

FOR RELEASE

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**GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES NEW FUNDING FOR LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

WHITEHORSE – Education Minister John Edzerza announced \$657,000 for new language and literacy programs will be included in the 2005-06 budget.

“Our government values healthy communities and a vibrant economy, and that is why we are investing in language and literacy in the Yukon,” Edzerza said.

“Language and literacy are important building blocks in life and essential components of lifelong learning. Strong language and literacy skills ensure that Yukoners can participate fully in their community and the work place.”

The additional funds will be used to update the Yukon Literacy Strategy, offer full-day kindergarten programs in more schools, hire new aboriginal language instructor trainees, and expand the late French immersion program at Whitehorse Elementary.

“Over half a million dollars is being allocated directly to new language and literacy programs in the 05/06 budget,” said Edzerza. “That’s because this government is committed to providing Yukoners with the best educational opportunities possible.”

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Attachment: New Literacy and Language Programs: 2005-06 Budget

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## **New Literacy and Language Programs: 2005-06 Budget**

### **Literacy Strategy**

The Yukon government will undertake a significant step to improving literacy in the Yukon this year. In the 05/06 budget, the government will be designating \$100,000 to update and develop a comprehensive, multi-year Yukon Literacy Strategy focusing specifically on improving adult literacy throughout the territory.

### **Optional Full-day Kindergarten Program**

The Yukon government is extending its very successful full-day kindergarten program to 10 Yukon schools over a two year period with \$300,000 allocated in the 05/06 budget.

The intent of the optional full-day kindergarten program is to ensure that students receive the instruction and developmental time they need so that they can approach Grade 1 with a strong set of pre-literacy and group learning skills.

### **Aboriginal Language Instructor Trainees**

To increase support for native languages in the classroom, the Yukon government is hiring two more aboriginal language instructor trainees with \$72,000 designated in the 05/06 budget. The new trainees will be hired in September 2005, making a total of six that have been hired over the past three years.

Currently 20 out of 29 Yukon schools offer native language instruction employing approximately 39 full-time equivalent instructors. The government also provides annual funding to CYFN to operate the Yukon Native Language Centre at Yukon College.

### **Late French Immersion Program**

To continue the Yukon government's support of late French immersion at Whitehorse Elementary \$185,000 has been allocated in the 05/06 budget.

The Yukon government has taken a leadership role in the creation of the late immersion program at Whitehorse Elementary School and is committed to supporting French language programs in Yukon schools. French language programs and immersion programs have been running at École Émilie Tremblay, FH Collins, Whitehorse Elementary and other schools for many years.