

**Yukon**  
Education

# ANNUAL REPORT 2016

YUKON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION







## NOTE

This report fulfills the requirement of ss. 5 (h) of the Education Act, which requires the Minister to table an annual report on the state of education in Yukon. This report focuses on the activities of the Public Schools Division and related support from other areas of the Department of Education.

It reports on the activities of 2016 and reflects information current as of December 2016.

Student and school performance indicators and statistical data are available online on the Department of Education website:  
[www.education.govyk.ca/performance.html](http://www.education.govyk.ca/performance.html)

Information on the Advanced Education Division can be found in the “Labour Market Framework Report” and other reports available on the Yukon Education website at:  
[www.education.govyk.ca/publications.html](http://www.education.govyk.ca/publications.html)

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## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

I am pleased to present the Department of Education's Annual Report for 2016 and to recognize the tremendous amount of work undertaken by staff across the department over the past year.

In addition to delivering education to students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 through Yukon's public schools, and post-secondary education through Yukon College, the Department of Education is responsible for training, labour market development and immigration in the territory. The mandate of our department has widespread impacts on Yukon's economy, society, and future, and everyone is a stakeholder in the work we do.

The Department of Education is committed to providing high-quality educational programs and opportunities that meet the needs of Yukon students, and helping them develop the skills and understanding they need to succeed on their education journey. The Government of Yukon supports learning of all ages and is dedicated to improving educational outcomes in all Yukon communities. The learners of today are the leaders of tomorrow, and their achievements are shared by all Yukoners.

Over the past year, the Department of Education has engaged in a wide range of initiatives to support learners throughout the territory, from signing new education agreements with Yukon First Nations, to collaborating with the Yukon Francophone School Board in support of French First Language students. A great amount of effort has also been devoted to preparing a new curriculum, to be introduced in our Kindergarten to Grade 9 classrooms in 2017, and in our Grade 10 to 12 classrooms in 2018. I look forward to reporting back next year on the exciting changes to Yukon's education system.

Our schools will succeed if the community is invested in their success, if the students are motivated to learn, and if parents and teachers have the supports they need in and out of the classroom. However, our efforts to help students succeed would be fruitless without the contributions of our partners in education. The Department of Education works in collaboration with families, educators, school communities, councils and associations, as well as First Nations governments, the First Nations Education Commission, the Yukon Francophone School Board and Yukon College. We also work closely with a variety of local organizations, businesses, employers and other stakeholders in our communities. Thank you to all of our partners in education for their efforts to support students and deliver public education across the Yukon.

I would also like to recognize and thank the entire staff of the Department of Education, both inside and outside of our many schools, for their dedication and service to the learners of the Yukon. The programs and services you deliver are essential to the future of our students, our economy, our society and our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Tracy-Anne McPhee'.

**Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee**  
Minister of Education





## MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY MINISTER

Welcome to the Department of Education's Annual Report 2016.

This report tells the stories of the work we do with Yukon students and the path ahead for public education in Yukon. You can also find out more about student and school performance indicators and statistical data online on the Department of Education website: [www.education.govyk.ca/performance.html](http://www.education.govyk.ca/performance.html)

My thanks to all of our staff, in the schools and at the department's main office, for their dedication and work over the past year. The many great programs and projects provided to Yukon students over the past year could not have happened without your energy and enthusiasm.

Thanks to our partners in education and our government to government work with Yukon First Nations for sharing valued input and ideas for Yukon schools. Your commitment to supporting Yukon students builds strong and vibrant school communities and helps students to succeed in their learning.

Thank you to the families, teachers, educational assistants, principals, Yukon Teachers' Association, support staff, School Councils, Council of Yukon First Nations, First Nations Education Commission, Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, Yukon Teachers' Association, Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards & Committees, Catholic Education Association of Yukon, Community Education Liaison Coordinators, Education Support Workers, Yukon College and others.

I encourage everyone to continue to work with us to improve education and learning outcomes for our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Judith'.

**Dr. Judith Arnold**  
Deputy Minister  
Department of Education



## AT A GLANCE

Public schools	30*
Students in K-12	5219
Rural	1059
Whitehorse	4160
Female	2504
Male	2715
First Nations	1665
French First Language	240
French Immersion	662
With Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)	595
Teachers	488.995 FTE
Paraprofessionals	225.907 FTE
Aboriginal Language Teachers	37 FTE**
Average spending per student in K-12 (estimate)	\$18,308***
Registered apprentices	508
Receiving student financial assistance for postsecondary studies	984
Average amount of student financial aid	\$4262

\* Includes Aurora Virtual School and the Individual Learning Centre.

\*\* Includes Aboriginal Language Teachers, Aboriginal language speakers, and trainees in the 2015-16 school year.

\*\*\* Includes all direct operation and maintenance costs for Yukon schools, including salaries for school-based staff, materials, supplies, equipment, security, groundskeeping and utilities.

Student and school performance indicators and data are available online on the Department of Education website:  
[www.education.gov.yk.ca/performance.html](http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/performance.html)



## PUBLIC EDUCATION IN YUKON

Under the Education Act, the Department of Education (department) is responsible for delivering accessible and quality education to Yukon learners. We work closely with our partners in education and school communities to develop and improve our programs and practices.

More student and school performance indicators and data are available online on the Department of Education website: [www.education.govyk.ca/performance.html](http://www.education.govyk.ca/performance.html)

## EARLY AND PRIMARY LEARNING

The department reports on two assessments of Kindergarten students: the Boehm Test of Basic Concepts and the Early Years Evaluation Survey (EYE). The Boehm Test of Basic Concepts is used to assess students in Kindergarten on their language ability through 50 basic concepts, matching words to pictures. The EYE survey measures a student's development in areas such as self-awareness, cognitive and social skills and physical development.

According to the 2016 survey, self-awareness, cognitive and social skills and language skills were the areas needing most support to improve readiness for school. These assessments also show that rural and First Nations students need more support for primary learning.

### Supporting young students during the transition to school

Our Student Support Services team assists with bridging students with special needs from the Yukon Child Development Centre to school and Kindergarten.

The Child Development Centre identified 56 urban and 21 rural children who needed support as they moved from the Child Development Centre to Kindergarten. Student Support Services staff attended meetings in the spring of 2016 with parents, school-based teams and Child Development Centre staff in order to identify and share the needs of these students with school staff and plan for a successful transition into school.



**GOAL:** Improved outcomes for all Yukon students

*The Boehm Test of spring 2016 found that 27 per cent of Yukon's 413 Kindergarten students need classroom support and 30 per cent needed further investigation.*



### Learning Together

Learning Together programs are designed to help families get ready for Kindergarten. The program introduces young children to school routines in social learning environments, while their caregivers learn new ways to support learning both in the program and at home. In 2016, Learning Together programs were offered at Selkirk Elementary School, Hidden Valley Elementary School and the Dusk'a Head Start Family Learning Centre in partnership with Kwanlin Dün First Nation in Whitehorse. The Dusk'a Learning Together program will not continue next year, as attendance was low. Those who attended have been referred to the program at Selkirk Elementary School for next year.

### Junior Kindergarten (K4)

Junior Kindergarten, or K4, provides additional support for early learning in rural communities. Through the program, young children have the option to attend the equivalent of a full-time Kindergarten program over the course of two years. Students participate in the program part-time and get early support for language development, how-to-learn behaviours, social skills and pre-literacy and numeracy skills. K4 programs are an option for early learners in most rural schools.

### Focus on foundational literacy skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking)

The skills and concepts from the Kindergarten assessments are some of the basic knowledge a child needs to be ready to learn at school. An important milestone in a child's education is 'reading to learn'. We know that when students can read to learn at an early stage in their education journey, they are more likely to graduate from high school. If a student has trouble reading and writing, it makes it more difficult for them to learn in other subjects and may limit their success at school.





## Early intervention pilot project

To address the significant number of Yukon students entering Kindergarten who need support in the areas of oral language and social development to be ready to learn, the department worked with the Yukon Teachers' Association to pilot an early intervention project in the 2015-2016 school year.

This pilot is running in seven Kindergarten classrooms across four schools. The schools were chosen based on historical data including Early Years Evaluation and Boehm results. Seven teachers and seven educational assistants receive special training from speech and language pathologists, an occupational therapist and a social emotional psychologist so they can assist their students in developing school readiness and communication skills. These skills include self-regulation, executive functioning, listening, speaking (oral communication) to support reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

The early findings at the end of year one of this pilot are that teachers found the program and the training highly useful and they were able to apply it in their classrooms. They also noted that the program should have started earlier in the school year so that the educational assistants would be prepared at the beginning of the school year. Some teachers also asked for more clear definitions of the goals of the program.

This pilot moved into its second year during the 2016-2017 school year. The educational assistants in this pilot moved with their Kindergarten class into Grade 1 and will follow them into Grade 2 in 2017-18. The progress of the students is tracked annually and cumulatively over the three years of the project.

