



Department of Education

Annual Report 2020


Yukon



Notes

This report fulfills the requirement of ss. 5 (h) of the *Education Act*, which requires the Minister of Education to table an annual report on the state of education in Yukon.

Under the *Education Act*, the Department is responsible for delivering accessible and quality education to Yukon learners. We work closely with our partners in education, including Yukon First Nations, and school communities to develop and improve our programs and practices.

This report highlights the activities of 2020 and reflects information current as of December 31, 2020. It acknowledges the impacts that occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the response and recovery across Yukon's education system.

More student and school performance indicators and data are available online at yukon.ca/student-data.

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Message from the Minister

The 2019–2020 school year was unlike any other in recent memory. None of us could have anticipated the impact that the pandemic would have on this past school year, but despite facing an unprecedented set of challenges, our teachers, staff, administration, education partners and community rose to the task by finding ways to adapt their practices to ensure the health and safety of our students, while maintaining the continuity of learning. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is the importance of relationships and working together to achieve success.

As you read this report, you will find many inspiring stories of our teachers and staff demonstrating resiliency and creativity, as they worked to find ways to connect with students and deliver personalized experiences that met their unique learning needs. I am extremely proud of the professionalism and dedication they displayed as we navigated these uncertain times together.

I want to acknowledge our families for their patience and commitment to education, as the pandemic forced us to reimagine what this year would look like. Many of you have had to assume a larger role in your children's education this year, as we transitioned to learning from home. Thank you for your flexibility, patience and perseverance in supporting us through this unprecedented time. I am truly grateful to be part of a community that values the importance of education.

Finally, I want to thank our students for their dedication and commitment to learning this year in a constantly changing environment. Thank you for your flexibility to adapt to these challenges, and willingness to engage in new ways of learning throughout the school year. These skills will serve you well and will set you up for success in your future endeavours.

While there have been many challenges to overcome this year, Yukoners have demonstrated incredible resiliency in the face of adversity. We have had to reimagine school, work, our social interactions, and so much more. Although we are heading into a new year facing similar uncertainty, I am confident that by continuing to work together, we can provide our students with the tools and learning they need to be successful in the future.

I am honoured to serve as your Minister of Education for the 2021–22 school year, and look forward to continuing our important work together as we move along the path towards recovery.

Hon. Jeanie McLean, Minister of Education



Message from the Deputy Minister

This year has been historic and will be marked as one of the most turbulent times in education across the globe, in Canada and here in Yukon. The COVID-19 global pandemic is revealing systemic gaps that lead to inequities throughout our society. Our own experiences of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic highlight our collective capacity to adapt and be resilient; however, they also reveal some of the areas we need to focus on to continue to improve the education system for all Yukoners especially rural students, First Nations students and students with special education needs.

As we begin to think about learning in a post-vaccine context, we have an opportunity to reflect on these experiences to reimagine what our education system can be. The pandemic is not over and there is still uncertainty ahead; however, in education we now understand, with greater resolve, that an industrial approach to student learning no longer works for students who are living in a rapidly changing world where they need new learning skills and knowledge to be successful. In this way our pandemic response and recovery aligns with the work of completing the implementation of Yukon's redesigned curriculum and deepening our work to address the recommendations of the Office of the Auditor General's 2019 report on K-12 learning in Yukon.

Thank you to students, families, school staff, central administration staff and community members for their combined efforts to keep the spread of COVID-19 to a minimum allowing for our schools to remain open to continue learning for all students. The pandemic has heightened our awareness as to what is happening for our students and their communities. Generating our new normal starts with reflection and gathering of evidence and lessons we have learned over the last year. We are emerging with new learning about the role school plays in the wellbeing and development of youth. We want confident, resilient and self-motivated learners who can innovate, adapt and be successful in any environment. We want learners who are prepared for lifelong learning with habits for success like goal setting, time management, organization and self-advocacy, as well as digital skills for the future.

Our work is now informed by our mutual experience in sustaining learning through a global pandemic. It has caused us to re-evaluate the way in which we work together, in community, to mutually support students, school staff and families to ensure the learning needs of all students are being addressed. We are shaping our future together rather than leaving it to chance.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Nicole Morgan". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Nicole Morgan, Deputy Minister of Education

Learning during COVID-19

Concerns over the spread of COVID-19 started to impact Yukon in March 2020. At the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH), the Arctic Winter Games were cancelled on March 7, 2020. Shortly afterwards, international school trips were cancelled on March 13, 2020, signaling the first action taken to adapt school programming by the Department of Education that resulted directly because of the pandemic.

On March 18, 2020, during March break, the CMOH declared a public health emergency, and responding to COVID-19 quickly became our top priority. Based on recommendations from the CMOH, the Minister of Education suspended classes for all students until April 15, 2020, allowing us to monitor other jurisdictions and work closely with public health officials to consider impacts to school programming in Yukon. On April 7, 2020, face-to-face classes were suspended for the remainder of the 2019–20 school year.

We began shifting resources to ensure that students could learn from a distance for the remainder of the school year. To prioritize essential learning for K–12 students, and ensure Grade 12 students were on track to graduate, many of the department's business operations were refocused. We established Yukon's Learning Continuity Requirements to guide educators in delivering essential learning standards of the school curriculum to students. School administration and staff quickly adapted their plans to develop at-home learning opportunities for students. On April 16, educators began delivering learning to students online, through paper-based packages and more traditional learning resources.

Over the summer months, our top priority was planning for students to safely return to in-class learning in the 2020–21 school year. On June 8, 2020, we announced intentions to return students to in-class face-to-face learning, setting four key priorities to help guide this work.

1. The health and safety of students, staff and school communities.
2. Ensuring learning continues for all students, with as many students in class as is safely possible.
3. Supports for students with diverse learning needs and for students who need different or additional supports.
4. Support for students, teachers and support staff for flexible learning, including access to technology, tools and training.

COVID-19 financial support for families

When face-to-face learning was suspended, many students and families faced challenges adapting to new learning and working routines. To help families offset some of the financial costs related to adapting to learning from home, we provided one-time direct funding support to families with children in K–12 in May 2020.

Families received \$250 per student, and applied for funds through Sport Yukon. In total, we allocated \$1.28 million through this initiative, directly supporting 4,595 K–12 students.

Planning for the 2020–21 school year

Looking ahead to the 2020–21 school year, we acknowledged the impacts of COVID-19 health and safety measures on learning and the mental health and wellness of students, which strengthened our resolve to plan for a return to face-to-face, in-class learning.

The CMOH provided initial health and safety guidance to help guide our planning, which included developing protocols around physical distancing and limiting mixing of students. Based on this guidance, on July 9, 2020, we announced that the majority of students could return to school full-time, while grades 10–12 students at Whitehorse's three larger high schools would return on a half-day, in-class schedule, attending face-to-face classes in the morning or afternoon and learning away from school or online for the remainder of the day.

On July 23, 2020, more detailed health and safety guidelines for K–12 school settings and school bus operations were developed. On August 12, school operational plans were finalized and shared with school communities to support a safe return to classes on August 20, 2020.

School-specific operational plans, based on the health and safety guidelines for K–12 school settings set by Yukon's CMOH, were key to safely returning students to class. These included considering requirements for physical distancing, limiting mixing of students and efforts to reduce traffic in areas such as hallways, cafeterias and other areas where students normally congregate.

On July 23, 2020, the Chief Medical Officer of Health released more detailed health and safety guidelines that allowed central administration and school administrators to start finalizing school-specific operational plans. Feedback from school councils and the local First Nations was key to this process. Before finalizing their plans, each school's operational plan had to be shared with their school council and the local First Nation to gather their feedback to ensure their school operational plan addressed their school community's needs and concerns.

On August 12, with input from school councils and local First Nations incorporated, schools shared their finalized operational plans with school communities to support a safe return to face-to-face classes for the start of the 2020–21 school year.

- Rural schools had the flexibility in their learning spaces to safely bring back all students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 for full-day, in-class instruction five days per week.
- Kindergarten to Grade 9 students in Whitehorse would be able to return to full-day, in-class instruction five days per week.

- Grade 10–12 students at the three larger Whitehorse high schools, F.H. Collins, Porter Creek and Vanier Catholic secondary schools would return to half-day, in-class instruction and half-day learning away from school for five days a week.
- To support safe spacing at F.H. Collins, the Grade 8 classes at the school would be moved to the Wood Street Centre for the 2020–21 school year, and Wood Street programs would move into available spaces at Porter Creek and F.H. Collins.

School planning during COVID-19

Each year, we work with school communities to develop school growth plans that identify one to three years of educational goals and priorities for the school, including activities relevant to the culture, heritage, traditions and practices of the local Yukon First Nations. School growth plans serve as a road map to guide schools on improving learning and supports for their students. While school growth planning continues to be a priority for schools, school-based planning has shifted in response to COVID-19.

School councils and Yukon First Nations governments were important advocates for students and families during the end of the 2019–20 school year, helping to ensure learning opportunities continued to meet student learning needs. Along with work by school administrators to share their school's approach to delivering learning during COVID-19 with their school council and local First Nations, we established weekly meetings with school council chairs, the Association of Yukon School Councils Boards and Committees, the Catholic Education Association of Yukon, Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, the Yukon Teachers' Association and Yukon First Nations governments



education staff to provide regular updates, hear feedback and address questions. These groups were key partners in developing our Learning during COVID-19 survey, which was established to check in with students, staff and families on learning during the pandemic.

Learning during COVID-19 surveys and ongoing assessment

- We committed to checking-in with students, families and school staff throughout the pandemic and working with Yukon First Nations and other partners in education to gather feedback needed to support students and staff in following a successful path to continue learning despite changes caused by the pandemic.
- We developed the surveys and invited feedback from Yukon First Nations and other partners in education, including the Yukon Teachers' Association, School Council chairs, the Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards and Committees, the Catholic Education Association of Yukon and the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon.
- The first Learning during COVID-19 survey ran from July 15 to 22, gathering information on the experiences and perspectives of students, families and school staff about learning from home. The survey's primary goal was to identify what was most effective during the suspension of in-person classes to help inform instruction and learning opportunities as planning began for the 2020–21 school year. The survey results supported central administration staff, school principals and school staff in planning learning opportunities and ongoing instruction for students during the pandemic.
- The second voluntary survey informed adjustments that needed to be made after the first half of the school year. The survey was open from November 23 to 30 and was completed by 2,085 respondents.
- At the school level, school administrators, teachers and other school staff assessed students to identify where supports were needed as part of the regular student assessment and reporting process, allowing us to be responsive to student learning needs.
- To learn more and see the results of the Learning during COVID-19 surveys, visit: yukon.ca/en/engagements/student-learning-during-pandemic.



Safe Return to Class funding

Thanks to the federal governments, committed support of **\$4,160,000** through the Safe Return to Class funding, a number of strategic investments were made to support student safety and continued learning.

Tutoring

- The Department of Education provided approximately \$264,000 in 2019–20 to support tutoring services for students through the Tutor program, Yukon First Nations Education Agreements and School Growth Planning.
- Recognizing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student learning, the Department confirmed and announced an additional \$150,000 to create a “COVID tutoring fund” accessible by organizations and Yukon First Nations to provide tutoring services.

Study halls and supports for high school courses such as chemistry, physics and pre-calculus

- Supports for grades 10–12 students were available at school and when students were learning half-days away from school, including access to teacher support during supervised virtual and in-person study halls.
- Study halls were well subscribed, in high demand and positively received by students. Vanier Catholic Secondary houses its study hall off-campus (across the street at a local church). The other two schools (F.H. Collins and Porter Creek Secondary) had on-site study halls.
- Teachers worked with students on an individual basis to ensure they were supported in their learning both in-class and away from class.

