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YUKON GOVERNMENT EXPANDS FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

WHITEHORSE – The Yukon government is expanding its successful full-day kindergarten program to ten more Yukon schools over the next two years.

“This is yet another example of our government’s commitment to excellence in education,” Education Minister John Edzerza said.

“Full-day kindergarten is an excellent way to help our students build a strong base in literacy,” Edzerza said. “This program was piloted in Elijah Smith Elementary School and students there showed a marked improvement in their learning during the year and had a more successful transition to elementary school.”

“The intent of the full-day kindergarten 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 skills,” Superintendent of Schools Colin Kelly said. “The focus of full-day kindergarten is on learning how to learn—and by that I mean pre-literacy skills, language development and group learning skills.”

Full-day kindergarten students will attend school for the same hours as Grade 1-7 students. The full-day kindergarten student will have a balance of teaching instruction and child focused activities. They will be able to participate more fully in the cultural life of the school and will have more dedicated time for learning.

“The program of activities at full-day kindergarten is tailor-made for five year olds and this approach has proved very successful in other Yukon schools,” said Kelly. “Not only are we seeing increased student success, parents and children involved in full-day kindergarten are giving us very positive feedback.”

Full-day kindergarten will be implemented at the following schools in two phases based on the 2005/06 budget:

Phase 1, beginning September 2005: Selkirk Elementary, Grey Mountain Primary, Christ the King, Takhini Elementary, Jack Hulland Elementary, Holy Family Elementary.

Phase 2 – beginning September 2006: Hidden Valley Elementary, Robert Service School, Whitehorse Elementary (English and French Immersion), Golden Horn Elementary.

The nine Whitehorse schools join École Emilie Tremblay and Elijah Smith Elementary which currently operate full-day kindergarten programs.

Robert Service will join Tantalus School and Johnson Elementary as rural schools with full-day programs. Other rural schools have two years of half-day kindergarten for four and five year-olds.

Phase 1 will cost approximately \$300,000 in the 2005-06 fiscal year.

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