Parents, School Councils, and Yukon First Nations also have a role in this pilot, from integrating First Nations' ways of knowing and doing to assisting students in learning the basic skills through school community events and at home.





## KINDERGARTEN-GRADE 12

We deliver Kindergarten to Grade 12 public education in 30 schools across Yukon, including for French First Language education through the Yukon Francophone School Board, for distance and home education through the Aurora Virtual School, and for students who need flexible learning options through the Individual Learning Centre.

### Coming changes to curriculum

Yukon schools will be introducing changes to the Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum over the next few years to better support student success and learning outcomes. The new curriculum will help students develop the skills they need for their future career paths.

Based on feedback from our school communities and partners, in 2016, we formed an advisory committee for education in Yukon. It included representatives of all partners in education, including:

- Educators, the Association of Yukon School Administrators (AYSA) and the Yukon Teachers' Association (YTA)

- School Councils, the Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards & Committees (AYSCBC) and the Catholic Education Association of Yukon (CEAY)
- The Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon – Yukon Francophone School Board (CSFY)
- The Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) and the First Nations Education Commission (FNEC)
- Yukon College
- The Department of Education: Deputy Minister, Assistant Deputy Ministers of Public Schools and Director, Labour Market Programs and Services

This committee meets every other month to discuss various priorities and initiatives in public education, including curriculum changes. It discussed several past reports and recommendations about education in Yukon, including:

- Council for Yukon Indians, Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow, 1973
- Yukon Department of Education, Education Reform Project, 2007
- Yukon Department of Education, One Vision, Multiple Pathways, 2008

- Yukon First Nation Education Advisory Committee, Helping Students Succeed: Vision Goals and Priorities for Yukon First Nations Education, 2008
- Office of the Auditor General of Canada, Report, 2009
- Yukon Department of Education, New Horizons, 2010
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Findings, 2015

From the above discussions, the committee identified key themes and priorities, including the Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum. We would like to thank our many partners and the members of the committee for their work with us this year.

For many years, Yukon schools have followed B.C.'s curriculum and Yukon has developed several of its own resources to help teach the curriculum. B.C. has revised and introduced a new curriculum based on research and good practices happening across Canada and around the world. Read more about it: [curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum-updates](http://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum-updates)

The committee looked at B.C.'s changes and curriculum in other regions of Canada. It recommended Yukon schools continue to follow B.C.'s curriculum in order to support the success of Yukon students.

Yukon schools will follow B.C.'s new curriculum and graduation program, using Yukon resources to teach the curriculum. Yukon First Nations' ways of knowing and doing and Yukon content will be incorporated into all grades. The new curriculum focuses on skills development in literacy, numeracy, communication, critical and creative thinking and personal-social responsibility. It includes more local knowledge, trades, hands-on learning, finance and career education.

## Kindergarten

Though it is not a requirement in Yukon, students should have one-year of schooling in a Kindergarten program prior to entering Grade 1. Kindergarten provides students with early support for language development, how-to-learn behaviours, social skills and pre-literacy and numeracy skills. In Whitehorse, Kindergarten is provided as a one-year, full-time K5 program. In most rural communities, Kindergarten is provided either as a K5 program or a two-year, part-time K4 program.



## Elementary

Elementary school programs help young students develop the key reading, writing, math and problem-solving skills they need to be successful in learning in all subjects. Elementary grades also help students practice good habits and routines that support their success in secondary school, postsecondary education and employment later in life.

## Literacy

Literacy skills are essential to students' learning outcomes for all grade levels. Yukon schools use a balanced literacy approach so that students are developing and using the key literacy skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking in all subjects and classes. Teachers in all subjects support students in developing literacy skills, not just the Language Arts teacher. They use a combination of instructional strategies for students to support them in developing their literacy skills. You can find more information on the department's balanced literacy approach in *Balanced Literacy Approach: Supporting Student Success in Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking*, available at [www.education.govyk.ca/publications.html](http://www.education.govyk.ca/publications.html)





We also have short-term intervention programs for elementary students who struggle with key literacy skills. Reading Recovery provides trained teachers to work with Grade 1 students to help them to become independent readers. The program supports work done in the classroom and provides a strategy for students to build confidence in their abilities so that they may fully participate in the regular curriculum. Through support programs such as this, we can work with students who need extra help to improve their literacy skills and ability to learn.

### Numeracy

Students also need to develop numeracy skills, such as mathematical knowledge and problem solving, for learning different subjects and grades. Yukon students formally learn mathematical concepts in their mathematics lessons, but they are expected to use this knowledge and understanding in other classes. The department provides models to teachers for numeracy instruction in class, as well as professional support and training.

Yukon educators use many learning tools to help students with numeracy skills. A good example is Yukon's numeracy nets, which help teachers to monitor levels of understanding, respond to learning needs and assess students' numeracy skills development. Numeracy nets have 'checkpoints' for learning outcomes to see if students understand and use numeracy skills at each grade level. Each checkpoint includes behaviours that help a teacher see if a student understands the concepts, and links to official resources for further learning. There are different checkpoints at each grade level that help show strengths and weaknesses for each student and guide conversations with students about their learning needs and further development.

### Assessment for, of and as learning

Like in many schools in Canada and globally, Yukon educators are increasingly using assessment for, of and as learning when they assess student progress in the development of key skills. Assessment for learning means that teachers look at on-going evidence of



student progress and use it to decide on teaching methods that will support the student in further learning. Assessment as learning means teacher feedback and the student's own self-assessment is used to guide students toward their learning goals. Assessment of learning measures student achievement at defined points in the school year and provides evidence of student progress toward learning goals.

The assessment for, of and as learning approach is consistent with the coming changes to Yukon's curriculum and includes regular assessments at different grade levels to identify where they are doing well and what they still need to work on. An example of the assessments used in Yukon's curriculum are the Yukon Foundational Skills Assessments (YFSAs), which students take in Grades 4 and 7. The YFSAs assess students' abilities in reading comprehension, writing and numeracy. They provide a snapshot over multiple years showing what students have learned and where they need more support.

## Secondary

Yukon's secondary school programs prepare students with the skills, knowledge and understanding they will need for their future academic, professional or personal paths.

## Career and personal learning

Yukon schools offer high school courses for career and personal learning, and, in the new curriculum, this learning will be integrated into all grades. Currently, in Grade 8, students may take Health and Career Education 8, which helps them understand themselves, their education and their career options. Grade 10 students take a required Planning 10 course, where they explore a range of life and career skills, and their options after high school. Some students gain valuable work experience through the Work Experience 12 course. In the final year of high school, every student will develop personal and career skills further with the required Graduate Transitions course, which prepares them for post-secondary education and work.





## Experiential learning

Experiential learning is not limited to field trips. It refers to experience-based, hands-on learning opportunities, which can happen in class, the community or on the land. Yukon schools offer a variety of experiential programs. At Porter Creek Secondary School, students can take Fashion, Art, Design School (FADS), Leadership Education and Athlete Development (LEAD) or courses in Cosmetology.

At F.H. Collins Secondary School, students can participate in the Food Education & Service Training (FEAST) program to get experience in specialty food preparation and catering or the Yukon Sports School, where they spend half the day in sport training and half the day in academics. Vanier Catholic Secondary School offers students a course in sustainable resources and mining to learn about mineral exploration.

### **LEAD Program at Porter Creek**

*The Leadership and Athletic Development (LEAD) program at Porter Creek Secondary School helps students to develop personal leadership, wellness and active living skills. LEAD is a half-day program that is delivered over one semester.*

*In 2016, two new LEAD programs were introduced: LEAD Soccer Academy, for students in Grades 9 -12; and LEAD Hockey Canada Skills Academy, for Grades 8 and 9 students. The original program, now called Senior LEAD, is also available for Grades 10-12 students. All three programs use sport and physical education as a means to create confident leaders in our community and teach them the importance of citizenship and personal responsibility. This year, 12 students participated in Senior LEAD, 17 in LEAD Soccer Academy and 10 in LEAD Hockey Canada Skills Academy.*



Wood Street Centre offers programs such as Music, Arts and Drama (MAD) that provides students with a solid foundation in theatre, music and dance; and ACES (Achievement, Challenge, Environment and Stewardship) that incorporates social studies and science with outdoor programming, including 30 days of outdoor experiences. Wood Street's programs are very popular. For instance, this year we had 73 applications for 47 places in the MAD program and 23 applications for 16 places in ACES.

As we introduce the curriculum changes, more and more schools will offer experiential learning opportunities to students.

## Financial literacy

Financial literacy is an important skill for everyone to have for their career, academic, and personal lives. Currently, financial literacy is part of math outcomes at most grade levels, and is addressed in some additional courses such as business, home economics and career and personal planning courses. In the revised curriculum, finance education will be a part of student learning in required subjects in all grade levels. For example, Grade 1 students will learn about coins and may role play exchange and transactions through trading games, while Grade 7 students will learn about calculating sales taxes, discounts, and product pricing and Grade 12 students will learn about budgeting, banking and interest rates.