Additional teachers

- We invested in 23 additional educator positions in schools to support students – 11 to support students in grades 10–12 in Whitehorse, and 12 to support student learning at other schools.

At a glance

Unless noted otherwise, all data is valid as of May 31, 2020



30

Public schools¹



5,612

Students in Kindergarten to Grade 12

(includes K4, rural, urban)



1,094

Rural



4,518

Urban



183

Other

(Aurora Virtual School and
L'École Nomade de la CSFY)



1,693

First Nations



400

With Individualized
Education Plans

(IEPs)



2,210

First Nations
languages

2,552

French Second
Language

(as of October 31, 2020)

815

French Immersion

286

French First
Language



502.449

Teachers deployed,
not including CSFY

(as of March 31, 2020)

242.917

Paraprofessionals
deployed

(as of March 31, 2020)

25.59
(6 vacant)

Aboriginal Language
Teachers

(as of March 31, 2020)²



\$20,183

Average spending
per student in K–12

(based on October 31, 2020
student enrolment)³

611

Registered
apprentices

(As of December 2019)

1,001

Receiving student
financial assistance
for post-secondary
studies

\$4,446

Average amount
of student financial
aid

¹ Includes Aurora Virtual School and the Individual Learning Centre.

² Includes Aboriginal Language Teachers, Aboriginal language speakers, and trainees in the 2019–20 school year.

³ Includes all direct operation and maintenance costs for Yukon schools, including salaries for school-based staff, materials, supplies, equipment, security, grounds keeping and utilities.

Governance and planning for effective schools

School growth planning

We regularly work with school staff to plan how they will meet the needs of their students. We also work with school councils to ensure the voice of Yukon school communities is represented in the learning that takes place in schools every day. The 2019 Auditor General of Canada findings highlighted further work in this area, including reporting on school growth plans.

During the 2019–20 school year, the superintendents continued to work with school administrators on the school growth planning process as a priority area. This work included reviewing the school growth planning process and collaborating with administrators to refine their plans, including reviewing and getting feedback and identifying a process to report annually. While many schools continue to improve their school growth planning process, much of this work was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We had to pivot school planning efforts to focus on providing continued learning for students through the remainder of the 2019–20 school year and planning operations for the 2020–21 school year.

School councils also have a key role in school growth planning. Members may sit on the school growth planning teams. All school council members must approve the final school growth plan that guides their school for one to three years. The school council also works with the administration on the implementation of the approved plan.

Continuing to advance a disciplined inquiry approach for the school growth planning process is one way the department is taking an evidence-based approach to understanding root causes and address student achievement gaps. This process focuses on student success and ensures educational programs in Yukon schools reflect Yukon First Nations' cultures, languages, traditions and practices.

You can learn more about the school growth planning process at yukon.ca/en/school-growth-process.

School councils

School councils are essential partners in public education and play a key role in the governance of Yukon school communities. Their responsibilities include assisting with hiring new principals, working with school communities to resolve disputes, following up on parent concerns and bringing life to great ideas to support students. They set the direction and atmosphere for Yukon schools and offer a forum for families and the wider community to get involved in the education system.

This year, school councils also played an important role in reviewing their school's operational plans for the 2020–21 school year. They provide valuable input to their school administration by raising health and safety concerns and identifying the learning needs for their school community across the pandemic. They have also been valuable partners in establishing the Learning during COVID-19 surveys to check in with students, families and school staff.

On June 16, 2020, the Minister of Education, Deputy Minister of Education, and Assistant Deputy Minister met with School Council Chairs and partner associations over Zoom. Close to 30 people attended the meeting, which offered school council members and partners an opportunity to ask questions and exchange ideas to deal with specific issues related to the pandemic.

This successful meeting turned into a series of regular online meetings with the same group over the summer. The school councils and partners' valuable input was integral to our planning for the safe re-opening of Yukon schools.

School council elections

In November 2019, Elections Yukon formed a committee with members from the Department of Education, the Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards and Committees (AYSCBC) and the Catholic Education Association Yukon (CEAY) to collaborate on better communications and promotion before the planned school elections in spring 2020.

May 4, 2020 was approved as the election date by the Minister of Education in January 2020; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Minister of Education postponed the school council elections.

Elections Yukon worked diligently with its partners to establish training and a safe process for holding the postponed elections, which successfully took place on October 5, 2020. Members of the current school councils will sit until the day before their school starts in the 2022–23 school year.

School council positions require a two-year commitment. School council member honoraria rate increases were approved in August 2020 to become more aligned with current roles and responsibilities. The new rates became effective after the fall elections.

Every two years, 26 school attendance areas in Yukon hold elections for school councils. Yukoners elect approximately 129 school council members to take on this civic responsibility in our education system.

Advisory Committee for Yukon Education

We continue to work with partners in education through the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education. This committee provides an ongoing forum to share diverse perspectives, while continuing to recognize and respect unique relationships, such as government-to-government relationships with Yukon First Nations.

The committee includes the Deputy Minister and Assistant Deputy Ministers of the Department of Education, Yukon educators and representatives from partners, including the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate; the Yukon First Nations Education Commission; the Yukon Teachers' Association; School Councils and the Association of Yukon School

Councils, Boards and Committees; the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon; the Catholic Education Association of Yukon; Yukon University; and the Association of Yukon School Administrators.

Topics for the committee's discussion in 2020 focused primarily on pandemic response and recovery for Yukon schools, and the review of inclusive and special education, providing opportunities for greater student voice in education, school growth planning, and student performance indicators.

We thank all of our partners for their continued collaboration with us on the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education to address challenges in Yukon's education system and identify ways we can work together to support Yukon learners.

Inclusive and special education review

In response to the 2019 audit, the Government of Yukon committed to working with Yukon First Nations governments and other partners in education to respond to the recommendations set in the report.

One of the key recommendations in the audit is recommendation 70, which states:

"The Department of Education should conduct a full review of the services and supports for inclusive education. It should exercise a leadership role by, for example, engaging with teachers, parents, and specialists to determine how the Department can help teachers maximize student success. The review should include examining how best to:

- evaluate whether its approach to inclusive education is working;
- determine whether services and supports have the desired effect;
- determine whether sufficient resources are in place to support inclusive education;
- prioritize students for specialized assessments;
- assess and track specialist recommendations; and
- assess and track teachers' use of recommended strategies."



The audit highlighted challenges in our current approach and the delivery model for inclusive and special education programming.

Inclusive education refers to the idea that students with diverse learning needs and individual interests should have equal access to learning, achievement and pursuit of excellence in all aspects of education. Inclusive education also encompasses students with special education needs.

Providing flexible learning opportunities that met the unique learning needs of each student became essential during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially at the end of the school year, as students worked at their own pace and addressed learning in their own way. Connecting with students who were struggling with the curriculum prior to COVID-19 and who may have been more impacted by these adjustments to learning is an essential part of pandemic recovery in education.

A review of inclusive and special education is being undertaken to gather information, perspectives and experiences from educators, students, families and Yukon First Nations to better understand barriers and opportunities within these programs. We also want to learn from what other jurisdictions are doing and what research identifies as effective practices in this area of education.

In 2019, we worked with Yukon First Nations to identify a suitable consultant to lead this independent review, originally planned to occur from January to June 2020. In the first two months, Dr. Nikki Yee, the consultant leading the review, began engaging with central administration and school administrators to

gather information, perspectives and experiences from across the education system. In March 2020, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic hit Yukon and timelines were extended, recognizing the importance of hearing from students, families, educators, Yukon First Nations and education partners as part of this review. Timelines for engagements were rescheduled for fall and winter 2020–21 to allow for further engagements and more time and opportunities to gather perspectives on these programs and services safely.



Yukon First Nations

Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being

Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being, remained an important part of student learning while in-person classes were suspended.

Yukon's Learning Continuity Requirements guided schools to ensure ongoing collaboration with Yukon First Nations in their community and Yukon First Nations education staff, such as Community Education Liaison Coordinators and Educator Support Workers, to ensure remote-learning opportunities for Yukon First Nations students remained accessible and meaningful.

The requirements also acknowledged the value for students when participating in Yukon First Nations language, culture and harvesting activities. With many families at home during the first wave of the pandemic, this facilitated an opportunity for more on-the-land learning opportunities built around traditions, language, knowledge, values and skills of Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

Collaboration with Yukon First Nations

The Government of Yukon is committed to working with Yukon First Nations governments, students, educators, families, and education partners to ensure students have the supports they need to succeed at school. We want to ensure that schools meet the needs of First Nations students and offer all students opportunities to learn about Yukon First Nations histories, cultures, languages and ways of knowing, doing and being.

The 2019 audit found that the Department of Education did not fully meet its Yukon First Nations culture and language responsibilities, including in how we collaborate with Yukon First Nations. Collaboration with Yukon First Nations governments on education priorities is essential to make sure that Yukon schools meet the needs of Yukon First Nations students and offer all Yukon students real opportunities to learn about Yukon First Nations languages, cultures, perspectives, and traditions.

We acknowledge there is work to be done to improve on areas of the education system, including how we work with Yukon First Nations governments to support the needs of their Citizens and students on their traditional territories. We work with Yukon First Nations:

- collectively, at the Yukon-wide level and through the Yukon First Nations Chiefs Committee on Education, Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, the Council of Yukon First Nations, the Yukon Native Language Centre, and the First Nations Education Commission;
- government-to-government, at the community level about education for their Citizens and on their traditional territory, often through an Education Agreement; or
- through individual discussions or in weekly meetings, which include meetings established in response to COVID-19.



Collective joint priorities

We continue to collaborate with Yukon First Nations to implement actions that support priorities of the Joint Education Action Plan (JEAP), which is focused on improving outcomes for First Nations students in Yukon.

The four pillars of JEAP are as follows.

1. K–12 culture and language.
2. Authority, control and responsibility.
3. First Nations student supports and success.
4. Closing the academic achievement gap.

The Deputy Minister of Education met with the JEAP Senior Officials Group on November 25, 2019, to discuss next steps for the Joint Education Action Plan working group. It was agreed that the four pillars of the JEAP continue to reflect the joint priorities of Yukon First Nations and the Government of Yukon. Discussions are underway on the Collaboration Framework with Yukon First Nations, which will inform collaboration on joint priorities such as the JEAP initiatives.

- A Collaboration Framework Policy outlining how Education and Yukon First Nations will work together to address education priorities is being developed with the Yukon First Nations and the Yukon First Nations Education Commission.
- We are working with the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate on many programs, including: Collaborative Framework, First Nation Education Advocates, Mobile Therapeutic Unit, Nutrition Program and the Early Years Initiative.

Community joint priorities

Yukon First Nations are essential partners in supporting First Nations students and in teaching all Yukon students about Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being.

In 2019–20 and 2020–21, the Government of Yukon has been working toward agreements and flowing funding to Yukon First Nations for education priorities in their community.

We have Transfer Payment Agreements with:

- Carcross/Tagish First Nation;
- Champagne and Aishihik First Nations;
- Ta'an Kwäch'än Council;
- Teslin Tlingit Council; and
- Vuntut Gwitch'in First Nation.

We have Education Agreements and Transfer Payment Agreements with:

- Kluane First Nation;
- Kwanlin Dün First Nation;
- Liard First Nation;
- Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation;
- Ross River Dena Council;
- Selkirk First Nation;
- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in; and
- White River First Nation.

Highlighting community calls with First Nations

The department worked with Yukon First Nations during the pandemic to share information, collaborate on joint priorities, address the needs of First Nations students, families and communities, and ensure learning continued to include opportunities to learn about Yukon First Nations languages, cultures and ways of knowing, doing and being.

