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YUKON STUDENTS CONTINUE TREND FOR SUCCESS ON ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

WHITEHORSE – The Government of Yukon announced today that the results of the 2004-05 Yukon Achievement Tests (YAT) are quite positive and have remained fairly constant in terms of average test scores from the last five years.

This year, there was an increase in average scores Yukon-wide in Language Arts 3 and 9 and Math 9 between 1-2 per cent. There was a decrease in average scores Yukon-wide in Math 3 and 6, and Language Arts 6 by between 1-2 per cent.

“While we’ve had some small decreases in certain areas of testing, Yukon students are continuing to do well in most areas,” said Lee Kubica, Superintendent of Schools, “While decreases in average scores are always of concern to us, the Department of Education looks at the big picture so we can adjust the programs and services we provide students. This responsive approach helps to make for the best possible learning environment.”

Since YAT testing began five years ago, Yukon students have shown overall improvement in most subjects and grade levels.

The largest area of concern continues to be in grades 6 and 9 Math, where between 31-34 per cent of students are not meeting standards. In response to these scores, the Department of Education provides enhanced teacher training in math instruction for grades 4-6, a Home Tutor program, and full-day kindergarten, among other programs, in order to improve student success.

Education Minister John Edzerza viewed the overall YAT results as a positive outcome and was optimistic about the new initiatives the Department is undertaking to ensure student success, especially in terms of increased resources for First Nations culture and language.

“I am very confident about the quality of education in Yukon,” said Edzerza, “Test scores will fluctuate on a yearly basis, but looking at the upward trend of our student success rates, I think our education system is serving students very well.”

“While we are focusing on increasing general student success throughout Yukon, we are specifically concerned with increasing First Nation student success,” said Edzerza, “This year we will introduce tailor-made Yukon First Nation curriculum materials and resources, provide funding to enhance First Nation cultural activities in schools and continue our financial commitment to developing the First Nations language through the instructor trainee program and the First Voices database.”

“This summer, we also launched the Education Reform Process in partnership with CYFN. This process will help the Yukon education system to further develop in ways that meet the needs and aspirations of all students, particularly First Nation students,” said Edzerza.

This is the sixth year students have written the Yukon Achievement Tests. The tests come from Alberta and are written in Grades 3, 6 and 9 in math and language arts (English or French).

Overall results, as well as school-by-school results, are available on-line at www.education.gov.yk.ca. More detailed information will be available later this year in the Public Schools Branch annual report.

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