## Trades training

Many Yukon students are interested in the trades as a career. They may register in an apprenticeship program while they are studying in high school. Students who are at least 16 years old can work part-time under a certified apprentice during the school year, and full-time during the summer months, with hours worked counting towards both course and apprenticeship requirements.



The department has partnerships to provide students with exposure to various skilled trades. Trades and apprenticeship programming offered between the three Whitehorse secondary schools include:

- Metalwork
- Woodwork
- Sled Ed / Small Engines
- Mechanics & Automotive
- Drafting & Digital Design
- Foods
- Fashion Design
- Hair & Aesthetics

For more information on rural schools' trades programming, please read about the Rural Equity Action Plan in this report.





## FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

Our data, available on the Department of Education website, continues to show First Nations students need more support to succeed in their learning.

Yukon First Nations are essential partners in supporting the success of First Nations learners and in sharing First Nations languages, perspectives and traditional knowledge with all Yukon students. We are continuing to build partnerships with the Council of Yukon First Nations, the First Nations Education Commission and Yukon First Nation governments to improve Yukon First Nation student achievement, to ensure that the public school system meets the needs of First Nation students and to offer opportunities to learn about First Nations to all Yukon students.

We will continue to work together to improve outcomes for First Nations learners and to provide all Yukon students with opportunities to learn more about Yukon First Nations.

**GOAL:** Effective education partnerships with Yukon First Nations

### Education agreements with Yukon First Nations

The Government of Yukon recognizes that Yukon First Nations are diverse peoples with unique needs and cultures. We engage directly with Yukon First Nation governments to determine how they prefer to work with us at the local school level. These discussions have led to the establishment of specific education agreements with a growing number of individual Yukon First Nations governments.

## Joint Education Action Plan (JEAP)

The Yukon government entered into a Memorandum of Understanding on Education Partnership with Yukon First Nations and the Government of Canada, which led to the creation of the Joint Education Action Plan (JEAP). The department works directly with Yukon First Nations and CYFN on yearly implementation plans for the Joint Education Action Plan. This action plan focuses on culturally inclusive schools, First Nation community priorities and capacity building, collaboration on protocols and evaluation and closing the academic achievement gap through foundational support.

A report on Yukon First Nations student achievement is being developed for the Yukon First Nations Education Summit and to the First Nations Education Commission. We are also drafting a data-sharing agreement.

In the 2015-16 school year, JEAP implementation focused on:

- Establishing mandatory Yukon First Nations cultural awareness training for department staff, including school staff
- Creating a template for culturally inclusive schools to be used in school reviews
- Increasing opportunities and supports to promote Yukon First Nation languages and cultural activities
- Developing a process to report on the performance of First Nations students each year
- Encouraging parents to actively participate in school communities at all levels, from volunteering to school councils to school reviews and growth planning

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*According to the Yukon Bureau of Statistics' 2016 Second Quarter Population Report, the number of Yukon residents who self-identified as First Nations was estimated at 7,792 – accounting for 20.6% of Yukon's population.*

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### With the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun

This year, we signed a three-year education agreement with the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun. The agreement outlines joint communication and participation on curriculum development, school programming and staffing. Our shared priorities with this agreement include: extra-curricular activities, experiential learning, student achievement, a greater focus on Northern Tutchone culture and language and an increased number of pathways to graduation for local students.

### With Carcross/Tagish First Nation

We signed a four-year education agreement this year with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation. With this agreement, we will be increasing the focus on land-based and experiential learning opportunities, Tlingit and Tagish language and culture and student achievement. The agreement will also increase the number of pathways to graduation for local students who have stopped attending school through the development of an Independent Learning Centre program in Carcross.

We continue to work with the following Yukon First Nations governments on their individual education agreements from previous years:

- Selkirk First Nation
- Kluane First Nation
- Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation
- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in

Through these six education agreements, we are establishing a framework to work collaboratively to support the needs of all students on individual Yukon First Nations' territories and embed First Nations traditional knowledge, language and culture in Yukon schools.

### First Nations language programs

Yukon schools offer a range of Yukon First Nations language programs. To help support the revitalization of these languages, we invest in training for Yukon First Nations language teachers, the work of the Yukon Native Language Centre and language programs in our schools.



We would like to recognize and thank the Aboriginal Language Teachers of Yukon and the Elders who have mentored them and shared knowledge of their languages with the next generations, including Gwich'in, Hän, Kaska, Northern Tutchone, Southern Tutchone, Tlingit and Upper Tanana.

As of September 2016, 2,044 students were enrolled in First Nations language classes which is about 35% of Yukon students. These programs are well-established and well-attended in elementary and middle school, however enrolment and retention are lower at the high school level.

In Fall 2016, there were 34 full-time Aboriginal Language Teachers in 21 Yukon schools.



*21 Yukon schools offered First Nations language programs in 2015-16, with eight programs in urban schools and 13 in rural schools.*

## In Yukon schools

LANGUAGE	SCHOOL
Gwich'in	Chief Zzeh Gittlit School
Hän	Robert Service School
Kaska	Johnson Elementary School
	Watson Lake Secondary School
	Ross River School
Northern Tutchone	Eliza Van Bibber School
	J.V. Clark School
	Tantalus School
Southern Tutchone	Elijah Smith Elementary School
	Hidden Valley Elementary School
	Jack Hulland Elementary School
	Porter Creek Secondary School
	Selkirk Elementary School
	Takhini Elementary School
	Whitehorse Elementary School
	Kluane Lake School
	St. Elias Community School
Tlingit	Ghùch Tlâ Community School
	Teslin School
	F.H. Collins Secondary School
Upper Tanana	Nelna Bessie John School

## Yukon Native Language Centre

We provide funding to the Council of Yukon First Nations to run the Yukon Native Language Centre.

This centre is a training and research facility that provides linguistic and educational services to First Nations people and the general public. It offers certificate and diploma programs for Aboriginal language teachers and partners with University of Alaska Fairbanks to offer a bachelor's degree.

Since the 1980s, the YNLC has trained more than 150 Yukon First Nations language teachers, many of whom have gone on to teach in Yukon schools.



## First Nations programs and resources

Providing more culturally inclusive curriculum, support for First Nations students and promoting Yukon First Nations traditional knowledge, culture and language helps to connect with First Nations students and support their success in schools. Yukon First Nations traditional knowledge, language and culture represent a wealth of wisdom and learning opportunities for all Yukon students and are especially important in the development and success of First Nations students.

The First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit works with and supports Yukon First Nations to integrate First Nations' ways of knowing and doing into schools and to develop Yukon First Nations language and culture curriculum and resources. Yukon schools offer courses like Ancestral Technology 9 and 10, English First Peoples 10-12 and Yukon First Nations 12. Resources like Northwind's Grade 1 stories about Yukon First Nations people, Social Studies booklets for Grades 4 and 5 on clans, languages and traditional governance, and more are available to Yukon students.

## Curriculum about residential schools

We are committed to recognizing the history, experiences and impacts of residential schools across Canada and continues to develop curriculum and resources to educate younger generations about this difficult and complicated chapter of Canada's history. A unit about residential schools is now part of the required Social Studies 10 courses in Yukon schools. It was developed by the First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit in partnership with First Nations, Elders, Yukon First Nations curriculum working group, former residential school students, health support workers and teachers.

In Fall 2016, this unit and related training for teachers was provided to all Yukon schools, including a teacher's guide, a digital collection of stories, videos and electronic resources, a timeline of events, a collection of fiction and non-fiction books with a Yukon focus, including Tr'ehuhch'in Nāwtr'udāā ḥā ("Finding Our Way Home"). Health support workers trained with the CYFN Health Commission, Committee on Abuse in Residential Schools (CAIRS) and Health Canada are available to support students and communities as this unit is introduced.



## Cultural inclusion program

The cultural inclusion program funds cultural programs, projects and activities coordinated by schools, school councils and First Nations. Examples of projects in the 2015-16 school year include:

- Eliza Van Bibber School – all students, along with Selkirk First Nation community members, took part in an ice fishing activity during the fall season. Students wrote stories about their experiences as a literacy component.
- Chief Zzeh Gittlit School – an intermediate and senior class trip to Rampart House to learn about its historical connection to the Vuntut Gwitchin as a Hudson's Bay trading post. A traditional trail links Rampart House with the Old Crow Flats.
- F. H. Collins Secondary – the Tlingit language class attended one of the largest biannual gatherings of Southeast Alaska Native people, Celebration. This festival of traditional song and dance showcases and preserves Native traditions, customs and knowledge, with day trips to Mendenhall Glacier, Mount Roberts, with hiking on Douglas Island and learning about traditional medicines.

