



Thunder Bay District Receives \$1.5 Million to Support Student Learning to Age 18

(January 11, 2005) – Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education Gerard Kennedy are following through on a commitment to provide more supports to encourage students to stay in school. As part of this initiative, the Ministry of Education has established an \$18 million fund and invited School Boards to submit proposals which would improve the success rate of Students At-Risk and provide increased motivation to remain in school until age 18.

The Student Success Leaders from the eight School Boards and ten District School Authorities forming N.O.E.L. (Northern Ontario Education Leaders), met and agreed to submit a joint proposal which would serve all Students At-Risk focusing on increasing success rates of students in the District.

On December 17, confirmation was received from the Ministry that the proposal has been approved and will be supported by a \$1.5 million grant.

The project will have several components, many of which will replicate successful pilot projects which have been conducted throughout the Thunder Bay District.

One component will provide Later Literacy support to students in Grades 7-12. Literacy is the key to learning and with support provided many more students will succeed on the Grade 10 Literacy test and have the skills to achieve higher rates of success in all classes.

Another component will provide an alternative education program focused on providing a suitable environment for potential school dropouts to continue their education in a flexible, culturally based program much like the arrangement the Ministry of Education has with United Native Friendship Centre.

Other components include providing transition classes for struggling students as they enter secondary school, helping students who have left school before graduation to return successfully and to provide pathways to employabilities for students who might not graduate without additional support.

The project will start at the beginning of Semester II and must be completed by August 31, 2005.

Terry Ellwood, Superintendent of Education for the Rainy River District School Board will coordinate the project with all Student Success Leaders in the District on behalf of N.O.E.L.

Staff and students were thrilled with J.W. Walker School's 28,644 square foot renovation and addition. "This 14 classroom school, with its vibrant colour scheme, full size gymnasium and fully-automated learning resource centre will provide a learning environment for our students that we can all be very proud of," said Raymond Roy, Manager – Plant Operations. Each classroom is equipped with overhead projectors and audio/visual equipment that gives teachers the capacity to integrate computer presentations into their lessons. The computer lab is fully equipped to ensure that this is one of the most technologically advanced schools in the province.

On opening day at the Rainy River District School Board, 1,701 elementary students and 1,330 secondary students arrived. This is nine more elementary students and fourteen less secondary students than projected. In comparison with 2003/2004, enrollment has decreased by 74 elementary students and 169 secondary students.

The Rainy River District School Board operates fourteen schools located throughout a geographic area that extends from Rainy River to Atikokan along the shores of the river.