At the community level on a government-to-government basis, we worked with local First Nations education officials to address specific student needs and education priorities in their Traditional Territory, by engaging in weekly calls between Yukon First Nations officials, principals and superintendents. We also held regular calls with the Chiefs Committee on Education, the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, the First Nations Education Commission, Council of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon Native Language Centre.

Audit recommendations on First Nations language programs

The need to support Yukon First Nations language learning was highlighted in the 2019 audit. The audit's recommendations included that the department should develop policies and guidelines to support First Nations language learning.

We continue to work closely with the Council of Yukon First Nations' Yukon Native Language Centre (YNLC) on First Nations language learning, and their mandate to revitalize Yukon First Nations language and increase fluency and proficiency.

In response to the recent auditor general's report, we are working to collaborate and develop a policy that supports both the YNLC's work and First Nations language learning in Yukon schools.

As communities develop community-based language training programs, we continue to discuss ways we can collaborate in providing quality Aboriginal language instruction to students.

Yukon First Nations language programs

Yukon Native Language Centre

We continue to provide the Council of Yukon First Nations with more than \$1.2 million annually to operate the Yukon Native Language Centre (YNLC). The YNLC supports community-based language initiatives, trains and certifies new language teachers, develops curriculum and resources, and preserves and documents Yukon First Nations languages.

First Nations language programs in Yukon schools

These programs are possible because of the work of Yukon's Aboriginal Language Teachers and the Elders and language speakers who have mentored them, sharing their knowledge with the next generation of speakers. Thanks to their dedication to preserving and revitalizing their languages, Yukon students have the opportunity to learn Gwich'in, Hän, Kaska, Northern Tutchone, Southern Tutchone, Tlingit and Upper Tanana in their schools and communities.

In 2019–20, we offered Yukon First Nations language programs in the following schools.

Language	School
Gwich'in	Chief Zzeh Gittlit School F.H. Collins Secondary 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 F.H. Collins Secondary School Khàtinash Community School
Upper Tanana	Nelna Bessie John School

In the 2019–20 school year, approximately 2,210 or 38% students took a Yukon First Nations language class. These programs are well established and well attended in elementary schools with approximately 92.5% of elementary students taking a Yukon First Nations language course. However, enrolment and retention remain low at the high school level, with approximately 7% of high school students taking a Yukon First Nations language course.

Aboriginal Language Teachers

There are challenges with finding fluent and proficient certified teachers for First Nations languages in Yukon. There has been a decrease in fluent Yukon First Nations language instructors through retirement and few systematic supports for fluency development among learner-teachers.

As of September 1, 2020, 31.59 full-time equivalent (FTE) are allocated for Yukon First Nations Language Teacher's and there are 6.0 FTEs currently without a Yukon First Nations Language Teacher for 2020–21.

Rural programs and supports

We are working with Yukon First Nations and the rural school communities to provide programming and learning supports that take into account the unique contexts and needs of rural and First Nations students, such as:

- sharing resources and staff between communities;
- bringing together students from multiple communities;
- offering local trades and Yukon First Nations cultural programs;
- more flexible options and course variety in high school to increase engagement;
- improving bandwidth for digital learning internet connectivity in rural schools;
- having dedicated support to rural educators; and
- new student-centred teaching, assessment, and reporting practices that are more culturally responsive to Yukon First Nations ways of knowing and doing and being.

Rural Experiential Models

The Rural Experiential Model (REM) supports rural students and offers expanded opportunities for programming to work together in larger groups across

communities, share resources and staff, and study more arts, trades, and other specialized courses.

The REM addresses how rural students, many of whom are Yukon First Nations Citizens, do not have access to the same opportunities available to urban students. REM provide students from small communities the opportunity to pursue their personal learning interests, make new friends and learn with students from other Yukon communities, and have access to a wider variety of programming. Senior REM participants earn two credits for completing intensive daytime sessions and evening learning activities.

The last Senior REM was hosted in Dakwākāda (Haines Junction), the Traditional Territory of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the week of September 16 to 21, 2019.

More than 100 Grades 10–12 students and educators from Carmacks, Carcross, Dawson City, Faro, Mayo, Old Crow, Pelly Crossing, and Watson Lake gathered in Dakwākāda/Haines Junction for a week of engaging hands-on activities, facilitated by Yukon experts, including Yukon First Nations Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

Junior REM is a spring event that brings together approximately 80 Grades 7–8 students and 25 educators from 14 rural schools for two days of engaging hands-on activities. The event is facilitated by Yukon experts, including Yukon First Nations Elders and Knowledge Keepers. Unfortunately, Junior REM was cancelled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Modernizing K-12 learning

Technology and COVID-19

Developing skills and knowledge in technology use and digital learning are key learning outcomes of Yukon's school curriculum. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted just how critical this learning is, as many governments, organizations and businesses shifted to working online during the pandemic.

As we shifted to working and learning from home, the Information Technology Support Services team quickly pivoted their services to provide central administration and school staff with the necessary supports. The team set up mobile devices with remote desktop access to ensure continuity of operations, services, and supports for school staff who began delivering online learning to students.

Investments in mobile devices enabled school administration to support school staff and students to work and learn from home. School administration loaned out existing mobile devices to their staff and students, with protocols for loaning devices provided in Yukon's Learning Continuity Requirements. Central administration, school staff and students increased the use of digital learning tools and platforms such as:

- Microsoft Office 365, including tools such as Microsoft Teams and Word;
- G Suite for Education, including tools like Google Classrooms to host classwork;
- Moodle and MyNelson to provide online courses and access to e-textbooks; and
- Zoom and YouTube to provide for online meetings and video lessons to students.

The suspension of face-to-face learning highlighted the importance of continuing to invest in technology and digital learning tools to support modernized learning approaches. While access to technology and the internet was not a requirement to participate in learning at the end of the 2019–20 school year, mobile devices and digital learning tools became an effective support for students and staff.

Access to Computing Devices

- The department collaborated with Yukon University and Yukon First Nations on committing up to \$480,000 to purchase computing devices for Yukon First Nations students.

- School administrators were also encouraged to authorize the loan of school computing devices to students who need them for learning.

Access to Wi-Fi

Students in Grades 10–12 who did not have access to Wi-Fi during the hours they were learning away from school could access support from teacher-supervised study halls where devices and Wi-Fi was accessible.

Identifying essential learning

We recognize the challenge of delivering a full-school curriculum to students while teachers, school staff, students, families and Yukoners are adapting to new and evolving health and safety measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While acknowledging this challenge and aiming to reduce the impacts of the pandemic on student learning, we asked educators to prioritize the essential learning standards of the school curriculum to students. Yukon's Learning Continuity Requirements guided educators on how to identify essential learning standards and outlined learning expectations by grade level.

Yukon's Learning Continuity Requirements

The Department of Education established Yukon's Learning Continuity Requirements to help guide our approach to learning across the COVID-19 pandemic. A Continuity of Learning Working group was created, comprised of education consultants, superintendents and policy staff, who worked with a committee of Yukon educators and the British Columbia Ministry of Education to develop the first version of Yukon's Learning Continuity Requirements, published on April 7, 2020.

Yukon's Learning Continuity Requirements set a framework for school staff to develop learning plans and deliver remote learning to students in a way that meets their individual learning needs and unique situations.

An essential part of delivering at-home learning became considering each student and family's unique needs and being sensitive to the challenges they may be facing due to the pandemic.

Many educators provided learning opportunities for students using online platforms and digital tools. To determine if this was the right fit, educators had to consider their students' access to technology, and how they best learn the curriculum material. In many cases, educators provided learning opportunities to students using more traditional paper-based learning packages. Many found ways to deliver learning using a blend of online learning and hard copy resources to meet their students' needs. Educators were also provided with the option to use the outdoor environment and open spaces to deliver on-the-land learning opportunities where appropriate, following health and safety measures.

Acknowledging that the teacher/student/parent relationship is at the core of successful learning, Yukon's Learning Continuity Requirements asked educators to ensure ongoing communication with students and families to ensure the learning opportunities, resources and materials provided were meeting their needs. These regular check-ins became an important support for students and families, and assisted educators in identifying where adaptations were required.

Supporting Yukon educators

Effective educators are an important factor in students' success at school. We work to hire caring and qualified teachers for Yukon students and help them develop their skills in supporting students' learning in all Yukon schools.

Teacher evaluations

Teacher evaluations help guide staff's ongoing performance, promoting quality instruction and continuous improvement of professional practice. As per the 2019 recommendations from the Auditor General of Canada, we are implementing the required oversight mechanisms to complete teacher evaluations.

Just as we encourage young people to be lifelong learners, we encourage staff to have growth mindsets and work continuously on their professional learning throughout their careers.

The Yukon Framework for Teacher Growth model and a new teacher evaluation process reflect modern professional development and evaluation practices in education, including performance scales and constructive feedback for growth opportunities.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, reporting and finalizing of teacher learning plans for the 2019–20 school year was adapted. When classes were suspended in the spring of 2020, we focused on evaluating temporary and probationary employees.

Learning Networks

The Curriculum and Assessment Unit and the First Nations Initiatives Branch established Learning Networks during the 2019–20 school year to help improve outcomes for students, honour Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing, and being, and help build capacity to support student self-assessment of core competencies. These networks also helped deepen understanding of standards-based grading and reporting, as well as the K–12 curriculum.

A collaborative, spiral of inquiry model was used to identify specific learner needs. During the school year, the Learning Networks explored topics including:

- Balanced Literacy in a Second Language Classroom;
- place-based learning;
- numeracy combined with the integration of Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being; and
- Network of Innovation, Inquiry, and Implementation.



Professional learning and development for educators

Supporting educators at the end of the 2019–20 school year

Throughout the 2019–20 school year, there were six days dedicated to collaborative professional learning. Principals with their school teams developed and led their professional learning plans and activities for these six days, relating to the following general topics.

- Curriculum implementation and support.
- Student assessment and reporting.
- Integrating experiential education in the new curriculum.
- Best practices for blended learning.
- New teacher First Nations orientation.
- Trauma-informed practices.
- Connecting new curriculum resources to professional learning.

Many of these sessions were recorded and were made available for viewing by Yukon educators to help support their new learning and adapt to their new reality of teaching from home.

We also supported teachers and school staff by increasing communication and access to resources. We began sharing the Educator Update newsletter once a week, and continually added local resources and curriculum support materials to the Educator's Place online curriculum resource portal for Yukon teachers.

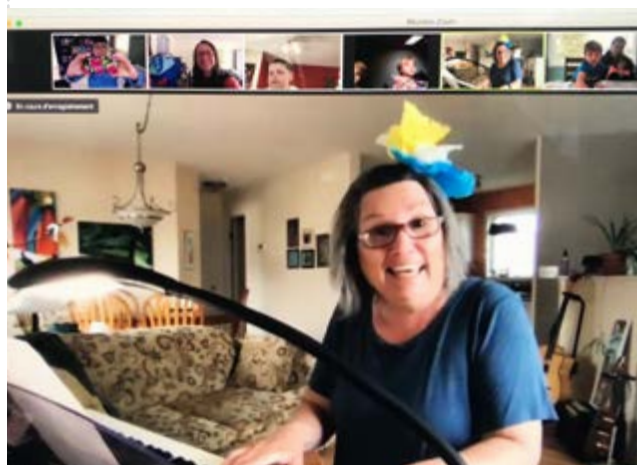
The budget for professional development and training for Yukon educators in the 2019–20 fiscal year was approximately \$1.67 million. There is \$1.86 million allocated for professional development in the 2020–21 fiscal year.

Included in both these amounts is the Government of Yukon's contribution of \$475,000 to the Yukon Teacher's Association Professional Development Fund. The Professional Development Fund is established under the collective agreement for professional growth opportunities toward modern instructional practice and other priorities.