## Community, Heritage, Adventure, Outdoor and Skills program (CHAOS)

The Community, Heritage, Adventure, Outdoor and Skills program (CHAOS) is an experiential learning program with a First Nations focus that runs out of Wood Street Centre in Whitehorse. It is open to all students in Grades 9 and 10 and includes four subjects:

### Learning on the land

*Every spring, Teslin School moves all operations to Brooks Brook, located on the traditional territory of the Teslin Tlingit Council. Teslin School and the Teslin Tlingit Council work together to plan experiential education sessions that are delivered to students over the course of four days. In 2016, participants worked with: Artist in the School, Arts Adventure, the Northern Cultural Expressions Society and Parks Canada, as well as with Elders, parents, various departments at Teslin Tlingit Council (Lands & Resources, Health and Social Development, Capital & Infrastructure), Parks Canada, and the Yukon Literacy Coalition. Fishing and gathering, paddling, and traditional bush skills were a few things that were taught to students by Teslin School staff, community members, Elders and knowledge keepers.*



English, Social Studies, Ancestral Technology and Outdoor Education. The program capacity is 16 students.

In 2015-16, nine Grade 9 and six Grade 10 students enrolled in the program. Staff reported positive feedback from parents about their children's participation in this program and observed that students were demonstrating increased community involvement.

In the next year, we will look at the range of programs available to Grade 9 students, assess the strengths of CHAOS and promote enrolment.



## FRENCH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

According to the 2011 Statistics Canada census, more than 4,500 Yukon residents speak French, which represents nearly 13% of the territory's population. Yukon has the third-highest percentage of French speakers in Canada (after Quebec and New Brunswick).

The department encourages Yukon students to become fluent in both of Canada's official languages.

The department works with the Yukon Francophone School Board (Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon – CSFY), l'Association franco-yukonnaise (AFY), Canadian Parents for French and other French advisory groups in developing French language programs and initiatives, from courses of study to cultural and community activities for students to in-service training for French teachers.

**GOAL:** Effective delivery of French Language Programs and Services.

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*During the 2015-2016 school year, 2,288 Yukon students participated in French Second Language programs, while 244 studied in French First Language programs.*

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## French First Language

French First Language educational programs at École Émilie-Tremblay (K to Grade 6), Académie Parhélie (Grades 7 to 12) and École Nomade (home-schooling Grades 1 to 12) are the responsibility of the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon (CSFY), Yukon's only school board. The department supports CSFY and its responsibility to deliver French First Language programming in Yukon. CSFY is provided with an annual operations budget to manage its programming costs.

In 2016, the Yukon government revised a regulation under the Education Act after discussions with the CSFY. The *French as a First Language Instruction Regulation* was changed to delegate the Minister's authority to admit non-rights holders to French First Language schools to the CSFY. The Minister still has the authority and responsibility to evaluate admissions processes to ensure the linguistic and cultural integrity of French First Language programs.

These changes officially recognize practices that have been in place for a number of years. Admissions processes to École Émilie-Tremblay, Académie Parhélie and École Nomade have not changed.

For more information about French First Language school programs, please see CSFY's annual report: [commissionscolaire.csfy.ca/publications](http://commissionscolaire.csfy.ca/publications).

## French Second Language

Yukon schools offer a range of French Second Language programs, including Core French, French Immersion (early and late), Intensive French, Post-Intensive French and Options Plus French. They also offer French cultural activities through the 11 French language assistants ("French monitors") from the Odyssey program who visited Yukon schools last school year to lead games, plays, songs and other French activities for students.

In the 2015-2016 school year, we began using the *French Second Language Assessment Matrix*, which includes system-wide literacy assessments in both French and English language achievements in reading, writing and oral language in Grades 2-9.

We also celebrated 35 years of French Immersion in Yukon. 689 students studied French Immersion,



reflecting an ongoing trend of increasing enrolment in the program within Yukon schools. In response to this increased demand, the French Immersion program at Selkirk Elementary School was expanded and will grow by one grade each year until it offers French Immersion Kindergarten to Grade 7.

In Spring 2016, the French Second Language Advisory Committee completed a new five-year Action Plan for French Programs in Yukon, based on the recommendations from the French Second Language parent survey and focus groups sessions that took place in 2015-2016.

In June 2016, approximately 20 French Second Language students successfully passed the *Diplôme d'études en langue française* (DEL F) exam, an internationally recognized language certificate that tests language proficiency. Following the success of this pilot, the DEL F will again be offered to graduating French Second Language students in spring 2017.



## RURAL PROGRAMS AND SUPPORTS

### Rural Equity Action Plan

Our data and performance indicators continue to show that rural students need more supports and program options to succeed in their learning. Living in rural and remote areas of Yukon can create challenges in terms of infrastructure and capacity. Students may have access to fewer courses and other educational options compared to urban students.

The Rural Equity Action Plan has created some programs to support rural students, such as more opportunities for rural students to work together in larger groups across communities, share resources and staff and study more arts, trades, and other specialized courses. The department also coordinates other school programs and services to support the objectives of the Rural Equity Action Plan.

### Rural Experiential Models (REM)

The department is offering more options and supporting improved learning outcomes for rural and Yukon First Nations students through programs like the Rural Experiential Model (REM).

The Senior REM (Grades 10-12) brings together approximately one hundred and thirty students and many educators from rural Yukon communities for a week of hands-on learning. Senior REMs were held in Dawson City, the traditional territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, in September 2015 and in Watson Lake, the Kaska traditional territory of the Liard First Nation, in April 2016. The Senior REM helps rural students to pursue their personal learning interests and to connect with their peers in other Yukon communities. Senior REM participants earn two Fine Art or Applied Skill credits. In 2015-16, 97% of participating students received credit.



In May 2016, the first Junior REM (Grades 7-8) took place. Eighty rural students (2/3 of whom were First Nation) gathered in Faro, in the traditional Kaska territory of the Ross River Dena Council. Students participated in a two-day holistic program of integrated traditional and modern 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning, aimed to strengthen their cultural, emotional, mental, and physical well being. Students were joined by 70 session leaders, 26 of whom were First Nation Elders and knowledge-keepers. Elder participation ensured that Yukon First Nations' ways of knowing and doing were honoured and celebrated. Learning at this event was hands-on and connected to the land.

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### **What students have to say about REM**

*"This was by far the best week  
of my entire school life."*

*~ Sid, Grade 8 student from Ross River*

*"REM is what we all look forward  
to every year — it's the best event."*

*~ Azul, Grade 11 student from Carmacks*

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## Rural trades and apprenticeship programming

Some trades programs are offered at multiple schools, and sometimes, students travel to the school offering the trade programming in which they are enrolled. Since the 2013-14 school year, many schools have upgraded their shop facilities. This has resulted in increased programming options for students at J.V. Clark, Chief Zzeh Gittlit, Del Van Gorder, Ross River, Ghùch Tlà Community and Tantalus Community schools.

It is a challenge to offer the same variety of trades programming to students in rural Yukon. While some schools, such as Robert Service, St. Elias Community and Watson Lake Secondary do provide regular trades programming, other schools have historically struggled to maintain such programming, largely due to low student populations and resulting staffing allocations.

In an effort to provide rural students with the same opportunities as their Whitehorse peers, trades programming is featured prominently in the Rural Experiential Model (REM) course offerings.

Our continued partnership with Skills Canada Yukon is another way for Whitehorse and rural students to follow interests in potential careers in the trades. Skills clubs usually occur after school, and provide a weekly opportunity for students to develop new skills and interests as they prepare for life after public school. The Advanced Education Division helps fund Skills Canada Yukon, which in turn, funds skills clubs throughout Yukon.

In partnership with Yukon College's Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining, high school students in Watson Lake explored five different trades in 2015-16 including carpentry, electrical wiring, plumbing, small engines and heavy duty mechanics. Watson Lake's Yukon College campus also held an Introduction to Carpentry program at the Yukon college campus with eight students, including one from Grade 12, and built an extension on the community thrift store.



## Alternative secondary programming

Some rural students need more flexible options to come back or complete their studies. Our alternative learning programs and centres offer safe, caring and positive learning environments to support them. Staff assist them with overcoming challenges that may otherwise stand in the way of finishing their education. The goal of these programs is to provide quality education while developing the individual student's strengths, talents, and interests.

In 2015-2016, the department continued to offer alternative learning programs in the Carcross Independent Learning Centre, Dawson Independent Learning Centre, Chief Zzeh Gittlit School, and the Teslin Learning Centre

## Blended learning

Blended learning combines flexible, online instruction with teacher-delivered classroom learning activities. This approach creates more course options and flexibility for learning. Content can be delivered in an interactive and engaging style, and students are able to view and replay lessons anytime, anywhere. This method empowers students to have greater control over their learning, allowing them to work ahead, plan for extended absences or to catch up on missed work.

The purpose of a blended learning approach is to improve student engagement and student achievement. It enables teachers to have more time to work one-on-one with students and build stronger teacher-student relationships. This time facilitates student-centered learning that is individualized to meet student needs.

