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To: info@bccpac.bc.ca
Subject: SECONDARY SCHOOL COMPLETION RATES EDGE UPWARD
Date: November 30, 2010 1:00:36 PM

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2010EDUC0133-001506
Nov. 30, 2010
Ministry of Education

SECONDARY SCHOOL COMPLETION RATES EDGE UPWARD

VICTORIA - While the trend in overall secondary school completion rates continues upward in B.C. this year with a small increase to 79.7 per cent, there is more work to be done said Minister of Education Margaret MacDiarmid.

"We have a good education system in B.C. While student completion rates are gradually heading in the right direction, we recognize there is significant room for improvement," said MacDiarmid. "Going forward, we need to work with our partners to offer our students a more personalized approach to learning to meet every student's needs."

Completion rates are determined by tracking the number of students entering Grade 8 who graduate within six years with a Dogwood diploma, B.C.'s secondary school graduation certificate. This year, B.C. saw a slight overall increase of less than one per cent to the provincial completion rate due to a large number of districts increasing their rates a little, rather than a few big districts increasing by large numbers.

Highlights:

- * Forty school districts saw small increases in student completion rates, while 20 saw small decreases.
- * Just over half of Aboriginal students (50.4 per cent) completed school last year - that's 1.6 per cent more than in 2008-09.
- * Twenty-three school districts have Aboriginal completion rates of 60 per cent or more, up eight districts from last year.
- * Nearly 60 per cent of the students in Gold Trail are Aboriginal - their Aboriginal students have a completion rate 16 per cent higher than the provincial average.
- * Revelstoke had a completion rate of 97.9 per cent last year - 100 per cent of the girls completed.
- * Independent school completion rates remain high at 88 per cent for 2009-10, down from 89.7 per cent in 2008-09.

"More Aboriginal students are successfully completing secondary school than ever before and they deserve our congratulations for their achievements," said MacDiarmid. "But we need to continue working with First Nations, educators and school districts to ensure that every student has the opportunity to achieve their best at school and in life."

Government continues to develop innovative ways to support student achievement.

Measures include creating provincial superintendents of achievement who work closely with boards of education to examine student outcomes and cross-referencing Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) scores with completion-rate data.

FSA scores provide a reliable predictor of a student's likelihood of completing school on time.

In addition, 51 school districts have now signed Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements, which are one component of the collaborative process that the Province is undertaking to help support Aboriginal student achievement.

Others include the B.C. First Nation Education Agreement, developing Aboriginal content for the K-12 curriculum and adding Aboriginal languages to the choices for second-language requirements.

Factsheet with details on completion rates available online at:

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/news/docs/2010/fs_CompletionRates_101130.pdf

This year's completion rates are available online at:

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/graduation/prov.pdf

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Media Contact:

Public Affairs Bureau
Ministry of Education
250 356-5963

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