Creative teachers, creative learning

At Ghùch Tlâ Community School in Carcross, educators ensured their students could continue learning at home by hand-delivering paper-based learning packages. Together, they stopped by each student's home to drop off resources, materials and assignments. Andrew Noble, vice-principal of the school, noted that one positive result of delivering learning to students in this way is that teachers at the school connected with families in a way they never had before.

At Grey Mountain Primary School in Whitehorse, educators provided learning to students through a mix of online learning opportunities and paper-based learning packages. They developed themed "learning boxes" for learning at-home that families could pick-up from the school. Each box contained basic supplies and daily learning activities for the week. To ensure their students' learning was supported, the school provided Zoom check-ins. Principal Betty Burns noted, "It is so nice to see their faces light up as they connect socially with each other."





Student assessment

Student assessment and reporting during the pandemic

The suspension of face-to-face classes impacted the approach to student assessment and reporting. Educators followed the expectations for assessment and reporting outlined in Yukon's Learning Continuity Requirements for year-end, and assessed each student's learning progress in all coursework completed by April 16, 2020.

Educators were also asked to review the learning standards students should meet before the end of the school year to ensure their success in moving to the next grade level. This included finding unique opportunities to assess students on the essential learning standards they completed at home based on their individual circumstances.

Communicating with students and families

Yukon's Learning Continuity Requirements outlined expectations for school staff to communicate regularly with students and families while delivering learning at a distance.

Under these uniquely challenging circumstances and the shift toward essential learning, Yukon's Learning Continuity Requirements required that students not be held back from progressing to the next grade because of the suspension of in-class learning. All students who were on track as of April 16, progressed to the next grade. However, all students were required to receive an end-of-year report card appropriate for their grade level that included a final assessment of their progress to the end of the school year.

While educators shifted to providing only essential learning, another shift in student assessment practices included the cancellation of the territory-wide assessments and course-specific exams normally offered in the spring. As outlined in Yukon's Learning Continuity Requirements:

- students were not expected to complete final, teacher-prepared summative examinations at the end of this school year; and
- students did not complete the normal territory-wide spring assessments, which include:
 - » Boehm Test of Basic Concepts for Kindergarten students;
 - » Early Years Evaluation (EYE) for Kindergarten students;
 - » DART (District Assessment of Reading Team) for Grades 2–9;
 - » School Wide-Writes (SWW) for Grades 2–9; and
 - » Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) and Written Proficiency Assessment (WPA) for students in Intensive and Core French and French Immersion.

Student outcomes

Many factors contribute to a student's success at school, including skilled instruction, engaging learning, regular attendance, and support networks for students in and outside of school.

The Auditor General's recommendations indicated that the Department should develop and implement a strategy to address student performance gaps and improve student performance, with a specific focus on Yukon First Nations students, rural students and students with different learning needs.

Initial discussions to start developing a strategy with Yukon First Nations and the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education began in 2019. Considerations included creating a framework of student outcomes and performance indicators, developing a plan to review system data, determining root causes affecting student performance, setting targets with specific actions to support improvement, and evaluating their effectiveness. Responding to emerging needs related to COVID-19 has resulted in an extended timeline to ensure this ongoing work takes place in collaboration with Yukon First Nations and the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education.

Key learning milestones for students include the transition into Kindergarten, the development of literacy and numeracy skills at the end of primary years in Grade 4, and the transition to secondary school in Grade 8. Successful student transitions at these critical times increase the likelihood of graduation. We are focusing attention on these key milestones, including Kindergarten, Grade 4 and Grade 7 assessments, which highlight where students may need different supports in areas such as literacy and numeracy.

As part of our pandemic response, we have sharpened our focus on learners who need additional supports to succeed. The data and targets highlight students who are "Emerging" or "Unknown" for their grade level learning outcomes. This allows us to focus attention on those students who require the most support.

To improve student outcomes, we need a deeper understanding of what is happening for Yukon learners to make better evidence-based decisions. We are working at the system and school level to do this analysis more effectively.

To ensure transparency and public access to the data we collect, we started publishing Yukon-wide student data reports in 2020, available on Yukon.ca at: yukon.ca/en/learn-about-student-enrolment-and-assessments#yukon-wide-student-data-reports.

To better understand the root causes of student outcomes for rural and Yukon First Nations students, we established a data-sharing working group to share aggregated Yukon First Nations performance data, and work in partnership with Yukon First Nations to develop a joint review and quality assurance process. We also established a process to create and distribute annual reports focused on outcomes for Yukon First Nations learners. They are published annually at: yukon.ca/en/learn-about-student-enrolment-and-assessments#how-are-we-doing-hawd-reports.

Important transitions into school years

Yukon Foundation Skills Assessments

Teachers are making adjustments to the Yukon Foundation Skills Assessments for Grades 4 and 7 students. In the past, these assessments were written later in the school year. Now they will take place in the fall of each school year, so that teachers can use the information about students' skills in reading, writing and numeracy to support improvement that school year.

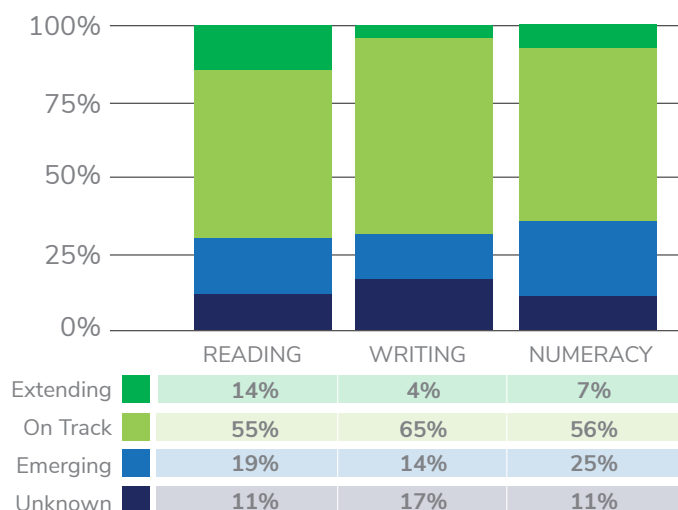
The Yukon Foundation Skills Assessments assess students in reading, writing and numeracy skills at key points during their education using the following rubric.

- **Extending** – The student demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.
- **On track** – The student demonstrates a partial to complete understanding.

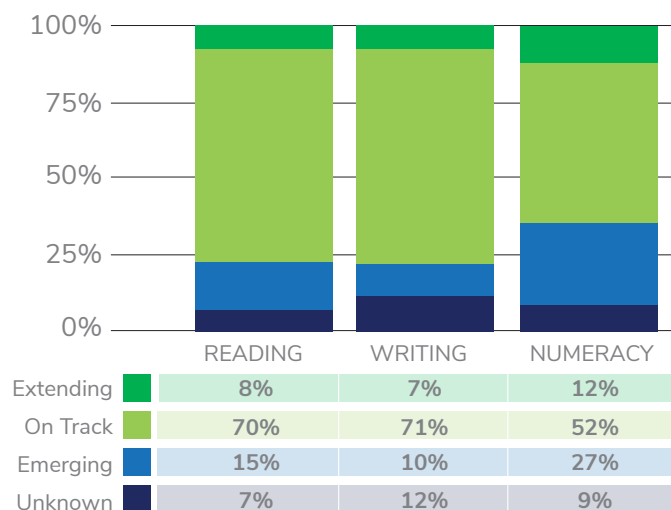
- **Emerging** – The student demonstrates an initial understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.
- **Unknown** – Students did not participate or were exempt.



Yukon-wide 2019–20 Grade 4
Foundation Skills Assessments results



Yukon-wide 2019–20 Grade 7
Foundation Skills Assessments results



Graduation years

High school numeracy and literacy assessments

Yukon high school students write the same graduation assessments as BC students, including a Grade 10 Numeracy Assessment and a Grade 10 and 12 Literacy Assessment. These numeracy and literacy assessments replace the BC Provincial Exams (BCPEs) that students used to write.

The Grade 10 Numeracy Assessment was introduced in Yukon during the 2017–18 school year. The Grade 10 Literacy Assessment was introduced during the 2019–20 school year.

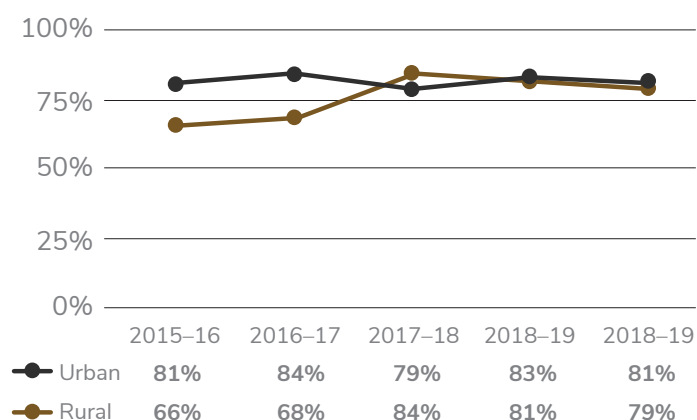
The Grade 12 Literacy Assessment was scheduled to be introduced in the 2019–20 school year; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, implementation of this new assessment is delayed until the 2020–21 school year.

For up-to-date information on Yukon's graduation program and assessments, visit yukon.ca/en/graduate-high-school.

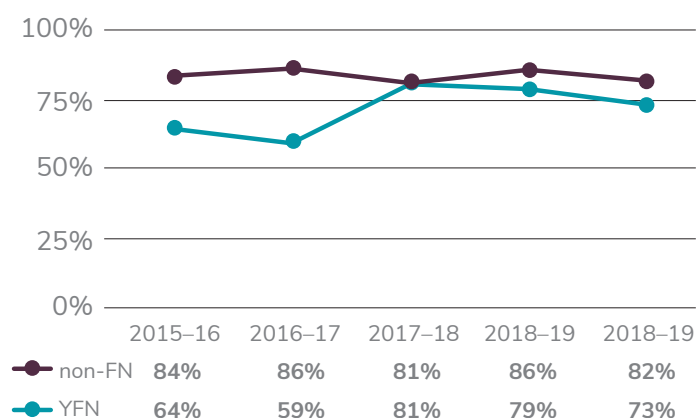
Graduation rates in Yukon

Grade 12 graduation rates indicate the percentage of active Grade 12 full and half-time students who successfully graduated and achieved a Dogwood Diploma. It does not include Adult Dogwood graduates or students on the School Completion Program (Evergreen Certificate). A Dogwood Diploma is the graduation certificate the BC Ministry of Education awards to students who successfully complete a minimum of 80 credits while meeting the provincial graduation requirements, including Yukon students.

Graduation rates for urban and rural students from 2015–16 to 2019–20



Graduation rates for non-First Nations and Yukon First Nations students from 2015–16 to 2019–20



Data taken from the Yukon Wide Student Data Report for 2019–20. More student and school performance indicators and data are available at yukon.ca/en/learn-about-student-enrolment-and-assessments.





COVID-19 and graduating students

One of our top priorities in 2019–20 was to ensure students remained on the path to graduation on the usual end-of-school-year timeline.

As outlined in Yukon's Learning Continuity Requirements, educators focused on course subjects required for completion in Grades 10 and 11. Educators were required to ensure that eligible Grade 12 students on target to graduate were provided with the opportunity to do so. This included confirming students who completed the 80 credits required for graduation were provided with the opportunity to complete a Grade 10 Numeracy Assessment if they had not already done so.

Student engagement and attendance

Students who attend school regularly tend to develop their academic and social-emotional skills, establish better work habits and get better grades. When students miss even small amounts of school regularly, they can quickly fall behind on important learning and developmental opportunities.

