

# Education Briefing Note Index Fall Session 2023

## Table of Contents

### HOT TOPICS

HOT01	Building Schools – 5 Year Capital Plan (SO01)
HOT02	Busing – General (SO03)
HOT03	Comprehensive Mental Health Approach (RISE) (RI01)
HOT04	EA Allocation in Schools (HR01)
HOT05	Gender, Identity and Health Curriculum (CU02)
HOT06	Hidden Valley School – Supports, Reviews, Investigations, Legal (SI08)
HOT07	Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners – Development (DPT11)
HOT08	Jack Hulland – Grove Street Concerns and Investigation around Holds (SI09)
HOT09	LGBTQ2S+ -- Action Plan, <u><a href="#">SOGI Policy</a></u> and Education Act Implementation (SSS03)
HOT10	Literacy (CU04)
HOT11	New <u><a href="#">CASA</a></u> Agreement – Education Commitments (DPT06)
HOT12	Numeracy (CU05)
HOT13	Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education ( <u><a href="#">RISE</a></u> ) (RI04)
HOT14	Safer Schools Policies and Procedures (DPT10)
HOT15	School Staffing Concerns – <u><a href="#">Recruitment</a></u> , TOCs, Vacancy (HR03)
HOT16	Student to Student Harm in Schools (SSS05)
HOT17	Whitehorse Elementary Replacement Project (SO16)
HOT18	Whitehorse School Replacements – Long-term Capital Planning (SO17)
HOT19	Yukon First Nation School Board (FN10)

### DEPARTMENT-WIDE

DPT01	Accomplishments
DPT02	Auditor General - 2019 Audit and Public Accounts Committee Update
DPT03	Department of Education Health and Safety Investigation
DPT04	Figures at a Glance
DPT05	Main Estimates
DPT06	New CASA Agreement - Education Commitments (HOT11)
DPT07	Privacy Breach
DPT08	Safer School Disclosures

# Education Briefing Note Index Fall Session 2023

## Table of Contents

### DEPARTMENT-WIDE

<b>DPT09</b>	Safer Schools Action Plan
<b>DPT10</b>	Safer Schools Policies and Procedures (HOT14)
<b>DPT11</b>	Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon learners Development – (previously Student Outcomes Strategy Development) (HOT07)

### RISE

<b>RI01</b>	Comprehensive Mental Health Approach (RISE) (HOT03)
<b>RI02</b>	Formal Assessments (RISE)
<b>RI03</b>	Ready to Learn Schools (RISE)
<b>RI04</b>	Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education (RISE) (HOT13)

### EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

<b>EL01</b>	Child Care Act Review
<b>EL02</b>	Child Development Centre Funding
<b>EL03</b>	Early Learning and Child Care Initiatives
<b>EL04</b>	Teen Parent Centre and Onsite Child Care
<b>EL05</b>	Universal Child Care
<b>EL06</b>	Yukon Child Care Board
<b>EL07</b>	Little Blue Expansion

### EDUCATION PARTNERS

<b>EP01</b>	Collaboration – Advisory Committee for Yukon Education
<b>EP02</b>	CSFY Request for School in Dawson
<b>EP03</b>	Private Schools in Yukon
<b>EP04</b>	School Board and Council Elections and Referendums
<b>EP05</b>	School Governance and Associations
<b>EP06</b>	Yukon School Food Programs

### FIRST NATIONS

<b>FN01</b>	Collaboration with Yukon First Nations – Yukon-Wide Initiatives
<b>FN02</b>	Education Agreements

# Education Briefing Note Index Fall Session 2023

## Table of Contents

### FIRST NATIONS

<b>FN03</b>	First Nation Programming in Schools
<b>FN04</b>	First Nations Initiatives Branch
<b>FN05</b>	JEAP Implementation and Agreement Renewal
<b>FN06</b>	Language, Culture and Heritage revitalization in Yukon Public Schools
<b>FN07</b>	Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
<b>FN08</b>	YFNED Programs and Services
<b>FN09</b>	YNLC - First Nation Language Programs
<b>FN10</b>	Yukon First Nation School Board (HOT19)

### CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT, AND TRAINING

<b>CU01</b>	Classroom Assessment Practices
<b>CU02</b>	Gender Identity and Health Curriculum (HOT05)
<b>CU03</b>	Graduation Program
<b>CU04</b>	Literacy (HOT10)
<b>CU05</b>	Numeracy (HOT12)
<b>CU06</b>	Student Data, Reporting, and Sharing
<b>CU07</b>	Teacher Professional Learning - PD Funding and Training
<b>CU08</b>	Yukon's Curriculum (Note: Formerly Curriculum Redesign)

### HUMAN RESOURCES - TEACHERS-EAs

<b>HR01</b>	EA Allocation in Schools (HOT04)
<b>HR02</b>	Housing for Teachers (in Communities)
<b>HR03</b>	School Staffing Concerns - recruitment, TOCs, vacancy (HOT15)
<b>HR04</b>	Teacher Allocation – staffing

### SCHOOLS – PROGRAMS

<b>SP01</b>	Attendance Areas
<b>SP02</b>	Early Kindergarten in Rural Schools
<b>SP03</b>	Emergency Procedures and Public Notices

# Education Briefing Note Index Fall Session 2023

## Table of Contents

### SCHOOLS – PROGRAMS

<b>SP04</b>	Enrolment at Yukon Schools
<b>SP05</b>	French Immersion – Programming, Enrollment and Staffing
<b>SP06</b>	Gadzoosdaa
<b>SP07</b>	K12 Technology in Yukon Schools
<b>SP08</b>	Kindergarten Registration
<b>SP09</b>	School Calendars
<b>SP10</b>	School Growth Planning

### SCHOOLS - ISSUES

<b>SI01</b>	Cannabis and Yukon Schools
<b>SI02</b>	Child and Youth Advocate
<b>SI03</b>	COVID-19 School Operations
<b>SI04</b>	COVID 19 Two-Year Recovery Strategy
<b>SI05</b>	Dispute Resolution Process for Yukon Schools
<b>SI06</b>	Education Appeal Tribunal
<b>SI07</b>	Fentanyl and Yukon Schools
<b>SI08</b>	Hidden Valley School – Supports, Reviews-Investigations, Legal (HOT06)
<b>SI09</b>	Jack Hulland – Grove Street Concerns and Investigation around Holds (HOT08)
<b>SI10</b>	Medication in Schools – Chronic Conditions
<b>SI11</b>	Mice at Elijah Smith Elementary School
<b>SI12</b>	School Video Surveillance
<b>SI13</b>	Schools' Use of Social Media
<b>SI14</b>	Smoking and Vaping in Yukon Schools

### SCHOOLS - OPERATIONS AND FACILITIES

<b>SO01</b>	Building Schools – 5-year Capital Plan (HOT01)
<b>SO02</b>	Burwash - KLUANE Lake School - Kêts'ádań Kù
<b>SO03</b>	Busing – General (HOT02)
<b>SO04</b>	Busing – Traffic Safety



# Education Briefing Note Index Fall Session 2023

## Table of Contents

### SCHOOLS - OPERATIONS AND FACILITIES

<b>SO05</b>	GOLDEN HORN Multi-Use Field
<b>SO06</b>	HIDDEN VALLEY School Playground
<b>SO07</b>	Public Announcement Systems in Schools
<b>SO08</b>	Radon in Schools
<b>SO09</b>	ROBERT SERVICE School Expansion
<b>SO10</b>	School Capital – 2023-24 Projects and Process
<b>SO11</b>	School Maintenance Projects and Process
<b>SO12</b>	Seismic and Schools (EDU/HPW)
<b>SO13</b>	Special Needs Transportation
<b>SO14</b>	Transportation Safety Plans
<b>SO15</b>	WHISTLE BEND School
<b>SO16</b>	Whitehorse Elementary Replacement Project (HOT17)
<b>SO17</b>	Whitehorse School Replacements – Long-term Capital Planning (HOT18)
<b>SO18</b>	Modular Classrooms

### STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

<b>SSS01</b>	Autism Specialist Project
<b>SSS02</b>	Learning Plans (IEPs, SLPs, BSPs)
<b>SSS03</b>	LGBTQ2S+ – Action Plan, SOGI Policy and Education Act Amendment Implementation (HOT09)
<b>SSS04</b>	Mental Health Supports for School Staff and Students
<b>SSS05</b>	Student to Student Harm in Schools (HOT16)

### STUDENT FINANCIAL

<b>SF01</b>	Apprenticeship Program
<b>SF02</b>	Student Financial Assistance - Non-Traditional Programs
<b>SF03</b>	Yukon Excellence Awards
<b>SF04</b>	Yukon Grant

# Education Briefing Note Index Fall Session 2023

## Table of Contents

### ADULT EDUCATION

<b>AE01</b>	Adult Learners - Supports
<b>AE02</b>	SOVA – School of Visual Arts
<b>AE03</b>	Yukon University - Transition
<b>AE04</b>	Yukon University Varsity Sports Feasibility

### YG CORPORATE NOTES

<b>YG01</b>	Housing Issues (YHC)
<b>YG02</b>	Our Clean Future Implementation (ENV)
<b>YG03</b>	Inflation and affordability (FIN)
<b>YG04</b>	Truth and Reconciliation Commission - Update on Calls to Action (ECO)
<b>YG05</b>	2023-24 Supplementary Estimates 1 - Key Information (FIN)

## Building Schools – 5-year Capital Plan

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Education

### Value:

- We continue to work with school communities on planning for their short, medium, and long-term facility needs.

### Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon's Five-Year Capital Plan includes school replacement and renovation projects to ensure all buildings are safe and suitable for many years to come.
- We are pleased that work is underway on new schools in Whistle Bend and Burwash Landing, and planning has started for the replacement of École Whitehorse Elementary School.
- The Government of Yukon's Five-Year Capital Plan also includes Experiential Learning Spaces. In the 2023-24 fiscal year, Experiential Learning Spaces are being constructed at St. Elias Community School, J.V Clark School, Tantalus Community School, and Jack Hulland Elementary School.
- Capital planning decisions are made based on current information and facility assessments, supplemented with education programming needs and emerging enrolment trends and pressures.
- Engagement with the broader Whitehorse community and partners took place this spring. The public had access to an online survey between Tuesday, March 14 and Monday, May 15, 2023. Public open houses were held throughout April.
- Additionally, direct emails and letters were sent to all Whitehorse school councils inviting them to meet with the public engagement

## Building Schools – 5-year Capital Plan

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specialist to hear their feedback and participate as part of the Whitehorse School Capital Planning public engagement.

- Seven school councils accepted the invite, including: Christ the King Elementary School Council joint with St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Secondary School Council; Golden Horn Elementary School Council; Hidden Valley Elementary School Council; Holy Family Elementary School Council; Jack Hulland Elementary School Council; Porter Creek Secondary School Council; and Selkirk Elementary School Council.
- The results of the public engagement are available in the form of a What We Heard Report which can be accessed on [Yukon.ca/engagements](https://Yukon.ca/engagements).
- This feedback will inform future planning for Whitehorse school renovations and replacements.
- We will continue to have conversations with Yukon school communities and the two Yukon school boards about facility needs as we plan for future school projects.

### Additional response:

- We completed a generic design, or functional plan, that can be used to scale the design of multiple types of schools.
- This is now referred to as the Yukon Schools Functional Program, and the plan outlines consistent standards for school design and construction that are scalable based on school population, grades, and urban and rural contexts.

## Building Schools – 5-year Capital Plan

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Education

- This plan was used as the basis for design and planning for the Whistle Bend and the Burwash Landing schools. With each school design we expect a certain amount of customization to ensure the school meets the needs of the community.

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Many school communities are advocating and lobbying for capital projects for various reasons (enrolment increases, facility upgrades, aging buildings, etc.).

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### Background:

- All approved school construction and renovation projects are prioritized and managed through the 5-Year Capital Plan.
- School projects in the 2023-24 five-year capital plan include:
  - A new elementary school in Whistle Bend.
  - The replacement of an existing aging Whitehorse school has been identified as École Whitehorse Elementary School.
    - École Whitehorse Elementary School was identified for replacement on the Takhini Educational Land Reserve in 2022.
    - A project advisory committee has been established to facilitate collaboration and the exchange of ideas between key partners, stakeholders and the Government of Yukon.
    - It is too early to signal a timeline for the construction and occupancy of the school.
    - In August 2023, Kobayashi + Zedda Architects Ltd. was awarded the prime consultant contract for the École Whitehorse Elementary School replacement project through a public tender.
      - The prime consultant will conduct a preliminary site assessment and will continue on through design and warranty phase oversight.
  - Modular Classrooms for short and medium-term school needs:

## Building Schools – 5-year Capital Plan

Education

- In 2022-23 Selkirk Elementary added a modular addition rather than a third portable. This freed up an additional classroom in the school and is now being used for school programming.
- For future years we have conducted feasibility studies and are evaluating modular classrooms at Jack Hulland or Hidden Valley. No final decision has been made.
- Working with Kluane First Nation to relocate Kluane Lake School to Burwash Landing.
- Ongoing stabilization work for Ross River School.
  - The approved budget for 2023-24 is \$3.6 million for the mechanical work and re-leveling.
- The generic school design project was completed in the 2018-19 budget. We now have a completed Yukon Schools Functional Program that is designed to create consistent standards for school design and construction, covering all room types for schools with small conceptual drawings that can be scaled.
- The Yukon Schools Functional Program is not a full school design, but rather the conceptual design of individual spaces that make up parts of a school. We also have a replicable list of specifications that can be used. These two documents are intended to reduce the front-end design time when we are planning schools and make the whole process more efficient.
- Education staff communicate regularly with school Principals to identify projects that would enhance programming.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-07**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

### Special Needs Transportation: refer to TAB SO13

#### Value:

- The Department of Education provides school busing, city transit passes, and transportation subsidies to families to support students travelling safely and effectively to and from school.

#### Recommended response— Registrations

- We acknowledge that there have been delays in processing registrations and special requests, particularly those received after the start of the school year and that there have been communication gaps with parents anxious to hear back from the department.
- Updated notifications of seat assignments were sent out to families during the first week of October.
- Work is ongoing to process any outstanding registrations and special requests.

#### Transportation subsidy:

- If families live more than 3.2 km from the nearest school bus stop and the student goes to the catchment area school, they may apply for a transportation subsidy to offset the cost of driving.
- We will be reviewing the student transportation program to ensure it supports the needs of families and those eligible for transportation allowances.
- We recognize that students with exceptional needs may require additional support and we make every effort to accommodate students' transportation needs.



#### Range Road Construction:

- The Range Road construction work will impact several bus routes and is expected to be completed in Fall 2023.
- Families of students were notified of updated routes that reflect the revised pickup and drop off times.
- We will continue to inform families and provide them with updates on any further impacts.

#### Cancellations:

- Standard Bus is responsible for notifying schools and families when there are bus route cancellations. We are working with Standard to ensure notifications are sent out as early as possible.
- In some instances, routes may be cancelled for the day due to extreme weather conditions, unsafe road conditions, or driver shortages.
- Families can sign up for “My School Bus Monitor” to receive email updates. They can also sign up for text notification with Standard Bus.
- We acknowledge the impact cancelled bus routes can have on families and are working with Standard Bus to find solutions whenever possible.
- There are 43 routes that run daily in Whitehorse.
  - For the 20 instructional days in September that equated to 860 runs.
  - In September 2023 the cancellation rate was under 3% (2.99%)

- The school bus cancellation rate in Whitehorse for September 2022 was 2.5%.

**Driver shortages: (Note: The information on service disruptions will be updated periodically as the semester continues)**

- Like many other jurisdictions, the Yukon is facing a driver shortage and we are working with the contractor, Standard Bus, to support them in their recruitment efforts.
- All Whitehorse routes were staffed for the start of the 2023-24 school year, while the two routes in Dawson were combined and the route in Mayo was not operational due to a lack of drivers.
  - Both Dawson and Mayo routes are now staffed and operational.
  - Standard Bus continues to recruit and is optimistic that they will be entering a period that is more conducive to retaining and recruiting staff.
  - The bus driver in Pelly Crossing recently resigned and recruitment efforts are underway to replace the driver. We will be supporting Standard in their recruitment efforts and hope to have the route staffed soon.
- Efforts will be made to limit any service disruptions in Whitehorse, and we will continue to work with Standard Bus to develop contingency plans, which may include bringing in out-of-territory drivers and combining routes where possible.

#### Discipline and Behavior Management on Buses

- The rules of the school apply while on the school bus and school Principals make a determination if an incident warrants suspension or expulsion from the bus.
  - Standard Bus has a process to report incidents to schools when they happen on the bus.
  - There may be occasions when drivers decide operationally, for health and safety reasons, to remove a student from the bus prior to leaving the school ground or on route.
  - When behavioral issues persist, schools work with Standard bus and Education staff to come up with a solution. An example would be developing a seating plan.
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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- There have been challenges with providing busing services since the start of the pandemic.
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#### Background:

- The Department of Education works with the School Busing Committee on matters affecting the delivery of shared busing services.
  - There are 41 active bus routes in Whitehorse and 12 in the communities, including Ross River.
  - As of the start of the 2023-24 school year there were 2,102 registered riders for the school bus in Whitehorse.
  - Since the start of the school year the department received over 500 late registrations and/or special requests which impacted our ability to respond in a timely manner.
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- For the beginning of the 2023-24 school year, Standard Bus reported that all rural community routes were staffed however unforeseen circumstances led to the two Dawson routes being combined and the Mayo route without a driver.
- For the 2023-24 school year families were required to submit a registration for the school bus.
  - The deadline for registrations was June 20th.
  - Registrations received up to August 15th were processed and seats assigned for the start of the school year.
  - Due to an influx of late registrations some families were not notified of a seat assignment until September 8<sup>th</sup>.
  - Additional communications were sent out to families notifying them of these communication delays.

#### Act and Regulations

- The *Education Act* and the *Student Transportation Regulations* outline the Department of Education's responsibilities for student transportation.
- Transportation subsidies are mandated under s. 47 of the *Education Act*.
- If a student's home is more than 3.2 km by the nearest passable road from the school the student attends, the Minister must either provide transportation (i.e., busing) or an 'allowance for transportation and accommodation.'
- The Department of Education supports Yukon students by providing busing services (in all Yukon communities) for families that do not meet the eligibility requirements under the *Education Act*.
- Under the *Student Transportation Regulations* (O.I.C. 1991/069) the amount of the transportation allowance (limited to one per family) shall equal the Government of Yukon car mileage rate payable to public servants to a maximum amount prescribed by the Minister.
- Under Ministerial Order 2004/10, the maximum transportation allowance payable is \$13 per day.

#### Testing for new drivers

- Testing delays continue to hover around 6 weeks.
- A new driver examiner has been hired and trained since last session.

- Another examiner has left the territory temporarily to receive advanced training in driver examinations, which will increase testing capacity upon their return.
- Additionally, Highways and Public Works is actively seeking another examiner to minimize delays.
- They continue to expedite testing for commercial clients that identify as needing testing for work purposes including tourism, bus driving and emergency medical services, on a case-by-case basis, as time slots become available due to cancellations.

#### Special requests

- In keeping with the Education Act and Student Transportation Regulations, student riders are first assigned a seat for transportation from home to school, and back.
- Transportation to locations other than home is beyond the criteria for school busing and are considered special requests and are considered at the beginning of the school year based on available space and existing bus routes.
- The Student Transportation Ridership Guidelines outline how we consider accommodating students travelling to locations other than their home, for example to after-school activities or daycare.

#### Contract

- Standard Busing was awarded the Student Transportation school bus contracts for both Whitehorse public schools and community public schools for 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24
  - These contracts went to public tender in 2021, and Standard was the successful bidder for both contracts. (Whitehorse: \$7.395 million, Community \$2.898 million; does not include field trips and non-scheduled transportation).

#### **Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-15**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Comprehensive Mental Health Approach (RISE)

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Education

**Mental Health Supports for School Staff and Students: refer to SSS04**  
**New CASA Agreement Education Commitments: refer to HOT11/DPT06**

#### Value:

- The health, safety, and wellbeing of students and staff is our first priority.

#### Recommended response—Mental Health and Wellness Approach:

- The Department of Education is developing a Comprehensive Mental Health and Wellness Approach. This is an important part of the overall work we are doing to reimagine inclusive and special education.
- Our Comprehensive Mental Health and Wellness Approach will include prevention and promotion of positive mental health, as well as intervention supports and responses in and out of school.
- The approach will be developmentally and culturally responsive.
- It will align with Yukon's Mental Health Strategy and be guided by the recommendations from the Yukon Youth Territorial Strategy – from the 2023 Youth Summit – which shares important perspectives from youth on supports that work for them.
- We are actively working to enhance the links between mental health and wellbeing resources available within the community, as provided by partners and stakeholders, as well as the resources accessible within the school environment.

### **Comprehensive Mental Health Approach (RISE)**

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Education

#### **Additional response—counsellors:**

- The department is clarifying the role and name of the school counsellor to ensure it reflects the current needs of students.
- We are working towards a School Wellness Specialist in every school over the next three years, which is a key commitment of CASA.
- These positions will be served by two specific roles, with each school having access to both: a School Wellness Specialist – the minimum requirement is a Bachelor of Social Work – and a Wellness role, which we are developing in collaboration with First Nation governments – this could be an Elder, traditional knowledge keeper, or traditional healer.
- We worked with Executive Directors of the School Boards, Superintendents, and our partners at Mental Health and Substance Use Services to finalize the job description for the School Wellness Specialist.
  - The job advertisement for the School Wellness Specialists was posted on Yukon.ca on October 16<sup>th</sup>.
- We have also started initial conversations with First Nation governments to develop the Wellness role, which will be specific to the needs of each individual First Nation and the school community.
- The success of these new roles is dependent on thoughtful, purposeful, and comprehensive planning.



### **Comprehensive Mental Health Approach (RISE)**

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Education

- We are looking at a broad range of approaches: from inclusive, culturally appropriate programs, to targeted services for acute mental health challenges, including clinical counsellors.
- Clinical counselling support is important; however, it is only one aspect of the comprehensive mental health approach we take in Yukon schools.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- \$500k is in place in Education's budget beginning April 1st, 2023, to support mental health and wellness for Yukon students and schools.
- CASA: commits to an additional annual investment of \$1 million (across YG) for mental health outcomes for youth and to create dedicated wellness counsellors or similar positions in all schools specifically dedicated to addressing the need for comprehensive mental health and wellness (of which Education will receive \$500k)

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#### **Background:**

- There is public demand for more mental health supports – especially for youth – in light of the pandemic and the opioid crisis, and the Yukon Association of Education Professionals and Child and Youth Advocate Office have been advocating for clinical counsellors in each Yukon school.
- For acute mental health challenges, school-based staff help students and families connect with the most appropriate supports that are available within a community, including clinical counselling services (supported through HSS' Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services branch).
- The school counsellor plays an essential role in supporting the wellbeing of students. We continue to hear that the duties of this role need to be more flexible to reflect a school community's needs and to address staffing challenges when filling these positions.

## Comprehensive Mental Health Approach (RISE)

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Education

- We will partner with Yukon First Nation governments and organizations to ensure that student support is culturally responsive and include coordinated work with students and families through First Nation advocates, Education Support Workers, Community Education Liaison Coordinators, and the new Wellness roles).
- As an example, in Fall 2022, we launched Ready-to-Learn Schools, a developmentally responsive approach that helps educators understand how trauma and toxic stress impacts brain development, functioning and learning.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-10-18**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Value:

- Our goal is to provide support and interventions for students to better meet their learning needs.

### Recommended response:

- Through the Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education initiative, we are examining how we allocate Education Assistants and other resources for students.
- As part of the allocation review, we will consider not only individual student needs, but also classroom composition, universal design for learning, and other small-group supports.
- Enhanced professional development and learning opportunities for teachers and educational assistants is also tied to this work.
- Under the updated Confidence and Supply Agreement, the Yukon government committed to increasing the number of Educational Assistants and Learning Assistance Teachers, or LATs, in schools in 2023-24 school year. This year, 40 new positions were added. These positions will include Education Assistants, Learning Assistance Teachers and wellness counsellors or similar. Next year, 21 positions will be added, and the following year, 20 positions will be added.
- We have actively recruited and increased Educational Assistants and Learning Assistance Teachers for the 2023-24 school year. We know recruitment has been challenging across Canada, and many provincial and territorial jurisdictions are also experiencing challenges in recruitment.

- As of November 3, 2023 there are a total of 52.86 LATs and 269.08 EAs **hired** across all schools in Yukon.

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### Context:

- The Department has seen a significant increase in EA requests from schools.
- CASA commitment to increase EA and Learning Assistance teachers in school for the 2023-24 school year.

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### Background:

- Educational Assistants are one of several resources that a school has to support students' learning. These resources include:
  - Inclusive classroom practices implemented by classroom teachers to provide learning activities that support students with diverse or exceptional needs;
  - School counsellors and Learning Assistance Teachers (LATs);
  - Supports from the department's Student Support Services branch, the Curriculum and Assessment branch, the First Nations Initiatives branch
  - First Nations' Education Support Workers, and Community Education Liaison Consultants; and
  - Community-based supports, such as those provided by Health and Social Services.
- We currently **allocate** Education Assistants using a needs-based model; however, to be truly needs-based the number of EAs would fluctuate from year to year. Currently we use a needs-based model using a finite number of EA's (265.4 for 2023-24 school year – does include additional EAs as approved under CASA), but does not account for additional growth/needs which are adjusted over the school year.
- Allocation numbers for schools can vary each year as school and students' needs and school enrolments change.
- When appropriate, we support students with developing their independence and self-advocacy skills. When progress is made, the need for EA support may be reduced after evaluating their successful skill development.

- Schools are responsible for determining day-to-day EA schedules to maximize meeting both individual and shared needs of students, when appropriate.
- There is an increase in EA allocation requests from schools. Schools are focused on recovery from the pandemic and working to better understand the needs of students and how best to support their educational programming.
- A community of inquiry examined better ways to align funding models and staffing allocations with student needs. Draft recommendations have been submitted to the department.

### Request increase

- There has been a steady increase in the request for EA support for students entering into Kindergarten who have been followed by the CDC.
- Each year there is also an increase in the requests for support for academics, behaviors and social emotional supports.

### Educational Assistant allocation

- The 2023-24 **budgeted** FTE allocation for EAs is 252.4 (Note; This does not include the 13 CASA positions).
- The 2022-23 budget allocation for EAs was \$16.4 million (236.9 FTEs). This included EAs for schools governed by the First Nation School Board. An additional 14.0 EAs at \$0.9 million was allocated for CSFY, for a total of \$17.3 million and 25.9 FTE.
- The 2021-22 budget allocation for EAs was \$15.413 million (236.40 FTEs), and CSFY had 12 EAs at \$0.79 million for a total of \$16.203 million and 248.40 FTE.
- The 2020-21 budget allocation for EAs was \$15.95 million (245.40 FTEs – includes both Department of Education and CSFY).
- The 2019-20 budget allocation for EAs was \$15.1 million (245.40 FTEs – includes both Department of Education and CSFY).

### Educational assistant allocation process

- In 2015-16, an 'Educational Assistant Allocation Advisory Committee' recommended needs-based allocation process.
  - Each school assesses its needs and submits a request for Educational Assistants to the Schools and Student Services Branch.

- The Student Support Services staff review all of the schools' requests and use a needs-based formula to initially allocate Educational Assistants.
- Educational Assistants are allocated to schools in the spring, and the principal assigns them within the school to best meet student needs.
- At the beginning of the new school year, adjustments are made to the allocations based on actual student enrolment, needs at each school, the amount of applications received and positions filled, allocations may be further adjusted during the school year as needs change.
  - 1) School-Based Allocations:

The base allocation for each school is determined by student enrolment and an index of assessments from Yukon's Student Assessment Matrix.

    - (a) Initial allocation by enrolment:
    - (b) Elementary index allocation is based on Kindergarten assessments, including the Boehm (test of Basic Concepts) and EYE (Early Years Evaluation), as well as the Grade 4 FSAs (Foundational Skills Assessment) and Grade 7 FSAs.
    - (c) Secondary index allocation is based on an average of the elementary index of the feeder schools.
  - 2) Intensive needs allocation:

To provide shared or intensive support for student needs:

    - (a) In addition to the school-based allocations, each school can request EA support to either be shared by groups of students or to be assigned to a specific student based on their intensive support needs (e.g., may require 1-1 support for at least part of the day).
    - (b) The Department of Education assesses each school's requests in this category with consideration of student data and criteria in order to determine the need for student-specific supports.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-06**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

## Gender Identity and Health Curriculum

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Education

### **LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan, SOGI Policy and Education Act Amendment Implementation: refer to HOT09/SSS03**

#### **Value:**

- It is a top priority to support healthy, active, safe, and caring learning environments in all Yukon schools.

#### **Recommended response:**

- Yukon's Physical and Health Education curriculum includes age-appropriate learning standards on physical literacy, health and active living, social and community health, and mental wellbeing.
- Students start to learn about sexual identity in Grade 4. Lessons include information about the physical, emotional, and social changes that occur during puberty, including those involving sexuality and sexual identity.
- We work with educators, health experts, and community members to ensure we are using the most up-to-date practices to create an inclusive school environment for all students.
- We are making every effort to ensure lessons and teaching practices promote inclusion and we continue to review and update these on an ongoing basis.
- We appreciate the need for families to be aware of curriculum topics. We invite parents to discuss the curriculum topics with their child's teacher or school principal.



## Gender Identity and Health Curriculum

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Education

- If anyone has feedback or concerns about a lesson being taught at their school, we encourage them to bring it to the attention of the teacher and school principal for a discussion.

### Additional response:

- Teachers are provided with resources and professional learning about appropriate language and best practices to teach these learning standards inclusively.
- Yukon's curriculum, resources, and professional learning for educators follow the department's Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Policy, or SOGI policy, which promotes appropriate, respectful behaviour for all students, including 2SLGBTQIA+ students.
- To further support 2SLGBTQIA+ students, the Department of Education updated its Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Policy, as outlined in the LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan.
- We will continue to engage with students, educators and other members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community as we work to implement and evaluate the updated SOGI Policy.
- The department has recently partnered with ARC Foundation, a charitable foundation supporting SOGI-inclusive educational practices in K-12 school settings, to implement the tools and resources of the SOGI 1 2 3 program to create more inclusive schools for students.
- Grade 4-7 Better to Know resources, previously known as SHARE, were recently reviewed. The revised resources were available to teachers beginning in the 2022-23 school year.

## Gender Identity and Health Curriculum

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Education

- We have implemented new training, developed through work on the Safer School Action Plan, in all schools to enhance student safety and raise awareness about appropriate adult behaviour.

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### Context – this may be an issue because:

- Questions about the recently updated SOGI Policy are expected.

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### Background:

- Yukon government initiatives relate to gender identity and safety in schools. These include:
  - The LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan which committed the Department of Education to updating the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Policy.
  - The Yukon Strategy on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-spirit+ People, which aims to address violence against Indigenous women, girls and Two-spirit+ people.
  - The Department of Education's current work to update its policies and processes on safe and caring schools.
  - The work of the Communities of Inquiry in response to the Review of Inclusive and Special Education and the Review on School Attendance, which are creating new definitions of Inclusive and Special Education.

### Curriculum

- Content related to sexual health begins in kindergarten, when students learn the proper name of all their body parts.
- With younger students, sexual health topics focus on general health and safety. In later grades, this content expands to include content such as topics related to pregnancy, the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, and overall healthy sexual decision making.
- Topics related to sexual identity begin in Grade 4 where students learn about the physical, emotional, and social changes that occur during puberty, including those involving sexuality and sexual identity.

## Gender Identity and Health Curriculum

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Education

- In grades 4-10, Physical and Health Education curriculum includes strategies for students to protect themselves and others from potential abuse, exploitation, and harm in a variety of settings.

### Resources

- All schools were provided with the Better to Know resources.
- Video and teaching resources for Grades K to 3 are available for use in Yukon Schools.

### Professional learning

- All Yukon Education schools that had a Professional Development Day on August 17, 2023 received professional development in Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Inclusive educational practices to support their roles and responsibilities in the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Policy.
- The Departments of Education and Health and Social Services follow best practices in comprehensive sexual health education as taught by Options for Sexual Health (OPT BC) in Vancouver. Health and Social Services employs Certified Sexual Health Educators who have been trained through OPT BC. Many Yukon educators have received training for teaching classroom lessons from Certified Sexual Health Educators.
- Since September 2017, Education and Health and Social Services have held workshops at the majority of Yukon schools. Topics included:
  - Better to Know, or BTK (previously SHARE);
  - Comprehensive sexual health curricular competencies for various elementary grade levels; and
  - Grade K-12 comprehensive health learning standards.
- We have organized and delivered professional development workshops open to all Yukon teachers on sexual health education in collaboration with Health and Social Services. We have also worked with Health and Social Services to deliver professional development workshops to the nursing community who are closely involved in K-12 education.
- Teachers most recently engaged in professional development on sexual health resources in January, 2023.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#HOT05/CU02**

**Fall 2023**

## Gender Identity and Health Curriculum

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Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-06

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

**Safer Schools Action Plan: refer to DPT09**

**Safer School Disclosures: refer to DPT08**

**Emergency Procedures and Public Notices: refer to SP03**

**Safer Schools Policies and Procedures: refer to HOT14/DPT10**

**Autism Specialist Project: refer to TAB SSS01**

**Child and Youth Advocate: refer to TAB SI02**

#### **Value:**

- There is nothing more important than the safety and protection of students when they are in our care.

#### **Recommended response:**

- We have taken significant action with the Safer Schools Action Plan and will continue to address the issues that have been identified in the reports that we have received to date.
- We appreciate the work of all the organizations that have reviewed, reported, or made recommendations on the Hidden Valley School situation: the Child and Youth Advocate, the RCMP, the Ombudsman, and the department's independent reviewer.
- We also appreciate the involvement of our education partners and the education community to advocate for and help us to bring about changes.
- We have accepted all of the various report recommendations in principle and are committed to continuing system-wide corrective action.

### **Hidden Valley School – Supports, Reviews-Investigations, Legal**

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Education

#### **Additional response:**

- We will continue to ensure the wellbeing of Yukon children remains at the centre of our decision-making and actions.
- The reports' recommendations have helped us re-examine, refine and enhance our existing commitments to ensure a strengthened student and child-centred approach.
- I continue to hold up the dedicated staff and parents at Hidden Valley Elementary School who are ensuring children feel connected, supported, and safe at school.
- A range of supports, including access to counselling, will continue to be available; no family will be left behind.

#### **Additional response – Ombudsman Report:**

- We agree with the conclusions of the recently released Ombudsman report about the communication failures in the government's initial responses to the 2019 incident at Hidden Valley Elementary School.
- The Government of Yukon and the RCMP acknowledged that mistakes were made in the response. We have apologized to parents at Hidden Valley Elementary and acknowledged that steps could have been taken to better inform and support parents following the incident.
- We look forward to receiving the second part of the Ombudsman's report later this fall and reviewing any recommendations they may make regarding the implementation of the Safer Schools Action Plan.

### **Hidden Valley School – Supports, Reviews-Investigations, Legal**

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Education

#### **Additional response – Child and Youth Advocate Report:**

- In November 2022 the department accepted in principle all of the recommendations in the Child and Youth Advocate Report. We committed to providing a progress report within one year on the government's actions to date.
- We provided a report on October 12, 2023 detailing the progress that the Government of Yukon has made in implementing the recommendations put forth by the Child and Youth Advocate's Office.
- Our progress reflects that the work of the Safer Schools Action Plan has been fully implemented and integrated into the department and across the Yukon government. We will continue our efforts to make schools safer and more inclusive environments for all students.
- We appreciate the work of all the organizations that have reviewed, reported, or made recommendations on the Hidden Valley Elementary School incident. We have accepted all the various report recommendations in principle, and are committed to continuing system-wide improvements.

#### **Additional response – William Auclair-Bellemare court matter:**

- We are aware of the verdict for the current court matter regarding former Educational Assistant, William Auclair-Bellemare was delivered on October 13, 2023. In this court matter, William Auclair-Bellemare has been found not guilty of the charges for sexual offences against a student and acquitted on charges of invitations to sexual touching and forcible confinement.
- We will not be commenting further on these court matters.



### Hidden Valley School – Supports, Reviews-Investigations, Legal

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Education

- Our priority remains on providing support for students, families and staff as these legal matters continue.
- We thank the dedicated staff at Hidden Valley Elementary School who are ensuring children feel connected, supported and safe at school.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Part 1 of the report from the Ombudsman was publicly released September 7, 2023, and it is anticipated Part 2 will be released in Fall 2023.
- The Yukon government committed to provide a one-year progress report to the Child and Youth Advocate by October 12, 2023.

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#### Background:

##### Supports for families and staff

- We are working closely with the Hidden Valley administration and school community on their needs for the 2023-24 year.
- The response to the school community is intentionally dynamic, as all children and families are unique in how they react to various experiences. We listen to the concerns to respond in an appropriate manner with the best direct supports.
- Families and staff were provided information reminding them of the supports available on February 15, 2023.
- Supports continue to be available to families and staff. Examples include:
  - Supports coordinated as needed via the School Community Consultant, school administration and staff to services through Family and Children's Services, Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services, and Victim Services.
  - Staff presentations on services and supports available to them, including crisis counselling services through LifeWorks and information on the broader Employee and Family Assistance program.

### **Hidden Valley School – Supports, Reviews-Investigations, Legal**

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Education

- Staffing support was strengthened starting in 2021, and we've continued to provide this support in how we schedule, assign and support staff in their learning.
- We currently have a full-time Principal and a full-time Vice-Principal at the school.
- In the 2022-23 school year, we hired a dedicated Learning Assistance Teacher to serve students with neuro-diversity in a dedicated classroom, and to provide programming and direct teaching in collaboration with Educational Assistants, Administrators, families and fellow staff members.
  - This teacher develops and implements Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) and ensures inclusion within the school community while facilitating ongoing communication with families.
  - The department committed to continuing this program in the 2023-24 school year, and we are finalizing a commitment to its continuation for an additional two years.
- To clarify a comment Minister McLean made during the Supplementary budget debate on March 16, 2023: a clinical counsellor continues to be available to support students on an ongoing basis. Supports and referrals from the Child and Youth and Family Treatment Team can be available at the school and outside the school.
- Clinical counselling support is important; however, it is only one aspect of the comprehensive mental health approach we take in Yukon schools.

#### Past Supports

- Mental Wellness and Substance Use facilitated a 6-session parent support group that involved evening sessions with a clinical counsellor and an outreach worker. This was held off-site to best accommodate the requests and privacy of families.
- Supports were available directly from Whitehorse-based private practitioner, Marie Fast who provides emotional support and counselling for families, helps participants to focus on self-care and well-being of their families, and helps parents to find ways to discuss relevant issues with their children.
- The Child and Youth and Family Treatment Team attending the school to monitor the needs of staff, students and families; providing service to parents and families; and delivering sessions on resilience and social-emotional skills for grade 5, 6, and 7 students.

### **Hidden Valley School – Supports, Reviews-Investigations, Legal**

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Education

#### RCMP Report

- The Yukon RCMP requested a complete review of their investigation by the BC RCMP E Division Major Crimes Unit after acknowledging mistakes were made in their initial investigation. The RCMP's preliminary findings were distributed to all Hidden Valley parents and guardians, current and former.
- Under the Safer Schools Action Plan, the Yukon government committed to working with the RCMP to create a new inter-agency agreement for the investigation of child abuse and provide training for those responsible in each department. This work is complete.

#### Safer Schools Action Plan

- For the Department of Education, key initiatives include:
  - enhancing our screening and hiring processes;
  - partnering with the Canadian Center for Child Protection for training on their Commit to Kids program that focuses on building awareness and response of adults working with children and youth on child sexual abuse prevention;
  - partnering with Family and Children's Services to provide training to school staff on their Duty to Report;
  - a new Student Protection Policy and procedures; and
  - Post-Incident Communications Guidance, which outlines expectations for ongoing communication with families in various scenarios.
- We trained all school administrators and teaching staff on these policies and procedures in fall of 2022, and have built safer schools training into onboarding of new staff.
- We are also working to ensure all school support staff and adults working in school settings, including school councils, are trained as well.

#### CYAO Report

### **Hidden Valley School – Supports, Reviews-Investigations, Legal**

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Education

- The CYAO released its Hidden Valley Elementary School Systemic Review of policies, protocols, and actions to ensure student safety and supports in October 2022. Education provided a formal response on November 23, 2022.
- The CYAO made 8 recommendations to the Department of Education, which were all accepted in principle.

#### Independent Review

- Generally, the report finds the response from the government inadequate, and that communication should have been sent earlier.
- The report of the internal review from Amanda Rogers was delivered on January 31, 2022, and the Department and parents/guardians received the report at the same time as Amanda Rogers walked through the report and her recommendations.
- Recommendations (all accepted):
  - Implement a policy/process for interdepartmental cooperation for significant events and provide appropriate training
  - Implement an Education policy for addressing school incidents including criminal allegations against employees
  - Provide better training for School Administrators and better onboarding of Education employees
  - Ensure computerized databases in all Yukon schools are capable of easily identifying families of students both past and present and information about EA assignments.
  - Ensure School Administrators, Teachers and Staff are provided training in respect of their duty to report and document suspected abuse on an annual basis
  - Develop and implement a policy in cooperation with the RCMP Re: information sharing and setting out the process for working together in the event a serious allegation of criminal conduct is levelled against an employee arising from or with a sufficient nexus to their employment.
  - Fully implement the recommendations set out in the 2019 June Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Yukon Legislative Assembly, especially those in respect of inclusive education for students who have special needs

### Hidden Valley School – Supports, Reviews-Investigations, Legal

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Education

#### Ombudsman Report

- The Ombudsman is scheduled to release Part 1 of its report on September 7, 2023. The report agrees with the Independent Review that there was a communication failure and that the delay in informing parents about the sexual abuse allegations was “unwarranted, and unfairly denied the Parents any opportunity to take immediate and appropriate steps to help their children.”
  - The Ombudsman concludes that the Department had a legal and policy obligation to report the matter to the Parents and that neither the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, or the publication ban to protect the identity of the child victim, prevented the Department from informing the Parents at any point.
  - The Ombudsman concludes that the Department only began sharing information with the parents because the matter became public through the media and the Department found itself having unexpectedly to respond.
- The Ombudsman will be issuing a second report in the late Fall of 2023 that will examine whether the Safer Schools Action Plan adequately addresses the issues identified in the first report.

#### William Auclair-Bellemare Charges

- The Crown stayed 4 of the additional charges against William Auclair-Bellemare for sexual offences against a student in February 2023.
- Other charges are still active and are before the court. The verdict in William Auclair-Bellemare's trial is to be delivered in October 2023.

#### Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-10-17

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

### **Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners Development (Previously: Student Outcome Strategy)**

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Education

#### **Values**

- We continue to work with Yukon First Nations and partners to monitor and improve student outcomes by identifying and analyzing root causes that can negatively impact a student's learning.

#### **Recommended response:**

- The Department of Education is developing a 10-year Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners.
- We are engaging with our partners, in particular with the First Nation Education Commission and the Advisory Committee on Yukon Education, prior to finalizing the strategy, in order to ensure we are taking the time to do this work in a good way.
- The Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners will help us better understand what students need to thrive. It will also help us make better decisions based on facts and current data.
- Over the past year, IRP Consulting led an extensive engagement with Yukon First Nations and the broader education community. The feedback from this engagement forms the foundation of our strategy.
- The strategy aims to address the long-standing gaps in student performance and improve outcomes for Yukon students, including First Nations students, rural students, and students with diverse learning needs.

### **Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners Development (Previously: Student Outcome Strategy)**

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Education

#### **Additional response:**

- The strategy will help us develop a deeper understanding of how we can best support students and make evidence-based decisions that ensure all students have an opportunity to succeed.
- Education staff are committed to doing this work in a good way: with kindness and supportiveness, taking the time to listen, learn, and understand.
- All initiatives in Education - including in schools and in our central services - will align with the values and intentions of the strategy.
- We highly value our collaborative work with the Chiefs Committee on Education and the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate to improve outcomes for Indigenous students.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- In the 2019 audit, the Auditor General identified achievement gaps between rural and urban students, as well as Yukon First Nations and non-First Nations students.

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#### **Background:**

- Recommendation #42 from the 2019 audit, states “The Department of Education should develop and implement a strategy to address the long-standing gaps in student performance and improve student outcomes, particularly those of Yukon First Nations and rural students.”

### Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners Development (Previously: Student Outcome Strategy)

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Education

- In response, the Department of Education committed to “collaborate with Yukon First Nations governments... to develop and implement an outcome management improvement strategy for the Yukon education system.”
- The Yukon First Nation Education Commission (FNEC) provided a clear preference for the department to work on a government-to-government basis with individual First Nations.
- The final report on the Review of Inclusive and Special Education notes that families, tutors, Yukon First Nations, advocacy groups, other government departments and programs, and the broader school community provide invaluable support to students.
- Central Services includes Curriculum, RISE and Student Support Services, Finance, Human Resources, Communications, Policy, Early Learning and Child Care, Training Programs, First Nations Initiatives, French Programs, and Student Financial Assistance.

**Approved by:**

**Cassandra Kelly**

**2023-09-25**

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a/Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]



### **Jack Hulland – Grove Street Concerns and Investigation around Holds, Restraints and Seclusion**

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#### **Value:**

- All students and staff have the right to a safe and inclusive learning environment.

#### **Recommended response:**

- In the fall of 2021, allegations were raised about the use of holds, restraints and seclusion at Jack Hulland Elementary School.
- We are continuing to communicate with and assist students, families, and staff in order for them to access support and make informed decisions, while also not compromising the RCMP investigation while it was underway.
- A range of free-of-charge supports continue to be available to students, families, and staff as we navigate these complex matters.

#### **Investigations and legal matters—holds and restraints:**

- As an employer, we have an obligation and are committed to learning more about the conduct of our employees and what happened.
- We fully cooperated with the RCMP's criminal investigation, which is complete pending their final report being shared with the Public Prosecution Service of Canada.
- We are also working with the Department of Justice in regards to the civil lawsuit underway. Given this is an ongoing matter before the courts, we will not be commenting on the specific allegations outlined in the statement of claim.

### **Jack Hulland – Grove Street Concerns and Investigation around Holds, Restraints and Seclusion**

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Education

- These matters are complex and of a most serious nature and will take time to complete.

#### **Managing student behaviour:**

- We have trained all Yukon administrators, teachers and staff on new policies and procedures for preventing harm to students as part of the Student Protection Policy and will continue to offer regular training sessions on non-violent crisis intervention, which is the standard for managing student behaviours in a positive manner.
- We have clarified expectations for staff at JHES about the use of holds, restraints and seclusion when managing student behaviour. The use of seclusion is unacceptable and physical holds or restraints are to be used only by persons trained and certified in Non-violent Crisis Intervention (module 6) and only when there is imminent risk or serious physical harm to student and others.
- In addition, we have increased oversight on Workplace Risk Assessments (WRAs). A Workplace Risk Assessment must be completed any time a hold occurs.
- We have made a commitment to significantly increase school-level supports to strengthen learning and wellbeing. This includes the addition of 81 new full-time student support positions over the next three years, subject to legislative approval, and a \$1 million investment in student support initiatives.

### **Jack Hulland – Grove Street Concerns and Investigation around Holds, Restraints and Seclusion**

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Education

- We want to ensure both students and staff are supported to uphold safe and inclusive learning environments.

#### **Requests for student records:**

- The Department of Education fully cooperated with the RCMP as they completed their investigation and finalize their final report.
- Any further questions regarding the concluded RCMP investigation should be referred to the RCMP.
- We will work with all individuals who have requested records to provide as much information as we are able to provide to make informed decisions and to access supports.
- We do not want this to prevent families from accessing support.
- The situation has been exceptionally challenging for many members of the Jack Hulland Elementary School community and supports are available to anyone who has been affected by this.

#### **Administration / supporting staff:**

- There is a dedicated team of teachers and staff at Jack Hulland school, and the administrative team is focused on moving the school forward in a good way.
- Since November 2021, we've maintained communication with the school community, providing regular updates and sharing information when we are able.

### **Jack Hulland – Grove Street Concerns and Investigation around Holds, Restraints and Seclusion**

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Education

- We've provided information on supports and encouraged families to reach out to the RCMP with any information that may be relevant to their investigation.
- A range of free-of-charge and confidential supports continue to be available to the school community.
- We will continue to work with the school administration and school council on staff supports and initiatives.

#### **Communications:**

- We will continue to communicate information as it becomes available and where we are able to.
- We continue to remind and encourage families and staff of the resource supports available to them, including a dedicated support person that is available to help families navigate the information and supports that are available.

#### **Child and Youth Advocate Office:**

- We are working with the Child and Youth Advocate on a case-by-case basis to directly support past and present students and families of Jack Hulland School.
- We will continue to provide updates to the Child and Youth Advocate on the government's ongoing response.

### Jack Hulland – Grove Street Concerns and Investigation around Holds, Restraints and Seclusion

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Education

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- On September 11<sup>th</sup>, the RCMP informed the JHES School community they have concluded their investigation and will forward their final report to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada when it is complete.
  - A statement of claim was filed on October 31, 2022, naming the Yukon government and JHES School Council as defendants.
  - A decision released September 6, 2023, certified the claim as a class action.
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#### Background:

- In November 2021 the Area Superintendent received information from the acting school principal that there could be school-wide physical abuse of students through inappropriate use of holds and isolation rooms as a means to restrain and address student behaviour.
  - Violence at the school has previously been described as student-to-student and/or student-to-teacher and largely focused on a Shared Resource Program that supports student with behavioural needs (Grove Street program).
  - RCMP and Family and Children's Services were engaged on November 19, 2021, and the investigation is progressing. Production orders for records were completed to RCMP's satisfaction.
  - A law group was engaged to conduct the employer's fact-finding investigation using duplicate copies of all the same materials that were disclosed to the RCMP, including Workplace Risk Assessments and other reports involving the use of holds and isolation rooms produced over the last 5 years. A Workplace Risk Assessment is required to be completed and submitted to the Student Support Services Unit when students demonstrate escalated behavior that may be harmful to others.
  - The initial findings from the law group received in April 2022, suggested concerns that holds, restraints and seclusion were not used as a last resort or in situations of
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### **Jack Hulland – Grove Street Concerns and Investigation around Holds, Restraints and Seclusion**

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Education

imminent danger, but rather for matters of non-compliance or not following the direction of staff.

- As the employer, we have an obligation to learn more and will do so.
- Education provides Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training – an industry standard training – to school staff to provide them with the tools to de-escalate situations and protect themselves and others from student outbursts.
- In May 2022, the Deputy Minister of Education provided staff at Jack Hulland Elementary School with a letter clarifying the employer's expectations of Educators in respect to managing student behavior.
- On May 5, 2022, information was also shared with families, and a meeting was held with participation from Victim Services, Family and Children's Services, Family Resource Unit, and Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services.
- A statement of claim was filed on October 31, 2022, to the Yukon Supreme Court by two plaintiffs and their guardians against the Department of Education and Jack Hulland Elementary School Council for holds and involuntary seclusion by school staff.
- The lawsuit seeks to be certified as a class-action on behalf of all students "who were subject to holds and restraints and who were locked in a room and/or placed in seclusion" at the school between Jan. 1, 2002, and June 30, 2022.
- Legal counsel for the Department of Education has filed a defense to the class action lawsuit that was submitted in mid-February 2023.
- In May 2023 the Yukon Supreme Court agreed to dismiss the action against the school council.
- June 26 – 29, 2023 a hearing was held to determine if the lawsuit should be a class action.
- September 6, 2023, the lawsuit was certified as a class action except for individual accusations of assault and confinement.
- The RCMP have concluded their investigation and are in the process of preparing a final report to be filed with the Public Prosecution Office of Canada.

## Session Briefing Note

**TAB#HOT08/SI09**

**Fall 2023**

Education

### **Jack Hulland – Grove Street Concerns and Investigation around Holds, Restraints and Seclusion**

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Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-10-23

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### **LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan, SOGI Policy and Education Act Amendment Implementation**

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Education

**Gender Identity and Health Curriculum: refer to HOT05/CU02**

#### **Value:**

- It is a top priority to support healthy, active, safe and caring learning environments in all Yukon schools.

#### **Recommended response:**

- All students, staff, and parents have a right to be and feel safe in Yukon public schools.
- They also have the right to be treated with respect and dignity regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, ancestry, place of origin, ethnicity, citizenship, religion, age, or ability.
- School authorities work with their entire school community to develop and implement proactive strategies that support the inclusion, respect and dignity of 2SLGBTQIA+ students and their families.
- The Department of Education values diversity in its school communities and wants to provide safe, welcoming, inclusive and affirming learning environments for all students.
- Parents/guardians and caregivers can contact their child's school directly to learn more about and direct and questions and concerns regarding SOGI Inclusive Education, safe spaces, safe contacts, activities, and organizations to promote equality and non-discrimination, are being implemented in Yukon schools.



### **LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan, SOGI Policy and Education Act Amendment Implementation**

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Education

#### **Action plan:**

- To further support 2SLGBTQIA+ students, the Department of Education updated its Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, or SOGI Policy, as outlined in the LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan
- In our work to implement and evaluate the updated SOGI Policy we will continue to engage with students, educators and other members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.
- As part of our continued SOGI policy review, we will look at the best ways to support schools to implement the policy in schools.
- A recent partnership between the department and ARC Foundation, a charitable foundation supporting SOGI inclusive educational practices in K-12 school settings, has been established to implement the tools and resources of the SOGI 1 2 3 program to help to create more inclusive schools for students and to support educators to implement the SOGI policy.
- Schools, with the support of the Department of Education, school councils and school boards and guidance of best practice from the ARC Foundation are developing school-based procedures and guidelines under the umbrella of the Department of Education's SOGI Policy, to ensure that 2SLGBTQIA+ students are treated with respect and dignity at all Yukon public schools, which includes publicly funded Catholic schools.

### **LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan, SOGI Policy and Education Act Amendment Implementation**

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Education

- As Minister of Education and Women and Gender Equity Directorate, I am fully committed to the ongoing implementation the LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan.

#### **Education Act Amendments:**

- In Spring 2022, the Government of Yukon was pleased to support amendments to the *Education Act* to promote equity and non-discrimination and to ensure that all Yukon schools have safe spaces for 2SLGBTQIA+ students in the form of activities or organizations.
- At the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year the Department of Education provided professional development training to administrators and teachers on the requirements of the *Education Act* and the SOGI and Safe and Caring Schools policies.
- School administrators have been provided with information about their legislative responsibilities, as well as reference materials and resources.
- Counsellors and administrators have been provided with local and national SOGI and Gender and Sexuality Alliance information.
- Several Yukon schools have Gender and Sexuality Alliances and other 2SLGBTQIA+ initiatives.
- We will continue to encourage and support schools to meet their legal obligations to support 2SLGBTQIA+ students.

### **LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan, SOGI Policy and Education Act Amendment Implementation**

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Education

#### **Additional response—Christopher West:**

- The Department of Education did not, nor will we, invite and endorse Christopher West to speak to Yukon educators, at any school or professional development event.
- We do not support speakers for professional learning whose ideologies and positions do not uphold the principles in:
  - the *Education Act*;
  - the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Policy;
  - the Safe and Caring Schools Policy; and
  - the *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Protection Act*, which bans conversion therapy.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- There is considerable interest in the Yukon on how Yukon schools are offering safe and inclusive environments to 2SLGBTQIA+ students including interests regarding the SOGI policy's statement that "Administrators, staff and students will recognize people's correct pronouns, as declared by the individuals themselves. This requirement applies to students who have not made official changes to their name or gender in school records."

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#### **Background:**

##### LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan and SOGI Policy

- There have been media requests, opposition questions and parental concerns regarding the SOGI policy's statement that "Administrators, staff and students will recognize people's correct pronouns, as declared by the individuals themselves. This

### **LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan, SOGI Policy and Education Act Amendment Implementation**

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Education

requirement applies to students who have not made official changes to their name or gender in school records.”

- Some people believe that a parent/guardian should be told by the school if their child is declaring to be called by the pronouns they choose to be recognized by. The policy does not speak to whether school staff must tell parents if a child wishes to use different pronouns or a different name but states that the “*Department of Education values diversity in its school communities and wants to provide safe, welcoming, inclusive and affirming learning environments for all students.*”
- While we understand the importance of involving parents in the lives of their children, the issue at hand is a delicate one that must consider the human rights of students, particularly those who are transgender or nonbinary.
- The Department of Education has recently partnered with the ARC Foundation for their support with the implementation of SOGI inclusive practices in Yukon school through SOGI 1 2 3 and resources for teachers to implement more inclusive practices into their lesson plans and delivery of curriculum. SOGI 1 2 3 implementation in other provinces has recently become under scrutiny.
- Training and resources shall be offered to all staff and further training to those identified staff members and counsellors to be sensitive and respond knowledgeably to 2SLGBTQIA+ students as well as students with 2SLGBTQIA+ family members. Identified staff and counsellors must receive training.
- We believe that schools should involve parents when there is a specific problem or issue that could impact the child's safety, wellbeing, or education.
- Yukon schools have a number of universal, stand-alone washrooms available, and we are working to ensure that all school facilities have stand-alone or gender-neutral washrooms. Building standards have now been updated to ensure new schools will include gender inclusive washrooms.
- In the LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan, released in July 2021, the Department of Education made a number of commitments, including to update the SOGI Policy.
- The recent updates to the SOGI Policy, announced in August 2023, are intended to address issues such as use of a student’s correct gender pronouns, update terminology

### LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan, SOGI Policy and Education Act Amendment Implementation

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Education

to be trans-inclusive, address gender-identity inclusion in sports, and clarify points of contact and responsibilities at the department and school levels.

- On March 23, 2022, the opposition asked the Minister to commit to engaging with the school community to update the SOGI policy before the end of the current school year (June 2022).

#### Education Act

- Amendments to the *Education Act* make it a legal requirement for Principals to ensure that initiatives and activities in schools are inclusive of gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.
- The funding agreement for Catholic schools in Yukon accommodates religious instruction, but emphasizes that they are publicly supported schools with the same responsibilities as other schools, including following responsibilities outlined under SOGI Policy.

#### Christopher West

- In October 2022, Schools and Student Service Branch heard from a school principal regarding concerns that the Catholic Diocese of the Yukon allegedly put Christopher West's name forward for discussion for professional development session(s) in May 2023.
- On October 13, 2022, the Catholic Episcopal Corporation emailed the department, indicating that "There was no decision made to invite Mr. West and he was neither contacted nor booked by the Catholic Episcopal Corporation to speak at any event."

#### **Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-08**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

### Value:

- Developing and improving literacy skills throughout life is essential to an individual's right to an education and is a top priority for the Department of Education.

### Recommended Response:

- Teaching literacy is complex and there is no single approach that works for all students. Educators need to have a well-developed 'toolbox' of strategies and approaches.
- We listened and heard the concerns about literacy instruction, and as stated last year, launched a Literacy Strategy Working Group.
- This group developed recommendations that informed the Culturally Responsive Literacy Strategy for Yukon Education operated schools.
- This strategy, announced on International Literacy Day - September 8, 2023, recognizes and supports the diversity of students in our classrooms.
- This student-centred approach will ensure that teachers and students have access to the resources and supports needed to meet the unique needs of our students.
- This means the addition of supports and resources for implementing Structured Literacy processes in grades K-3 classrooms.
- Using different approaches in classrooms is not easy and does not happen overnight and the Department is committed to supporting

educators by providing training and resources to increase their instructional toolkit.

### **Additional Responses:**

- Part of this commitment is ensuring that Literacy Support Teachers are fully in place in Yukon Education operated schools by the 2025/26 school year.
- The Literacy Support Teachers will be guided by a Literacy Consultant and evidence-based practices.
- Further collaborative work will begin right away in this school year, as recommended by the working group.
- This collaborative work will strengthen Indigenous and culturally responsive approaches to literacy and examine current interventions and assessment tools.

### **If asked about Recent News article from Dyslexia Canada**

- I would like to reassure the public that the current BC curriculum used in Yukon schools does not limit the integration of evidence-based approaches and strategies.
- Evidence-based ways of teaching children to read, including structured literacy, is currently being practiced in many Yukon schools, and will be a requirement of all Yukon education schools as the Culturally Responsive Literacy strategy is implemented.

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### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- There are still some controversial differences with the FNSB's literacy approach including the use of Reading Recovery as one intervention tool for reading, and the use of Fountas and Pinnell literacy assessments.

- Questions about Yukon's literacy approach have been raised in the Public Accounts hearing, due to a submission from Yukon Speech Language Pathology and Audiology Association, as well as in past budget debates.
  - Yukon data indicates that literacy and numeracy proficiencies need improvement.
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### Background:

#### Literacy and Curriculum

- The recently announced Literacy Strategy will have a phased approach, over the next three years that will include, but is not limited to:
  - Increasing learning opportunities for educators and implementing Literacy Support Teachers in schools to provide continued support to educators, guided by a Literacy Consultant.
  - Ensuring culturally inclusive materials and approaches to support Structured Literacy.
  - Using up-to-date evidence-based practices, meaningful consultation with partners, and frequent review and quality assurance processes to measure success and provide iterations of support where necessary.
- The literacy strategy includes a recommendation to continue working on exploration of literacy interventions and Indigenous ways of teaching literacy. This work is likely to have an impact on current assessments and intervention methods in the future.
- Yukon education has data from Reading Recovery that is supportive of student success. It is not, however, an intervention that some teachers and administrators view as the best intervention for reaching the most students. The working group will continue to examine current interventions and assessments.
- Some administrators have asked to utilize the centralized Reading Recovery teacher positions to become literacy intervention specialist.
- Updates to current literacy assessments mandated for Yukon Education schools are in effect in the 2023-24 school year. Fountas and Pinnell assessments are replacing the previously mandated District Assessment of Reading Team (DART).



### Yukon Speech Language Pathology and Audiology Association (YSLPAA)

- YSLPAA sent an email and various letters to different parties in education, including the Deputy Minister outlining concerns with respect to literacy approaches used in Yukon Schools. The email and accompanying letter was sent on March, 2022.
- YSLPAA expressed a desire to build relationships and discuss gaps in the use of evidence-based practices as well as adoption of Right to Read report recommendations.
- The Director, Curriculum and Assessment and Director, Student Support Services met with a representative of YSLPAA on September 8, 2022.
- At this meeting, the representative was invited to join the Culturally Responsive Literacy Strategy working group once the committee was formed. This representative was part of the committee from the beginning and held a voice to the recommendations recently put forward for development into a strategy.

### Tracking literacy progress

- The BOEHM and Early Years Evaluation (EYE) assessments provide data on student's literacy at primary levels.
- Aspen, the Student Information System that the Yukon uses, allows teachers to upload all Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment results for each student.
- Any teacher attached to a student can see the multiple assessments that can be inputted into the system each year.
- The principal and any Learning Assistance Teacher that works with the student can also access these results. They can track the literacy and comprehension progress of a student over time.

### Assessments and data.

- We assess reading and writing at key points during a student's education, including in Grades 4 and 7 through the Yukon Foundation Skills Assessments. In the past, these assessments were written late in the school year. They have now been moved to the fall of each school year so teachers can use the information from these assessments to adjust teaching instruction and provide supports to students who need it.
- At the high school level, students write the Grade 10 and Grade 12 Literacy Assessments.

- Yukon education has indicated interest in participating in the [Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study \(PIRLS\)](#) assessment taking place in 2026. This will give Yukon further data on student reading proficiencies.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-06**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### New CASA Agreement - Education Commitments

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Education

**School Staffing Concerns – Recruitment, TOCs, Vacancy: refer to HOT15/HR03**

**Formal Assessments (RISE): refer to RI02**

**Comprehensive Mental Health Approach (RISE): refer to HOT03/RI01**

#### Value:

- The 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement sets out a new relationship between the Yukon Liberal Caucus and the Yukon NDP Caucus, founded on the principle of “good faith and no surprises”, in order to improve the lives of Yukoners.