Thirty percent of Grade 5 to 12 students across 18 schools participated in at least one blended learning course during the 2015/16 academic year. Based on feedback from students and teachers, we are helping teachers to balance online and in-person instruction time and students to develop their self-directed learning skills.



## DISTANCE LEARNING AND HOME EDUCATION

### Aurora Virtual School

The Aurora Virtual School is a hub of distributed, distance and online learning options for Yukon students, including home-educated, rural and urban students. Its programs are open to all Yukon students. Depending on their needs and interests, students take one or more types of courses through this school.

The school is staffed with four teachers to coordinate and deliver the following options for Yukon students:

- The Aurora Virtual School program, which combines online coursework with instruction from Yukon teachers via interactive technologies, such as videoconferencing or live webcasting of lessons and group projects.

- Distributed learning from B.C., in which students may work their way through courses online or by mail — the school offers all required courses for Grades 8-12 and a growing number of electives.
- Home education registration, learning resources and support.
- Cross-enrolment with Yukon schools, in which a student may opt to take some courses at Aurora Virtual School and some courses at their local school.

Based on the needs of the school, we moved its location to share a space with the Individual Learning Centre in the fall of 2015.

### Home education

Home educators in Yukon can access a Home Education Handbook, with information about the rights, responsibilities and support available for home educators. It outlines the process of creating a home education plan, teaching a child at home, assessments and the role and resources of the Aurora Virtual School.

Parents can be reimbursed up to \$1,200 per year with receipts to cover the purchase of educational resources needed to complete their children's home education plan. Materials and services normally provided by parents for students in public schools (such as pencils and notebooks, private lessons or sports team fees) are not eligible.

## SUPPORTING YUKON STUDENTS

Our main goal is supporting the success of each learner. With our school communities and partners, we work to identify the challenges faced by our students and address the specific needs of students inside and outside of class to support their success at school.

### Student engagement and attendance

Many factors can affect attendance, like illness, family and community events, lack of transportation, work or disengagement from school. When students miss a class, they miss the learning that happens that day and social time with their peers and teachers. Regular attendance helps to develop time management, social-emotional skills, work ethic and personal motivation to



**GOAL:** Improving programs and teaching practices.

their fullest potential. Regular attendance is one way of seeing how engaged a student is in their learning.

*Every Student, Every Day* is an initiative of the Victoria Gold Yukon Student Encouragement Society to fund school-based projects that encourage student engagement and attendance. The Yukon government matches up to \$25,000 annually for the society's fundraising and sponsorship. Department staff administer the funding program in partnership with society staff, including promoting the project, reviewing proposals, awarding funds and reviewing project reports. School-based staff also support and deliver projects under this initiative.

*Every Student, Every Day* awarded more than \$49,000 to 10 projects for the 2015/16 school year. Reports from all 10 projects indicated improved attendance, punctuality and/or engagement for the students who benefitted from the fund.



Results and observations from schools since the fund became available in 2012 suggest that when schools and communities focus attention on specific students — whether by making programming more diverse and exciting, meeting nutritional needs, supporting learning opportunities outside of school and on the land, or forging stronger relationships with students and families — attendance and engagement in school can be positively affected.

More information on the Victoria Gold Student Encouragement Society attendance project can be found at: [www.education.govyk.ca/attendance.html](http://www.education.govyk.ca/attendance.html)

### School supplies initiative

Working with School Councils and school staff, the Yukon government provided \$100 of school supplies funding for every student in Yukon for the 2016-2017 school year (a total of \$550,000).

An essential supplies list was developed with School Councils and administrators, outlining the basic required supplies for different grade levels. For

any remaining funding after the purchase of these supplies, School Councils worked with their schools to support the needs of students for other fees such as field trips and sports activities, or additional classroom supplies.

We have received mixed feedback from School Councils, schools and parents about this funding. Some parents appreciated how it helped with the financial burden they normally face during the back-to-school season. Some schools found it easier to get started during the first week of school and some School Councils thought it was reassuring to know that all students had the proper materials to do well during the school year.

For others, this initiative put additional stress on an already heavy workload during the beginning of the school year. Schools and School Councils were responsible for purchasing and tracking all school supplies and distributing them to students, which took a lot of time and organization.



## Student support services

Yukon schools are modeled on inclusive education, which is based on the belief that all students can learn together in different ways. A Student Support Services Parent Handbook, a guide for parents of children with special needs, is available on our website or in print through the department. Parents are always consulted before any formal assessments or interventions with the Student Support Services unit.

In 2016, the department shifted its delivery model for Student Support Services from an assessment driven model to a more consultative based model. This model allows Students Support Services staff to better address student needs through evidence-based practice and provide a more consistent service delivery to students and staff in Yukon schools.

## Educational assistant (EA) Allocation Advisory Committee

The department established an EA Allocation Advisory Committee in the fall of 2015 to review the current allocation model for paraprofessionals in the territory and evaluate its merits and challenges. In 2016, this committee recommended an improved paraprofessional allocation process based on needs which allows schools to make requests for paraprofessional supports to support student needs. This process was adopted and implemented during the spring of 2016. With further refinements, this new process will be used for EA allocation moving forward.

## Individualized Education Action Planning Criteria Committee

The Individualized Education Planning Criteria Committee was established in late 2015 to examine how to shift from a criteria-based model to an inclusive needs-based model for establishing Individualized Education Plans (IEP) for students who require them.

The committee met three times in 2016. The group's work focused on defining the difference between adaptations and modifications and how students' individual needs are addressed. The committee also focused on creating clear parameters around which students are eligible for an IEP.

## Positive Behaviour Intervention Support (PBIS)

The Government of Yukon and the Yukon Teachers' Association (YTA) are implementing a collaborative Positive Behaviour Intervention Support initiative to proactively address behaviour issues, including training and coaching over the next three years, as per the collective agreement.

In 2016, Tier 1 of the PBIS plan began. A four-day introductory training course was given to 26 Yukon schools from PBIS experts. All schools are now working through the implementation process, including developing consistency across all staff, creating school specific behavior models to define school values and expectations, and using data to track instances of problem behavior and effectively and efficiently address concerns in the school. Schools receive ongoing support from a Positive Behavior Intervention Support Coach.

## Self-regulation

The Positive Behaviour Intervention Support initiative includes options such as self-regulation, which teaches students to observe and manage their thoughts, stress, emotions and actions – to extend the space between a stimulus and their response. It helps all children, including those who may struggle with social-emotional and behavioural control, to be ready to learn in the classroom. Examples of tools include slow starts to the morning, scheduled movement breaks, spin bikes, noise-reducing headphones, snacks, gratitude circles and quiet zones.

All Student Support Services Consultants are trained to provide self-regulation, and school staff have participated in in-service training and professional development days. An information resource was provided to all schools. We are currently developing a report to evaluate the first year of PBIS at each school. Its focus is on the current status of the implementation of the PBIS approach at each school and what difference it has made for students to date.



## Safe and Caring Schools

The department is committed to providing a safe and caring learning environment for all Yukon students and staff. Under the *Safe and Caring Schools Policy* of 2008:

“All students and school staff have the right to be treated in a fair, respectful and equitable manner in a safe school environment free from all forms of bullying, harassment and intimidation.”

The department provides schools with resources to act on this policy, such as school counsellors, reporting processes, access to specialists and consultants, professional development and training opportunities.

## Counselling programs

Helping students understand their strengths, challenges and career options is an important way to guide and support their success in school.

Our partners in education have identified mental health and counselling as a priority area. Each school receives a staff allocation for a school counsellor. In 2015-2016, the department completed a review of the services offered by Yukon school counsellors. We found that Yukon school counsellors have a range of skills and education and provide students support in developing their social skills, emotional awareness, decision making abilities, health and wellness, self-regulation, career exploration and transitioning out of high school, and academic planning.

We are supporting our school counsellors through professional development opportunities and in-service training to help them meet the various needs of students in our schools.

## Reporting incidents

School staff document and address incidents of concern involving students and staff through the Workplace Risk Assessment procedure, which determines the level of concern about a student's behaviours and provides an appropriate intervention to address the behaviours and the needs of any affected student(s) and/or staff.

During 2016, a Workplace Risk Assessment working group examined ways to clarify and streamline the process for documenting incidents in Yukon Schools. To address concerns from staff about when and how to report an incident, the Workplace Risk Assessment working group developed a draft document to distinguish between procedures for reporting incidents and assessing threats.

Student Support Services also offered additional training and discussion with school staff, such as regular training to all Yukon schools in Non-violent Crisis Intervention. Some schools requested this training as part of their professional development.

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*“All students and school staff have the right to be treated in a fair, respectful and equitable manner in a safe school environment free from all forms of bullying, harassment and intimidation.”*

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## HEALTH AND SAFETY

Safety is a responsibility shared among all department staff, students and clients.

Staff who see a hazard or unsafe condition in the workplace have a responsibility to address and report it. We encourage staff, students and community members to report any and all health and safety concerns to their supervisor or school.

