



Department of Education

2021 Annual Report





Note

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 the 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 2021 and reflects information current as of December 31, 2021.

More student and school performance indicators and data are available online on [Yukon.ca](https://www.yukon.ca).

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Message from the Minister



It is my pleasure to present you the 2021 Annual Report for the Department of Education. Despite the many challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has presented us, our central administration staff and our dedicated school administrators and educators continued to ensure the health and safety of our students, while maintaining continuity of learning.

While continuing to respond to the impacts of the pandemic, the department worked very hard on important changes to transform our education system.

A significant step we have taken in 2021 is the advent of the universal early learning and childcare program and enhanced early kindergarten in rural communities. Providing high-quality, culturally-appropriate early learning opportunities has long-lasting positive impacts for children.

All children need to feel welcome and included, from their first days at daycare to their graduation from school. When we talk about transforming our education system, there is no greater area we need to focus on more than inclusive and special education. A review of inclusive and special education programs was completed through 2020-2021 and the final report was released in ceremony on June 1, 2021.

We have heard loud and clear from this report that the Department of Education needs to do a better job of working in partnership with Yukon First Nations. The report speaks to the devastating impacts of colonizing approaches on students and points out that to achieve the kind of system change we are seeking we must establish new relationships that are informed by our connections to each other because our futures are connected whether we see it or not.

We have set out to strengthen our relationships with Yukon's First Nations and our partners, and we want to decolonize Yukon's education system. We acknowledge that this work must be done together, and it must be done differently. A key example of our commitment to this, is the work we've done with the Chiefs Committee on Education to establish a Yukon First Nation School Board. This is an exciting time for education in the Yukon, and I would like to express my appreciation for all our partners in education, for your dedication, collaboration, and hard work in ensuring that our youth can succeed in every area of their lives. This would not be possible without you.

I want to thank all our students for their continued resiliency and adaptability in the face of so many changes. I would also like to extend my gratitude for the families who have supported their children through these challenging times.

I am honoured to be in this position of leadership and committed to continue our important work together in 2022, fearlessly forging a path towards meaningful collaboration, decolonization, and a more holistic approach to education.



Hon. Jeanie McLean, Minister of Education

Message from the Deputy Minister



In the past year, the Department of Education has worked very hard to respond to the needs of Yukon students in the context of a pandemic. This has required a great deal of adaptability, creativity, and determination. I am honoured to work alongside the dedicated staff of the Department of Education, whether centrally assigned or working in Yukon schools. I also want to acknowledge and thank our students, and their families, and all our partners in education, for their collaboration, innovative ideas, resilience and faith.

In 2021, we also saw tremendous growth in our journey towards rebuilding an education system that will better suit the needs of our youth, living in a rapidly evolving society. We looked to the past, our shared experiences and all the lessons learned and we are now moving forward together to co-create a strong and bright future for our youth.

Thanks to the newly implemented universal early learning and childcare program and enhanced early kindergarten in rural communities, it is now more affordable for parents to place their children in quality early learning child care centers, and we have increased opportunities for children to participate in early learning programs.

We received the report from the inclusive and special education review that was conducted over the 2020-21 school year. We heard that in many cases, students' needs are not being met, and that colonial practices in our education system are failing not only First Nation students but all Yukon students.

Naming and noticing these truths has led us to learning what is really happening for students and families across our education system. While no one of us has created Yukon's education system, we each individually have the ability to take a first step to making informed and significant changes to improve our education system.

We acknowledge that we cannot do this work alone and we are calling on our partners to begin a journey with us to walk together to make significant and meaningful change for our children. We strengthened our partnerships with Yukon First Nations, and together worked hard on establishing a Yukon First Nation school board. This is a significant stride in our sincere efforts to advance our relationship with Yukon First Nations governments, facilitating greater authority and control over education, and together leading the way to the decolonization of our education system.

We still have lots of work to do, and we are steadfast in our resolve because this is the right work at the right time. I have faith in our dedicated team across the department and in the strong partnerships that we have forged and in those we continue to nurture. Let's continue our efforts together, sharing the same goal of ensuring the best chances at success for our youth, in all areas of their lives.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nicole Morgan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Nicole Morgan, Deputy Minister of Education

Early learning

Putting People First and early learning

In August 2020, the Government of Yukon endorsed [Putting People First](#), the final report of Yukon's comprehensive review of health and social programs and services. The report included recommendations specifically on early learning:

Recommendation 3.8:

"Work towards fully-funded, universal early childhood education for all Yukon children over the age of one and provide families with options to improve children's learning outcomes:

- a. Coordinate early learning services at all levels to ensure the child is put at the centre by moving early learning to the Department of Education.
- b. Open current preventative and supportive early learning programs, moving towards universal access for all Yukon families.
- c. Increase accessible training opportunities for day home and daycare providers to support continued integration of preventative and early learning supports.
- d. Provide access to early learning and/or childcare services opportunities for more families by increasing the current subsidy system in Yukon."