#### Recommended response:

- The opposition NDP shares the Yukon government's desire to improve the Yukon's education system. To this end, the 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement contains several specific actions for the Department of Education and identifies funding commitments over the next three budgets.
- These actions include:
  - Support for recruitment and retention of rural education professionals;
  - Increased allocation of education assistants and Learning Assistance Teachers;
  - A service standard of six months from the time of referrals for completed psychoeducational assessments;
  - Provide a 1-year training plan for educational assistants and teachers on call;
  - Create dedicated wellness counsellors or a similar position; and
  - Increase funding to improve mental health outcomes for youth.

### **New CASA Agreement - Education Commitments**

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Education

- Some of this work is already underway under the Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education initiative.
- We have engaged with our education partners, including the Yukon Association of Education Professionals, Autism Yukon and the Learning Disability Association of Yukon on these actions.
- In addition, we continue to work with Yukon University to implement the 2021 CASA commitment to support members of Yukon communities to pursue careers in health and social services program delivery.
- We continue to work through many details in the implementation of these commitments, and I will be happy to bring forward more information as I am able to.

#### **Additional response – Recruitment and Retention:**

- This is a three-year commitment. We have undertaken a number of activities to improve recruitment and retention for 2023-24 and future years.
- Actions implemented to date include:
  - Enhanced marketing for recruitment;
  - Posting jobs earlier;
  - Participating more widely at job fairs;
  - Providing supplementary funds for rural teachers where housing is not available;
  - Enhanced onboarding and training for staff; and
  - Examining the potential for a bursary incentive for Yukon students to attend education professional post-secondary programs.

### **New CASA Agreement - Education Commitments**

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Education

#### **Additional response – Education Assistants, Learning Assistance Teachers and Wellness Counsellors:**

- The Yukon government has committed to 81 new positions over the next three years, including Wellness Counsellors, Educational Assistant and Learning Assistance Teachers, and two support positions.
- We have created a School Wellness Specialist position. This position is identified as a Yukon Employees' Union (YEU) bargaining unit position.
- These positions will have two specific roles, with each school having access to both: School Wellness Specialist, with a minimum requirement of a Bachelor of Social Work, and/or First Nation Wellness Support, which could be an Elder, traditional knowledge keeper or traditional healer.
- The role of the School Wellness Specialist will be to provide a variety of direct supports to students, families, educators, and the community, which may range from assessments, counselling, consultation and programming, case management and education, depending on the specific needs of individual schools and communities.
- The jobs advertisement for the School Wellness Specialist were posted on Yukon.ca on October 16th.
- The role of the First Nation Wellness Support role will be to provide culturally appropriate supports that meet the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and academic needs of students.
- We have also allocated an additional \$1 million in funding, which can be used for other types of services to support students. Part of these funds will be used to work with Yukon First Nations governments to hire for these roles.

### **New CASA Agreement - Education Commitments**

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Education

- We are currently working with Superintendents and School Board Executive Directors to prioritize the implementation of both positions over the next two years.
- We are also working with School Board Executive Directors and Superintendents on additional EA and LAT supports in the schools. This is in part dependent on our successful recruitment efforts for these positions.

#### **Additional response – Training for EAs and TOCs:**

- Staff have met with Autism Yukon, the Learning Disability Association of Yukon, the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate and the Yukon Association of Education Professionals to discuss this commitment.
- In January and February 2023, we provided specific training to Education Assistants, and we will continue to offer this training during the 2023-24 school year.
- We will work with our partners to develop a training and implementation plan, for both Education Assistants and Teachers on Call.
- The Department of Education provides \$475,000 in annual funding to the Yukon Association of Education Professionals to provide for training and development activities related to professional growth, curriculum implementation, and other priorities.

#### **Additional response – Psychoeducational Assessments:**

- The Department of Education is working on a number of initiatives related to psychoeducational assessments.
- This includes communications with parents and school-based staff, clarifying the assessment and school-based team meetings and referrals

### **New CASA Agreement - Education Commitments**

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Education

processes, updating Individualized Education Plans, and ensuring strategies from assessments are implemented.

- As committed to in the CASA agreement, we are working to establish an assessment service standard of six months. If this work cannot be done within the department we will contract this work out or we will reimburse parents to have the assessment done privately.

#### **Additional response – IEP Reinstatement:**

- We have committed that all students in need of special education have the option of an IEP.
- We are communicating with and educating parents, school staff, partners, stakeholders and families about the process for individualized Education Plans, or IEPs, and learning plans.
- At any time, parents and guardians can and are encouraged to bring forward concerns to their school to ensure a student is being effectively supported.
- IEPs are, and will continue to be, a legislated support for students in need of a special education program.
- We are taking steps to strengthen implementation of IEPs, and to promote a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

#### **Additional response – Mental Health Outcomes for Youth:**

- Under the CASA agreement the Yukon government has committed \$500,000 annually to the Department of Education to improve mental health outcomes for youth.

### **New CASA Agreement - Education Commitments**

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Education

- The Department of Education is developing a Comprehensive Mental Health and Wellness Approach. This is an important part of the overall work we are doing to reimagine inclusive and special education.
- Our Comprehensive Mental Health and Wellness Approach will include prevention and promotion of positive mental health, as well as intervention supports and responses in and out of school.
- The approach will be developmentally and culturally responsive.
- It will align with Yukon's Mental Health Strategy and be guided by the recommendations from the Yukon Youth Calls to Action – 2022 Youth Summit, which brings forward important perspectives from youth on supports that work for them.
- In addition, other CASA commitments support enhanced mental health outcomes for youth. The addition of the School Wellness Specialist is an example of how we are supporting improved student mental health outcomes in schools and classrooms.

#### **Additional response – 2021 CASA, Careers in Health and Social Services:**

- The Yukon government continues to support Yukon University to assist Yukoners to pursue careers in health and social services.
- The Department of Education provided the University with \$170,000, to support this commitment in the first Confidence and Supply Agreement (April 28, 2021 to January 31, 2023).
- We also provided \$85,000 to support a proposal between Yukon Hospital Corporation and the First Nations Youth Internships program to promote



### New CASA Agreement - Education Commitments

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Education

health careers and engage 32 participants over 3 years to be mentored while working in areas of medical and acute care environments.

- In addition, we provide the University with \$740,780 in ongoing funding for the Practical Nurse Program.
- This program now provides annual opportunities for up to 18 new students to pursue healthcare careers. The graduates of this program provide much needed talent to fill vacancies in this important healthcare role in the Yukon.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- On January 31, 2023, the Yukon Liberal Caucus and the Yukon NDP Caucus signed a Confidence and Supply Agreement in which they agreed to advance a number of proposals during the term of the agreement.

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#### Background:

- From the 2023 CASA agreement: To improve the Yukon's education system, the Government of Yukon will:
  - Allocate an additional \$1 million in each of the next three budgets to enhance recruitment and retention of new rural education professionals across the Yukon. This may include a program aimed at supporting Yukon students pursuing studies in educational fields who commit to working in the Yukon after graduation.
  - Increase the allocation of Educational Assistants and Learning Assistance Teachers starting in the fall of 2023.
  - Provide a one-year training plan program for Educational Assistants and Teachers on Call by 2024 in collaboration and consultation with the Yukon Association of Education Professionals, Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, and Autism Yukon.
  - Provide, complete, and deliver the final report for psychoeducational assessments necessary to obtain an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) within

## New CASA Agreement - Education Commitments

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Education

- six months of referrals from teachers, administrators or physicians. If the Government is unable to provide the assessment directly within this timeframe, it shall cover expenses incurred by parents to obtain the assessment externally.
- Provide all students in need of special education with the option of an IEP.
  - Create dedicated wellness counsellors or similar positions in all schools specifically dedicated to addressing the need for comprehensive mental health and wellness.
  - Commit to an additional annual investment of \$1 million for mental health outcomes for youth.
  - From the 2021 CASA Agreement:
    - The recent cancellation of IEPs for children with special learning and neurodiverse needs will be reversed. Those IEPs that were cancelled will be reinstated within 30 days, and any future changes to policies or processes in respect of IEPs will only be made following meaningful consultation with stakeholders. This is complete.
    - The government will immediately begin developing a plan to support members of Yukon communities to pursue careers in health and social services program delivery in partnership with First Nations, Yukon University and the Government of Canada. Project development funds will be allocated in the 2012-22 budget and implementation will receive dedicated funding in the 2022-23 budget.
      - Under the first CASA agreement the Department of Education earmarked \$255,000 to support members of Yukon communities to pursue careers in Health and Social Services:
      - Education provided \$170,000 in planning dollars for this initiative to the University in 2022-2023 fiscal.
      - The remaining \$85,000 supported a proposal between Yukon Hospital Corporation and the First Nations Youth Internships program to promote health careers and engage 32 participants over 3 years to be mentored while working in areas of medical and acute care environments. Education and Economic Development are working together to support this program.
      - We continue to provide funding to Yukon University to support the Licensed Practical Nurse program.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#HOT11/DPT06**

**Fall 2023**

## **New CASA Agreement - Education Commitments**

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Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-11-09

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Value:

- Developing students' numeracy skills is a high priority for the Department of Education.

### Recommended Response:

- Addressing student numeracy needs is a complex task, and no single approach or resource program is a solution for the many factors that influence student numeracy outcomes.
- As stated last year, the Department of Education launched a working group to develop longer-term strategies for developing culturally responsive numeracy programming in Yukon Education schools. This strategy was announced on September 8, 2023.
- This working group included representatives from Yukon First Nation Education Directorate and Department of Education staff, including educators and administrators.
- The strategy focuses on increasing learning opportunities for educators and implementing numeracy support teachers in K-7 schools by the 2024-25 school year.
- A key action is implementing numeracy camps which are expected to be piloted in the summer of 2024.
- These numeracy camps are an experiential way for holistic numeracy instruction.

### Additional Responses:

- The Department will continue to seek collaborative opportunities with the First Nation School Board, the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, and other interested partners while implementing the numeracy strategy.
  - We continue to assess student learning and are closely monitoring the impacts of the pandemic on learning outcomes.
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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Yukon data indicates that numeracy proficiencies need improvement.
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### Background:

- A culturally responsive numeracy strategy for Yukon Education operated schools was announced on September 8, 2023.
- This strategy aligns well with the First Nation School Board numeracy strategy.
- Training and support for Mathology, a newer mathematics resource, has been ongoing, in collaboration with the First Nation School Board and the Commission Scolaire Francophone de Yukon. The working group supports the continued use of this resource.

### Tracking literacy and numeracy progress

- The BOEHM and Early Years Evaluation (EYE) assessments provide data on student's numeracy at primary levels.
- The new Mathology resource has built in assessments for teachers to use. These assessments include instructional supports to address any identified gaps.

### Assessments and data

- Yukon teachers provide ongoing assessments of students to help students and parents focus on ways to support student growth.
  - We assess numeracy at key points during a student's education, including in Grades 4 and 7 through the Yukon Foundational Skills Assessments. In the past,
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these assessments were written late in the school year. They have now been moved to the fall of each school year so teachers can use the information from these assessments to adjust and provide supports to students who need it.

- At the high school level, students write the Grade 10 Numeracy Assessment.

Approved by:

Cassandra Kelly

2023-09-25

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a/Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education (RISE)

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Education

#### Value:

- We are responding to the 2019 Audit, the Final Report of the Review of Inclusive and Special Education and the Child and Youth Advocate Review on School Attendance by supporting students and delivering timely, effective help for their learning needs.

#### Suggested response:

- We continue to work with our partners and stakeholders to reimagine and create schools that are safe, inclusive, and build on student strengths to ensure that every child feels connected and supported to thrive.
- This includes developing a Comprehensive Mental Health and Wellbeing Approach that aligns with the Yukon Mental Health Strategy. The approach will include prevention and developmental and clinical responses and will improve connections to mental health and wellbeing support provided by partners and stakeholders.
- In November 2021, the First Nations Education Commission and the Advisory Committee on Yukon Education approved the “Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education Work Plan”, which addressed the Review of Inclusive and Special Education as well as the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Review on Attendance.
- This work plan is guiding our collective efforts to transform the education system, address barriers to inclusion, and improve education outcomes for all students. We continue to advance initiatives in this work plan.

### Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education (RISE)

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Education

- We are also working with our education partners to support experiential learning opportunities in Yukon schools.

#### **Additional response:**

- A key initiative that launched in fall of 2022 was Ready-to-Learn Schools, based on the ground-breaking work of Dr. Bruce Perry's Neurosequential Model.
- The program is grounded in the understanding that children can only be ready to learn when they feel safe and calm.
- This model trains teachers and staff to be developmentally responsive to recognize that a child's chronological age may not match their emotional, cognitive, or social age.
- Most importantly, it helps educators understand how developmental adversity impacts brain development, functioning and learning.
- This initiative empowers our teachers and school staff to understand, honour, support, and guide our children so they are ready to learn as they travel along their own unique path.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- Questions may be asked about the Yukon government's progress to implement recommendations from the audit and two reviews.

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#### **Background:**

- Many recommendations in the Review of Inclusive and Special Education, and the 2019 Office of the Auditor General Report on Kindergarten Through Grade 12 Education in Yukon overlap with those from Child and Youth Advocate's Review



## Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education (RISE)

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## Education

on School Attendance. Therefore, they are both being addressed in the “RISE” work plan.

- Both reviews involved extensive engagement with students, parents, First Nations and other education partners and stakeholders.
- In November 2021, the department, in partnership with the First Nation Education Commission and the Advisory Committee on Yukon Education, approved the work plan that is guiding our collective efforts to transform the education system and address barriers to inclusion and improved education outcomes for all students.
- The department hosted an Educational Summit in November 2021 with an estimated 600 online participants, representing our education partners and stakeholders, as well as broad representation from the department.
- In May 2022 the department hosted a conference for members of the Communities of Inquiry, the First Nation Education Commission, and the Advisory Committee on Yukon Education.
- The COIs have a variety of representatives from First Nations governments, non-governmental organizations such as the Child Development Centre, Autism Yukon and the Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, school councils, and school-based and central administration staff. Membership varies by COI.
- This COI approach respects the collaborative nature of the inquiry process and ensures that Yukon context and Yukon First Nations’ ways of knowing, being and doing are incorporated into all actions flowing from both reviews and the department is not making decisions without involving our partners and stakeholders in the process.
- The community of inquiry addressing experiential learning has put forward recommendations and is currently working on further recommendations to address cultural camps and other experiential learning opportunities.
- Several Yukon schools offer experiential learning programs, including:
  - Golden Horn Elementary School’s Great Outdoor Experiential School Philosophy (G.O.E.S.), which is a weekly class block dedicated to providing students with challenge and achievement through academic, athletic, cultural, and social endeavours.
    - G.O.E.S. encourages students in learning-by-doing, on the land, field trips or in the beautiful forest that surrounds the school. The

## Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education (RISE)

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experiential model of Golden Horn Elementary School is a long-standing approach to education that is also supported by Golden Horn's School Council and is part of a whole-school approach to outdoor experiential learning.

- Each Spring, Elijah Smith Elementary School partners with the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation to host an experiential culture-based week of activities.
  - Throughout the week, students can participate in various activities, led by Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, such as cutting and drying, creating button blanket dolls, caribou hide tanning, and hand games.
- The Wood Street Centre offers a wide variety of experiential learning programs where academics are integrated with heritage, adventure, outdoors, skills, theatre, and art.
- Hidden Valley Students can access onsite camping, hiking, snowshoeing, kick-sledding, and cross-country skiing activities.
  - The intermediate grades are learning paddling, camping, and team-building skills, and participate in multiple trips throughout the year.
- The Community of Inquiries that worked on decolonizing possibilities that focused on holistic supports and IEPs within the K-12 education system, have developed recommendations. They sought *feedback on the recommendations from our partners*. Final recommendations from this COI have been submitted to the department..
- To date the department has received several recommendations from other Communities of Inquiry. The department is working on analyzing the recommendations

### Ready-to-Learn Schools

- Ready-to-Learn Schools was launched as a pilot project at Takhini Elementary School in 2020.
- In the 2022-23 school year it was implemented at schools operated by Education and the First Nation School Board: Jack Hulland Elementary, Grey Mountain Primary and Selkirk Elementary School in Whitehorse, St. Elias Community School in Haines Junction and Nelna Bessie John School in Beaver Creek.

### Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education (RISE)

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Education

- This year it will be implemented in Hidden Valley Elementary, Holy Family Elementary, FH Collins Secondary, Porter Creek Secondary, Aurora Virtual Schools, and St. Francis of Assist Secondary in Whitehorse; and at Robert Service School in Dawson City, and Tantalus School in Carmacks.
- Pre-engagement work has also begun at Chief Zzeh Gittlit School (Old Crow), Ghùch Tlâ School (Carcross) and Elijah Smith School (Whitehorse).
- Responsive instructional approaches will eventually be implemented in all Yukon schools.
  - Pre-engagement with Robert Service school included reaching out to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation government as per 17.7 provisions in their self-government agreement.
- We have contracted two professionals who have the expertise, experience, capacity, and capability to create a unified approach across Yukon.
- We will continue to develop internal capacity. For 2023/2024 school year we have two Educators to lead an NME certification program for 20 educators during this school year.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-06**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Safer Schools Policies and Procedures

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Education

**Safer Schools Action Plan: refer to DPT09**

**Safer School Disclosures: refer to DPT08**

**Student to Student Harm in Schools: refer to HOT16/SSS05**

**Emergency Procedures and Public Notices: refer to SP03**

**Education Health and Safety Investigation: Refer to DPT03**

#### Value:

- It is a top priority to support healthy, active, safe, and caring learning environments in all Yukon schools.

#### Recommended response:

- All allegations or reports of harm are taken seriously. All Yukoners have a legal duty to report suspected abuse, harm, or unlawful behaviour against children.
- The new Student Protection Policy: Preventing and Responding to Harm by Adults, and related procedures, is fully implemented in all Yukon schools.
  - This policy outlines our commitment to safeguard students while in the care of adults, and while engaged in school activities, and was developed in response to Action 6 of the Safer Schools Action Plan.
  - The related procedures guide staff in how to fulfill their responsibility to prevent, respond, and report alleged or suspected harm or inappropriate behaviour by adults, and how to communicate with families and other school community members.
- There is a clear expectation that all members of the school community refrain from engaging in bullying, or other abusive or unacceptable

## Safer Schools Policies and Procedures

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behaviours. These expectations are outlined in our Safe and Caring Schools Policy.

- Peer-to-peer harm is taken very seriously, and we have committed to examining our policies and procedures as we work to improve safety and inclusivity in Yukon schools.

### Additional response:

- Yukon schools develop and support positive behaviours through school values and related expectations.
- The values and related expectations are developed from the Education Act and the Safe and Caring Schools Policy.
- School administrators approach discipline, for behaviours that do not follow the school's values and related expectations, by learning what led to the behaviour, how the students could be supported further, while keeping in mind the developmental age and grade of the students.
- School administrators have support through their superintendent, executive director, and staff from the Department of Education to evaluate the behaviour and how best to provide support for all that may be impacted.
- If a serious incident occurs at school, we follow emergency plans and response protocols. This includes working with the RCMP and other agencies as well as providing support to the families involved.
- The department has provided training support to school administrators to support their role in the orientation, training, and communicating of the Student Protection Policy and related procedures to the school community.

### Safer Schools Policies and Procedures

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Education

- In the first year of implementation, the Student Protection Policy training was provided to school on a PD Day.
  - In this first year, over 800 educators, including school administrators, teachers, LATs, school counselors, and educational assistants were provided orientation.
  - In addition, over 940 adults, who by virtue of their role, interact with students through school related activities, also completed the Commit to Kids Training, which focuses on the prevention of and response to child sexual abuse.
  - For the 2023-2024 school year, school administrators have been provided training support to ensure that annual training occurs for all new and existing school-based staff.
  - Further training is planned for all school community members working in school settings, including school councils and school boards during the 2023-2024 school year.
- To supplement this training, the Department of Education partnered with the Canadian Center for Child Protection to develop a training video that outlines prevention methods, including signs of grooming or abuse.
  - We continue to review the Student Protection Policy and Post-Incident Communications Guidance with our education partners.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- On June 20, 2023, the Government of Yukon announced full implementation of the 23 action items in the Safer Schools Action Plan, which focuses on improving the safety and wellbeing of students.
- The Department of Education implemented in full actions 10 and 13 of the Safer Schools Action Plan by providing system wide orientation and training in the Student Protection Policy.

## Safer Schools Policies and Procedures

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Education

- In the second year of this policy, the Department of Education continues to support school administrators in their role and responsibility to communicate this policy and procedure to the school community.

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### Background:

- The Student Protection Policy: Preventing and Responding to Harm by Adults came into effect on September 29, 2022.
  - As of the end of September 2022, all staff working at the time - school administration, teachers and educational assistants - were trained on the Student Protection Policy as well as Post-Incident Communications Guidance during a scheduled PD Day to ensure that this new policy and related procedures were communicated to all YAEP members.
  - During the first week of October 2023, Superintendents and Executive Directors shared with their school administrators an orientation package to support school administrators to communicate the Student Protection Policy and related procedures to their school community. A plan to deliver this information to their staff was recommended to happen during a regularly scheduled staff meeting, or if in cases where this couldn't happen, call an extra-ordinary meeting.
- Engagement with schools and education partners regarding the Student Protection Policy and related procedures and the implementation of the policy, procedures and training occurred with:
  - FNEC – February 9, 2023 – ½ day engagements on review of the policy and procedure and a request for feedback.
  - School administrators – April 5 – April 28, 2023. The survey was advertised in administrator updates from April 5 - April 26.
  - ACYE – June 8, 2023. Overview of the policy and procedure with a request for feedback.
  - Family and Children's Services – July 27, 2023. Meeting to discuss the policy. Clarity was provided that the reporting is only for adults who work in the school setting.

## Safer Schools Policies and Procedures

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Education

### Key considerations – communications

- The Yukon School Post-Incident Communications Guidance is clear that for major incidents the Superintendent or Executive Director will notify School Council members or School Board Trustees.
- Examples of major incidents include police or the fire department attending the school, and lock downs or “hold-and-secure.”

### General

- In October 2021, the government launched an independent review of the 2019 incident at Hidden Valley Elementary School.
- The Government of Yukon and the RCMP acknowledged that mistakes were made in the response to the 2019 incident at Hidden Valley Elementary School. Minister of Education Jeanie McLean and Minister of Justice Tracy-Anne McPhee apologized to parents at Hidden Valley Elementary and acknowledged that steps could have been taken to better inform and support parents following the incident.
- The report of the internal review from Amanda Rogers was delivered on January 31, 2022, and the Department and parents/guardians received the report at the same time as Amanda Rogers walked through the report and her recommendations.
- As a response to the independent review findings, the Yukon government released the Hidden Valley Elementary School Independent Review Report action plan on February 24, 2022.
  - The committee overseeing the action plan response included Deputy Ministers from the departments of Education, Justice, Health and Social Services, the Public Service Commission, and the Executive Council Office.
  - The plan was renamed the Safer Schools Action Plan at the request of the Hidden Valley school administration; the new name reflects that the policies and changes in this plan will improve safety in all Yukon schools.
  - The government shared progress updates on the Safer Schools Action Plan in July 2022, October 2022, and June 2023.
- The Child and Youth Advocate Office released a report on student safety in October 2022.
- The Ombudsman’s Office is also investigating the department’s response to the events at Hidden Valley Elementary School.



# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#HOT14/DPT10**

**Fall 2023**

## **Safer Schools Policies and Procedures**

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Education

- The department has reviewed the Ombudsman's first report on its and found it aligned with the assessment provided by the Independent Review Report.
- The second part of the Yukon Ombudsman's report is expected this fall; at that time, the department will review any additional recommendations regarding the implementation of the Safer Schools Action Plan.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-08**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### School Staffing Concerns - Recruitment, TOCs, Vacancy

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Education

**New CASA Agreement – Education Commitments: refer to  
HOT11/DPT06**

#### Value:

- Effective teachers are one of the most important factors in a student's success at school and we work to attract and retain the best educators.

#### Recommended response:

- The ongoing national labour shortage, limited housing options and the pandemic have continued to have impacts on our overall recruitment efforts.
- For the 2023-24 school year, we were able to take many strategic recruitment actions:
  - We posted positions earlier to be more competitive with other jurisdictions.
  - We have participated in online career fairs, and the Yukon University fair, and placed advertising on Yuwin, Employment Central, LinkedIn, Facebook, Google, YouTube, and through Canadian universities.
  - To date, teacher recruitment has attended 7 online job fairs and 15 in-person education career fairs in the Yukon, Ontario, Alberta, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, and New Brunswick.
  - These steps have supported our recruitment efforts.
- We continue to work to find staff with the best combination of qualifications, experience and suitability.

### **School Staffing Concerns - Recruitment, TOCs, Vacancy**

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Education

- Although these numbers are changing daily, in terms of recruitment for the 2023-24 school year, postings as of November 19, 2023, include:
  - 17 teacher postings (1 Whitehorse, 16 rural);
  - 2 learning assistance teachers (0 Whitehorse, 2 rural);
  - 5 Yukon First Nations language teacher postings (4 Whitehorse, 1 rural);
  - 0 principal and 1 vice-principal posting (0 Whitehorse, 1 rural); and
  - 8 Educational Assistant postings (4 Whitehorse, 4 rural).
- We began posting for rural schools, French Immersion, and French Schools for the 2023-24 school year in February 2023. External posting began after our internal process in April 2023.
- The new CASA agreement commits the Yukon government to allocate an additional \$1 million in each of the next three budgets to enhance recruitment and retention of new rural education professionals across the Yukon.
- As per the CASA, we will also provide a one-year training plan program for Educational Assistants and Teachers on Call by 2024 in collaboration and consultation with the Yukon Association of Education Professionals, Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, and Autism Yukon.

#### **Additional response:**

#### **Temporary vacancy management**

- Operational management of schools routinely requires regular adjustment by administrators, and I commend our administration

### **School Staffing Concerns - Recruitment, TOCs, Vacancy**

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Education

teams for their ability to effectively make adjustments where temporary vacancies have put increased demands on staff resources.

- Schools have several options available to help them manage should they have a need. These include, but are not limited to:
  - temporarily adjusting staff teaching assignments;
  - adjustments to student learning groups; and
  - the use of teachers on call.
- If a school indicates it may be unable to operate due to a shortage of staff, temporary redeployment of Superintendents to schools under the authority of Yukon Education, or regrouping students will be considered before a shift to remote learning. School closure is a last resort.
- If the Civil Emergency Measures Act is invoked, employees could be redeployed to other tasks and responsibilities. Classroom operations in the school system do not constitute an emergency under CEMA.
- The Public Service Commission and the Department of Education are working together to identify and implement new initiatives that are intended to address the teacher shortage. This ensures our students will have the necessary in classroom supports that enables Yukon students to succeed in their educational journey.

#### Rural recruitment

- Recruitment for education staff and office administration is often a challenge in rural communities.
- This is especially true when recruiting for less than full-time positions, which is often the case as per the staffing allocation.

### **School Staffing Concerns - Recruitment, TOCs, Vacancy**

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Education

- Staffing allocations are based on number of students, with special provisions made for small rural schools.

#### Psychological wellbeing

- The Government of Yukon offers a variety of supports for staff to address workplace challenges, including:
  - health, safety and wellbeing resources to assess, protect and promote psychological safety in the workplace;
  - our Employee and Family Assistance Program to assist staff on an individual level; and
  - the Respectful Workplace Office, as another avenue for staff who are experiencing conflict in the workplace to receive support and guidance.

#### Teachers on call (TOCs)

- As of November 19, 2023, there were 227 registered teachers on call in the Yukon (179 Whitehorse, 48 Rural), with an additional 41 applications pending (33 Whitehorse, 8 Rural).
- On November 3<sup>rd</sup> last year, there were 198 registered TOCs in Yukon (154 Whitehorse, 44 Rural), with 18 applications pending (15 Whitehorse, 3 Rural).
- 23 total teachers on call (15 Whitehorse, 8 rural) have moved from the teacher on call position into temporary positions supporting schools since the start of the 2023-2024 school year.
- We continue to recruit teachers on call and recognize that demand for coverage continues to be a challenge.

### **School Staffing Concerns - Recruitment, TOCs, Vacancy**

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Education

- We continue to evolve our recruitment efforts to attract candidates for teacher on call roles and to support staff in accepting assignments as they are available.
- An information session was held at Employment Central on October 26<sup>th</sup> from which we are in the process of hiring a TOC and an Assistant Education Outdoor Guide. We intend to hold information sessions on an ongoing basis in Whitehorse as well as in communities in the coming weeks through Employment Central with Dawson City being the first on November 23<sup>rd</sup>
- We are intending to attend the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Career Fair November 30<sup>th</sup>.
- We are planning and will be participating in an open house at Selkirk Elementary School as a pilot to generate interest and provide information to community members on the teacher on call role.
- We have also increased advertising on Facebook, in universities, on Yuwin, Employment Central, and other recruitment sites.
- We sent targeted communications to former TOCs, retirees, candidates from the Apply to Education registry, and applicants from Educational Assistant competitions.
- We recognize the renegotiation of our Collective Agreement at the end of the current term, June 2024, as a joint opportunity to collaborate with YAEP through the negotiation process.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- Teacher and principal vacancies are continued topics of concerns in media with concerns expressed by both opposition and the Yukon Association of Education Professionals.

### School Staffing Concerns - Recruitment, TOCs, Vacancy

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Education

#### Background:

- TOCs fill in as needed when staff are absent from work for short periods of time. TOCs come from a range of educational backgrounds. They became part of the Yukon Teacher's Association in 2018, and their rate of pay is subject to negotiation in collective bargaining.
- Similar to other jurisdictions across Canada, we have challenges in hiring qualified teachers.
- We do not have rules preventing staff with jobs in one school from applying for other vacancies in the summer, which can result in a “domino effect” of postings. This also affects TOC availability, as some TOCs are successful in competing on vacant positions and are subsequently removed from the TOC list.
- Between August and October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022 we had 10 TOCs move into temporary positions (3 Whitehorse, and 7 rural). This number increased to a total of 13 TOCs by December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022 (6 Whitehorse, and 7 Rural).
- TOCs have been sent from Whitehorse to our communities throughout the 2022-23 year to support school needs, and will continue to be sent for the 2023-24 school year.

#### Approved by:

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-20**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

## Student to Student Harm in Schools

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Education

### Value:

- It is a top priority to support healthy, active, safe and caring learning environments in all Yukon schools.

### Recommended response:

- All students, parents, and teachers and other school staff have the right to be safe, and to feel safe, in their school community.
- The comprehensive work on the Safer Schools Action Plan has highlighted other work that we need to complete to ensure Yukon schools are safe and inclusive.
- There is a need to proactively and responsively address concerns of student-to-student harm.
- Peer-to-peer harm is taken very seriously, and we commit to examining the need for a stand-alone policy to address this issue.
- If a serious incident occurs at school, we follow emergency plans and response protocols. This includes working with the RCMP and other agencies as well as providing support to families involved.
- We have developed communication guidance to support school administrators in providing clear and consistent communication to families.
- In addition, there has been collaborative work done by Education and Victim Services in the development of guidelines and victim support plans to support victims of harm to feel safe at school.

### Additional response:

- School staff promote respectful and positive behaviours by providing welcoming and positive spaces for teaching and learning.



## Student to Student Harm in Schools

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Education

- Few children come to school intending to be disruptive – it is up to the adults in the school to be sensitive to the signs that a student may become dysregulated and demonstrate escalated behaviours.
- Staff use Violence Threat Risk Assessment training to recognize signs and respond appropriately.

### Resources and Supports:

- We are focusing on training and onboarding to:
  - support staff in building connection with students;
  - identify risks, signs of trauma, unhealthy social and bullying behaviours; and
  - respond with effective supports and redirecting behaviours.
- We share resources with staff and students and families about restorative practices to strengthen school communities.

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Dysregulated behavior, violence and threats occurring in schools is an issue of concern.

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### Background:

The Department of Education promotes respectful and safe school environments in the following ways:

- Working closely with government and non-government partners to promote safe schools and response to concerns of safety.
- Safe and Caring Schools Policy;
- Student Protection Policy;
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Policy;
- Non-violent Crisis Intervention training; and

## Student to Student Harm in Schools

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Education

- Available cyberbullying resources and presentations with guest speakers.

### Training and supports for staff

- The department supports school staff after incidents through consultation with School Community Consultant; Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP, or short term counseling); and support and collaboration from the RCMP and other medical and other government and non-government agencies.
- The department has a Safe and Caring Schools Support Plan that outlines the training offered to school staff to support them.
- Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training is an example of effective industry-standard training that is widely available to school-based staff to prevent and respond to students who are demonstrating escalated behaviours.
- Training in the Violence Threat Risk Assessment Protocol (VTRA) is offered by Department of Education every two years.
- Training for school VTRA teams was held at the end of March 2021 via virtual means from the North American Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response (NATCAR).
- Through the collective agreement, we work with YAEF at the *Positive Behaviour Intervention Support and Classroom Diversity Committee* to develop these supports for Yukon schools.

### Process for dealing with 'incidents of concern'

- The department has a Workplace Risk Assessment and Safety Plan Procedure in place for dealing with incidents that occur which indicate that a student's actions may be a risk to staff or other students.
- Under the procedure, such incidents are first reported to the school principal, who investigates the incident using the Workplace Risk Assessment.
- If it is determined that the incident involved a serious threat such as a threat to harm or kill, the Violence Threat Risk Assessment Protocol is used to address the incident. This activates the involvement of community partners to deal with the issue, including the RCMP, Student Support Services, and Health and Social Services.
- If the principal determines that there is otherwise a risk of injury to staff or other students then the Workplace Risk Assessment and Safety Plan Procedure is

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#HOT16/SSS05**

**Fall 2023**

## **Student to Student Harm in Schools**

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Education

followed, and the appropriate plans and resources are put in place to support the school, staff, and students to address and deal with the issue.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-06**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Whitehorse Elementary Replacement Project

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Education

**Whitehorse School Replacements Long-Term Capital Planning: refer to HOT18/SO17**

#### Value:

- Our government is investing in school infrastructure.
- École Whitehorse Elementary School has been identified for replacement with a new, modern facility that will meet the needs of the community for years to come.

#### Recommended response:

- École Whitehorse Elementary School was originally built in the 1950s and is the top priority for replacement among Whitehorse schools.
- The current facility is not able to meet current and future programming and community needs, including access to spaces for innovative, inclusive, and experiential learning.
- The Takhini Educational Land Reserve is a central location that can accommodate French Immersion students from around Whitehorse.
- The Department of Education has established a Project Advisory Committee to facilitate collaboration and the exchange of ideas between key partners, stakeholders, and the Government of Yukon. This group meets regularly.
- Project timelines will be determined as further planning work is undertaken.
- In August 2023, Kobayashi + Zedda Architects Ltd. was awarded the prime consultant contract for the École Whitehorse Elementary School replacement project through a public tender.

### Whitehorse Elementary Replacement Project

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Education

- A preliminary site assessment is currently underway.
- In phase two of the contractors' work a traffic study will be conducted to report on the local impacts of the development. Pedestrian safety, traffic access, and egress from the site will also be assessed.
- Moving Whitehorse Elementary School to the Takhini Educational Land Reserve does not preclude having a downtown school in future.
- There are a number of schools in the downtown right now – the Wood Street Centre, the Individual Learning Centre, and the Aurora Virtual School. All operate out of downtown and are an important part of our portfolio of schools.

#### **Additional response:**

- The government has Educational Land Reserves identified for schools.
- The Takhini Educational Land Reserve is a large parcel of land, serviced, appropriately zoned, and provides a central location that has better access to green space desired for modern learning.
- An initial step in this work is to identify potential locations for the future school on the Takhini educational reserve, at which point engagement with the First Nation School Board and Softball Yukon will occur.
- Engagement with the broader Whitehorse community and partners occurred in the spring of 2023 and will inform the long-term plan for replacing and renovating aging Whitehorse schools.

## Whitehorse Elementary Replacement Project

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Education

- In October 2022, I met with downtown residents who are concerned about having an elementary school in the downtown core. This information will be considered as the long-term plan is developed.
  - The Project Advisory Committee has designated seats for the following:
    - Whitehorse Elementary School Council
    - Whitehorse Elementary School Administration
    - City of Whitehorse
    - Government of Yukon
    - Ta'an Kwäch'än Council
    - Kwanlin Dün First Nation
- 

### Context—this may be an issue because:

- MLAs have been vocal about the need to keep a school in the downtown core. The Minister met with concerned downtown residents on October 21, 2022.
  - Softball Yukon is concerned about the impact to ball diamonds located on the Tahkini education reserve.
  - Department officials have met with Softball and Sport Yukon and a commitment was made to ensure they remain informed as the project progresses.
- 

### Background:

- École Whitehorse Elementary School was originally built in the 1950s and is the oldest currently operated school in the Yukon.
  - Renovating or replacing the current facility on site are not viable options.
  - There have been issues raised with the current École Whitehorse Elementary School regarding the capacity of the gymnasium and its egress, the number of washrooms available on the main floor, IT infrastructure, energy efficiency, lack of modern learning spaces, seismic rating, needed build code upgrades and overall accessibility.
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### Whitehorse Elementary Replacement Project

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Education

- Among other concerns such as lot size and suitability, building on the same downtown site would require costly and prohibitive decanting strategies (moving students) for 2-3 years minimum to accommodate build.
- The Project Advisory Committee meetings occurred on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, November 10<sup>th</sup>, and December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
- The Project Advisory Committee will provide the department with input on key aspects of the school's planning and design, including ways the school can help to meet community needs in terms of functionality, cultural components, and community space.
- The School Community, Takhini area residents, Association franco-yukonnaise, Canadian Parents for French, other relevant organizations and the general public will be encouraged to provide feedback on the project at key milestones in the project's design.
- Site selection on Takhini Education Reserve.
  - The Takhini Educational Land Reserve is one of the largest in Whitehorse and has enough room for two schools.
  - There are not a lot of other sites that are centrally located and would meet the needs of a new school; there is not a lot of vacant land in general that is centrally located.
  - To look at a different site would entail having to go through lengthy territorial and municipal zoning processes, followed by those sites needing to be serviced (sewer, electricity etc.); this is not a viable option given the urgent need to replace school infrastructure.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-10-23**

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Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

### Whitehorse School Replacements – Long-Term Capital Planning

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Education

#### Whitehorse Elementary Replacement Project: refer to HOT17/SO16

##### Value:

- Our government is investing in Yukoners by investing in school infrastructure.

##### Recommended response:

- It's important that we ensure the portfolio of schools meets the demands of our growing population and provides modern learning environments for students to learn and grow for years to come.
- The Yukon government recognizes the fundamental role of schools in healthy, thriving communities.
- In spring 2023 the Yukon government opened a public survey and conducted open houses to hear from the public and school communities to better understand their user experiences with their school facilities and how to better meet the K-12 programming needs.
- In addition to the survey and open houses, the department hosted focus groups for educators, learning stewards, and students.
- We recognize that there are many other educational partners, organizations, and community groups that have ideas and experiences to share. The department reached out to many groups to inform them of the engagement and how to participate.



## **Session Briefing Note**

**Spring Session 2023**

# **Whitehorse School Replacements – Long-Term Capital Planning**

Education

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### **Additional response:**

- We will continue working closely with the two Yukon school boards, the First Nation School Board and the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, on their vision for education and capital needs.
- As part of the engagement, we also had conversations with Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.
- The department is sharing information about this engagement with First Nations across the territory, and the Gadzoosdaa Advisory Committee, recognizing that students from communities may attend school in Whitehorse.
- We continue to invest in all our schools across the territory and conversations about capital projects in rural schools will continue at the community level.

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### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- There is considerable public attention around school replacements and locations in Whitehorse.

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### **Background:**

- The purpose of the engagement is to:
  - Build relationships with school communities;
  - Inform Yukoners about the school capital planning and development process; and
  - Collect stakeholder feedback on their ideas and considerations for a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment.
- The following groups were engaged as part of the engagement process:

### Whitehorse School Replacements – Long-Term Capital Planning

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Education

- Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards and Committees
- Catholic Education Association of Yukon
- Yukon First Nation Education Directorate
- Gadzoosdaa Advisory Committee
- Yukon Association of Education Professionals
- Yukon Employee's Union
- Yukon University
- City of Whitehorse
- Child Youth and Advocate Office
- Softball Yukon
- Association franco-yukonnaise
- LDay Centre for Learning
- Autism Yukon
- Child Development Centre
- Yukon Literacy Coalition
- Yukon Learn
- Whitehorse Downtown Resident's Association
- Whitehorse-area community associations
- The results of this engagement will inform future development of an updated Whitehorse school replacement plan, and a work plan for small and medium renovations for Whitehorse schools.
- The public engagement was delayed from fall 2022 to spring 2023 as more time was required to secure a local contractor.
- École Emilie-Tremblay was the last elementary school built in Whitehorse and opened in 1996.
- The Whistle Bend Elementary School will be completed during the 2023-24 school year.
- The French First Language Secondary School Community Centre, Centre scolaire secondaire communautaire Paul-Émile Mercier (CSSC Mercier) opened its doors to students in November 2020.
- Short-term measures such as portables have been added to several Whitehorse schools to alleviate enrolment pressures.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#HOT18/SO17**

**Fall 2023**

## **Whitehorse School Replacements – Long-Term Capital Planning**

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Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-06

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

**School Board and Council Elections and Referendums: refer to EP04**  
**School Governance and Associations: refer to EP05**

### **Value:**

- The Government of Yukon, Chiefs Committee on Education and the First Nation School Board share the common goal of providing high quality and culturally appropriate education, based on an Indigenous worldview, for all Yukon students.

### **Recommended response:**

- The First Nation School Board governs eleven schools across the Yukon. This is a historic step for Yukon First Nations and their citizens.
- The First Nation School Board is enabling Yukon First Nations to reclaim greater responsibility for the administration and management of education programs for students in their communities.
- As Minister of Education, I will continue to collaborate with the Chiefs Committee on Education and the First Nation School Board trustees as I exercise my oversight authorities.
- I will also continue to work on a government-to-government basis with individual First Nations on their educational priorities for their citizens.

### **Additional response:**

- The First Nation School Board held its first election November 2022.
- With the recent resignation of Erin Pauls, there are four elected trustees: Shadelle Chambers, Dana Tizya-Tram, Jocelyn Joe-Strack and Gillian Staveley.

- The department is working with Elections Yukon and the First Nation School Board to coordinate a by-election.
- I would like to thank Ms. Pauls for her dedication and hard work to establish the First Nation School Board, and wish her well in her new role.
- Following the results of the February 2023 referendums, three additional schools have joined the First Nation School Board. Thank you to all school communities, councils, the First Nation School Board, and Elections Yukon for providing opportunities and holding conversations on the considerations to join the First Nation School Board.
- I am pleased to announce that the following three schools are being managed and operated by the First Nation School Board as of the start of the 2023-24 school year:
  - Eliza Van Bibber School, Pelly Crossing
  - Ghùch Tlâ Community School, Carcross
  - Kluane Lake School, Destruction Bay
- I would like to acknowledge and thank the Chiefs Committee on Education, the Interim Governance Committee, the officials of the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate and the First Nation School Board, who worked tirelessly to launch the school board in February 2022, and to ensure a successful start to the 2023-2024 school year for schools and students moving to the school board.

### **Additional response - Funding:**

- We have a 15-month agreement that runs until June 30, 2024, in an amount of just over \$35 million, which includes a combination of new money and reprofiling the existing budget to offset the funding requirements of the First Nation School Board.
- The Yukon government has committed to this funding through a Transfer Payment Agreement.
- The FNSB, under the current funding agreement, will receive approximately \$5.2M in additional funding related to the operations, administration and salaries for the 3 recently added schools.
  - The Department of Education has the majority of this funding in its existing budget in the Kindergarten to Grade 12 branch.
  - The funding agreement will be updated in early November 2023 to include the 3 new schools.
- The department worked with the newly elected trustees on a final financial arrangement for the First Nation School Board funding formula to create equitable funding between the school authorities and to establish consistent service levels in the provisioning of K-12 education programs.

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### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- There will be considerable interest in how the First Nation School Board is operating the 11 schools under its authority, and the impacts of this on all Yukon students.
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### Background:

- The breakdown for the TPA with the FNSB includes:
  - Operational support and operations and maintenance of eight schools \$23.6M – this includes the same cost factors and drivers as the commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, or CSFY, with a minor difference for rural remoteness.
  - Board governance and administration of eight schools of \$3.2M
  - Grant for Indigenous recognition \$4.8M.
  - One time funding for governance of community committees \$450k.
  - Grant for student outcomes and indigenization of the curriculum in response to the 2019 Auditors General report \$3.125M.
  - Additional funding to support the three new schools will be confirmed in October 2023 as we finalize enrollments for the school year.
- The following schools are operated by the First Nation School Board (FNSB):
  - Chief Zzeh Gittlit School, Old Crow, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation
  - Johnson Elementary School & Watson Lake Secondary School, Watson Lake, Liard First Nation
  - Ross River School, Ross River, Ross River Dena Council
  - St. Elias Community School, Haines Junction, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations
  - Nelna Bessie John School, Beaver Creek, White River First Nation
  - Grey Mountain Primary School, Whitehorse, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Kwanlin Dün First Nation
  - Takhini Elementary School, Whitehorse, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Kwanlin Dün First Nation
  - Eliza Van Bibber School, Pelly Crossing, Selkirk First Nation
  - Ghùch Tlâ Community School, Carcross, Carcross/Tagish First Nation
  - Kluane Lake School, Destruction Bay, Burwash Landing, Kluane First Nation
- JV Clark School (Mayo) electors voted in 2022 to not have their school operated by the FNSB.

- An Interim Funding agreement was in place to ensure a successful transition for the start of the 2022-23 school year. The total amount of this agreement was \$13,094,188 (to March 31, 2023) and represents base funding for school operations as well as funding for the new board's administration and costs associated with Indigenous recognition.
- The current funding agreement provides the FNSB with \$27,733,890 for the operation, administration, salaries and strategic initiatives for the original 8 schools along with the School Board for the 23-24 school year.
  - The current funding agreement will be updated to include the 3 additional school in early November 2023, once enrolment is confirmed.
- Following establishment of the First Nation School Board, the Minister of Education appointed an interim governance committee based on recommendations of the Chiefs Committee on Education.
- This committee oversaw operations of the school board until November 2022, when school board trustee elections took place.

**Approved by:**

**Cassandra Kelly**

**2023-09-25**

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a/Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]



### Early Learning and Child Care

- April 2023 - signed three-year transfer payment agreement with Yukon First Nation Education Directorate and the Early Years Program to design, develop and deliver a culturally rich “Understanding the Early Years” course.
- August 9, 2022 – Online resource and professional development hub is released for Early Childhood Educators.
- Spring 2022 – signed agreement with Yukon University to implement the Professional Diploma Pathway program so that early childhood educators holding a level three equivalent certificate could work towards a full level three certificate through flexible course offerings and practicum placements in their existing workplaces.
- December 2021 - launched funding for licensed early learning and child care programs to provide access to extended health benefits.
- Fall 2021 – Launched enhanced early kindergarten and full-day kindergarten in most rural communities.
- April 1, 2021 – Universal Child Care Program is launched.
  - This program reduced parent fees to less than \$10 per day on average.
  - 350 new child care spaces have been created.
  - Implemented a wage scale for early childhood educators.
  - Funding is provided to all licensed programs for wage enhancements and operational and administrative expenses.
- April 1, 2021 – the responsibility for early learning and child care transferred from the Department of Health and Social Services to the Department of Education in response to recommendations in the Putting People First Report.

#### K-12 and Schools

- August 17, 2023 – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) policy is updated and training for school staff and school administrators starts. A three-year partnership with ARC Foundation was made to support the implementation of SOGI inclusive education and practices in all of Yukon's K-12 schools.
- August 17, 2023 - Ready-to-Learn Schools program launched in additional Yukon Schools
  - This program supports schools to affect positive social change and well-being for all students and staff. It is based on the understanding that children can only be ready to learn when they feel safe and calm.
- August 2023 – FNSB is managing and operating 11 schools throughout the Yukon.
- July 2023 - Collaborated with CSFY and TH to offer a French First Language program of instruction in Dawson City starting August 2023 that recognizes the TH Self Government Agreement.
- June 27, 2023 - Families began to be able to confirm enrolment interest for the new Whistle Bend Elementary School.
  - Whistle Bend Elementary School will welcome students in August 2024 for the 2024-25 school year.
- June 20, 2023 - The 23 action items in the Safer Schools Action Plan are fully implemented.
- May 31, 2023 - Celebrated Kêts'ádań Kù site clearing with the school community.
  - Kêts'ádań Kù meaning "House of Learning" was selected by KFN citizens as the name for the new school.

- July 2023 - the first phase of the N'tsaÜw Chu' Kedts'edán Kù Traditional Camp, at Porter Creek Secondary, the fire pit, was completed and is ready for use for the 2023-2024 school year.
- April 3, 2023 - \$35M funding agreement to support the First Nation School Board is approved.
- Spring 2023 – Shared access to a new data dashboard with Yukon First Nations and YFNED that provides better access to some types of student data.
- March 1, 2023 – Released progress report to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.
- February 14, 2023 – First Nation School Board is officially established.
- September 2022 - Student Protection Policy v.1 and related procedures is finalized and implemented.
- Ongoing - Working with Yukon First Nations to develop and implement curriculum, resources, and training to support localized and culturally inclusive school programming and learning about Yukon First Nations.
- February 2020 – Created a student data sharing Memorandum of Understanding and data working group with Yukon First Nations.

### First Nations Initiatives

- Each year the department provides \$735,000 to the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate to implement the Joint Education Action Plan and related collective education priorities.
- Each year the department provides \$1.19 million in support of language First Nations Language revitalization through the Yukon Native Language Centre. We are proud to see students of Youth

Today, Language Leaders Tomorrow program complete placements to support community language initiatives.

- August 2023 – signed an Education Agreement with Ta'an Kwäch'än Council that identifies joint education priorities and supports implementing the priorities of the Joint Education Action Plan.
- May 2023 – the First Nations Education Commission and the department established next steps for implementation of the Collaboration Framework and will report back to the Commission at each quarterly meeting to track progress of implementing education initiatives and the priorities of the Joint Education Action Plan.
- Spring 2023 – work continuing on Yukon First Nations credit policy to support development and deliver of local culturally relevant curriculum for credit.
- April 2022 signed three-year Transfer Payment Agreements with each Yukon First Nation to support education initiatives and implementing the priorities under the Joint Education Action Plan
- February 2022 – the First Nations Education Commission approved the Collaboration Framework with Yukon First Nations.

### Human Resources

- Under the Confidence and Supply Agreement the Yukon government has committed to increasing the number of Education Assistants and Learning Assistance Teachers. The department has made a significant investment of 81 new full-time positions over the next three years along with an additional \$1 million in funding for student supports.

- Streamlining how educators are hired while improving the recruitment experience for applicants, the department has transitioned to e-recruitment for hiring Teachers on Call and will transition for all other educators – teachers and educational assistants as of September 18<sup>th</sup> – using the same system as all other Yukon government departments.

#### Adult Learners

- August 1, 2023 - Introduction of a new online student financial assistance application portal
  - Post-secondary students from the Yukon can apply for grants and loans, check the status of their applications and view funding decision letters online.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

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Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

### Auditor General - 2019 Audit and Public Accounts Committee Update

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Education

#### Value:

- Together with our partners in education, we are reimagining the Yukon school system. We cannot undertake this transformative work without the trust of our partners – educators, students, and families who are at the heart of our work.

#### Recommended response:

- We are working with our partners and stakeholders to reimagine education and create school environments that are safe, inclusive, and build on student strengths. We are working to ensure that every child feels connected and supported to thrive.
- We are focused on the important work of recovering from the pandemic and responding to the Auditor General of Canada's Review of Kindergarten to Grade 12 education in the Yukon, and the 2021 Review of Inclusive and Special Education.
- Over the past several years, we have maintained student learning during a global pandemic and have made progress on various initiatives to address system inequities, including:
  - Launching the Universal Child Care model;
  - Launching enhanced early kindergarten and full-day kindergarten in rural communities;
  - Working with the Chiefs Committee on Education to establish the First Nation School Board;
  - Finalizing a Collaboration Framework with Yukon First Nations;

### Auditor General - 2019 Audit and Public Accounts Committee Update

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Education

- Completing the Review of Inclusive and Special Education and advancing the Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education workplan developed with Yukon First Nations and education partners;
- Launching the Ready-to-Learn Schools initiative, based on the ground-breaking work of Dr. Bruce Perry's Neurosequential Model;
- Creating a data sharing Memorandum of Understanding with Yukon First Nations and releasing publicly available student data reports; and
- Engaging on the development of a 10-year Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners.

#### **Additional response:**

- We are unwavering in our commitment to implement all the recommendations contained in the 2019 Auditor General's report.
- We welcomed the opportunity to provide the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, and the Office of the Auditor General, with an update on our work in February 2023.
- We are taking informed actions that come from our diverse perspectives rather than making unilateral decisions on changes to education.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The Department continues to implement programs and services in response to the Auditor General's 2019 report on K-12 education in the Yukon.

## Auditor General - 2019 Audit and Public Accounts Committee Update

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Education

### Background:

- Some of our actions since the release of the audit report include:
  - Education agreements with all Yukon First Nations.
  - A student data sharing Memorandum of Understanding and data working group with Yukon First Nations.
  - We are providing \$735,000 in 2023-24 in funding to implement the Joint Education Action Plan and related collective education priorities.
  - We are also providing:
    - \$1.83 million to support community-level education agreements with the 14 Yukon First Nations;
    - \$1.4 million to Yukon First Nation organizations to support other education initiatives, including language learning, cultural activities and Elder programming in schools; and
    - \$3.98 million to specifically support language initiatives.
  - Working with Yukon First Nations on a new teacher resource and professional learning tool for Yukon First Nations languages, cultures, histories and ways of knowing, doing and being in all grade levels and subject areas.
  - Implementing a collaboration framework with Yukon First Nations.
  - Launching the Ready-to Learn Schools initiative in fall 2022 in schools across the Yukon. This program is based on the ground-breaking work of Dr. Bruce Perry's Neurosequential Model, and supports schools to affect positive social change and well-being for all students and staff. It is based on the understanding that children can only be ready to learn when they feel safe and calm.
  - Working with First Nation governments and other partners to deliver and enhance early learning child care program in the Yukon.
  - Working with Yukon First Nations to develop and implement curriculum, resources and training to support localized and culturally inclusive school programming and learning about Yukon First Nations.



## Auditor General - 2019 Audit and Public Accounts Committee Update

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Education

- Completed engagement on, and are currently finalizing the Integrated Outcome Strategy for, Yukon Learners.
  - Providing all students in need of special education with the option of an IEP.
- 2019 OAG recommendations:
  - 42: The Department of Education should develop and implement a strategy to improve student outcomes, particularly for Yukon First Nations and rural students, including:
    - analyzing the root causes of poor student outcomes;
    - defining performance targets;
    - actions to reach these targets; and
    - evaluating the effectiveness of these actions.
  - 47: The Department should implement its required oversight mechanisms to provide summary reports to the Minister and complete teacher evaluations.
  - 70: The Department should conduct a full review of its services and supports for inclusive education, including how best to:
    - evaluate its approach to inclusive education;
    - determine effectiveness of services and supports;
    - determine whether sufficient resources are in place to support inclusive education;
    - prioritize students for specialized assessments;
    - assess and track specialist recommendations; and
    - assess and track teachers' use of recommended strategies.
  - 89: The Department should complete and implement its policy to collaborate with Yukon First Nations to meet the Education Act's requirements, and a strategic action plan with specific, measurable actions and timelines.
  - 93: The Department of Education should meet regularly with Yukon First Nations to assess the status of the Joint Education Action Plan's initiatives and determine how and when to complete them.
  - 99: With Yukon First Nations, School Boards, and School Councils, the Department of Education should develop policies and guidelines to support First Nations language learning, including:

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#DPT02**

**Fall 2023**

## **Auditor General - 2019 Audit and Public Accounts Committee Update**

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Education

- determining the language goals for individual schools;
  - considering a range of approaches for the specific language, student population density, and community interests; and
  - identifying options to support Yukon First Nations languages both during regular school hours and outside of school.
- 109: The Department of Education should determine the human resources and training required to develop sufficient classroom support and materials to help teachers implement the new curriculum as it pertains to Yukon First Nations culture and languages.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-29**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

**Emergency Procedures and Public Notices: refer to SP03**

**Safer Schools Policies and Procedures: refer to HOT14/DPT10**

#### Value:

- The health, safety, and well-being of students and staff is our first priority.

#### Recommended response:

- This past year, we have been working closely with the Yukon Workers' Safety and Compensation Board to determine how our program is working overall and how it could be more effective.
- The Department of Education met the inspection report timelines for submitting information about Joint Health and Safety Committees at Yukon schools. We are in compliance with the requirements for departmental workplaces.
- The department has also established a communication process with Yukon Workers' Safety and Compensation Board for submitting required information throughout the school year.

#### Additional response:

- We will continue working with schools to ensure that their Joint Health and Safety Committees have the proper training and resources to function and conduct their important work.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Media has reported on the inspection reports. Schools inconsistently reported and provided documentation such as meeting minutes and worksite inspections.

## Department of Education Health and Safety Investigation

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Education

### Background:

- The health and safety requirements for individual workplaces are based on staff size. These requirements are outlined in the *Yukon Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*.
- Where required, all Department of Education worksites have functioning Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSC). The Education central administration building has a JHSC.
- As the employer we will continue to provide training and orientation for health and safety representatives in workplaces with under 20 staff, as per *Yukon Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*,
- In January 2022, Education received notification that the Yukon Workers' Safety and Compensation Board (YWSCB) was conducting an investigation to determine the current state of Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSC) in schools.
- Education provided all available documents within the requested timeframe.
- In August 2022, YWHSB published an inspection report that outlined gaps and inconsistencies in the department's health and safety program. The department responded by the requested October 7, 2022 date, and is now in compliance.
- Education has developed a framework to ensure all the necessary training and resources are available, to ensure that all worksites are adhering to the *Yukon Workers' Safety and Compensation Act*.
  - The framework consists of continuous monthly communication with the schools on upcoming training opportunities.
  - Education is working with PSC to create a new format to deliver training so that training will be more accessible.

### Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-06

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

### FINANCE

#### O&M BUDGET (000's)

	23-24	22-23
COVID-19 Response	\$0	\$457
Education Support Services Deputy Minister's Office \$1,469 / \$1,362 Communications \$836 / \$709 Human Resources \$3,070 / \$2,063 Finance \$1,585 / \$1,574	\$6,960	\$5,708
School Authorities K-12 \$113,280 (includes FNSB) / \$108,118 Commission Scolaire Francophone du Yukon \$9,968 / \$9,709	\$123,248	\$117,827
Administration & Support Administration \$323 / \$323 Student Support Services \$3,021 / \$3,580 Technology & Student Information \$1,856 / \$1,866 Facilities and Transportation \$8,251 / \$8,299	\$13,451	\$14,068
Policy & Partnerships Administration \$486 / \$441 Strategic Support \$3,674 / \$3,513 Curriculum & Assessment \$3,714 / \$3,388 French Programs \$1,571 / \$1,570 Training Programs \$10,684 / \$10,698 Early Learning and Child Care \$43,443 / \$40,079	\$63,572	\$59,689
First Nations Initiatives Administration \$350 / \$323 First Nations Program Delivery and Curriculum Development \$916 / \$1,022 First Nations Language Initiatives \$2,784 / \$3,024 First Nations Education Agreements \$3,581 / \$3,521	\$7,631	\$7,890
Yukon University	\$29,293	\$28,913
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$244,155</b>	<b>\$234,552</b>

### HUMAN RESOURCES

As per Main Estimates		2023-2024	2022-2023
1	Teachers	562.00 FTEs (includes all school authorities)	562.00 FTEs (includes all school authorities)
2	Paraprofessionals (EAs and Remedial Tutors)	Budgeted 251.4 FTE (includes all school authorities)	Budgeted 250.4 FTE (includes all school authorities)

Note: Approval was given to hire an additional 40 FTEs effective July 2023

### EARLY LEARNING & CHILDCARE

The Yukon Universal Child Care commitment is to ensure that all families have access to an average of \$10 a day out-of-pocket parent fees for full-time regulated early learning and child care spaces for children under age six

2023-24 Average daily rate with universal child care: **\$8.48**

Early Learning and Child Care Average Costs - Infant to Kindergarten				
2020-21 monthly	2020-21 average daily rate	2023-24 monthly	2023-24 average daily rate	Average daily rate with universal child care
\$789.92	\$37.62	\$884.38	\$40.81	<b><u>\$8.48</u></b>

# of licensed spaces (0 - 12)	# of children enrolled	# of early childhood educators
March 2021: 1,869	March 2021: 1,467	March 2021: 333
September 2023: 2,262	September 2023: 1788	September 2023: 541

### STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

# Session Briefing Note

TAB#DPT04

Fall 2023

## Figures at a Glance

Education

		2023-2024	2022-2023
1	Students on IEPs (includes CSFY and FNSB)	330 (as of Nov.1, 2023)	393 at the end of the 2021/22 school year
2	Student Support Plans	947	N/A
3	Behaviour Support Plans	93	N/A
4	Safety Plans	50	N/A

### Educational Psychological Assessments

Completed since January 2023	78
Waitlisted	85

## TRAINING PROGRAMS

### ADULT LEARNERS

		2022-2023 Forecast	2022- 2023 Actuals
1	Registered Apprentices	550	550 (as of October 31, 2023)
2	Trade (Journey person) Certifications issued	55	50 (in 2022 calendar year) 41 (in 2023 as of October 31, 2023)
3	STEP program positions created	131 (summer 2023)	78 (summer 2023)
4	Summer Career placements created	33 (summer 2023)	21 (summer 2023)
5	Post-secondary student funding (including Canada Student loans and grants) expenditures (Academic Year - August 1 to July 31)	\$7,500,000	\$7,047,856

## OVERALL ENROLMENT COUNTS IN YUKON SCHOOLS

	May 2022	May 2023	Oct 2023	Change (+/-) Since May 2023
All Yukon Schools	5799	5872	5969	97
Rural Schools	1110	1083	1071	-12
Urban Schools	4689	4789	4898	109
Elementary Students	3656	3706	3705	-1
Secondary Students	2143	2166	2264	98
First Nation School Board	648*	668*	842**	174
Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon	352	345	383	38
Yukon Education Schools	4799	4859	4744	-115

\* The Yukon First Nation School Board was established in February 2022 and included 8 schools.

\*\* Starting in the 2023-24 school year the Yukon First Nation School Board started to operate and manage an additional 3 schools.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-15**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]



# Session Briefing Note

TAB#DPT05

Fall 2023

## Main Estimates

Education

### MAINS AT A GLANCE (original budget)

#### 2023-2024 O&M BUDGET (000's)

Education Support Services Deputy Minister's Office \$1,469 Communications \$836 Human Resources \$3,070 Finance \$1,585	\$6,960
School Authorities K-12 \$113,280 Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon \$9,968	\$123,248
Administration & Support Administration \$323 Student Support Services \$3,021 Technology & Student Information \$1,856 Facilities and Transportation \$8,251	\$13,451
Policy & Partnerships Administration \$486 Strategic Support \$3,674 Curriculum & Assessment \$3,714 French Programs \$1,571 Training Programs \$10,684 Early Learning and Child Care \$43,443	\$63,572
First Nations Initiatives Administration \$350 First Nations Program Delivery and Curriculum Development \$916 First Nations Language Initiatives \$2,784 First Nations Education Agreements \$3,581	\$7,631
Yukon University	\$29,293
Total	\$244,155

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#DPT05**

**Fall 2023**

## **Main Estimates**

Education

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**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-06**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### New CASA Agreement - Education Commitments

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Education

**School Staffing Concerns – Recruitment, TOCs, Vacancy: refer to HOT15/HR03**

**Formal Assessments (RISE): refer to RI02**

**Comprehensive Mental Health Approach (RISE): refer to HOT03/RI01**

#### Value:

- The 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement sets out a new relationship between the Yukon Liberal Caucus and the Yukon NDP Caucus, founded on the principle of “good faith and no surprises”, in order to improve the lives of Yukoners.

