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GOVERNMENT OF YUKON INCREASES FUNDING FOR VOCATIONAL/EXPERIENTIAL PROGRAMS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WHITEHORSE –Education Minister Patrick Rouble today announced a \$385,000 increase to the base funding for vocational and experiential programs in Yukon’s public schools.

“Our government is committed to experiential education programs that enhance students’ comprehension of key concepts and improve their level of achievement. This additional funding will expand the provision of skills training and increase opportunities for the success of our Yukon students,” Rouble said.

“This funding demonstrates our commitment to be responsive to the real world needs of students by providing vocational skills training and innovative experiential education opportunities at all grades and in all communities,” Rouble added.

The increased funding represents an increase of 370 per cent, from \$104,000 to \$489,000, over current funding for experiential learning. The school based budgets will be used for expanding programming to more schools, transportation, materials and supplies.

Kelly Collins is the principal of Takhini Elementary School, and the teacher who originated and runs the school’s Grade 7 vocational program in conjunction with the Skills Canada facility.

“Students in the Grade 7 vocational program are very keen. They work virtually non-stop,” he said. “I have had students work on similar projects on their own at home and bring them to school to show me.”

Collins said students begin the program by learning to use hand tools and wood-shaping techniques, and then move to power tools. “We include First Nations content with a hand tools section by making a model of a Tlingit paddle,” he said. “The students practice carpentry skills, mathematics skills in measuring and cooperative skills in group work.”

Phillip Dorian, a teacher in Elijah Smith Elementary School’s pilot experiential program, is very busy during the last few weeks of school. His students are completing canoe training at the pool in preparation for an overnight trip from Marsh Lake to Schwatka Lake. “In a nutshell, experiential programs present more options and a broader range of activities for children to succeed in our schools,” he said.

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