literacy Coordinator and at least one representative from each school in the South Slave region, has developed and is currently implementing a plan consisting of agreed upon strategies that are likely to bring about the greatest improvements to student literacy across the region. The committee consulted with school staffs and students, local District Education Authorities, and other partners in education as part of the planning process. Committee members were chosen through application process, based on their initiative, commitment to student literacy, and willingness to "go the extra mile" to ensure this project is successful.

RUFUS THE READING RASCAL



SOUTH SLAVE DIVISIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL
LITERACY PROJECT

SSDEC Project Committee

The regional committee consists of:

- 10 members (at least one member from each of our eight schools) who are classroom teachers.
- one Program Coordinator who facilitates the committee, oversees the development, implementation and updates of the regional Literacy Project Plan.

The committee meets 3 times a year as a group, and also communicates through email & phone calls. Each committee member has release time to work on action items that they are responsible for in the literacy plan.

We are making every effort for this initiative to be comprehensive and fully immersed in all our schools. As such, the regional committee reps are typically the chairpersons of their own school-based Literacy Committees—Each of these committees have also created and are implementing their own local school literacy plans.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

- ✓ **School-Based Literacy Committees and Plans**
All eight schools have school-based literacy teams and plans in place. Funding is provided to each school literacy committee to support their plan.
- ✓ **Rufus' Reading Club**
Incentives such as certificates, book marks, pennants and t-shirts are awarded to elementary students who read 25, 50, 75 and 100 books.
- ✓ **Home Reading Programs**
Books, that students can read, travel between the school and the home. Students read the book with a family member on a daily basis. Teacher resource manuals were developed and leveled books were purchased for each K-6 classroom.
- ✓ **Baby Bags**
The SSDEC Literacy Project has developed and distributed Baby Bags to new moms to promote literacy right from birth. The bag contains a chewable book and literacy activities for parents to do with their babies.
- ✓ **Kindergarten Bags**
Kindergarten Bags are provided to five year olds in the spring. They contain books, crayons, paper, etc. so that our future students are ready to start school in the fall.
- ✓ **English Language Arts Benchmarks**
A Benchmarks resource has been developed and distributed to teachers. This resource provides clarification of key expected learning outcomes at each grade level to support teachers with their program planning and assessment of students.
- ✓ **Aboriginal Language Resources**
Books are being translated into Cree, Chipewyan and South Slavey to be used with Aboriginal Language programs in our schools. Partnerships have also been established with some Aboriginal Language Groups to create a series of children's books.
- ✓ **Computer Literacy**
Literacy development continues in our schools through the use of information technology. Software has been selected and purchased to promote both language arts and numeracy.
- ✓ **Training**
With funding from the *Healthy Children Initiative*, a Speech & Language Workshop was provided to educators/community members from all five of our communities who work with students aged 0-6. Funding from *ECE Early Childhood* also provided a three-day workshop for kindergarten and grade one teachers on the topic of *Reading Essentials*.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Future plans... We are now expanding into grades 4-6 and also looking at numeracy.... Numeracy kits, for K-3, have already been purchased to support the teaching of math through children's literature.