#### Recommended response:

- The opposition NDP shares the Yukon government's desire to improve the Yukon's education system. To this end, the 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement contains several specific actions for the Department of Education and identifies funding commitments over the next three budgets.
- These actions include:
  - Support for recruitment and retention of rural education professionals;
  - Increased allocation of education assistants and Learning Assistance Teachers;
  - A service standard of six months from the time of referrals for completed psychoeducational assessments;
  - Provide a 1-year training plan for educational assistants and teachers on call;
  - Create dedicated wellness counsellors or a similar position; and
  - Increase funding to improve mental health outcomes for youth.

### **New CASA Agreement - Education Commitments**

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Education

- Some of this work is already underway under the Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education initiative.
- We have engaged with our education partners, including the Yukon Association of Education Professionals, Autism Yukon and the Learning Disability Association of Yukon on these actions.
- In addition, we continue to work with Yukon University to implement the 2021 CASA commitment to support members of Yukon communities to pursue careers in health and social services program delivery.
- We continue to work through many details in the implementation of these commitments, and I will be happy to bring forward more information as I am able to.

#### **Additional response – Recruitment and Retention:**

- This is a three-year commitment. We have undertaken a number of activities to improve recruitment and retention for 2023-24 and future years.
- Actions implemented to date include:
  - Enhanced marketing for recruitment;
  - Posting jobs earlier;
  - Participating more widely at job fairs;
  - Providing supplementary funds for rural teachers where housing is not available;
  - Enhanced onboarding and training for staff; and
  - Examining the potential for a bursary incentive for Yukon students to attend education professional post-secondary programs.

### **New CASA Agreement - Education Commitments**

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Education

#### **Additional response – Education Assistants, Learning Assistance Teachers and Wellness Counsellors:**

- The Yukon government has committed to 81 new positions over the next three years, including Wellness Counsellors, Educational Assistant and Learning Assistance Teachers, and two support positions.
- We have created a School Wellness Specialist position. This position is identified as a Yukon Employees' Union (YEU) bargaining unit position.
- These positions will have two specific roles, with each school having access to both: School Wellness Specialist, with a minimum requirement of a Bachelor of Social Work, and/or First Nation Wellness Support, which could be an Elder, traditional knowledge keeper or traditional healer.
- The role of the School Wellness Specialist will be to provide a variety of direct supports to students, families, educators, and the community, which may range from assessments, counselling, consultation and programming, case management and education, depending on the specific needs of individual schools and communities.
- The jobs advertisement for the School Wellness Specialist were posted on Yukon.ca on October 16th.
- The role of the First Nation Wellness Support role will be to provide culturally appropriate supports that meet the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and academic needs of students.
- We have also allocated an additional \$1 million in funding, which can be used for other types of services to support students. Part of these funds will be used to work with Yukon First Nations governments to hire for these roles.

### **New CASA Agreement - Education Commitments**

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Education

- We are currently working with Superintendents and School Board Executive Directors to prioritize the implementation of both positions over the next two years.
- We are also working with School Board Executive Directors and Superintendents on additional EA and LAT supports in the schools. This is in part dependent on our successful recruitment efforts for these positions.

#### **Additional response – Training for EAs and TOCs:**

- Staff have met with Autism Yukon, the Learning Disability Association of Yukon, the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate and the Yukon Association of Education Professionals to discuss this commitment.
- In January and February 2023, we provided specific training to Education Assistants, and we will continue to offer this training during the 2023-24 school year.
- We will work with our partners to develop a training and implementation plan, for both Education Assistants and Teachers on Call.
- The Department of Education provides \$475,000 in annual funding to the Yukon Association of Education Professionals to provide for training and development activities related to professional growth, curriculum implementation, and other priorities.

#### **Additional response – Psychoeducational Assessments:**

- The Department of Education is working on a number of initiatives related to psychoeducational assessments.
- This includes communications with parents and school-based staff, clarifying the assessment and school-based team meetings and referrals

### **New CASA Agreement - Education Commitments**

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Education

processes, updating Individualized Education Plans, and ensuring strategies from assessments are implemented.

- As committed to in the CASA agreement, we are working to establish an assessment service standard of six months. If this work cannot be done within the department we will contract this work out or we will reimburse parents to have the assessment done privately.

#### **Additional response – IEP Reinstatement:**

- We have committed that all students in need of special education have the option of an IEP.
- We are communicating with and educating parents, school staff, partners, stakeholders and families about the process for individualized Education Plans, or IEPs, and learning plans.
- At any time, parents and guardians can and are encouraged to bring forward concerns to their school to ensure a student is being effectively supported.
- IEPs are, and will continue to be, a legislated support for students in need of a special education program.
- We are taking steps to strengthen implementation of IEPs, and to promote a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

#### **Additional response – Mental Health Outcomes for Youth:**

- Under the CASA agreement the Yukon government has committed \$500,000 annually to the Department of Education to improve mental health outcomes for youth.

### **New CASA Agreement - Education Commitments**

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Education

- The Department of Education is developing a Comprehensive Mental Health and Wellness Approach. This is an important part of the overall work we are doing to reimagine inclusive and special education.
- Our Comprehensive Mental Health and Wellness Approach will include prevention and promotion of positive mental health, as well as intervention supports and responses in and out of school.
- The approach will be developmentally and culturally responsive.
- It will align with Yukon's Mental Health Strategy and be guided by the recommendations from the Yukon Youth Calls to Action – 2022 Youth Summit, which brings forward important perspectives from youth on supports that work for them.
- In addition, other CASA commitments support enhanced mental health outcomes for youth. The addition of the School Wellness Specialist is an example of how we are supporting improved student mental health outcomes in schools and classrooms.

#### **Additional response – 2021 CASA, Careers in Health and Social Services:**

- The Yukon government continues to support Yukon University to assist Yukoners to pursue careers in health and social services.
- The Department of Education provided the University with \$170,000, to support this commitment in the first Confidence and Supply Agreement (April 28, 2021 to January 31, 2023).
- We also provided \$85,000 to support a proposal between Yukon Hospital Corporation and the First Nations Youth Internships program to promote



### New CASA Agreement - Education Commitments

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Education

health careers and engage 32 participants over 3 years to be mentored while working in areas of medical and acute care environments.

- In addition, we provide the University with \$740,780 in ongoing funding for the Practical Nurse Program.
- This program now provides annual opportunities for up to 18 new students to pursue healthcare careers. The graduates of this program provide much needed talent to fill vacancies in this important healthcare role in the Yukon.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- On January 31, 2023, the Yukon Liberal Caucus and the Yukon NDP Caucus signed a Confidence and Supply Agreement in which they agreed to advance a number of proposals during the term of the agreement.

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#### Background:

- From the 2023 CASA agreement: To improve the Yukon's education system, the Government of Yukon will:
  - Allocate an additional \$1 million in each of the next three budgets to enhance recruitment and retention of new rural education professionals across the Yukon. This may include a program aimed at supporting Yukon students pursuing studies in educational fields who commit to working in the Yukon after graduation.
  - Increase the allocation of Educational Assistants and Learning Assistance Teachers starting in the fall of 2023.
  - Provide a one-year training plan program for Educational Assistants and Teachers on Call by 2024 in collaboration and consultation with the Yukon Association of Education Professionals, Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, and Autism Yukon.
  - Provide, complete, and deliver the final report for psychoeducational assessments necessary to obtain an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) within

## New CASA Agreement - Education Commitments

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Education

- six months of referrals from teachers, administrators or physicians. If the Government is unable to provide the assessment directly within this timeframe, it shall cover expenses incurred by parents to obtain the assessment externally.
- Provide all students in need of special education with the option of an IEP.
  - Create dedicated wellness counsellors or similar positions in all schools specifically dedicated to addressing the need for comprehensive mental health and wellness.
  - Commit to an additional annual investment of \$1 million for mental health outcomes for youth.
  - From the 2021 CASA Agreement:
    - The recent cancellation of IEPs for children with special learning and neurodiverse needs will be reversed. Those IEPs that were cancelled will be reinstated within 30 days, and any future changes to policies or processes in respect of IEPs will only be made following meaningful consultation with stakeholders. This is complete.
    - The government will immediately begin developing a plan to support members of Yukon communities to pursue careers in health and social services program delivery in partnership with First Nations, Yukon University and the Government of Canada. Project development funds will be allocated in the 2012-22 budget and implementation will receive dedicated funding in the 2022-23 budget.
      - Under the first CASA agreement the Department of Education earmarked \$255,000 to support members of Yukon communities to pursue careers in Health and Social Services:
      - Education provided \$170,000 in planning dollars for this initiative to the University in 2022-2023 fiscal.
      - The remaining \$85,000 supported a proposal between Yukon Hospital Corporation and the First Nations Youth Internships program to promote health careers and engage 32 participants over 3 years to be mentored while working in areas of medical and acute care environments. Education and Economic Development are working together to support this program.
      - We continue to provide funding to Yukon University to support the Licensed Practical Nurse program.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#HOT11/DPT06**

**Fall 2023**

## **New CASA Agreement - Education Commitments**

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Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-11-09

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

**Value:**

- The Department of Education takes protecting the privacy of Yukoners' personal information very seriously.

**Recommended response:**

- We have taken steps to train managers and staff on the protection of privacy, and we are actively reviewing workflow processes and training opportunities to prevent privacy breaches in the future.
- This training includes clarifying that secure file transfer tools, rather than email, must be used when transmitting personal information outside Yukon government's firewall.
- In addition, we are documenting what personal information we collect and how we handle and safeguard that information for all program areas through the Personal Information Map project. This project is near completion.
- We are also reviewing and updating the department's privacy management policy and plan and hope to complete this in this fiscal year.

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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- On Aug. 24, 2022, a privacy breach occurred at the Department of Education involving the personal information of 537 individuals that had applied for the Yukon Grant.
  - There was significant media coverage on this issue.
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#### Background:

- An Excel spreadsheet containing personal information of 537 individuals (including names, addresses, DOB and SIN) was inadvertently sent from an Education employee to a member of the public on August 24, 2022, by email.
- The department followed the Yukon government Privacy Breach Protocols as set out by the government's Access to Information and Protection of Privacy office including notifying the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the breach.
- Prior to notification, the Privacy Officer followed the YG Privacy Breach Protocols as set out by the ATIPP office (document is available online at Yukon.ca). The steps include: contain the breach, submit report to Designated Privacy Officer (DPO), DPO assess report, further assessment and action, determine risk of significant harm, notification, complete DPO breach reporting form, manage DPO reporting form).
- On September 22, 2022, the department was able to connect with the recipient, who confirmed that they had not read or opened the email.
- The recipient of the information cooperated fully and confirmed that they did not see the email but were able to locate and delete it without opening it. They have also signed a declaration of such.
- On Friday, September 23, 2022, an email update was sent to the 537 affected individuals assuring them that the third-party had been located and that they had confirmed in writing that the email and attachments has been deleted.
- All affected individuals were offered the opportunity to enrol in one year of paid credit monitoring.
- In its follow-up report, the Privacy Commissioner's Office determined that the risk of significant harm to the individuals affected by this breach has now been mitigated, and that the Department of Education would be taking appropriate action to address the breach.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#DPT07**

**Fall 2023**

**Privacy Breach**

Education

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Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-06

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Safer Schools Policies and Procedures: refer to HOT14/DPT10

#### Value:

- It is a top priority to support healthy, active, safe, and caring learning environments in all Yukon schools.

#### Recommended response:

- All Yukoners have a legal duty to report suspected abuse, harm, or unlawful behavior against children.
- The Student Protection Policy applies to all Yukon schools. This policy focuses on the conduct of adults who care for students while engaged in school activities. The policy outlines expectations for documenting, reporting, and communicating when allegations or reports of inappropriate behaviour or abuse are made.
- At the beginning of each school year, school administration, teachers and other school staff are trained on the policy and its supporting materials. This includes the Post-Incident Communications Guidance that outlines expectations for ongoing communication with families.
- All allegations or reports of harm are taken seriously. Disclosures are referred to Family and Children's Services or the RCMP so they can investigate incidents as per their respective mandates.
- When allegations or reports of harm are made, we support students, families, and staff through the process in a way that protects individuals' privacy. We also ensure access to supports and resources.

#### Additional response—Disclosures:

- Training staff on the new Student Protection Policy has increased their awareness and understanding of what child abuse, harm or

unlawful behaviour is, and the legal duty of all Yukoners to report suspected incidents.

- We are now seeing disclosures reported, some historic. We will continue to handle all disclosures by following the Student Protection Policy and procedures.
- The increase in disclosures is a good indication the policy is providing the guidance needed, and that people are learning and using the new policy and its procedures as intended.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The school community will be interested to hear about the ongoing implementation of the Student Protection Policy and procedures and the implementation of the Safer Schools Action Plan.

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#### Background:

- In September 2022, Education staff finalized the Student Protection Policy, version 1, along with associated procedures.
- All administrators, teachers, and EAs were trained in the requirements of the policy.
- This includes reporting inappropriate or concerning behaviour to the administrator, or if the administrator is the subject of the report, to the superintendent.
- Education officials are in the process of seeking feedback from staff and education partners on the implementation of the policy and procedures and how they, and their roll-out, can be improved.

#### Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-07

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]



**Hidden Valley School – Supports, Reviews Investigations, Legal: refer to HOT06/SI08**

**Safer Schools Policies and Procedures: refer to HOT14/DPT10**

**Safer School Disclosures: refer to DPT08**

#### Value

- There is nothing more important than the wellbeing, safety, and protection of students when they are in our care, at any school across our educational system.

#### Recommended response:

- Since the Safer Schools Action Plan's release, we have dug in, done the work, and are delivering to support students, teachers, and families.
- The outcomes of this work are extremely important, and the Government of Yukon has fully implemented all 23 of the commitments in the Safer Schools Action Plan.
- While recognizing that the work to ensure students are safe at school will never end, the action items in the Safer Schools Action Plan emphasized creating safe and caring environments, transparency, accountability, victim-centered approaches, collaboration, and reconciliation in education settings.
- The Department of Education continues to prioritize the work under the Safer Schools Action Plan to improve the safety and wellbeing of students in our care.

- A few highlights of our ongoing work:
  - This includes training school-based staff in the requirements of safer schools and examining opportunities to bring in additional policies and procedures.
  - We are forming a Yukon Parent Advisory Committee to support identification of safety and wellness issues in Yukon schools so we can continue to make well-informed decisions to improve safety for all students in Yukon Schools.
  - We are also planning engagement with other government departments, partners, Yukon First Nations and other education partners to enhance prevention and response regarding peer-to-peer harm.
  - We are evaluating how to better support schools, students, families and our contracted school bus services to improve safety for all who ride school buses.
  - In addition, we remain committed to creating learning environments that are welcoming for everyone through our updated Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity policy and the continued work through Reimaging Inclusive and Special Education.

### **Additional response:**

- We have taken action to build back trust and repair and restore confidence in our ability to respond to critical incidents and support school communities.
- We took meaningful steps to improve government-wide coordination in response to critical incidents so that we ensure timely and

appropriate supports for children, their families, and the school community.

- We also worked hard to address policy gaps and enhance safety and oversight mechanisms across all departments and with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Ombudsman's Office will be releasing its report on the Safer Schools Action Plan in Fall 2023.
- With additional lawsuits being brought forward and the release of reports from multiple Education reviews, conversations will likely restart about supports for students, staff, and families at Hidden Valley.

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### Background:

- The Safer Schools Action Plan was launched in February 2022 in response to the Hidden Valley Elementary School Independent Review Report, with an oversight committee that included deputies from the departments of Education, Justice, Health and Social Services, the Public Service Commission, and the Executive Council Office.
- The action plan contained 23 commitments linked to the 7 recommendations in the independent review report and focused on improving the safety and wellbeing of students, and the government's ability to respond effectively to critical or serious incidents.
- A full listing of all actions can be found [online at Yukon.ca](https://www.yukon.ca).

### History

- In October 2021, Minister McLean launched an independent review of the 2019 incident at Hidden Valley Elementary School.

- The Government of Yukon and the RCMP acknowledged that mistakes were made in the response to the 2019 incident at Hidden Valley Elementary School.
- Minister of Education Jeanie McLean and Minister of Justice Tracy-Anne McPhee apologized to parents at Hidden Valley Elementary and acknowledged that steps could have been taken to better inform and support parents following the incident.
- The report of the internal review from Amanda Rogers was delivered on January 31, 2022. The Department and parents/guardians received the report at the same time and Ms. Rogers walked through the report and her recommendations.
- The Yukon government released the Hidden Valley Elementary School Independent Review Report action plan on February 24, 2022.
- In October 2022, the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office released its report Responding to Sexualized Abuse in Yukon Schools: Review of Policies and Governmental Response. Minister McLean responded to the report's recommendations in writing on November 22, 2022.

**Approved by:****Mary Cameron****2023-11-09**\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

## Safer Schools Policies and Procedures

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Education

**Safer Schools Action Plan: refer to DPT09**

**Safer School Disclosures: refer to DPT08**

**Student to Student Harm in Schools: refer to HOT16/SSS05**

**Emergency Procedures and Public Notices: refer to SP03**

**Education Health and Safety Investigation: Refer to DPT03**

### Value:

- It is a top priority to support healthy, active, safe, and caring learning environments in all Yukon schools.

### Recommended response:

- All allegations or reports of harm are taken seriously. All Yukoners have a legal duty to report suspected abuse, harm, or unlawful behaviour against children.
- The new Student Protection Policy: Preventing and Responding to Harm by Adults, and related procedures, is fully implemented in all Yukon schools.
  - This policy outlines our commitment to safeguard students while in the care of adults, and while engaged in school activities, and was developed in response to Action 6 of the Safer Schools Action Plan.
  - The related procedures guide staff in how to fulfill their responsibility to prevent, respond, and report alleged or suspected harm or inappropriate behaviour by adults, and how to communicate with families and other school community members.
- There is a clear expectation that all members of the school community refrain from engaging in bullying, or other abusive or unacceptable

## Safer Schools Policies and Procedures

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Education

behaviours. These expectations are outlined in our Safe and Caring Schools Policy.

- Peer-to-peer harm is taken very seriously, and we have committed to examining our policies and procedures as we work to improve safety and inclusivity in Yukon schools.

### Additional response:

- Yukon schools develop and support positive behaviours through school values and related expectations.
- The values and related expectations are developed from the Education Act and the Safe and Caring Schools Policy.
- School administrators approach discipline, for behaviours that do not follow the school's values and related expectations, by learning what led to the behaviour, how the students could be supported further, while keeping in mind the developmental age and grade of the students.
- School administrators have support through their superintendent, executive director, and staff from the Department of Education to evaluate the behaviour and how best to provide support for all that may be impacted.
- If a serious incident occurs at school, we follow emergency plans and response protocols. This includes working with the RCMP and other agencies as well as providing support to the families involved.
- The department has provided training support to school administrators to support their role in the orientation, training, and communicating of the Student Protection Policy and related procedures to the school community.

### Safer Schools Policies and Procedures

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Education

- In the first year of implementation, the Student Protection Policy training was provided to school on a PD Day.
  - In this first year, over 800 educators, including school administrators, teachers, LATs, school counselors, and educational assistants were provided orientation.
  - In addition, over 940 adults, who by virtue of their role, interact with students through school related activities, also completed the Commit to Kids Training, which focuses on the prevention of and response to child sexual abuse.
  - For the 2023-2024 school year, school administrators have been provided training support to ensure that annual training occurs for all new and existing school-based staff.
  - Further training is planned for all school community members working in school settings, including school councils and school boards during the 2023-2024 school year.
- To supplement this training, the Department of Education partnered with the Canadian Center for Child Protection to develop a training video that outlines prevention methods, including signs of grooming or abuse.
  - We continue to review the Student Protection Policy and Post-Incident Communications Guidance with our education partners.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- On June 20, 2023, the Government of Yukon announced full implementation of the 23 action items in the Safer Schools Action Plan, which focuses on improving the safety and wellbeing of students.
- The Department of Education implemented in full actions 10 and 13 of the Safer Schools Action Plan by providing system wide orientation and training in the Student Protection Policy.

## Safer Schools Policies and Procedures

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Education

- In the second year of this policy, the Department of Education continues to support school administrators in their role and responsibility to communicate this policy and procedure to the school community.

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### Background:

- The Student Protection Policy: Preventing and Responding to Harm by Adults came into effect on September 29, 2022.
  - As of the end of September 2022, all staff working at the time - school administration, teachers and educational assistants - were trained on the Student Protection Policy as well as Post-Incident Communications Guidance during a scheduled PD Day to ensure that this new policy and related procedures were communicated to all YAEP members.
  - During the first week of October 2023, Superintendents and Executive Directors shared with their school administrators an orientation package to support school administrators to communicate the Student Protection Policy and related procedures to their school community. A plan to deliver this information to their staff was recommended to happen during a regularly scheduled staff meeting, or if in cases where this couldn't happen, call an extra-ordinary meeting.
- Engagement with schools and education partners regarding the Student Protection Policy and related procedures and the implementation of the policy, procedures and training occurred with:
  - FNEC – February 9, 2023 – ½ day engagements on review of the policy and procedure and a request for feedback.
  - School administrators – April 5 – April 28, 2023. The survey was advertised in administrator updates from April 5 - April 26.
  - ACYE – June 8, 2023. Overview of the policy and procedure with a request for feedback.
  - Family and Children's Services – July 27, 2023. Meeting to discuss the policy. Clarity was provided that the reporting is only for adults who work in the school setting.



## Safer Schools Policies and Procedures

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Education

### Key considerations – communications

- The Yukon School Post-Incident Communications Guidance is clear that for major incidents the Superintendent or Executive Director will notify School Council members or School Board Trustees.
- Examples of major incidents include police or the fire department attending the school, and lock downs or “hold-and-secure.”

### General

- In October 2021, the government launched an independent review of the 2019 incident at Hidden Valley Elementary School.
- The Government of Yukon and the RCMP acknowledged that mistakes were made in the response to the 2019 incident at Hidden Valley Elementary School. Minister of Education Jeanie McLean and Minister of Justice Tracy-Anne McPhee apologized to parents at Hidden Valley Elementary and acknowledged that steps could have been taken to better inform and support parents following the incident.
- The report of the internal review from Amanda Rogers was delivered on January 31, 2022, and the Department and parents/guardians received the report at the same time as Amanda Rogers walked through the report and her recommendations.
- As a response to the independent review findings, the Yukon government released the Hidden Valley Elementary School Independent Review Report action plan on February 24, 2022.
  - The committee overseeing the action plan response included Deputy Ministers from the departments of Education, Justice, Health and Social Services, the Public Service Commission, and the Executive Council Office.
  - The plan was renamed the Safer Schools Action Plan at the request of the Hidden Valley school administration; the new name reflects that the policies and changes in this plan will improve safety in all Yukon schools.
  - The government shared progress updates on the Safer Schools Action Plan in July 2022, October 2022, and June 2023.
- The Child and Youth Advocate Office released a report on student safety in October 2022.
- The Ombudsman’s Office is also investigating the department’s response to the events at Hidden Valley Elementary School.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#HOT14/DPT10**

**Fall 2023**

## **Safer Schools Policies and Procedures**

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Education

- The department has reviewed the Ombudsman's first report on its and found it aligned with the assessment provided by the Independent Review Report.
- The second part of the Yukon Ombudsman's report is expected this fall; at that time, the department will review any additional recommendations regarding the implementation of the Safer Schools Action Plan.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-08**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### **Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners Development (Previously: Student Outcome Strategy)**

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Education

#### **Values**

- We continue to work with Yukon First Nations and partners to monitor and improve student outcomes by identifying and analyzing root causes that can negatively impact a student's learning.

#### **Recommended response:**

- The Department of Education is developing a 10-year Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners.
- We are engaging with our partners, in particular with the First Nation Education Commission and the Advisory Committee on Yukon Education, prior to finalizing the strategy, in order to ensure we are taking the time to do this work in a good way.
- The Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners will help us better understand what students need to thrive. It will also help us make better decisions based on facts and current data.
- Over the past year, IRP Consulting led an extensive engagement with Yukon First Nations and the broader education community. The feedback from this engagement forms the foundation of our strategy.
- The strategy aims to address the long-standing gaps in student performance and improve outcomes for Yukon students, including First Nations students, rural students, and students with diverse learning needs.

### **Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners Development (Previously: Student Outcome Strategy)**

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Education

#### **Additional response:**

- The strategy will help us develop a deeper understanding of how we can best support students and make evidence-based decisions that ensure all students have an opportunity to succeed.
- Education staff are committed to doing this work in a good way: with kindness and supportiveness, taking the time to listen, learn, and understand.
- All initiatives in Education - including in schools and in our central services - will align with the values and intentions of the strategy.
- We highly value our collaborative work with the Chiefs Committee on Education and the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate to improve outcomes for Indigenous students.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- In the 2019 audit, the Auditor General identified achievement gaps between rural and urban students, as well as Yukon First Nations and non-First Nations students.

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#### **Background:**

- Recommendation #42 from the 2019 audit, states “The Department of Education should develop and implement a strategy to address the long-standing gaps in student performance and improve student outcomes, particularly those of Yukon First Nations and rural students.”

### Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners Development (Previously: Student Outcome Strategy)

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Education

- In response, the Department of Education committed to “collaborate with Yukon First Nations governments... to develop and implement an outcome management improvement strategy for the Yukon education system.”
- The Yukon First Nation Education Commission (FNEC) provided a clear preference for the department to work on a government-to-government basis with individual First Nations.
- The final report on the Review of Inclusive and Special Education notes that families, tutors, Yukon First Nations, advocacy groups, other government departments and programs, and the broader school community provide invaluable support to students.
- Central Services includes Curriculum, RISE and Student Support Services, Finance, Human Resources, Communications, Policy, Early Learning and Child Care, Training Programs, First Nations Initiatives, French Programs, and Student Financial Assistance.

**Approved by:**

**Cassandra Kelly**

**2023-09-25**

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a/Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Comprehensive Mental Health Approach (RISE)

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Education

**Mental Health Supports for School Staff and Students: refer to SSS04**  
**New CASA Agreement Education Commitments: refer to HOT11/DPT06**

#### Value:

- The health, safety, and wellbeing of students and staff is our first priority.

#### Recommended response—Mental Health and Wellness Approach:

- The Department of Education is developing a Comprehensive Mental Health and Wellness Approach. This is an important part of the overall work we are doing to reimagine inclusive and special education.
- Our Comprehensive Mental Health and Wellness Approach will include prevention and promotion of positive mental health, as well as intervention supports and responses in and out of school.
- The approach will be developmentally and culturally responsive.
- It will align with Yukon's Mental Health Strategy and be guided by the recommendations from the Yukon Youth Territorial Strategy – from the 2023 Youth Summit – which shares important perspectives from youth on supports that work for them.
- We are actively working to enhance the links between mental health and wellbeing resources available within the community, as provided by partners and stakeholders, as well as the resources accessible within the school environment.

### **Comprehensive Mental Health Approach (RISE)**

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Education

#### **Additional response—counsellors:**

- The department is clarifying the role and name of the school counsellor to ensure it reflects the current needs of students.
- We are working towards a School Wellness Specialist in every school over the next three years, which is a key commitment of CASA.
- These positions will be served by two specific roles, with each school having access to both: a School Wellness Specialist – the minimum requirement is a Bachelor of Social Work – and a Wellness role, which we are developing in collaboration with First Nation governments – this could be an Elder, traditional knowledge keeper, or traditional healer.
- We worked with Executive Directors of the School Boards, Superintendents, and our partners at Mental Health and Substance Use Services to finalize the job description for the School Wellness Specialist.
  - The job advertisement for the School Wellness Specialists was posted on Yukon.ca on October 16<sup>th</sup>.
- We have also started initial conversations with First Nation governments to develop the Wellness role, which will be specific to the needs of each individual First Nation and the school community.
- The success of these new roles is dependent on thoughtful, purposeful, and comprehensive planning.

## Comprehensive Mental Health Approach (RISE)

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Education

- We are looking at a broad range of approaches: from inclusive, culturally appropriate programs, to targeted services for acute mental health challenges, including clinical counsellors.
- Clinical counselling support is important; however, it is only one aspect of the comprehensive mental health approach we take in Yukon schools.

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- \$500k is in place in Education's budget beginning April 1st, 2023, to support mental health and wellness for Yukon students and schools.
- CASA: commits to an additional annual investment of \$1 million (across YG) for mental health outcomes for youth and to create dedicated wellness counsellors or similar positions in all schools specifically dedicated to addressing the need for comprehensive mental health and wellness (of which Education will receive \$500k)

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### Background:

- There is public demand for more mental health supports – especially for youth – in light of the pandemic and the opioid crisis, and the Yukon Association of Education Professionals and Child and Youth Advocate Office have been advocating for clinical counsellors in each Yukon school.
- For acute mental health challenges, school-based staff help students and families connect with the most appropriate supports that are available within a community, including clinical counselling services (supported through HSS' Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services branch).
- The school counsellor plays an essential role in supporting the wellbeing of students. We continue to hear that the duties of this role need to be more flexible to reflect a school community's needs and to address staffing challenges when filling these positions.



## Comprehensive Mental Health Approach (RISE)

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Education

- We will partner with Yukon First Nation governments and organizations to ensure that student support is culturally responsive and include coordinated work with students and families through First Nation advocates, Education Support Workers, Community Education Liaison Coordinators, and the new Wellness roles).
- As an example, in Fall 2022, we launched Ready-to-Learn Schools, a developmentally responsive approach that helps educators understand how trauma and toxic stress impacts brain development, functioning and learning.

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-10-18

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

#### New CASA Agreement – Education Commitments: refer to HOT11/DPT06

##### Value:

- We are responding to the 2019 Audit and the final report of the Review of Inclusive and Special Education by actively supporting students and delivering timely, effective help for their learning needs.

##### Recommended response:

- The Student Support Services branch has reviewed its service delivery model and is now centralizing waiting lists for consultations and assessments. This prioritizes students with the most urgent needs.
- In the 2023-2024 school year, regular training will be provided for Learning Assistance Teachers and other school team members. This training will cover the school-based team process, collaboration with Student Support Services, and the assessment referral procedure.
- The time required for assessments varies based on factors like the complexity of the student's needs and assessment type. It also depends on the availability of the professional conducting the assessment.
- If an assessment is needed, Student Support Services will make sure it is completed within six months. If this work cannot be done within the department, we will engage with external contractors to complete the assessment.
- Student Support Services has contracted additional psychologists to help minimize wait times. Currently we have standing offer

arrangements in place with four private educational psychology providers (two within Yukon and two outside of the territory). These standing offer arrangements are for three years.

- Student Support Services is actively working on establishing a funding program that will enable the provision of financial assistance for private psychological assessments.
  - This assistance will be extended to families/caregivers who have been waiting more than six months after consent forms have been signed.
- While a student is waiting for a formal psychological assessment, there are many steps school staff can take to address the student's learning needs and support their success at school. Staff can implement many strategies, supports, and accommodations recommended by the school-based team or a in student's informal assessment.

#### **Additional response:**

- When an educator or parent has concerns about a student's learning, the first step is for the school-based team to discuss the student's needs and collaborate on what strategies or interventions should be implemented to support the student.
- If a referral is received from the school-based team, Student Support Services staff determine the type of consultation or assessments needed. They make this determination by reviewing the information presented by the school-based team and in the student's file.

- The Department of Education's Educational Psychologists work with each school to determine the need for a formal assessment.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The Auditor General of Canada made recommendations relating to this issue in their 2019 report (Recommendation #70).
- CASA commitment: to provide, complete, and deliver the final report for psychoeducational assessments necessary to obtain an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) within six months of referrals from teachers, administrators, or physicians. If the Government is unable to provide the assessment directly within this timeframe, it shall cover expenses incurred by parents to obtain the assessment externally.

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#### **Background:**

- External stakeholders were invited to a spark session focused on assessments in July 2021. CBC aired a story about parents saying assessments were taking 2-3 years and that they had to pay for their own private assessments.
- Students do not have to have a formal assessment to receive learning supports at school.
- The Education Act provides the framework for special education programs, including an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- Under the Act, school administration, in consultation with professional staff and parents, determines whether a student has special educational needs, and the appropriate special education program to meet those needs.
- School-based teams (SBT) are made up of the school principal, learning assistance teacher, classroom teacher, other school staff and staff from Student Support Services. Parents are also valued members of the SBT. Other professionals may also be invited.
- A parent may request a school-based team meeting at any time for their child through their school.
- Sometimes the department/school is unable to obtain parent consent or a student's low rate of attendance may complicate the assessment process.

### Current referral process for formal assessments

1. A concern is identified by the educator or parent.
2. The school-based team collects and reviews the relevant information and provides any universal supports that are available.
3. If universal supports don't seem to provide adequate support, the school-based team invites relevant Student Support Services staff to participate, based on the nature of the concern or issue that has been identified. This includes consultation and informal assessments where specific interventions may be recommended before a formal assessment is requested.
4. If consultation with Student Support Services about a specific child becomes necessary, guardians must be informed, and a Consent for Referral for Consultation with Student Support Services must be signed.
5. Upon consultation, Student Support Services staff and the school-based team may make recommendations for a formal educational psychology assessment. Guardian consent is required for formal assessments, and a new Consent for Formal Educational Psychology Assessment form must be signed.
6. Based on the referral, Student Support Services staff respond by providing the services needed to support the student. Priority is given for a formal assessment when the student's learning is being severely impeded.
7. Student Support Services staff continue to work with school staff to support the student's learning by monitoring the student's needs and collaborating on programming to support the student's learning.

### Speech language pathologists

- There are 4.0 FTE allocated in Student Support Services for Speech Language Pathologists. There are currently 2 FTE vacant.
- Students with speech needs will be prioritized over students with language needs.
- Student Support Services also contracts private Speech Language Pathologists to assist with SLP supports.
- We collaborate with the Child Development Centre, Yukon First Nation Education Directorate's Mobile Therapeutic Unit and Health and Social Services to provide additional Speech and Language Pathologist services.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#RI02**

**Fall 2023**

## Formal Assessments (RISE)

Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-11-06

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

#### Value:

- The Department of Education is taking action to create safer and more inclusive schools where students are ready and supported to learn.

#### Recommended response:

- The Ready-to-Learn Schools (R2L) initiative was originally introduced by staff at Takhini Elementary and is being expanded to schools across the Yukon.
- To date, Ready-to-Learn Schools has been implemented at Takhini Elementary, Selkirk Elementary, Jack Hulland Elementary, and Grey Mountain Primary, all in Whitehorse, Nelna Bessie John in Beaver Creek, and St. Elias Community School in Haines Junction.
- This school year it is moving forward at Hidden Valley Elementary, Holy Family Elementary, FH Collins Secondary, Porter Creek Secondary, St. Francis of Assisi Secondary, and Aurora Virtual School in Whitehorse, and at Robert Service School in Dawson City, and Tantalus School in Carmacks.
- Pre-engagement work has also begun at Chief Zzeh Gittlit School in Old Crow, Ghùch Tlâ School in Carcross, and Elijah Smith School in Whitehorse. Eventually, these responsive instructional approaches will be implemented in all Yukon schools.
- Pre-engagement included reaching out to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation government as per 17.7 provisions in their self-government agreement. These discussions are underway.
- Ready-to-Learn trains teachers and staff to be developmentally

responsive and to recognize that a child's chronological age may not match their emotional, cognitive, or social age.

- It also helps educators understand how developmental adversity impacts brain development, functioning, and learning.
- Based on the groundbreaking work of Dr. Bruce Perry, the program is based on the understanding that children can only be ready to learn when they feel safe and calm.

#### **Additional response:**

- There is an urgent need to build and implement a common understanding of how to take a positive behavioural and brain-based approach to working with students.
- Except in the rarest of cases, students do not come to school intending to be disruptive or harmful to others.
- Ready-to-Learn Schools is a model that supports positive social change and wellbeing for all students and staff.
- We will continue to communicate information with school communities, offer training opportunities related to this program, and share progress on implementation.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- This initiative is part of the department's response to the Review of Inclusive and Special Education and to the 2019 Office of the Auditor General Report on Kindergarten Through Grade 12 Education in Yukon.



#### Background:

- This model was developed by brain development and trauma expert, Dr. Bruce Perry, and is informed by more than 30 years of research. A key component of this initiative is teacher training in an evidence-based model called the Neurosequential Model in Education, or NME.
- In fall 2022 the department contracted two professionals who have the expertise, experience, capacity, and capability to create a unified approach in schools across the Yukon.
- The initiative is expanding in a phased approach and will eventually be implemented in all Yukon schools.
- The Yukon First Nation School Board has stated its support for the NME approach and has already implemented R2L in many of its schools.
- Staff development on positive approaches to managing student behaviours and supporting students with diverse and special educational needs is a priority for Education. The Yukon Association of Education Professionals has also communicated the need for training and resources to support teachers to create inclusive classrooms.
- Ready-to-Learn Schools was launched as a pilot project at Takhini Elementary School in 2020.

#### Approved by:

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

### Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education (RISE)

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Education

#### Value:

- We are responding to the 2019 Audit, the Final Report of the Review of Inclusive and Special Education and the Child and Youth Advocate Review on School Attendance by supporting students and delivering timely, effective help for their learning needs.

#### Suggested response:

- We continue to work with our partners and stakeholders to reimagine and create schools that are safe, inclusive, and build on student strengths to ensure that every child feels connected and supported to thrive.
- This includes developing a Comprehensive Mental Health and Wellbeing Approach that aligns with the Yukon Mental Health Strategy. The approach will include prevention and developmental and clinical responses and will improve connections to mental health and wellbeing support provided by partners and stakeholders.
- In November 2021, the First Nations Education Commission and the Advisory Committee on Yukon Education approved the “Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education Work Plan”, which addressed the Review of Inclusive and Special Education as well as the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Review on Attendance.
- This work plan is guiding our collective efforts to transform the education system, address barriers to inclusion, and improve education outcomes for all students. We continue to advance initiatives in this work plan.

### Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education (RISE)

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Education

- We are also working with our education partners to support experiential learning opportunities in Yukon schools.

#### **Additional response:**

- A key initiative that launched in fall of 2022 was Ready-to-Learn Schools, based on the ground-breaking work of Dr. Bruce Perry's Neurosequential Model.
- The program is grounded in the understanding that children can only be ready to learn when they feel safe and calm.
- This model trains teachers and staff to be developmentally responsive to recognize that a child's chronological age may not match their emotional, cognitive, or social age.
- Most importantly, it helps educators understand how developmental adversity impacts brain development, functioning and learning.
- This initiative empowers our teachers and school staff to understand, honour, support, and guide our children so they are ready to learn as they travel along their own unique path.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- Questions may be asked about the Yukon government's progress to implement recommendations from the audit and two reviews.

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#### **Background:**

- Many recommendations in the Review of Inclusive and Special Education, and the 2019 Office of the Auditor General Report on Kindergarten Through Grade 12 Education in Yukon overlap with those from Child and Youth Advocate's Review

## Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education (RISE)

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## Education

on School Attendance. Therefore, they are both being addressed in the “RISE” work plan.

- Both reviews involved extensive engagement with students, parents, First Nations and other education partners and stakeholders.
- In November 2021, the department, in partnership with the First Nation Education Commission and the Advisory Committee on Yukon Education, approved the work plan that is guiding our collective efforts to transform the education system and address barriers to inclusion and improved education outcomes for all students.
- The department hosted an Educational Summit in November 2021 with an estimated 600 online participants, representing our education partners and stakeholders, as well as broad representation from the department.
- In May 2022 the department hosted a conference for members of the Communities of Inquiry, the First Nation Education Commission, and the Advisory Committee on Yukon Education.
- The COIs have a variety of representatives from First Nations governments, non-governmental organizations such as the Child Development Centre, Autism Yukon and the Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, school councils, and school-based and central administration staff. Membership varies by COI.
- This COI approach respects the collaborative nature of the inquiry process and ensures that Yukon context and Yukon First Nations’ ways of knowing, being and doing are incorporated into all actions flowing from both reviews and the department is not making decisions without involving our partners and stakeholders in the process.
- The community of inquiry addressing experiential learning has put forward recommendations and is currently working on further recommendations to address cultural camps and other experiential learning opportunities.
- Several Yukon schools offer experiential learning programs, including:
  - Golden Horn Elementary School’s Great Outdoor Experiential School Philosophy (G.O.E.S.), which is a weekly class block dedicated to providing students with challenge and achievement through academic, athletic, cultural, and social endeavours.
    - G.O.E.S. encourages students in learning-by-doing, on the land, field trips or in the beautiful forest that surrounds the school. The

## Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education (RISE)

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experiential model of Golden Horn Elementary School is a long-standing approach to education that is also supported by Golden Horn's School Council and is part of a whole-school approach to outdoor experiential learning.

- Each Spring, Elijah Smith Elementary School partners with the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation to host an experiential culture-based week of activities.
  - Throughout the week, students can participate in various activities, led by Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, such as cutting and drying, creating button blanket dolls, caribou hide tanning, and hand games.
- The Wood Street Centre offers a wide variety of experiential learning programs where academics are integrated with heritage, adventure, outdoors, skills, theatre, and art.
- Hidden Valley Students can access onsite camping, hiking, snowshoeing, kick-sledding, and cross-country skiing activities.
  - The intermediate grades are learning paddling, camping, and team-building skills, and participate in multiple trips throughout the year.
- The Community of Inquiries that worked on decolonizing possibilities that focused on holistic supports and IEPs within the K-12 education system, have developed recommendations. They sought *feedback on the recommendations from our partners*. Final recommendations from this COI have been submitted to the department..
- To date the department has received several recommendations from other Communities of Inquiry. The department is working on analyzing the recommendations

### Ready-to-Learn Schools

- Ready-to-Learn Schools was launched as a pilot project at Takhini Elementary School in 2020.
- In the 2022-23 school year it was implemented at schools operated by Education and the First Nation School Board: Jack Hulland Elementary, Grey Mountain Primary and Selkirk Elementary School in Whitehorse, St. Elias Community School in Haines Junction and Nelnah Bessie John School in Beaver Creek.

### Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education (RISE)

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Education

- This year it will be implemented in Hidden Valley Elementary, Holy Family Elementary, FH Collins Secondary, Porter Creek Secondary, Aurora Virtual Schools, and St. Francis of Assist Secondary in Whitehorse; and at Robert Service School in Dawson City, and Tantalus School in Carmacks.
- Pre-engagement work has also begun at Chief Zzeh Gittlit School (Old Crow), Ghùch Tlâ School (Carcross) and Elijah Smith School (Whitehorse).
- Responsive instructional approaches will eventually be implemented in all Yukon schools.
  - Pre-engagement with Robert Service school included reaching out to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation government as per 17.7 provisions in their self-government agreement.
- We have contracted two professionals who have the expertise, experience, capacity, and capability to create a unified approach across Yukon.
- We will continue to develop internal capacity. For 2023/2024 school year we have two Educators to lead an NME certification program for 20 educators during this school year.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-06**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

**Child Development Centre Funding: refer to EL02**

**Early Learning and Child Care Initiatives: refer to EL03**

**Teen Parent Centre and Onsite Child Care: refer to EL04**

**Universal Child Care: refer to EL05**

**Yukon Child Care Board: refer to EL06**

#### **Value:**

- We recognize the importance of early learning and child care for Yukon families, and the need to continue to improve children's learning opportunities and outcomes.

#### **Recommended Response:**

- The Government of Yukon is committed to increasing access to high-quality, affordable, accessible, and inclusive early learning and child care.
- To support high quality early learning and child care, we are following through with our commitment to review the Yukon's *Child Care Act*, which is a priority in my mandate letter.
- To begin this work, we reviewed all feedback from engagements with First Nations governments, the Yukon Child Care Board, and stakeholders since early 2021.
- On March 27, 2023, we released a report based on feedback that outlines themes that can shape the review of the *Child Care Act* and a summary of possible amendments.
- I look forward to sharing information about this work as it progresses.

#### **Additional Response:**

- We have acted on many of the priorities we heard in these engagements. Since April 2021, we have made changes to policies and implemented new programs.
- In addition to affordability for families, we were asked by partners and stakeholders to specifically look at quality and wages for educators.
- We have followed through by increasing wages for early childhood educators to some of the highest in Canada, as well as offering access to funding for a comprehensive health insurance benefits program.
- We are investing in continuing education for educators and providing funding for operators to enhance their early learning programs.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The mandate letter directs the Minister of Education to continue to work to review the *Child Care Act*.

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#### **Background:**

- The *Child Care Act* came into force on July 1, 1990.

#### **What We Heard / Potential *Child Care Act* amendments**

- Based on the engagement feedback, the report highlights several potential *Child Care Act* amendments that could, if passed, strengthen and legislate improvements already implemented through the new universal child care system, including where government funding has reduced rates for families to below \$10 per day on average, increased minimum wages for early childhood educators to some of the highest in the country, and enhanced program quality.



- The report also includes potential amendments that could:
  - improve inclusive supports;
  - simplify subsidy processes for families and operators;
  - modernize credentialing and licensing requirements for educators;
  - support continued professional development for educators; and
  - update the role and powers of the Yukon Child Care Board.

### **Actions informed by Engagement**

- Many of the items heard through various engagements were actionable through amendments to policies, and development and implementation of new programs.
  - A partnership with the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate and their Early Years Program that supports the design and delivery of a First Nations “Understanding the Early Years” course.
    - This course will be offered six times a year and is free of charge for participants.
  - A Professional Diploma Pathway (PDP) program was developed with Yukon University, and implemented in 2022, to provide an accelerated pathway for educators with a level 3 equivalency to receive full certification as a level 3 early childhood educator.
    - The PDP program is flexible on when courses are being held and offers innovative practicum placements for early childhood educators (ECEs) working in the field.
  - Investment in bursaries was increased for ECEs, for both post-secondary study and other learning and development opportunities.
  - Wages for educators were substantially increased, with fully certified ECEs in Whitehorse now earning \$32.08 an hour and ECEs in rural communities earning \$33.88.
  - Access to funding for comprehensive health insurance benefits for staff of licensed early learning and child care centres was introduced.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#EL01**

**Fall 2023**

## *Child Care Act Review*

Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-07

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

## Child Development Centre Funding

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Education

Highways and Public Works will respond to building and lease questions.

Child Care Act Review: refer to EL01

Early Learning and Child Care Initiatives: refer to EL03

Teen Parent Centre and Onsite Child Care: refer to EL04

Universal Child Care: refer to EL05

Yukon Child Care Board: refer to EL06

### Value:

- Education and Health and Social Services work collaboratively with partners including the Child Development Centre to improve ways to provide the best services and supports to Yukon children and families.

### Recommended response:

- We acknowledge and very much appreciate the Child Development Centre's important work helping families and young children access inclusive early learning and therapeutic services.
- In 2022-23 we provided approximately \$3.4 million in operational funding for the CDC. In 2023-24, we are providing approximately \$4.6 million in funding. The additional funding allows the CDC to move forward with their renewal plans that address the waiting list, provide additional support to Yukon families, and provides funding for their new lease.
- Dedicated funding allows the CDC to provide services to children and families in every Yukon community.

## Child Development Centre Funding

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- Additionally, the Yukon government provided \$2.685 million in funding for the renovations and fit up for the new space.
- The CDC moved into their new location at 206 Hanson Street in August 2023. This new space accommodates all CDC programs and staff, including their therapeutic preschool.

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### Context – this may be an issue because:

- The CDC operated out of temporary spaces until they moved into their permanent home in August 2023.
- The move was postponed from October 2022, due to delays in construction.

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### Background:

#### Space

- The CDC was temporarily located out of three spaces (Waterfront Place, Industrial Road, and Alexander Street) until August 2023 when they moved into their new space at 206 Hanson Street.

#### Cost of new space

- The total cost of renovations and fit up was \$2,685,005, including \$125,000 in fit up costs.
- The lease cost for the first three years is \$501,058 annually or \$39.50 per square foot, prorated for 2023-24.
- The renovation and fit up cost is a one-time expense whereas the lease cost is an annual expense. The lease will increase by 2.25% annually starting in year 4.

#### Organizational review and structural renewal

- In 2021-22, the department funded the CDC to undertake a review of services and they have since shared two reports: Yukon Child Development Centre Strategic Planning and Structural Renewal report, and Summary of Funding Requests: Structural Renewal and Collective Bargaining.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#EL02**

**Fall 2023**

## Child Development Centre Funding

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Education

- The Early Learning and Child Care unit continues to work with and support the CDC in identifying their future needs.
- The structural renewal recognizes the need for a new approach to service delivery that addresses the increasing number and complexity of children waiting for services. This new approach is dependent on strengthening organizational support and shifting administrative duties away from specialized therapy services to maximize therapists' time with children and decrease waiting lists.
- In 2023-24, additional funding is being provided for continuation of phase one, which included increased funding for administrative support and funding for phase two of their renewal which includes funding for program support and to pilot a family partners project that provides much needed therapeutic and coordination support.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

## Early Learning and Child Care Initiatives

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Education

**Child Care Act Review: refer to EL01**

**Child Development Centre Funding: refer to EL02**

**Teen Parent Centre and Onsite Child Care: refer to EL04**

**Universal Child Care: refer to EL05**

**Yukon Child Care Board: refer to EL06**

### Value:

- We continue to work with Yukon First Nations governments and stakeholders to enhance early learning and child care programming in the Yukon, as we move toward a future where all families have access to high-quality early learning and child care that is affordable, accessible, and inclusive.

### Recommended response:

- We heard loud and clear in various engagements on universal child care that in addition to affordability and accessibility for families, we needed to address quality.
- We have made great strides in addressing quality by:
  - increasing wages for educators to some of the highest in Canada,
  - introducing funding for operators to access comprehensive health insurance benefits, and
  - increasing our funding for programs and cultural supports to enhance early learning programs.
- We are investing heavily in professional learning and development opportunities. This includes innovative and flexible training options for

## Early Learning and Child Care Initiatives

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early childhood educators to receive full certification while continuing to work.

- Investing in early childhood educators is one way we continue to support the growth and expansion of high-quality early learning and child care in the Yukon.

### Additional response

#### Partnerships

- We signed a three-year funding agreement in April 2023 with the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate and the Early Years Program to offer a First Nations designed “*Understanding the Early Years*” course. Once successfully completed, participants receive a level one early childhood educator certificate.
  - The course supports culturally competent educators with an understanding of Yukon First Nations, and culturally inclusive programs. Partnerships such as these are critical for reconciliation.
- Since spring 2022, we have been partnering with Yukon University to offer the Professional Diploma Pathways Program, where early childhood educators assessed as “level 3 equivalent” can complete the requirements for a level 3 Early Childhood Educator certificate.
- We are funding Yukon University to provide enhanced course offerings in rural Yukon communities.
- We are providing education bursaries for post-secondary study as well as an enhanced bursary option, up to \$500, for educators to

### Early Learning and Child Care Initiatives

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access other learning and development opportunities. We will also continue to contract with individuals and organizations to create and deliver workshops and training opportunities.

#### Advisory committee

- To support and develop high-quality early learning and child care programs, the Early Learning and Child Care branch has established a program-level advisory committee.
- This committee is made up of early learning representatives from Yukon First Nation governments, Whitehorse, and rural communities who provide their advice and feedback on policy and programming.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- As we create new licensed spaces and improve quality in programming the cost of delivering universal child care will increase.

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#### **Background:**

##### Quality Enhancement Funding, including cultural and inclusive supports

- Licensed programs and early childhood educators have access to develop high-quality and culturally rich early learning programs and environments.
- In 2023-24, \$400,000 is budgeted to support culturally rich programming.
- The Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) branch is also providing \$255,892 in funding to Dusk'a Head Start Family Learning Centre, owned and operated by Kwanlin Dün First Nation, for a cultural connector program.
- In 2022-23, \$413,381 was spent on cultural enhancement programming with an additional \$144,413 spent on material to support culturally rich programs. Fifty-two programs and 297 early childhood educators accessed this funding or availed themselves of cultural resource kits curated by early learning specialists. Additionally, 18 early kindergarten teachers in Yukon schools benefited from cultural resource kits.



### Early Learning and Child Care Initiatives

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- In 2021-22, \$338,377 was spent on the cultural enhancement program with 43 licensed programs and 223 early childhood educators participating.

#### Funding to increase wages and benefits for early childhood educators

- Wages for early childhood educators employed in licensed early learning and child care programs increased effective April 1, 2021 and are adjusted annually by the increase to Yukon's minimum wage under the *Employment Standards Act*
- Effective April 1, 2023, fully certified ECEs in Whitehorse are earning \$32.08 an hour and fully certified ECEs in rural communities are earning \$33.88.
- Funding includes an additional payment of 14% of wage costs to operators for mandatory employment-related costs (e.g., CPP, EI, and WCB contributions).
- As of June 2023, approximately 72% of licensed programs are taking advantage of comprehensive health insurance benefit funding.
  - In Whitehorse, 93% of child care centres (41 of 44 programs) and 18% of family day homes (three of 17 programs) are accessing the funding option.
  - Many family day homes are staffed solely by the operator and we are not seeing a high uptake.
  - In rural Yukon, nearly 70% of all programs (nine of 13 programs) have accessed this option.

#### Learning and development

- ELCC has a three-year TPA valued at \$925,802 with YFNED and the Early Years Program to deliver the "Understanding the Early Years" course that will support the development of culturally competent educators and culturally rich programs.
- The first course rolled out in Dawson City on September 11, 2023 with 14 early child educators participating from the three local programs. The next course will be offered in Watson Lake in November, 2023.
- By signing on to universal child care, all ELCC providers have committed to collaborating on all improvement activities such as quality measurement, professional development for their staff, and collaboration with early learning specialists.
- ELCC launched the online early childhood educators learning hub on August 9, 2022. We continue to develop and update this resource.

### Early Learning and Child Care Initiatives

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Education

- Beginning in late August 2022, the ELCC branch began hosting open houses and professional development opportunities for educators and operators, both in person and online.
- In 2023-24, there will be a continued focus on professional development and supporting quality in programs, including strategic investments to offer leadership training to owner operators.

#### Bursaries

- Funding is directed towards a bursary program for students enrolled in early learning studies. Full-time bursaries are awarded for \$2,000 per term, and part-time bursaries are awarded for \$500 per course.
- In 2022-23, 91 bursaries (85 part-time and 6 full-time) were awarded. Of the full-time bursaries, two recipients were from rural communities and one from a Whitehorse French-language program. Fifteen of the part-time bursaries went to recipients in rural Yukon.

#### Professional Diploma Pathways (PDP) Program

- 39 students have enrolled in the PDP program.
- In addition to the partnership with Yukon University, the ELCC branch is partnering with La Garderie to support their French speaking level 3 equivalent educators to receive full certification.

#### Other initiatives

- We are continuing to work on the development of a robust data management system to support high-quality early learning and child care in the Yukon.
- The review of the early learning supported child care programs began in September 2022 with a local consultant contracted to undertake the review. The review is expected to be completed by fall 2023.

#### Technical advisory committee

- The technical advisory committee was established in September 2022 to satisfy Canada's requirement to have an advisory committee and to address an internal need to invite others into our work in a formal way.
- Prior to this, ELCC staff reached out to First Nation governments and stakeholders on an ad hoc basis to seek advice on various projects.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#EL03**

**Fall 2023**

## Early Learning and Child Care Initiatives

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Education

- Including First Nation governments and stakeholders through a more formalized process allows the ELCC branch to collaboratively engage on an ongoing basis and transparently shape the direction of the Yukon early learning and child care system.
- The inclusion of First Nations government, francophone, and rural operators was prioritized as these groups have unique needs and can offer perspectives to help Yukon's child care system be more responsive and meet the needs of all families.
- The advisory committee includes representatives from First Nations governments, rural and urban operators, French language programs, early childhood educators, Child Care Board, Yukon First Nation Education Directorate (Early Years Program) and the Child Development Centre.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

#### Teen Parent Centre and Onsite Child Care

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Education

**Child Care Act Review: refer to EL01**

**Child Development Centre Funding: refer to EL02**

**Early Learning and Child Care Initiatives: refer to EL03**

**Universal Child Care: refer to EL05**

**Yukon Child Care Board: refer to EL06**

#### Value:

- The Department of Education works collaboratively to provide services and support to Yukon children and families.

#### Recommended response:

- The Teen Parent Centre brings together a variety of supports for students during and after pregnancy, including providing a safe and caring environment, access to healthy meals, academic support and onsite child care.
- The Teen Parent Centre Child Care Society was licensed on January 31, 2023, with a five-member board, to start operating the on-site child care program.
- We supported the new society in navigating the licensing process and we will continue to support them as they move forward and build a sustainable program.

#### Additional response:

- We are pleased to work with the Teen Parent Centre, and the services they offer to support students and their children have not changed.

### Teen Parent Centre and Onsite Child Care

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Education

- We also offer a teen parent grant, which provides funding for free child care for high school students who are also parents. This funding is available to Yukoners in every community.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- In December 2022, the TPC Child Care Society was formed to take over operation of the onsite early learning and child care program and they continue to require a lot of support. There was significant media coverage of this issue.

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#### Background:

##### New operator: on-site child care

- The TPC Child Care Society, currently with five board members, was issued a license on January 31, 2023, to operate the early learning and child care program at the Teen Parent Centre.
- The department's ELCC unit has regular meetings and other communication with the society to answer questions and provide support as they move forward. Additionally, the Department is supporting the new society with a transfer payment agreement and a license agreement for use of the space.
- Board members from the society, the new team leader in charge of the Teen Parent Centre school program and ELCC staff met on August 23, 2023 to discuss programming and working collaboratively.
- The new board is experiencing challenges among board members. Two board members were asked to leave the board during the week of October 10, 2023, and the Director of the Child Care Centre was removed from her position on October 13, 2023.
- The society held its AGM on October 20, 2023.
- ELCC is monitoring the situation and ELCC staff met with the person in charge on October 17, 2023.
- Although they have been advertising for more families/children to enroll in the program, there are only two children enrolled currently.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#EL04**

**Fall 2023**

## Teen Parent Centre and Onsite Child Care

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Education

- ELCC will support the placement of the existing families in other child care programs, if needed.
- The new team leader of Teen Parent Centre education programming continues to work closely with the TPC Child Care Society to coordinate the needs of students accessing the Teen Parent Centre programming and families accessing child care.

### Previous operator: on-site child care

- The Teen Parent Access to Education Society (TPAES) was licensed to operate the on-site child care centre until January 31, 2023.
- In 2021-22, TPAES's representative signed a transfer payment agreement for the total amount of \$180,989. Of that amount, \$133,000 in funding was advanced before it became known that they were no longer in good standing. They were not provided any funding for 2022-23.
- TPAES was given an order on September 12, 2022, to resume management of the daycare or surrender their license. The order deadline was extended to January 31, 2023, to allow time to explore options for next steps.

### Approved by:

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-09**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

**Child Care Act Review: refer to EL01**

**Child Development Centre Funding: refer to EL02**

**Early Learning and Child Care Initiatives: refer to EL03**

**Teen Parent Centre and Onsite Child Care: refer to EL04**

**Yukon Child Care Board: refer to EL06**

#### Value:

- We continue to work with Yukon First Nations and other partners to enhance early learning and child care programming in the Yukon, as we move toward a future in which all families have access to high-quality early learning and child care that is affordable, accessible, and inclusive.

#### Recommended response:

- We are proud to share that a Yukon educator has been awarded a 2023 Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Early Childhood Education.
- We were honored to receive national recognition from the Atkinson Centre in July 2021 for the Yukon's universal child care system – a blend of non-profit, owner-operator, family day home and First Nations government-owned and operated programs.
- In 2023-24, the budget for Early Learning and Child Care is just over \$43.4 million, with another \$515 thousand invested in capital to support the development of a data management system. Among other quality initiatives, the funding supports:
  - Wage enhancements for more than 500 early childhood educators,

- 77 licensed operators, including nine First Nations government owned and operated programs, and
  - 2262 licensed spaces.
- In September 2023, 1788 children and their families were benefiting from universal child care and saving up to \$8400 a year for each child enrolled in a licensed program.
- The universal child care program, when combined with the subsidy program for lower income earners, means some families have no out-of-pocket expenses for child care. Additionally, teen parents continuing their education and grandparents with primary responsibility for their grandchildren receive free child care.
- Since the implementation of universal child care in April 2021, more than 350 child care spaces have been created in Pelly Crossing, Whitehorse, Ross River and Dawson, and programs continue to expand and grow. All licensed programs are part of the universal child care program and receive funding from the Yukon government.
- The funding agreements signed with the Government of Canada in the summer of 2021 continue to support development and expansion of the Yukon's universal child care system and early childhood educator workforce development.
- We continue to work with Canada on early learning and child care initiatives. We look forward to hearing more details from Canada regarding their recent announcement on infrastructure funding to support the growth and expansion of nonprofit child care in the Yukon.



#### **Additional response:**

- We provide funding – including wage enhancements – to all licensed programs to reduce operational and administrative expenses, and to support program needs.
- In addition to fee reductions, we also administer a supported child care program that provides funding to licensed programs for additional supports for children who need them.
- Providing greater access to early learning and child care programs that are affordable, accessible and inclusive reduces barriers to entering the workforce and ensures proper supports are in place for families when parents are returning to work.

#### **Minimum wage increase and increased costs to operators**

- A key to successful recruitment and retention is the ability to pay qualified early childhood educators a fair wage.
- In April 2021, the Yukon implemented a wage of \$31 for level three early childhood educators, one of the highest in Canada.
  - As of April 1, 2023, level three educators in Whitehorse are earning \$32.08 an hour and level three educators in rural communities are earning \$33.88.
  - The wage grid is aligned with minimum wage increases whereby program operators must pay at least the minimum wage and Yukon government provides a wage enhancement. For level three educators, Yukon contributes almost 50% of the wages.
- We continue to provide 100% of the wages for supported child care workers.

- In 2023-24, parents may see higher than normal increases to child care fees due to higher wages for educators tied to the minimum wage and other increased costs due to inflation.
- The Yukon government will continue to heavily subsidize child care in the territory.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- As we create new spaces and improve quality in programming, the cost of delivering universal child care will increase.
- Operators may ask for increases in funding as the rate of inflation increases.

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#### **Background:**

##### Summary of Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Funding

- The new funding model came into effect on April 1, 2021, and the government budgeted a total of \$25,202,000 in 2021-22 to support the new program.
- In 2023-24, the operations and maintenance budget is \$43,442,903, and \$515,000 is invested in capital.
- Under agreements with the Government of Canada, the Yukon government will receive approximately \$54.3 million from 2021 to 2025, to further enhance the universal ELCC program.

##### Affordability

- The universal child care program reduces parent fees by up to \$700 (per child per month) for full-time enrollment in licensed programs. All licensed programs have signed on to universal child care.
- The Poverty Report Card for the Yukon reported in 2022 that the living wage had reduced from previous years due to the implementation of universal child care and families having to pay less for child care.
- Parent fee increases are controlled to ensure parent fees remain affordable.
- Most provinces and territories limit fee reduction and affordability measures to children who have not yet started school, whereas the Yukon applies fee reductions to all children in licensed spaces.

- The wages for educators are tied to minimum wage increases whereby program operators have to pay at least the minimum wage and the Yukon government provides a wage top up: for Whitehorse level 3 educators, Yukon will contribute 48% of the mandated wage and in rural Yukon we will contribute 50.5% of the mandated wage.
- In 2023-24, parents may see higher than typical increases to child care fees due to higher wages for educators tied to the minimum wage and other increased costs due to inflation.

### Economy

- In 2020, the Centre for Future Work published a report on “The Role of Early Learning and Child Care in Rebuilding Canada’s Economy after COVID-19” by noted economist, Jim Stanford. The report provides broad estimates of the economic benefits of a universal ELCC program, projecting:
  - Direct jobs and economic activity associated with provision of ELCC services.
  - Increases in women’s labour force participation and employment thanks to better availability of quality, affordable child care.
  - Long-term benefits from improved capacities of children who participate in high-quality ELCC.