Every Student, Every Day attendance initiative

Through a partnership with the Victoria Gold Yukon Student Encouragement Society, we promote and help administer the Society's Every Student, Every Day (ESED) attendance initiative to fund a wide range of school-based projects.

Graduation day

Due to COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings, traditional cap-and-gown ceremonies were cancelled or postponed at many Yukon schools. However, Yukon communities showed incredible creativity, resilience and community spirit to celebrate Yukon's 2019–20 graduates. Students, parents, families, school staff, Yukon First Nations and other community members found other ways to celebrate their graduates, including community parades, physically distanced photoshoots, and displaying banners with graduates' names and faces in their communities.

To acknowledge and celebrate Yukon's 2019–20 graduates and the significant efforts of Yukon's communities to honour this group of young people, June 1, 2020 was proclaimed Yukon Graduate Day by the Commissioner of Yukon, Angélique Bernard.



This initiative fosters conversations and promotes innovative approaches to improve attendance and student engagement and support Yukon students' overall success. Teachers, schools, school councils, First Nations and community organizations can apply new ideas or build on previous successes every year.

Twenty projects received grants for initiatives to improve student engagement and attendance through the Victoria Gold Yukon Student Encouragement Society in 2019–20. In total, \$100,000 was allocated to fund these attendance projects. The diverse proposals aimed to recognize and encourage student attendance, increase family engagement in the lives of students, and provide students access to fitness opportunities, mental wellness supports, and land-based and cultural activities.

The 2019–20 project year was directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic when students and teachers had to finish the school year at home after spring break. The Society received 17 final project reports by May 2020. Each report indicated a degree of improved attendance, punctuality, and/or successful engagement in learning due to the initiative deployed by the funding recipient(s).

More information on the Victoria Gold Student Encouragement Society's Every Student, Every Day attendance initiative can be found at: everystudenteveryday.ca.

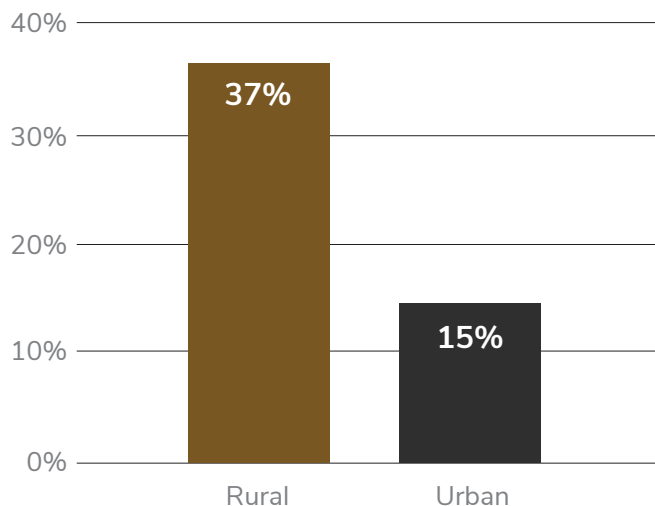
Student attendance over time

The data below shows the number of students who have been absent for 20 or more days during the school year up until face-to-face classes were suspended.

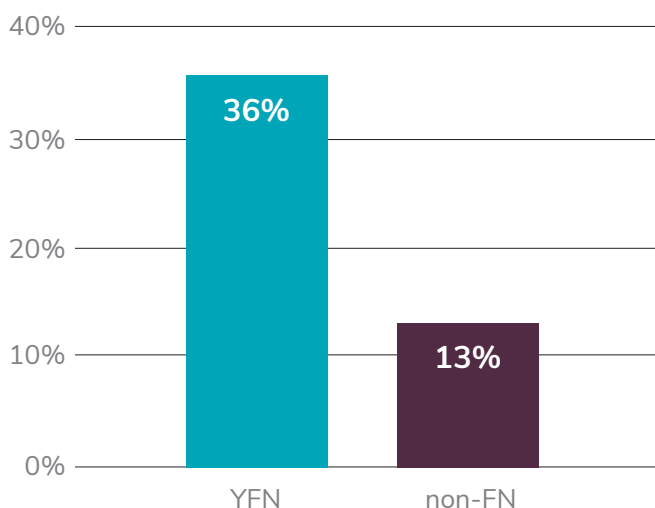
Absent days are defined as school days missed by students enrolled at Yukon schools for that school year. This includes all excused and unexcused absences.

Partial days missed are part of the count. Absent days do not include programs such as the Individual Learning Centre, Learning Together, Early Kindergarten or home education.

Students who missed 20 or more days for rural, urban and Yukon-wide in 2019–20



Students who missed 20 or more days for Yukon First Nations, non-First Nations and Yukon-wide in 2019–20



Data taken from the Yukon Wide Student Data Report for 2019–20. More student and school performance indicators and data are available at yukon.ca/en/learn-about-student-enrolment-and-assessments.

French programs

French language education

With a growing population of people who speak French, Yukon follows Québec and New Brunswick with the third-highest percentage of bilingual speakers in Canada.

We collaborate with our community partners when developing French language programs and initiatives, including the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, the French Second Language Advisory Committee, and Canadian Parents for French. For example, through the French Second Language Advisory Committee, partners contribute to decision-making on topics like programming guidelines, courses of study, cultural and community activities for students and French teachers' training.

In 2020, the Government of Yukon continued collaborating with national organizations, including the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada's committee that tackles issues in French Second Language and French First Language education shared across Canada.

With partners in French First Language education, the department aims to ensure that northern students' unique needs are addressed in this financing agreement.

French First Language

In Yukon, the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon (CSFY) is responsible for providing French First Language educational programs. The schools offering these programs are École-Émilie Tremblay (K to Grade 6), Académie Parhélie (Grades 7 to 12), and École Nomade (home-schooling for Grades 1 to 12). The CSFY is Yukon's only school board and is responsible for the administration, management and control of these programs.

After several years of negotiations, the Government of Yukon and Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon reached a settlement in spring 2020 to resolve all outstanding issues from a lawsuit that had started in 2009. This settlement clarified roles and responsibilities in a mutually satisfactory way and established the future path French First Language education administration in the territory. The Government of Yukon will continue to work with the CSFY to effectively support the learning needs of French First Language students and all Yukon students.

In 2020, we worked with CSFY on finalizing construction of the French First Language Secondary School, which includes community spaces. This new school is part of Riverdale's campus model, where



groups, communities and cultures can gather, learn and play in a variety of facilities. The new school opened in November 2020.

For more information about French First Language school programs, please see the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon's annual report: commissionscolaire.csfy.ca/publications.

French Second Language

The Department of Education is responsible for providing French Second Language educational programs. French Second Language programs are for students whose first language is not French.

French immersion

French Immersion is a popular French Second Language program. According to Statistics Canada⁴, French immersion enrolment in Yukon increased by 89% from 2004 to 2018. French Immersion gives students the opportunity to become fluent in English and French. These students are expected to be able to study and work in both languages.

Yukon students can enter Early French Immersion in Kindergarten and Grade 1. This program is offered at École Whitehorse Elementary (Kindergarten to Grade 7) and at Selkirk Elementary (Kindergarten to Grade 4). They also have the option of entering Late French Immersion in Grade 6 at École Whitehorse Elementary. F.H. Collins Secondary offers French Immersion for students from Grades 8 to 12.

Intensive French

The Intensive French program leads to effective and meaningful communication in French. At the end of Grade 12, after the Intensive and Post-Intensive French program, students usually have clear understanding of common topics, can describe experiences and events, give explanations for opinions and plans, and produce simple writing on common topics of personal interest or that are familiar to the student. This program begins in Grade 5 or 6 and students receive 80% of instruction in French for half of the year, and 20% for the other half. Post-Intensive French continues through Grade 12 as an optional program.

Driveway visits

Unable to see her students in their usual setting during the spring of 2020, Selkirk Elementary school teacher Monique Levesque started conducting "driveway visits" to check in on students and their families. Levesque visited her students to have a conversation a couple of metres apart, following health officials' guidelines, on the students' driveways. This was a wonderful way for students to connect with their teacher and continue to use French in person.



Intensive French is currently offered in the following schools.

- Christ the King Elementary.
- Holy Family Elementary.
- Selkirk Elementary.
- Robert Service.
- Vanier Catholic Secondary.

⁴ From "Yukon: Beautiful, Complex, and Changing". Statistics Canada - www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-631-x/11-631-x2018006-eng.htm.

Core French

Core French provides students with basic French conversation skills. At the end of Grade 12, after regular core French courses from Grade 5 to graduation, students can usually understand relevant sentences and frequently used expressions, communicate simple tasks on common and routine matters.

Students receive up to 120 minutes of French instruction weekly. In schools where Core French is the only second language offered, Core French is mandatory for all students from Grades 5 to 8. Core French is offered as an elective course in Grades 9 to 12. Grades 10, 11 and 12 Core French courses are credited toward the Dogwood Graduation Certificate.

DELf Scolaire exams

To continue to recognize students' French language learning achievements and proficiency at transition points in their learning, the Department of Education is proud to be a DELF (Diplôme d'études en langue française) Examination Centre. The DELF is the official French-language diploma awarded by France's Ministry of National Education. The DELF is an official certificate of French second language proficiency. It is internationally recognized in 165 countries and is valid for life.

In 2020, the DELF exam was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Supporting online learning in French

As part of planning for more online learning during the 2020–21 school year, the French Second Language consultant from the Department of Education worked all spring 2020 with intensive and late-immersion French teachers to develop, create and test digital tools on virtual learning platforms such as Zoom and Google Classroom. This project was presented to educators around the World at an international Webinar organized by CIFRAN (Centre International de Formation et de Recherche en Approche Neurolinguistique et en Neuroéducation).

The goal of this project was to find ways of teaching in these conditions, through online methods with a focus on the acquisition of a second language, to ensure that students learn how to speak French.

Francophone Day 2020

Selkirk French Immersion students and their families celebrated Francophone Day on March 20, 2020, from their homes through Zoom with singing in French led by Danielle Bonneau, Promotion and Cultural Agent for the department's French Programs. The students were also invited to create self-portraits through an online visual arts workshop with local artist Marie-Hélène Comeau. The works of art were cleverly exhibited with messages in French written by the students along the Millennium Trail on Francophone flag backgrounds for all families and the whole community to enjoy. This exhibit was called "Plein-Art."



Modernizing adult learning

Modernized labour market programs

The Department of Education is committed to supporting educational programs for learners of all ages. This includes assisting those learners who require additional support to participate in the labour market. By modernizing our labour market programs alongside the modernization of our K–12 education system, we are better able to respond directly to the needs of those we are serving.

On September 26, 2019, we announced three broad funding programs, replacing more than 20 specific labour market programs. These new programs simplify the application process, expand eligibility for funding and offer more flexibility in using funds. The new funding models also helped us adapt quickly and efficiently to support the 2020 pandemic response and economic recovery.

The programs are as follows.

- **Working UP** – assists individuals who require support to get and keep a job. Supports might include essential literacy skills, training and assessments and accommodations. The program also provides incentives for a person in trades to take on an apprenticeship. Through Working UP, we provided \$1.8 million in supports for individuals in the 2019–20 fiscal year, representing 311 cases. Under this program, some individuals would have received funding more than once.
- **Staffing UP** – helps employers find, hire and keep workers that are a good fit for their organizations. Staffing Up funding can also help employers access and use labour market information. Through Staffing UP, we provided \$251,803 in funding to employers in the 2019–20 fiscal year, representing 28 projects.
- **Building UP** – funds organizations that provide labour market services to individuals and employers, connects employers and job seekers, and coordinates community and sector training funds. Through Building UP, we provided \$6.1 million in funding to 59 organizations, including seven First Nations governments, whose projects served more than 10,000 Yukoners.