- Putting People First (page 8-9)

In February 2021, the Government of Yukon [announced](#) four commitments to advance the recommendations from Putting People First:

1. Yukon families would have access to universal child care starting on April 1, 2021.
2. Full-time early kindergarten programs would be offered in all rural Yukon schools starting in the 2021-22 school year.
3. To support these initiatives and coordinate early learning services, the Child Care Services Unit would transfer to the Department of Education as of April 1, 2021. Doing so includes amending the *Child Care Act*.
4. The Government of Yukon would continue engagement with Yukon First Nations governments and key stakeholders, including childcare operators and education partners, on how to create a universal child care model for Yukon based on the principles of affordability, accessibility and quality, and enhanced early kindergarten programming at all rural schools in Yukon.

Why is early learning important?

Investing in early childhood relationships, environments and experiences supports the development of Yukon children and the future of a happier and healthier society. Results are exponential when pre-school-aged children have access to high-quality early learning and child care experiences. It's in these early years that our youngest learners develop vital physical, cognitive and social skills needed to set them on a path to future health and success.

In the Yukon, we have early learning and child care programs and early kindergarten programs. Early kindergarten programs are run through Yukon schools, while licenced early learning and child care programs are privately operated and include:

- for-profit businesses,
- non-profit organizations,
- organizations run by First Nations, and
- family day homes.

The combination of play-based learning and thoughtful curriculum in early learning programs offers children everyday moments to inquire, wonder and explore the world, while nurturing their brain development and language and communication skills. The goals of early learning programs include, but are not limited to:

- cultivating positive personal and cultural identities for children,
- fostering inclusive environments that respect, value and appreciate diversity,
- nurturing strong relationships with other children and caregivers,
- participating in literacy and numeracy rich environments,
- learning with others through play and inquiry,
- practicing social-emotional and problem-solving abilities,
- developing and nurturing positive self-esteem,
- encouraging lifelong learning and well-being, and
- improving fine and gross motor skills.

Engagement on early learning

Engagement with Yukon First Nations, rural communities, educators and program operators (including French language educators and operators), stakeholders and other partners in the field of early childhood education and child care has been foundational in developing the Yukon's early learning supports and universal child care system. Targeted engagement efforts took place from January through June 2021, and the engagement sessions included representation from all Yukon communities and First Nations, as well as organizations such as:

- Yukon First Nations Health Directors,
- the Yukon First Nations Education Directorate,
- the Yukon Child Care Board,
- the Yukon Child Care Association, and
- the Child Development Centre.

We asked for feedback on key aspects of the Yukon's early learning and child care system, including:

- priorities developing the universal system,
- what makes high-quality early learning programs,
- how we can make programs affordable for families, and
- what the successful implementation of a universal early learning and child care system looks like.

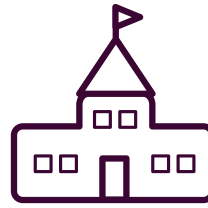
Through these engagement sessions, significant feedback was received and directly impacted how the Yukon's universal early learning and child care system has been developed. Some highlights from what we heard and incorporated into the Yukon's early learning system includes:

- programming needs to be reflective and inclusive of First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being;
- programs need to be available for all families, regardless of income level, employment status, geographic location or other factors that may inhibit access;
- an early learning curriculum should be developed and implemented, in a system that strives for inclusion of all children and respects and values diversity, including for children with disabilities, children needing enhanced or individual support, and children and families who are experiencing vulnerability;
- early childhood educators need to be compensated with pay and benefits that reflect their training and contributions;
- training and professional development opportunities need to be available to current and prospective early childhood educators; and
- the number of available child care spaces in the Yukon needs to increase.

Throughout the rest of 2021, the Department of Education continued to work closely with partners to develop early learning supports to meet the unique needs of each Yukon community. This engagement and collaborative work continues in 2022 as Yukon government has committed to begin the work to review Yukon's *Child Care Act*. To start this work, officials are reviewing all the feedback from engagements with First Nations governments, the Child Care Board and stakeholders over the past several years to create a document outlining themes for moving ahead.