### Accessibility

- Since April 1, 2021, there have been more than 350 additional spaces created, which includes 26 licensed spaces at Little Critters in Dawson City (opened in January 2022) and 49 licensed spaces at Tu Lidlini program in Ross River (opened in February 2022).
- Dunya Ra Kats Inte Ku, owned and operated by Selkirk First Nation government, re-opened on October 17, 2022, with 18 licensed spaces. The community has not had child care options for 2 years, since the building housing their program burned down.
- On September 28, 2022, a child care license was issued to The Heart of Riverdale Community Centre, a non-profit society, to operate the Heart of Riverdale – Heart Heroes, now licensed for 62 child care spaces.

- The ELCC unit is also collaborating with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Government officials to support them in exploring options that ensure consistent child care.

#### Funding for operational and administrative expenses for ELCC program operators

- Additional funding is provided to operators to reduce their operational and administrative expenses and to support program needs. This funding provides for 37% of program building expenses (such as rent/mortgage, insurance, electricity, heat, janitorial, etc.) in Whitehorse and 43% in rural communities.
- Start-up funding is available for the creation of new licensed programs. Funding is also available to address health and safety concerns.

#### Status of Child are in Dawson City

- Universal child care has created increased demand for early learning and child care opportunities.
- There are three early learning and child care programs currently operating in Dawson City with Little Critters, the most recent program, opening in January 2022. They each have a waiting list (note that it is likely that some children will be on all three waiting lists).
- Little Blue confirmed on November 10, 2023, that they have 42 children on their waiting list, with all of them being under school age and three of them not born yet.

#### Little Blue

- In 2022-23, the Society applied for and received CDF funding to advance the next step of their building project, which involved hiring a professional contractor for the blueprints/design, and cost estimates.
- The costs for this step was \$102,000. Of which they received \$75,000 from the CDF, the Society committed \$12,500, and ELCC contributed \$14,500.
- In 2022-23, ELCC provided \$8,430 for Feasibility – Little Blue to Big Blue.
- The Society hired ORO Enterprises Ltd, a local Dawson City business, who worked with Northern Front Studio in Whitehorse to complete the blueprints/design that have since been provided to the departments.
- The estimated cost for the new build is just under \$5.6 million (which includes contingency). In addition to the expanded child care program, the new build

includes two – one bedroom apartments and dedicated office space for other agencies, such as Child Development Centre and the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program.

- The Department of Education continues to work with EMR and HPW on a one-government approach on next steps.

#### Council of Yukon First Nations

- ELCC is providing subject matter expertise to consultants hired by CYFN to work on their plans to develop a child care centre at the Indigenous led women's shelter that is being built in the Whistle Bend neighbourhood.
- ELCC met with the consultants in October 2023 and is having ongoing conversations with them regarding any questions they may have.

#### Carcross/Tagish First Nation - Haa Yátx'i Hidí

- The child care centre re-opened in July 2023 after being closed for several months.

#### Tu Lidlini, Ross River

- Tu Lidlini, a child care centre in Ross River with 26 children enrolled, is operating in a YG owned building.
- On November 03, 2023 HPW sent a structural engineer to Ross River to look at cracks that have been noticed in the building.
- The report from the engineer indicates that the building is still safe to use as a child care centre. The engineer recommended repairs to the entryway and that the building be monitored for any deterioration.
- The timeline for the repair to the entryway has not been determined yet.

#### Kluane First Nation – Kluane Daycare

- The child care centre with an average of 4 – 6 children enrolled, is currently closed, but is working to reopen soon.

#### Grow with Joy

- Four of the programs employees' have taken jobs as educational assistants with the Department of Education; resulting in the operator having to close 3 toddler groups (18 toddlers), and 1 preschool group (8 children). We are contacting programs to identify spaces that could be made available.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#EL05**

**Fall 2023**

## Universal Child Care

Education

### Recognition

- The Early Childhood Education Report 2020 released in July 2021 by the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development recognized Yukon Territory as the new leader in early childhood education based on decisions to increase wages for educators, reduced parent fees, introduction of new curriculum and monitoring, increased funding for inclusion, and the transfer to Department of Education.
- Erin Wallingham-Schultz, head teacher of the Aurora Casa at Yukon Montessori School has been awarded a [2023 Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Early Childhood Education](#).

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-15**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

**Child Care Act Review: refer to EL01**

**Child Development Centre Funding: refer to EL02**

**Early Learning and Child Care Initiatives: refer to EL03**

**Teen Parent Centre and Onsite Child Care: refer to EL04**

**Universal Child Care: refer to EL06**

#### Value:

- We recognize the importance of early learning and child care for Yukon families, and the need to continue to improve children's learning opportunities and outcomes.
- We value our ongoing dialogue with the Yukon Child Care Board and the important input that members provide in the development and support of early learning and child care services for Yukon families.
- In its Annual Report for 2022-23, the Board recognized the Yukon government's commitment to early learning and celebrated the steps that have been made.
- The Board noted items that still need progress, including the modernization of Yukon's *Child Care Act*, development of an assessment and evaluation system for child care programs, ensuring the principle of inclusion is highlighted and commissioning an early learning framework.
- I am proud of the work we have accomplished together with our partners and fully acknowledge that there is more work to be done. It certainly cannot be done without collaboration with the Yukon Child Care Board.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Minister of Education has received the annual report for 2022-23 and will be tabling it during the fall sitting for the Legislative Assembly, as per the requirement of the *Child Care Act*.

#### Background:

##### Yukon Child Care Board (YCCB)

- The YCCB is established under the *Child Care Act* to:
  - encourage the development and support of child care services;
  - make recommendations to the Minister on matters pertaining to child care;
  - review government policies, programs, services, or procedures in matters pertaining to child care;
  - advise on the planning, development, standards, coordination and evaluation of child care services; and
  - hear appeals under the Act.
- The Board currently has seven members, as required by the *Child Care Act*, including 2 representatives from rural communities. Three of the appointments will expire in December 2023.

##### YCCB annual report 2022-23

- The 2022-23 annual report has been submitted and has to be tabled during the 2023 Fall Sitting as per section 4(111) of the *Child Care Act*.
- The report noted the work that had been carried out since the transfer of ELCC to Education stating:

“The commitment that was made two years ago has now become our reality and we celebrate the steps forward that have been made. Keeping the child at the center of our vision, we can see that children and families have certainly benefited from the changes that have been made.”

Adding later in the report, “The effect on the field has been both innovative and trailblazing.”
- The YCCB highlighted a few areas which have had significant progress (YCCB budget and funding for training, board member appointments, website development), incomplete progress (completing and sharing the supported child care review, recruitment and retention of early childhood educators) and no progress (modernization of *Child Care Act*, implementation of an early learning framework, and the development of a formal system of evaluation and assessment of centres).



- Items the Board noted, within their annual report with no progress:
  - The need to focus on **modernizing the Child Care Act**.
  - ELCC has reached out to other jurisdictions to explore **formal assessment and evaluation of centres** and intend to explore the concept of quality indicators during future engagement on the *Child Care Act*.
  - The need to **promote inclusion as a key principle**. ELCC is in the process of updating all public facing material to clearly identify inclusion as a key principle.
  - The need for ELCC to **commission an early learning framework**. ELCC will work collaboratively with the Child Care Board to clarify the use of an early learning framework. ELCC is currently using the BC early learning framework as the foundation for educator professional development, it is referenced in monthly educator newsletters and copies are provided to centres and educators free of charge. The BC Early Learning framework is also used by Yukon schools from kindergarten to grade 3 and in the early learning program at Yukon University.
- The YCCB also noted that they would like to see:
  - A more streamlined process for securing board membership,
  - A review of the inspection process, and
  - The addition of level 4 and level 5 to early childhood educator certification to recognize early childhood diploma and higher levels of academic achievement within the field of early learning specific.
- Many accomplishments noted in the YCCB 2022-23 annual report include:
  - consultation and representation with the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education,
  - membership on the Technical Advisory Group formed by ELCC branch,
  - participated in the review of the supported child care program, and
  - consultation with the recruitment and retention of early childhood educators advisors, etc.
- ELCC staff meet with the Board regularly to share information.

# Session Briefing Note

**Yukon Child Care Board**

**TAB#EL06**

**Fall 2023**

Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-11-01

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Little Blue Early Care and Learning Centre expansion

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Education

#### Value

- We continue to work with Yukon First Nations governments, partners and stakeholders to enhance early learning and child care programming in the Yukon, as we move toward a future in which all families have access to high-quality early learning and child care that is affordable, accessible, and inclusive.

#### Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to high quality early learning and child care that is accessible, affordable, and inclusive.
- Since the implementation of universal child care we have created more than 350 child care spaces in Whitehorse, Dawson City and Ross River; and supported the reopening of the child care centre in Pelly Crossing.
- The Department of Education is actively working with other relevant departments, Little Blue and the Dawson Society for Children and Families to support their expansion.
- In 2021 we provided funding for them to update their feasibility study, and in 2022 and 2023 we provided additional funding to support planning and design of an expanded Little Blue.
- Officials are in regular contact with the program and we will continue to collaborate with them.
- I look forward to sharing information about this work as it progresses.

#### Additional response:

- We continue to support the child care centre financially by providing operational funding. This year we have a transfer payment agreement for \$487,000.

### Little Blue Early Care and Learning Centre expansion

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Education

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Universal child care has created increased demand for early learning and child care opportunities.
- There are three programs currently operating in Dawson City. Each have a waiting list, although it is likely that some children will be on all three waiting lists.
- Little Blue confirmed on November 10, 2023 that they have 42 on their waiting list, with all of them being under school age and three of them not born yet.

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#### Background:

##### Little Blue Expansion

- In 2021-22, the Society received \$5,400 from the Department of Economic Development and the Community Development Fund (CDF) to update its 2014 feasibility report. Additionally, the Department of Education (ELCC) provided \$16,030 in funding to offset the consultant fee for “Feasibility – Little Blue to Big Blue”.
- The Society engaged Klondike Development Organization (KDO) in October 2021, to update the 2014 report. In February 2022, KDO submitted their update, ‘Little Blue to Big Blue Feasibility Update’ with the following findings:
  - The update supports the need for an expanded program and states: “The funding of childcare has improved significantly since 2014.”
  - “Under the current funding and fees framework, the proposed Big Blue facility can be viably operated and maintained over the long term.” It is worth noting that KDO did not consider the capacity of the Society to acquire land and construct the new building.
- In 2022-23, the Society applied for and received CDF funding to advance the next step of their building project, which involved hiring a professional contractor for the blueprints/design, and cost estimates.
  - This step cost \$102,000, of which the Society received \$75,000 from the CDF, committed \$12,500 of its own finances, and ELCC committed and paid \$14,500.
  - The Society hired ORO Enterprises Ltd, a local Dawson City business to complete the blueprints/design.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#EL07**

**Fall 2023**

## **Little Blue Early Care and Learning Centre expansion**

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Education

- The Society is requesting land located at the former McDonald Lodge site (Block D).
- Education is working with EMR and HPW on a one government approach on next steps and will involve other departments as needed.

### Other

- In July 2023 the Yukon Bureau of Statistics published updated population demographics. As of March 31, 2023, there were 257 children aged 12 and under in Dawson City. Early learning and child care is primarily for children aged 12 and under, with exceptions for children with diverse developmental needs, to age 16.
- Dawson City is the only community in Yukon where the Department of Education has not implemented early kindergarten. Education is continuing discussions with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in regarding the future of early kindergarten in the community.

### **Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-15**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### **Collaboration – Advisory Committee for Yukon Education**

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Education

#### **Value:**

- The Department of Education is committed to enhancing community involvement in our work to ensure we are supporting Yukoners on their learning journey – from cradle to career.

#### **Recommended response:**

- The Advisory Committee for Yukon Education provides advice on system-wide education matters, and we value the input we receive.
- With advice of the committee, we recently enhanced membership to include service providers such as the Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon and Autism Yukon; youth-serving organization such as the Boys and Girls Club of Yukon, Communities Building Youth Futures, and the Bringing Youth Toward Equality – Empowering Youth Society; as well as organizations advancing the interests of learners including the Child Development Centre, Child and Youth Advocate's Office and l'Association franco-yukonnaise.
- We continue to have conversations with the committee about their advisory role to ensure their perspectives are reflective of the organizations that they represent, as we move forward with the development of educational initiatives.

#### **Additional response:**

- The Advisory Committee for Yukon Education typically meets quarterly, and committee information is available on Yukon.ca.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The committee is expanding its advisory group.
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## Collaboration – Advisory Committee for Yukon Education

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Education

### Background:

- The committee's work during previous school years focused on pandemic response and recovery, and work on recommendations from the 2019 audit.
- A key priority is now working with the committee on Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education (RISE) initiatives along with the First Nations Education Commission (FNEC).
  - The committee worked collaboratively with FNEC to develop a work plan in 2021 to guide next steps in response to recommendations in the RISE final report from Nikki Yee.
- The committee, as of August 2023, includes (31 representatives):
  - Educators (4; 1 vacancy),
  - Yukon Association of Education Professionals (1)
  - Association of Yukon School Administrators (1)
  - School Council Chairs (4)
  - First Nations Education Commission (2)
  - Yukon First Nation Education Directorate (2)
  - Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards & Committees (1)
  - Catholic Education Association of Yukon (1)
  - CSFY (1) and First Nation School Board (1)
  - Yukon University (1)
  - Child Care Board (1) and Child Development Centre (1)
  - Child and Youth Advocate Office
  - Association franco-yukonnaise (1)
  - LDAY Centre for Learning (1), Autism Yukon (1)
  - BGC (Boys and Girls Club) (1) Yukon, BYTE (1), CBYF (Communities Building Youth Futures) (1)
  - Education officials, including the Deputy Minister (chair), ADMs and Director of RISE (4)

### Approved by:

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-10-19**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

### CSFY Request for School in Dawson

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Education

#### Value:

- We work collaboratively with the commission scolaire francophone du Yukon (CSFY) to support the learning needs of French First Language students and the path for the administration of French First Language education in the territory.

#### Recommended response:

- I am happy to report that this school year, French First Language students have access to an in-person French-language program of instruction in Dawson.
- This is a priority for the Francophone school board and Francophone parents in Dawson.
- We are continuing to work with the CSFY and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, as the CSFY moves forward with their implementation of the French First Language program in Dawson.

#### Additional response:

- The CSFY, the Department of Education, and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in have established an effective working relationship and officials will continue to navigate and approach the work ahead in a good way.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- There is currently an in-person French First Language program of instruction being offered in Dawson.

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#### Background:

- The name of the program is **Programme francophone de Dawson**.



## CSFY Request for School in Dawson

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Education

- The CSFY is currently renting space located at 486 King Street in Dawson City. The parties are currently reviewing the possibility of moving it into Robert Service School in the future.
- As of October 31, 2023, 12 students are enrolled in the program.
- On the week of September 18, CBC-Radio-Canada reporters will be in Dawson to build a story about the French First Language program of instruction in Dawson.
- Under the terms of the mediation agreement, the CSFY will provide an in-person French First Language instruction program in Dawson City for the period 2023-2024 to 2025-2026.
- As it is a program rather than a school, it would be a scaled down financial model including two teachers and an EA.
- The program is funded as part of the 2023-2024 Transfer Payment Agreement with the CSFY.

Teachers	\$292,023.00
Ed Assistants	\$74,985.00
Program Delivery Costs	\$234,292.00
Francophone Administration	\$21,000.00
Innovation Support	\$5,000.00
Cultural Inclusion Support	\$7,500.00
Tutor Support	\$1,700.00
Francophone Recognition (20% of base funding)	\$20,000.00
Rent and Utilities	\$74,000.00
Custodial Services	\$23,500.00
Program Related Capital Repairs	\$9,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$763,000.00</b>

- The government has not agreed to construct a school facility for the CSFY in Dawson City as part of the mediation agreement.
- This program will run for a minimum of three years, during which time an assessment will be undertaken of the ongoing need and suitability of the program.
- On February 28, 2022, CSFY requested the establishment of a French First Language School in Dawson for the 2022-2023 school year.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#EP02**

**Fall 2023**

## **CSFY Request for School in Dawson**

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Education

- In May 2023, the Department of Education and CSFY engaged in a mediation process regarding the establishment of an in-person French language program of instruction in Dawson for the 2023-24 school year.
- On May 8, 2023, Dawson francophone parents filed an injunction to the Supreme Court of Yukon to approve and fund the establishment of a full-time, in-person French as a first language program in Dawson for the 2023-2024 school year.
- On July 10, 2023, a mediation agreement was reached and the Dawson's parents' injunction has been formally discontinued.
- Department officials continue to meet with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and CSFY's officials regularly.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-09**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

#### Value:

- The *Education Act* allows for a variety of learning environments, including private schools, to suit individual students' needs.

#### Recommended response:

- The *Education Act* defines a private school as “a school, including a school operated by a religious denomination, other than a school operated by the Minister or a school board, that offers educational programs during school days to school-age children”.
- Private schools can operate in the Yukon if they meet the requirements of section 29 of the *Education Act* and the Private Schools Regulations.
- There are currently two private schools operating in Yukon: the Yukon Montessori School, which serves Grades 1 to 7, and the Yukon Wild School, which serves students in Grades Junior Kindergarten to 7.
- Private schools are required to:
  - Provide courses of study that meet the goals and objectives established by guidelines approved by the Minister;
  - Agree to regular evaluation and monitoring as determined by the Minister;
  - Meet all local and territorial health, safety, and building standards; and
  - Meet standards of student achievement, as measured by achievement testing, comparable to those of schools operated by the Minister or a School Board.
- The Department of Education works with private schools through the Aurora Virtual School to assess student achievement.

- Department officials are working with the private schools to ensure they are meeting their requirements under the Act and Regulations, and that there is a robust evaluation and monitoring framework in place.

#### **Additional response – private schools and IEPs:**

- Private schools charge fees for students to access programs and services offered by the school.
- The Yukon *Education Act* speaks to the right of students to receive an educational program appropriate to their needs, and to receive an educational program outlined in an IEP when they need special education programs.
- However, the Act speaks to students attending a school operated by the Minister or a school board. The Department of Education does not operate or manage private schools, nor does it provide staffing or funding to private schools.
- Further, the programming at private schools is the responsibility of the school and not the department.
- As such, the Department of Education is not responsible for providing support to students attending private schools, either in the Yukon or outside of the territory.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The Minister has a role in approving, monitoring and evaluating private schools.

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#### **Background:**

- Under the *Education Act* ("the Act"), private schools may operate in the Yukon if they meet the requirements of s. 29 of the Act and the requirements of the Private Schools Regulations.

- Application Process
  - An application for registration and accreditation as a private school needs to be submitted at least four months before the anticipated opening date of the school.
  - As per subsection 1 of the regulations, the application for registration shall include:
    - a) the names of the owners or operators of the school,
    - b) the name of the school,
    - c) the location of the school,
    - d) proof of compliance with all municipal and zoning bylaws, and all applicable municipal and territorial health, safety and building standards requirements,
    - e) procedures for achievement testing for the students,
    - f) written consent of the owner or operator to such evaluations of the school as may be required by the Minister, and
    - g) such further information as may be required by the Minister under the Act.
  - As per subsection 2 of the regulations, the application for accreditation shall include:
    - a) the information required in an application for registration under subsection 1, and
    - b) a list of the proposed instructional staff and proof that each instructor meets the certification requirements outlined in the Teacher Qualification Regulations.
  - The Minister of Education is responsible for approving an application for registration or accreditation of a private school, and for regularly monitoring and evaluating the school.
  - The Act states that no grants or contributions shall be made to a private school by the Minister, the Commissioner in Executive Council, a school board or a Council.
  - Under the *Education Act*, only students at government-run schools, including those operated and managed by a school board, are entitled to IEP programming.

- In March 2023 an applicant for a Cannabis license sought a judicial review of a decision by the Yukon Cannabis Licensing Board not to grant a license because the proposed store was within 150 metres of a school.
  - The applicant has argued that Montessori is a daycare and is not registered as a school.
  - The department is following up with Montessori to ensure its registration is up to date.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

## School Board and Council Elections and Referendums

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Education

School Governance and Associations: refer to EP05

First Nation School Board: refer to HOT19/FN10

### Value:

- School council members and school board trustees play an important role in supporting student success, and the Government of Yukon is committed to enhancing community involvement in school governance.

### Recommended response:

- I would like to recognize that, following last winter's referendum process, the First Nation School Board is managing and operating the following three additional schools as of the start of the 2023-24 school year:
  - Eliza Van Bibber School in Pelly Crossing;
  - Ghùch Tlâ Community School in Carcross; and
  - Kluane Lake School in Destruction Bay.
- I would also like to recognize the Chief Electoral Officer, Max Harvey, and his team at Elections Yukon, who continue to work tirelessly to oversee the democratic process in communities across the Yukon.
- Education officials are working with the First Nation School Board to ensure a smooth transition of these schools from management of the Department of Education to the school board.

### Forming or Joining a School Board:

- The *Education Act* outlines a process for school communities to decide whether to be governed by a school board. The Department of

### **School Board and Council Elections and Referendums**

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Education

Education aims to increase awareness of this process, but it is up to each school community to decide whether they wish to join a board.

- I encourage any school councils considering forming a school board to reach out to the Department of Education, recognizing that the First Nation School Board took several years to establish.

#### **School Board Elections:**

- In November 2022, the First Nation School Board and the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon held trustee elections.
- I am excited to be working on the next chapter of the First Nation School Board with the trustees, Shadelle Chambers, Dana Tizya-Tram, Jocelyn Joe-Strack and Gillian Staveley.
- I am aware that Erin Pauls recently submitted her resignation as trustee for the First Nation School Board. The Department of Education is working with Elections Yukon and the school board to hold a fair and accessible by-election to replace Ms. Pauls.
- I thank Erin for her work as a trustee and I wish her well in her new role.
- I am happy to work with the trustees of the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon to continue to advance French First Language education in the Yukon. I would like to acknowledge the CSFY trustees, Jean-Sebastien Blais, Jessica Masson Guerette, Myriam Bougie, Veronique Maggiore and Jesse Cooke.



### School Board and Council Elections and Referendums

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Education

- Thank you to all trustees for your dedication to our educational system. The next school board elections occur in Fall 2025.

#### School Council Elections

- I would like to thank the members of the recently established Whistle Bend School Council who are working to ensure the school is ready to welcome students next year: Tia Campbell, Cassandra Malach, Andrea Oldridge, Rebecca Hutchings-Archibald, and Amy Nichols-Hogan.
- I thank everyone who put their names forward to serve as school board trustees and school council members, and those who support their schools through volunteer activities.
- The next school council elections will take place in Spring 2024.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- There is interest in the school board and council elections, and the school board referendum process.

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#### Background:

- Under the *Education Act*, school board elections take place every three years, and school council elections are held every two years.
- School council vacancies after an election and during the term are common and can be filled by the current school council or the incoming school council nominating people, or by a by-election to fill vacancies.
- School Council elections were held in May 2022, and trustee elections for the CSFY and the FNSB were held in November 2022.
- As of August 24, 2023, the following school's councils have vacancies to be filled by the Minister: FH Collins (2 of 7)

### School Board and Council Elections and Referendums

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Education

- J.V. Clark (2 of 3)
  - Del Van Gorder (2 of 5)
  - Porter Creek (3 of 7)
  - Robert Service (2 of 6)
- The process for filling seats involves school council members making recommendations. The School Council Liaison is working with school councils to identify members to recommend for appointment.
- Under the Act, a new or existing School Board can be substituted for an existing school council when the school council, or 20% of the electors in the attendance area, requests that a referendum be held.
- Education officials worked with the First Nation School Board (FNSB) and Elections Yukon to establish a process for schools to consider joining the school board after it has been in existence for at least one school year, as allowed for in the *Education Act*.
- If the result is in favour of establishing a school board, or substitution with an existing board, this will be made effective the first day of the next following school year.

#### Expanded Voting – 2022 School Board Elections

- Unlike previous school board elections, which have only taken place in Whitehorse, polling stations were in several rural Yukon communities.
- In addition, the Chief Electoral Officer temporarily brought in the following changes for 2022 using his authorities under the *Education Act* to address new or unforeseen circumstances:
  - Use of an internet voting pilot;
  - Expanded use and circulation of mail-in ballots; and
  - Expansion of voting to Saturday.
- For any of these process changes to become permanent, changes to the *Education Act* and School Board Election Regulations would be required.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#EP04**

**Fall 2023**

## **School Board and Council Elections and Referendums**

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Education

Approved by:

Cassandra Kelly

2023-09-25

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a/Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

School Board and Council Elections and Referendums: refer to EP04  
First Nation School Board: refer to HOT19/FN10

#### Value:

- School council members and school board trustees play an important role in supporting student success. The Government of Yukon is committed to enhancing community involvement in school governance.

#### Recommended response:

- I want to thank all current and previous members of school councils, school boards, and associations who have worked hard to make their school communities a better place. Your dedication is appreciated.
- The Department of Education works directly with school councils and school boards to ensure schools are operated effectively. We respect all roles and responsibilities outlined in the *Education Act* for the governance of schools.
- We also collaborate with the Association of Yukon School Councils Boards and Committees and the Catholic Education Association of Yukon to support the work of school councils, seek advice, and address issues affecting the entire education system.

#### Additional response—school council liability:

- In a situation where a school board or council is named in a court case, the Yukon government will work to support the organization and its members on a case-by-case basis.

### School Governance and Associations

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Education

- The *Education Act* states that a school board or council is not liable for anything done or omitted, without negligence, in the exercise of a power conferred by the Act.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- There may be questions about how the department works with and supports school boards and councils due to recent court cases.

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#### Background:

- There are 29 'brick and mortar' public schools in the Yukon. Of these:
  - Two are operated by the Francophone School Board (la commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, or CSFY);
  - 11 are operated by the First Nation School Board (FNSB); and
  - 16 are operated by Yukon Education (Department of Education), with local oversight provided by elected school councils.
- In November 2022, the Whistle Bend Elementary school council was established.
- The Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards and Committees (AYSCBC) is the non-profit association of school councils in the Yukon. 13 school councils are currently members of AYSCBC. The 3 Catholic school councils are represented by the Catholic Education Association of Yukon (CEAY).
- The *Education Act* governs how school boards are created, how schools can be added to the education area of a board and outlines a board's powers and duties.
- The choice of whether or not any particular school is governed by a school board is decided by that school community's electors.
- In spring 2020, the government and the CSFY settled a longstanding lawsuit relating to the roles and responsibilities of the CSFY as a school board, and there is now greater clarity about the significant authority and responsibilities that the CSFY trustees have over the schools that the board operates.
- School board powers under the *Education Act* include:
  - Operating the schools in its education area.

### School Governance and Associations

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### Education

- Selection of all school staff; including principals and teachers, as well as dismissal, discipline, transfer, promotion and demotion; subject to the Act and any applicable collective agreement.
  - Setting the calendars for schools they operate.
  - Providing educational programs, including locally developed courses, and establishing policies for the administration, management and operation of its schools.
  - Making agreements with the Government of Canada, a Yukon First Nation, any agency of the Government of Canada, the government or agent of any other jurisdiction, another school board, or with a department or agency of the Government of Yukon respecting the provision or joint provision and operation of services.
  - Managing the funds and financials that are approved by the Minister.
  - Creating a parent advisory group for a school.
- School council roles and responsibilities under the *Education Act* include:
  - Providing advice to the Minister on their school programs.
  - Seeking parent input on their school rules.
  - Approving school rules objectives, priorities and courses of study from school administration.
- A committee made up of representatives from the Department of Education, CEAY, Yukon First Nations Education Directorate, and AYSCBC developed a 'Resource Tool,' which launched in December 2020. It includes detailed information about the roles and responsibilities of school councils, the Department of Education, and Yukon First Nations in the operation of schools and the Yukon education system.
- Honoraria rates for school council members and school board trustees were increased as of the 2020-21 school year. Prior to this, they had been the same since 1991.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#EP05**

**Fall 2023**

## **School Governance and Associations**

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Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-07

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

#### Value:

- Good nutrition is vital for students' mental and physical health and increases all students' learning potential.

#### Recommended response:

- All Yukon schools currently provide some level of food service for students.
- We are working with our government and non-government partners through the Future of Yukon School Food Programs working group to explore the steps to strengthen food programs for Yukon students.
- In the 2023-24 budget we were happy to announce an investment of \$500,000 for food in Yukon schools. I look forward to sharing updates on this work soon.
- The Yukon government currently provides the Yukon Food for Learning Association with \$137,000 in annual funding. Funding comes from two departments, with \$115,000 coming from Health and Social Services and \$22,000 coming from the Department of Education.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- On March 10, 2022, the Third Party introduced a motion that the department review its food policy.

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#### Background:

- The 2022 federal budget reaffirmed the 2021 mandate letter commitments for the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food by directing them to work with provinces, territories, municipalities, Indigenous partners, and stakeholders to develop a national school food policy and to explore how more Canadian children can receive nutritious food at school.



- In November 2022, Education and federal officials met as part of the consultations on a national school food policy. Yukon officials flagged the following areas for more discussion:
  - Ensuring equity for rural schools
  - Clarification and common understanding of what would be included in a pan-Canadian policy (education is the jurisdiction of provinces/territories)
  - Infrastructure
  - Federal funding
  - Capacity to implement a program
- On October 31, 2023, Canada released a What We Heard report summarizing feedback from consultations on a national school food policy.
- Almost all participants agreed that school food programs benefit children and their communities.
- The Government of Yukon will continue to collaborate with Canada in any discussions regarding the development of a national school food policy that is responsive to the evolving needs of children and families.
- The Future of Yukon School Food Programs working group was started in January 2022 to discuss and explore ways forward, and consists of members from:
  - Department of Education
  - Department of Health and Social Services
  - Yukon Food for Learning Association
  - Yukon First Nations Education Directorate
- IRP Consulting was hired to create a report to:
  - Understand the current state of Yukon school food programs;
  - Identify overlaps and gaps in services and propose solutions; and
  - Explore what would have to happen to implement a universal school food program in the Yukon.
- The IRP Consulting report's findings include:
  - Program inconsistencies across schools
  - Funding and mandate limitations (e.g., Jordans Principle funding can only be used for Indigenous students)
  - Unsuitable school kitchen infrastructure
  - Lack of standardized policies, procedures, training, and data collection
- The Yukon First Nation Education Directorate receives Jordan's Principle funding from the Federal government to administer a number of nutrition programs for Indigenous

students in Yukon public schools. Where school kitchens in these schools lack capacity for meal preparation, food is prepared in a commercial kitchen off-site and then delivered to the school.

- Porter Creek Secondary School, St. Francis of Assisi, F.H Collins, and CSSC Mercier all have commercial kitchens. All schools have some capacity to deliver foods and nutrition programs to students through smaller kitchens or Home Ec rooms.
- The commercial kitchens at Porter Creek Secondary School and CSSC Mercier are the only ones that are made available through special request for user groups to access through the Joint Use Agreement with the City of Whitehorse.
- Upgrading current infrastructure to meet commercial kitchen standards is a complex process that will involve extensive design and planning.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-08**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

## Collaboration with Yukon First Nations - Yukon Wide Initiatives

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### Value:

- We are working with Yukon First Nations to ensure that all schools meet the needs of Yukon First Nation students and offer all students opportunities to learn about Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing, and being.

### Recommended response:

- We work with Yukon First Nations:
  - On a government-to-government basis;
  - At the community level, on education for their citizens and on their Traditional Territory; and
  - Collectively, at the Yukon-wide level with:
    - all Yukon First Nation governments and the Council of Yukon First Nations, including through the Yukon Forum;
    - the Yukon Native Language Centre;
    - the Chiefs Committee on Education;
    - the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate;
    - the First Nations Education Commission;
    - the First Nation School Board; and
    - the Data Working Group.
- We will continue to work in partnership with First Nation governments to improve educational outcomes for students through:
  - Community-level Education Agreements;
  - The Joint Education Action Plan;
  - Responding to the 2019 audit, including the work to reimagine inclusive and special education;

## **Collaboration with Yukon First Nations - Yukon Wide Initiatives**

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Education

- A Memorandum of Understanding and Transfer Payment Agreement with the Yukon Native Language Centre;
- Implementing the Joint Collaboration Framework Policy, which outlines how the department and Yukon First Nations will collaborate to address their joint education priorities; and
- Other initiatives, such as, working towards a Yukon First Nations Credit Policy, implementing Ready-to-Learn, and the Indigenous Academy at FH Collins.

### **Additional response:**

- As of the start of the 2022-23 school year, eight schools across the Yukon were operated by the First Nation School Board, and as of the start of this school year, this has grown to 11 schools.
- This is a historic step where Yukon First Nations and their citizens are reclaiming greater responsibility for the administration and management of education programs for students in their communities – a path that started 50 years ago, on the foundation of *Together Today for our Children Tomorrow*.
- It is also an example of effective collaboration between Yukon First Nations and the Government of Yukon to advance reconciliation, support First Nations students, and ensure all Yukon students benefit from learning about Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing, and being.
- We recognize the value the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate adds in its administrative role for the Chief's Committee on Education and the First Nations Education Commission, and we will continue to combine our efforts to meet the needs of Yukon First Nation students.

### Collaboration with Yukon First Nations - Yukon Wide Initiatives

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Education

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The 2019 audit from the Auditor General of Canada found that the Department of Education has not done enough to collaborate with Yukon First Nations. During the Public Accounts hearing in January 2022, the Chief's Committee on Education said Education needs to collaborate more effectively.

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#### Background:

- In 2019, the Office of the Auditor General of Canada recommended that the Department of Education complete and implement its policy to collaborate with Yukon First Nations as well as a strategic action plan with specific, measurable actions and timelines to support its work with Yukon First Nations.
- In February 2022 department officials and members of the First Nations Education Commission finalized the Yukon First Nations Education Collaboration Framework.
- The Yukon First Nations Education Collaboration Framework was developed in partnership between Department of Education officials and the members of the First Nations Education Commission (FNEC) and is organized with the same priority areas identified and agreed to in the Joint Education Action Plan –
  - Yukon First Nations Cultures and Languages,
  - Authority, Control and Responsibility,
  - Sustainability, Supports and Success and
  - Closing the Academic Achievement Gap, and
  - Data and Student Information.
- The Collaboration Framework includes opportunities for collaboration, description of action taken and timelines.
- Next steps for implementation include ensuring all department staff are aware of and understand the purpose for the Collaboration Framework, what their role is and what implementation looks like.
- There are many ways to implement the Collaboration Framework, such as:

### Collaboration with Yukon First Nations - Yukon Wide Initiatives

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Education

- The work we do with the Yukon Native Language Centre to support the revitalization of Yukon First Nation languages in Yukon;
  - Negotiating and implementing joint priorities in Education Agreements with Yukon First Nations;
  - Implementing 17.7 provisions under the five Self-government Agreements (TH, SFN, LSCFN, TKC, CTFN),
  - Ensuring all students have opportunities to learn about Yukon First Nation language, culture, and traditions in Yukon schools;
  - Supporting the First Nation School Board and schools operating under the First Nation School Board;
  - Working with Yukon First Nations to build resources for teachers to support their work to bring First Nation ways of knowing, doing and being into their lessons;
  - Developing a Student Outcome Strategy; and
  - Implementing the Data Sharing MOU.
- The First Nation Education Commission has provided direction for the department to work in collaboration with Yukon First Nations and report back on implementation of the Collaboration Framework at each quarterly First Nation Education Commission meeting.
- In response to feedback from many Yukon First Nation partners about allocation of credits for Yukon First Nation led cultural experiences, a draft Yukon First Nation credit was developed and shared with members of First Nations Education Commission (FNEC) in May 2023, in Dawson City.
  - The Education Act s.43 allows a locally developed course of study to be used in an educational program if the course has been approved by a School Board or Council and the Minister.
  - These credits will be counted as locally developed electives within the Dogwood Graduation Program.
  - FNEC members were in support of the idea of having a credit policy; however, further discussion is needed on how the policy may impact each First Nation.

## **Collaboration with Yukon First Nations - Yukon Wide Initiatives**

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- The Indigenous Academy at F.H. Collins, in operation since 2021, explores learning through Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being with an experiential approach.
  - Students participate in authentic, hands-on Indigenous activities aimed at enriching their understanding of the local culture while making a positive contribution to the community.
  - Students are involved in a half day program where they participate in credit courses through languages and connections with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and respected Indigenous leaders in the community.
  - Upon successful completion students receive grade 10 credits for, English First Peoples, Leadership, Social Studies, and Career Life Education.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

## Collaboration with Yukon First Nations - Yukon Wide Initiatives

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Education





#### Value:

- We are working with First Nations and educational partners to improve educational programs, services, and outcomes for all Yukon students.

#### Recommended response:

- Yukon First Nation governments are essential partners in supporting First Nations students and in teaching all Yukon students about Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being.
- We will continue to work with individual Yukon First Nation governments on community-level education and funding agreements to improve educational outcomes for their citizens and learners on their traditional territories at local schools.
- The Government of Yukon allocates \$1.83 million for Yukon First Nation governments to use toward joint education priorities at the community level, and we are working to renew agreements that are expiring in 2023.

#### Additional response:

- This community-level collaboration reflects our government-to-government relationships and commitment to reconciliation.
- It is also reflecting our commitment to working closely with Yukon First Nations to support First Nation students and respond to the recommendations from the 2019 Audit and the priorities under the Joint Education Action Plan.

- Funds that flow to the First Nation School Board are separate and distinct from the funds designated for Education Agreements.
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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The 2019 audit found that the Department of Education has not done enough to collaborate with Yukon First Nations. The Chiefs Committee on Education said Education needs to collaborate more effectively during the Public Accounts hearing in January 2022.
- 

#### **Background:**

- The formula for allocating funding varies from nation to nation based on supports, number of students, number of schools and targeted projects.
  - We currently have education funding agreements with twelve Yukon First Nations. Officials from the Department of Education have been meeting with Yukon First Nations officials to discuss government-to-government education priorities.
    - Carcross/Tagish First Nation
    - Champagne & Aishihik First Nations
    - First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun
    - Kluane First Nation
    - Kwanlin Dun First Nation
    - Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation
    - Ross River Dena Council
    - Selkirk First Nation
    - Ta'an Kwäch'an Council
    - Teslin Tlingit Council
    - Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
    - White River First Nation
  - Department officials continue to work with Liard First Nation and Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation to finalize their funding agreements.
-

- Department of Education officials will initiate discussions with Yukon First Nations throughout the winter to discuss joint education priorities and Education Agreements.
- There are regular meetings with each Yukon First Nation throughout the year and the ADM and Director of First Nation Initiatives are available when any concerns or questions come up.

Other examples of local collaboration:

- We have worked collaboratively with Yukon First Nations on a number of programs, units, camps, and resources for Yukon schools, including Yukon First Nations Credit policy to support credits for on the land and locally delivered education programs:
  - Dooli: traditional knowledge resources with the Northern Tutchone nations for schools in Pelly Crossing, Mayo and Carmacks and teacher training.
  - External credits with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in: First Fish, First Hunt, and Moose Hunt as part of their 17.7 education agreement.
  - Spring culture and trapping camps for Chief Zzeh Gittlit School with the Vuntut Gwitchin Government, and for Kluane Lake School with Kluane First Nation, amongst others.
  - Carcross/Tagish First Nation and Ghùch Tlâ School established curriculum on first fish, hunt, or trapping.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

### First Nation Programming in Schools

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#### Value:

- We want to ensure that all Yukon schools are meeting the needs of Yukon First Nations students and offer all students opportunities to learn about Yukon First Nations' ways of knowing, doing, and being.

#### Recommended response:

- Culturally inclusive and welcoming learning environments help to support student success at school.
- The Yukon's Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum is localized to reflect Yukon First Nations' ways of knowing, doing and being.
- All Yukon schools also work with the "Cultural Inclusion Standards in all Schools" that were developed by the First Nations Education Commission.
- We continue to work with Yukon First Nations on an ongoing basis to develop additional materials, resources, and supports for culturally inclusive school programming. This includes developing a Yukon First Nations credit policy, which will allow students to receive credit for locally developed coursework.

#### Additional response:

- Ensuring Yukon educators have the professional learning opportunities and resources they need to include this learning in their class lessons is a priority for the department and a key to successfully delivering the modernized curriculum.

### First Nation Programming in Schools

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Education

- We have education consultants available to schools with information on how to localize resources to reflect Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing, and being.
- The First Nation School Board will also guide us on new and culturally-rich ways to deliver the K-12 curriculum and programming that can be used in all Yukon schools.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Office of the Auditor General of Canada's 2019 audit report recommended that the department do more to support the inclusion of Yukon First Nation cultures and languages in schools.

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#### Background:

- Recommendation #109 from the 2019 audit: "The Department of Education should determine the human resources and training required to develop sufficient classroom support and materials to help teachers implement the new curriculum as it pertains to Yukon First Nations culture and languages."
- The First Nations Initiatives branch and the Curriculum and Assessment unit have worked with Yukon First Nations to develop curriculum materials and deliver training and support to Yukon educators relating to how students learn about Yukon First Nations cultures, languages, and histories, such as:
  - New grade 5 unit about residential schools (currently field testing); and
  - Draft sample units for K-12 educators, integrating Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being.
- The Cultural Inclusion Standards in all Yukon Schools are being integrated into School Growth Plans.
  - They were developed at the 2016 Yukon First Nation Education Summit, and approved by the First Nation Education Commission (FNEC) in April 2016 and have been introduced to school principals. School principals

### First Nation Programming in Schools

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Education

participated in discussions and planning for the standards at the 2017 Yukon First Nation Education Summit.

- The First Nations Education Council (FNEC) has worked with the department over the past few years on several initiatives related to the Joint Education Action Plan (JEAP), including these standards.
- In September 2021, a new Indigenous Academy started operating out of FH Collins Secondary – a cooperative effort between the school, school council, First Nations, and the Yukon First Nations Education Directorate.
- The Academy is based on a similar program from School District 23 in British Columbia and is a "learning community" where several core subjects are taught through a primarily Indigenous worldview with wrap-around supports provided for students.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

#### Value:

- We are working with Yukon First Nations to ensure that schools meet the needs of Yukon First Nation students and offer all students opportunities to learn about Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being.

#### Recommended response:

- We took action on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Call to Action #62, which calls upon governments to establish senior-level positions at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.
- The First Nations Initiatives branch continues to foster effective partnerships with Yukon First Nations to support Yukon-wide and community-specific joint education priorities. Through this support, we are helping to meet our goals under the Joint Education Action Plan.
- The branch has worked to clarify its mandate and evaluate the services provided. This work resulted in establishing a position focused solely on Yukon First Nations language education and providing support for the Yukon First Nations Language teachers through professional development and connecting them to language resources.
- In addition, two Senior Partnership Advisor positions have been added to the branch, along with the Director, to support the on-going relationship with First Nations governments: including the negotiation and renewal of Education Agreements and supporting the implementation of those agreements across the department.
- The First Nations Initiatives Branch works closely with Curriculum and Assessment branch, Student Support Services, Schools, and Human

Resources to ensure dedicated and aligned of work towards implementation of these goals.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The public may be interested to know what the Department of Education is doing to meet the needs of Yukon First Nations students.

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#### Background:

- The First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit (now the First Nation Initiatives Branch) was created in 2006.
- The First Nations Initiatives Branch was established in June 2019 and has responsibilities relating to:
  - First Nations education in Yukon schools;
  - Yukon First Nations language programming in Yukon schools;
  - Development of curriculum and resource materials and training; and
  - Developing partnerships with Yukon First Nations (Yukon First Nations governments, Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon Native Language Center, Chiefs Committee on Education, Yukon First Nations Education Directorate, First Nations Education Commission, First Nation School Board, etc.).
- An acting ADM is in place until June 30, 2025, to continue to support the work of the First Nation Initiatives Branch and allow time for the Department of Education and the Chiefs Committee on Education to assess progress towards shared education goals.
- Any resulting changes to the branch's mandate and services will be shared as they are finalized, including with Yukon First Nations.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]



### JEAP Implementation and Agreement Renewal

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Education

#### Value:

- We want to ensure that Yukon schools are meeting the needs of Yukon First Nations students and offering all students opportunities to learn about Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being in all Yukon schools.

#### Recommended response:

- As per the 2019 audit recommendations, we continue to collaborate with Yukon First Nations to implement actions that support the priorities of the Joint Education Action Plan 2014-2024.
- The four priority areas in the Joint Education Action Plan, or JEAP, remain relevant, and they will continue to be prioritized and addressed through collective and community-level agreements. Those priority areas are:
  - K-12 Culture and Language;
  - Authority, Control and Responsibility;
  - Sustainability, Supports and Success; and
  - Closing the Academic Achievement Gap.
- The Government of Yukon looks forward to working with Yukon First Nations and Canada as partners in the joint renewal of JEAP for 2025.
- It's an exciting time in education, the past few years we have seen unprecedented change, and I look forward to seeing where we can go next.

## **JEAP Implementation and Agreement Renewal**

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Education

### **Additional response:**

- The establishment of the First Nation School Board and recent expansion from eight schools to eleven schools that are now being operated by the First Nation School Board is a key example of Yukon First Nations reclaiming authority and control over education, a key commitment of JEAP.
- Additional examples of implementation of JEAP include:
  - providing \$735,000 to the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate to their work on JEAP and administering the First Nation Education Commission;
  - continuing to work with Yukon First Nations on a government-to-government basis at the community-level to address education priorities in their Traditional Territory, often through an Education Agreement. Through these discussions, we are able to provide funding supports towards each community's identified needs, and it helps us realize our commitment to implement JEAP priorities.
  - our continued work with the Yukon Native Language Centre, providing \$1.19M in funding to support the revitalization of Yukon First Nation languages and provide training and supports for Yukon First Nation language teachers in Yukon schools.

## JEAP Implementation and Agreement Renewal

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Education

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The 2019 audit recommended that the Department of Education should meet regularly with Yukon First Nations to assess the status of the Joint Education Action Plan's initiatives and determine how and when to complete those that remain.

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### Background:

- As of 2019-20, the government allocated an additional \$300,000 per year to implement the education initiatives set out in the JEAP.
- We combined the two previous Transfer Payment Agreements with CYFN (one for Education Initiatives, one for FNEC) and added more resources for JEAP for a one-year term agreement for \$735,000 (up from \$435,000 combined annual amount from the two previous 3-year agreements). This now flows to YFNED as per CCOE and CYFN request, instead of CYFN.
- Senior Officials agree that the four priority areas in the JEAP should continue to be pursued through collective and community level agreements and initiatives.
- Work continues in this regard, for example:
  - Signed Agreement Respecting Education and the Establishment of a First Nation School Board in Yukon with 10 Yukon First Nations in March 2021.
  - Transfer Payment Agreements with all 14 Yukon First Nations, allocating over \$1.83 million among the 14 Yukon First Nations.
  - Signed a Memorandum of Understanding in February 2020 with the Chiefs Committee on Education. The Data Working Group was formed to collaborate and establish arrangements to enable and expedite the sharing of Yukon First Nation student aggregated data for the purpose of improving the delivery of education programs and improving student outcomes.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#FN05**

**Fall 2023**

## **JEAP Implementation and Agreement Renewal**

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Education

- Increased funding in 2021 to Council for Yukon First Nations for the Yukon Native Language Center, to support language revitalization and planning for more First Nation Language teacher training.

### Student performance data reporting (please review bullets)

- The Data Sharing MOU between CCOE and Yukon Education has established a Data Working Group. This group has representation from YFNs, Yukon Education and CCOE technical staff. The purpose of the group is to allow for the sharing of aggregated YFN student performance data, and ensure a role for YFNs in the review and quality assurance process for such data.
- In the past, there have been issues in producing relevant reports on Yukon First Nations student performance data and sharing this data with Yukon First Nations.
- To address these issues and more effectively support Yukon First Nations data requests, the department has developed a YFN dashboard containing various datasets. This dashboard has been provided to YFNs and YFNED.
- The department is working collaboratively with the Data Working Group and YFNs to develop solutions to share student information (including personal information) with Yukon First Nations.
- We have published the 2019-20 How Are We Doing (HAWD) Report on Yukon.ca. We have shared the HAWD 2020-21 and 2021-22 Reports with First Nation Education Commission and are waiting for their approval. We have also shared the second draft of the HAWD 2022-23 version, as committed to in the MOU.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

## Language, Culture and Heritage Revitalization in Yukon Public Schools

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Education

**Yukon Native Language Centre – First Nation Language Programs: refer to TAB FN09**

### Value:

- Safer, healthier, and thriving communities are inherently linked to re-building First Nation identity and connection to heritage. We also need to focus on leadership, education, and training programs that are grounded in culture and language.

### Recommended response:

- Yukon First Nation languages are in critical condition with a number of dialects down to only a handful of speakers.
- The Department of Education is working with individual Yukon First Nations on bilateral government-to-government Education Agreements, which include discussions on allocations for indigenizing education and language, culture, and heritage programming in schools.
- In 2023-24 the Yukon government is providing \$1.19 million to the Yukon Native Language Centre, to support First Nations language revitalization. Through this partnership, our Yukon First Nations language teachers have access to language resources and courses to support their own fluency and better support Yukon students.
- We are also supporting professional development and fluency of our Yukon First Nations language teachers through a pilot program, whereby two teachers can apply for full time study to increase their

### Language, Culture and Heritage Revitalization in Yukon Public Schools

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Education

language fluency. This program will enrich the learning environment for our children.

#### **Additional response:**

- A specific priority for the Government of Yukon is to work towards a shared commitment with Yukon First Nations and the Government of Canada to address and take meaningful steps to revitalize Yukon First Nations languages, culture, and heritage.
- The Government of Yukon is interested in continuing with the work of the Joint Education Action Plan to which all Yukon First Nations and Canada are partners, as well as advancing specific funding conversations with Yukon First Nations and Canada, on how to advance language, culture, and heritage priorities in public school settings.
- The Yukon government continues to explore other options for sharing existing capacity and resources for Yukon First Nation language programming with Yukon First Nations governments to support their language revitalization initiatives, and to meet the department's obligation to provide Aboriginal language instruction to Yukon students.
- The Government of Yukon has received the Yukon First Nations K-12 Language Framework and Action Plan that was recently approved by the First Nations Education Commission. Language and Culture is a key pillar of the Joint Education Action Plan.

### Language, Culture and Heritage Revitalization in Yukon Public Schools

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Education

- As we review the work completed by the Commission, we look for ways to align our shared efforts to revitalize Yukon First Nations Languages and build a love of language in the next generation of learners.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Language and culture are ongoing issues and a priority for Yukon First Nations, and a key pillar of JEAP.
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#### Background:

- There is an opportunity and expectation through JEAP renewal to discuss how YFNs would like to be engaged about funding for language, culture and heritage and conversations with federal ministers in Ottawa. This issue also aligns with discussions with interests from other provinces and territories.
- The Department is having distinct funding conversations related to Indigenous education, and will develop a funding strategy to address the recommendations, objectives and requirements (within the Minister's responsibility under the Education Act) of the:
  - Joint Education Action Plan,
  - Collaboration Framework,
  - Education Agreements with Yukon First Nations, and
  - Yukon First Nations Education Directorate,
- The Council of Ministers of Education of Canada (CMEC) met in July, 2022. At this meeting Ministers discussed the “Framework for the CMEC Indigenous Education Plan, 2023-27. This framework was designed to ensure CMEC's Indigenous Education Plan continues to reflect CMEC members' respective commitments to advance progress on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action. CMEC 2023 included discussions around provinces and territories' shared interest in increased federal funding support for indigenous languages.

## Language, Culture and Heritage Revitalization in Yukon Public Schools

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Education

- The Framework also seeks to support provincial and territorial education systems to recognize the historical impacts and unique cultures, and advance truth, reconciliation, and success for Indigenous students.
- The Government of Yukon transferred full administration and resources of the Yukon Native Language Centre to the Council of Yukon First Nations in 2018, for their important work to train language teachers and revitalize First Nations languages.
- The Yukon Strategy on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-spirit+ People includes a foundational value: “Culture, Language, Spirituality and Relationship with the Land”, which guides our work in this area.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-06**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]



#### Value:

- Residential schools are part of Canada's shared history, and we acknowledge the impacts this had on Yukon First Nations and all Indigenous peoples in Canada.

#### Recommended response:

- The Department of Education's role in Truth and Reconciliation is vital, and we are taking this responsibility seriously as we stand as allies to support Truth and Reconciliation initiatives across all Yukon schools and their communities.
- September 25<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> 2023 was Truth and Reconciliation Week. Schools across the territory organized activities for staff, students and families to recognize this year's theme: Honouring Survivors.
- The Government of Yukon observes September 30<sup>th</sup> as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, also known as Orange Shirt Day, and schools were closed October 2<sup>nd</sup> across the territory.
- This statutory holiday is an important day to honour the survivors, families and communities impacted by residential schools in Canada and the continued trauma faced by Indigenous communities throughout the country.
- I am proud to support the work we are doing towards decolonizing education. We are changing not just what we teach but how we are teaching it. This year, we will continue to offer the Indigenous Atlas of Canada's Giant floor map where hundreds of students are invited to engage with the floor map, which shows the locations of Indigenous

communities, residential schools, and reserves. This map is a special teaching tool. It includes a timeline of key points that affected Indigenous people.

- I commend the work of our teachers, facilitators and especially our students who engage with this important and sensitive work with respect and curiosity. This ensures the next generation of Yukoners will have a more complete understanding of our shared history.

#### **Additional response:**

- The department's work to address the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission includes establishing a more inclusive public education system in Yukon, ensuring schools meet the needs of Yukon First Nation students, and offering all students opportunities to learn about Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being.
- Establishing the Yukon First Nation School Board is a major step in advancing reconciliation – a path that started 50 years ago with the historic document, championed by Yukon First Nations Chiefs: *Together Today for our Children Tomorrow*.
- I also want to highlight the work we have done to achieve Action 63: “to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal issues, including developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.” This is an ongoing action, but I can confirm that the Department of Education continues to embed Yukon First Nations ways of knowing doing, and

being into school programs and the revised school curriculum in all subjects at all grade levels. This includes:

- Approving locally developed courses that include - Ancestral Technology, Youth for Dignity, Mentorship, Outdoor Education, Yukon First Nation Leadership, Learning Strategies, and more. Yukon First Nations Studies 12 was developed as an adaptation to British Columbia's First People's 12.
- The Grade 5 and 10 Residential School Unit is in the final stages of development, and the Grade 9 Unit is in development.
- The Department of Education is working with Yukon First Nation governments and partners to develop a policy to allow credits to be earned for land-based experiential learning delivered or facilitated by Yukon First Nation governments, Elders and knowledge keepers.
- We are working with Yukon First Nations to develop supports for teachers to implement the recently introduced curriculum that integrates Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being in all grade levels and subject areas.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released its final report calling for greater partnerships with First Nations and more culturally appropriate curricula and curricula about residential schools.
- The Yukon observes September 30 as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Schools will be closed on Monday October 2, 2023, to observe the statutory holiday, as September 30<sup>th</sup> falls on a Saturday.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#FN07**

**Fall 2023**

## Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

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Education

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### Background:

- The department's work in this area includes:
  - In 2021, we reached a landmark framework agreement with the Chiefs of 10 Yukon First Nations governments to establish a Yukon First Nation School Board.
  - Starting the 2023-2024 school year with eleven schools operating under the First Nation School Board.
  - Curriculum developed on Indian Residential School working with YFN and knowledge keepers for grade 10 social studies.
  - The Joint Education and Action Plan.
  - Education Agreements with all 14 Yukon First Nation governments are either signed or in process of signing. This includes financial compensation (\$1.83 million total).
  - Cultural and language initiatives – First Nations Initiatives (FNI) Branch.
  - Establishing the FNI Branch - Department officials worked with the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Chiefs Committee on Education to establish an Assistant Deputy Minister of First Nations Initiatives.

### Approved by:

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-10-04**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

#### Value:

- We want to ensure that all Yukon schools are meeting the needs of Yukon First Nations students and offering all students opportunities to learn about Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being.

#### Recommended response:

- Our government is pleased to be working collaboratively with the Chiefs Committee on Education and the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate on the programs and services they are implementing to support First Nations students.
- The Yukon Government funds Yukon First Nations Education Directorate \$735,000 per year in support of its work with the First Nation Education Commission in meeting the Joint Education Action Plan.
- In addition, we are also partnering with the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate and the Early Years Program to offer “*Understanding the Early Years*”. Once successfully completed, participants receive a level one early childhood educator certificate.
- The course will support culturally competent educators with an understanding of Yukon First Nations, and culturally inclusive programs.
- Several Department staff were very pleased to attend the recent Sacred Day in August at Ama Ku teaching camp, learning and sharing alongside all Yukon First Nations Education Directorate staff.
- Partnerships such as these are critical for reconciliation.

### Additional response:

- We appreciate the work and support of the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate and recognize the valuable supports they can offer to First Nations students and families, and we share their enthusiasm for the positive difference we can make together.

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- CYFN, the Yukon First Nations Education Directorate and Yukon First Nations are working on a number of programs to support First Nation students that have direct connections to Yukon schools, such as food programs, access to specialized assessments and additional counselling supports.

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### Background:

- Created by the Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) in 2020, the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate (YFNED) is a stand-alone entity. The Yukon government provides \$735,000 per year which covers a portion of administrative and Joint Education Action Plan costs and represents 4% of their total annual budget. A substantial portion of their total funding is through Jordan's Principle, other federal and private funding sources. The Directorate has received funding for several initiatives to form a wraparound service to Yukon First Nations students.
- The YFNED receives federal funding for several programs:
  - The Jordan's Principle initiative aims to make sure First Nations children can access all public services in a way that reflects their distinct cultural needs and takes full account of the historical disadvantage linked to colonization.
  - This funding may be awarded to cultural and emotional support in school, assessments, technology and communication devices, and transportation.
- YFNED programs include:

- Mobile Therapeutic Unit: Indigenous allied health services for all Yukon communities, cultural mental wellness services, speech and language pathology, occupational therapy, education psychology, optometry, and audiology. This was launched in January 2021.
- Nutritional Programs: Hot breakfast and lunch, traditional food, and community feasts. This has been offered in rural First Nation communities, and in Whitehorse.
- Early Childhood Education/Maternal Child Health: Early Child Visiting Program in rural communities and Whitehorse.
- Yukon First Nation Education Advocates: Aim to provide support and advocacy for individual Indigenous students, support culturally inclusive programming, work with school to improve the academic achievement of Indigenous students, increase a sense of belonging, self-respect, and place in heritage for all Indigenous students, and connect Indigenous students to services and supports and ensure recommended services and supports are provided.
- Cultural Connections: School-wide cultural programming is being developed.
- We are working with YFNED and other education partners to collaborate on joint education priorities.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

#### YNLC - First Nation Language Programs

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Education

#### Language, Culture and Heritage Revitalization in Yukon Public Schools: refer to FN06

##### Value:

- We are committed to supporting the revitalization of First Nations Languages through language learning programs.

##### Recommended response:

- We continue to work closely with the Yukon Native Language Centre and Council of Yukon First Nations on programs that promote First Nations language learning, as well as supporting the revitalization of Yukon First Nation languages.
- The Government of Yukon provides the Yukon Native Language Centre, or YNLC, with approximately \$1.19 million each year, part of which is to support planning for more First Nations language teacher training.
- We continue to offer First Nations language programs in Yukon schools, although there are a few language teacher vacancies due to the declining number of fluent and proficient language teachers.
- To support revitalizing Yukon First Nation languages and restoring First Nations' responsibility for their languages, the Government of Yukon transferred full authority and control of the Yukon Native Language Centre to the Council of Yukon First Nations in 2018.



## YNLC - First Nation Language Programs

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Education

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The 2019 audit included recommendations relating to Aboriginal language instruction and policies in schools.
- Language revitalization was a topic in the 2022 Public Accounts Committee hearing.

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### Background:

- CYFN conducted a review of Yukon First Nations (YFN) languages, which included the YNLC, to determine how to meet the urgent need to restore and revitalize First Nations languages in the Yukon. The YNLC is now focusing on supporting First Nations community-based language initiatives, including creating fluent speakers.
- The Education Act requires the Minister of Education to employ YFN language teachers to provide language instruction in the schools; establish policies and guidelines on the amount of and timetabling for the instruction of YFN languages in the schools; and provide for the development of instructional materials for the teaching of YFN languages and the training of YFN language teachers.
- The department works to recruit certified candidates to fill vacant YFN Language Teacher positions, but faces challenges finding and recruiting certified and proficient YFN Language Teachers. There has been a decrease in fluent Yukon First Nation language instructors through retirement and few systemic supports for fluency development among learner-teachers.
- 31.59 FTEs are allocated for Yukon First Nation Language Teachers.
  - As of August 23, 2023 there are 5 postings for YFNLT positions.
  - 1 of the vacancies is due to the language teacher participating in a secondment with a Yukon First Nation government.
  - 1 of the vacancies is due to a language teacher participating in the Yukon First Nations Language pilot program where the staff member has been provided leave for 1 year to attend an educational program in support of fluency.

## YNLC - First Nation Language Programs

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Education

- 7 Yukon First Nation languages are being taught in 23 schools. There are well-established elementary and middle school programs but low student enrolment and retention after grade 7.
- In February 2021, the First Nations Education Commission passed a resolution for the Department of Education to work with the YNLC to support: YFN languages curriculum development, language teacher training, and language proficiency and fluency development. The resolution will help to guide the development of the YNLC's workplan.
- The Department has re-established a Language Coordinator position within the First Nations Initiatives branch. This position provides support and advice to Yukon First Nation Language Teachers to enhance delivery of First Nation language curriculum and will work with Yukon First Nations and Yukon Native Language Center to support language revitalization.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

**School Board and Council Elections and Referendums: refer to EP04**  
**School Governance and Associations: refer to EP05**

### Value:

- The Government of Yukon, Chiefs Committee on Education and the First Nation School Board share the common goal of providing high quality and culturally appropriate education, based on an Indigenous worldview, for all Yukon students.

### Recommended response:

- The First Nation School Board governs eleven schools across the Yukon. This is a historic step for Yukon First Nations and their citizens.
- The First Nation School Board is enabling Yukon First Nations to reclaim greater responsibility for the administration and management of education programs for students in their communities.
- As Minister of Education, I will continue to collaborate with the Chiefs Committee on Education and the First Nation School Board trustees as I exercise my oversight authorities.
- I will also continue to work on a government-to-government basis with individual First Nations on their educational priorities for their citizens.

### Additional response:

- The First Nation School Board held its first election November 2022.
- With the recent resignation of Erin Pauls, there are four elected trustees: Shadelle Chambers, Dana Tizya-Tram, Jocelyn Joe-Strack and Gillian Staveley.

- The department is working with Elections Yukon and the First Nation School Board to coordinate a by-election.
- I would like to thank Ms. Pauls for her dedication and hard work to establish the First Nation School Board, and wish her well in her new role.
- Following the results of the February 2023 referendums, three additional schools have joined the First Nation School Board. Thank you to all school communities, councils, the First Nation School Board, and Elections Yukon for providing opportunities and holding conversations on the considerations to join the First Nation School Board.
- I am pleased to announce that the following three schools are being managed and operated by the First Nation School Board as of the start of the 2023-24 school year:
  - Eliza Van Bibber School, Pelly Crossing
  - Ghùch Tlâ Community School, Carcross
  - Kluane Lake School, Destruction Bay
- I would like to acknowledge and thank the Chiefs Committee on Education, the Interim Governance Committee, the officials of the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate and the First Nation School Board, who worked tirelessly to launch the school board in February 2022, and to ensure a successful start to the 2023-2024 school year for schools and students moving to the school board.