Yukon First Nations governments are eligible for these programs, or they may develop government-to-government funding agreements for First Nations-led labour market initiatives.

In October 2019, the Department of Education presented Yukon's new learner-centered labour market program model to federal, provincial and territorial governments at the Forum on Essential Workplace Skills in Ottawa. The model also garnered attention from the Federal Labour Market Ministers' Innovation and Best Practices Working Group as a promising practice.

These programs are largely funded by two new Labour Market Transfer Agreements with the Government of Canada in March 2018. Under these agreements, in the 2019–20 fiscal year, the Government of Canada provided more than \$7.5 million to support labour market and workforce development programs in Yukon. The Government of Yukon contributed more than \$2.8 million for the same period and purpose.

Some federal funding for labour market activities in the 2019–20 fiscal year lapsed due to cancellations and postponements resulting from COVID-19. Provinces and territories may carry some of this lapsed funding into the 2020–21 fiscal year, to ensure that program participants do not lose opportunities due to emergency measures.

Adult Learning Continuity guidelines

As part of Yukon's COVID-19 response and economic recovery, in May 2020, the departments of Education and Economic Development collaborated to facilitate summer employment programs. A Yukon Adult Learning Continuity working group was established to identify and recommend innovative solutions, for consideration, to support the continuity of adult educational programs and services, including the department's work relating to post-secondary (Yukon University), labour market, apprenticeships, student financial assistance and student employment.

Through flexibility in the Staffing Up labour market funding program, we prioritized \$750,000 to help Yukon employers create new summer employment and work experience opportunities for graduating and

post-secondary students. Staffing UP helped students continue to earn income and develop skills for the workplace by connecting post-secondary students with businesses providing or requiring critical and essential services and offering wage subsidies of up to \$20 per hour.

Additionally, we supported businesses in filling critical social, economic and service roles in communities outside of Whitehorse. These supports enabled employers to adapt to a changing labour market, ensured continuity of services for Yukoners and helped support Yukon's economic recovery.

Apprenticeship training programs

The Government of Yukon oversees the apprenticeship program through the *Apprenticeship Training Act* and the *Apprenticeship Training and Tradesmen's Qualifications Regulation*. There are 48 designated trades in Yukon under the *Apprenticeship Training Act*, and 36 of these trades are eligible for the Interprovincial Red Seal endorsement.

The Department of Education Training Programs Unit provides registration, monitoring, and the arrangement and coordination of an individual's apprenticeship in-school technical training. This unit works closely with high school trades programs, the Post Secondary and Labour Market Unit, Yukon University and industry to ensure that Yukon apprentices can access employment, training and funding support for their apprenticeship programs.

In 2019–20, we had 611 registered apprentices in 48 designated trades. There were 169 Yukon apprentices who took in-school training at Yukon University, and various institutions in Alberta. There were 96 students who wrote exams, and 87 journeyman certificates were issued.

In December 2019, the Yukon Apprenticeship Program had 412 registered apprentices, including 144 First Nations and 43 females. The majority of Yukon apprentices are employed by Yukon private sector businesses, with one individual employed by Yukon government as of December 2019.

Through the COVID-19 pandemic, Training Programs Unit staff worked with other jurisdictions to monitor how the pandemic was impacting apprentices. We were able to continue to support registered Yukon apprentices in completing their program requirements in partnership with Yukon University and Alberta Apprenticeship. We also ensured financial supports

Apprenticeship graduates

On Friday, February 8, 2020, 41 graduates of the Yukon Apprenticeship program received their journeyman certificates from the Training Programs Unit at our annual evening dinner event. The same event recognized 44 Yukon apprentices with Awards of Excellence for achieving 85% or higher on their exams.

for Yukon apprentices remained stable and flexible to meet individual needs.

In March 2020, when the pandemic began and classes were cancelled, 46 Yukon apprentices were attending in-class training at Alberta institutions or Yukon University. Spring exams were either cancelled or postponed. At Yukon University, third and fourth year exams for carpentry were postponed to October 2020.

When classes resumed in the fall, apprenticeship training at Yukon University and Alberta institutions adapted to offer a new blended format of online and in-person learning, similar to other institutions across Canada.

In the fall of 2020, some Yukon apprentices were concerned about the requirement to write apprenticeship level exams, as the new blended learning format presented challenges. Our Training Programs Unit supported Yukon apprentices through this transition period, and 100% of Yukon apprentices wrote their level exams, with 88% passing their exams and completing their levels. We provide safe, physically distanced spaces for apprentices to write their level exams, complete their levels and ensure that their training is not interrupted.

We continue to work to modernize Yukon's Apprenticeship and Tradespersons Qualification Program and participating in the Red Seal Harmonization Initiative. These steps will align training programs with other jurisdictions across Canada. It will also help us meet the needs of current and future apprentices and industry in a growing economy.

Harmonization will improve apprentices' mobility, support an increase in their completion rates and enable employers to access a larger pool of apprentices.

Student financial aid

The Student Financial Assistance Unit administers several programs to assist students in pursuing post-secondary education, including the Yukon Grant, Student Training Allowance, Yukon Excellence Awards, Canada Student Loans and Grants and a variety of scholarships.

In the 2019–20 academic year, more than \$7.1 million was awarded through student financial assistance programs.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, many Yukon post-secondary students were required to return home early or complete their studies online. Recognizing that the pandemic caused some people to experience financial hardship, we continued to provide Student Financial Assistance based on the regular funding schedule for the 2019–20 school year.

Yukon Grant

The Yukon Grant was established under the Student Financial Assistance Act to provide financial support to Yukon students enrolled full-time at approved post-secondary institutions. Students can receive the grant for a maximum of 170 weeks.

In 2019–20, the total Yukon Grant expenditure was \$4,104,541 for 751 students. Eligible students received \$141 per week of study. Additionally, eligible students who studied outside Yukon received \$1,500 for travel-related costs to help them commute between home and school. The average value to the student was \$5,465.

Student Training Allowance

The Student Training Allowance is provided to students enrolled in a full-time program of studies at Yukon University (formerly Yukon College) or in an approved Human Resources development training program within Yukon. Eligible programs must run for a minimum duration of three weeks, and students must have resided in Yukon for two years prior to their classes commencing.

In 2019–20, the total expenditure on Training Allowances was \$486,675, allocated to 137 eligible students. Students received a baseline payment of \$110 per week. The allowance increases with the number of dependents, up to a maximum of \$230 per week. Students who must travel from a rural Yukon community are eligible for a travel allowance. If they are required to maintain a second residence while studying, they can also receive an additional \$87 per week. The average recipient received \$3,552 from this program.

Yukon Excellence Awards

The Yukon Excellence Awards encourage secondary school students to do well in their coursework and pursue post-secondary education or training. Yukon students are eligible to receive up to \$3,000 to put towards furthering their education, through academic achievement in a Yukon secondary school. Students can earn \$300 per course for up to ten courses, with a maximum of four Grade 10 courses, three Grade 11 courses and three Grade 12 courses. The award is based on earning a final course grade of 80% or better.

In the 2019–20 academic year, 213 students earned a Yukon Excellence Award through their secondary school courses. Last year, we distributed \$304,393; the average amount received per student was \$1,429.



Supporting Yukon students

Student Support Services

Yukon schools are modelled on inclusive education, which is based on the belief that all students can learn together in different ways. Department staff work together with schools and families to provide multi-disciplinary supports to students who have been identified as having unique or complex learning needs.

Response to Intervention

We currently use the Response to Intervention model to help schools identify student needs that may require support staff from Student Support Services. Each school collaborates with Student Support Services to determine how the school can meet their students' needs through recommendations made through consultation and/or specialized assessments.

The Response to Intervention model is designed to identify students who need additional supports early in their schooling to ensure that adjustments are made and evaluated to ensure continued learning progress throughout their school years. The Response to Intervention model includes five steps.

1. Identification and assessment.
2. Planning.
3. Program support/implementation.
4. Evaluation.
5. Recording and reporting.

Supporting mental wellness during COVID-19

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced students and families to study and work from home, the Department of Education recognized that students, educators, parents and guardians were under new kinds of stress. Everyone in our school communities were encouraged to support and treat mental and emotional health and wellness with respect and care, and view it as equally important as attending to our physical health. We encouraged students and families to stay active, connect and be social while practicing physical distancing, and continue learning and keeping their brains active.

We also worked with the Department of Health and Social Services to develop several mental health resources for parents and students. We provided lists of local and national support lines, contact information for local mental wellness professionals, and specific tools for recognizing stress symptoms and managing mental wellness during the pandemic. These documents are available for download on Yukon.ca through the following links.

- Talking and Sharing with Kids and Families on COVID-19: yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/edu/talking_sharing_with_kids_families_on_covid-19.pdf.
- COVID-19 and Teenagers: Supporting Youth Mental Wellness: yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/edu/edu-supports-youth-mental-wellness-covid-19.pdf.



Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health indicated that the pandemic and suspension of face-to-face classes in 2019–20 negatively affected children and youth's well-being, including their mental health. As part of returning students to school in August 2020, all school staff were provided with the opportunity to attend a webinar entitled "Trauma Informed Re-Entry to School during a Pandemic" offered from Safer Schools Together in B.C.

Mental health supports in schools

Across Canada, there is growing recognition of the critical need to improve young Canadians' mental health.

School counsellors are trained and certified teaching professionals who provide personal, social and emotional support to students, as well as advice, guidance and resources to help students plan for life after high school, including post-secondary and career planning.

If students require supports beyond what the school counsellor can provide, the school counsellor can refer them to appropriate healthcare professionals or a youth outreach worker. We work collaboratively with partners to ensure mental health supports and resources are available for students at school and in the community, including supporting their needs during the ongoing pandemic.

Mental Health and High School Curriculum Guide training continue to be offered twice per year by Student Support Services. Pre-pandemic training took place in Whitehorse and during-pandemic training has taken place via Zoom.

Training is intended to support the Grades 9–10 mental health curriculum. Teachers, school counsellors, administrators, educational assistants and any other identified adults who are teaching and supporting mental health curriculum and positive mental health practices in schools, are encouraged to take this training.

Educators and students are provided learning opportunities in suicide prevention and intervention, mental health, and restorative approaches to building healthy school communities, repair harm and restore relationships. Yukon schools also use peer support initiatives, including peer leadership courses, Challenge Day, and Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs).

Yukon is a member of the Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium of School Health, a partnership of 25 Ministries of Health and Education across Canada working to promote a Comprehensive School Health approach to student wellness/well-being and achievement/success for all children and youth.

F.H. Collins Secondary School recognized for supporting mental health

In December 2019, F.H. Collins Secondary School was one of five schools selected from 316 proposals across Canada, to be recognized for their efforts to support teacher and student mental health. The school received a grant for \$5,000 from the 2019 Share2Care initiative, which gathers stories and promising mental health practices from schools across the country.

F.H. Collins was recognized for their "Soft Start Welcome" initiative, where students who have experienced trauma are welcomed in a comfortable manner each morning when they arrive at school. These students are also supported with regular counselling and a holistic approach that sets them up for success at school. The school's winning program is outlined at: phecana.ca/programs/teach-resiliency/resources/soft-start-welcomes.

Educational Assistant allocation

An Educational Assistant (EA) Allocation Advisory Committee established in fall 2015 reviewed the allocation model for paraprofessionals in the territory and evaluated its merits and challenges. In 2016, the committee recommended an improved paraprofessional allocation process that allows schools to request paraprofessionals based on student needs. This process was adopted and implemented during the spring of 2016 and continues to be used.