### Yukon Education Health and Safety Management System

This year, we continued our work to align the Yukon Education Health and Safety Management System with the Corporate System and began to roll out the Yukon Education Health and Safety Management System to all staff.

This system includes on-going hazard identification and mitigation, reporting, Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee activities, auditing, improvement and communication with all staff.

Toward the end of 2016, we developed an internal collaborative website for delivery of the Health and Safety Management System. The website is designed to create uniformity and help standardize school processes for health and safety reporting and documentation processes. The site is designed to facilitate automatic workflows to advise principals about when an incident has occurred and any follow up that is required. All documentation can be stored within the website so that schools and administrators can quickly reference documented incidents or past meeting minutes.

**GOAL:** Provide a safe and healthy workplace for all employees

### Radon monitoring

The department is monitoring radon levels in schools and the Health and Safety Management Coordinator is becoming certified as a Radon Measurement Professional. This will give the department a higher level of confidence when testing for radon in schools, as well as a better understanding of what remediation efforts are most suitable for different Education buildings.

Moving forward, the Government of Yukon's Public Service Commission will be leading the development of radon management practices that will apply to all departments and schools. Education will adopt the standard government approach upon its release.



## Safety of movable soccer goals

This year, the *Movable Soccer Goal Safety Regulation* and revised policy came into effect. They ensure the safe use of moveable soccer goals. They apply to any movable soccer goal available for public use that weighs more than 18 kilograms, with standards for the size of netting, labelling, storage, usage, inspection, maintenance and anchoring of goals. These standards will ensure that movable soccer goals are set up and anchored properly, reducing the risk of goals tipping and causing injury.

In 2013, we worked with the Yukon Soccer Association to put in place similar interim safety measures. The regulation standardizes the interim measures and adds the requirement that regulated goals meet the strict manufacturing requirements of the American Society for Testing and Materials. As part of the new regulation, we replaced any movable soccer goals that did not meet the new safety standards.

The regulation was developed through an extensive public engagement process that took place from April to June 2015 with Yukon First Nations governments, Yukon municipalities, recreation and soccer associations, Yukon schools and the Yukon Coroner's Office. With their participation and the implementation of these new safety standards, we are ensuring a safer environment for all Yukoners, including children and students, to participate in the sport of soccer.

## Privacy of student data

In September 2015, the British Columbia Ministry of Education informed the Yukon government that they were missing an external backup hard disk drive and there was the possibility of a privacy breach. The missing drive contained some personal information of 5,936 Yukon K-12 students, along with the information of 3.4 million B.C. students, processed by the B.C. Ministry of Education from 1986-2009.

The B.C. Ministry of Education processes and stores some Yukon student information as part of our shared education system for curriculum, exams and reporting. The data contained on the drive included personal student information, such as: Personal Education Number (PEN), name, age, gender, school, courses taken and exam scores. The drive did not contain financial or banking information, Social Insurance Numbers or driver's license numbers.

There has been no indication of any unauthorized access to the information on the drive or that individuals have had their personal information used as result of this possible breach. We have since notified individuals whose personal student information was contained on the drive of the possible breach and the risks involved.

The student data B.C. currently collects, including data from Yukon, is stored exclusively on its secure Government Local Area Network. The network includes protection measures such as surveillance, authentication and security officers for the physical premises. Only authorized individuals have access to the network's data centres and firewalls are in place that prohibit unauthorized external access.

The privacy and security of our students' personal information is an important responsibility. We will continue to work with the B.C. Ministry of Education and evaluate our own processes to ensure student information is secure.



## TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EDUCATORS

The department provides a range of professional development and training opportunities for school staff such as teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals.

### Summer Academy

Summer Academy gathers all Yukon educators together before the beginning of school to participate in required training. In the fall of 2016, approximately 850 school staff participated.

Training included:

- Preparing for changes to the K-9 curriculum – assessment; Applied Design, Skills, and Technology; digital literacy; physical literacy; literacy; numeracy
- First Nations – Yukon First Nation Art, Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom, Blanket Exercise, Bringing Indian Residential Schools and Reconciliation into the Elementary Classroom, Yukon First Nation Inclusion — why it matters, Making collective change for all children
- Featured breakout sessions, *Inquiry-Informed and Innovative Practices*, led by Judy Halbert and Linda Kaser, authors of *Spirals of Inquiry*
- French Cultural Planning Workshop
- Several sessions led by classroom-based teachers
- Health and safety – Respectful Workplace Training; Safety Reboot and Project Critique, introduction to off-site trip applications, Let's talk about suicide; workplace risk assessment and safety planning; Concussions: What every teacher should know; sexual health
- Special needs – FASD, Play and motor development, visual perceptual skills, impact of consistent language on behavior, linking sensory processing and behavior, fine motor bootcamp, 1-2-3s of IEPs, trauma in the classroom



## Professional learning about Yukon First Nations

Providing staff with the training and knowledge to bring Yukon First Nations perspectives into their teaching practice is an important part of improving First Nations education in Yukon schools. In August 2016, 46 new teachers and principals participated in the Yukon First Nations New Teacher Orientation, hosted by the First Nations Programs and Partnerships Unit, with the help of the Yukon First Nations Curriculum Working Group Members.

At this training, staff learned about Yukon First Nations cultures and traditions and how to engage their schools' First Nation communities. Breakout sessions included:

- Storytelling
- Ancestral Technology
- Medicinal Walk
- How to Work with Resource People/Elders and Website and Resources
- Outdoor Cooking

## Blanket Exercise

In 2015/16, the First Nations Programs and Partnerships Unit introduced the Blanket Exercise, an experiential exercise to increase awareness of the effects of colonization in Canada, including residential schools. All school administrators participated in the Blanket Exercise and the debriefing session indicated a deep understanding of the effects in their school communities. In addition to the sessions for educators, sessions were hosted for students at Wood Street Centre, the School Councils Conference, Yukon First Nations Studies 12 students at F.H. Collins Secondary School, Social Studies 10 students at Vanier Catholic Secondary School, for the public at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre and the Yukon Native Teacher Education program at the college.

Demand for Blanket Exercise training became so great in 2016 that it is now available to all Government of Yukon employees through the Organizational Development branch of the Public Service Commission. Training sessions occur several times per year.



## 2016 calendar year Blanket Exercise participation for educators

GROUP/COMMUNITY	DATE	# OF PARTICIPANTS
Learning Network	Feb 2, 2016	25
Teslin School	May 30, 2016	16 (approx.)
YFN New Teacher Orientation	August 23, 2016	50
Summer Academy	August 24, 2016	35
Summer Academy	August 25, 2016	15
Indian Residential School In-Service (Grade 10 teachers)	October 12, 2016	40
6 sessions for educators		181 total

### **KAIROS Blanket Exercise**

*The KAIROS Blanket Exercise is a teaching tool that uses participation to educate people about the nation-to-nation relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. The exercise deepens participants' understanding of the denial of Indigenous peoples' nationhood throughout Canadian history. It explores the major themes and recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), examines how federal policies and programs impact the lives of Indigenous peoples in Canada, and identifies what Indigenous peoples and their allies are doing to bring about positive change. The First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit offers this activity to students and staff in Yukon schools. See the Training with Yukon First Nations section of this report to learn more about the implementation of this learning tool.*





## TRAINING DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

### Learning networks

In 2015/16, the Education Learning Networks continued, helping Yukon educators to deepen their understanding of modern approaches to learning and curriculum redesign in B.C and across Canada. Approximately 40 teachers participated this past year, exploring three network themes in three sessions throughout the school year:

- Flexible and engaging approaches to learning
- Integrating literacy and experiential learning
- Integration of Yukon First Nations ways of knowing and doing and literacy in the curriculum

### Safe and Caring Schools Policy in-service

A range of further on-request training to support safe and caring schools is regularly offered and delivered to Yukon school staff, including:

- *Restorative approaches* – to build healthy communities, repair harm and restore relationships
- *Suicide Response and Intervention* – ASIST, a two-day suicide intervention workshop

- *Mental Health* – in-services discussing disorders relating to substance use, mood, anxiety and trauma, psychoses, eating disorders and deliberate self-injury
- *Resources for building positive school climate* – continued support for schools to provide staff-led peer support groups such as Gay/Straight Alliances, Challenge Days and Positive Behaviour Support and Intervention
- *Positive Behaviour Intervention and Supports* – focus on setting positively stated behavior expectations with students and support those behaviours in the schools
- *Non-Violent Crisis Intervention* – equipping staff with strategies to de-escalate situations and keep staff and student safety as the paramount goal

### Yukon First Nations 101

One of the action items under the Joint Education Action Plan is to deliver Yukon First Nations cultural awareness training to all department staff, including school staff. In partnership with Yukon College and Yukon First Nations, we have begun rolling out a “Yukon First Nations 101” training workshop, starting with our senior management and main office staff in 2016.

## STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

The department provided school bus service to over 2,000 Yukon students in 2015-16. Standard Bus Contracting is currently under contract to provide school bus service for Yukon students through 2018.

Each year, there are a number of students who show up to take the bus who are not registered before the start of school. As a result, additional buses and drivers have to be located and dispatched to pick up the extra children. Throughout September, bus routes and pick-up times are adjusted as these students are registered. By the end of the first month of school, bus routes are confirmed for the school year.

The Student Transportation Committee, made up of representatives from School Councils and the department, met twice in 2015-16. The committee reviews and works to improve student transportation services on an as-needed basis.

In January 2016, there was a successful shortening of bus wait times at the North Transfer Station on the Alaska Highway. Buses now wait at the North Transfer Station for approximately 3-10 minutes instead of the 15-20 minutes they were waiting prior to the change. As a result of this and other changes, students who live out on the North Alaska Highway now get home 20-30 minutes earlier at the end of the day.

**GOAL:** Efficient and effective student transportation services

### City transit passes for high school students

High school students can opt out of school busing and register instead for a free transit pass from the City of Whitehorse. This option increases their access to transportation not just to school, but to after-school activities, work and community events. We increased the number of free city bus passes for high school students from 525 students per month registered for these passes in 2014-15, to 590 students in 2015-16.



## CAPITAL PLANNING & FACILITIES

The departments of Education and Highways and Public Works are responsible for the planning, monitoring and maintenance of Yukon schools as Yukon government facilities.

### F.H. Collins Secondary School replacement

Students began classes in the new F.H. Collins Secondary School building in January 2016. The new school building supports good practices for teaching and learning with a variety of modern, flexible and technology-ready learning spaces. The official grand-opening ceremony was held on January 13, and the school community has since been turning the new school into a true home for learning.

Work on the demolition of the old F.H. Collins school building began in August 2016. We are working with the contractor to ensure the safety of all students throughout this project and minimize any disruptions to regular school operations. The anticipated completion date for the demolition project is June 2017.

### F.H. Collins Technical Education Wing Renovations

During the planning for the new F.H. Collins Secondary School building, we decided to keep the Technical Education Wing for use with the new school. The Technical Education Wing is the largest shop facility in Whitehorse and is in good condition for continued use. In January 2016, work began on renovations to the Technical Education Wing to allow it to function independently of the old F.H. Collins School building.

The project includes the installation of a new heating plant, a new pedestrian entry with barrier-free access, upgrades to the building's insulation and siding and washroom improvements. Work on the Technical Education Wing is anticipated to be completed in spring 2017.

**GOAL:** Long-term facilities planning, monitoring and maintenance to ensure Yukon school facilities meet the needs of Yukon students and staff

### Ross River School repairs

Ross River School is built on permafrost, which can shift and stress the building. This movement can damage structural elements such as foundations, columns and beams, as well as create superficial damage to building finishes such as drywall, doorways and windows.

After significant shifting due to permafrost in January 2015, Ross River School was closed and underwent extensive repairs. The school reopened in September 2015. Since then, the school building and permafrost cooling system have been inspected regularly by engineers to ensure the on-going safety of Ross River School.

After a dramatic change in weather in fall 2016, there was enough shift in the building to prompt an engineer's inspection outside of the school's regular inspection schedule. The school was found to be structurally sound and safe to occupy, but the shifting did result in strain on a water pipe that forms part of the school's fire suppression system. The water pipe was promptly repaired; the school continues to be inspected regularly.

### Johnson Elementary School old wing

The old wing of Johnson Elementary School has been disconnected. The Department of Highways and Public Works issued the tender for the demolition of this wing in Fall 2015, which is now complete.

## **Tantalus Community School field**

The Department of Education closed the Tantalus Community School field in 2016 to begin maintenance to improve the quality of the field for sports and recreation for students now and in the future.

We contracted Budget Plumbing to install an irrigation system for the Tantalus School field to ensure the long-term quality of the field. Budget Plumbing completed the installation of the irrigation system in October 2016. A pump house was also constructed to pump water into the irrigation system. It is expected that Atco Electric will energize the pump house system in spring 2017 to bring it online so it can pump water into the irrigation system.

Once the irrigation system is complete and functioning properly, we will assess the timeline to reopen the field to our students and staff.

## **J.V. Clark School remediation**

A fuel spill occurred near the main fuel tank at J.V. Clark School in Mayo on January 30, 2016. The spill was caused by a bobcat that was doing snow removal around the back of the school, which damaged the main feed line from the fuel tank to the school.

We are currently completing clean up and remediating the site. The project is ongoing. So far, 800 cubic meters of contaminated soil has been excavated and removed to a treatment facility. Another 10,000 litres of contaminated water were removed from the bottom of the excavation.

Groundwater samples have indicated there is no contamination of the village's main well, and monthly monitoring continues to occur to ensure the health and safety of all students and staff at J.V. Clark School and members of community.

## **Biomass heating systems**

In partnership with the departments of Highways and Public Works and Energy, Mines and Resources, Requests for Qualifications (RFQs) were issued in September for the design construction and operation of biomass heating systems for St. Elias Community School in Haines Junction and Johnson Elementary in Watson Lake. These heating systems would use locally-sourced, renewable biomass energy and to be run in a more sustainable manner.

The RFQs will identify qualified parties interested in constructing and operating a biomass energy plant at these schools. There may also be interest in installing similar systems at Teslin School.

## **French First Language secondary school planning**

The French First Language programs at École Émilie-Tremblay and Académie Parhémie need more space as they grow. The Yukon government is currently working collaboratively with CSFY on a new French First Language secondary school through a joint construction subcommittee.

In 2016, we completed functional planning for the new school, which involved developing space requirements, recommending a construction delivery method and establishing a preliminary construction schedule and budget.

Further details about the new school are still under discussion through the on-going confidential negotiations between the Government of Yukon and CSFY through the joint settlement committees.



## École Émilie-Tremblay portable

In October 2015, we worked with CSFY on a temporary solution to address the space and program needs at École Émilie-Tremblay and Académie Parhélie until we move forward with the construction of the new French First Language secondary school. We agreed to install a new portable on the school grounds that creates additional classroom space for up to 28 students. Elementary classroom programming will take place in the portable while Académie Parhélie classes will be placed in a wing of the main school building.

The tender for the portable closed in February 2016 and it was installed and ready for use early in the 2016/17 school year.

## School Revitalization Plan

A number of older school buildings in Yukon will need to be replaced or renovated in coming years. In order to spread the cost of the upgrades and replacements over a reasonable period of time, the Yukon government is working to develop a long-term School Revitalization Plan. This plan will help the government determine which schools need replacement, which schools need renovation and when this work should take place. Work will be prioritized based on a balance of building conditions and programming needs.

The conditions of Yukon school buildings were assessed in 2014, with the reports received in spring 2015. The School Revitalization Plan will be finalized in summer 2017 based on facility condition assessments, findings from the 2013 Seismic Evaluation Report from the engineering firm David Nairne + Associates Ltd., programming requirements and enrolment projections. Based on capital funding and this plan, the goal will be to upgrade or replace one school building approximately every three years.

Milestones of progress for this plan will include the preparation and completion of tender documents, architectural plans for the buildings, contract awards and the upgrades or replacements of these school buildings.

## SCHOOL PLANNING

The 2009 Auditor General of Canada's report recommended that the department create a policy for individual school plans, including a process for planning, updating, evaluating and reporting.

**GOAL:** Develop a policy and process for creating individual school plans

## School Growth Planning

The department developed a *School Growth Planning Policy* outlining a process for school growth planning teams (made up of staff, School Councils, the Yukon Francophone School Board (CSFY), parents, students and Yukon First Nations) work together to develop school growth plans. This process involves annual planning, evidence-based discussions at each school and school reviews every three years. School reviews are completed by a team of staff (including principals and teachers), Yukon First Nations education professionals and School Council/Board members. In 2015-16, 9 schools were reviewed.

## School Councils

School Councils are important partners in public education. They are a forum for parents and the wider community to raise ideas and concerns about our schools and the education system. They decide on important issues, set the direction and atmosphere for Yukon schools and help families to get involved in their children's education. They have an important role in developing the school growth plans as members on the school growth planning teams.

## School Board

The Yukon Francophone School Board (Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon – CSFY) is Yukon's only school board and it participates in the school growth planning process as part of its responsibilities and role. For more information, please see the section on French language education in this report.



## School growth plans

School growth plans are created each year based on observations, student achievement data and the recommendations made in the school reviews. The plans contain the school's context, educational goals, priorities and evaluation procedures for the current school year. They are the road maps to improvement for schools. These plans are reviewed each June for the upcoming school year, updated in September and monitored and adjusted throughout the year.

School growth plans are public documents and are available on Yukon school websites. School growth plans chart three years ahead.