### **Additional response - Funding:**

- We have a 15-month agreement that runs until June 30, 2024, in an amount of just over \$35 million, which includes a combination of new money and reprofiling the existing budget to offset the funding requirements of the First Nation School Board.
- The Yukon government has committed to this funding through a Transfer Payment Agreement.
- The FNSB, under the current funding agreement, will receive approximately \$5.2M in additional funding related to the operations, administration and salaries for the 3 recently added schools.
  - The Department of Education has the majority of this funding in its existing budget in the Kindergarten to Grade 12 branch.
  - The funding agreement will be updated in early November 2023 to include the 3 new schools.
- The department worked with the newly elected trustees on a final financial arrangement for the First Nation School Board funding formula to create equitable funding between the school authorities and to establish consistent service levels in the provisioning of K-12 education programs.

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### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- There will be considerable interest in how the First Nation School Board is operating the 11 schools under its authority, and the impacts of this on all Yukon students.
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### Background:

- The breakdown for the TPA with the FNSB includes:
  - Operational support and operations and maintenance of eight schools \$23.6M – this includes the same cost factors and drivers as the commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, or CSFY, with a minor difference for rural remoteness.
  - Board governance and administration of eight schools of \$3.2M
  - Grant for Indigenous recognition \$4.8M.
  - One time funding for governance of community committees \$450k.
  - Grant for student outcomes and indigenization of the curriculum in response to the 2019 Auditors General report \$3.125M.
  - Additional funding to support the three new schools will be confirmed in October 2023 as we finalize enrollments for the school year.
- The following schools are operated by the First Nation School Board (FNSB):
  - Chief Zzeh Gittlit School, Old Crow, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation
  - Johnson Elementary School & Watson Lake Secondary School, Watson Lake, Liard First Nation
  - Ross River School, Ross River, Ross River Dena Council
  - St. Elias Community School, Haines Junction, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations
  - Nelna Bessie John School, Beaver Creek, White River First Nation
  - Grey Mountain Primary School, Whitehorse, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Kwanlin Dün First Nation
  - Takhini Elementary School, Whitehorse, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and Kwanlin Dün First Nation
  - Eliza Van Bibber School, Pelly Crossing, Selkirk First Nation
  - Ghùch Tlâ Community School, Carcross, Carcross/Tagish First Nation
  - Kluane Lake School, Destruction Bay, Burwash Landing, Kluane First Nation
- JV Clark School (Mayo) electors voted in 2022 to not have their school operated by the FNSB.

- An Interim Funding agreement was in place to ensure a successful transition for the start of the 2022-23 school year. The total amount of this agreement was \$13,094,188 (to March 31, 2023) and represents base funding for school operations as well as funding for the new board's administration and costs associated with Indigenous recognition.
- The current funding agreement provides the FNSB with \$27,733,890 for the operation, administration, salaries and strategic initiatives for the original 8 schools along with the School Board for the 23-24 school year.
  - The current funding agreement will be updated to include the 3 additional school in early November 2023, once enrolment is confirmed.
- Following establishment of the First Nation School Board, the Minister of Education appointed an interim governance committee based on recommendations of the Chiefs Committee on Education.
- This committee oversaw operations of the school board until November 2022, when school board trustee elections took place.

**Approved by:**

**Cassandra Kelly**

**2023-09-25**

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a/Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Value:

- All K-12 students benefit from our modern curriculum that follows best practices from across Canada and the world and incorporates the Yukon's context and Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing, and being.

### Recommended response:

- Part of the Yukon's modernized school curriculum includes updated ways for teachers to assess and report on student learning.
- Changes to assessment and reporting are based on research and leading teaching practices that confirm students need to understand learning as a lifelong process. Educators involve parents and students in the learning process by using ongoing, meaningful feedback to support student growth.
- Students in Grades 10 to 12 continue to receive percentage scores and transcripts for post-secondary school. Grade 12 students also receive percentage scores at the mid-point of their course for pre-admission to post-secondary schools.
- All school authorities - Yukon Education, CSFY and the First Nation School Board, follow the same K-12 curriculum and assessment and reporting structure. However, how learning objectives are met, and how programming is delivered is flexible and may vary.

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

There continue to be varying reactions to Yukon's decision to adopt standards-based assessment, grading, and reporting.

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### Background:

- Assessment changes are based on the collaborative work and recommendations of the Education Assessment Committee, a group of 40 Yukon educators and partners in education, who researched best practices in student-centered assessment and reporting to update reporting procedures and guidelines for Yukon schools.
- Assessment and reporting procedures and guidelines require teachers to collect evidence of student learning, evaluate achievement on the learning standards for each grade and subject, and provide descriptive feedback on students' strengths, areas for further development, and next steps for learning.
- The main changes to the student assessment and reporting procedures and guidelines were:
  - Moving from letter grades to proficiency levels for Grades 4-9, with a chart that schools can make available to show parents and caregivers how the proficiency levels correspond to letter grades.
  - Proficiency levels and descriptive feedback and comments provide parents and caregivers with more helpful information on their child's learning, so they know how their child is progressing in their learning and how they can help support that learning process.
  - Communicating student learning in report cards is based on the most recent and consistent demonstration of learning to best reflect students' understanding and skills.
  - Teaching students how to self-assess their strengths and areas for improvement for core competency skills in communication, thinking, and personal and social, are noted on their final report card.
- These changes have been in place in Yukon schools since 2019.
- The Yukon student assessment matrix was updated in September 2022 to align with the Education Recovery plan.
- The updated matrix includes updated literacy assessments for both English and French Immersion students.
- There is criticism to the updated Matrix with respect to Literacy assessments.

- The recommendations from the Culturally Responsive Literacy Strategy working group include a continuation of the working group to explore literacy interventions and inclusion of Indigenous ways of teaching literacy.
- These further developed recommendations are likely to impact current assessments of literacy in the future.
- The assessment matrix does not include formalized assessments completed by Student Support Services specialists.
- The main features of the modernized assessment and reporting guidelines and procedures are:
  - Flexibility to increase parent and student involvement in the learning process using ongoing, meaningful feedback in conversation with parents/students and examples of student work to show learning progress to parents and caregivers and students.
  - More informal communication options with parents.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

## Gender Identity and Health Curriculum

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Education

### **LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan, SOGI Policy and Education Act Amendment Implementation: refer to HOT09/SSS03**

#### **Value:**

- It is a top priority to support healthy, active, safe, and caring learning environments in all Yukon schools.

#### **Recommended response:**

- Yukon's Physical and Health Education curriculum includes age-appropriate learning standards on physical literacy, health and active living, social and community health, and mental wellbeing.
- Students start to learn about sexual identity in Grade 4. Lessons include information about the physical, emotional, and social changes that occur during puberty, including those involving sexuality and sexual identity.
- We work with educators, health experts, and community members to ensure we are using the most up-to-date practices to create an inclusive school environment for all students.
- We are making every effort to ensure lessons and teaching practices promote inclusion and we continue to review and update these on an ongoing basis.
- We appreciate the need for families to be aware of curriculum topics. We invite parents to discuss the curriculum topics with their child's teacher or school principal.

## Gender Identity and Health Curriculum

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Education

- If anyone has feedback or concerns about a lesson being taught at their school, we encourage them to bring it to the attention of the teacher and school principal for a discussion.

### Additional response:

- Teachers are provided with resources and professional learning about appropriate language and best practices to teach these learning standards inclusively.
- Yukon's curriculum, resources, and professional learning for educators follow the department's Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Policy, or SOGI policy, which promotes appropriate, respectful behaviour for all students, including 2SLGBTQIA+ students.
- To further support 2SLGBTQIA+ students, the Department of Education updated its Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Policy, as outlined in the LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan.
- We will continue to engage with students, educators and other members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community as we work to implement and evaluate the updated SOGI Policy.
- The department has recently partnered with ARC Foundation, a charitable foundation supporting SOGI-inclusive educational practices in K-12 school settings, to implement the tools and resources of the SOGI 1 2 3 program to create more inclusive schools for students.
- Grade 4-7 Better to Know resources, previously known as SHARE, were recently reviewed. The revised resources were available to teachers beginning in the 2022-23 school year.

## Gender Identity and Health Curriculum

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Education

- We have implemented new training, developed through work on the Safer School Action Plan, in all schools to enhance student safety and raise awareness about appropriate adult behaviour.

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### Context – this may be an issue because:

- Questions about the recently updated SOGI Policy are expected.

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### Background:

- Yukon government initiatives relate to gender identity and safety in schools. These include:
  - The LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan which committed the Department of Education to updating the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Policy.
  - The Yukon Strategy on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-spirit+ People, which aims to address violence against Indigenous women, girls and Two-spirit+ people.
  - The Department of Education's current work to update its policies and processes on safe and caring schools.
  - The work of the Communities of Inquiry in response to the Review of Inclusive and Special Education and the Review on School Attendance, which are creating new definitions of Inclusive and Special Education.

### Curriculum

- Content related to sexual health begins in kindergarten, when students learn the proper name of all their body parts.
- With younger students, sexual health topics focus on general health and safety. In later grades, this content expands to include content such as topics related to pregnancy, the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, and overall healthy sexual decision making.
- Topics related to sexual identity begin in Grade 4 where students learn about the physical, emotional, and social changes that occur during puberty, including those involving sexuality and sexual identity.

## Gender Identity and Health Curriculum

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Education

- In grades 4-10, Physical and Health Education curriculum includes strategies for students to protect themselves and others from potential abuse, exploitation, and harm in a variety of settings.

### Resources

- All schools were provided with the Better to Know resources.
- Video and teaching resources for Grades K to 3 are available for use in Yukon Schools.

### Professional learning

- All Yukon Education schools that had a Professional Development Day on August 17, 2023 received professional development in Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Inclusive educational practices to support their roles and responsibilities in the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Policy.
- The Departments of Education and Health and Social Services follow best practices in comprehensive sexual health education as taught by Options for Sexual Health (OPT BC) in Vancouver. Health and Social Services employs Certified Sexual Health Educators who have been trained through OPT BC. Many Yukon educators have received training for teaching classroom lessons from Certified Sexual Health Educators.
- Since September 2017, Education and Health and Social Services have held workshops at the majority of Yukon schools. Topics included:
  - Better to Know, or BTK (previously SHARE);
  - Comprehensive sexual health curricular competencies for various elementary grade levels; and
  - Grade K-12 comprehensive health learning standards.
- We have organized and delivered professional development workshops open to all Yukon teachers on sexual health education in collaboration with Health and Social Services. We have also worked with Health and Social Services to deliver professional development workshops to the nursing community who are closely involved in K-12 education.
- Teachers most recently engaged in professional development on sexual health resources in January, 2023.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#HOT05/CU02**

**Fall 2023**

## Gender Identity and Health Curriculum

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Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-06

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Value:

- Our goal is to ensure all Yukon students have the skills and knowledge that they need for their transition into higher education, training, or the workforce – whatever their path may be.

### Recommended response:

- All Grade 10-12 students follow the BC Graduation Program and requirements, including writing the BC literacy and numeracy assessments.
- These assessments demonstrate overall skills in literacy and numeracy, rather than the student's proficiency in a specific course.
- All graduation assessments are now implemented.
- The Grade 10 Literacy, Grade 10 Numeracy, and Grade 12 Literacy, as well as the French Immersion and Francophone equivalent assessments, are offered several times throughout the school year.
- Effective the 2023-24 school year, all students will be required to complete 4 credits in an Indigenous-focused course as part of their graduation requirement.

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- A requirement for 4 credits in an Indigenous focused course is now a requirement for students to graduate. There may be questions around how to meet this requirement.
- Questions may be asked about if there are differences between the graduation programs for Yukon public and private schools as well as between the school authorities – Yukon Education, CSFY or FNSB. There are no differences.



### Background:

- British Columbia Provincial Exams (BCPEs) and the Language Proficiency Index (LPI) have been phased out and replaced by a numeracy assessment and two literacy assessments: Grade 10 Numeracy (introduced June 2018); Grade 10 Literacy (introduced in 2019-20 school year); and Grade 12 Literacy (first session was November 2021).
- Grade 10-12 classes continue to have ongoing assessments, such as in-class final projects, learning portfolios, and exams. These are determined at the school level.
- The Graduation Program requires 80 credits, with a minimum of 16 at the Grade 12 level, and 28 elective course credits.
- No changes have been made to the requirements for the Adult Dogwood Diploma or Diplôme de fin d'études secondaires en Colombie-Britannique, both of which the Yukon follows.
- Recently, the BC Ministry of Education announced, starting in the 2023-24 school year, they will be implementing a new graduation requirement that requires all secondary students to complete Indigenous-focused coursework before they graduate from the K-12 system.
- The majority of Yukon schools are already meeting the new graduation requirements for Indigenous-focused coursework being introducing in BC for secondary students in the 2023-24 school year, and the department will ensure this is in place for all students for next year.

### Approved by:

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Value:

- Developing and improving literacy skills throughout life is essential to an individual's right to an education and is a top priority for the Department of Education.

### Recommended Response:

- Teaching literacy is complex and there is no single approach that works for all students. Educators need to have a well-developed 'toolbox' of strategies and approaches.
- We listened and heard the concerns about literacy instruction, and as stated last year, launched a Literacy Strategy Working Group.
- This group developed recommendations that informed the Culturally Responsive Literacy Strategy for Yukon Education operated schools.
- This strategy, announced on International Literacy Day - September 8, 2023, recognizes and supports the diversity of students in our classrooms.
- This student-centred approach will ensure that teachers and students have access to the resources and supports needed to meet the unique needs of our students.
- This means the addition of supports and resources for implementing Structured Literacy processes in grades K-3 classrooms.
- Using different approaches in classrooms is not easy and does not happen overnight and the Department is committed to supporting

educators by providing training and resources to increase their instructional toolkit.

### **Additional Responses:**

- Part of this commitment is ensuring that Literacy Support Teachers are fully in place in Yukon Education operated schools by the 2025/26 school year.
- The Literacy Support Teachers will be guided by a Literacy Consultant and evidence-based practices.
- Further collaborative work will begin right away in this school year, as recommended by the working group.
- This collaborative work will strengthen Indigenous and culturally responsive approaches to literacy and examine current interventions and assessment tools.

### **If asked about Recent News article from Dyslexia Canada**

- I would like to reassure the public that the current BC curriculum used in Yukon schools does not limit the integration of evidence-based approaches and strategies.
- Evidence-based ways of teaching children to read, including structured literacy, is currently being practiced in many Yukon schools, and will be a requirement of all Yukon education schools as the Culturally Responsive Literacy strategy is implemented.

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### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- There are still some controversial differences with the FNSB's literacy approach including the use of Reading Recovery as one intervention tool for reading, and the use of Fountas and Pinnell literacy assessments.

- Questions about Yukon's literacy approach have been raised in the Public Accounts hearing, due to a submission from Yukon Speech Language Pathology and Audiology Association, as well as in past budget debates.
  - Yukon data indicates that literacy and numeracy proficiencies need improvement.
- 

### Background:

#### Literacy and Curriculum

- The recently announced Literacy Strategy will have a phased approach, over the next three years that will include, but is not limited to:
  - Increasing learning opportunities for educators and implementing Literacy Support Teachers in schools to provide continued support to educators, guided by a Literacy Consultant.
  - Ensuring culturally inclusive materials and approaches to support Structured Literacy.
  - Using up-to-date evidence-based practices, meaningful consultation with partners, and frequent review and quality assurance processes to measure success and provide iterations of support where necessary.
- The literacy strategy includes a recommendation to continue working on exploration of literacy interventions and Indigenous ways of teaching literacy. This work is likely to have an impact on current assessments and intervention methods in the future.
- Yukon education has data from Reading Recovery that is supportive of student success. It is not, however, an intervention that some teachers and administrators view as the best intervention for reaching the most students. The working group will continue to examine current interventions and assessments.
- Some administrators have asked to utilize the centralized Reading Recovery teacher positions to become literacy intervention specialist.
- Updates to current literacy assessments mandated for Yukon Education schools are in effect in the 2023-24 school year. Fountas and Pinnell assessments are replacing the previously mandated District Assessment of Reading Team (DART).

### Yukon Speech Language Pathology and Audiology Association (YSLPAA)

- YSLPAA sent an email and various letters to different parties in education, including the Deputy Minister outlining concerns with respect to literacy approaches used in Yukon Schools. The email and accompanying letter was sent on March, 2022.
- YSLPAA expressed a desire to build relationships and discuss gaps in the use of evidence-based practices as well as adoption of Right to Read report recommendations.
- The Director, Curriculum and Assessment and Director, Student Support Services met with a representative of YSLPAA on September 8, 2022.
- At this meeting, the representative was invited to join the Culturally Responsive Literacy Strategy working group once the committee was formed. This representative was part of the committee from the beginning and held a voice to the recommendations recently put forward for development into a strategy.

### Tracking literacy progress

- The BOEHM and Early Years Evaluation (EYE) assessments provide data on student's literacy at primary levels.
- Aspen, the Student Information System that the Yukon uses, allows teachers to upload all Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment results for each student.
- Any teacher attached to a student can see the multiple assessments that can be inputted into the system each year.
- The principal and any Learning Assistance Teacher that works with the student can also access these results. They can track the literacy and comprehension progress of a student over time.

### Assessments and data.

- We assess reading and writing at key points during a student's education, including in Grades 4 and 7 through the Yukon Foundation Skills Assessments. In the past, these assessments were written late in the school year. They have now been moved to the fall of each school year so teachers can use the information from these assessments to adjust teaching instruction and provide supports to students who need it.
- At the high school level, students write the Grade 10 and Grade 12 Literacy Assessments.

- Yukon education has indicated interest in participating in the [Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study \(PIRLS\)](#) assessment taking place in 2026. This will give Yukon further data on student reading proficiencies.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-06**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

### Value:

- Developing students' numeracy skills is a high priority for the Department of Education.

### Recommended Response:

- Addressing student numeracy needs is a complex task, and no single approach or resource program is a solution for the many factors that influence student numeracy outcomes.
- As stated last year, the Department of Education launched a working group to develop longer-term strategies for developing culturally responsive numeracy programming in Yukon Education schools. This strategy was announced on September 8, 2023.
- This working group included representatives from Yukon First Nation Education Directorate and Department of Education staff, including educators and administrators.
- The strategy focuses on increasing learning opportunities for educators and implementing numeracy support teachers in K-7 schools by the 2024-25 school year.
- A key action is implementing numeracy camps which are expected to be piloted in the summer of 2024.
- These numeracy camps are an experiential way for holistic numeracy instruction.

### Additional Responses:

- The Department will continue to seek collaborative opportunities with the First Nation School Board, the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, and other interested partners while implementing the numeracy strategy.
  - We continue to assess student learning and are closely monitoring the impacts of the pandemic on learning outcomes.
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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Yukon data indicates that numeracy proficiencies need improvement.
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### Background:

- A culturally responsive numeracy strategy for Yukon Education operated schools was announced on September 8, 2023.
- This strategy aligns well with the First Nation School Board numeracy strategy.
- Training and support for Mathology, a newer mathematics resource, has been ongoing, in collaboration with the First Nation School Board and the Commission Scolaire Francophone de Yukon. The working group supports the continued use of this resource.

### Tracking literacy and numeracy progress

- The BOEHM and Early Years Evaluation (EYE) assessments provide data on student's numeracy at primary levels.
- The new Mathology resource has built in assessments for teachers to use. These assessments include instructional supports to address any identified gaps.

### Assessments and data

- Yukon teachers provide ongoing assessments of students to help students and parents focus on ways to support student growth.
  - We assess numeracy at key points during a student's education, including in Grades 4 and 7 through the Yukon Foundational Skills Assessments. In the past,
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these assessments were written late in the school year. They have now been moved to the fall of each school year so teachers can use the information from these assessments to adjust and provide supports to students who need it.

- At the high school level, students write the Grade 10 Numeracy Assessment.

Approved by:

Cassandra Kelly

2023-09-25

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a/Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Student Data, Reporting and Sharing

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Education

#### Value:

- We believe that collecting and analyzing student data and sharing this data within the organization and with Yukon First Nations and partners will support effective decision making related to student learning.

#### Recommended response:

- How well a student does in school depends on several factors. This includes top-notch teaching, active participation in learning, and the support they get both inside and outside the classroom.
- Student data gives the Department of Education, and our education partners, a better understanding of how our students are doing.
- We use student assessment data to create published reports, including the Yukon Wide and the How Are We Doing student data reports.
- Data is an important tool, and we're always looking for ways to make it more available. Better access to current data helps us all make informed decisions.
- In fact, we've created a special dashboard focused on First Nation student outcomes, and we've shared it with our key stakeholders.

#### Additional response:

- We're actively working with the Data Working Group to navigate through legal hurdles like the Access to Information and Protection of

## Student Data, Reporting and Sharing

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Privacy Act (ATIPP). This is all about making data sharing easier and more transparent.

- While we can share much of the requested data, some pieces are missing or require extra steps to ensure we're following privacy laws.
- Additionally, we are working with individual First Nations to learn about their specific data needs and how we can safely share that information.

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- In the 2019 audit, the Auditor General identified achievement gaps between rural and urban students, as well as Yukon First Nations and non-First Nations students.
- Additionally, the Auditor General found that Education has not done enough to create partnerships with YFNs to develop and deliver educational programs that meet the needs of YFN students.

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### Background

- In response, Education committed to collaborate with YFNs to develop and implement an outcome improvement strategy for the Yukon education system, and this work is underway. Collaborating with YFNs to carry out research and analysis initiatives to improve YFN student outcomes is an important component of this strategy.
- In 2020, the Minister and the CCOE signed a Data Sharing MOU in which they agreed to collaborate on the sharing of YFN student data and on research and analysis initiatives for the purpose of improving outcomes for YFN students.
- Under the Data Sharing MOU, the Data Working Group ('DWG') was established to work collaboratively to administer and achieve the objectives of the MOU. The DWG is comprised of members from Education, YFN governments, and the YFNED.

## Student Data, Reporting and Sharing

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Education

### Yukon-Wide Student Data Report

- The Yukon-Wide Student Data report provides analysis reporting of student assessment and other important student data. It is published each March on Yukon.ca for the previous school year.
- The most recent report, using 2021-2022 data, was published in March 2023.

### Data reporting

- As per the joint MOU between the Chiefs Committee on Education and the Department of Education, we have committed to providing yearly How Are We Doing reports, which focus on YFN student performance data.
- The department has provided YFNs with the 'How Are We Doing' reports for each year dating back to 2017-18. The 'How Are We Doing' draft reports for 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23 were provided to the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate for review and approval.
- In the fall of 2022, schools received their 2021-2022 School Profile reports which provide an overview and analysis of the school's student assessment and enrolment.
- In Fall 2023 we will be providing schools with their 2022-2023 School Profile reports.
- The department gathers and analyzes student assessment data throughout the school year. This information is provided to department staff and partners throughout the school year to support evidence-based decision making. This information is then summarized and collated into a Yukon Wide report and published the following March of the reports school year.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Teacher Professional Learning - PD Funding and Training

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Education

#### Value:

- The Department of Education values and supports ongoing and continuous professional learning opportunities that are available to educators each year.

#### Recommended response:

- Department staff plan and provide professional learning networks that engage educational staff in making informed changes in their practice to better outcomes for students.
- The learning network teams in the 2022-23 school year were honored with the 2023 Premiers Award for their outstanding achievements in improving outcomes for students.
- The Department of Education in collaboration with many partners and stakeholders provides ongoing professional development for educational staff that includes training in Ready to Learn Schools, Safer Schools Action Plan, language teacher training, literacy, and numeracy to name a few.
- The Department provides \$475,000 in annual funding to the Yukon Association of Education Professionals to provide for training and development activities related to professional growth, curriculum implementation, and other priorities.
- This coming school year, the Association is using part of this fund to provide training for volunteer Literacy and Numeracy coaches in schools.

### Teacher Professional Learning - PD Funding and Training

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Education

#### Additional response:

- A Community of Inquiry stemming from the Review of Inclusive and Special Education has examined the approaches and opportunities for professional development to increase inclusive practices in Yukon classrooms and ensure a culturally based lens is applied.
- Recommendations from this Community of Inquiry were put forward and are currently being developed into an implementation plan. Recommendations are based on current research on best practices for effective professional development.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Review of Inclusive and Special Education identified professional development needs to increase inclusive practices within the system.

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#### Background

- All Yukon Education schools that had a Professional Development Day on August 17, 2023, received training in Duty to Report.
  - Duty to Report Training is vital to support educators in reporting allegations of abuse or harm to children and youth.
  - This Duty to Report is an obligation of staff working in school as per the Family and Children Services Act, the Education Act, and is integral to the roles and responsibilities of adults who work in school under the Student Protection Policy.
  - These educators also received professional development in Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Inclusive educational practices to support their roles and responsibilities in the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Policy.
- All schools that are part of the Ready to Learn initiative receive professional development in the neuro-sequential model of education. “Baseline” training is provided to whole schools, and focused reflective groups are provided to pilot teachers.

## Teacher Professional Learning - PD Funding and Training

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- This year, 20 Educators from Ready to Learn schools will also be certified in the Neurosequential Model of Education.
- Supports for language fluency are offered throughout the year, including through courses, resources and site visits offered through Yukon Native Language Centre. In addition, there is an October 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023 workshop offering 3 days of immersive on-the-land language activities and presentations on the deep connections between land and language.
  - Aside from mandatory training on Education Act PD days, a menu of options has been shared with schools to support their non-education act PD days in the 2023-23 school year.
  - Since 2014, professional learning relating to the new curriculum has been provided through in-service training, and professional networking and coaching to support professional learning in foundational literacy and numeracy, assessment, core skills for learning, flexible learning environments and Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being.
- Teachers have requested more flexible professional learning time organized at the school level to better meet their needs.
- In the 2022-23 fiscal year the Department of Education allocated \$1.59 million for Professional Development (included YAEP funding).
- Under Article 12 of the YAEP collective agreement, the department contributes \$475,000 annually to the Professional Development Fund.
- A Joint Trust Fund Management Committee with YAEP and department members (including the Education Director Curriculum & Assessment) sets the parameters for eligible activities for Deputy Minister approval each year, with funding administered by the YAEP's Professional Development Committee.
- Community of Inquiry #3 was tasked to "Explore effective professional collaborative development structures where educators can learn how to structure learning options that will benefit students through more inclusive classroom practice." and to "Explore exemplary practices in Yukon schools or other educational settings to ensure culturally based lens is applied to PD options for EAs and all relevant school staff members". This committee has put forward recommendations that are being reviewed.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#CU07**

**Fall 2023**

## **Teacher Professional Learning - PD Funding and Training**

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Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-07

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]



### Value:

- We provide all Early Kindergarten to Grade 12 students a modern curriculum that follows best practices from across Canada and the world, and incorporates the Yukon's context and Yukon First Nations' ways of knowing, doing and being.

### Recommended response:

- The curriculum is designed to be student-centered with more hands-on and personalized learning opportunities, incorporating career and finance education along with applied skills, design, and technology requirements.
- The concept-based and competency-driven curriculum allows for students to access deeper understanding of concepts and application of processes as opposed to memorization of isolated information.
- Flexible learning environments that include space for incorporating local contexts and place-based learning opportunities are at the forefront of the current curriculum.
- The two-year pandemic recovery plan recognizes that experiential learning and on-the-land learning remain important elements of learning – these are being explored in a community of inquiry in order to determine recommendations going forward.
- Numeracy and literacy development is designed to be integrated across the curriculum, not just in the English Language Arts and Mathematics curriculum.

### Additional response:

- Core competencies, a set of intellectual, personal, and social and emotional proficiencies are embedded within the current curriculum.
- We will continue working collaboratively with Yukon First Nations partners to develop stronger programming for delivering the curriculum to meet the needs of all Yukon students.
- Yukon Education, The First Nation School Board, and the commission scolaire francophone du Yukon all follow the same curriculum.

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The First Nation School Board (FNSB) have developed their own resources and assessments to support literacy development.
- Choosing different resources and assessments could be misunderstood: that the FNSB is not following the same curriculum, even though they are using the same curriculum.

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### Background:

- Yukon schools began using the redesigned curriculum in kindergarten to Grade 9 in 2017– 2018, Grade 10 in 2018 – 2019, and Grades 11 and 12 in 2019-20.
- The redesigned curriculum is based on BC's modernized competency-based curriculum. BC is a leading jurisdiction in Canada and the world in education, and Yukon partners with BC and has used the BC's curriculum for many years, and will continue to do so.
- On October 30, 2023, BC announced they will broaden the scope of the required Grade 10 social studies curriculum to include Holocaust education as mandatory. This change will take effect in the 2025-26 school year, which will

allow consultation and development with partners (including an invitation to Yukon.)

- Many high-performing national and international jurisdictions are teaching skills development (“competencies”).
- The changes to the curriculum are based on international research and extensive consultations with teachers and experts in education; references available on the BC Ministry curriculum website.
- In 2016-17, senior department officials visited all Yukon school communities to present changes to the curriculum through public meetings and meetings for school staff, School Councils, and Yukon First Nations, as requested. We estimate that 10-50 people attended the open houses at each school.
- In 2016, the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education recommended Yukon use BC's curriculum, with Yukon and Yukon First Nations adaptations.
- Teachers and other educational staff continue to engage in inquiry processes through learning networks to improve outcomes for students as an avenue to dig into ways to deliver the curriculum to students.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-01**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Value:

- Our goal is to provide support and interventions for students to better meet their learning needs.

### Recommended response:

- Through the Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education initiative, we are examining how we allocate Education Assistants and other resources for students.
- As part of the allocation review, we will consider not only individual student needs, but also classroom composition, universal design for learning, and other small-group supports.
- Enhanced professional development and learning opportunities for teachers and educational assistants is also tied to this work.
- Under the updated Confidence and Supply Agreement, the Yukon government committed to increasing the number of Educational Assistants and Learning Assistance Teachers, or LATs, in schools in 2023-24 school year. This year, 40 new positions were added. These positions will include Education Assistants, Learning Assistance Teachers and wellness counsellors or similar. Next year, 21 positions will be added, and the following year, 20 positions will be added.
- We have actively recruited and increased Educational Assistants and Learning Assistance Teachers for the 2023-24 school year. We know recruitment has been challenging across Canada, and many provincial and territorial jurisdictions are also experiencing challenges in recruitment.

- As of November 3, 2023 there are a total of 52.86 LATs and 269.08 EAs **hired** across all schools in Yukon.

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### Context:

- The Department has seen a significant increase in EA requests from schools.
- CASA commitment to increase EA and Learning Assistance teachers in school for the 2023-24 school year.

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### Background:

- Educational Assistants are one of several resources that a school has to support students' learning. These resources include:
  - Inclusive classroom practices implemented by classroom teachers to provide learning activities that support students with diverse or exceptional needs;
  - School counsellors and Learning Assistance Teachers (LATs);
  - Supports from the department's Student Support Services branch, the Curriculum and Assessment branch, the First Nations Initiatives branch
  - First Nations' Education Support Workers, and Community Education Liaison Consultants; and
  - Community-based supports, such as those provided by Health and Social Services.
- We currently **allocate** Education Assistants using a needs-based model; however, to be truly needs-based the number of EAs would fluctuate from year to year. Currently we use a needs-based model using a finite number of EA's (265.4 for 2023-24 school year – does include additional EAs as approved under CASA), but does not account for additional growth/needs which are adjusted over the school year.
- Allocation numbers for schools can vary each year as school and students' needs and school enrolments change.
- When appropriate, we support students with developing their independence and self-advocacy skills. When progress is made, the need for EA support may be reduced after evaluating their successful skill development.

- Schools are responsible for determining day-to-day EA schedules to maximize meeting both individual and shared needs of students, when appropriate.
- There is an increase in EA allocation requests from schools. Schools are focused on recovery from the pandemic and working to better understand the needs of students and how best to support their educational programming.
- A community of inquiry examined better ways to align funding models and staffing allocations with student needs. Draft recommendations have been submitted to the department.

### Request increase

- There has been a steady increase in the request for EA support for students entering into Kindergarten who have been followed by the CDC.
- Each year there is also an increase in the requests for support for academics, behaviors and social emotional supports.

### Educational Assistant allocation

- The 2023-24 **budgeted** FTE allocation for EAs is 252.4 (Note; This does not include the 13 CASA positions).
- The 2022-23 budget allocation for EAs was \$16.4 million (236.9 FTEs). This included EAs for schools governed by the First Nation School Board. An additional 14.0 EAs at \$0.9 million was allocated for CSFY, for a total of \$17.3 million and 25.9 FTE.
- The 2021-22 budget allocation for EAs was \$15.413 million (236.40 FTEs), and CSFY had 12 EAs at \$0.79 million for a total of \$16.203 million and 248.40 FTE.
- The 2020-21 budget allocation for EAs was \$15.95 million (245.40 FTEs – includes both Department of Education and CSFY).
- The 2019-20 budget allocation for EAs was \$15.1 million (245.40 FTEs – includes both Department of Education and CSFY).

### Educational assistant allocation process

- In 2015-16, an 'Educational Assistant Allocation Advisory Committee' recommended needs-based allocation process.
  - Each school assesses its needs and submits a request for Educational Assistants to the Schools and Student Services Branch.

- The Student Support Services staff review all of the schools' requests and use a needs-based formula to initially allocate Educational Assistants.
- Educational Assistants are allocated to schools in the spring, and the principal assigns them within the school to best meet student needs.
- At the beginning of the new school year, adjustments are made to the allocations based on actual student enrolment, needs at each school, the amount of applications received and positions filled, allocations may be further adjusted during the school year as needs change.
  - 1) School-Based Allocations:

The base allocation for each school is determined by student enrolment and an index of assessments from Yukon's Student Assessment Matrix.

    - (a) Initial allocation by enrolment:
    - (b) Elementary index allocation is based on Kindergarten assessments, including the Boehm (test of Basic Concepts) and EYE (Early Years Evaluation), as well as the Grade 4 FSAs (Foundational Skills Assessment) and Grade 7 FSAs.
    - (c) Secondary index allocation is based on an average of the elementary index of the feeder schools.
  - 2) Intensive needs allocation:

To provide shared or intensive support for student needs:

    - (a) In addition to the school-based allocations, each school can request EA support to either be shared by groups of students or to be assigned to a specific student based on their intensive support needs (e.g., may require 1-1 support for at least part of the day).
    - (b) The Department of Education assesses each school's requests in this category with consideration of student data and criteria in order to determine the need for student-specific supports.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-06**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

### Housing for Teachers (in Communities)

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Education

#### Value:

- The Government of Yukon recognizes that staff housing has a role in supporting the recruitment and retention of teachers in Yukon communities.

#### Recommended response:

- We are continuing to work, within available resources, to assist staff in rural communities to meet their housing needs.
- This is challenging and complex work as housing supply is limited, especially in rural communities.
- Currently there are 53 Yukon Housing units in the communities leased to teachers.
- An additional three units are leased by the department and sublet to teachers in a rural community.
- As well, three additional units are leased by the department from Yukon Housing Corporation for short-term accommodation needs in Pelly Crossing, Ross River, and Old Crow.
- All other staff have private housing, which they either rent or have purchased themselves.
- Teachers' ability to receive extensions on staff housing gives them security and confidence.
  - The Department of Education, Yukon Housing Corporation, and the Public Service Commission created a solution in alignment with the policy, where the department will recommend



### Housing for Teachers (in Communities)

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extensions annually on behalf of any teachers subject to renewal.

- This solution ensures that teachers will not receive notices of term end, and supports the department's recruitment and retention strategy.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- While all teachers working in rural communities have housing, some remain concerned about the condition of their housing.
- Teachers have expressed concerns around communication from YHC/PSC on the policy and process to request extension.
- Not all communities have housing options through Yukon Housing Corporation and have limited private housing options, such as Carcross. Some teachers have expressed concerns with having to commute long distances to attend work at their expense.
- Yukon Association of Education Professionals has voiced concerns publicly that housing is impacting the department's recruitment potential.

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#### Background:

- The Yukon Housing Corporation (YHC) manages Yukon government staff housing units in accordance with G.A.M. Policy 3.30 Staff Accommodation.
- The policy for staff housing was revised in May 2019 in respect to eligibility, tenancy agreements and duration, rental rates, and assignment.
- In communities outside Whitehorse, there may be staff units provided by YHC. If this is not available, staff are required to find their own private accommodation.
- For communities that do have private market housing, we work with the school principal and contacts in that community to refer staff to available private housing.
- When YHC staff housing is not available in a community the department may provide an employee with improvements on terms and conditions of employment for a specific period (i.e., rent subsidy or additional relocation assistance). The department agrees to consult with the YAEP.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#HR02**

**Fall 2023**

## Housing for Teachers (in Communities)

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Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-07

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### School Staffing Concerns - Recruitment, TOCs, Vacancy

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Education

**New CASA Agreement – Education Commitments: refer to  
HOT11/DPT06**

#### Value:

- Effective teachers are one of the most important factors in a student's success at school and we work to attract and retain the best educators.

#### Recommended response:

- The ongoing national labour shortage, limited housing options and the pandemic have continued to have impacts on our overall recruitment efforts.
- For the 2023-24 school year, we were able to take many strategic recruitment actions:
  - We posted positions earlier to be more competitive with other jurisdictions.
  - We have participated in online career fairs, and the Yukon University fair, and placed advertising on Yuwin, Employment Central, LinkedIn, Facebook, Google, YouTube, and through Canadian universities.
  - To date, teacher recruitment has attended 7 online job fairs and 15 in-person education career fairs in the Yukon, Ontario, Alberta, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, and New Brunswick.
  - These steps have supported our recruitment efforts.
- We continue to work to find staff with the best combination of qualifications, experience and suitability.

### **School Staffing Concerns - Recruitment, TOCs, Vacancy**

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Education

- Although these numbers are changing daily, in terms of recruitment for the 2023-24 school year, postings as of November 19, 2023, include:
  - 17 teacher postings (1 Whitehorse, 16 rural);
  - 2 learning assistance teachers (0 Whitehorse, 2 rural);
  - 5 Yukon First Nations language teacher postings (4 Whitehorse, 1 rural);
  - 0 principal and 1 vice-principal posting (0 Whitehorse, 1 rural); and
  - 8 Educational Assistant postings (4 Whitehorse, 4 rural).
- We began posting for rural schools, French Immersion, and French Schools for the 2023-24 school year in February 2023. External posting began after our internal process in April 2023.
- The new CASA agreement commits the Yukon government to allocate an additional \$1 million in each of the next three budgets to enhance recruitment and retention of new rural education professionals across the Yukon.
- As per the CASA, we will also provide a one-year training plan program for Educational Assistants and Teachers on Call by 2024 in collaboration and consultation with the Yukon Association of Education Professionals, Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon, and Autism Yukon.

#### **Additional response:**

#### **Temporary vacancy management**

- Operational management of schools routinely requires regular adjustment by administrators, and I commend our administration

### **School Staffing Concerns - Recruitment, TOCs, Vacancy**

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Education

teams for their ability to effectively make adjustments where temporary vacancies have put increased demands on staff resources.

- Schools have several options available to help them manage should they have a need. These include, but are not limited to:
  - temporarily adjusting staff teaching assignments;
  - adjustments to student learning groups; and
  - the use of teachers on call.
- If a school indicates it may be unable to operate due to a shortage of staff, temporary redeployment of Superintendents to schools under the authority of Yukon Education, or regrouping students will be considered before a shift to remote learning. School closure is a last resort.
- If the Civil Emergency Measures Act is invoked, employees could be redeployed to other tasks and responsibilities. Classroom operations in the school system do not constitute an emergency under CEMA.
- The Public Service Commission and the Department of Education are working together to identify and implement new initiatives that are intended to address the teacher shortage. This ensures our students will have the necessary in classroom supports that enables Yukon students to succeed in their educational journey.

#### Rural recruitment

- Recruitment for education staff and office administration is often a challenge in rural communities.
- This is especially true when recruiting for less than full-time positions, which is often the case as per the staffing allocation.

### **School Staffing Concerns - Recruitment, TOCs, Vacancy**

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Education

- Staffing allocations are based on number of students, with special provisions made for small rural schools.

#### Psychological wellbeing

- The Government of Yukon offers a variety of supports for staff to address workplace challenges, including:
  - health, safety and wellbeing resources to assess, protect and promote psychological safety in the workplace;
  - our Employee and Family Assistance Program to assist staff on an individual level; and
  - the Respectful Workplace Office, as another avenue for staff who are experiencing conflict in the workplace to receive support and guidance.

#### Teachers on call (TOCs)

- As of November 19, 2023, there were 227 registered teachers on call in the Yukon (179 Whitehorse, 48 Rural), with an additional 41 applications pending (33 Whitehorse, 8 Rural).
- On November 3<sup>rd</sup> last year, there were 198 registered TOCs in Yukon (154 Whitehorse, 44 Rural), with 18 applications pending (15 Whitehorse, 3 Rural).
- 23 total teachers on call (15 Whitehorse, 8 rural) have moved from the teacher on call position into temporary positions supporting schools since the start of the 2023-2024 school year.
- We continue to recruit teachers on call and recognize that demand for coverage continues to be a challenge.

### **School Staffing Concerns - Recruitment, TOCs, Vacancy**

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Education

- We continue to evolve our recruitment efforts to attract candidates for teacher on call roles and to support staff in accepting assignments as they are available.
- An information session was held at Employment Central on October 26<sup>th</sup> from which we are in the process of hiring a TOC and an Assistant Education Outdoor Guide. We intend to hold information sessions on an ongoing basis in Whitehorse as well as in communities in the coming weeks through Employment Central with Dawson City being the first on November 23<sup>rd</sup>
- We are intending to attend the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Career Fair November 30<sup>th</sup>.
- We are planning and will be participating in an open house at Selkirk Elementary School as a pilot to generate interest and provide information to community members on the teacher on call role.
- We have also increased advertising on Facebook, in universities, on Yuwin, Employment Central, and other recruitment sites.
- We sent targeted communications to former TOCs, retirees, candidates from the Apply to Education registry, and applicants from Educational Assistant competitions.
- We recognize the renegotiation of our Collective Agreement at the end of the current term, June 2024, as a joint opportunity to collaborate with YAEP through the negotiation process.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- Teacher and principal vacancies are continued topics of concerns in media with concerns expressed by both opposition and the Yukon Association of Education Professionals.

### School Staffing Concerns - Recruitment, TOCs, Vacancy

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Education

#### Background:

- TOCs fill in as needed when staff are absent from work for short periods of time. TOCs come from a range of educational backgrounds. They became part of the Yukon Teacher's Association in 2018, and their rate of pay is subject to negotiation in collective bargaining.
- Similar to other jurisdictions across Canada, we have challenges in hiring qualified teachers.
- We do not have rules preventing staff with jobs in one school from applying for other vacancies in the summer, which can result in a “domino effect” of postings. This also affects TOC availability, as some TOCs are successful in competing on vacant positions and are subsequently removed from the TOC list.
- Between August and October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022 we had 10 TOCs move into temporary positions (3 Whitehorse, and 7 rural). This number increased to a total of 13 TOCs by December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022 (6 Whitehorse, and 7 Rural).
- TOCs have been sent from Whitehorse to our communities throughout the 2022-23 year to support school needs, and will continue to be sent for the 2023-24 school year.

#### Approved by:

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-20**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]



#### Value:

- Effective teachers are one of the most important factors in a student's success at school. Equitable staffing is a priority to ensure that each school community is staffed appropriately.

#### Recommended response:

- To provide consistent service levels in all schools, maximum class sizes are set out in the Collective Agreement between the Government of Yukon and the Yukon Association of Education Professionals; staffing allocation is primarily based on student enrolment and class sizes.

#### Additional response:

- Student enrolment has increased in recent years, and the department is working to ensure consistent service levels in schools, and that effective targeted support is provided for students with diverse learning needs.
- While overall enrolment is increasing, some individual schools have decreasing enrolment, which may have impacted their school's staffing allocation.
- Some FTEs are held "in contingency" to allow for fluctuations in enrolment that appear in the fall and throughout the school year. This year we have provided contingency to each school authority to support nimble decision making for school needs.
- CASA committed to increasing the number of Educational Assistants and Learning Assistant Teachers and creating new wellness counsellor positions for the 2023-24 school year.

- The department has made a significant investment of 81 new full-time positions over the next three years along with an additional \$1 million in funding for student supports.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- Allocating staff to Yukon schools is an issue of interest for school communities.
- 2023-24 teacher staffing allocations were released to schools at the end of January 2023.
- CASA commitment to increase EA and learning assistance teachers in schools for the 2023-24 school year.

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#### **Background:**

- Yukon school staffing levels are reviewed each fall to align with actual student enrolment and the needs of the students at each school, and any needed adjustments are made.
- An increase in students sometimes requires an increase in staff to maintain consistent service levels across schools. School staffing plans are made after the allocation is received and may result in jobs needing to be posted or for employees to be redeployed.
- The School Staffing Allocation Handbook was developed to allocate teacher and other school staff positions consistently and transparently. Enrolment, school size, grades taught, rural location, and programs of choice (French Immersion) are factors.
  - To ensure equitable and standard service levels in all Yukon schools, each school receives a base number of FTEs through the allocation formula, regardless of how many students are enrolled at the school.
  - Other resources may be allocated to support specific initiatives, such as Aboriginal Language Teachers, Religious Education, French programming (Intensive French) and English Language Learners. These differentiated resource allocations have their own allocation formulas or models.
  - Additional FTEs may be provided to schools to support specific initiatives like Reading Recovery and Early Kindergarten.

- Principals receive a staffing allocation each year, and then they assign the FTEs within their school, with input from their school council.
- From the staffing allocation handbook:
  - For the 2023-24 school year, Reconciliation Staffing has continued as recommended by a Community of Inquiry stemming from the Review of Inclusive and Special Education.
  - Reconciliation Staffing is a small step to recognize the systemic inequities and colonialist practices that have negatively impacted Yukon First Nations and other Indigenous students. It reallocates the 10.0 FTE of Achievement Equity staffing to recognize schools based on two factors:
    - Those that have significantly above average populations of Yukon First Nations or other Indigenous students; and
    - Those schools where multiple Yukon First Nations are represented.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

#### Value:

- Attendance areas support the governance and operation of schools and support the School Council election process.

#### Recommended response:

- When a new school or residential area is approved for construction or expansion, or a school joins a school board, we review attendance areas and consult with any impacted neighbouring schools.
- The new Whistle Bend Elementary School attendance area is based on the city boundaries for the subdivision, plus portions of the previous Takhini Elementary School attendance area.
- This new school attendance area will help address student enrollment growth at north-end elementary schools when the school becomes operational.

#### Additional response:

- Attendance areas were dissolved this year for the communities that voted to join the First Nation School Board: Eliza Van Bibber School, Ghùch Tlâ Community School Council, and Kluane Lake School.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The department has recently made changes to attendance areas in the Yukon.

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#### Background:

- The Education Act requires that every school be assigned to an attendance area (for school councils) or an education area (for school boards). Students may be resident in multiple attendance or education areas since the areas can overlap.

- Any school joining the First Nation School Board (FNSB) requires the dissolution of its attendance area, and in Whitehorse that area needs to be redistributed to the remaining attendance areas.
- Parents registering their children for school can find the attendance areas on Yukon.ca.
- Prior to the current areas being finalized in 2022, Whitehorse school attendance areas were last reviewed and changed for the 2008-09 school year. At that time some residential areas of Whitehorse were not officially included in an attendance area.
- The Whistle Bend Elementary School Council was elected at the same time as the November 2022 School Board Elections were held.
- The adjustments to attendance areas in 2022 included:
  - Responding to the creation of the FNSB and the referendums that were passed in rural Yukon and at Takhini Elementary and Grey Mountain Primary by dissolving the attendance areas of the now FNSB schools.
  - Establishing an attendance area for the new Whistle Bend school, based on the city boundaries for the subdivision, and arranging an election for a School Council. Jack Hulland Elementary school will remain the “in area” school for Whistle Bend elementary age students until the new school is operational.
  - Adding the Mt. Sima subdivision to the Golden Horn Elementary attendance area, which reflects current practice.
  - Adding the Marwell subdivision to the Selkirk Elementary attendance area, which reflects current practice.
  - Reassigning Lobird and Valleyview subdivisions to the Elijah Smith Elementary attendance area. Both subdivisions were previously assigned to Takhini Elementary, which is now governed by the First Nation School Board.
  - Splitting the old Takhini Elementary attendance area between Elijah Smith and Jack Hulland.
  - Cleaning up boundaries between areas to eliminate gaps in coverage.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SP01**

**Fall 2023**

## Attendance Areas

Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-07

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

### Early Kindergarten in Rural Schools

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Education

#### Value:

- Our goal is to ensure rural schools have the resources and training they need to deliver enhanced Early Kindergarten, which supports a child's transition to kindergarten programs through a literacy-rich, play-based early learning environment.

#### Recommended response:

- We continue to work with rural school communities, Yukon First Nations and the First Nation School Board to enhance Early Kindergarten programs in their communities.
- For the 2023-24 school year, all Yukon rural schools except Robert Service School in Dawson offer optional Early Kindergarten programming.
- The Department of Education will continue to work with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Robert Service School with respect to their decision on Early Kindergarten.
- All rural Yukon schools offer full-time optional Kindergarten programs.

#### Additional response:

- Early Kindergarten is intended to provide students with more time engaging in the kindergarten curriculum for critical skill development, supporting a successful transition into the school years.
- Early Kindergarten follows the same class size maximums as Kindergarten, 18 students per 1 teacher, as outlined in the Yukon Association of Educational Professionals collective agreement.

### Early Kindergarten in Rural Schools

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Education

- When more student support is required, Early Kindergarten classrooms also have the support of an Educational Assistant and/or an Early Child Therapy Assistant (ECTA).
- We meet regularly with the Yukon Association of Educational Professionals on the Early Kindergarten Program Policy and implementation of Early Kindergarten.
- The department is currently conducting a review of the Early Kindergarten policy, as required in the policy.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Enhanced early learning and child care programs were key areas identified during the Standing Committee on Public Accounts hearing on the Office of the Auditor General's report on K-12 education in January 2022 as supporting better student outcomes.
- YAEP continues to question whether an Early Childhood Therapy Assistant (ECTA) should be replaced with EAs as ECTAs are not part of the YAEP collective bargaining agreement.

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#### Background:

- The Early Kindergarten policy requires a review of the policy after the first year of implementation.
  - The Department has gathered input from educators, administrators, YAEP, and First Nations Partners on the Early Kindergarten policy.
  - This information is in the process of being reviewed and scheduled to be completed by the end of the 2023-24 school year.
- A working group to provide recommendations for assessment practices for Early Kindergarten was formed in January 2023.
- The group consists of members from Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Early Learning and Child Care, Curriculum and Assessment, rural teachers, Child Development Centre, Carcross/Tagish First Nation, and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.



### Early Kindergarten in Rural Schools

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- The group has provided recommendations for the review of the Early Kindergarten policy and is currently working on measures for assessment of the Early Kindergarten program.
- Following this, the group will develop assessment practices for teachers to use in the Early Kindergarten classroom.
- Kindergarten and Early Kindergarten programs are both optional for parents. Early Kindergarten programs are for children four years of age as of December 31st for that year.
- Full-day or half-day Early Kindergarten programming is now available in all rural schools except Robert Service School in Dawson City. Half-day Early Kindergarten was implemented in Watson Lake in the 2022-23 school year.
- In 2022-23 we allocated 5.5 FTEs, based on community needs, to rural schools to support enhancing and expanding Early Kindergarten programs.
- Depending on enrolment, classes at a school may be Early Kindergarten, Kindergarten, or a split combination.
- We engaged with Yukon First Nations, school councils, YAEP and child care providers to establish the next steps for enhancing all early learning programming in rural communities, including Early Kindergarten programs.
- Engagement covered developing an Early Kindergarten program policy, as well as professional learning opportunities, curriculum, and reporting requirements.
- During engagement, we were advised that a 'one size fits all' approach would not work for all communities, given the differences in available pre-school programming across rural communities and Yukon First Nations.
- An Early Kindergarten program policy was approved in 2021 that:
  - Provides guidelines that support high quality EK programming in all rural schools in Yukon.
  - Establishes parameters for EK programs in order to ensure consistency in programming.
  - Allows for flexibility to accommodate local needs.
  - YAEP has questioned whether an Early Childhood Therapy Assistant (ECTA) should be replaced with EAs as ECTAs are not part of the YAEP collective bargaining agreement.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SP02**

**Fall 2023**

## Early Kindergarten in Rural Schools

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Education

- In the longer term, we will explore the feasibility of offering Early Kindergarten programming at schools in Whitehorse.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

## Emergency Procedures and Public Notices

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Education

**Safer Schools Policies and Procedures: refer to HOT14/DPT10**  
**Department of Education Health and Safety Investigation: Refer to DPT03**

### Value:

- The health, safety, and well-being of students and staff is our first priority.

### Recommended response:

- Each school is required to have its own Emergency Response Plan, with detailed procedures for emergencies and other unforeseen events.
- School staff are professionals who are trained and prepared to care for students in the event of an emergency.
- When safety issues arise, the department works closely with the RCMP and other agencies to ensure the safety of students and staff.
- As a key action in the Safer Schools Action Plan, we have updated communication guidance for when and how schools are to communicate to parents, internal staff and other agencies such as the RCMP about incidents that occur at school.

### Additional response:

- The first priority during an emergency is to secure the safety of students and staff. Once this has been attended to, communicating with parents and guardians becomes a priority.

### Emergency Procedures and Public Notices

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Education

- Schools practice emergency drills on a regular basis. This includes fire drills, earthquake drills, and lockdown procedures, among others.
- The Department of Education has several communication platforms to communicate quickly with families by email, text message, or telephone using the contact information that is on each student's record.
- We also remind parents that they should tune in to the radio rather than try to contact the school should an emergency arise; so phone lines are available for emergency use at the school.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- There is often public and media attention on school safety issues.
- Some school communities have expressed concerns about escalated student behaviour resulting in schools being "locked down" and information not being communicated to parents.

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#### Background:

- Each fall, school principals prepare their School Emergency Response Plans, which include coordination with the RCMP and other agencies, evacuation routes and alternate sites, and security protocols, so that they can quickly respond to unforeseen events and emergencies.
- Schools provide an updated plan to their Superintendent, or School Board Executive Directors by October 15th. A hard copy of each plan is filed with the administrative assistant for the Superintendents and executive directors.
- Examples of drills commonly practiced at schools include fire drills, earthquake drills, lockdown procedures, and other evacuation drills.
- The department offers training for school staff to identify risks, signs of trauma, unhealthy social and bullying behaviours, and how to provide effective supports,

## Emergency Procedures and Public Notices

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Education

and redirect behaviours, including: Nonviolent Crisis Intervention; Positive Behaviour Intervention Supports; and Violence Threat Risk Assessment.

- If an incident does occur, we support school staff through critical incident debriefing; the Family Services Employee Assistance Programs; restorative approaches (with emphasis on addressing harm and building relationships after an incident); and support and collaboration from the RCMP, medical and other government and non-government agencies.
- The department prepares a letter each fall for schools to send to parents about what is involved in school emergency responses and drills.
- The department has licensed a unified communication platform (School Messenger) that automates contact with parents about emergencies via text, voice and email.
- Schools may also use the Aspen student information system to share information to parent/guardian email addresses only.
- In the fall of 2021, guidelines for communications were developed to assist school administrators to respond to minor, concerning, major, and incidents or allegations of assault/abuse/ criminal behaviour.
  - This tool was used to respond to the Faro shooting and the Jack Hulland RCMP investigation.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

### Building Schools – 5-year Capital Plan: refer to TAB HOT01/SO01

#### Value:

- The Department of Education monitors student enrolment to help school administrators and school communities plan for changing trends and meet their short, mid, and long-term needs.

#### Recommended response:

- The Yukon's population is increasing, and we expect it will continue to grow over the years to come.
- We are prioritizing work on long-term capital planning, including the recently announced replacement of Whitehorse Elementary School.
- The new Whistle Bend Elementary School will help address enrolment growth in the north end of Whitehorse, and we have added portables at Hidden Valley Elementary, Selkirk Elementary, and Golden Horn Elementary

#### Additional response:

- If enrolment at a school nears program capacity, we work with the school administration and council to find ways to accommodate all students.
- If needed, we work with families on a case-by-case basis to place students at other schools where space is available.
- The Department of Education works with the two Yukon school boards – the First Nation School Board and the commission scolaire

francophone du Yukon – to assess their enrolment pressures and determine their long-term school capacity needs.

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### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- Concerns have been raised about schools perceived to be overcrowded, portable procurement, and long-term capital planning for schools.
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### **Background:**

- The population growth in Whitehorse and the changing demographics of Whitehorse neighbourhoods affect enrolment in Whitehorse schools.
  - The number of students that can be enrolled in a school is based on the number of classroom spaces and classes at each grade at the school, and the maximum class size allowed for those grades.
  - School administrators manage their school's spaces on an ongoing basis by maximizing the use of classroom-sized spaces as classrooms, reorganizing students into split-grade classrooms, and increasing the class size beyond the maximum classroom size; all in accordance with the requirements of the collective agreement.
  - Education and the First Nation School Board have clarified enrollment processes for students who wish to attend schools under the First Nation School Board or transfer to another school (e.g., in Whitehorse).
  - The department is working with the First Nation School Board and the commission scolaire francophone du Yukon on their vision and requirements for facilities.
  - The department is working to address both short, mid, and long-term student enrolment growth by taking the following actions:
    - **In the Short-term:** By consistent use of our new attendance areas and sending students to other area schools if their grade level is full. In such a case, transportation support is provided with busing, or as a subsidy if busing is not available.
-

- **In the Mid-term:** By adding portables to increase the number of classroom-sized spaces available, and by monitoring attendance areas and the number of students who live in a school's attendance area to align with the school's enrolment capacity.
- **In the Long-term:** By confirming approved projects through the Government of Yukon's 5-year capital plan and continued long-term facilities planning for schools through the capital planning process.

OVERALL ENROLMENT COUNTS IN YUKON SCHOOLS				
	May 2021	May 2022	May 2023	Change (+/-) Since May 2022
All Yukon Schools	5,702	5,799	5,872	73
Communities Schools	1,096	1,110	1,083	-27
Whitehorse Schools	4,606	4,689	4,789	100
Elementary Students	3,592	3,656	3,706	50
Secondary Students	2,110	2,143	2,166	23
First Nation School Board	660	648	668	20
Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon	329	352	345	-7
Minister-Operated Schools	4,713	4,799	4,859	60



# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SP04**

**Fall 2023**

## Enrolment at Yukon Schools

Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-07

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Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

### **French Immersion – Programming, Enrollment and Staffing**

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#### **Value:**

- The Department of Education offers excellent French second language programs to students, and we are working with our partners and school communities to address the long-term needs of these programs.

#### **Recommended response:**

##### Programming

- Currently, the overall student demand for French Immersion programming is being met.
- The Government of Yukon plans to continue École Selkirk Elementary School as a 'dual track' English program/French Immersion school.
- We have committed to long-term planning for French as a second language programs.
- In Spring 2023, I approved a vision statement created in collaboration with the French Second Language Advisory Committee that will enable graduates to be inspired, proud and confident to live, learn and work in French.
- The French Second Language Advisory Committee includes representation from the Department of Education, School Councils, Canadian Parents for French, school administrators and teachers.

## **French Immersion – Programming, Enrollment and Staffing**

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### Early French Immersion (Kindergarten):

- Early French Immersion is a popular program in Whitehorse, offered at Whitehorse Elementary school and Selkirk Elementary school.
- In the 2023-24 school year we committed to offer 18 Kindergarten seats at Selkirk Elementary school and 54 seats at Whitehorse Elementary school, for a total of 72 seats.
- We also have capacity to accept additional applications if needed.

### French Immersion teacher recruitment:

- We continue to monitor and plan for enrolment in French Immersion including the recruitment of qualified French language teachers. French language teachers are in high demand across Canada. Recruiting for these positions remains a challenge.
- We continue to attend job fairs both in person and virtually at post-secondary institutes where we know there are qualified French language teachers, to help with targeting our recruitment efforts.
- We have also increased advertising on job boards in post-secondary institutions that offer French language education programming.
- We have continued with pooled competitions and early posting for teaching positions in French Immersion Elementary schools for the 2023-24 school year, thanks to the dedication of our school administrators and superintendents.

## French Immersion – Programming, Enrollment and Staffing

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- There is considerable interest in French second language programming.
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### Background:

#### Programming

- The additional funding for French as a Second Language recently reflected in the Legislative Assembly was provided by the Government of Canada through the Canada-Yukon Agreement on Minority Language Education and Second Official Language Instruction for the 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years. This \$899 000 funding is 100% recoverable.
- The Explore program is an intensive, immersion program for 13-18 year olds, offered during the spring and summer in locations across Canada. The sessions are taught at Universities/Colleges, and students live on campus or with local host families. This \$28 000 funding is 100% recoverable.
- The total \$927,000 debated in the Legislative Assembly is for French Language Programs, including the French Immersion program and the increase in the Explore program.
- French Immersion is a popular program in Whitehorse, and is offered at Whitehorse Elementary School, Selkirk Elementary School and F. H. Collins Secondary School.
- Whitehorse Elementary School is a 'single track' school offering only French Immersion programs. Selkirk Elementary School and F. H. Collins Secondary School are 'dual track' schools meaning that both French Immersion and English language programs are available.
- The balance of instructional time between the two languages may differ at Selkirk versus Whitehorse Elementary, but the long-term outcomes are the same.

#### Early French Immersion (Kindergarten)

- The Kindergarten registration information night was held virtually on January 25, 2023.

### **French Immersion – Programming, Enrollment and Staffing**

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- Kindergarten French Immersion Pre-registration was open from February 1st to February 22nd, 2023.
  - A lottery system was not necessary this year because the demand for Early French Immersion registration did not exceed capacity.
- French Immersion seats are available to families wishing to enroll their child at the Grade 1 level.
- Since 2015-16, when the demand for Early French Immersion registration exceeded capacity, the department has used a lottery system for admission to these programs, run with Canadian Parents for French, a national network of parents, volunteers, and advocates dedicated to the promotion and creation of French-second-language learning opportunities for young Canadians.
- Every year since the lottery process has been in place, all students have been able to enroll in French Immersion in Kindergarten or Grade 1.

#### French Immersion teacher recruitment

- Part of the hiring process includes language testing by the French Language Services Directorate. They work closely with the Department of Education to ensure this testing is prioritized.
- As of October 17, 2023, we have 1 French Immersion teacher vacancy at Whitehorse Elementary School and 0.75 teacher vacancy at Selkirk Elementary School. These teaching assignments are being covered by other staff on a temporary basis.
- Retention in French Immersion drops in high school, so the demand for French Immersion is currently forecasted to be met by the program at F.H. Collins Secondary.

#### French Second Language Advisory Committee:

- The French Second Language Advisory Committee was formed in 2010 to strengthen French as a Second Language education in Yukon.
- This advisory body includes representation from the Department of Education, School Councils, Canadian Parents for French, school administrators and teachers.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SP05**

**Fall 2023**

Education

## **French Immersion – Programming, Enrollment and Staffing**

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- Education has committed to long-term planning for French as a second language programs and a vision statement has been created in Spring 2023 in collaboration with the French Second Language Advisory Committee.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-10-18**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

#### Value:

- The Department of Education offers various supports to families when students leave their communities to attend school.

#### Recommended response:

- The Department of Education works with staff and the Gadzoosdaa Advisory Committee to provide a safe, caring and enriching living environment for rural students pursuing learning opportunities in Whitehorse.
- We are committed to ensuring the program is effectively resourced and meeting today's needs and values – with a student-centred focus.
- In July 2023, the *Renewal Results and Recommendations* final report was presented to the Gadzoosdaa Advisory Committee and the Department of Education staff. A working group is being established to action the presented items.

#### Additional response:

- To support relationships and stability for students and staff, staffing and recruitment is a key pillar of the program renewal.
- Staffing positions have recently been posted as one-year term positions for the 2023-24 school year, to support stable positions for eligible candidates while having flexibility to address recommendations from the renewal. Other positions will be considered as part of the Renewal working group.

