



Schools of the Rainy River District School Board Launch Innovative Projects

(April 4, 2006) - The Rainy River District School Board through the Innovative Project Initiative has once again funded projects that encourage creativity and address needs that have not been met through any existing board programs. This year, approved projects were proposed by Atikokan High School, Crossroads School, Fort Frances High School, J. W. Walker School, North Star Community School, Rainy River High School, Riverview School, Robert Moore School, and Sturgeon Creek School/Sturgeon Creek Alternative Program.

Atikokan High School received \$6,000 for a high-tech, e-learning room. The current videoconference room at the school will be updated, allowing a flexible learning environment and increased student access to a variety of course options.

Crossroads School's "Cultivating Our Future!" received \$2,000 to support the creation of an outdoor classroom, a green space that will provide a friendly, healthy, and attractive area for students and staff.

To develop peer mentoring and peer mediation programs, Fort Frances High School received \$8,000. Peer mentoring involves teams of Grade 11 and 12 students who mentor Grade 9 students to support academic and co-curricular success. Similarly, students in Grades 10 to 12 will be trained to be peer mediators, employing conflict resolution strategies to mediate and resolve student to student disputes under the coordination of staff advisors.

Similarly, J. W. Walker School received \$8,000 in funding to support a Peer Mediation program as well as three other initiatives. With the funding, the school is expanding its Math Tote program, in which totes containing engaging activities and games for students in SK to Grade 3 are taken home weekly, reinforcing the development of math concepts. The Browsing Bins project involves placing three or four bins containing a variety of texts, mostly non-fiction within each primary classroom to motivate students, particularly boys, to be engaged in reading for the purpose of enjoyment. A final project will have the Grade 3 students touring the local area and visiting the Fort Frances Museum to expand their understanding and knowledge of bridges. "This wonderful initiative not only enriches our school improvement goals in literacy, numeracy, and character education, but also allows us to provide our students with unique, hands-on learning opportunities," noted Heather Campbell, J. W. Walker Principal.

North Star Community School received \$950 to implement the STAR Volunteer Program, which involves the training of volunteers. These volunteers will work one-on-one to not only support reading development, but to also strengthen the positive collaboration between community and school. "Cathy Burton lead the first in a series of workshops for parents," said Sylvia Parker, North Star Community School Principal. "The focus of this workshop was *How to Read with Your Child*. Information packages were provided and parents stayed on after the session to continue to talk with Mrs. Burton and other parents about reading and some of the issues they have regarding supporting their child at home. It was a great session and parents were quite excited

about attending the next workshop. The next workshop, on writing, will be held at the end of April. ”

Rainy River High School received \$6,000 to support the installation of a high tech classroom in the school through the purchase of computer furniture, whiteboards, a projection screen, and audio-visual equipment. As well, a joint proposal for \$5,250 between Rainy River High School and Riverview School allows the schools to revitalize the track surface at Riverview School to expand the physical education programs within both schools.

Robert Moore School received \$9,000 for two projects. The first project is an Outdoor Education Project which allows the school to purchase a class set of cross country skis (including boots and poles) so that junior level students can learn and participate in this lifelong fitness activity. Robert Moore School Principal Penny Newman remarked, “We have embraced the two new Innovative Projects at Robert Moore, which support our school's Environmental Priorities. The outdoor education project will support our students in promoting personal commitment to vigorous physical activity on a regular basis, and a positive attitude towards healthy active living.” The second project is to support Robert Moore School’s First Nations/Metis Student Council. Intermediate First Nations/Metis Students have become actively involved in organizing and planning activities and awareness for the school and community, as seen recently in its school wide Pow Wow. “The First Nations/Metis Student Council planned and organized an outstanding Pow-Wow at Robert Moore on March 8th, and are now meeting regularly to plan other events and activities which increase student involvement, and awareness of Aboriginal culture,” enthused Penny Newman.

Sturgeon Creek School and Sturgeon Creek Alternative Program received \$4,800 for the Healthy Active Living Project. To encourage students to be more physically active, the schools plan to purchase a class set of snowshoes for each school as well as introduced all intermediate students to the sport of curling.

“The Innovative Project Initiative supported by the Rainy River District School Board encourages schools to ‘think outside the box’ and establish creative new programs or support existing programs with exciting alternatives,” said Ian Simpson, Assistant to the Director of Education. “Our schools reacted positively and submitted fantastic proposals which will enhance school life and improve student achievement. All schools that applied received funding and many projects are underway or have already been completed with great benefits for our students.”