School	2019–20 EA Allocation Final	2018–19 EA Allocation Final	2017–18 EA Allocation Final
Chief Zzeh Gittlit (Old Crow)	5.0	4.5	4
Christ the King	14.0	14.75	14
Del Van Gorder (Faro)	4.5	4	3.75
Elijah Smith	16.25	14.5	16.7
Eliza Van Bibber (Pelly)	5.5	5.5	6
Emilie-Tremblay	8.0	8	9.5
F.H. Collins	15.5	15.4	15.75
Ghuch Tla (Carcross)	3.75	3.75	3.5
Golden Horn	5.75	5	3
Grey Mountain	5.5	5	5
Hidden Valley	9.5	9.84	6.37
Holy Family	7.5	7	9
Individual Learning Centre (ILC)	1.5	1.5	1.5
Jack Hulland	16.25	17.5	21.75
Johnson Elementary (Watson Lake)	7.5	7.75	6.5
J.V. Clark (Mayo)	3.75	4	3.5
Khàtinas.àxh Community School (Teslin)	3.75	4	5
Kluane Lake (Destruction Bay/Burwash)	1.0	1	1
Nelna Bessie John (Beaver Creek)	0.37	0.5	1
Porter Creek	13.5	14.375	15.5
Robert Service (Dawson)	10.5	10.5	12
Ross River	5.5	5.75	6
Selkirk	15.25	14.5	14
St. Elias Community (Haines Junction)	11.5	11.5	11
Takhini	11.5	11.5	14.25
Tantalus (Carmacks)	8.0	8.5	9.5
Teen Parent Centre (TPC)	1.0	1	1
Vanier	14.75	14.5	12
Watson Lake Secondary	3.0	4	3.75
Whitehorse Elementary	11.0	9.8	10
Student Support Services	7.267	6.377	4.91
Total	242.917	245.792	250.73

Individual Education Plans

One way we support and track students with exceptional needs in Yukon is through Individual Education Plans.

Individual Education Plans are meant for students who are found to have special education needs under the *Education Act* because of their one or more exceptionalities. These could be of intellectual, communicative, behavioural, physical, or multiple exceptionalities. An Individual Education Plan identifies special education programming and supports that help students meet modified learning goals based on their strengths and needs. Other students may have different types of learning plans, depending on what supports they need.

Supporting students with diverse learning needs

Yukon's Learning Continuity Requirements also included expectations around supporting students with diverse learning needs.

Recognizing that we could not replicate all services provided in the regular school setting, classroom teachers worked with students and parents/guardians to develop learning opportunities appropriate under the circumstances. Classroom teachers continued to collaborate with educational assistants and learning assistance teachers to ensure learning opportunities and supports met unique student needs and supported goals outlined in Individualized Education Plans.

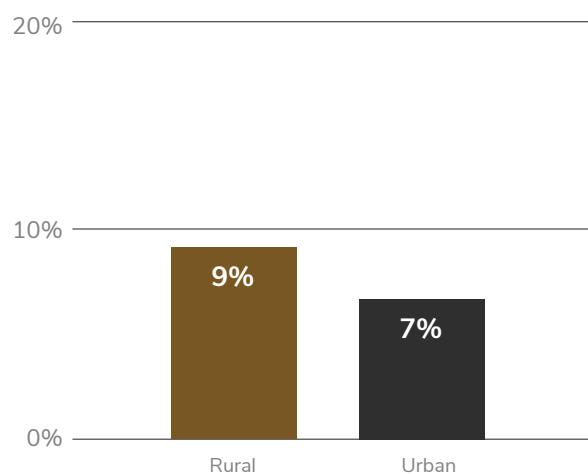
While planning remote-learning opportunities for students with diverse learning needs, central administration staff through the Student Support Services unit continued to:

- support teachers in providing learning opportunities for students with exceptional needs to meet Student Learning Plan or Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals and objectives;
- support school-based teams, if requested, in developing, updating, and delivering IEPs to students through various online programs;
- support schools to provide resources for parents/guardians to support their children at home as requested;
- provide specialist services such as speech and language, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and educational psychology as much as possible; and

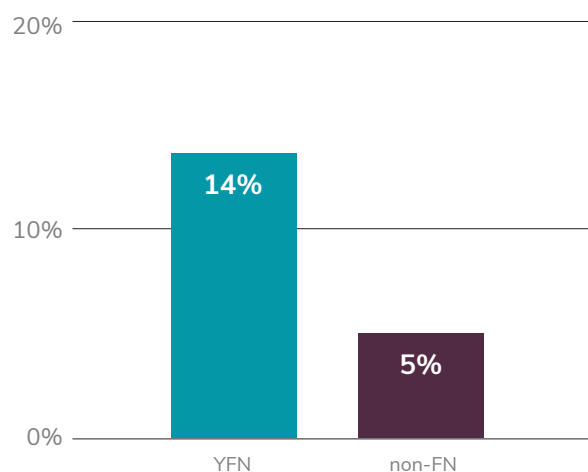
- support school staff in transitioning students from grade-to-grade and from their secondary school experience.

During the 2019–20 school year, there were 400 students on an Individual Education Plan.

Rural and urban students on Individual Education Plans 2019–20



Yukon First Nations and non-First Nations students on Individual Education Plans 2019–20



Data taken from the Yukon Wide Student Data Report for 2019–20. More student and school performance indicators and data are available at yukon.ca/en/learn-about-student-enrolment-and-assessments.

Health and safety

Safety is a responsibility shared among all central administration, school staff, educators, students and clients. Staff who see a hazard or unsafe condition in the workplace, including schools, have a responsibility to address and report it. We encourage staff, students and community members to report any health and safety concerns to their supervisor or school.

Health and safety measures during COVID-19

In order to keep students and staff safe, the Department of Education provided increased custodial services and cleaning supplies; access to personal protective equipment; invested in equipment to support adapted learning spaces; and increased busing services to make sure students could get to school safely.

Food program

Many Yukon schools have established food programs for students to ensure they can access healthy meals and are supported and ready for learning. The programs are run with the support of local organizations, such as the Yukon Food for Learning Association. Local First Nations also run many food programs, and in some communities we provide kitchen access to ensure they can run these programs in their communities.

The suspension of classes and restrictions related to COVID-19 caused concern that some students would go without meals if they could not access these programs during the school day. To ensure food programs could continue to operate, we worked together with Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health to share information and guidelines, and allowed access to school kitchens for these programs to continue to run through the remainder of the 2019–20 school year and current school year.



Cannabis, fentanyl and vaping education

The Department of Education works with the departments of Health and Social Services and Justice to provide school staff, students and families with up-to-date information about the risks of substance use, including tobacco, vaping, cannabis, drugs and alcohol.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there were concerns about the impacts of health restrictions on substance use. To support students in making safe and healthy decisions, the school curriculum includes grade-appropriate learning outcomes from K–12 on the consumption of harmful substances such as poisons, prescription medications, tobacco, vaping, alcohol and cannabis, as well as fentanyl and other illicit drugs. Education on psychoactive substances, such as cannabis, and illegal drugs, which may also be laced with fentanyl, starts in Grade 5. When issues and topics such as cannabis, fentanyl and vaping are topical and relevant to the local community, teachers are encouraged to integrate new information into their lesson plans in physical and health education, and other subjects.

In spring 2020, we completed the “Learning about substance use” unit for Grades 8–12 with Health and Social Services to support educators in teaching students about these substances. The unit includes learning activities connected to alcohol, the impacts of vaping, the physical/psychological effects of cannabis, the risks associated with fentanyl and strategies for promoting positive mental well-being while exploring substance use issues.

In addition to learning outcomes in the curriculum, we amended the *Tobacco and Vapour Free Schools Policy* to include vapour products in the definition of smoking ahead of the 2019–20 school year. We also continue to make naloxone kits and training available to staff and students to keep them safe in the case of a fentanyl overdose. School counsellors are available at schools to provide students with guidance and advice around healthy decision-making and avoiding

risky and unsafe situations. We also work with Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services to make alcohol and drug services counsellors available in schools.

Reporting incidents of threat and violence in Yukon schools

All Yukon schools are increasingly using the Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NCI), and Positive Behaviour Intervention Supports (PBIS) approaches to support positive behaviour and be responsive to student behaviour needs.

Any out-of-the-ordinary occurrence involving students and staff is called an “incident of concern.” These incidences include but are not limited to, physical and/or verbal assault that may result in injury, property loss or damage.

If an incident of concern occurs, school staff fill out an internal Workplace Risk Assessment (WRA). The WRA determines the level of concern about the student's behaviour, and provides an opportunity to collaboratively plan an intervention approach to address the behaviour and the needs of any affected student(s) and/or staff.

The incident may trigger the Violence Threat Risk Assessment Protocol (VTRA). A VTRA sets out a series of questions to identify the level of concern and guide the investigation to determine mitigation of risks and the kinds of supports and interventions to be offered. When an incident requires the VTRA protocol to be enacted, we partner with the departments of Health and Social Services and Justice, as well as the RCMP and Yukon University. The protocol includes considerations for a comprehensive intervention plan to help ensure everyone's safety and well-being in the school and community.

If an incident occurs that impacts a school, Student Support Services assists school staff through debriefing, planning, training and restorative approaches to address harm. School staff may receive short-term counselling and assistance through the Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP).

Year	Number of reported incidents	Number of WRAs	Number of VTAs
2019–20	62	50	12
2018–19	161	133	28
2017–18	241	218	23

In 2019–20, the use of the Nonviolent Physical Intervention by school staff was required in 33 (68%) of the WRAs submitted.

We did not receive any WRAs after in-person classes were suspended at the end of spring break, contributing to the overall lower number of total incidents for this year.

The *Safe and Caring Schools Policy* is a commitment of the school community to plan, strategize and create a respectful, safe and nurturing educational environment for everyone.

Student Support Services developed the *Safe and Caring Schools Policy Support Plan* in 2018–19 to support Yukon schools with implementing this policy. The support plan outlines specific services and training available to school counsellors, educators and students to address student behaviour needs. This includes Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NCI), Positive Behaviour Intervention Supports (PBIS) and Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) training.

In the 2019–20 school year, nine NCI trainings were held, including six in Whitehorse. There were also two trainings held over two days in Old Crow in October 2019, and one in Dawson in February 2020. A total of 108 educators were trained. All courses stopped from March to the end of June, due to the pandemic. VTRA training is offered to school staff every other year and was provided in the 2018–19 school year. It will be offered again during the 2020–21 school year.

We continue to support schools to implement PBIS through our PBIS coach, Student Support Services consultants and educational psychologist.

LGBTQ2S+ supports in schools

All Yukon students and staff are entitled to feel safe and welcome in school. The Government of Yukon recognizes that homophobic and gender-based comments, discrimination, and bullying are demeaning and are not permitted in Yukon schools.