#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Concerns have been raised about staffing levels and student safety at the residence.
- 

#### Background:

##### Staffing concerns

- Some staff at Gadzoosdaa have stated they believe there is not an adequate staffing allotment to support programming for students in residence. Concerns are related to permanent staff being covered with casual staff in the short term.
- Several emails with regards to staffing and programming, and potentially the closure of the facility, have been received by the department.
- Departmental staff met with Gadzoosdaa Residence staff and the Advisory Committee to better understand their challenges with service delivery and resourcing.
- Additional staff supports were immediately put in place to ensure effective program delivery. These will remain in place until the program renewal is completed.
- A program renewal, led by IRP Consulting with input from the Advisory Committee, First Nations, and the Department of Education was completed July 2023. It looked at areas such as the mandate of the residence, staffing, culturally relevant programming and student transportation.
- The annual operating budget of \$1.39 million has not been reduced and there is no intent to close the residence.
- Financial and human resource allocations at Gadzoosdaa have been and continue to remain stable.
- Staffing levels have been as follows:
  - 11.8 FTEs – 2023-24
  - 11.8 FTEs – 2022-23
  - 11.8 FTEs – 2021-22
  - 11.8 FTEs – 2020-21
  - 11.8 FTEs – 2019-20
  - 10.8 FTEs – 2012 to 2018



### Gadzoosdaa Student Residence

- Students who are required to live outside their home community to attend school in Whitehorse may be provided with:
  - accommodation at the Gadzoosdaa Student Residence in Whitehorse, which includes a travel subsidy; or
  - certain travel subsidies to help offset travel costs to and from home communities during the school year.
- We are guided by the requirements of the *Education Act* and regulations, and we ensure that students receive the support they need in a fiscally responsible and equitable way.
- In September, 2023, 26 students were registered for 23-24 school year:
  - Atlin - 4
  - Beaver Creek – 1
  - Carcross/Tagish – 6
  - Carmacks – 3
  - Dawson – 4
  - Faro – 1
  - Old Crow – 1
  - Ross River - 1
  - Teslin – 5

### Transportation allowances for rural students attending high school in Whitehorse

- Over the years, certain practices developed similar to 'transportation allowances', where rural students coming to Whitehorse to attend high school are reimbursed for the cost of travel to and from their home communities during the school year.
- The department clarified its legislated responsibilities in order to ensure consistent application of the requirements of the Student Transportation Regulations. The maximum amount payable prescribed in M.O. 2004/10 must be adhered to in all circumstances.
- The following principles are now being applied to travel subsidy requests:
  - Students staying at Gadzoosdaa Student Residence because a specific secondary school program is not available in their community will be

entitled to a travel subsidy for expenses they incur for travelling to and from their home community during the school year, up to the maximum amount payable under M.O. 2004/10, or \$13.00 per day.

- Students moving to Whitehorse and staying in a private residence because a specific secondary high school program is not available in their community, and they were not able to stay in the Gadzoosdaa Student Residence are entitled to a travel subsidy. This does not apply if students are living with one or both parents in Whitehorse.
- Students who choose to come to Whitehorse to attend high school when a high school program that is appropriate to their needs is available in their community will not be entitled to a travel subsidy.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-29**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

#### Value:

- The Department of Education is continually working to integrate educational technology into school programming and ensure that it is secure, reliable and equitably accessible.

#### Recommended response:

- Online and digital learning technologies and resources are a key part of modern, blended, and flexible learning.
- The Government of Yukon has budgeted \$2.524 million for education technology for Yukon students in 2023-24.
- The school IT budget is a 5-year plan that fluctuates annually, based on the planned projects in that fiscal year.
- The Department of Education continues to invest in modernizing school cybersecurity, access to computing devices, IT infrastructure and bandwidth access to meet modern learning requirements.

#### Additional response:

- Students who do not have access to a personal device can access a school device as needed for their learning.
- We continue to donate some retired computing devices to the Computers for Schools Yukon recycling program for K-12 students.
- The growing availability, popularity and utility of AI is a learning opportunity for us. We can embrace the benefits and stress a focus on transparency and academic integrity.

### Context—this may be an issue because:

- There has been a significant increase in student's use of technology and devices as a result of the pandemic.
- 

### Background:

- The department budgeted \$2.524 million in education technology to modernize learning in Yukon schools for 2023-24, including investing in upgrading school computing devices, infrastructure, and bandwidth access.
- There was an increase in the IT capital budget by \$350 thousand from 2022-23 to 2023-24.
- Online and digital learning technologies and resources are part of the blended learning approach for students and teachers.
- With increased enrollment, new schools being built and an increase in the overall demand for technology, the department continually assesses technological needs, including the provision of computing devices.
- During the summer of 2023, department IT staff visited 31 locations across the territory to perform technical maintenance and IT support. This annual maintenance prepares the hardware, infrastructure and systems that support over 7100 students and staff.

### Mobile devices for students

- The department is using a phased approach to implement network improvements that will advance the connectivity of education-owned and personal computing devices in order to enhance learning.
- In 2020-21, the department partnered with Yukon First Nation governments for the purchase of 712 laptops to support First Nations students. These devices were delivered to participating First Nation governments and to student citizens.

### Connectivity, wireless and bandwidth

- Students have internet access when at school through school wireless networks. For those students who do not have internet access at home, school administrators can consider arranging other options, either within the school or elsewhere in their community when face-to-face learning is interrupted.
  - The department continues to work to improve bandwidth via network upgrades. Education's service standard is one megabit per second (Mbps), per student.
-

- The department continues to enhance and modernize school networks and wireless capacity each year to ensure they have the capability to meet demands.

#### Learning technology

- The Information Technology and Support Services branch continues to develop and enhance a robust suite of web-based learning tools to support blended learning.
- The Department of Education continues to develop and enhance K-12 cybersecurity for students and their personal information.
- Classrooms are embracing new and robust modern learning tools. However, the K-12 cybersecurity technology may block untested technology and devices when at the school.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-29**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

### **French Immersion Programming, Enrollment and Staffing: refer to SP05**

#### **Value:**

- We work with families and school communities to ensure we are effectively managing student enrolment, teacher allocations, and learning spaces, starting with the kindergarten registration process.

#### **Recommended response:**

- Families begin to register for kindergarten each year in February, and registration is finalized in September.
- Families can register for kindergarten in schools operated by Yukon Education, the First Nation School Board, or the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon.
- Each year, we allocate spaces for kindergarten students based on student enrolment forecasts, staffing allocations, and enrolment trends.
- If the number of students exceeds the number of spaces available at a school, we work with the school authority to determine next steps and contact families to discuss options to meet their needs.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- French Immersion (FI) programming continues to be in high demand in particular for FI kindergarten.
- Questions may arise about enrolment in First Nation School Board (FNSB) schools across the Yukon.

### Background:

- Children are expected to attend their attendance area schools.
- In recent years there has been growing enrolment in kindergarten in north end Whitehorse schools. We work with the school administration to determine steps to address increases.
- After processing student enrolment forms, the department contacts parents in March to confirm school assignments for their children. Parents then fill out additional forms at that school to finalize registration, including showing proof of their child's age.
- Registration is first-come, first-serve for schools with fewer available spaces than students enrolling.
- If we cannot accommodate all in-area students at an attendance area school, we work with the school authority to determine next steps and contact families to discuss options to meet their needs.
- We may adjust classes to accommodate more students at the school (for example, adding an additional student to a class or making a Kindergarten/Grade 1 combined class), or work with the family to assign their child to another school with space.
- Parents in Whitehorse register online or by contacting the Department of Education. We continue to work with the FNSB to ensure processes are clear for kindergarten registration.

### Out-of-attendance area requests:

- Parents are asked to register their child in their attendance area school before making a request to have their child enrolled in a different school.
- To attend a school outside their attendance area, students must receive written permission from the Superintendent or Executive Director.

### Catholic school programs

- Catholic students are prioritized for registration in the three Catholic schools.
- Both Catholic elementary schools have a separate attendance area to determine which school students should register for based on their residence.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SP08**

**Fall 2023**

## Kindergarten Registration

Education

### French Immersion programs:

- For the Early French Immersion programs at Selkirk Elementary and Whitehorse Elementary, registration is open for one week, and when demand is high for these programs, the department may run a lottery to fill the programs.
- If neither school fills up, we continue to take registrations after the opening week on a first-come, first-serve basis until space is filled.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]



#### Value:

- A great deal of planning and discussion goes into establishing school calendars, and we try to set a multi-year school calendar outlook to help school communities and families plan around key dates of the school year.

#### Recommended response:

- We collaborate with school councils, school boards, and school administrators to create a multi-year calendar of important school dates that we share with school communities.
- We publish school calendar key dates and a summary of individual school calendars on Yukon.ca when we finalize or modify them. As per the *Education Act*, school boards must also set their school calendars on or before March 31<sup>st</sup>.
- We adjust school calendars when needed. It is common for calendars to change after the school year has started, to accommodate various unexpected events, such as the Queen's Day of Mourning in 2022.

#### Additional response:

- We continue to work with our partners on the 2024-25 preliminary school calendars to confirm key start, end, and holiday dates.
- 2023–24 key dates for all Yukon schools are available on Yukon.ca.

#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Queen's Day of Mourning on September 19, 2022 resulted in Yukon schools needing to make up a full day of instructional time.
  - Not all key dates have been set for years after 2023-24.
- 

#### Background:

- All schools, including those operated by the two school boards, have resolved their 2023-24 calendars, and this information has been posted to Yukon.ca.
- Under the *Education Act*, the Minister, or the school board, sets the school calendar dates on or before March 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. For Yukon Education-operated schools, the Minister will consider advice from School Councils.
- The school calendar dates include the school opening date, number of days of school operation, length of the school day, and number of minutes of instruction in a school day.
- Each school year includes: 950 instructional hours for students; 15 hours for non-instructional purposes determined by individual schools, school councils and school boards; 15 hours for professional development for school staff who are *Education Labour Relations Act* employees.
- School boards may offer additional hours of professional development at their own discretion.
- Different schools prefer different school calendar options. Therefore, the department generally offers a choice of three options (early, middle, and late start date).
- In communities where there is more than one school (Whitehorse and Watson Lake), school calendars must be the same. This helps manage busing costs and assists families with children attending more than one school.
- The 2023-24 key dates for Whitehorse schools are:
  - August 22, 2023: First day of school for students
  - December 21, 2023, to January 5, 2024: Winter break
  - March 11 to March 22, 2024: March break
  - June 15, 2024: Last day of school for students

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SP09**

**Fall 2023**

## School Calendars

Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-07

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

### Value:

- School Growth Plans are an important way to focus on student success and the impacts of school-level strategies to improve student learning outcomes and engagement.

### Recommended response:

- Each school is responsible for developing and implementing a School Growth Plan that is reflective of the needs of their community and students.
- School Growth Plans are collaboratively developed with Yukon First Nations, School Councils, School Boards, school staff and students.
- All schools include Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being in their School Growth Plans, aligning cultural, language, tradition and perspectives with the curriculum and local priorities.
- In response to the 2019 Audit, the Department of Education is currently updating and improving its School Growth Planning process and policy.
- Updating the School Growth Planning Process is one way the Department seeks to further identify and address root causes of achievement gaps with an evidence-based approach.

### Additional response:

- Schools are using their School Growth Plans to focus on the Yukon Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Pandemic Recovery Plan in response to the interruption to learning during the pandemic.

- A draft update of the School Growth Planning Policy has been developed.
- There have been delays on this work due to the pandemic, but this work is progressing and remains a priority.
- Additional updates to this policy will include the Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners that is currently being developed collaboratively with Yukon First Nations and partners in education.

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### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The 2019 Auditor General report highlighted that the department needs to implement its required oversight mechanisms, including providing summary reports of School Growth Plans to the Minister (Recommendation #47). School Growth Planning was also part of the Auditor General of Canada's recommendations in Audit 2009.

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### **Background:**

- The Education Act provides that a school plan must be prepared for each school (by the school administration) that contains the school objectives, educational priorities, courses of study by grade, evaluation procedures, recommended budget and staffing requirements, and other information that is required for the effective functioning of the school.
- School Growth Plans identify the school's educational goals and priorities for the school year and are designed to be the road maps to improvement for each Yukon school.
- School Growth Plans are public documents and are shared with the Superintendents, Executive Directors, School Councils, School Boards and other local community partners as appropriate. Depending on their scope, plans identify one to three years of educational priorities.
- The Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners, developed in collaboration with Yukon First Nations and other educational partners will help define areas of focus that every school will use in their School Growth Plans. The First Nation

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SP10**

**Fall 2023**

## School Growth Planning

Education

Education Commission has asked us to engage with First Nations on a government-to-government basis.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-09**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

### Value:

- The health, safety and well-being of students and staff is our first priority.

### Recommended response:

- Students learn age-appropriate information and decision-making skills about drugs, including cannabis, alcohol, and risky behaviours, as part of the Yukon's school curriculum.
- Yukon educators are provided with lesson plans, activities and handouts for students on the legalization and health effects of cannabis, and harm reduction strategies.
- We encourage everyone to talk to the young people in their lives to help them make healthy choices and stay safe.
- These conversations need to happen inside and outside of school. Parents can find information and resources online through the Department of Health and Social Services or from their school.
- We provide the most current information and resources available to school staff, students and parents about the legalization of cannabis and its health effects.

### Additional response:

- The Yukon government's regulatory approval process to license a retail cannabis store takes the safety of youth into consideration.

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- At times concerns arise about young people using cannabis now that it is legalized, sometimes prompted by specific school incidents.

- In recent years, the media has covered cannabis stores being denied applications for licences because of how close they are to schools.

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### Background:

- On October 10, 2023, the Yukon Supreme Court dismissed a cannabis license applicant's request for judicial review of a decision by the Yukon Cannabis Licensing Board to deny the applicant a retail licence because the proposed store was within 150 metres of a school.
  - The applicant sought the judicial review in March 2023.
  - The applicant had argued that the Montessori school is a daycare and is not registered as a school.
  - The department is following up with the Montessori school to ensure its registration is up to date.
- In October 2022, Whitehorse City Council voted to reject a zoning amendment request from a proposed cannabis store that would have been located within 150 metres of the Individual Learning Centre.
- The Yukon's curriculum has learning outcomes from Kindergarten to Grade 12 related to substances such as poisons, prescription medications and drugs. Teachers focus lessons in physical and health education, and in other subjects, on locally relevant issues and topics like cannabis.
- The Department of Education has focused on:
  - completing a substance unit resource for grades 8-12 teachers and providing professional development to teachers around this resource;
  - supporting teachers with the Let's Talk Pot presentation available online; and
  - working with the Health Promotion unit to support principals on vaping policies.
- Health Promotion continues to support Yukon educators and students with classroom presentations and resources on tobacco use, vaping and cannabis use. Through 2022-2023 over 1000 students from Grades 4-12 received classroom presentations.
- Additional resources for students include:
  - school counsellors, who can provide students with guidance and advice, including on healthy decisions.



# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SI01**

**Fall 2023**

## **Cannabis and Yukon Schools**

Education

- o Mental Wellness and Substance Use counsellors from Health and Social Services.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-10-17**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

**CYAO referenced in the Jack Hulland note – refer to HOT08/SI09**

### Value:

- The Department of Education recognizes the Child and Youth Advocate's valuable role of advocacy and support on behalf of Yukon children and youth.

### Recommended response:

- We appreciate the 2022-23 Annual Report of the Child and Youth Advocate Office, which outlines work undertaken by the Child and Youth Advocate in the areas of access to mental health supports, student attendance, safety in schools (including responding to sexualized abuse in Yukon schools), and education and behavioural supports for students with special needs.
- We are pleased to be working with the Child and Youth Advocate and taking action on many fronts to address all of these important issues.
- As outlined in the Advocacy Protocol Agreement between our two organizations, building and maintaining relationships through cooperative information sharing is a priority.
- We continue to have regular meetings with the Child and Youth Advocate to discuss matters of shared interest and to find solutions to individual and systemic advocacy matters.
- These meetings offer an opportunity to collaborate with the Child and Youth Advocate on individual advocacy matters along with broader initiatives, including student safety and attendance.

### Hidden Valley Report:

- We value the work of the Child and Youth Advocate to review and report on sexualized abuse in Yukon schools.
- We accepted the report recommendations in principle, and a detailed formal response from the Department was provided directly to the Child and Youth Advocate in 2022.
- Many of the recommendations in the report closely align with the work currently underway as a part of Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education (RISE) and the Safer Schools Action Plan. We committed to providing a progress report within one year on the government's actions to date.
- We provided a report on October 12, 2023 detailing the progress that the Government of Yukon has made in implementing the recommendations put forth by the Child and Youth Advocate's Office.
- Our progress reflects that the work of the Safer Schools Action Plan has been fully implemented and integrated into the department and across the Yukon government. We will continue our efforts to make schools safer and more inclusive environments for all students.
- We have taken significant action and will continue to address the issues that have been identified in the reports we have received.

### Student Attendance Report:

- We received the report on student attendance from the Child and Youth Advocate in May 2021, and acknowledged it in ceremony

alongside the Review of Inclusive and Special Education report in June 2021.

- We accepted the report recommendations in principle, and a detailed formal response from the Department has been provided directly to the Child and Youth Advocate.
- Many recommendations in the attendance report overlap with those from the Review of Inclusive and Special Education. We worked in partnership with the First Nation Education Commission and the Advisory Committee on Yukon Education to develop and finalize a work plan to guide our joint response to the Review of School Attendance and the Review of Inclusive and Special Education.
- Through regular online reports to partners and the public, we will share progress on this work.

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Child and Youth Advocate has undertaken two Education-related, systemic reviews (Attendance and Hidden Valley Elementary School) and has advised the department that she is undertaking a systemic review of the use of holds and confinement at Jack Hulland Elementary School.

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### Background:

#### 2022-23 Annual Report of the Child and Youth Advocate Office

- The annual report of the CYAO includes activities of its office for the 12 months ending March 31, 2023. The report is provided to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

### Child and Youth Advocate Office (CYAO)

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Education

- The report references Education numerous times, and cites Education as highest for advocacy issues (103 new issues, compared to 83 for HSS Family and Children Services).
- It also references that the Child and Youth Advocate has dealt with the following number of Access to Education issues: Attendance (39), Safety in School (29), Educational Supports (21), and Behavioural Supports (11).

#### The CYAO

- The Child and Youth Advocate operates under the authority of the Child and Youth Advocate Act (2009).
- As an independent office of the Legislative Assembly, the Advocate is accountable to children and youth in Yukon. Their role is to ensure children and youth's views, rights and interests are upheld. The Advocate serves children and youth who are eligible, or currently receiving government services and programs.
- Work of the CYAO is guided by: the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Act, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2S+ Calls to Justice.

#### Hidden Valley Elementary School Systemic Review

- The CYAO has completed its review of policies, protocols, and actions to ensure student safety and supports. The final report was released in October 2022. Education provided a formal response on November 23, 2022.
- The CYAO made 8 recommendations to the Department of Education, which were all accepted in principle.

### Jack Hulland Elementary School Systemic Review

- On November 21, 2021, the CYAO notified the department of a systemic review regarding the Yukon government's response to reports of restraints and seclusion at Jack Hulland Elementary School.
- It was clarified between CYAO and ADM of Schools and Student Services at the time that ongoing updates and meetings were satisfactory and a review of services and supports to families may come after the RCMP completes their investigation.
- On July 14, 2022, the CYAO requested disclosure of a summary and select records provided to the RCMP as per their criminal investigation. The RCMP confirmed that the information requested is evidence in a law enforcement matter and/or criminal proceeding and release will obstruct the matter proceeding. The request may be reviewed at a future date.
- In December 2022, the CYAO met with deputy ministers from Education, Health and Social Services, Justice and the Executive Council Office to provide a one-year update.
  - In July 2023, the CYAO met again with deputy ministers from Education, Health and Social Services, Justice and the Executive Council Office to discuss updates
- The Advocate reported promising practices such as interdepartmental meetings with CYAO, RCMP interview process and a parent therapeutic support group, as well as areas for further improvement such as communication with students and families at other Yukon schools, those no longer in school and also between the CYAO.

### Meetings

- The ADM of Schools and Student Services meets with the CYAO and her team regularly to address student and systemic advocacy issues.
- These meetings take place regularly (scheduled monthly).

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SI02**

**Fall 2023**

## **Child and Youth Advocate Office (CYAO)**

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Education

- Members of the CYAO staff meet frequently (sometimes weekly) with branch staff and, in particular, the Director of Student Support Services to work on individual advocacy issues.

### Child and Youth Advocate Attendance Review

- The Government of Yukon requested the Advocate's independent review be conducted under Section 15 of the *Child and Youth Advocate Act* to ensure the Child and Youth Advocate can work with partner groups that have perspectives as well as roles and responsibilities to support student attendance, including Yukon First Nations.
- Terms of Reference for the review were established. They incorporated the department's requests that the review have broad engagement, examine root causes, and provide a report tabled by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. The review focused on children 16 years and under; and included discussions with a number of partners. The CYAO made 14 recommendations to the Department of Education.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-06**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

### COVID-19 Two-Year Recovery Strategy: refer to SI04

#### Value:

- We are committed to providing safe and healthy learning environments that foster student success.

#### Recommended response:

- We have all learned how important being at school is to the mental health and wellbeing of children and families, and we have returned to a much more normal school year.
- We are committed to keeping schools open and safe for children – especially for those who depend on a school as a reliable safe space.
- The Department of Education follows the advice and guidance given by the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and we will continue to work closely with their office.

#### CMOH guidance:

- It remains a recommendation that children who are ill – regardless of symptoms – stay home to rest, recover, and avoid infecting others.
- For the 2022-23 school year the Chief Medical Officer of Health no longer required that students and staff wear masks or practice physical distancing. This is the case for the 2023-24 school year.
- The decision to wear a mask or face covering is a personal choice for everyone. We support and respect these choices and we expect others to do the same.



- We will continue to use the well-established process for school-based surveillance and reporting communicable diseases. This process requires principals to notify the Yukon Centre for Disease Control when there are high numbers of absences due to reported illness.

### Two-year recovery phase

- We are in our 2<sup>nd</sup> year of a two-year recovery phase, from 2022-24, to address the impacts of the pandemic on learners.
- The Yukon Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Pandemic Recovery Plan supports learning, mental health and wellness for all, and focuses on key priorities including inclusive and special education, mental health and wellness, numeracy, literacy, and core competencies.
- We are committed to providing supports for recovery, and meeting students where they are at.
  - In the 2023-24 budget we provided \$500k towards Mental Wellness supports: \$400k under RISE plus \$100k through a CASA commitment.
- We have allocated additional funding of \$150k to outsource additional assessments. We have contracts in place to do this work.

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- This is the second year of our recovery phase from the pandemic, and there are concerns about lost learning from the past three years.
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#### Background:

- The Chief Medical Officer of Health updated COVID-19 guidance for the 2022-23 school year to help parents and caregivers use their best judgment in determining whether their child is well enough to attend school or other activities.
- The return to school for 2023-24 is guided by the [Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Pandemic Recovery Plan](#). This plan helps schools plan and provide appropriate resources for an optimal learning environment that can also accommodate contingencies if the COVID-19 virus requires individuals, groups or entire schools to self-isolate.
- Schools have developed Operational Plans for the Reduction of Communicable Disease to integrate the essential, school-specific portions of those two documents and communicate them to families.

#### School Ventilation

- Prior to the start of the school year, all school ventilation systems are inspected, and preventative maintenance work is completed, which includes replacing filters. Filters are then changed every three months, or more often if required.
- All Yukon schools started the 2023-24 school year with HEPA air purifiers for each classroom-sized space. By the start of the school year, 559 HEPA air purifiers had been deployed to schools across the Yukon.
- Replacement filters for all the HEPA air purifiers have been distributed to schools.

#### Joint Use Agreement

- The after-hours use of Whitehorse school facilities is managed by the City of Whitehorse and CSFY, through a Joint Use Agreement (JUA) with the government.  
The facility booking documents were updated to meet the necessary health and safety guidelines.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SI03**

**Fall 2023**

## COVID-19 School Operations

Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-07

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

### COVID-19 Two-Year Recovery Strategy

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Education

#### COVID-19 School Operations: refer to SI03

##### Value:

- We are committed to providing all students with the supports they need to address learning gaps and mental health and wellness challenges due to the pandemic.

##### Recommended response:

- We recognize that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have not been the same for all students. For some, learning has been lost, for others, mental health and wellbeing has been negatively impacted.
- Educators are in the second year of a two-year pandemic recovery plan to support learners. The plan continues to focus on key priorities, including inclusive and special education, mental health and wellness, numeracy, literacy, and core competencies.
- It is important for educators to continue to meet learners where they are at, and to provide students with tailored supports to ensure success for all students.
- To understand a student's overall needs, we need a holistic approach that includes an understanding of where each student is at academically, culturally, emotionally, and physically.

##### Additional response:

- The recovery plan continues work on Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education, implementing recommendations from the 2019 audit, decolonizing the Department of Education, and implementing the Safer Schools Action Plan.

## COVID-19 Two-Year Recovery Strategy

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- As noted last year, the Department of Education launched a Culturally Responsive Literacy Strategy Working group and a Culturally Responsive Numeracy Strategy Working group to develop a longer-term strategy for programming in schools.
- These working groups have provided recommendations that are currently being developed into strategies.
- Five hundred thousand dollars was put in place beginning April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 to support mental health and wellness for Yukon students and schools.
- All this important work will continue to support recovery for Yukon students.

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Similar to the rest of Canada, learning has been lost during the pandemic due to decreased face-to-face instruction.
- Mental health and wellness of students and staff may be at varying levels due to the pandemic.
- Data on numeracy and literacy shows a decrease in overall performance during the pandemic.

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### Background:

- The Curriculum and Assessment program budget ensures alignment of resources purchased with the Yukon Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Recovery Plan including updated resources to support literacy and numeracy.
- The Mental Health and Wellness budget provides support and resources to students which is a priority identified in the Yukon Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Recovery Plan.

### COVID-19 Two-Year Recovery Strategy

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- The Yukon Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Recovery Plan – Guidelines for Schools provides direction to Yukon public schools to deliver K-12 educational programs and supports in line with territorial pandemic recovery efforts in the 2022-24 school years by:
  - acknowledging where we have been;
  - clarifying key priorities;
  - identifying supports for key priorities including working with First Nations to address the unique educational learning needs of their communities; and
  - including links to additional information and resources that can support decision-making and communication.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Dispute Resolution Process for Yukon schools

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Education

#### Education Appeal Tribunal: refer to SI06

##### Value:

- The health, safety, and well-being of students and staff is our first priority.

##### Recommended response:

- The Safe and Caring Schools Policy applies to all staff of Yukon Education, school councils and school boards, and all other members of the school community.
- The purpose of this policy is to promote the safety of people in the schools, and to ensure that all members of the school community are treated with respect and dignity.
- Our dispute resolution process encourages collaborative and restorative dispute resolution. Most disagreements or issues that arise in school communities can be resolved through courteous and respectful discussion.

##### Additional response:

- Under the Education Act, and informed by the School Council Dispute Resolution Policy, school councils work with their school community to establish a specific dispute resolution process for their school.
- We encourage all members of our school community to first resolve the dispute with the people who are directly involved, before escalating the issue to higher levels.
- Information on the dispute resolution process for Yukon schools and relevant policies is available online at Yukon.ca.

### Dispute Resolution Process for Yukon schools

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Education

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Disputes arise in schools and issues become public via social media.
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#### Background:

- The Education Act requires each school board or council to (in consultation with the superintendent or director, school administration, and teachers of the school) establish a procedure for resolving disputes within the school community.
- Under the Department of Education's School Council Dispute Resolution Procedure Policy, school administrators are responsible for resolving disputes between the school, parents, and teachers.
- There is an expectation that everyone involved will make every reasonable effort to resolve issues in an effective and timely manner and in the best interests of all students at all times.
- In some instances, a parent may file an appeal with the Education Appeal Tribunal.
- Student and staff privacy is legally protected. If a problem involves the behaviour of another student, teacher or staff member at the school, there are limits in what information is available.
- Yukon.ca website information about dispute resolution in schools contains the following on basic dispute resolution process:

*To resolve problems in school communities, it's important to take these steps.*

- a. Speak with the teacher or staff member involved.*
  - b. If the problem is not resolved, you can raise your concern with authorities in this order:*
    - i. principal or vice-principal;*
    - ii. superintendent or school council (to contact a superintendent phone the office of the superintendents 867-667-5068 or find contact information for your school council on your school's website);*
    - iii. Assistant Deputy Minister of Schools and Student Services (Email the Assistant Deputy Minister of Schools and Student Services at [publicschools@yukon.ca](mailto:publicschools@yukon.ca)).*
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# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SI05**

**Fall 2023**

## Dispute Resolution Process for Yukon schools

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Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-07

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Dispute Resolution Process for Yukon Schools: refer to SI05

#### Value:

- The Education Appeal Tribunal plays a critical role in giving parents the ability to appeal certain education decisions, such as a suspension or an individualized education plan, they may disagree with.

#### Recommended response:

- I would like to thank the members of the Education Appeal Tribunal for their hard work to resolve issues that may arise.
- I appreciate all opportunities for parties to work together to find mediated solutions. Mediation has been used to successfully resolve most disputes and appeals.

#### Additional response:

- I am not able to comment on the details of a specific student's file. The tribunal process respects and upholds the confidentiality and privacy rights of students and their families.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- There may be interest in the status of current appeals.

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#### Background:

- The Education Appeal Tribunal is a quasi-judicial body established by the *Education Act* in 1991 to hear appeals on issues related to decisions made by the department, school councils or schools.

#### Authority

- The Education Appeal Tribunal has statutory authority to hear appeals pursuant to section 157 of the *Education Act*. The Tribunal functions as a quasi-judicial board

and operates at arms-length from the government. Pursuant to the legislation, the Tribunal can hear appeals in four areas:

1. Special Needs (section 17.1)
2. Student Records (section 20.6)
3. Suspensions (section 41.7)
4. Locally Developed Course of Study (section 43.5)

### Membership

- Pursuant to the *Education Act*, the Minister is responsible for appointing “a chair, a maximum of nine other members and a secretary to the Education Appeal Tribunal”.
- Members are appointed to a length of term specified by the Minister. Currently, members are being appointed to three-year terms.
- The option exists for the Minister to appoint two rural Yukon representatives to the Tribunal.
- On April 13, 2022, Cabinet confirmed the appointments of five members for a three-year term.
  - These members were in addition to two members whose appointments expire in April 2024.
- The department is currently working to fill the recent resignations of the Chair and a member.
  - Until a new Chair is appointed, the Education Appeal Tribunal cannot deal with any appeals that it receives.
  - There is currently one appeal that the Tribunal has received that it is unable to deal with.
  - Normally, when the Tribunal receives an appeal it offers mediation to try to resolve the issue.
  - The department has reached out to the parent who filed the appeal and offered to engage in mediation to help resolve their concerns.

### Appeal Hearings

- The Tribunal may hear appeals arising from departmental, school or school council decisions, including those affecting special needs students, suspensions, student records and locally developed courses of study.
- On average, the Tribunal receives between 0-3 appeals annually.

- Once it receives an appeal, the tribunal:
  - Confirms it is a valid appeal under the provisions of the Education Act;
  - Provides a copy of the written appeal and a summary to all parties, including the Department of Education within five days;
  - Provides the Department an opportunity to respond in writing to the appeal within seven days.
  - Determines a date and time for a pre-hearing conference within 30 days of the appeal.
- During a pre-hearing conference, the tribunal:
  - Confirms the tribunal's jurisdiction to hear the appeal; and
  - Determines if there is an opportunity for resolution before a formal hearing. This may include a mediator.
- In cases where a mediator facilitates a decision between parties, the Chair of the tribunal makes sure any decisions and/or agreements, including commitments and follow-up steps are written and signed by all parties.
- If no agreement is reached, the matter will proceed to a formal hearing. Decisions made during a formal hearing of the Education Appeal Tribunal are binding and are filed in the Yukon Supreme Court.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-10-30**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

#### Value:

- The health, safety, and wellbeing of students and staff is our first priority. The opioid crisis in Yukon and the declaration of a health emergency is a real and serious concern.

#### Recommended response:

- Our hearts are with the families and communities who are grieving. This crisis impacts us all.
- We continue to remind everyone about the risks and dangers of fentanyl, which can be hiding in other drugs.
- Students learn age-appropriate information and decision-making skills about drugs, alcohol, safety, and risky behaviours as part of the school curriculum. This includes learning about fentanyl.
- It is often said that the opposite of addiction is not sobriety, it is connection. We strive to have schools that are places of positive connections for students. We want students to know that school staff care for and believe in them.

#### Additional response:

- Our schools have a strong partnership with the Department of Health and Social Services' Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services branch. Schools can connect students at particular risk of harm from substance use to effective and qualified therapeutic practitioners.
- We have provided naloxone training for staff, and presentations and information resources for students. Principals were retrained on the use of naloxone kits in May 2021.

- Fentanyl laced products were recently discovered at Porter Creek Secondary School.
- When substances are discovered in schools, the school works with the RCMP to investigate and send communications out to parents and guardians advising what supports are available and the importance of having conversations with their kids about drug usage.
- The Government of Yukon's Opioid Action Plan includes provisions to keep students safe by continuing to work with students, staff, and their families to educate them about the dangers of illicit drugs like fentanyl.

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### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- On August 23, 2023, Health and Social Services released Yukon's Substance Use Emergency Strategy, containing several recommendations where the Department of Education could partner with Health and Social services on implementation.

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### **Background:**

- The Yukon's curriculum includes learning about harmful substances such as prescription medications and drugs, starting in Grade 5 for illegal drugs. Students also develop decision-making skills and learn how to make informed choices related to risky behaviors.
- In November 2018, HSS released its Opioid Action Plan. The plan includes several provisions to increase education and information sent to students about opioids.
- In January 2022, the Government of Yukon declared a Substance Use Health Emergency in response to the dramatic increase in overdose-related deaths and substance use-related harms.
- Between January 1 and December 15, 2022, the Yukon Coroner's Service confirmed 20 opioid-related deaths.
- From January through August 2023, the territory saw 12 people die due to toxic illicit substances.

- The Substance Use Health Emergency Strategy is organized around prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery support, and community safety, and wellbeing.
- According to the strategy, “substance use encompasses the consumption of drugs or alcohol, including substances like tobacco, cannabis, illicit drugs, prescription medications, inhalants, and solvents.”
- Some Whitehorse schools (particularly high schools) have hosted specific presentations on fentanyl.
- Naloxone training and kits were first made available to principals in spring 2017. In spring 2021, administrators were provided with additional naloxone training and new kits.
- Schools are expected to have updated naloxone kits and trained staff at all schools in the event of an overdose at school. These kits can help save lives if someone is overdosing on fentanyl.
- All Yukon high schools offer counselling at the school with support from Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services (HSS).
- Health Promotion continues to support Yukon educators and students with classroom presentations and resources on tobacco use, vaping and cannabis use. Through 2022-2023 over 1000 students from Grades 4-12 received classroom presentations.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-10-18**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

**Safer Schools Action Plan: refer to DPT09**

**Safer School Disclosures: refer to DPT08**

**Emergency Procedures and Public Notices: refer to SP03**

**Safer Schools Policies and Procedures: refer to HOT14/DPT10**

**Autism Specialist Project: refer to TAB SSS01**

**Child and Youth Advocate: refer to TAB SI02**

#### **Value:**

- There is nothing more important than the safety and protection of students when they are in our care.

#### **Recommended response:**

- We have taken significant action with the Safer Schools Action Plan and will continue to address the issues that have been identified in the reports that we have received to date.
- We appreciate the work of all the organizations that have reviewed, reported, or made recommendations on the Hidden Valley School situation: the Child and Youth Advocate, the RCMP, the Ombudsman, and the department's independent reviewer.
- We also appreciate the involvement of our education partners and the education community to advocate for and help us to bring about changes.
- We have accepted all of the various report recommendations in principle and are committed to continuing system-wide corrective action.



### **Hidden Valley School – Supports, Reviews-Investigations, Legal**

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Education

#### **Additional response:**

- We will continue to ensure the wellbeing of Yukon children remains at the centre of our decision-making and actions.
- The reports' recommendations have helped us re-examine, refine and enhance our existing commitments to ensure a strengthened student and child-centred approach.
- I continue to hold up the dedicated staff and parents at Hidden Valley Elementary School who are ensuring children feel connected, supported, and safe at school.
- A range of supports, including access to counselling, will continue to be available; no family will be left behind.

#### **Additional response – Ombudsman Report:**

- We agree with the conclusions of the recently released Ombudsman report about the communication failures in the government's initial responses to the 2019 incident at Hidden Valley Elementary School.
- The Government of Yukon and the RCMP acknowledged that mistakes were made in the response. We have apologized to parents at Hidden Valley Elementary and acknowledged that steps could have been taken to better inform and support parents following the incident.
- We look forward to receiving the second part of the Ombudsman's report later this fall and reviewing any recommendations they may make regarding the implementation of the Safer Schools Action Plan.

### **Hidden Valley School – Supports, Reviews-Investigations, Legal**

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Education

#### **Additional response – Child and Youth Advocate Report:**

- In November 2022 the department accepted in principle all of the recommendations in the Child and Youth Advocate Report. We committed to providing a progress report within one year on the government's actions to date.
- We provided a report on October 12, 2023 detailing the progress that the Government of Yukon has made in implementing the recommendations put forth by the Child and Youth Advocate's Office.
- Our progress reflects that the work of the Safer Schools Action Plan has been fully implemented and integrated into the department and across the Yukon government. We will continue our efforts to make schools safer and more inclusive environments for all students.
- We appreciate the work of all the organizations that have reviewed, reported, or made recommendations on the Hidden Valley Elementary School incident. We have accepted all the various report recommendations in principle, and are committed to continuing system-wide improvements.

#### **Additional response – William Auclair-Bellemare court matter:**

- We are aware of the verdict for the current court matter regarding former Educational Assistant, William Auclair-Bellemare was delivered on October 13, 2023. In this court matter, William Auclair-Bellemare has been found not guilty of the charges for sexual offences against a student and acquitted on charges of invitations to sexual touching and forcible confinement.
- We will not be commenting further on these court matters.

### **Hidden Valley School – Supports, Reviews-Investigations, Legal**

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Education

- Our priority remains on providing support for students, families and staff as these legal matters continue.
- We thank the dedicated staff at Hidden Valley Elementary School who are ensuring children feel connected, supported and safe at school.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- Part 1 of the report from the Ombudsman was publicly released September 7, 2023, and it is anticipated Part 2 will be released in Fall 2023.
- The Yukon government committed to provide a one-year progress report to the Child and Youth Advocate by October 12, 2023.

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#### **Background:**

##### Supports for families and staff

- We are working closely with the Hidden Valley administration and school community on their needs for the 2023-24 year.
- The response to the school community is intentionally dynamic, as all children and families are unique in how they react to various experiences. We listen to the concerns to respond in an appropriate manner with the best direct supports.
- Families and staff were provided information reminding them of the supports available on February 15, 2023.
- Supports continue to be available to families and staff. Examples include:
  - Supports coordinated as needed via the School Community Consultant, school administration and staff to services through Family and Children's Services, Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services, and Victim Services.
  - Staff presentations on services and supports available to them, including crisis counselling services through LifeWorks and information on the broader Employee and Family Assistance program.

### **Hidden Valley School – Supports, Reviews-Investigations, Legal**

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Education

- Staffing support was strengthened starting in 2021, and we've continued to provide this support in how we schedule, assign and support staff in their learning.
- We currently have a full-time Principal and a full-time Vice-Principal at the school.
- In the 2022-23 school year, we hired a dedicated Learning Assistance Teacher to serve students with neuro-diversity in a dedicated classroom, and to provide programming and direct teaching in collaboration with Educational Assistants, Administrators, families and fellow staff members.
  - This teacher develops and implements Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) and ensures inclusion within the school community while facilitating ongoing communication with families.
  - The department committed to continuing this program in the 2023-24 school year, and we are finalizing a commitment to its continuation for an additional two years.
- To clarify a comment Minister McLean made during the Supplementary budget debate on March 16, 2023: a clinical counsellor continues to be available to support students on an ongoing basis. Supports and referrals from the Child and Youth and Family Treatment Team can be available at the school and outside the school.
- Clinical counselling support is important; however, it is only one aspect of the comprehensive mental health approach we take in Yukon schools.

#### Past Supports

- Mental Wellness and Substance Use facilitated a 6-session parent support group that involved evening sessions with a clinical counsellor and an outreach worker. This was held off-site to best accommodate the requests and privacy of families.
- Supports were available directly from Whitehorse-based private practitioner, Marie Fast who provides emotional support and counselling for families, helps participants to focus on self-care and well-being of their families, and helps parents to find ways to discuss relevant issues with their children.
- The Child and Youth and Family Treatment Team attending the school to monitor the needs of staff, students and families; providing service to parents and families; and delivering sessions on resilience and social-emotional skills for grade 5, 6, and 7 students.

### **Hidden Valley School – Supports, Reviews-Investigations, Legal**

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Education

#### RCMP Report

- The Yukon RCMP requested a complete review of their investigation by the BC RCMP E Division Major Crimes Unit after acknowledging mistakes were made in their initial investigation. The RCMP's preliminary findings were distributed to all Hidden Valley parents and guardians, current and former.
- Under the Safer Schools Action Plan, the Yukon government committed to working with the RCMP to create a new inter-agency agreement for the investigation of child abuse and provide training for those responsible in each department. This work is complete.

#### Safer Schools Action Plan

- For the Department of Education, key initiatives include:
  - enhancing our screening and hiring processes;
  - partnering with the Canadian Center for Child Protection for training on their Commit to Kids program that focuses on building awareness and response of adults working with children and youth on child sexual abuse prevention;
  - partnering with Family and Children's Services to provide training to school staff on their Duty to Report;
  - a new Student Protection Policy and procedures; and
  - Post-Incident Communications Guidance, which outlines expectations for ongoing communication with families in various scenarios.
- We trained all school administrators and teaching staff on these policies and procedures in fall of 2022, and have built safer schools training into onboarding of new staff.
- We are also working to ensure all school support staff and adults working in school settings, including school councils, are trained as well.

#### CYAO Report

### **Hidden Valley School – Supports, Reviews-Investigations, Legal**

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Education

- The CYAO released its Hidden Valley Elementary School Systemic Review of policies, protocols, and actions to ensure student safety and supports in October 2022. Education provided a formal response on November 23, 2022.
- The CYAO made 8 recommendations to the Department of Education, which were all accepted in principle.

#### Independent Review

- Generally, the report finds the response from the government inadequate, and that communication should have been sent earlier.
- The report of the internal review from Amanda Rogers was delivered on January 31, 2022, and the Department and parents/guardians received the report at the same time as Amanda Rogers walked through the report and her recommendations.
- Recommendations (all accepted):
  - Implement a policy/process for interdepartmental cooperation for significant events and provide appropriate training
  - Implement an Education policy for addressing school incidents including criminal allegations against employees
  - Provide better training for School Administrators and better onboarding of Education employees
  - Ensure computerized databases in all Yukon schools are capable of easily identifying families of students both past and present and information about EA assignments.
  - Ensure School Administrators, Teachers and Staff are provided training in respect of their duty to report and document suspected abuse on an annual basis
  - Develop and implement a policy in cooperation with the RCMP Re: information sharing and setting out the process for working together in the event a serious allegation of criminal conduct is levelled against an employee arising from or with a sufficient nexus to their employment.
  - Fully implement the recommendations set out in the 2019 June Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Yukon Legislative Assembly, especially those in respect of inclusive education for students who have special needs

### Hidden Valley School – Supports, Reviews-Investigations, Legal

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Education

#### Ombudsman Report

- The Ombudsman is scheduled to release Part 1 of its report on September 7, 2023. The report agrees with the Independent Review that there was a communication failure and that the delay in informing parents about the sexual abuse allegations was “unwarranted, and unfairly denied the Parents any opportunity to take immediate and appropriate steps to help their children.”
  - The Ombudsman concludes that the Department had a legal and policy obligation to report the matter to the Parents and that neither the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, or the publication ban to protect the identity of the child victim, prevented the Department from informing the Parents at any point.
  - The Ombudsman concludes that the Department only began sharing information with the parents because the matter became public through the media and the Department found itself having unexpectedly to respond.
- The Ombudsman will be issuing a second report in the late Fall of 2023 that will examine whether the Safer Schools Action Plan adequately addresses the issues identified in the first report.

#### William Auclair-Bellemare Charges

- The Crown stayed 4 of the additional charges against William Auclair-Bellemare for sexual offences against a student in February 2023.
- Other charges are still active and are before the court. The verdict in William Auclair-Bellemare's trial is to be delivered in October 2023.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-10-17**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

### **Jack Hulland – Grove Street Concerns and Investigation around Holds, Restraints and Seclusion**

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#### **Value:**

- All students and staff have the right to a safe and inclusive learning environment.

#### **Recommended response:**

- In the fall of 2021, allegations were raised about the use of holds, restraints and seclusion at Jack Hulland Elementary School.
- We are continuing to communicate with and assist students, families, and staff in order for them to access support and make informed decisions, while also not compromising the RCMP investigation while it was underway.
- A range of free-of-charge supports continue to be available to students, families, and staff as we navigate these complex matters.

#### **Investigations and legal matters—holds and restraints:**

- As an employer, we have an obligation and are committed to learning more about the conduct of our employees and what happened.
- We fully cooperated with the RCMP's criminal investigation, which is complete pending their final report being shared with the Public Prosecution Service of Canada.
- We are also working with the Department of Justice in regards to the civil lawsuit underway. Given this is an ongoing matter before the courts, we will not be commenting on the specific allegations outlined in the statement of claim.



### **Jack Hulland – Grove Street Concerns and Investigation around Holds, Restraints and Seclusion**

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Education

- These matters are complex and of a most serious nature and will take time to complete.

#### **Managing student behaviour:**

- We have trained all Yukon administrators, teachers and staff on new policies and procedures for preventing harm to students as part of the Student Protection Policy and will continue to offer regular training sessions on non-violent crisis intervention, which is the standard for managing student behaviours in a positive manner.
- We have clarified expectations for staff at JHES about the use of holds, restraints and seclusion when managing student behaviour. The use of seclusion is unacceptable and physical holds or restraints are to be used only by persons trained and certified in Non-violent Crisis Intervention (module 6) and only when there is imminent risk or serious physical harm to student and others.
- In addition, we have increased oversight on Workplace Risk Assessments (WRAs). A Workplace Risk Assessment must be completed any time a hold occurs.
- We have made a commitment to significantly increase school-level supports to strengthen learning and wellbeing. This includes the addition of 81 new full-time student support positions over the next three years, subject to legislative approval, and a \$1 million investment in student support initiatives.

### **Jack Hulland – Grove Street Concerns and Investigation around Holds, Restraints and Seclusion**

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Education

- We want to ensure both students and staff are supported to uphold safe and inclusive learning environments.

#### **Requests for student records:**

- The Department of Education fully cooperated with the RCMP as they completed their investigation and finalize their final report.
- Any further questions regarding the concluded RCMP investigation should be referred to the RCMP.
- We will work with all individuals who have requested records to provide as much information as we are able to provide to make informed decisions and to access supports.
- We do not want this to prevent families from accessing support.
- The situation has been exceptionally challenging for many members of the Jack Hulland Elementary School community and supports are available to anyone who has been affected by this.

#### **Administration / supporting staff:**

- There is a dedicated team of teachers and staff at Jack Hulland school, and the administrative team is focused on moving the school forward in a good way.
- Since November 2021, we've maintained communication with the school community, providing regular updates and sharing information when we are able.

### **Jack Hulland – Grove Street Concerns and Investigation around Holds, Restraints and Seclusion**

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Education

- We've provided information on supports and encouraged families to reach out to the RCMP with any information that may be relevant to their investigation.
- A range of free-of-charge and confidential supports continue to be available to the school community.
- We will continue to work with the school administration and school council on staff supports and initiatives.

#### **Communications:**

- We will continue to communicate information as it becomes available and where we are able to.
- We continue to remind and encourage families and staff of the resource supports available to them, including a dedicated support person that is available to help families navigate the information and supports that are available.

#### **Child and Youth Advocate Office:**

- We are working with the Child and Youth Advocate on a case-by-case basis to directly support past and present students and families of Jack Hulland School.
- We will continue to provide updates to the Child and Youth Advocate on the government's ongoing response.

### **Jack Hulland – Grove Street Concerns and Investigation around Holds, Restraints and Seclusion**

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Education

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- On September 11<sup>th</sup>, the RCMP informed the JHES School community they have concluded their investigation and will forward their final report to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada when it is complete.
  - A statement of claim was filed on October 31, 2022, naming the Yukon government and JHES School Council as defendants.
  - A decision released September 6, 2023, certified the claim as a class action.
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#### **Background:**

- In November 2021 the Area Superintendent received information from the acting school principal that there could be school-wide physical abuse of students through inappropriate use of holds and isolation rooms as a means to restrain and address student behaviour.
  - Violence at the school has previously been described as student-to-student and/or student-to-teacher and largely focused on a Shared Resource Program that supports student with behavioural needs (Grove Street program).
  - RCMP and Family and Children's Services were engaged on November 19, 2021, and the investigation is progressing. Production orders for records were completed to RCMP's satisfaction.
  - A law group was engaged to conduct the employer's fact-finding investigation using duplicate copies of all the same materials that were disclosed to the RCMP, including Workplace Risk Assessments and other reports involving the use of holds and isolation rooms produced over the last 5 years. A Workplace Risk Assessment is required to be completed and submitted to the Student Support Services Unit when students demonstrate escalated behavior that may be harmful to others.
  - The initial findings from the law group received in April 2022, suggested concerns that holds, restraints and seclusion were not used as a last resort or in situations of
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### **Jack Hulland – Grove Street Concerns and Investigation around Holds, Restraints and Seclusion**

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Education

imminent danger, but rather for matters of non-compliance or not following the direction of staff.

- As the employer, we have an obligation to learn more and will do so.
- Education provides Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training – an industry standard training – to school staff to provide them with the tools to de-escalate situations and protect themselves and others from student outbursts.
- In May 2022, the Deputy Minister of Education provided staff at Jack Hulland Elementary School with a letter clarifying the employer's expectations of Educators in respect to managing student behavior.
- On May 5, 2022, information was also shared with families, and a meeting was held with participation from Victim Services, Family and Children's Services, Family Resource Unit, and Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services.
- A statement of claim was filed on October 31, 2022, to the Yukon Supreme Court by two plaintiffs and their guardians against the Department of Education and Jack Hulland Elementary School Council for holds and involuntary seclusion by school staff.
- The lawsuit seeks to be certified as a class-action on behalf of all students "who were subject to holds and restraints and who were locked in a room and/or placed in seclusion" at the school between Jan. 1, 2002, and June 30, 2022.
- Legal counsel for the Department of Education has filed a defense to the class action lawsuit that was submitted in mid-February 2023.
- In May 2023 the Yukon Supreme Court agreed to dismiss the action against the school council.
- June 26 – 29, 2023 a hearing was held to determine if the lawsuit should be a class action.
- September 6, 2023, the lawsuit was certified as a class action except for individual accusations of assault and confinement.
- The RCMP have concluded their investigation and are in the process of preparing a final report to be filed with the Public Prosecution Office of Canada.

## Session Briefing Note

**TAB#HOT08/SI09**

**Fall 2023**

Education

### **Jack Hulland – Grove Street Concerns and Investigation around Holds, Restraints and Seclusion**

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Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-10-23

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

## **Medication in Schools - Chronic Conditions**

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### **Value:**

- The health, safety, and well-being of students and staff is our first priority.

### **Recommended response:**

- Our schools accommodate students with a wide variety of chronic and severe medical conditions, such as diabetes or anaphylaxis, and who may require medication and other care while under school supervision.
- All Yukon schools follow the Administration of Medication to Students Policy, which requires planned care and support for students with various medical conditions, including diabetes.
- School staff have a duty of care to students who are at risk from these medical conditions and require up-to-date information and guidance about their specific condition.
- These students require and receive planned care and support at school, on field trips, and while being transported to and from school to ensure their health and safety.
- A collaborative approach with each family is taken to develop a detailed and specific response plan to keep the student well.

### **Additional response:**

- Departmental officials are currently working with the T1D Support Network to review the existing policy and to identify any gaps (specifically for students around Type 1 Diabetes).

### Medication in Schools - Chronic Conditions

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Education

- As of October 30, 2023 there have been six meetings with the T1D network to date on how best to approach supporting students with Type 1 Diabetes in the school setting.
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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The Legislative Assembly unanimously passed a motion in fall 2021 for the development of a Yukon diabetes strategy.
  - The Yukon T1D Support Network (for type 1 diabetes) asked that a policy be written specifically regarding roles, responsibilities and supports for students with diabetes; this was echoed in a Public Accounts Committee submission for the 2022 hearing.
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#### **Background:**

- Recent meetings with the Department of Education and T1D network have focused on creating a draft procedure for students with T1D in the school setting.
  - Yukon T1D Support Network's concern is based on the fact that Yukon did not have a specific type 1 diabetes policy. The department clarified that this falls under the Administration of Medication to Students Policy, which includes a specific reference to students with diabetes.
  - The *Administration of Medication in Schools* Policy and related procedures outline roles and responsibilities among school staff, parents, and students regarding medical care and medication, including that:
    - These students require planned care and support at school to ensure their safety at school. This responsibility is shared among the student, their parents, school staff, and healthcare providers.
    - The parent of a child with a severe or chronic medical condition is required to inform the school of their child's condition and requirements, including providing any medication and medical devices that the student requires to the school.
    - All school staff identified to provide supervisory support to a student with a severe or chronic medical condition must be informed of the student's
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## **Medication in Schools - Chronic Conditions**

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medical condition and the planned response to emergency situations, and must be provided with specific training and other support required to deal with medical emergencies and administer medication to the student.

- The school bus registration form also contains information about medication and care that a student may require. This information is provided to Standard Bus, and they ensure that the student's bus driver is provided with information and training to support the student.
- The Government of Yukon was the first jurisdiction in Canada to provide permanent coverage for continuous glucose monitors (CGM) to youth 18 and younger with type 1 diabetes.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-06**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

## **Mice at Elijah Smith Elementary School**

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Education

### **Value**

- The health, safety, and well-being of students and staff is our first priority.

### **Recommended response:**

- Pest control mitigations are put in place when signs of pests are discovered in Yukon government workplaces.
- The Department of Education was advised of a mice issue at Elijah Smith School in fall 2022 and employed additional custodial and pest control services immediately.
- Following an inspection in October 2022, Environmental Health issued a report containing recommendations or mitigations, which have all been followed.

### **Additional response:**

- For the start of the 2023-24 school year there are no signs that there is a rodent issue at the school.
- The school will continue to be monitored for any increase in activity and staff will act accordingly to respond if needed.
- The department will continue to coordinate any necessary additional custodial services and deep cleaning if mouse activity is noted.

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### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- Concerns regarding health and safety were brought to Yukon Association of Education Professionals by staff. Parents contacted the school administration with concerns.

## **Mice at Elijah Smith Elementary School**

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- Many schools have food and nutrition programs and there is often increased mouse activity in the fall season.
- Concerns are often raised regarding exposure to the hantavirus.

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### **Background:**

- We work with the school staff, Health and Safety Management Coordinator, Facilities Services Director and Environmental Health Services on response, prevention and remediation.
- There has been an increase in food and nutrition programs being delivered at schools. This has resulted in more food being stored in the schools and classrooms and increased the amount of compost, both of which are attractants for pests.
- Environmental Health inspected Elijah Smith on October 18, 2022 and provided recommendations. The school was not ordered to close.
- Recommendations from Environmental Health included:
  - Increase custodial resources;
  - Limit food storage and preparation;
  - Ensure all food is stored in mouse proof containers;
  - Cease cooking in classrooms;
  - Increase the frequency of site inspections by a pest control technician; and
  - Seal mice access points.
- Staff met on October 19, 2022 to discuss the situation and learn how classroom practices will be altered. The School Operations branch supported school-based staff with these measures.
- Communications were initially sent to families on October 20, 2023 and were ongoing as we had more updates to provide.
- An Environmental Health Officer collected a specimen from the school on October 28, 2022 and the Chief Veterinary Officer confirmed that specimen was a "house mouse."
- The risk of hantavirus from that species remains low.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SI11**

**Fall 2023**

## **Mice at Elijah Smith Elementary School**

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Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-07

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

### Value:

- The Department of Education takes protecting the privacy of Yukoners' personal information very seriously.

### Recommended response:

- Video surveillance is used in limited situations at schools when it's deemed appropriate to ensure a safe and caring school community.
- This technology serves as an additional tool to help address incidents of concerning behaviour on school grounds, including when there are allegations of crime or acts of vandalism and destruction on school property.
- The department has a Video Surveillance Policy that follows privacy regulations and policies and outlines guidelines for records collection and destruction.
- To date there have been no reports of misuse or mishandling by the department of information gathered by video surveillance technology or any breaches of privacy.
- The department outlined a clear response to the Information and Privacy Commissioner's audit on how we would address the 24 recommendations, with some modifications.

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- In November 2022, media reported on a June 2022 Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner report on the use of video surveillance technology in schools.

- Some schools have seen an increase in acts of vandalism and video surveillance can act as a deterrent as well as assist in investigations.
- 

### Background:

- Video surveillance technology is currently being used at the following schools operated by Yukon Education:
    - F.H Collins Secondary School
    - St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Secondary School
    - Porter Creek Secondary School
    - École Whitehorse Elementary School
  - Video surveillance technology is currently being used at the following schools operated by the commission scolaire francophone du Yukon:
    - Centre scolaire secondaire communautaire Paul-Émile Mercier
    - L'École Émilie-Tremblay
  - Video surveillance technology is currently being used at the following school operated by the First Nation School Board:
    - Ghùch Tlâ Community School (Carcross)
  - The Department of Education received a complaint in November 2021 about its use of video surveillance technology in Yukon schools. The department's response was that its use of video surveillance technology was justified.
  - In early 2022, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner decided to conduct a compliance audit to evaluate whether the personal information collected through the use of video surveillance technology in schools is adequately protected in accordance with the requirements of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and Regulations.
    - It is our position that our policy for records collections and destruction follows privacy regulation and policies.
  - Following the investigation, the IPC submitted a [Privacy Compliance Audit Report](#) to the Department of Education on June 14, which included recommendations.
  - In our follow-up response on July 8, 2022, we committed to ensuring that any new video surveillance technology in schools complies with the 24 recommendations.
  - We also committed to work expeditiously to implement the recommendations in all current systems, including completing Privacy Impact Assessments for deployed technology and submitting them to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and updating the department's video surveillance policy.
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# Session Briefing Note

## School Video Surveillance

**TAB#SI12**

**Fall 2023**

Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-07

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

### Value

- The Department of Education takes protecting the students' privacy and personal information very seriously.

### Recommended response:

- We believe we have the authority to collect, use, and disclose student's personal information for the purpose of communicating to the broader school community.
- We are currently undertaking a privacy impact assessment to assess the risks of posting student's personal information to internet platforms.
- We have notified staff of their obligations with respect to the collection, use or disclosure of youth's personal information under the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

### Additional response:

- We do not agree with the Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner on all their recommendations.
- We are working to refine our processes and policies into a comprehensive framework that clearly outlines roles, responsibilities, and oversight with respect to the collection, use, and disclosure of youth personal information on internet platforms.



- We are also reviewing and updating the department's privacy management policy and plan.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- An individual made a complaint to the OIPC.
- The OIPC posted the report publicly on their web site on June 12, 2023.
- There was media coverage on this issue.

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#### Background:

- On May 18, 2023, Minister McLean received a letter from the Yukon Information and Privacy Commissioner (IPC) advising Education that the Commissioner had completed their report on the compliance audit regarding the collection, use, and disclosure of student images on internet platforms that is occurring in some schools in the Yukon.
- The final report included six recommendations. We accept four of the six.
- We have notified staff of their obligations with respect to the collection, use or disclosure of youth's personal information under the ATIPPA. Further, we have provided direction that there are to be no new social media posts until the risk assessment has been completed, processes and procedures are better defined, and further direction can be provided.
- We are working to refine our processes and policies into a comprehensive framework that clearly outlines roles, responsibilities, and oversight with respect to the collection, use, and disclosure of youth personal information on internet platforms.

#### Approved by:

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Smoking and Vaping in Yukon Schools

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#### Value:

- The health, safety and well-being of students and staff is our first priority.

#### Recommended response:

- Yukon schools follow the Tobacco and Vapour-Free Schools Policy, which prohibits smoking on school property. This policy has been updated to apply to vaping and the use of e-cigarettes on school grounds.
- Talking to students about making healthy lifestyle choices is part of the curriculum and should be an ongoing conversation happening both at school and at home.
- Schools provide information to help young people to make good choices and keep themselves safe and healthy.

#### Additional response:

- We encourage everyone to talk to the kids in their lives to help them make healthy choices and stay safe.
- Schools and families share responsibility for ensuring students understand the risks of smoking and vaping.
- A school's response to students who are caught smoking or vaping on school property is guided by its policies, which are approved by each school council.
- The Yukon government's Health Promotion Unit helps deliver smoking and vaping prevention information to students upon school request.

### Smoking and Vaping in Yukon Schools

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#### Context – this may be an issue because:

- There have been incidents of students vaping at school.

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#### Background:

- Under the *Tobacco and Vaping Products Control and Regulation Act* no person shall smoke, vape or use a tobacco product in a school or on school grounds.
- The Department of Education updated the *Tobacco and Vapour Free Schools Policy* in 2019 to include language around vaping devices.
- Under the department's *Substance Abuse Policy*, smoking cannabis is not permitted on school grounds, regardless of whether it is legal.
- The Department of Education also provides information about the risks of smoking and vaping in Yukon schools as part of the school curriculum.
- There are no designated smoking areas on any school grounds; however, students sometimes smoke off school grounds in areas close to and often within sight of the school, especially at the secondary schools.
- Whitehorse high school administrators have been working to improve the consistency of their school-based policies on vaping since 2018-19.
- In spring 2022, F.H. Collins High School partnered with Physical and Health Education Canada (with support from the Public Health Agency of Canada) to engage in a three year-pilot project entitled STOMP. F.H. received a grant of \$2500 for this project. STOMP takes a comprehensive approach to curb tobacco use, including e-cigarettes and vaping, in students from grades 7-12.
- Health Promotion continues to support Yukon educators and students with classroom presentations and resources on tobacco use, vaping and cannabis use. Through 2022-2023 over 1000 students from Grades 4-12 received classroom presentations.

#### Approved by:

Cassandra Kelly

2023-09-25

a/Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

### Building Schools – 5-year Capital Plan

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Education

#### Value:

- We continue to work with school communities on planning for their short, medium, and long-term facility needs.

#### Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon's Five-Year Capital Plan includes school replacement and renovation projects to ensure all buildings are safe and suitable for many years to come.
- We are pleased that work is underway on new schools in Whistle Bend and Burwash Landing, and planning has started for the replacement of École Whitehorse Elementary School.
- The Government of Yukon's Five-Year Capital Plan also includes Experiential Learning Spaces. In the 2023-24 fiscal year, Experiential Learning Spaces are being constructed at St. Elias Community School, J.V Clark School, Tantalus Community School, and Jack Hulland Elementary School.
- Capital planning decisions are made based on current information and facility assessments, supplemented with education programming needs and emerging enrolment trends and pressures.
- Engagement with the broader Whitehorse community and partners took place this spring. The public had access to an online survey between Tuesday, March 14 and Monday, May 15, 2023. Public open houses were held throughout April.
- Additionally, direct emails and letters were sent to all Whitehorse school councils inviting them to meet with the public engagement

## Building Schools – 5-year Capital Plan

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specialist to hear their feedback and participate as part of the Whitehorse School Capital Planning public engagement.

