

**THE HONOURABLE ALFRED MOSES
MINISTER OF EDUCATION, CULTURE
AND EMPLOYMENT**

NO.: 34-18(3)

DATE: February 21, 2018

Strengthening Supports for Educators

Mr. Speaker, this is Education Week in the Northwest Territories. I would like to celebrate the educators who have dedicated their careers, and lives, to teaching our children and youth. I would also like to share how I and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment are supporting their success.

Right now, there are more than 800 educators here in Yellowknife at the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association Educators' Conference. They are working together to strengthen education in the territory by participating in workshops, professional development and training sessions.

Mr. Speaker, the theme of the 2018 Educators' Conference is Our Students – Our North – Our Success. The conference has included the very best resources, expertise and speakers for our educators. I encourage my colleagues to welcome and thank the teachers they meet this week in town.

Mr. Speaker, the Educators' Conference is just one example of the strong relationship between the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association.

As part of Education Renewal, in the 2017-2018 school year, the Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practices, three-year pilot was launched in collaboration with the Teachers' Association and the Northwest Territories Superintendents' Association to support excellence in teaching and learning.

Mr. Speaker, we know that teachers are one of the most important factors in student achievement. High quality instruction improves student outcomes. Teachers need time to properly plan, and to develop their teaching strategies and instructional practices.

While there are other factors that influence student outcomes, there is strong evidence to show that supporting teacher wellness, giving teachers more time to prepare, assess and collaborate, and providing strategic professional development opportunities are critical in improving teacher practice and student academic success.

Mr. Speaker, the Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practices pilot allows schools to schedule as many hours as they feel are required to properly deliver the curriculum, subject to the legislated minimum of 945 hours of instruction. Starting in the 2017-2018 school year, schools were permitted to submit proposals to redirect up to 100 hours of instructional time divided evenly between teacher professional duties and collaborative professional learning. It is up to the school principal and the Education Authority, in consultation with the Superintendent, to decide the appropriate amount of time.

Each school submits a Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practices proposal outlining how their teachers will use their time. A committee made up of the Department, the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association and the Northwest Territories Superintendents' Association reviewed and approved each proposal.

Mr. Speaker, all schools participating in the Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practices pilot this year have split their re-directed hours equally between time for individual professional duties and learning, and collaborative professional learning. No resources are directed away from the students.

The activities in some schools included collaborative evaluations, assessments and goal-setting, while in others, staff worked together to improve student mental wellness. For example, in the Dehcho Region, one school spent their Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practices hours developing a school-wide bullying prevention strategy, another worked on positive behaviour intervention, culture and events, and yet another on Dene language for educators.

As we celebrate our educators this week, the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association provides a wonderful opportunity for students to celebrate their teachers, as well. The Thank You for Making a Difference initiative highlights the contributions of dedicated

educators who make a difference in the lives of students, with students themselves submitting messages of appreciation and nominating them for individual and school prizes. All of the thank you messages will be delivered to teachers during this Education Week.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to offer my personal thank you to the teachers who made a difference in my life, and the dedicated educators who continue to teach our children and youth.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.