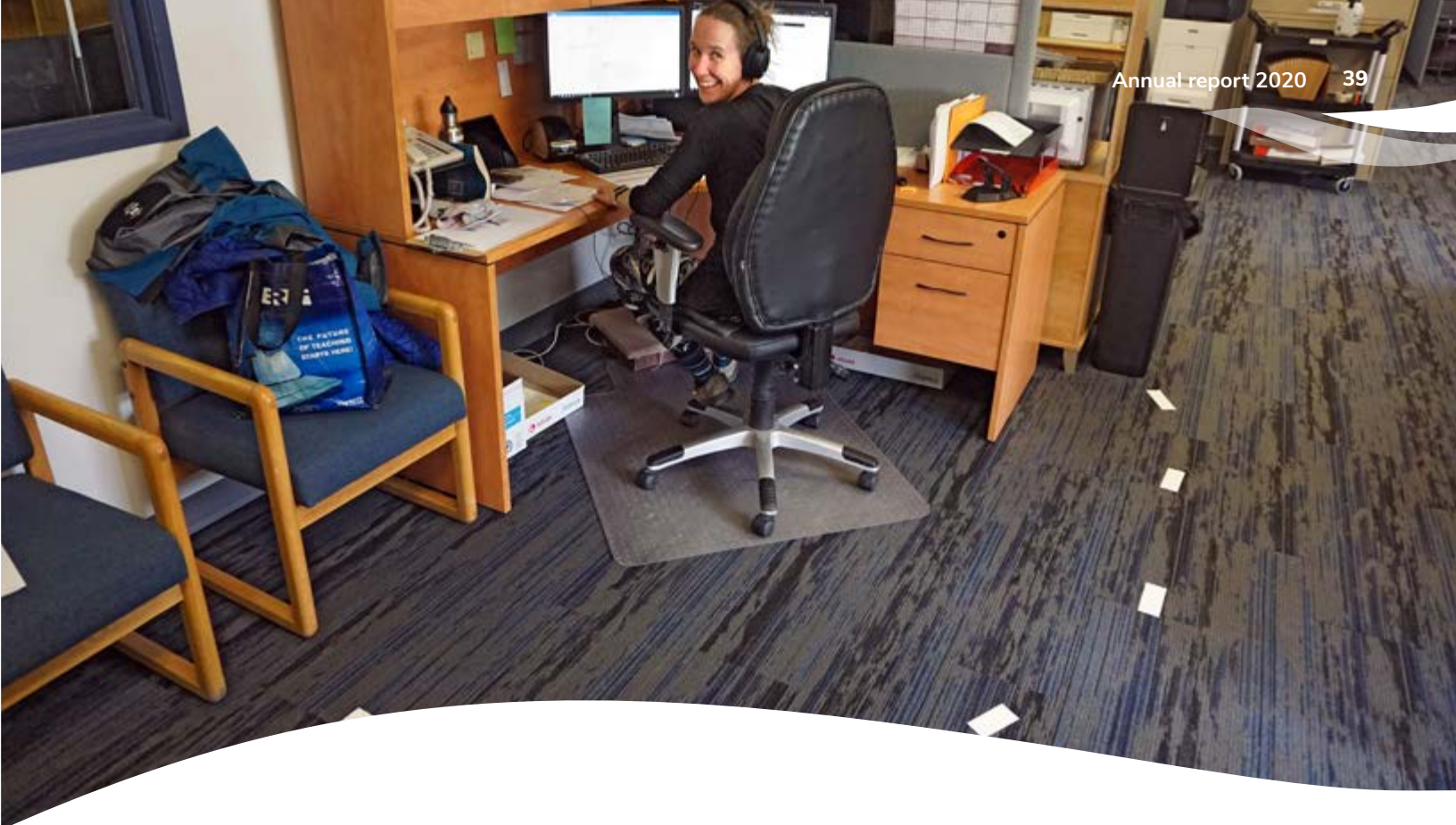
The Department of Education has put many supports in place for students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, Two-Spirit, plus (LGBTQ2S+) through policies, teacher training, and updated curriculum resources to promote inclusive and safe environments in schools.

The department's *Safe and Caring Schools Policy* applies to all schools. It establishes principles and standards of behaviour to ensure the safety and well-being of students, staff and all other members of each school community.

The department implemented a *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Policy* in 2012 to support students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, Two-Spirit, plus (LGBTQ2S+). This policy applies to all schools and requires the development of school-based policies and strategies to ensure that LGBTQ2S+ students are treated with respect and dignity at school.

In the fall of 2019, the Women's Directorate released the results of their public engagement on LGBTQ2S+ inclusion in Yukon. The engagement was designed to inform the development of an action plan to increase inclusiveness for LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners in government legislation, policies, programs and services. The Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) at F.H. Collins Secondary and Porter Creek Secondary were specifically included in the engagement process to ensure the voices of youth were heard and included in the recommendations.

The F.H. Collins and Porter Creek Secondary GSAs were involved in several public activism campaigns in 2019, including leading a petition against conversion therapy and creating safe spaces in schools for LGBTQ2S+ students. The Government of Yukon does not support conversion therapy and tabled legislation to ban conversion therapy in the spring of 2020. This legislation passed in October 2020.



Radon testing in Yukon schools

Radon is a colourless, odourless, naturally occurring gas in Yukon. It can enter buildings through cracks and unsealed openings in basements and foundations from the soil. Radon does not pose an immediate danger to health and is only a concern if there is prolonged exposure to high concentrations over many years.

Remediation work at Christ the King Elementary School and Eliza Van Bibber School was completed during the 2019–20 school year, and testing is within the Health Canada guidelines.

The Teen Parent Centre and Holy Family Elementary school completed follow-up testing during the 2019–20 school year to ensure radon levels fall within Health Canada guidelines.

We will continue to ensure radon levels at Yukon schools remain within levels recommended by Health Canada. We retest schools if:

- there is work done on a school exterior, foundation or basement;
- seismic activity affects the school building;
- the ground or basement floors are renovated; or
- radon remediation work takes place at a school.

To see results for all schools and to learn more about radon testing in Yukon schools, visit: yukon.ca/en/learn-about-radon-testing-yukon-schools.

Water testing

All water fixtures at Yukon schools were tested in two phases to meet national standards. By October 2019, replacements and repairs were completed at all phase one schools. Mitigation work on water fixtures at phase two schools started in September 2019. All fixtures requiring replacement at phase two schools are now completed. Follow-up testing indicates there are water fixtures that require additional mitigation at J.V. Clark School, Del Van Gorder School and Watson Lake Secondary School. These fixtures remain out of use until further mitigation work is complete. This work is ongoing into the 2020–21 school year.

While this work is being completed, all Yukon schools continue to have access to safe drinking water. As part of this work to upgrade water fixtures at Yukon schools, all schools had new water bottle filling stations installed. Water bottle filling stations help to support students, staff and visitors in following COVID-19 health and safety measures, which recommend filling water bottles instead of drinking from water fountains to reduce the spread of germs. Learn more about this initiative at: yukon.ca/en/health-and-wellness/health-concerns-diseases-and-conditions/learn-about-water-testing-yukon-schools.

Student transportation

Student transportation options

We provide families support with transporting students to and from school by offering school bus services, transportation subsidies, and city transit passes. For students who live more than 3.2 kilometres from the nearest school bus stop, we offer an allowance to offset the cost of driving students to a school bus pick-up location. In 2019–20, we provided nearly \$64,000 to 53 Yukon families for the student transportation allowance.

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 to school, after-school activities, work and community events. The number of City Transit riders varies each month. In 2019–20, we had an average of 700 free City of Whitehorse transit passes issued every month to registered students.

Riding the school bus during COVID-19

In anticipation of returning to face-to-face learning for the start of the 2020–21 school year, we adapted our regular school bus operations to meet the health and safety guidelines for school bus operations set on July 23, 2020, by Yukon's CMOH. The guidelines outlined physical distancing protocols, enhanced cleaning measures and introduced rules around assigned seating.

As a result of following new health and safety guidelines, we could not assign as many non-eligible students to ride the school bus for the 2020–21 school year as in previous years. Students are eligible to ride the school if they live more than 3.2 kilometres from their school and attend a school in their attendance area. These students were prioritized for busing ahead of the 2020–21 school year. In previous school years, we were able to accommodate many students beyond the eligibility requirements.

Capital planning and facilities

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

We have a number of projects underway to ensure Yukon schools offer modern learning spaces, including building and renovating schools to ensure they remain safe and available for years to come. We continue to work with school communities through school councils to talk about ongoing maintenance, upgrades and capital projects in the short, medium and long-term.

All approved capital projects from the Department of Education are prioritized and managed through the Government of Yukon's five-year capital plan, available at: yukon.ca/en/2020-21-five-year-capital-plan.

Whistle Bend Elementary School

In spring 2019, as part of the Government of Yukon's 2019–20 five-year capital plan, we announced a new

elementary school in Whistle Bend. The elementary school is the first planned in Whitehorse in more than 20 years and will accommodate up to 425 Kindergarten to Grade 7 students from Whistle Bend and surrounding areas.

To inform our decisions as we plan for the school, we are currently working with partners on this project through a Project Advisory Committee. The committee includes representatives from the Whistle Bend Community Association, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, and the City of Whitehorse. We will be working with the Project Advisory Committee on the school's community and cultural needs until an established attendance area and school council have been formed.

We are also working with an Owner's Advisor team and a group of consultants who will provide technical

expertise to the government throughout the project's life. The Owner's Advisor team is responsible for finalizing the school's functional program, business case, and preparing the requirement to tender the school's design and construction. During construction, this team will ensure the quality of work, good value for money, and advise on technical matters.

Planning for the new Whistle Bend School is part of our work to modernize learning spaces in Yukon schools to support flexible and hands-on learning. The new school will provide us with the flexibility and capacity to begin renovating or replacing ageing Whitehorse schools.

In January 2020, Colliers Project Leaders was awarded the Owner's Advisor Contract for the Whistle Bend elementary school. As the Owner's Advisor for the project, Colliers Project Leaders have been developing the conceptual design and tender documents for the school.

Kluane Lake School

As part of our commitment to reconciliation and long-term capital planning for Yukon schools, we are working in partnership with Kluane First Nation (KFN) to relocate Kluane Lake School community from Destruction Bay to Burwash Landing.

The Government of Yukon spent \$50,000 on planning for this project in 2018–19 and 2019–20. We budgeted an additional \$500,000 for 2020–21 to support continued planning and design work with KFN. In collaboration with KFN, we identified a site for the new school selected in 2020. Work will continue into 2021 with a tender for an Owner's Advisor.

French First Language Secondary School

The Government of Yukon has worked with the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon to build a French First Language Secondary School with community spaces.

The new Centre scolaire secondaire communautaire Paul-Émilie Mercier School was completed in November 2020. We will continue to work with the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon and the Francophone community to support the success of French First Language students.

The school and its community spaces accommodate up to 150 students from Grades 7 to 12, providing modern, flexible learning spaces for students and community groups. This new school is part of

Riverdale's campus model, along with F.H. Collins Secondary school and Selkirk Elementary school, where groups, communities and cultures can gather, learn and play in various facilities.

Ross River Elementary School

Engineering teams continue to assess and monitor this school four times per year to ensure the current building remains safe and available for students and staff.

The most recent assessments in 2020 found the school remains safe for students and staff. Recent assessments have also noted some levelling differences on the school's main floor due to seasonal foundation movements, and some doors getting jammed, which have been repaired.

We are committed to ensuring Ross River Elementary has a safe learning environment that meets the needs of the school community and all Ross River residents. The Government of Yukon is committed to working with the Ross River Dene Council and the Ross River school community to plan for a new school. As plans evolve, we will continue to keep the community informed and work with the school community to address any concerns with the current school building.

FH Collins site development

This year we completed additional project work required at F.H. Collins Secondary school. Projects included a new bus loop, completed in June 2020; work on the new Technical Education Wing parking lot, completed in August 2020; the basketball court and outdoor classroom, completed in September 2020; and the north parking lot, which has been paved in coordination with the paving of parking areas for CSSC Mercier.

School modular classrooms

As part of the five-year capital plan, the Department of Education is acquiring modular classrooms to address short and medium-term school needs.

Golden Horn Elementary school acquired two modular classrooms in 2018–19 and 2019–20. One modular classroom at Selkirk Elementary school was completed in fall 2020, and another is planned for 2021–22. We are in the process of evaluating the need for building modular classrooms at other schools as well. These modular classrooms will help provide capacity for the school programs and enrolment.