This year, school growth plans reflected a number of continuing trends and themes such as:

- Literacy – 12 schools have goals which focus on reading, writing and comprehension strategies
- Student engagement and improved conditions for learning – 8 schools have goals focusing on community engagement, attendance, self-regulation, increased physical activity, etc.
- Increased learning opportunities for students – 3 schools have goals focusing on expanding programming, e.g. individualized instruction, improved course transitions, project-based learning etc.

For example, as part of working toward their goal of improving literacy, Holy Family Elementary focused on student practicing non-fiction writing to improve their ability to fully meet grade-level expectations

in written communication. At St. Elias Community School, students worked with non-fiction materials to improve their ability to understand and respond to informational texts and improve their reading skills. Golden Horn Elementary School worked with its students to be adaptive, resilient, confident and caring in the learning environment.

## Signs of successful school growth: numeracy at Hidden Valley Elementary School

At Hidden Valley Elementary School, math was the focus of the 2015-2016 school year. The students' confidence improved greatly and it resulted from hard work and great growth and success in improving in numeracy skills.

The goal this school set in its growth plan was for 80 per cent of all primary students and 90 per cent of all intermediate students to develop and achieve number sense using the Numeracy Net Performance Indicator by the end of the school year.

Setting clear goals and encouraging motivation and focus in their students around mathematics, Hidden Valley Elementary was able to make sure students met or exceeded grade-level expectations in mathematics as measured in the B.C. Performance Standards.

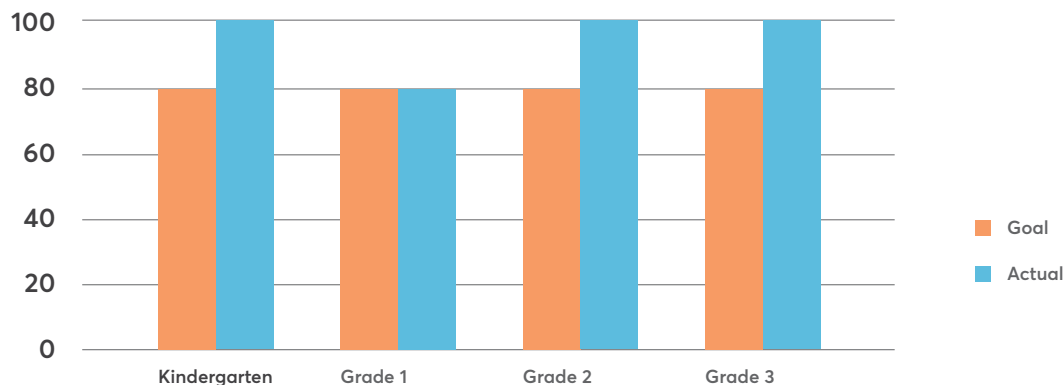
As shown below, all students Kindergarten to Grade 6 achieved their numeracy goal and almost all grades achieved their net numeracy goal.

## Goals and progress during 2015-2016 (From Hidden Valley Elementary's School Growth Plan)

GRADE	DEVELOP NUMBER SENSE	INDICATOR #
K, Gr 1, Gr 2	The students solve a variety of addition and subtraction problems, using personal strategies.	6
Gr 3	The students write number sentences for addition and subtraction problems.	6
Gr 4	The students use multiplication to represent the repeated addition of equal sized groups.	5
Gr 5	The students represent multiplication using equal groupings and arrays.	6
Gr 6	The students use multiplication and division to represent situations involving equal groupings and arrays.	6
Gr 7	The students represent a variety of multiplication and division situations using number sentences.	7

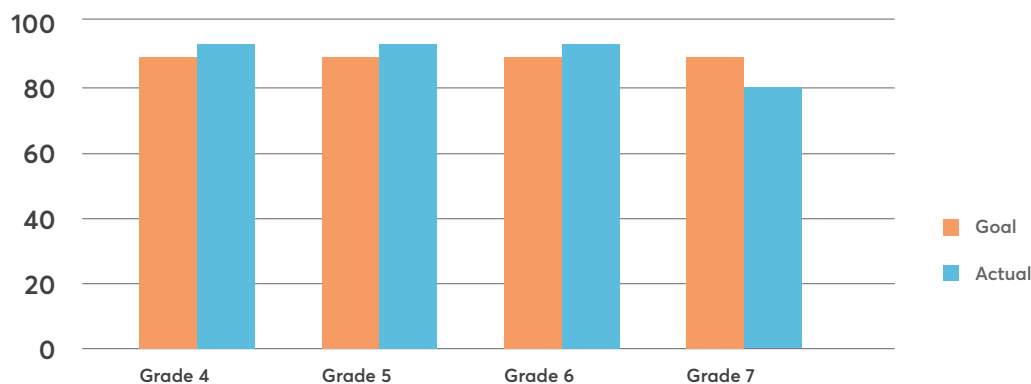
**Primary Students:** Our goal was that at least 80 per cent of all primary students will achieve the following Numeracy Net Performance Indicator (develop number sense).

### Progress:



**Intermediate students:** Our goal was that at least 90 per cent of all intermediate students will achieve the following Numeracy Net Performance Indicator (develop number sense).

### Progress:







## STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

Access to student financial assistance is an important factor in making post-secondary education affordable for students. According to Statistics Canada, students attending undergraduate studies at a Canadian university paid an average of \$6,191 in tuition fees in 2015-16.

The Yukon government is proud to provide significant support for higher education through its student financial assistance programs. In 2015-16, the department awarded more than \$4.38 million to Yukon post-secondary students and approved 1,123 applications for funding. This funding was provided through the Yukon Grant, Student Training Allowance and Yukon Excellence Awards programs. Students are still required to make a financial investment in their own future, but these programs help to make easier to access post-secondary education.

**GOAL:** A more efficient and effective student financial assistance program

A major focus throughout the year has been revising our student financial assistance programs, including completing a review of the *Student Financial Assistance Act*, which governs the Yukon Grant.

### **New Student Financial Assistance Act**

In 2016, the Government of Yukon passed the new *Student Financial Assistance Act* and regulations. The changes ensure we distribute student financial assistance funding in a fair and equitable way to make post-secondary studies more affordable for more Yukon students.

More Yukon students are now eligible for the Yukon Grant. Previously, First Nations students who received funding through the federal government were not eligible for the Yukon Grant. Now, all Yukon First Nations students who meet eligibility requirements, including students who receive post-secondary funding from the federal government, may receive Yukon Grant funding.

Residency requirements were also clarified. Students are now eligible if they:

- completed two years of secondary school in Yukon and are a Yukon resident for two years before classes start;
- are under 20 and have lived in Yukon continuously since the age of 14; or
- were resident of Yukon from the age of 14 to 18 and are a resident for two years before classes start.

Students must also be a Canadian citizen or Permanent Resident, be enrolled or registered as a full-time student at a designated institution and not be eligible for student financial assistance from another jurisdiction.

Funding amounts changed for the Yukon Grant. Students in a typical 17-week program saw the maximum yearly grant increase from \$3,740 to \$4,590. There is also an airfare amount of \$1,500 available to students who are studying at a post-secondary institution outside the territory. Students from Yukon communities outside Whitehorse are eligible for an additional travel amount.

Typically, students who are eligible for both the Yukon Grant and Student Training Allowance, which provides funding for post-secondary students enrolled at Yukon College, are eligible for a total of 170 weeks of combined funding. Now, Yukon Grant eligible students may receive up to 68 weeks of additional funding to attend full-time upgrading courses at Yukon College using the Student Training Allowance program.

The changes to post-secondary funding began to apply in the 2016/17 academic year. Students who were funded in the 2015/16 academic year who did not meet the eligibility requirements of the new *Student Financial Assistance Act* may have been able to receive funding for one additional year in the 2016/17 academic year.

## Yukon Excellence Awards

The Yukon Excellence Awards encourage Yukon secondary students to do well in their coursework and to pursue post-secondary education or training. Yukon students are eligible for up to \$3,000 toward continuing their education through academic achievement in secondary school.

In previous years, the awards were earned by students in Grades 10-12 who achieved a final overall mark of 80 per cent or higher in up to five mandatory courses with British Columbia Provincial Exams (BCPEs) and five other elective courses. Starting in the 2016/17 school year, there will be a change to how students are assessed in some courses that qualify for Yukon Excellence Awards. B.C. will be replacing the BCPEs with in-class assessments for most Grades 10 and 11 courses as part of the changes to its curriculum and graduation requirements. Students will continue to write a Language Arts 12 BCPE. If a course does not have a BCPE, the final course mark will be the combined total of marks for all in-class assessments for a course. If a course still has a BCPE, the final course mark will be the combined total of marks for all in-class assessments plus the BCPE mark.

These awards are worth \$300 per course for up to 10 courses, with a maximum of four Grade 10 courses, three Grade 11 courses and three Grade 12 courses. A total of \$191,275 was awarded to 170 students through the Yukon Excellence Awards in the 2015-16 academic year.