- Seven school councils accepted the invite, including: Christ the King Elementary School Council joint with St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Secondary School Council; Golden Horn Elementary School Council; Hidden Valley Elementary School Council; Holy Family Elementary School Council; Jack Hulland Elementary School Council; Porter Creek Secondary School Council; and Selkirk Elementary School Council.
- The results of the public engagement are available in the form of a What We Heard Report which can be accessed on [Yukon.ca/engagements](https://Yukon.ca/engagements).
- This feedback will inform future planning for Whitehorse school renovations and replacements.
- We will continue to have conversations with Yukon school communities and the two Yukon school boards about facility needs as we plan for future school projects.

### Additional response:

- We completed a generic design, or functional plan, that can be used to scale the design of multiple types of schools.
- This is now referred to as the Yukon Schools Functional Program, and the plan outlines consistent standards for school design and construction that are scalable based on school population, grades, and urban and rural contexts.

## Building Schools – 5-year Capital Plan

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Education

- This plan was used as the basis for design and planning for the Whistle Bend and the Burwash Landing schools. With each school design we expect a certain amount of customization to ensure the school meets the needs of the community.

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Many school communities are advocating and lobbying for capital projects for various reasons (enrolment increases, facility upgrades, aging buildings, etc.).

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### Background:

- All approved school construction and renovation projects are prioritized and managed through the 5-Year Capital Plan.
- School projects in the 2023-24 five-year capital plan include:
  - A new elementary school in Whistle Bend.
  - The replacement of an existing aging Whitehorse school has been identified as École Whitehorse Elementary School.
    - École Whitehorse Elementary School was identified for replacement on the Takhini Educational Land Reserve in 2022.
    - A project advisory committee has been established to facilitate collaboration and the exchange of ideas between key partners, stakeholders and the Government of Yukon.
    - It is too early to signal a timeline for the construction and occupancy of the school.
    - In August 2023, Kobayashi + Zedda Architects Ltd. was awarded the prime consultant contract for the École Whitehorse Elementary School replacement project through a public tender.
      - The prime consultant will conduct a preliminary site assessment and will continue on through design and warranty phase oversight.
  - Modular Classrooms for short and medium-term school needs:

## Building Schools – 5-year Capital Plan

Education

- In 2022-23 Selkirk Elementary added a modular addition rather than a third portable. This freed up an additional classroom in the school and is now being used for school programming.
- For future years we have conducted feasibility studies and are evaluating modular classrooms at Jack Hlland or Hidden Valley. No final decision has been made.
- Working with Kluane First Nation to relocate Kluane Lake School to Burwash Landing.
- Ongoing stabilization work for Ross River School.
  - The approved budget for 2023-24 is \$3.6 million for the mechanical work and re-leveling.
- The generic school design project was completed in the 2018-19 budget. We now have a completed Yukon Schools Functional Program that is designed to create consistent standards for school design and construction, covering all room types for schools with small conceptual drawings that can be scaled.
- The Yukon Schools Functional Program is not a full school design, but rather the conceptual design of individual spaces that make up parts of a school. We also have a replicable list of specifications that can be used. These two documents are intended to reduce the front-end design time when we are planning schools and make the whole process more efficient.
- Education staff communicate regularly with school Principals to identify projects that would enhance programming.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-07**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

### Burwash - KLUANE Lake School - Kêts'ádañ Kù

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Education

**NOTE: Questions about tendering and build are for HPW.**

#### Value:

- As part of our commitment to reconciliation and long-term capital planning for Yukon schools, we are pleased to be working in partnership with Kluane First Nation on Kêts'ádañ Kù [KEht-sah-dun KOO].

#### Recommended response:

- Moving the current Kluane Lake School from Destruction Bay to Burwash Landing has been a longstanding request of Kluane First Nation.
- The Governments of Yukon and Kluane First Nation continue to uphold the Memorandum of Understanding, which outlines a shared commitment to plan and construct a new school in Burwash Landing, to be known as Kêts'ádañ Kù - meaning "House of Learning".
- Kêts'ádañ Kù is a priority as it will support Kluane First Nation citizens to learn and thrive in their community.
- Regular meetings of the bipartite oversight committee and the project management team continue.

#### Additional response:

- In July 2022, a Yukon Asset Construction Agreement was signed with Kluane First Nation that will provide benefits to the community through the construction of the school.



#### **Burwash - KLUANE Lake School - Kêts'ádañ Kù**

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Education

- I was delighted to travel to Burwash Landing for the Infrastructure Canada's Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program announcement in September 2022 and visit the new school site with Chief Dickson and then again in June 2023 for the community celebration of the site clearing.
- The construction tender date and the project completion date will be confirmed as we move forward with the project planning process.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- This project is important to the Kluane First Nation and is a high-profile school project that is mentioned in the Minister's mandate letter.

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#### **Background:**

- Kluane Lake School has been located in Destruction Bay since 1961. Most of the students reside in or around Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay.
- This project received Implementation Phase Approval for a target cost of \$29.7M in August 2023.
- The 2023-24 Main Estimates include \$3.5 million in design work and project activities.
- In YG's 2022-23 Five-Year Capital Plan an estimated budget of \$20 – 28 million was included for a new school in Burwash Landing.
- The construction tender date and the project completion date will be confirmed subject to additional project planning.
- The school is a priority for renovation or replacement on the government's School's Seismic Mitigation Program.
- On November 13, 2015, the Department of Education and KFN entered an 'Agreement Respecting the Provision of the Public School Education Program in Destruction Bay and Burwash Landing' to identify and implement a three-year plan to provide options and planning for the establishment of a school in the community of Burwash Landing.

### **Burwash - KLUANE Lake School - Kêts'ádań Kù**

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Education

- In April 2016, the department began working with KFN on the planning of a new school in Burwash Landing, including site visits to determine suitable locations on non-settlement land.
- In October 2016, the firm Urban Arts was contracted by the Yukon government, in consultation with KFN, to develop a Functional Plan for a new school in Burwash Landing. Work to revise this functional plan was undertaken in 2018.
- In January 2019, the Minister of Education met with the Chief to discuss next steps on the school and discuss the budget / project scope. On Jan 18, 2019, the joint working group met, led by the Deputy Minister of Education, and determined the three options for further exploration: retrofit, lease, build.
- In November 2019, the Minister met with the Chief to confirm a school would be built in Burwash Landing. Since then technical officials have been meeting to move this project forward, including signing an MOU in June 2019 outlining a commitment to plan and construct a new school in Burwash Landing.
- The MOU includes provisions to establish a KFN/YG Oversight Committee to oversee the implementation of the MOU with a commitment for the Minister of Education and Chief to meet quarterly to ensure the goals are being met and help move items forward as required.
- In January 2021, a tender for an Owner's Advisor to provide expertise and guidance on this new school project was posted. Taylor Architecture Group (TAG) was the successful proponent.
- In August 2022, KFN provided a submission to YG for naming the Burwash School. At the General Assembly in July 2022, Kêts'ádań Kù meaning "House of Learning" was selected by KFN citizens as the name for the new school. This name has been formally approved by Cabinet as per the corporate building naming policy.
- The site selected for the school is KFN settlement land.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SO02**

**Fall 2023**

**Burwash - KLUANE Lake School -  
Kêts'ádań Kù**

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Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-07

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Special Needs Transportation: refer to TAB SO13

#### Value:

- The Department of Education provides school busing, city transit passes, and transportation subsidies to families to support students travelling safely and effectively to and from school.

#### Recommended response— Registrations

- We acknowledge that there have been delays in processing registrations and special requests, particularly those received after the start of the school year and that there have been communication gaps with parents anxious to hear back from the department.
- Updated notifications of seat assignments were sent out to families during the first week of October.
- Work is ongoing to process any outstanding registrations and special requests.

#### Transportation subsidy:

- If families live more than 3.2 km from the nearest school bus stop and the student goes to the catchment area school, they may apply for a transportation subsidy to offset the cost of driving.
- We will be reviewing the student transportation program to ensure it supports the needs of families and those eligible for transportation allowances.
- We recognize that students with exceptional needs may require additional support and we make every effort to accommodate students' transportation needs.

#### Range Road Construction:

- The Range Road construction work will impact several bus routes and is expected to be completed in Fall 2023.
- Families of students were notified of updated routes that reflect the revised pickup and drop off times.
- We will continue to inform families and provide them with updates on any further impacts.

#### Cancellations:

- Standard Bus is responsible for notifying schools and families when there are bus route cancellations. We are working with Standard to ensure notifications are sent out as early as possible.
- In some instances, routes may be cancelled for the day due to extreme weather conditions, unsafe road conditions, or driver shortages.
- Families can sign up for “My School Bus Monitor” to receive email updates. They can also sign up for text notification with Standard Bus.
- We acknowledge the impact cancelled bus routes can have on families and are working with Standard Bus to find solutions whenever possible.
- There are 43 routes that run daily in Whitehorse.
  - For the 20 instructional days in September that equated to 860 runs.
  - In September 2023 the cancellation rate was under 3% (2.99%)

- The school bus cancellation rate in Whitehorse for September 2022 was 2.5%.

**Driver shortages: (Note: The information on service disruptions will be updated periodically as the semester continues)**

- Like many other jurisdictions, the Yukon is facing a driver shortage and we are working with the contractor, Standard Bus, to support them in their recruitment efforts.
- All Whitehorse routes were staffed for the start of the 2023-24 school year, while the two routes in Dawson were combined and the route in Mayo was not operational due to a lack of drivers.
  - Both Dawson and Mayo routes are now staffed and operational.
  - Standard Bus continues to recruit and is optimistic that they will be entering a period that is more conducive to retaining and recruiting staff.
  - The bus driver in Pelly Crossing recently resigned and recruitment efforts are underway to replace the driver. We will be supporting Standard in their recruitment efforts and hope to have the route staffed soon.
- Efforts will be made to limit any service disruptions in Whitehorse, and we will continue to work with Standard Bus to develop contingency plans, which may include bringing in out-of-territory drivers and combining routes where possible.

#### **Discipline and Behavior Management on Buses**

- The rules of the school apply while on the school bus and school Principals make a determination if an incident warrants suspension or expulsion from the bus.
  - Standard Bus has a process to report incidents to schools when they happen on the bus.
  - There may be occasions when drivers decide operationally, for health and safety reasons, to remove a student from the bus prior to leaving the school ground or on route.
  - When behavioral issues persist, schools work with Standard bus and Education staff to come up with a solution. An example would be developing a seating plan.
- 

#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- There have been challenges with providing busing services since the start of the pandemic.
- 

#### **Background:**

- The Department of Education works with the School Busing Committee on matters affecting the delivery of shared busing services.
  - There are 41 active bus routes in Whitehorse and 12 in the communities, including Ross River.
  - As of the start of the 2023-24 school year there were 2,102 registered riders for the school bus in Whitehorse.
  - Since the start of the school year the department received over 500 late registrations and/or special requests which impacted our ability to respond in a timely manner.
-

- For the beginning of the 2023-24 school year, Standard Bus reported that all rural community routes were staffed however unforeseen circumstances led to the two Dawson routes being combined and the Mayo route without a driver.
- For the 2023-24 school year families were required to submit a registration for the school bus.
  - The deadline for registrations was June 20th.
  - Registrations received up to August 15th were processed and seats assigned for the start of the school year.
  - Due to an influx of late registrations some families were not notified of a seat assignment until September 8<sup>th</sup>.
  - Additional communications were sent out to families notifying them of these communication delays.

#### Act and Regulations

- The *Education Act* and the *Student Transportation Regulations* outline the Department of Education's responsibilities for student transportation.
- Transportation subsidies are mandated under s. 47 of the *Education Act*.
- If a student's home is more than 3.2 km by the nearest passable road from the school the student attends, the Minister must either provide transportation (i.e., busing) or an 'allowance for transportation and accommodation.'
- The Department of Education supports Yukon students by providing busing services (in all Yukon communities) for families that do not meet the eligibility requirements under the *Education Act*.
- Under the *Student Transportation Regulations* (O.I.C. 1991/069) the amount of the transportation allowance (limited to one per family) shall equal the Government of Yukon car mileage rate payable to public servants to a maximum amount prescribed by the Minister.
- Under Ministerial Order 2004/10, the maximum transportation allowance payable is \$13 per day.

#### Testing for new drivers

- Testing delays continue to hover around 6 weeks.
- A new driver examiner has been hired and trained since last session.



- Another examiner has left the territory temporarily to receive advanced training in driver examinations, which will increase testing capacity upon their return.
- Additionally, Highways and Public Works is actively seeking another examiner to minimize delays.
- They continue to expedite testing for commercial clients that identify as needing testing for work purposes including tourism, bus driving and emergency medical services, on a case-by-case basis, as time slots become available due to cancellations.

#### Special requests

- In keeping with the Education Act and Student Transportation Regulations, student riders are first assigned a seat for transportation from home to school, and back.
- Transportation to locations other than home is beyond the criteria for school busing and are considered special requests and are considered at the beginning of the school year based on available space and existing bus routes.
- The Student Transportation Ridership Guidelines outline how we consider accommodating students travelling to locations other than their home, for example to after-school activities or daycare.

#### Contract

- Standard Busing was awarded the Student Transportation school bus contracts for both Whitehorse public schools and community public schools for 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24
  - These contracts went to public tender in 2021, and Standard was the successful bidder for both contracts. (Whitehorse: \$7.395 million, Community \$2.898 million; does not include field trips and non-scheduled transportation).

#### **Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-15**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

#### Transportation Safety Plans: refer to SO14

##### Value:

- The health, safety, and wellbeing of students and staff is our first priority.

##### Recommended response:

- School buses are one of the safest modes of transportation available.
- In our current contract with Standard Bus, we have additional safety features such as strobes on the top of the vehicles and dash cameras on some vehicles.
- The Government of Yukon participates in a Transport Canada National Task Force on School Bus Safety, as Yukon's school buses must meet all the Transport Canada requirements for buses.
- At this time, installing seat belts on buses is not recommended or required by the task force.
- The contractor ensures that evacuation drills are practiced twice per school year.

##### Additional response:

- We work with Standard Bus, the RCMP, and communities to promote safe driving near school buses and to reduce risks along bus routes.
- In an emergency on a bus, the first priority is to ensure the safety of students and staff.
- Information is shared with families as soon as it is safe to do so.

- If parents have any concerns, they can contact their school, the Student Transportation Officer, or Standard Bus.

#### **Additional response – Transportation Safety Plans:**

- Infrastructure and parking lot access points are an important factor in ensuring students and school community members can navigate school campuses safely.
- We are working with Highways and Public Works' Road Safety Unit on a Transportation Safety Plan initiative.
- We have made many on-campus improvements to improve student safety around traffic. Some of these improvements come from recommendations outlined in the 2018 Whitehorse School Mobility Report.
- The department hired a contractor to do a follow up assessment to the 2018 report and will be working to implement any further improvements that are recommended.
- The department has been working with Highways and Public Works to develop safety materials for students and parents. The materials will be distributed in the fall of the 2023-24 school year.
- I would like to remind drivers that you are required under the law to stop when a school bus is letting children on and off the buses. Please make sure you do this for the safety of our children.

#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- There has been media attention, public discussion, MLA correspondence and debate in the Legislature about school bus safety.

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#### Background:

- The regulations for physical safety requirements on school buses, including school bus seating, are set by the Government of Canada. Yukon school buses are required to meet national standards.
- All bus routes and stops are assessed on an ongoing basis.
- The Government of Yukon increased fines and demerit points for infractions, and the department is piloting the use of dashboard cameras on certain bus routes.
- The Departments of Education, Justice, Highways and Public Works, RCMP, Standard Bus and school communities have worked, and continue to work, to address concerns about bus safety on the highways.
- The Department of Education works with the School Busing Committee to address issues that affect shared busing services in Whitehorse.
- The RCMP continues to pay close attention to areas of concern, including the Alaska Highway.

#### Motion 332 and 2020 Report from the Task Force

- Motion 332 was passed in October 2019: THAT this House urges the Minister of Education, in partnership with all appropriate stakeholders, to participate in the recently announced Transport Canada assessment of seatbelt safety and continue to review school busing in Yukon, including but not limited to: (1) bus capacity and assigned seating; (2) whether the wearing of seat belts by passengers should be mandatory; (3) registration process; (4) behavioural and disciplinary policies; (5) emergency procedures; and (6) service areas and standards.
- In June 2019, the federal Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities published a report on bus passenger safety, which noted that buses - particularly school buses - are among the safest modes of transportation available.
- The Government of Yukon is part of a national committee (Task Force) to identify measures to further improve school bus safety in Canada.

- The HPW Director of Transport Services has been part of the national Task Force and updates the EDU Director of Operations periodically.
- The February 2020 report from the Task Force recommended 4 additional safety measures, but did not recommend 3-point seat belts in buses for passengers. The 4 recommendations are:
  - i. Infraction Cameras, to help prevent dangerous incidents caused by passing motorists;
  - ii. Extended Stop Arms, to further deter motorists from passing while children are entering or leaving the bus; (Transport Canada proposed this regulation which would apply only to newly manufactured/imported buses)
  - iii. Exterior 360° Cameras, as a means of better detecting and protecting children and other vulnerable road users around the exterior of the bus; and
  - iv. Automatic Emergency Braking, to help reduce the severity of a collision or avoid it entirely. (As of February 2023, Transport Canada continues to conduct research and testing of automatic emergency braking to inform a proposed regulatory package.)
- The task force is working with partners in BC and Ontario to carry out school bus seatbelt projects.

#### Operational procedures

- Following incidents, the bus drivers first work with the RCMP on scene, and submit company incident reports, which are then shared with the department.
- The department and Standard Bus then work together on specific responses such as outreach with the RCMP.
- The department coordinates with the school, Standard Bus, and RCMP to ensure the safety of students and to share current information with parents as it becomes available.
- School buses regularly stop on highways to pick up and drop off students at designated locations. By stopping on the highway, other drivers can see the bus and flashing red lights from a distance, and all vehicles are required to stop. This allows the bus to take control of the roadway, stopping vehicles in both directions so it is safe for children to cross the road.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SO04**

**Fall 2023**

## Busing – Traffic Safety

Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-10-30

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

#### Value

- We continue to work with school communities on planning for their short, medium and long-term facility needs.

#### Recommended response:

- The Department of Education recognizes the importance of outdoor play and experiential learning opportunities.
- I recognize that the current state of the multi-use field presents challenges to accommodating the type of outdoor physical activities the school community wants.
- Following my site visit with the school council on June 14, 2023, the Department of Education and the Department of Highways and Public Works have identified the need for a feasibility study, which would determine what options would be available to transform the field to a more usable state for the students of Golden Horn.
- Once that report is finalized it will assist us in mapping out our next steps. In the meantime, Department of Education has been working on additional projects to meet the school's needs.
- Outdoor educational opportunities and connection to outdoor spaces are an integral component of a child's education and we are committed to ensuring there are opportunities for outdoor learning and play at all Yukon schools.

#### Additional response:

- Additional projects include the following:

- The accessibility bathroom has recently been completed.
- The health and safety concerns about the front landing of portable number one have been mitigated.
- A Stantec report identified several upgrades to the parent drop-off area, and at this time two of the projects have been completed, which include installing a speed table and signage.
- The damaged basketball hoop has been replaced.
- The asphalt repair in the basketball area has been completed.
- New flooring was installed in a portion of the school over the summer.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Members of the GHES school community and the opposition have expressed concerns of the state of the school's multi-use field.

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#### Background:

- Minister McLean and other Government of Yukon officials attended a walk through with School Council to discuss concerns around the multi-use purpose field on June 14, 2023.
- Larger projects such as these are identified through a process with HPW and delivered through the Property Management Division Capital Development unit.
- Currently Education has confirmed school education infrastructure upgrade projects in the next few years that include a parking lot reconfiguration at École Émilie-Tremblay, site works and field drainage at Robert Service School, parking lot resurfacing at Saint Francis of Assisi, and parking lot improvements at Gadzoosdaa.

#### Approved by:

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]



#### **HIDDEN VALLEY School Playground**

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Education

##### **Value**

- We continue to work with school communities on planning for their short, medium, and long-term facility needs.

##### **Recommended response:**

- Of significant importance to me is ensuring that all those who support the school community are working well together to ensure a great learning environment for students and staff, and that facility and outdoor needs are addressed.
- It is a priority of the Yukon government to continue to invest in school infrastructure and ensure our schools meet the demands of the unique school communities they serve.
- The Department of Education committed to installing new playground equipment this fall, that the school council procured through Blue Imp.
- The new structures were installed over the Thanksgiving long weekend.
- Planning is underway for the purchase and installation of a larger playground structure at Hidden Valley School for the 2024-25 school year.
- Safe outdoor learning and play is an integral component of a child's education, and we are committed to ensuring these opportunities are available for students.

### **HIDDEN VALLEY School Playground**

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Education

#### **Additional response:**

- Work this summer also included procuring a Gaga-ball court for the school grounds and work to upgrade the Porcupine neurodiversity room to meet programming needs for the school.
- Yukon government is a proud supporter of Victoria Gold Yukon Student Encouragement Society's Every Student, Every Day funding program and I look forward to hearing about how the Gaga-ball court supports the school.
- Yukon government performs periodic assessments of all play structures with the most recent being completed in the fall 2022.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- Two of the three wooden structures at Hidden Valley school were recently deemed unsafe and were removed on July 2, 2023.
- The department was working with the school principal and determined that removing the two wooden climbing structures at the front of the school was the best option at the time.
- However, replacement for the structures had not yet been procured.
- Superintendent has been working closely with the principal at Hidden Valley Elementary School to plan capital priorities for the school.

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#### **Background:**

- School Council sent a letter on this issue on June 16, 2023, July 17, 2023 and July 21, 2023.
- The Superintendent met with school Principal and School Council on July 13, 2023.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SO06**

**Fall 2023**

## **HIDDEN VALLEY School Playground**

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Education

- The Assistant Deputy Minister spoke with School Council Chair on July 25, 2023 to let them know the department will be funding the installation of the procured playground equipment for the 2023-2024 school year as well as the playground and installation for the following year.
- On July 28, 2023, Education's Health and Safety Management Coordinator met with a School Council member to discuss logistics for the install of the playground. Together they mapped out where the new playground equipment will go and they included room for expansion next summer.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-10-10**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Public Announcement Systems in Schools

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Education

#### Value:

- The health, safety, and well-being of students and staff is our first priority.

#### Recommended response:

- It is important that school staff are able to communicate effectively during emergencies and during regular programming.
- We completed upgrades on public announcement systems at Elijah Smith Elementary in 2018, Grey Mountain Primary in 2019, Holy Family in 2021, and Khàtinàs.àxh (Kaw keen ah sa) Community School in Teslin in 2022.
- We also upgraded the public announcement systems at Porter Creek Secondary School and St. Francis of Assisi Secondary School in the 2019-20 school year.
- Recent upgrades to the Del Van Gorder School public announcement systems have been completed.
- The public announcement system at Ghùch Tlâ Community School in Carcross was upgraded over the summer 2023.
- Education has maintenance contracts in place to troubleshoot and repair any public announcement system deficiencies reported by schools.
- Work is ongoing at Elijah Smith Elementary, Porter Creek Secondary, Saint Francis of Assisi, Selkirk and Christ the King Elementary school to address any potential system errors and source parts as needed.

## Public Announcement Systems in Schools

Education

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Many schools use their public announcement systems in emergency protocols to communicate with their staff and students.
- Local contractors who can address public announcement system needs are limited.
- Elijah Smith School Council raised concerns with the school's public announcement system in the spring of 2022.

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### Background:

- Schools with public announcement systems use them to make announcements to the entire school, make calls between school rooms, play signal bells and more.
- Public announcement systems are sometimes part of staff communication protocols. For example, they may use them to communicate emergency codes to all staff and students at once, or make calls from a classroom to request support from other staff.
- If a school's public announcement system is not available/functional, schools make alternative plans to communicate, such as deploying two-way radios to teachers, using megaphones or using cell phones in the interim.
- Replacement of broken or aging public announcement systems is managed and prioritized in the capital planning process. For example, broken public announcement systems would take priority over aging but functional systems.
- Public announcement systems are complex networks and take time to install and connect with phones and the internet.

### Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-11-07

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

#### Value:

- The health and safety of students and staff is our first priority.

#### Recommended response:

- The Government of Yukon's radon management guidelines follow Health Canada's recommended guidelines.
- Testing and remediation has been completed for all schools.
- Any school that shows results above the recommended range is remediated and monitored until we are confident the levels are within the recommended range.
- Post-remediation testing was completed at Eliza Van Bibber, Christ the King Elementary, the Teen Parent Centre, and Holy Family Elementary School, and results indicate levels are now below Health Canada Guidelines.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The issue of radon levels in schools was raised in October 2019.

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#### Background:

- Radon is naturally occurring in Yukon. It does not pose an immediate danger to health and is only a concern if there is prolonged exposure to high concentrations over many years.
- Health Canada's recommended levels of radon concentration for acceptable indoor air quality are as follows: Below 200 Bq/m<sup>3</sup> – acceptable; Between 200 Bq/m<sup>3</sup> and 600 Bq/m<sup>3</sup> – remediate within two years; Above 600 Bq/m<sup>3</sup> – remediate within one year.

- All Yukon schools have been tested, and schools that showed results above the 200 Bq/m<sup>3</sup> have been remediated, with follow-up monitoring until the government is confident levels are within the recommended range. All Yukon school communities have been informed about the results and if any remediation is needed at their schools. The majority had low radon readings.
- Christ the King Elementary School and Eliza Van Bibber School tested above the parameters established by Health Canada guidelines. Remediation work is now completed, and long-term testing indicates levels are now below Health Canada guidelines.
- Remediation work was completed at Jack Hlland Elementary and Nelna Bessie John School, and long-term testing confirmed that radon levels at both schools are below Health Canada guidelines.
- The Teen Parent Centre and Holy Family Elementary School had remediation work in 2018-19. Follow-up testing indicates radon levels are below Health Canada guidelines.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

### ROBERT SERVICE School Expansion

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Education

#### Value:

- We continue to work with school communities on planning for their short, medium and long-term facility needs.

#### Recommended response:

- I am pleased that the Robert Service School modular addition is fully operational for the 2023-24 school year.
- This addition has added more programming space for the school, which will enhance and support student learning.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The budget for this project increased to accommodate requests for increased classroom sizes.
- Delays were caused by supply chain issues.

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#### Background:

- Mould was found in the Robert Service School portables in July 2019.
- The portables were immediately closed, and all programming was moved to the main building. The old portables were decommissioned and removed.
- The final cost for this project was \$6.4 million, and Canada provided funding under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.
- Regular project meetings took place and updates were shared with the school administration.
- Substantial completion was achieved in January 2023.
  - The warranty portion of the contract lasts one year past the date of substantial completion, or to January 2024.
  - Site work to restore the grounds is ongoing and planning continues for future exterior projects.



# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SO09**

**Fall 2023**

## **ROBERT SERVICE School Expansion**

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Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-07

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### School Capital – 2023-24 Projects and Process

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Education

#### Value

- The health and safety of students and staff remains our top priority.

#### Recommended response:

- We will continue to work with school communities on planning their short, medium, and long-term facility needs.
- Major capital projects for 2023-2024 includes work on:
  - Ross River School structural upgrades - \$3.56M;
  - the new Burwash School - \$3.5M;
  - the new Whistle bend Elementary School - \$20.3M;
  - the Selkirk parking lot - \$1.5M (\$1.2M mains and \$0.3M reprofiled in P4);
  - Experiential Learning Spaces - \$1M (St. Elias Community School, J.V Clark School, Tantalus Community School, and Jack Hulland Elementary School)
- In spring 2023, the Yukon government opened a public survey and conducted open houses to hear from the public and school communities to better understand their user experiences with their school facilities and how to better meet the K-12 programming needs.
- The results of this engagement will inform future development of an updated Whitehorse school replacement plan, and a work plan for small and medium renovations for Whitehorse schools.
- Capital planning decisions are made based on information and facility assessments, supplemented with educational programming needs.

## School Capital – 2023-24 Projects and Process

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Education

**Additional response:** We work closely with our colleagues at Highways and Public Works who assist in identifying projects for maintenance, refurbishment, or replacement, such as:

- Playground equipment,
  - Experiential learning spaces,
  - Modernizing learning spaces, and
  - Program related capital repairs.
- It is important that we ensure the portfolio of schools meets the demands of our growing population and provides modern learning environments for students to learn and grow for years to come.
  - Schools are provided a program related capital budget for small scale program related renovations.

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- School communities have demonstrated an increasing interest in capital planning and infrastructure.
- The timing of some major capital projects in recent years (ex: Selkirk Street) has caused disruption to the flow of traffic for students, staff, and families accessing the facility.

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### Background:

- Highways and Public Works delivers major capital projects for sponsoring departments.
- The Department of Education works with Highways and Public Works to ensure impacts to programming are minimized where possible.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SO10**

**Fall 2023**

## **School Capital – 2023-24 Projects and Process**

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Education

- All efforts are made to implement major projects during school closures.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-10-18**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### School Maintenance - 2023-24 Projects and Process

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Education

#### Value

- The health and safety of our students and staff remains our top priority.

#### Recommended response:

- Regularly scheduled preventative maintenance occurs throughout the school year.
- Maintenance that impacts school programming is scheduled for school closure times such as winter, spring, and summer breaks whenever possible.
- We continue to invest in ongoing building maintenance at all our facilities, regardless of age, including routine and emergency maintenance.

#### Additional response:

- We work closely with Highways and Public Works and school administrators on identifying areas in need of maintenance.
- Building systems such as HVAC, electrical, and plumbing are maintained at regularly scheduled intervals.
- Assessments of building systems occur periodically to assist in identifying larger projects for maintenance or upgrade.

### School Maintenance - 2023-24 Projects and Process

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Some school communities feel there is a lack of investment in the infrastructure in their schools.
  - Emergency maintenance to address issues such as isolated water events or hazardous materials remediation can have an impact on programming and can result in disruptions to planned activities.
- 

#### Background:

- 2023-24 Capital maintenance projects being delivered by Highways and Public Works, not including multi-year projects, are:
  - Elijah Smith School - Air Handling Unit
  - Robert Service School - Mechanical Upgrades
  - Ghuch Tlâ Community School - PA/Bell/Clock Replacement
  - Jack Hulland School Services Maintenance Shop – Demolition
  - Ross River School - Gym Lighting Replacement.
  - Takhini Elementary School - Partial Classroom Re-flooring
  - Porter Creek Secondary School – Re-flooring Classrooms
  - Golden Horn Elementary School – Re-flooring Partial Corridor
  - St. Elias Community School – Re-flooring Hallway
  - Tantalus School - Exterior Re-paint
- In the 2022-23 school year the removal of broken floor tiles at Selkirk Elementary School resulted in the school council raising concerns about hazardous materials and questioning protocols and processes.
- The department makes efforts to minimize disruptions to school programming, and processes are in place to ensure health and safety remains at the forefront.
- When there are programming components to capital maintenance projects, Principals are provided an opportunity to provide feedback during the design

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SO11**

**Fall 2023**

## **School Maintenance - 2023-24 Projects and Process**

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Education

process. An example would be the functionality of a PA system and where to place speakers.

- The Yukon government ensures that all Yukon government buildings, including schools, are safe to occupy.
- The Department Highways and Public Works maintains all government building ventilation systems to industry standards and performs regular inspections and maintenance.
- All Yukon government schools are equipped with ventilation systems, which provide fresh air supply to classrooms and offices.
- Fresh air supply is based on maximum occupancy and national and international standards for volumes.
- CO2 monitoring is not a code requirement to monitor air in buildings.
- Schools have access to a work order-generating program, which Highways and Public Works monitors and actions.
  - Work orders are categorized as either "routine" or "emergency". Anything identified as "emergency", such as Health and Safety items or critical systems requests, takes precedence and is prioritized.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-09**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

**Session Briefing Note****Seismic and Schools**

Education /  
Highways and  
Public Works

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**Value:**

- Safety at our schools is a top priority and we work to proactively address safety issues whenever possible.

**Recommended response:**

- Schools are regularly inspected to ensure that they are safe.
- If structural issues are identified, precautionary action is taken and mitigation work is prioritized based on a risk assessment.
- Given the evolution in seismic research, the Government of Yukon conducted studies on all Yukon schools to identify potential seismic risks and the likelihood of seismic events.
- The Yukon government continues to perform seismic and structural assessments on Yukon schools as required, to ensure the safety of staff and students.
- As a result of these studies, our government has undertaken several mitigation measures.
- To date, we have addressed several structural issues – for example, repairs on roofs, floors, and walls – and many non-structural issues such as duct work, furniture upgrades and shelving.
- Yukon's last major seismic event was in 2017 and the mitigations we had in place proved effective during that event.

**Additional response:**

- Every school was built to the standard of the day and inspected to ensure they meet all relevant codes at the time of construction.



## Session Briefing Note

### Seismic and Schools

FALL 2023

Education /  
Highways and  
Public Works

- The Departments of Highways and Public Works and Education are reviewing all Yukon school facilities and planning for the future of those facilities.
- Seismic issues are one of the many factors considered in new school design.

#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- The public is interested in seismic mitigation in Yukon schools.

#### Background:

- Yukon schools were built to the building code in place at the time of construction and modern building code requirements contain increasingly stringent structural requirements.
- The type and severity of seismic issues varies from building to building and can be categorized into:
  - structural components - roof, floors, walls, foundations; or
  - non-structural components - suspended ceilings, water piping, ductwork, furniture upgrades and shelving units.

Approved by:



September 8, 2023

Deputy Minister, Highways and Public Works

Date Approved

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

September 8, 2023

Deputy Minister, Education

Date Approved

### Busing—General: refer to HOT02/SO03

#### Value:

- The Department of Education provides transportation to support students with special needs to travel safely to and from school.

#### Recommended response:

- The safety and wellbeing of students is a top priority, and we expect the same from contractors operating on behalf of the Government of Yukon.
- The Department of Education is currently supporting students with special needs by providing transportation through our bus contractor, Standard Bus, and through other means, such as transportation subsidies or taxi services.

#### Additional response:

- For some families, transportation challenges can impact student attendance. When students miss school, they miss important learning opportunities. We explore all available safe transportation options with families to find the best solution to meet students' needs.

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#### Context – this may be an issue because:

- Taxi safety and accessible vehicles continue to be a high-profile concern in Whitehorse.
- A contract with a local cab company was terminated early, on January 7, 2022, due to non-compliance with performance requirements.

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#### Background:

- Beginning January 17, 2022, transportation arrangements were made for students with special needs with a local cab company and were in place for the remainder of the 2021-22 school year.
  - This arrangement occurred after the previous contract with a different company was terminated,
  - The local cab company continued to provide the service for the 2022-23 and is providing the service for the 2023-24 school year.
  - For the 2023-2024 school year, the department is providing direct support for one student, and has partnered with Disability Services- Health and Social Services to provide this service to two other students.

#### History

- The previous contractor, a different local cab company, was contracted with the Department of Education from August 12, 2019, to March 31, 2022.
  - They were awarded a three-year contract through a Request for Bids process in 2019 to provide transportation for students with exceptional needs in Whitehorse.
  - Four students with exceptional needs were accessing the special needs transportation through the company during the 2021-22 school year.
- Throughout the fall of the 2021-22 school year, the Department of Education began to experience issues with the company related to contract performance requirements.
- After attempts to communicate and resolve the non-compliance, a final notice was issued to the company in December 2021. No response was received, and the contract was terminated early in January 2022.
- Tender documents were issued for the provision of special needs transportation and a successful bid was received by a different company.
- Upon meeting with department staff and receiving the draft contract the successful bidder notified the department that they could no longer meet the contract specifications.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SO13**

**Fall 2023**

## Special Needs Transportation

Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-07

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

**Value:**

- The health and safety of students and staff remains our top priority.

**Recommended response:**

- We understand the importance infrastructure and orientation plays in ensuring students and school community members can navigate campuses safely.
- In 2018, we worked with the City of Whitehorse to review infrastructure surrounding Whitehorse schools and identify projects that could enhance safety.
- Many of the on-campus recommendations from the 2018 School Mobility Review, as well as additional projects identified, have been implemented. These include:
  - New parking lots and parent drop-off areas at Christ the King, Golden Horn, Holy Family, and Hidden Valley schools.
  - Bus loop and parent drop-off at the north side of Selkirk Elementary School.
  - Enhanced crosswalks on 12<sup>th</sup> avenue, and additional signage on Pine and Fir streets.

**Additional response:**

- The Department initiated a follow up report to the 2018 School Mobility Review to evaluate the work done and identify any potential opportunities to further enhance safety and traffic flows.

- Developing active safety transportation plans is as a key government priority.
- Currently we are working with the Road Safety Branch of Highways and Public Works to:
  - develop a safety activity booklet for students; and,
  - develop a school-specific parent handout that will include information on how to navigate the campus safely.
- The materials will be distributed in the fall semester of the 2023-24 school year. This initiative is being funded through existing budgets.
- The Yukon government continues to invest in infrastructure to enhance safety, including new parking lots, additional signage, and better lighting.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- Some of the themes we heard in the spring 2023 public engagement centered around active transportation and safe links to school campuses as well as accessible parking and safe student drop off areas.
- The Golden Horn school council has voiced displeasure with the design and functionality of their recently upgraded parking lot which includes a parent drop off and bus loop.

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#### **Background:**

- The City of Whitehorse partnered with the Department of Education to conduct a School Mobility Review of school zone safety.
- Stantec was hired for the review and visited sites from May 28 to 31, 2018, placing focus on 6 priority sites which included Christ the King (CKES), Jack Hulland (JHES), Elijah Smith (ESES), Whitehorse Elementary (EWES), Holy Family

(HFES), and Selkirk (SES). They identified some on-campus and off-campus opportunities for improved safety.

- School communities have expressed concerns with adjacent infrastructure and requested upgrades in the past (example: 12<sup>th</sup> avenue in Porter Creek crosswalks)
- During each site design process school communities are consulted.
- The development of active safety transportation plans has been identified as a key government priority.
- When concerns are raised about crosswalk safety the Department of Education works with the City of Whitehorse on efforts to mitigate risk and address concerns.
- The Department of Education works closely with Highways and Public Works Transport Services on public awareness campaigns to enhance the safety of students as they commute to school.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

Questions about tendering and build are for HPW.

School Board and Council Elections and Referendums: refer to EP04

#### Value:

- We are building the first new Whitehorse elementary school in over 20 years in Whistle Bend. This will provide students with a modern learning environment and support a thriving and growing community.

#### Recommended response:

- Construction is underway and is expected to be completed in the winter of 2023-24.
- In preparation for the new school, a new Whistle Bend School attendance area has been created.
- This attendance area is based on the city boundaries for the subdivision, plus portions of the previous Takhini Elementary School area, which is now being governed by the First Nation School Board.
- The Whistle Bend School Council has a role guiding aspects of the school build and will assume regular school council duties, such as hiring a principal – which is currently underway.

#### Additional response:

- The Whistle Bend School is a key investment, with construction scheduled to be completed during the 2023-24 school year.
- A \$42.8 million design-build contract was awarded to Ketza Construction Corporation.
- The 2023-24 Main Estimates include \$20.3 million for construction of the school, with a total capital requirement budgeted at \$52.8 million.



#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Throughout this project, questions have been raised about overall project delays and budget increases.

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#### Background:

- As part of the capital planning process, Education, the Project Advisory Committee, EMR's Land Management Branch and Highways and Public Works identified Lot 333 as a suitable location in Whistle Bend for the school.
- A contract for Owner's Advisor services was awarded to Colliers Project Leaders.
- The Design-Build tender was published March 2021 and closed on May 19, 2021.
- Education established a Project Advisory Committee (PAC), which met regularly throughout the design phase of the project.
- Members of the PAC included: Whistle Bend Community Association, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, and City of Whitehorse; as well as Yukon government representatives from Education, Community Services, and Highways and Public Works. It was co-chaired by a Department of Education representative and a nominated representative of the PAC.
- The design builder completed the design and it followed the design and intent of the design that was tendered out.
- The design includes gender-neutral washrooms.
- A tender for the supply and delivery of classroom furniture closed on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and contract details are being worked on with the successful bidders.
- An attendance area has been established and an election for the Whistle Bend School Council took place in November 2022 to align with the First Nation School Board trustee elections conducted by Elections Yukon.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SO15**

**Fall 2023**

**WHISTLE BEND School**

Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-07

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Whitehorse Elementary Replacement Project

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Education

**Whitehorse School Replacements Long-Term Capital Planning: refer to HOT18/SO17**

#### Value:

- Our government is investing in school infrastructure.
- École Whitehorse Elementary School has been identified for replacement with a new, modern facility that will meet the needs of the community for years to come.

#### Recommended response:

- École Whitehorse Elementary School was originally built in the 1950s and is the top priority for replacement among Whitehorse schools.
- The current facility is not able to meet current and future programming and community needs, including access to spaces for innovative, inclusive, and experiential learning.
- The Takhini Educational Land Reserve is a central location that can accommodate French Immersion students from around Whitehorse.
- The Department of Education has established a Project Advisory Committee to facilitate collaboration and the exchange of ideas between key partners, stakeholders, and the Government of Yukon. This group meets regularly.
- Project timelines will be determined as further planning work is undertaken.
- In August 2023, Kobayashi + Zedda Architects Ltd. was awarded the prime consultant contract for the École Whitehorse Elementary School replacement project through a public tender.

### Whitehorse Elementary Replacement Project

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Education

- A preliminary site assessment is currently underway.
- In phase two of the contractors' work a traffic study will be conducted to report on the local impacts of the development. Pedestrian safety, traffic access, and egress from the site will also be assessed.
- Moving Whitehorse Elementary School to the Takhini Educational Land Reserve does not preclude having a downtown school in future.
- There are a number of schools in the downtown right now – the Wood Street Centre, the Individual Learning Centre, and the Aurora Virtual School. All operate out of downtown and are an important part of our portfolio of schools.

#### **Additional response:**

- The government has Educational Land Reserves identified for schools.
- The Takhini Educational Land Reserve is a large parcel of land, serviced, appropriately zoned, and provides a central location that has better access to green space desired for modern learning.
- An initial step in this work is to identify potential locations for the future school on the Takhini educational reserve, at which point engagement with the First Nation School Board and Softball Yukon will occur.
- Engagement with the broader Whitehorse community and partners occurred in the spring of 2023 and will inform the long-term plan for replacing and renovating aging Whitehorse schools.

## Whitehorse Elementary Replacement Project

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Education

- In October 2022, I met with downtown residents who are concerned about having an elementary school in the downtown core. This information will be considered as the long-term plan is developed.
  - The Project Advisory Committee has designated seats for the following:
    - Whitehorse Elementary School Council
    - Whitehorse Elementary School Administration
    - City of Whitehorse
    - Government of Yukon
    - Ta'an Kwäch'än Council
    - Kwanlin Dün First Nation
- 

### Context—this may be an issue because:

- MLAs have been vocal about the need to keep a school in the downtown core. The Minister met with concerned downtown residents on October 21, 2022.
  - Softball Yukon is concerned about the impact to ball diamonds located on the Tahkini education reserve.
  - Department officials have met with Softball and Sport Yukon and a commitment was made to ensure they remain informed as the project progresses.
- 

### Background:

- École Whitehorse Elementary School was originally built in the 1950s and is the oldest currently operated school in the Yukon.
  - Renovating or replacing the current facility on site are not viable options.
  - There have been issues raised with the current École Whitehorse Elementary School regarding the capacity of the gymnasium and its egress, the number of washrooms available on the main floor, IT infrastructure, energy efficiency, lack of modern learning spaces, seismic rating, needed build code upgrades and overall accessibility.
-

### Whitehorse Elementary Replacement Project

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Education

- Among other concerns such as lot size and suitability, building on the same downtown site would require costly and prohibitive decanting strategies (moving students) for 2-3 years minimum to accommodate build.
- The Project Advisory Committee meetings occurred on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, November 10<sup>th</sup>, and December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
- The Project Advisory Committee will provide the department with input on key aspects of the school's planning and design, including ways the school can help to meet community needs in terms of functionality, cultural components, and community space.
- The School Community, Takhini area residents, Association franco-yukonnaise, Canadian Parents for French, other relevant organizations and the general public will be encouraged to provide feedback on the project at key milestones in the project's design.
- Site selection on Takhini Education Reserve.
  - The Takhini Educational Land Reserve is one of the largest in Whitehorse and has enough room for two schools.
  - There are not a lot of other sites that are centrally located and would meet the needs of a new school; there is not a lot of vacant land in general that is centrally located.
  - To look at a different site would entail having to go through lengthy territorial and municipal zoning processes, followed by those sites needing to be serviced (sewer, electricity etc.); this is not a viable option given the urgent need to replace school infrastructure.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-10-23**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]

### Whitehorse School Replacements – Long-Term Capital Planning

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Education

#### Whitehorse Elementary Replacement Project: refer to HOT17/SO16

##### Value:

- Our government is investing in Yukoners by investing in school infrastructure.

##### Recommended response:

- It's important that we ensure the portfolio of schools meets the demands of our growing population and provides modern learning environments for students to learn and grow for years to come.
- The Yukon government recognizes the fundamental role of schools in healthy, thriving communities.
- In spring 2023 the Yukon government opened a public survey and conducted open houses to hear from the public and school communities to better understand their user experiences with their school facilities and how to better meet the K-12 programming needs.
- In addition to the survey and open houses, the department hosted focus groups for educators, learning stewards, and students.
- We recognize that there are many other educational partners, organizations, and community groups that have ideas and experiences to share. The department reached out to many groups to inform them of the engagement and how to participate.

**Session Briefing Note**

**Spring Session 2023**

**Whitehorse School Replacements – Long-Term Capital Planning**

Education

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**Additional response:**

- We will continue working closely with the two Yukon school boards, the First Nation School Board and the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, on their vision for education and capital needs.
- As part of the engagement, we also had conversations with Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.
- The department is sharing information about this engagement with First Nations across the territory, and the Gadzoosdaa Advisory Committee, recognizing that students from communities may attend school in Whitehorse.
- We continue to invest in all our schools across the territory and conversations about capital projects in rural schools will continue at the community level.

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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- There is considerable public attention around school replacements and locations in Whitehorse.

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**Background:**

- The purpose of the engagement is to:
  - Build relationships with school communities;
  - Inform Yukoners about the school capital planning and development process; and
  - Collect stakeholder feedback on their ideas and considerations for a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment.
- The following groups were engaged as part of the engagement process:



### Whitehorse School Replacements – Long-Term Capital Planning

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Education

- Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards and Committees
- Catholic Education Association of Yukon
- Yukon First Nation Education Directorate
- Gadzoosdaa Advisory Committee
- Yukon Association of Education Professionals
- Yukon Employee's Union
- Yukon University
- City of Whitehorse
- Child Youth and Advocate Office
- Softball Yukon
- Association franco-yukonnaise
- LDay Centre for Learning
- Autism Yukon
- Child Development Centre
- Yukon Literacy Coalition
- Yukon Learn
- Whitehorse Downtown Resident's Association
- Whitehorse-area community associations
- The results of this engagement will inform future development of an updated Whitehorse school replacement plan, and a work plan for small and medium renovations for Whitehorse schools.
- The public engagement was delayed from fall 2022 to spring 2023 as more time was required to secure a local contractor.
- École Emilie-Tremblay was the last elementary school built in Whitehorse and opened in 1996.
- The Whistle Bend Elementary School will be completed during the 2023-24 school year.
- The French First Language Secondary School Community Centre, Centre scolaire secondaire communautaire Paul-Émile Mercier (CSSC Mercier) opened its doors to students in November 2020.
- Short-term measures such as portables have been added to several Whitehorse schools to alleviate enrolment pressures.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#HOT18/SO17**

**Fall 2023**

## **Whitehorse School Replacements – Long-Term Capital Planning**

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Education

Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-09-06

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

#### Value

- We work with school communities on ways they can organize their building's learning spaces to meet the needs of their students and programs.

#### Recommended response

- We monitor all schools to help administrators and school communities plan for enrolment and needs in the short, medium, and long term.
- Modular classrooms are an option to address enrolment pressure in schools.
- Enrolment pressure is also a key element in the long-term capital planning process.

#### Additional response:

- Prior to placing modulars at schools enrolment and program offerings are reviewed to assist in decision making.
- Market conditions have resulted in the procurement timelines for modulars impacting completion timelines.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Schools such as FH Collins and Jack Hulland have requested modulars in recent years.

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#### Background:

- In recent years modular classrooms have been placed at:
  - 2 at Golden Horn Elementary Schools
  - Hidden Valley Elementary Schools

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SO18**

**Fall 2023**

## Modular Classrooms

Education

- 2 at Selkirk Elementary School
- A modular addition at Selkirk Elementary Schools
- A 4-classroom annex to replace aged modulators at Robert Service School in Dawson
- Site feasibility studies have been conducted to confirm the ability to place modulators at schools with emerging enrolment pressures.
- In addition to the new modulators all existing modulators have been assessed for condition.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-10-12**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

**Hidden Valley School-Supports, Reviews-Investigations, Legal: refer to HOT06/SI08**

### Value:

- The 2019 Audit and the final Report of the Review of Inclusive and Special Education tell us that we have to rethink how we're supporting students and delivering timely, effective supports for their learning needs.

### Recommended response:

- There is a growing need for specialized programming support for students on the autism spectrum across the territory.
- The position for Itinerant Teacher for Autism had been posted three times with no candidates meeting the essential qualifications.
- For the 2023-2024 school year we will dedicate this FTE specifically to Hidden Valley Elementary School to continue neurodiverse programming.
- The purpose of this position is to support the students who have been successful in this program and will help the school and teachers develop and deliver inclusive programming in all schools.

### Additional response:

- We intend to work with parents and partner organizations – such as Autism Yukon – to help us in the development and implementation of neurodiverse programming to better support all teachers and support staff in a school to increase inclusive practice.

- This Itinerant Teacher for Autism position stems from requests from a school with a proportionately high number of students with autism.
- This is a new and creative programming approach in providing supports in line with the recommendations from the final report of the Review of Inclusive and Special Education.
- We want to be responsive to the growing number of Yukon students who are being diagnosed through the Child Development Centre (Pre-school Diagnostic Clinic) and Health and Social Services, Disability Services (School-aged Diagnostic Clinic).

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The Child and Youth Advocate, MLAs and families at Hidden Valley Elementary are calling for more EAs and specialized programming support.
- Autism Yukon has raised concerns about the under reporting of the prevalence of autism spectrum disorder in the territory based on the National Survey Report published in 2018.

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#### **Background:**

- There is a recognition of the increasing prevalence of students in the Yukon with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.
- Some parents are concerned that when support personnel, who have been successfully working with their child, change positions there is a lack of well documented programming and strategies that enable continued success for their child.
- For the 2022-2023 school year HVES was able to hire within their teacher FTE an LAT that is supporting the development and implementation of programming for students on the spectrum, as well as, students with other neuro diverse needs.
- This change in FTE does not take away from the other specialized supports offered to Hidden Valley Elementary School or other schools from the Student Support Services Branch.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SSS01**

**Fall 2023**

## Autism Specialist Project

Education

- Evaluation criteria for neurodiverse programming will be established to determine next steps.
- The position for Itinerant Teacher, Autism has been posted three times with no candidates meeting the essential qualifications.
  - This Itinerant Teacher for Autism position remains unfilled at this time and there are concerns from parents and advocates that the qualifications and experience required in the poster cannot be found in a teacher skill set. The poster was created using qualifications and experience from similar positions in other school jurisdictions.
  - In 2024-2025 school year we will continue with efforts to recruit a qualified candidate to have an Itinerant Teacher for Autism based out of the Student Support Services Branch.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

#### Value:

- Our goal is to provide students with educational programs that meet their learning needs.

#### Recommended response:

- No matter what type of learning plan a student has, educators are aware of the plan and the supports and strategies that the student requires.
- If school staff require any assistance to implement the strategies, they can seek help from the school administration, School-Based Team, and/ or the Student Support Services branch.
- At any time, parents and guardians are encouraged to bring forward concerns to their school to ensure a student is being effectively supported.
- An Individual Education Plan, or IEP, can be created for any student who requires special education (as outlined in the Education Act).
- Students on an IEP may graduate with a full Dogwood high school Diploma if they earn all the credits required to graduate.

#### Additional Response—RISE:

- We are reviewing all the services and supports for inclusive and special education, including the development and delivery of learning plans.
- We will review the recommendations of a Community of Inquiry, made up of our education partners and department staff, that is



looking specifically at IEPs, as part of the work plan for Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education. The recommendations were submitted at the end of October and the department is currently reviewing them.

- This Community has been tasked to update a consistent IEP template, process and structures that incorporate student voice and create accountability structures around IEPs.

#### **Types of learning plans**

- There are three types of learning plans available in the Yukon: Individualized Education Plans, Student Learning Plans, and Behaviour Support Plans.
- All learning plans are designed to provide the learning supports individual students need to be successful in school. Students may need more specific supports to access the curriculum.
- The type of learning plan a student has in no way limits the types of learning supports that are available to the student.
- We will provide all students in need of special education with the option of an IEP.
- Information about the supports for students with diverse abilities or special needs, and how they are provided, is available on Yukon.ca.

#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Questions about IEPs were received during the Standing Committee on Public Accounts hearing in January 2022 and it was suggested regular meetings with families and plan updates are not happening.
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#### Background:

##### Student Learning Plans (SLPs) and Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs)

- These plans typically are for students who need ‘adaptations’ to their education programs in order to meet the learning outcomes of the prescribed curriculum.
- These adaptations are designed to ‘level the playing field’ for a student so that the student can successfully learn the prescribed curriculum.
- BSPs set out the adaptations required for students who demonstrate behaviours that are not expected in the school environment
- The supports and adaptations that are put in place depend on the specific needs of the student. Examples include: allowing additional time to complete tasks, allowing the use of a calculator in math to support numeracy, providing access to audio books to support literacy, or behaviour supports such as scheduled breaks throughout the day to help self-regulate.
- Students on these plans may also access other supports such as assistive technology, speech therapy, etc. depending on what they need.
- Students with SLPs and/or BSPs have their plan documented in the Student Information System and their progress is reported.
- Students with SLPs and BSPs are generally expected to be able to graduate with a Dogwood diploma.

##### Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)

- IEPs are typically used for students who have been determined to have special educational needs and therefore require an individualized curriculum with modified or adapted learning outcomes to support those special educational needs. IEPs can also be used for gifted students.
  - Although a formal psychological assessment is not required for the creation of an IEP, an assessment can inform which supports are required. The updated CASA
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commits the department to provide, complete, and deliver the final report for psychoeducational assessments within six months of referrals from teachers, administrators or physicians. If the Government is unable to provide the assessment directly within this timeframe, it shall cover expenses incurred by parents to obtain the assessment externally.

- IEPs state how the student will be supported and set out the student's goals. They can be modified or adapted to meet the student's needs.
- Having an IEPs does not automatically mean a student will be assigned an Educational Assistant (EA). There is a separate process to request EA support.
- Principals are responsible for ensuring the learning goals of IEPs are being met, and that the plans are evaluated and updated at least three times a year.
- The Learning Assistance Teacher (LAT) case manages IEPs within the school, and tracks IEP progress as a student moves between different grade levels and teachers.
- Students with IEPs and their learning goals are tracked in the student information system.
- Teachers are responsible for the implementation of an IEP's goals and objectives and the supports and interventions.
- The central administration staff are monitoring that IEPs are being updated by each school. We are currently focused on using the data from the student information system to produce more relevant and meaningful reports on IEPs to help to monitor these updates.
- We continue to support and train teachers, LATs and administrators on how to communicate student learning for those students who are on an IEP.
- Each student is unique. Some students with an IEP are eligible to graduate with a Dogwood diploma, while others receive an Evergreen Certificate.
- An Evergreen Certificate is intended to celebrate the success in learning that is not recognized as the student graduating as they are unable to receive the required courses to graduate with a Dogwood Diploma.
- An Evergreen Certificate recognizes the accomplishments of students with special needs and an IEP who have met the goals of their education program, other than graduation.
- Communication with students and their parents/caregivers is key in determining graduation planning.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SSS02**

**Fall 2023**

**Learning Plans (IEPs, SLPs, BSPs)**

Education

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Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-11-06

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### **LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan, SOGI Policy and Education Act Amendment Implementation**

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Education

**Gender Identity and Health Curriculum: refer to HOT05/CU02**

#### **Value:**

- It is a top priority to support healthy, active, safe and caring learning environments in all Yukon schools.

#### **Recommended response:**

- All students, staff, and parents have a right to be and feel safe in Yukon public schools.
- They also have the right to be treated with respect and dignity regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, ancestry, place of origin, ethnicity, citizenship, religion, age, or ability.
- School authorities work with their entire school community to develop and implement proactive strategies that support the inclusion, respect and dignity of 2SLGBTQIA+ students and their families.
- The Department of Education values diversity in its school communities and wants to provide safe, welcoming, inclusive and affirming learning environments for all students.
- Parents/guardians and caregivers can contact their child's school directly to learn more about and direct and questions and concerns regarding SOGI Inclusive Education, safe spaces, safe contacts, activities, and organizations to promote equality and non-discrimination, are being implemented in Yukon schools.

### **LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan, SOGI Policy and Education Act Amendment Implementation**

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Education

#### **Action plan:**

- To further support 2SLGBTQIA+ students, the Department of Education updated its Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, or SOGI Policy, as outlined in the LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan
- In our work to implement and evaluate the updated SOGI Policy we will continue to engage with students, educators and other members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.
- As part of our continued SOGI policy review, we will look at the best ways to support schools to implement the policy in schools.
- A recent partnership between the department and ARC Foundation, a charitable foundation supporting SOGI inclusive educational practices in K-12 school settings, has been established to implement the tools and resources of the SOGI 1 2 3 program to help to create more inclusive schools for students and to support educators to implement the SOGI policy.
- Schools, with the support of the Department of Education, school councils and school boards and guidance of best practice from the ARC Foundation are developing school-based procedures and guidelines under the umbrella of the Department of Education's SOGI Policy, to ensure that 2SLGBTQIA+ students are treated with respect and dignity at all Yukon public schools, which includes publicly funded Catholic schools.

### **LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan, SOGI Policy and Education Act Amendment Implementation**

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Education

- As Minister of Education and Women and Gender Equity Directorate, I am fully committed to the ongoing implementation the LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan.

#### **Education Act Amendments:**

- In Spring 2022, the Government of Yukon was pleased to support amendments to the *Education Act* to promote equity and non-discrimination and to ensure that all Yukon schools have safe spaces for 2SLGBTQIA+ students in the form of activities or organizations.
- At the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year the Department of Education provided professional development training to administrators and teachers on the requirements of the *Education Act* and the SOGI and Safe and Caring Schools policies.
- School administrators have been provided with information about their legislative responsibilities, as well as reference materials and resources.
- Counsellors and administrators have been provided with local and national SOGI and Gender and Sexuality Alliance information.
- Several Yukon schools have Gender and Sexuality Alliances and other 2SLGBTQIA+ initiatives.
- We will continue to encourage and support schools to meet their legal obligations to support 2SLGBTQIA+ students.

### **LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan, SOGI Policy and Education Act Amendment Implementation**

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Education

#### **Additional response—Christopher West:**

- The Department of Education did not, nor will we, invite and endorse Christopher West to speak to Yukon educators, at any school or professional development event.
- We do not support speakers for professional learning whose ideologies and positions do not uphold the principles in:
  - the *Education Act*;
  - the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Policy;
  - the Safe and Caring Schools Policy; and
  - the *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Protection Act*, which bans conversion therapy.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- There is considerable interest in the Yukon on how Yukon schools are offering safe and inclusive environments to 2SLGBTQIA+ students including interests regarding the SOGI policy's statement that "Administrators, staff and students will recognize people's correct pronouns, as declared by the individuals themselves. This requirement applies to students who have not made official changes to their name or gender in school records."

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#### **Background:**

##### LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan and SOGI Policy

- There have been media requests, opposition questions and parental concerns regarding the SOGI policy's statement that "Administrators, staff and students will recognize people's correct pronouns, as declared by the individuals themselves. This



### **LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan, SOGI Policy and Education Act Amendment Implementation**

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Education

requirement applies to students who have not made official changes to their name or gender in school records.”

- Some people believe that a parent/guardian should be told by the school if their child is declaring to be called by the pronouns they choose to be recognized by. The policy does not speak to whether school staff must tell parents if a child wishes to use different pronouns or a different name but states that the “*Department of Education values diversity in its school communities and wants to provide safe, welcoming, inclusive and affirming learning environments for all students.*”
- While we understand the importance of involving parents in the lives of their children, the issue at hand is a delicate one that must consider the human rights of students, particularly those who are transgender or nonbinary.
- The Department of Education has recently partnered with the ARC Foundation for their support with the implementation of SOGI inclusive practices in Yukon school through SOGI 1 2 3 and resources for teachers to implement more inclusive practices into their lesson plans and delivery of curriculum. SOGI 1 2 3 implementation in other provinces has recently become under scrutiny.
- Training and resources shall be offered to all staff and further training to those identified staff members and counsellors to be sensitive and respond knowledgeably to 2SLGBTQIA+ students as well as students with 2SLGBTQIA+ family members. Identified staff and counsellors must receive training.
- We believe that schools should involve parents when there is a specific problem or issue that could impact the child's safety, wellbeing, or education.
- Yukon schools have a number of universal, stand-alone washrooms available, and we are working to ensure that all school facilities have stand-alone or gender-neutral washrooms. Building standards have now been updated to ensure new schools will include gender inclusive washrooms.
- In the LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan, released in July 2021, the Department of Education made a number of commitments, including to update the SOGI Policy.
- The recent updates to the SOGI Policy, announced in August 2023, are intended to address issues such as use of a student’s correct gender pronouns, update terminology

### LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan, SOGI Policy and Education Act Amendment Implementation

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Education

to be trans-inclusive, address gender-identity inclusion in sports, and clarify points of contact and responsibilities at the department and school levels.

- On March 23, 2022, the opposition asked the Minister to commit to engaging with the school community to update the SOGI policy before the end of the current school year (June 2022).

#### Education Act

- Amendments to the *Education Act* make it a legal requirement for Principals to ensure that initiatives and activities in schools are inclusive of gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.
- The funding agreement for Catholic schools in Yukon accommodates religious instruction, but emphasizes that they are publicly supported schools with the same responsibilities as other schools, including following responsibilities outlined under SOGI Policy.

#### Christopher West

- In October 2022, Schools and Student Service Branch heard from a school principal regarding concerns that the Catholic Diocese of the Yukon allegedly put Christopher West's name forward for discussion for professional development session(s) in May 2023.
- On October 13, 2022, the Catholic Episcopal Corporation emailed the department, indicating that "There was no decision made to invite Mr. West and he was neither contacted nor booked by the Catholic Episcopal Corporation to speak at any event."

#### **Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-08**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

## Mental Health Supports for School Staff and Students

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Education

**Comprehensive Mental Health Approach (RISE): refer to HOT03/RI01**

**New CASA Agreement – Education Commitments: refer to  
HOT11/DPT06**

### Value:

- The health, safety, and well-being of staff and students is our first priority. Supporting employee and student wellbeing is a crucial part of our work towards creating an engaging and inclusive educational environment.

### Recommended response:

- We are working to develop a Comprehensive Mental Health and Wellness Approach for students that:
  - Includes prevention as well as developmental, cultural, and clinical responses;
  - Creates connections to mental health and wellbeing activities provided by partners and stakeholders; and
  - Aligns with the Yukon Mental Health Strategy.
- The Main Estimates include \$500,000 for Mental Health Supports in schools in the 2023-24 budget in recognition of the increased mental health and wellness needs of students.
- We have created a School Wellness Specialist position as committed to in the new CASA agreement. The role will be to provide a variety of direct supports to students, families, educators and the community.

## Mental Health Supports for School Staff and Students

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Education

- These supports may range from assessments, counselling, consultation and programming, case management and education, depending on the specific needs of individual schools and communities. Positions will be filled between 2023-2026.
- Meeting the mental health needs of students requires flexibility in how we approach meeting them where they are at.
- This can include raising awareness of mental well-being for all students through inclusive, culturally appropriate programs, to targeted services for acute mental health challenges.
- We will continue to work with School Boards and Councils, First Nation governments and other education partners, including youth, to determine how best to:
  - coordinate student supports and access to services;
  - provide additional training for school counsellors;
  - enhance student outreach and awareness; and
  - offer training and supports to school staff in developmentally responsive approaches to mental wellness and awareness of mental wellness needs.
- We continue to offer ongoing training and access to confidential counselling services to staff.

### **Mental Health Supports for School Staff and Students**

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Education

#### Additional response—Students:

- Conversations about mental health are important.
- Through increased awareness, our curriculum, and developmental supports, we are providing students and staff an understanding of mental health.
- This includes teaching them the language to talk about it and where to seek support.
- School counsellors support students in achieving their personal, social, emotional, and academic development, and their career potential.
- Through the Yukon's school curriculum, students learn about social-emotional skills, decision-making about their health and safety, and strategies to strengthen their resilience and wellbeing.
- For acute mental health challenges, school-based staff help students and families connect with the most appropriate supports that are available within a community- including clinical counselling services.

#### Staff:

- Ongoing training and supports are available for administrators and school staff to help recognize and respond appropriately when individuals or colleagues may be struggling to cope.
- During the 2023-24 School Year, all educators have the opportunity to complete a Certified Suicide Prevention training webinar as part of their Professional Development.

### Mental Health Supports for School Staff and Students

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Education

- We offer all employees and their families a range of confidential and expert help and well-being services through the Employee and Family Assistance Program and through their extended health benefits as employees of the Yukon government.
- The Employee and Family Assistance Program provides counselling and critical incident services, as well as nutritional, financial and wellbeing services to get support to deal with life's challenging situations.
- When school staff are dealing with critical events, we work with LifeSpeak to help deploy counselling resources for support and debriefing of staff.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- There is constant public conversation and demand for more mental health supports – especially for youth – in light of the pandemic and the opioid crisis.
- There have been recent calls to staff a clinical counsellor in each Yukon school.

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#### Background:

- Education is working on initiatives that are focused on both prevention and intervention measures to support students and staff.
- We are also working closely with Boys and Girls Club (BGC Yukon) Yukon to implement the recommendations from the Youth Calls to Action- Summit 2022
- According to the *Health Behaviours of School-Aged Children Survey*, a significant proportion of Yukon students are feeling depressed or low at least once a week.
- The Report on the results of the *2018 Health Behaviour of School Aged Children Survey* was released to the public in Winter 2022 by HSS.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SSS04**

**Fall 2023**

## **Mental Health Supports for School Staff and Students**

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Education

- The 3rd Learning During COVID-19 survey found almost half of student respondents said the pandemic had very negatively or negatively impacted their mental health and wellness.
- There is growing recognition within Canada of the critical nature of improving the mental health of young Canadians with a particular emphasis on building positive mental health, in contrast to historically focusing on mental illness.
- The Yukon is a member of the Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium of School Health, a partnership of 25 Ministries of Health and Education across Canada working to promote a Comprehensive School Health approach to student wellness/well-being and achievement/success for all children and youth.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-10-18**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

## Student to Student Harm in Schools

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Education

### Value:

- It is a top priority to support healthy, active, safe and caring learning environments in all Yukon schools.

### Recommended response:

- All students, parents, and teachers and other school staff have the right to be safe, and to feel safe, in their school community.
- The comprehensive work on the Safer Schools Action Plan has highlighted other work that we need to complete to ensure Yukon schools are safe and inclusive.
- There is a need to proactively and responsively address concerns of student-to-student harm.
- Peer-to-peer harm is taken very seriously, and we commit to examining the need for a stand-alone policy to address this issue.
- If a serious incident occurs at school, we follow emergency plans and response protocols. This includes working with the RCMP and other agencies as well as providing support to families involved.
- We have developed communication guidance to support school administrators in providing clear and consistent communication to families.
- In addition, there has been collaborative work done by Education and Victim Services in the development of guidelines and victim support plans to support victims of harm to feel safe at school.

### Additional response:

- School staff promote respectful and positive behaviours by providing welcoming and positive spaces for teaching and learning.



## Student to Student Harm in Schools

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Education

- Few children come to school intending to be disruptive – it is up to the adults in the school to be sensitive to the signs that a student may become dysregulated and demonstrate escalated behaviours.
- Staff use Violence Threat Risk Assessment training to recognize signs and respond appropriately.

### Resources and Supports:

- We are focusing on training and onboarding to:
  - support staff in building connection with students;
  - identify risks, signs of trauma, unhealthy social and bullying behaviours; and
  - respond with effective supports and redirecting behaviours.
- We share resources with staff and students and families about restorative practices to strengthen school communities.

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Dysregulated behavior, violence and threats occurring in schools is an issue of concern.

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### Background:

The Department of Education promotes respectful and safe school environments in the following ways:

- Working closely with government and non-government partners to promote safe schools and response to concerns of safety.
- Safe and Caring Schools Policy;
- Student Protection Policy;
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Policy;
- Non-violent Crisis Intervention training; and

## Student to Student Harm in Schools

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Education

- Available cyberbullying resources and presentations with guest speakers.

### Training and supports for staff

- The department supports school staff after incidents through consultation with School Community Consultant; Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP, or short term counseling); and support and collaboration from the RCMP and other medical and other government and non-government agencies.
- The department has a Safe and Caring Schools Support Plan that outlines the training offered to school staff to support them.
- Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training is an example of effective industry-standard training that is widely available to school-based staff to prevent and respond to students who are demonstrating escalated behaviours.
- Training in the Violence Threat Risk Assessment Protocol (VTRA) is offered by Department of Education every two years.
- Training for school VTRA teams was held at the end of March 2021 via virtual means from the North American Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response (NATCAR).
- Through the collective agreement, we work with YAEF at the *Positive Behaviour Intervention Support and Classroom Diversity Committee* to develop these supports for Yukon schools.

### Process for dealing with 'incidents of concern'

- The department has a Workplace Risk Assessment and Safety Plan Procedure in place for dealing with incidents that occur which indicate that a student's actions may be a risk to staff or other students.
- Under the procedure, such incidents are first reported to the school principal, who investigates the incident using the Workplace Risk Assessment.
- If it is determined that the incident involved a serious threat such as a threat to harm or kill, the Violence Threat Risk Assessment Protocol is used to address the incident. This activates the involvement of community partners to deal with the issue, including the RCMP, Student Support Services, and Health and Social Services.
- If the principal determines that there is otherwise a risk of injury to staff or other students then the Workplace Risk Assessment and Safety Plan Procedure is

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#HOT16/SSS05**

**Fall 2023**

## **Student to Student Harm in Schools**

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Education

followed, and the appropriate plans and resources are put in place to support the school, staff, and students to address and deal with the issue.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-06**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Value

- Officials from the Training Programs Branch work hard with our apprentices to provide flexible support to enable their success.

### Recommended response:

- The Yukon Apprenticeship program continues to support registered Yukon apprentices to complete their program requirements in partnership with Yukon University and Alberta Apprenticeship.
- We're excited to be bringing back the Apprenticeship Excellence Awards on November 23, 2023 to celebrate the outstanding achievements of apprentices and those that have graduated.
- The Department of Education budgets over \$2.5 Million toward supporting apprentices.
- Yukon Apprenticeship is experiencing an increase in both new apprentices signing up and journeyperson certificates being issued as apprentices finish their apprenticeship journey.
- I encourage anyone interested in pursuing training and careers in the trades, or employers who are interested in working with an apprentice, to contact the Training Program Branch at the Department of Education, or to visit our updated Apprenticeship website at [Yukon.ca](http://Yukon.ca).

### Additional response: new interim level evaluation process

- To support apprentices on their learning path, while also upholding high standards in the trades, a new interim level evaluation process is in effect until 2026.

- The interim change is needed because many of the level exams Yukon uses include some outdated questions connected to practices no longer taught. It is important to provide some consideration for this while exams are updated.
- Test scores above 60% will now be considered, alongside technical in-school training marks and workplace performance, to determine if an apprentice will advance to the next level.
- Apprentices can ask for a re-evaluation of exam marks back to January 1, 2022, and we are actively contacting apprentices.
- We appreciate the input of the Apprenticeship Advisory Board on this interim level evaluation process and the positive feedback we've already received from employers and apprentices.

#### **Additional response – Apprentices working for YG:**

- Most Yukon apprentices are employed by Yukon's private sector, with 5 apprentices currently employed by Yukon government. There are three Heavy Equipment and Truck and Transport Technician apprentices with Highways & Public Works, along with one Cook and one Baker apprentice with Health & Social Services.
- While the Yukon government employs journeypersons in various trades, sometimes the positions available within the Yukon government may not offer the scope of work required for apprentices to meet the training requirements for certification.

#### **Additional response – Apprentices not eligible for Yukon Grant:**

- While apprentices are not eligible for the Yukon Grant, the Government of Yukon offers Yukon apprentices one of the most

robust and comprehensive apprenticeship support programs in the country. These supports include:

- Agreements with Yukon University and Alberta Apprenticeship where the government pays for tuition and seat fees.
- Employment Insurance for eligible apprentices.
- Funding supports through the Working Up program to cover the costs not eligible under Employment Insurance, which may include funding for travel, books, commuting, a second residence, living allowance and daycare costs.
- Additional Government of Canada and Yukon government loans and grants are offered through the Training Program Branch. Some are geared specifically towards Red Seal completion, while others are more inclusive of all apprentices at all stages of their journey.
- In addition to the financial support, Yukon apprentices have access to the Virtual Learning Strategy program for tutoring and exam preparation support if needed.

### **Additional response – Dual Credit:**

- The Department of Education is currently updating the Dual Credit program, where high school students can take post-secondary courses and receive credit for them.
- This will help create more options for high school students to partake in pre-apprenticeship and other apprenticeship programs to advance their careers at an earlier age.
- High school students can also enroll in the Youth in Trades course if offered at their school.

### Context—this may be an issue because:

- There has been an interest in what supports are available to apprentices and adult learners and how many apprentices YG employs.
- A new interim process for evaluating Yukon apprentices was introduced on September 11, 2023.

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### Background:

- On October 23, 2023, the Apprenticeship Unit is resuming the Apprenticeship Excellence Awards. This is an event where we celebrate graduates as well as apprentices with outstanding achievement in their level exams. Since the event was paused during the pandemic, this year apprentices from 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 will be recognized.
- At the end of October 2023, there are 110 Yukon apprentices registered for training at Yukon University, another 73 registered in various institutions in Alberta and an additional 3 apprentices attending institutions in other areas of Canada for the 2023-24 academic year.
- As of October 31, 2023, Yukon has 550 registered apprentices, that is an increase of 68 new apprentices since Jan 31, 2023.
- First Nation apprentices make up 134 of the 550 apprentices and there are now 65 apprentices that identify as women.
- A total of 50 journeyperson certificates were issued in the 2022 calendar year. As of October 31, 2023, there have been 41 journeyperson certificates issued this year.
- The Federal government recently announced a new support program geared to increasing new apprenticeship hires. This program supports employers to hire first-year apprentices in 39 Red Seal trades by providing \$5000 for each eligible new first-year apprentice hired, \$10,000 if the apprentice is from an equity-deserving group.  
Dual credit high school program
- Yukon students in grades 11 and 12 are eligible to receive credits through the dual credit program.

- The dual credit program allows students to enroll in a university course that leads to a post-Secondary credential and receive credits for both high school and university.
- Students in the Yukon can enroll in the Youth in Trades course if offered at their school.

### Apprenticeship new interim level evaluation process:

- The new interim level evaluation process (until 2026) applies to apprentices who attend school in Yukon and Alberta. If a student attends school outside Yukon and Alberta, they will continue to be evaluated using the process that is used by that jurisdiction.
- The new interim level evaluation process supports apprentices working to achieve their Red Seal; allow more input from employers; and provide more emphasis on the importance of good marks in the technical in-school training.
  - Process snapshot: If an apprentice does not achieve 70% on a level exam (previously required), but scores between 60-69%, they will be further evaluated. Consideration for the following will determine if an apprentice moves to the next level.
    - level exam mark;
    - technical in-classroom training (school) grades; and
    - whether the employer recommends they pass the level (this may involve a conversation with Yukon Apprenticeship, the employer, and apprentice. This is appropriate as 80% of an apprentice's learning is on-the-job).
  - The Director of Training Programs will make the final decision based on the above factors, with the employer's recommendation having significant bearing.
  - An apprentice can appeal this decision to the Apprenticeship Advisory Board.
  - Yukon Apprenticeship will apply this new process back to January 1, 2022, to retroactively re-evaluate apprentices that were not able to move on to their next level.
- In 2026, a determination will be made in respect to effectiveness and whether the level exams we use from Alberta have been updated. As Yukon is a small



jurisdiction, we partner with Alberta Industry Training to be able to provide the apprenticeship program to Yukoners.

- Alberta announced they will start using level exams again this fall and resume activities to update exams, after suspending both activities during the pandemic. Alberta updates their exams on a rotational schedule and is looking at next steps to make updates based on current labour market demands and work in progress.

#### Boards and Committees

- This past year, a new Territorial Trades and Technology Committee was formed to identify and address gaps in the support system for apprentices. This group is a partnership between Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, Yukon Skills Canada, Yukon Women in Trades and Technology, Yukon University, and the Apprenticeship Unit at the Department of Education.
- The Apprenticeship Advisory Board meets a minimum of 4 times per year. An application intake for members closed on September 15 to fill positions that expired on November 11, 2023. This appointment process is underway to fill three seats, at minimum.

#### Approved by:

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-21**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### **Student Financial Assistance - Non-Traditional Programs**

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Education

#### **Value:**

- The Government of Yukon's student financial assistance programs are supporting many students to attend post-secondary education institutions in the Yukon and beyond.

#### **Recommended response:**

- The Yukon Grant is available for students attending eligible full-time post-secondary programs. Eligibility criteria are outlined in the *Student Financial Assistance Act* and regulations.
- The Training Programs Branch also administers the Canada Student Financial Assistance Program. This program is available to eligible Yukon post-secondary students.
- The Student Training Allowance is available for students attending eligible human resource development training programs at a designated Yukon institution. Eligibility criteria are outlined in the *Occupational Training Act* and regulations.
- There are certain programs and courses offered at Yukon University that may not meet the criteria for the Yukon Grant, the Student Training Allowance, or Canada Student Loans and Grants Program.
- If a student or adult learner does not qualify for these funding streams, they may be eligible for funding support through the Working Up program.

### Student Financial Assistance - Non-Traditional Programs

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Education

#### Additional response:

- If students have questions about what support they may be eligible for, I encourage them to contact our Training Programs staff who would be happy to assist them.
- Department officials continue to work with Yukon University to ensure students are aware of other funding sources that may be available to them for non-traditional programs.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Questions have been raised in the Legislature because certain Yukon University programs are not eligible for the Yukon Grant since they are not 'full-time' within the context of the *Student Financial Assistance Act*.

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#### Background:

- The criteria for post-secondary student eligibility for financial assistance is established in legislation. The Yukon Grant is set out in the *Student Financial Assistance Act* and regulations, and the Student Training Allowance is set out in the *Occupational Training Act* and regulations.
- To be eligible for the Student Training Allowance, a student must attend a program at Yukon University that is three or more consecutive weeks in duration.
- To be eligible for the Yukon Grant, a student's program of study must be at least 12 weeks in duration within a timeframe of 15 weeks, and each study period must be no less than six consecutive weeks and no more than 52 consecutive weeks. In cases where a student is enrolled in a program with courses that are less than six weeks in duration, a student may still be eligible for the Yukon Grant if those courses make up an essential element in a program of study which is at least 12 weeks long and takes place within a time frame of 15 consecutive weeks.
- Registered Yukon apprentices receive financial support through the Working Up program for the duration of the 8–10-week technical training portion for each level of their apprenticeship. These supports include payment of tuition costs and

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#SF02**

**Fall 2023**

## **Student Financial Assistance - Non-Traditional Programs**

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Education

seat fees, funding for travel, commuting, second residence, and daycare costs.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-21**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

### Value:

- We are committed to encouraging academic achievement in grades 10 to 12, and helping students pursue post-secondary education or training.

### Recommended response:

- Work is underway on determining eligible award recipients for the 2022-23 school year.
- We are working with our partners to modernize the Yukon Excellence Awards.
- This work will align the awards with the Yukon's redesigned school curriculum, better recognize students' skill development, achievement, and improvement, and reflect reconciliation with Yukon First Nations.

### Additional response:

- The eligibility criteria for the Yukon Excellence Awards need to be modernized, as the current criteria are becoming obsolete.
- The awards are intended to support students attending Yukon schools and learning about the Yukon and its unique social, cultural, and economic context.
- Yukon residents who choose to attend secondary school outside of the Yukon are not eligible for these awards.

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### Context—this may be an issue because:

- This collaboration and the implementation of changes was temporarily delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic and other priorities.

#### Background:

- The eligibility criteria for the Yukon Excellence Awards Program have changed several times over its history to reflect changing graduation requirements.
- We are working with the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education to propose changes to the Yukon Excellence Awards to recognize both the top academic achievers among students, and to allow for school-based awards for achievement or improvement in a student's chosen area of interest or strength.
- Since the mid-1990s, Education has been accruing the number of awards earned by students. The department holds the awards for ten years after a student's date of graduation.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-10-18**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

**Privacy Breach: refer to DPT07**

**Other Adult Learners Supports: refer to AE01**

#### **Value:**

- We support eligible students with funding opportunities to pursue post-secondary education.

#### **Recommended response:**

- The Government of Yukon offers various funding options to support eligible post-secondary students. Our Student Financial Assistance Officers are available to assist students with their applications and address any inquiries they might have.
- We introduced a new online student financial assistance portal in July, 2023 so students have the convenience of accessing a streamlined application process when applying for grants and loans for post-secondary studies.
- This marks a significant advancement in enhancing access to financial support for adult learners. Introducing this new system will streamline processing times, leading to quicker disbursement of funds.
- Students who submitted complete applications for the Yukon Grant before August 11 received their funding as communicated.
- I am happy to share the officers have processed all complete applications received this fall and are issuing any remaining payments to eligible students.
- With system development ongoing, soon post-secondary students will have the capability to track their application status and access funding decision letters, all on one connected and convenient platform.

#### **Additional response:**

- Every student's situation is unique, and eligibility for funding and amounts are determined by their specific situation.
- Student Financial Assistance Officers work with students to ensure all the information needed for the application is received for assessment.
- If a student is eligible to apply for or receive funding for post-secondary schooling from another jurisdiction or country, they are not eligible for funding in the Yukon.
- If a student is not approved for the Yukon Grant, they have the right to appeal. The Student Financial Assistance Committee meets each month to hear appeals as needed.
- Eligibility requirements and how to apply are available on Yukon.ca.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- There were some students who were late in receiving their Yukon Grant payments in previous years.
- System development challenges over summer 2023 have impacted processing timelines for Canada Student Financial Assistance Loans/Grants, which are issued differently than Yukon Grant.

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#### **Background:**

- As of November 20, 2023, the department has issued payment for 622 Yukon Grant applications. There are currently 74 Yukoners attending Yukon University who are receiving the Yukon Grant.
- As of October 18, 2023, the department has received more than 930 applications for one or more of the student funding streams for the 2023-24 academic year. We



typically see around 1000 applications over a full academic year. This is comparable to the same time last year.

- In January 2023, the department was aware of some students who were late in receiving their January 2023 Yukon Grant payment. The department worked with these students to send in the required Program Information Form, which verifies their full-time enrollment in post-secondary studies. This form allows the department to release the student's second Yukon Grant payment.

#### Financial Supports for Yukon Grant

- Students can receive up to 170 weeks of funding over their lifetime if they meet the eligibility requirements at the time of application.
- Yukon Grant is calculated on a weekly basis of \$167/week and paid out in 2 lump-sum payments.
  - For a full academic school year – September to April (34 weeks) a student will receive approximately \$5,678 (in 2 payments).
  - If attending school outside of the territory, a student may be eligible for travel amount of \$1,500. Students from Yukon communities may also be eligible for an extra travel amount.
- Students now receive payments by direct deposit. This was implemented in response to the pandemic.
- Students applying for the Yukon Grant are required to provide confirmation of full-time, post-secondary enrolment prior to each funding disbursement.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-21**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

#### Value:

- We continue to help adult learners and post-secondary students access financial support and summer employment opportunities.

#### Recommended response:

- We provide individual adult learners with flexible supports that best meet their needs.
- We recognize that every individual's journey and needs are different and encourage interested Yukoners to come in and talk to the Training Programs team to discuss the support available to them.

#### Additional response: Online portal and funding

- We are excited that the new online student financial assistance portal launched over the summer is already providing streamlined administration and enhanced usability for students applying for the Yukon Grant, Student Training Allowance and Canada Student Financial Assistance Loans and Grants.
- Students who submitted their Yukon Grant application before August 11 received their funding the first week of classes as communicated.
- Challenges with ongoing system development and deployment has impacted processing timelines for Canada Student Financial Assistance Loans and Grants.
- Additional resources and expertise were deployed, and applications have been expedited.

- Students and universities were provided updates, and the Student Financial Assistance Unit continues to work one-on-one with students to address their needs.
- Our commitment is to provide excellent client service and timely processing of applications, and we regret any impact this had on students and families.

#### **Additional response: funding programs**

- The following programs are available at the Department of Education to support adult learners:
  - Student Financial Assistance, which includes the Canada Student Financial Assistance program, Yukon Grant, and Student Training Allowance (As of October 18, 2023, more than 930 applications for support from one or more of these programs for the 2023-24 academic year has been received).
  - Yukon Apprenticeship - in addition to financial support, Yukon apprentices have access to the Virtual Learning Strategy program for tutoring and exam preparation support. (As of October 31, 2023, there are 550 registered apprentices, with more than 68 registering since January 31, 2023).
  - The Working Up program, which provides broad financial support for individuals to advance towards their career goals is also offered through the Training Programs Unit. (Since April 1, 2022, there have been 316 individuals supported through this program.)

- Summer Career Placement and Student Training Employment Programs both provide work experience opportunities for students (There were 164 positions created in summer 2023 through both programs).
- We will continue to work with adult students, Yukon First Nations, Economic Development, and other partners to adapt and develop initiatives to support the needs of Yukon post-secondary students and adult learners.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- There may be questions around funding supports for adult learners and the status of the online portal implementation.

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#### **Background:**

##### Funding application processing challenges

- Contractor and system development challenges impacted assessment timelines for processing completed Canada Student Financial Assistance Loans/Grant applications and Canada's funding disbursement.
- Student Financial Assistance unit communicated the delays directly with students to provide them information on next steps and status, including issuing approval letters to outline their funding amounts from Canada. Post-secondary institutions were asked to extend timelines for Yukon students to pay their fees.
- In March 2023, SFA Officers contacted students who had not yet received their January 2023 Yukon Grant payment. The department worked directly with those students to send in the required Program Information Form, which verifies their full-time enrollment in post-secondary studies.

##### Training Programs funding supports for adult learners.

- Yukon Grant:

- Funding is available for eligible Yukon students enrolled in full time post-secondary studies. There are currently 74 Yukoners currently attending Yukon University who are receiving Yukon Grant.
- Students cannot receive Yukon Grant and the Student Training Allowance at the same time; however, they may be able to access both at separate times while completing their studies. Students must choose the funding that best suits their current circumstances. Student Financial Assistance Officers support students to understand their options.
- Student Training Allowance:
  - Funding is available to eligible Yukon students attending Yukon University or Alkan Air as a full-time student in a program that is at least three weeks long.
- Canada Student Financial Assistance Program Loans and Grants:
  - Yukon residents can apply for the Canada Student Financial Assistance Program Loans and Grants for both full-time and part-time post-secondary studies.
  - As this is a national program, funding for approved Yukon students is paid directly through the National Student Loans Service Centre.
- Apprenticeship:
  - The Apprenticeship Unit in Training Programs provides administrative and operational support for Yukon apprentices and their employers. This includes guidance, advice, and support to register in the program, assistance with enrolling in technical training at Yukon University and at various trade institutions in Alberta.
  - In addition to many financial supports, Yukon apprentices have access to the Virtual Learning Strategy program for tutoring and exam preparation support.
- Working Up:
  - This funding supports individuals seeking upgrading, formal vocational training (including apprenticeship), foundational and essential skills, professional assessments, accommodations for persons with disabilities, and may cover training costs for programs that are not covered by the other programs.
  - Financial support includes payment of tuition costs and seat fees, funding for travel, commuting, second residence, and child care costs.

- Registered Yukon apprentices can receive financial support through the Working Up program for the duration of their 8 to 10 week technical training portion of each level of their apprenticeship.

#### Labour Market transfer to Economic Development

- On April 1, 2022, the labour market component of the Post-Secondary Labour Market Unit moved from Education to Economic Development. Individual supports for adult learning remained with the Department of Education.
- 7 FTEs moved from Education to Economic Development, including 1 director, 5 labour market development officers and one admin staff.
- Education retained the administration of apprenticeship, training (e.g., Working Up program) and student financial assistance, and \$3,876,044 of O&M in 2022-23 to deliver the programs.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-11-15**

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

#### Value:

- We are committed to supporting and fostering vibrant arts and culture in the Yukon.

#### Recommended response:

- The Department of Education has supported the School of Visual Arts, or SOVA, since its inception in 2007.
- SOVA provides developing artists with industry transferable skills and the foundational arts requirement for academic arts programs in partner universities.
- Education committed to providing \$634,794 in 2023-24 to support SOVA. Funding is provided through the existing transfer payment agreement with Yukon University as a Strategic Initiative.
- Strategic Initiative funding requests are developed by Department of Education and Yukon University officials.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- SOVA's governance council is exploring the creation of an Indigenous Fine Arts program. Yukon University keeps us updated on the program's developments.

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#### Background:

- The SOVA governance council includes representatives from Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Yukon University and the Klondike Institute of Arts and Culture.
- In 2019-20, the department worked with Yukon University to create a core funding agreement. Funding for SOVA moved from Core Operations to Strategic Initiatives, enabling the department to engage directly with the SOVA governance council members regarding the Indigenous Fine Arts program development.

- An increase of \$130,000 for 2023-24 was requested and approved to reinstate personnel in the SOVA Library (\$60K), and to ensure ongoing access to funds for maintenance of equipment and technology as well as requisite expendables.
- On October 1, 2021 one-time bridge funding was requested and approved for \$36,794 for fiscal 2021-22.
- Included in a request made on October 1, 2021, was an additional funding request of \$213,069.49 over four years to support a First Nations Community Liaison and Indigenous Arts Program Dialogue.
- Future funding requests need to come through the Yukon University Joint Agreement Management Committee.
- JAM meets on a monthly basis and includes the following representatives:
  - Yukon University: Vice President of University Services, Director of Finance & Administrative Services, Manager of Budgets
  - For YG: ADM, Policy & Partnership, Director of Finance (Education), Director of Training Programs (Education), Director of Labour Market (Economic Development), and Labour Market Development Officer (Economic Development).
  - The parties may designate advisors to attend meetings.

**Approved by:****Mary Cameron****2023-09-07**\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Minister, Education\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date approved]



#### Yukon University Varsity Sports Feasibility: refer to AE04

##### Value:

- The Government of Yukon is proud of its collaboration with Yukon College to establish Yukon University as Canada's first university north of 60.

##### Recommended response:

- As a hybrid university, Yukon University offers degrees, diplomas, certificates, career and trades training, second language support, and upgrading to meet the diverse learning needs of Yukon communities.
- In the 2023-24 budget the Government of Yukon continues to allocate \$1.5 million in core O&M funding to support transition.
- We continue to support Yukon University in advancing its strategic initiatives through the Joint Agreement Management committee made up of members of the University, the Department of Education, and the Department of Economic Development.
- We are pleased to be providing up to \$1 million to the university to provide important technical training for apprentices in Yukon's apprenticeship program.
- We are also working with Yukon University and Yukon First Nations to an accountability framework for the university.
- The initial draft of the accountability framework from Yukon University has been received, and consultation with Yukon First Nations is currently underway. The plan is to have an approved accountability framework in place in 2024.

- We look forward to continuing to collaborate with Yukon University to help it achieve the commitments outlined in its strategic plan.

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#### **Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The Yukon University Act came into force on February 6, 2020, and the university continues to transition from a college.
- Yukon University released its five-year strategic plan on April 4, 2022.

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#### **Background:**

##### President/Vice Chancellor

- On August 16, 2021, Dr. Lesley Brown started her position as the newly appointed president and vice-chancellor of Yukon University.

##### Board of Governors

- The university board of governors has 17 members and is chaired by David Morrison.
  - 10 members are appointed by the Commissioner in Executive Council. Appointments include members with extensive leadership experience:
    - Jamena (James Allen) a former Dän Nättthe (Chief) of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.
    - Aan Goosh oo Mark Wedge (former Khà Shâde Hénì (Chief) of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation.
    - Chris Mahar (former ADM of Finance, Yukon Government); and
  - Seven members are established through virtue of office and university elections process. Appointments include Jason Bilsky, CEO Yukon Hospital Corporation.

##### Funding

- Yukon University O&M and Transition activities are funded through Transfer Payment Agreement with the Department of Education.
- Transition funding for Yukon University of \$1.5 million in O&M began in April 2019 and is maintained in the department's 2023-24 budget.
  - \$1.0M in capital has been allocated to further support University Transition since April 1, 2020 (\$100,000 in 2022-23; \$500,000 in 2021-22; \$400,000 in 2020-21).

- Yukon University has two distinct O&M funding streams: core funding and strategic initiatives funding.
- Core funding increases for 2023-24 include:
  - Increase for a new five-year Academic plan: \$250k.
  - Increase of \$130k for SOVA to reinstate personnel, maintenance of equipment & technology as well as requisite expendables.
- Strategic initiatives are identified by both the University and the Department of Education and are based on priorities.
- Strategic funding for 2023-24 includes:
  - Ongoing funding Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining \$1.2M.
  - Ongoing funding for Licensed Practical Nurse Program \$741k.
  - The funding for the Professional Diploma Pathways program in 2023/2024 will be a total of \$503,029.
  - Additionally, ELCC is funding the Early Learning Program to offer early learning courses in rural communities for a total commitment of \$145k.
  - Up to \$1 million for seats for apprentices in Yukon's apprenticeship program.
- The priorities are discussed at a Joint Agreement Management Team (JAM) and agreed upon by both parties.
- The JAM Team works together to provide oversight and accountability around the strategic initiative funding provided through this agreement. Recently, the team has agreed to update the Terms of Reference to ensure a strategic component is prioritized.
- Members of the JAM Team for the university include the VP of University Services, VP of Finance and Administration, Director of Finance, and Manager of Budgets. For the Department of Education includes the ADM Policy & Partnership, Director of Finance and Director of Training Programs. For the Department of Economic Development includes Director Labour Market Development and Labour Market Development Officer, Labour Market Development.

#### Science (Polaris) building

- In March 2019, the Government of Canada announced \$26 million over the next five years for Yukon University, for a new science building on the Whitehorse campus. A preliminary functional plan has been developed by the government and university.

- In its 2022-23 annual report, the University indicates that planning has continued for the new science building, which will be its first new building as a university.
- The departments of HPW, HSS and Education meet regularly with Yukon University to discuss next steps on the Science (Polaris) building.

#### Degree programs

- The first graduating class of Yukon University included graduates from the first made-in-Yukon degree: the Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Governance Degree.
- Yukon University also now offers a 4-year Bachelor of Business Administration, and a 1-year post-graduate certificate in Climate Change Policy.

#### Accountability framework

- The Yukon University Act provides that the Minister of Education must establish accountability and performance measures for Yukon University, in consultation with each Yukon First Nation and the University.
- The department is coordinating the development of the Yukon University accountability framework.
- As agreed to by Education and the university and as noted in its 2022-23 annual report, Yukon University has produced a preliminary draft of the accountability framework. IRP Consulting has been hired to consult with Yukon First Nations on the draft framework. Engagement is expected to be completed in January 2024.
- Results of consultation with both parties will inform the first accountability framework for the new university.

#### Campus land and buildings

- The Yukon University Act provides that the government may transfer the ownership of campus lands and buildings (property) to Yukon University.
- A joint working group has been established to consider the issues and options for transferring land and building ownership to Yukon University, recognizing that this is a longer-term project.

#### Yukon University Strategic Plan – Becoming, 2022-27

- On April 4, 2022, the university released its first strategic plan since transitioning from a college.
- Vision: Yukon University will become a thriving learning and research community leading Canada's North.

- Mission: We provide inclusive, quality education experiences that equip learners to seize opportunities, make change and positively impact local and global communities.
- Commitments: Over the life of this plan, Yukon University will:
  - Build our identity and nurture our culture as a university.
  - Take our place in advancing reconciliation.
  - Continue to develop our northern expertise.
  - Develop bold thinkers and confident change leaders.
  - Be leaders for the common good.

#### Varsity sports feasibility study

- The Departments of Education and Economic Development worked with Yukon University to complete a feasibility study of a varsity sports program at the university.
- This is a government mandate letter commitment.
- The study examined factors such as benefits, staffing requirements and O&M costs, process to scale up a program, and opportunities for Yukon First Nations participation or partnership.

#### Communications about communicable diseases

- Yukon University is autonomous in its governance. The university establishes its own policies and procedures for programming and operations.
- The Department of Education and Yukon University communicate regularly on matters of public policy.

#### Approved by:

Mary Cameron

2023-11-20

Deputy Minister, Education

[Date approved]

### Yukon University Varsity Sports Feasibility

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#### Value:

- The Government of Yukon is proud of its collaboration with Yukon College to establish Yukon University as Canada's first university north of 60.

#### Recommended response:

- We look forward to continuing to work with Yukon University as it continues to grow.
- This includes reviewing the results of the Yukon University Varsity Sport Feasibility Study publicly released in June 2023.
- We continue to work with the Department of Economic Development to assess the report and opportunities to implement its recommendations. We continue to support Yukon University with other shared priorities.

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#### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Questions may be raised about the status of the feasibility study, a mandate commitment.

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#### Background:

##### Feasibility study background

- The varsity sport feasibility study is a government mandate letter commitment.
- The Departments of Education and Economic Development worked with Yukon University to complete the study.
- A steering committee for the study was struck in late December 2021 and included representatives from the university, Yukon Aboriginal Sport Circle, Sport Yukon, Education, and Economic Development.

# Session Briefing Note

**TAB#AE04**

**Fall 2023**

## **Yukon University Varsity Sports Feasibility**

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Education

- A contractor with related expertise conducted the study, which examined factors such as benefits, staffing requirements, O&M costs, a process to scale up a program, and opportunities for Yukon First Nations participation or partnership.
- The contractor delivered a final report to the Steering Committee in November 2022.
- The feasibility study identifies \$1.3M is needed over three years to plan and implement a three-sport pilot project, with ongoing yearly implementation costs of \$1.8-2.5M.

**Approved by:**

**Mary Cameron**

**2023-09-07**

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Deputy Minister, Education

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[Date approved]

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Housing Issues**

Yukon Housing Corporation

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#### **Recommended response:**

- There are challenges the Yukon's housing continuum, including:
  - a lack of affordable rental supply;
  - high house prices and mortgage rates; and
  - homelessness and a lack of access to housing with services.
- Exceptionally high building costs and rising interest rates are creating significant challenges for new housing projects, for both Yukon Housing Corporation and its partners.
- We continue working hard to move projects forward - through collaboration and strong partnerships - to provide relevant solutions to Yukoners' housing needs.

#### **Additional response:**

- Our government is seeking to increase housing options across the continuum and to make housing more affordable for Yukoners. (See [Tab #0](#))
  - We continue to work to increase housing and land supply and to provide rental subsidies and support programs for homeowners to offer more affordable options for Yukoners.
  - Following the 2022 Office of the Auditor General's (OAG) report, the Corporation and Department of Health and Social Services continue to progress implementing the OAG's recommendations. ([Tab #09](#))
- 

#### **Context:**

- On a square footage basis, contractors' bids for YHC projects have more than doubled in the last two years alone.
- The rental vacancy rate in the Yukon for all building types is currently 2.2 per cent (YBS Spring Rental Survey).
- The Banks 5-year average mortgage interest rate increased from 4.75 per cent in February 2022 to 6.24 per cent in May 2023 (Weekly Updates).



## Session Briefing Note

### Housing Issues

Yukon Housing Corporation

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#### Background:

- In 2022-23, the Yukon Housing Corporation lapsed 34 per cent of its revised capital budget.
  - This was largely due to cancellation and scaling back of projects being supported through the corporation's loans and grants programs.
- New housing projects led by YHC's partners – including the Safe at Home Society and the Vimy Heritage Housing Society – continue to face delays.
- The 5th and Rogers RFP received only a single application. It is currently under review.

Approved by:



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Colin McDowell  
A/ President, Yukon Housing Corporation

September 8, 2023

Date approved

**Session Briefing Note**  
**Our Clean Future**  
**Implementation**

Environment and Energy,  
Mines and Resources

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**Recommended response:**

- Our Clean Future is the Government of Yukon's path to address the climate emergency.
- The strategy is continually being strengthened year after year as we assess our progress, review new research, consider the input of others and identify new and innovative solutions.
- We have committed to an ambitious target of reducing our emissions by 45 per cent below 2010 levels by 2030.
- We have also committed to ensuring the Yukon is highly resilient to the impacts of climate change by 2030, because we know the North will face climate impacts.

**Additional response:**

- It is important to look back on our progress to date and remain diligent in implementation when it comes to addressing climate change.
- We have legislated greenhouse gas emissions targets and associated reporting through the Clean Energy Act. (See EMR BN #31 / ENV #23)
- We launched the five-year Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership this year which will enhance the agriculture sector's resiliency and adaptation to climate change. (See EMR BN # 20)
- In collaboration with Yukon's public utilities, we exceeded our target to install seven megawatts of renewable electricity capacity through the Micro-Generation program by 2030. ( See EMR BN #37)
- We launched the Better Buildings program to offer affordable financing for energy retrofits on Yukoners' homes and buildings.

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Our Clean Future Implementation**

Environment and Energy,  
Mines and Resources

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- We established a geohazard mapping program to understand risks from climate change to the Yukon's transportation corridors.
- We advanced emergency preparedness by progressing on Community Wildfire Protection Plans for Dawson City, Mayo, Watson Lake, Beaver Creek, the Town of Faro and the Kluane Lake Region.
- We have begun work on developing flood maps for all flood-prone Yukon communities. Flood maps for the Southern Lakes, Carmacks, and Teslin [are anticipated to be released in 2024](#). The next communities for flood hazard mapping will be Old Crow, Ross River and Dawson/Klondike, with work occurring in 2024-25.
- We completed the installation of a biomass heating system at Elijah Smith Elementary School in May 2023.

#### **Third response:**

- Although we have made progress on many of our commitments, there is still significant work required to meet our 45 per cent greenhouse gas emissions target reduction by 2030.
- We are working with industry to establish a mining emissions intensity target for quartz and placer mining operations.
- We will continue to build on Our Clean Future as we learn more and implement new actions. This will be reflected in future annual reports.
- [Our 2022 Annual Report will be released in late 2023. We look forward to highlighting the good work that has been done in 2022.](#)
- [As this is an adaptative management strategy which involves 14 departments and agencies, it has taken some time to ensure that the report is strategically focused on helping us reach our targets.](#)

**Session Briefing Note**  
**Our Clean Future**  
**Implementation**

Environment and Energy,  
Mines and Resources

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- As a government, we continue to collaborate on implementation of actions.
- We will continue to work with experts, stakeholders and partner governments across the territory and beyond, to identify opportunities to accelerate and intensify our efforts to reach our ambitious targets.
- We established the Yukon Climate Leadership Council to provide advice and perspectives to support us in meeting our greenhouse gas emissions targets. We are working to integrate the work of the Council directly into Our Clean Future and continue to implement existing actions that align with their recommendations.
- With the end of the second Yukon Youth Panel on Climate Change in 2022, we are exploring how to continue mentorship opportunities on climate change for the important voice of youth.

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**Context — this may be an issue because:**

- Climate change is of high interest to Yukoners; they will want to know the government's progress in delivering on Our Clean Future commitments.

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**Background:**

- Our Clean Future was released on September 14, 2020.
- Our Clean Future contains 136 actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support the Yukon to be highly resilient to the impacts of climate change by 2030.
- The Our Clean Future 2020 Annual Report was publicly released on August 12, 2021. The 2021 Annual Report was publicly released on September 12, 2022.

**Tab# YG02**


## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Our Clean Future Implementation**

**Fall 2023**

Environment and Energy,  
Mines and Resources

Approved by:



Deputy Minister  
Department of Environment

**2023-11-14**

Date approved



Deputy Minister  
Department of Energy, Mines and Resources

**November 14, 2023**

Date approved

## Session Briefing Note

### Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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#### Recommended:

- All Yukon households continue to see their budgets stretched by higher prices, with lower-income households often feeling the worst effects.
- At the same time, our government continues to track inflation and its impact on Yukoners, so that we can take steps to ease the burden, as we have been doing for the last year.
- The Government of Yukon continues to work hard to make life more affordable for Yukoners and has announced an extension of the temporary \$150 Inflation Relief Rebate to reduce the impacts that inflation continues to have on Yukoners.
- All non-government residential and commercial electricity customers will see a \$50 credit on their bills starting in November 2023 and running through December 2023 and January 2024.
- Several other measures included in the 2023-24 Budget are helping to make life more affordable for Yukoners.
  - funding for food in Yukon schools;
  - the timber harvesting incentive and a support program for commercial fuelwood harvesters and retailers to boost the fuelwood supply;
  - a quarterly top-up of \$150 to eligible recipients of the Yukon Senior Income Supplement;

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)**

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- o a \$100 monthly increase to eligible Social Assistance recipients;
  - o increasing the Yukon Child Benefit to \$867 per child and tying the benefit amount in future years to the rate of inflation; and
  - o a 10 per cent increase to monthly payments to caregivers with children in out of home care.
- The Government of Yukon has also made significant and ongoing financial investments in Early Learning and Child Care. The new Universal Child Care Program has reduced fees to less than \$10 per day on average.

#### **Additional response:**

- This government first established a strong record of making life more affordable for Yukoners with almost \$10 million-worth of inflation relief made available in last year's budget.
- This included more funding for Food Network Yukon, a 10 per cent top up to the Pioneer Utility Grant and rebates on the purchase of firewood.
- Yukoners are also receiving inflation relief from the federal government. This includes the accelerated Canada Workers' Benefit, the elimination of interest on student loans, a doubling of the GST tax credit, dental care and the Canada Housing Benefit for renters.

# Session Briefing Note

## Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

---

Fall 2023

Finance

### Context—this may be an issue because:

- Inflation has fallen from many decade highs but remains elevated in Canada and in the Yukon.
- Energy prices remain elevated, and higher costs for food and shelter have become prominent drivers of overall inflation in recent months. These are all areas where higher prices are more obvious to consumers.
- Housing affordability has been a concern in the Yukon for several years.
- While remaining above historic norms, inflation of 3.8 per cent in September matched the national figure and was the lowest year-over-year increase in the Whitehorse Consumer Price Index (CPI) since January 2022 (3.7 per cent).

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### Background:

#### Key government initiatives addressing inflation in the Yukon

- Our energy programs are successfully encouraging Yukon residents and local businesses to reduce their energy use, save money and choose low carbon options to live and move.
- A significant portion of the Government of Yukon's Five-Year Capital Plan is allocated to housing and land development in order to continue to help address the supply side of the housing equation.
- Yukon Housing Corporation is investing across all parts of the housing continuum, including increase to supportive housing, subsidized Community Housing, and rental subsidy programs.
- This builds on previous programs to improve affordability for Yukoners under previous budgets.
- Last year, the Government of Yukon announced almost \$10 million in new inflation relief measures targeted at vulnerable groups.



## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)**

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**Fall 2023**

Finance

- The inflation relief rebate covered seven months at a total cost to Government of \$7.6 million. The inflation relief rebate automatically applied a \$50 credit to all residential and commercial ATCO Electric Yukon and Yukon Energy electricity bills.
- Yukoners on social assistance received a one-time payment of \$150.
- Seniors were supported by a 10 per cent top up in the Pioneer Utility grant and a one-time payment of \$150 to recipients of the Yukon Seniors Income Supplement.
- Yukoners who heat their homes with wood are eligible for a \$50 rebate per cord of fuel wood purchased from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023. Yukon also introduced the Timber Harvesting Incentive that gives commercial timber harvesters \$10 per cubic metre.
- The pilot program that gave an extra \$500 per month to Extended Family Caregiver agreement caregivers and foster caregivers was extended by 6 months to March 31, 2023.
- In June 2022, the Yukon government extended the Tourism Accommodation Sector Supplement and Tourism Non-Accommodation Sector Supplement programs, administered through Economic Development.

#### **Yukoners are also supported by Federal Government affordability programs:**

- Accelerated Canada Workers Benefit payments and new minimum entitlement started in July 2023 (\$4 billion over six years, starting in 2022-23).
- All Canada Student Loans and Canada Apprentice Loans became permanently interest-free starting in April 2023 (\$2.7 billion over five years and \$556.3 million ongoing).
- GST Tax Credit: The GST tax credit has doubled for six months in the current benefit year. Additional payment will be provided in one lump sum, before the end of the benefit year. Targeted to individuals and families with low incomes

## Session Briefing Note

### Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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Fall 2023

Finance

(below \$39,826, and gradually phased out above that level). Single Canadians without children will receive up to an extra \$234, and couples with two children will receive up to an extra \$467 this year. Seniors will receive an extra \$225 on average.

#### **Government initiatives which are indexed to inflation:**

- Higher inflation impacts various government of Yukon programs through indexation, (indexation is updated each April unless otherwise noted), including:
  - o Tobacco Tax is updated each January
  - o Comprehensive Municipal Grant Regulation (with a one-year lag).
  - o The minimum wage.
  - o Subsidies for medical travel.
  - o Pioneer Utility grant.
  - o Residential rent caps.
  - o Seniors benefits (updated each October)
  - o Social Assistance Payments (updated each November)
  - o Student Financial Assistance (updated each school year)

#### **Inflation outlook**

- Following record annual inflation for Whitehorse of 6.8 per cent in 2022, the same increase seen nationally, monthly inflation has remained elevated in 2023. [September's inflation of 3.8 per cent was the lowest since January 2022 and matched the national increase. Prior to September, Whitehorse inflation had exceeded the Canadian figure for fourteen consecutive months.](#)

## Session Briefing Note

### Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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- Early in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, some price pressures were slower to materialize in the Yukon than in other parts of the country, as inflation for Whitehorse was amongst the lowest in Canada in the first half of 2022.
- Robust price growth in the CPI components of food, shelter and recreation, education and reading material have been key drivers of overall inflation in 2023. Stronger growth in these three components in the Whitehorse CPI, account for much of the difference between the overall levels of inflation for Whitehorse and Canada in recent months.
- The Bank of Canada continues to be aggressive in trying to get inflation under control. With a 0.25 percentage point increase in July, the Bank has raised the target for its overnight rate 4.75 percentage points since January 2022. At 5.0 per cent, the overnight rate is at its highest level since early 2001.
- Most forecasters still expect inflation in Canada will move towards historic norms over the next couple of years as the effect of higher interest rates move through the economy. Canadian inflation is expected to decline from near 7 per cent in 2022, to 3.5-4.0 per cent in 2023. Inflation in 2024 is expected to return to within the Bank of Canada's target range of 1-3 per cent.
- While inflation in Whitehorse has been stronger in recent months, it generally follows the national trend. Current expectations are for inflation to come in at 5.5 per cent in 2023, before falling to 2.5 per cent in 2024.

#### Carbon Taxes and Grocery Prices

- The effect of the carbon tax on CPI has contributed to inflation, but only modestly and mostly through the direct effect on fuel prices.
- According to the Bank of Canada, the direct effect of carbon tax is adding 0.15 percentage points to inflation this year.

## Session Briefing Note

### Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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Fall 2023

Finance

- An economist at the University of Calgary<sup>1</sup>, estimates that accounting for indirect effects brings this impact to 0.2 percentage points.
- For food in particular, the entire \$65 per tonne carbon tax increases monthly spending on groceries by at most \$20 per month, and likely closer to \$5 per month after accounting for emissions allowances provided by the federal Output Based Allocation system.<sup>2</sup>
- Overall, food price increases appear to be predominantly driven by other factors as prices have increased across North America independent of the implementation of a carbon tax.
- In the US, with no carbon tax system in place, food prices have increased by 26 per cent since the carbon tax came into effect in Canada in January 2018. In Canada the increase has been a similar 28 per cent.
- Whitehorse recorded an 18 per cent increase in food prices since January 2018 while Urban Alaska reported a 28 per cent increase.

#### INFLATION RELIEF ACROSS GOVERNMENT

##### Programs currently in place:

##### Tourism and Culture:

##### Community Tourism Destination Development Fund

- In October 2022, the Department of Tourism and Culture announced the creation of the Community Tourism Destination Development Fund, which is slated to run for an initial 3-year term.
- The new annual funding program is available to local businesses, First Nations governments, First Nation Development entities, municipalities and not-for-profit

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<sup>1</sup> Trevor Tombe

<sup>2</sup> Energy and Environmental Policy Trends: Indirect Carbon Tax Costs Reduced By Policy Design, Kent Fellows and Trevor Tombe, University of Calgary

## Session Briefing Note

### Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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organizations for projects that will improve tourism-related services and infrastructure.

- Projects can focus on infrastructure like accommodations, attractions, activities and amenities, and special consideration will be given to umbrella projects, where multiple organizations are working together.

#### Creative and Cultural Industries

- In November 2021, the Department of Tourism and Culture released Creative Potential; Advancing the Yukon's Creative and Cultural Industries, a 10-year strategy to support the growth and development of the creative and cultural industries in the Yukon.
- The CCIS identified 4 strategic objectives and 22 key actions, which reflect input gathered through extensive public and sector engagement.
- We also identified 10 actions in support of pandemic recovery to be completed over 3 years as Phase 1 implementation, which includes:
  - Modernizing existing funding;
  - Offering new funding streams;
  - Industry branding and promotion;
  - Marketing and export strategies;
  - Workshops; and
  - Labour market supports.
- In 2023-24, 3 new funding programs will provide \$450,000 annually to the creative and cultural sectors, including:
  - Express Micro-grant;
  - Indigenous Artists and Cultural Carriers Micro-grant; and
  - Creative and Cultural Career Advancement Fund.

# **Session Briefing Note**

## **Inflation and Affordability**

### **(Corporate Note)**

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**Fall 2023**

Finance

#### **Additional Funding Programs**

- Tourism and Culture also provides annual supports to the tourism and culture sectors through Transfer Payment Agreements (TPAs) with many NGOs across the Yukon and through a number of regular funding programs, including:
  - Advanced Artist Award;
  - Arts Fund;
  - Arts Operating Funds;
  - Cultural Industries Training Funds;
  - Culture Quest;
  - New Canadian Events Fund;
  - Touring Artist Fund;
  - Historic Properties Assistance Program;
  - Historic Resources Fund;
  - Museums Contribution Program;
  - Special Projects Capital Assistance Program (SPCAP); and
  - Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund;

#### **Yukon Development Corporation:**

##### **Inflation Relief Rebate**

- The Inflation Relief Rebate (IRR) provides \$50 per month to all non-government residential and commercial electricity customers to help ease the impacts of rising inflation.
- The IRR was subsequently extended for March, April, and May 2023. The budget in 2023-24 is comprised of:

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Inflation and Affordability**

#### **(Corporate Note)**

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**Fall 2023**

Finance

- \$2,056,000 for program costs in April and May 2023 (costs for March 2023 are included in the 2022-23 Supplementary Estimates #2).
- \$3,246,000 for a further 3 additional months. We will continue to monitor inflation and costs of living, and we anticipate this will show on electricity bills next winter when electricity bills are typically higher.

#### **Economic Development:**

##### **Paid sick leave program**

- On April 1, 2023, Economic Development launched the Paid Sick Leave Rebate. The program will run for two 12-month blocks:
  - April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024; and
  - April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025
- The Paid Sick Leave Rebate is a temporary program that offers up to 40 hours of paid sick leave to employees and self-employed Yukoners that earn less than the average private-sector wage of \$33.94/hour. The program is available to employees regardless of whether their employer offers paid sick leave.

#### **Energy, Mines and Resources:**

##### **Energy retrofits and funding to improve efficiency and offset costs**

- Our energy programs are successfully encouraging Yukon residents and local businesses to reduce their energy use, save money and choose low carbon options to live and move.
- Energy efficiency programs are available for the transportation sector, renewable heating sector, and the construction sector focusing on high efficiency buildings.
- For existing homes, the Energy Branch offers the Good Energy rebate program for high performance heating systems and upgrades to thermal enclosures including insulation and windows, and high performance new homes. Taking these measures will save homeowners money on their energy costs.

## **Session Briefing Note**

### **Inflation and Affordability**

#### **(Corporate Note)**

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**Fall 2023**

Finance

- For commercial and institutional buildings, the Energy Branch offers rebates for greenhouse gas-reducing retrofits and renewable heating.
- Between January 1, 2018, and June 30, 2023, 176 high-performance retrofits to residential, commercial and institutional buildings have been completed across the territory.
- Innovative programs like the Better Buildings Program, combined with our Good Energy rebates, make energy retrofits more accessible and affordable for Yukoners.
- For First Nation and municipal buildings, the Energy Branch offers retrofit and funding support through its Community Institutional Energy Efficiency Program.
- To help increase the supply of firewood, we distributed \$315,000 to 33 Yukon businesses under the Timber Harvest Incentive program in 2022-23. We are offering this program for another year as it increased timber harvest volumes and prompted new harvesting businesses to emerge. No new applications have been received yet for this year, but we did not anticipate to see them until the fall when the businesses start operating again.
- The Government of Yukon and the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency combined financial contributions to launch a new \$200,000 support program offering funding for commercial harvesters and retailers.
- The program will help forest sector businesses with the cost of purchases and repairs from local suppliers for harvest equipment, vehicles and trailers, personal protective equipment, and other equipment. For larger harvesting businesses, the funds can also be used for things like planning and administrative costs.
- Applicants have until March 31, 2024, to apply or until available funds are exhausted.



# Session Briefing Note

## Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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Fall 2023

Finance

Yukon Housing Corporation:

**Projects under the Five-Year Capital Plan which support housing affordability and those in need include:**

- The 47-unit housing complex at 401 Jeckell Street in Whitehorse opened in January 2023. The building provides new homes to Yukoners, including 5 three-bedroom, 12 two-bedroom, 16 one-bedroom and 14 bachelor units.
- A Yukon Housing Corporation Housing Initiatives Fund recipient, Right On Property Group, has completed Boreal Commons, a new 87-unit rental development in Whitehorse's Whistle Bend neighbourhood. This large-scale housing project will help address the need for more rental housing in the Yukon, including for more affordable and accessible units.
- Normandy Living, the Yukon's first private seniors' supportive living community, has officially opened its doors in Whitehorse with 84 modern suites, including housing units for First Nations Elders and affordable units for low-income seniors.
- Triplex housing units in Watson Lake, Mayo and Whitehorse were completed in spring 2022 and are providing affordable homes to families in each of these communities.
- A 10-Plex Mixed-Use Housing complex in Old Crow is under construction.
- Construction of a 10-Plex Housing First Project in Watson Lake started in the summer 2023 and is expected to be completed by fall 2024;
- Two accessible duplexes in Mayo and Carmacks were completed this summer and are now available for YHC clients.

**Other highlights from the plan**

- More homes will be created for Yukon families in rural communities through the construction of three duplexes in Dawson City and Faro. These homes are on track for completion in summer 2024.

# **Session Briefing Note**

## **Inflation and Affordability**

### **(Corporate Note)**

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**Fall 2023**

Finance

**Health and Social Services:**

- A 37.5 per cent top-up to eligible Yukon Senior Income Supplement recipients' monthly payment;
- a \$100 monthly increase to eligible Social Assistance recipients; and
- a 10 per cent increase to monthly payments to caregivers of children in out of home care.

**Covid-19 and other temporary inflation relief measures no longer in place:****Tourism and Culture:****COVID-19 Business Relief Programs**

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Yukon acted quickly and decisively by implementing one of the most robust business relief programs in the country. This began with the Yukon Business Relief Program (YBRP) in 2020, which was open to any business from any sector that experienced at least a 30 per cent revenue loss due to the pandemic.
- In that same year, Tourism and Culture (T&C) also launched the Tourism Relief and Recovery Plan (TRRP), which was reviewed and endorsed by the Yukon Tourism Advisory Board (YTAB) and industry.
- The Tourism Relief and Recovery Plan committed \$15 million over 3 years to support the tourism sector and was focused on 4 key themes:
  - Providing tourism sector leadership;
  - Rebuilding confidence and capabilities for tourism;
  - Supporting the recovery of tourism industry operators; and
  - Refining the brand and inspiring travelers to visit.
- Through the TRRP, various financial support programs were rolled out during the course of the pandemic to sustain the tourism industry and prepare it for the eventual reopening of borders, including:

## Session Briefing Note

### Inflation and Affordability (Corporate Note)

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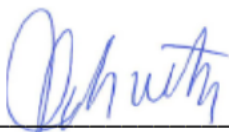
Fall 2023

Finance

- Tourism Accommodation Sector Supplement (TASS);
- Tourism Non-Accommodation Sector Supplement (TNASS);
- Culture and Tourism Non-profit Sector Supplement;
- Great Yukon Summer (GYS) program;
- Great Yukon Summer Freeze program;
- ELEVATE program; and
- A top-up to the Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund (TCMF).

**Health and Social Services:**

- a one-time \$150 payment to social assistance recipients;
- a one-time payment of \$150 to Yukon Seniors Income Supplement recipients;
- a one-time 10 per cent additional payment to Pioneer Utility Grant recipients;
- a 6-month extension of \$500 per month to caregivers of children in out of home care; and
- a commitment of \$100,000 to Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition to continue to support food security across the territory.

**Approved by:**

Deputy Minister, Finance

October 26, 2023

Approved

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission  
– Update on Calls to Action**

Executive Council  
Office

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**Recommended response:**

- Reconciliation is an ongoing process and a shared responsibility of all governments and individuals in our society.
- Our government is deeply committed to advancing reconciliation through collaboration and partnership with Indigenous governments.
- While there is still more work to do, our efforts are resulting in meaningful change and creating better programs and services for all Yukoners.
- In honour of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation this year, we shared our progress toward addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action through the release of the Pathways magazine and an accompanying report.
- The magazine and report provide an update on our actions being taken across the Yukon government and in close collaboration with First Nations governments and organizations in areas including child welfare, health, education and justice.

**Additional response:**

- The Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nations governments are leaders in demonstrating a collaborative approach to reconciliation.
- We will continue our collaborative work to implement and report on the Calls to Action, including through work on Yukon Forum joint priorities and by implementing the *Putting People First* recommendations.

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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The 2023 mandate letters include a commitment to fulfill the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action.
- CASA 2023 contains a commitment to work with First Nations to continue to implement the TRC recommendations through targeted investment.

## Truth and Reconciliation Commission – Update on Calls to Action

Executive Council  
Office

- It is expected that the media and opposition will be interested in the fall 2023 public update, which will be the first comprehensive public update since 2016.

### Background:

- The TRC report, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, was released in June 2015. It contains 94 Calls to Action focused on redressing the harms resulting from Residential Schools and creating better relations between the federal, provincial and territorial governments and Indigenous Peoples. Thirty-two of the Calls to Action relate directly to YG.
- YG and Yukon First Nations (YFNs) have collaborated on addressing the Calls to Action under the 2017 Yukon Forum Joint Priority Action Plan and through other reconciliation initiatives, such as supporting the important work of the YFN-led Yukon Residential Schools and Missing Children Project.
- YG has taken additional steps to address the Calls to Action, including:
  - establishing the position of Assistant Deputy Minister of First Nations Initiatives at the Department of Education, signing an agreement to establish a YFN School Board, and entering into education agreements with all YFNs (speaks to Calls 7 and 10 directed to the federal government);
  - supporting Indigenous athletes and the North American Indigenous Games (Call 88);
  - implementing the YFN Procurement Policy (relates to Call 92) and the Representative Public Service Plan: *Breaking Trail Together* (relates to Call 7);
  - working with YFNs and Yukon Indigenous women's groups to implement the Yukon's *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2-Spirit+ People Strategy* (MMIWG2S+ Strategy) (relates to Call 41);
  - participating at the Trilateral Table on the Wellbeing of YFN Children and Families to address gaps for culturally appropriate parenting programs (Call 5); and

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission  
– Update on Calls to Action**

Executive Council  
Office

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- receiving input from YFNs on Health and Social Services programming through the Mental Health Advisory Committee (relates to Call 19).

**Approved by:**



Deputy Minister, Executive Council Office

October 10, 2023

Date

**Session Briefing Note (Corporate)****Fall 2023****2023-24 Supplementary Estimates #1**

Finance

**Key Information**

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**Recommended response:**

- The 2023-24 Supplementary Estimates No. 1 forecasts an overall gross increase of \$132.7 million in O&M spending, with an offsetting increase of \$26.8 million in recoveries. The net increase in new O&M spending is forecast at \$105.9 million.
- Revenues are expected to increase by \$18.7 million, mainly to reflect an increase of \$2 million to the Canada Health Transfer and \$15 million for federal funding for Affordable Housing in the North.
- A large portion of the increase in O&M is for the new collective agreement between the Government of Yukon and Yukon Employee's Union. This new collective agreement was ratified in June and accounts for a \$36.9 million increase in O&M.
- The Supplementary Estimates also respond to several new or unanticipated challenges requiring funding. Some of these items include:
  - \$25.0 million for environmental care and maintenance work at the Minto Mine following the cessation of operations at the site in May, which will ensure that our environment remains protected;
  - \$19.6 million for wildland firefighting costs in response to the significant fire season experienced in the territory and which helped ensure the safety of Yukoners;
  - \$14.9 million in response to operational funding pressures at the Yukon Hospital Corporation to ensure that Yukoners have access to the health care services and supports they need;

**Session Briefing Note (Corporate)****2023-24 Supplementary Estimates #1****Key Information**

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- \$9.8 million in response to cost pressures for Insured Health to support the wellbeing of Yukoners; and
- \$1.9 million to support the Substance Use Health Emergency Strategy, and \$1.4 million for initiatives to support reconciliation with Yukon First Nations governments.
- The Supplementary Estimates also include a \$21.4 million capital allocation to support the development of a marine services platform in Skagway, which will create positive opportunities for Yukon's mining industry and its broader economy. We have identified offsetting adjustments based on timelines, loan program uptake, and the progress of various capital projects to accommodate this new project without any gross changes to capital spending.
- The Yukon government has maintained its surplus by making use of its contingency fund, included as part of Budget 2023-24. This \$50 million contingency fund helped shelter the government's fiscal position and allowed us to respond to emerging challenges throughout the year. The use of the contingency fund has allowed the government to present a revised surplus of \$3.6 million as part of these Supplementary Estimates.

**Additional response:**

- Changes in the Supplementary Estimates result in a revised year-end net debt of \$423.8 million.



**Session Briefing Note (Corporate)****Fall 2023****2023-24 Supplementary Estimates #1**

Finance

**Key Information**

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- The use of the contingency fund will cover the following emergency cost pressures:
    - \$25 million for unplanned maintenance costs at the Minto mine;
    - \$19.6 million for increased wildland firefighting activity.
    - \$2.3 million for other emergency response measures, like the Village of Mayo evacuation in response to the Talbot Creek fire;
    - and \$1.9 million for Substance Use Emergency response.
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**Context—this may be an issue because:**

- The 2023-24 Second Appropriation Act is tabled in the fall session and will be the subject of debate.
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**Background:**

- Supplementary Estimates are used annually by a government to account for spending that is unforeseen at the time of tabling the annual Budget. It is common to have one or two spending updates throughout the fiscal year.
- They are tabled during the fall and spring sessions, debated and voted on in the legislature and provide departments with increased spending authority for O&M and Capital for the current fiscal year.

**Approved by:**

Deputy Minister, Finance

September 29, 2023

[Date approved]