Early kindergarten

Early kindergarten is an optional program that provides literacy rich, play-based learning opportunities to support a child's transition to kindergarten. The program takes place in schools with dedicated teaching staff. Early kindergarten is available for children who are 4 years old on or before December 31 of the relevant school year. A new [Early Kindergarten Policy](#) came into effect in August 2021, which:



11 out of 13 rural schools offer free early kindergarten programs

- provides guidelines to support early kindergarten programming in rural Yukon schools,
- establishes parameters for consistent early kindergarten programming, and
- allows for flexibility to accommodate local needs.

The Department of Education met regularly with the Yukon Association of Educational Professionals about this new policy, and has committed to reviewing the policy after one year of implementation.

Since early kindergarten is provided at no cost to families, the programs are valuable and highly sought-after, especially for families with less access to other early learning and child care spaces in the community. In the 2021-22 school year, early kindergarten programs were implemented in schools in 11 of 13 rural Yukon communities, including:

- Beaver Creek, at Nelna Bessie John School
- Carcross, at Ghùch Tlâ Community School
- Carmacks, at Tantalus Community School
- Destruction Bay, at Kluane Lake School
- Faro, at Del Van Gorder School
- Haines Junction, at St. Elias Community School
- Mayo, at J.V. Clark School
- Old Crow, at Chief Zzeh Gittlit School
- Pelly Crossing, at Eliza Van Bibber School
- Ross River, at Ross River School
- Teslin, at Khàtinash Community School

With additional staffing allocation support of 5.5 full-time equivalents from the Department of Education, all but two of these schools enhanced their early kindergarten programs from half-day to full-day programs.

Ongoing engagement continues with rural school communities, Yukon First Nations and more recently, the First Nation School Board to enhance Early Kindergarten programs in the two other rural Yukon communities, including:

1. Dawson City, at Robert Service School, and
2. Watson Lake, at Johnson Elementary School.

While the long-term goal is to have full-time early kindergarten programs available in every Yukon community, including Whitehorse, the immediate focus is to provide early kindergarten in rural communities where there are fewer alternative early learning and child care program options.

Hand-in-hand with supporting Yukon's earliest learners is supporting early childhood educators. In the 2021-22 school year the Department of Education supported early kindergarten educators with professional development offerings, such as:

- implementation of Fountas & Pinnell Balanced Library Classroom resources,
- the Early Learning Framework Community of Practice,
- a professional development day with courses for educators (recorded for continued access),
- education leave for educators,
- new administrator orientation sessions; and
- the Primary Learning Network.

Universal Child Care

The Government of Yukon invested more than \$25 million in 2021-22 towards early learning and child care initiatives, including approximately \$15 million for a new Yukon-wide universal child care program: the [Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Funding Program](#).



On average,
parents now pay
less than \$10/day
for child care.

The Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Funding Program focuses on quality, inclusivity, affordability and accessibility. The program consists of two parts:

1. Funding for licensed child care, which:
 - a. reduces parent fees,
 - b. reduces operational and administrative expenses, and
 - c. supports program needs.
2. Child care operational funding (formerly the Direct Operating Grant), which:
 - a. supports high-quality learning environments,
 - b. increases wages of early childhood educators, and
 - c. supports operational costs.

Starting on April 1, 2021, Yukon families began automatically saving up to \$700 per month per child registered full-time in participating licensed child care programs. These savings are also provided on a prorated basis for children attending programs part-time. The Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Funding Program helps to support the reduction of parent fees to remain on average less than \$10 a day.

The new Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Funding Program launched with targeted support for all licensed early learning and child care programs, including for-profit businesses, non-profit organizations, organizations run by First Nations, and family day homes. Operators who chose to participate in the program immediately began benefitting from enhanced funding for operations and wages for early childhood educators. Under the new funding model, operators have also been provided with additional funding to better support including children with special needs in their programs.

There was a total of 1979 child care spaces in the Yukon on January 1, 2022.



When the Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Funding Program launched on April 1, 2021, 98.5% of the 69 licensed early learning and child care programs chose to participate in universal child care. This resulted in the families of 1546 children automatically saving up to \$700 per

child for the first month of universal child care. As of January 1, 2022, 100% of licensed early learning and child care programs in the Yukon had transitioned to universal child care, providing a total of 1979 spaces for children. This number continues to grow in 2022.

In addition to making early learning and child care immediately more affordable for families, the new universal child care system also specifically increases funds for early learning programs to better support children with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual support. This is part of larger Quality Program Enhancement Funding for operators, intended to improve the quality of all early learning environments participating in universal child care.

On top of the supports for families and operators, the new Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Funding Program championed significant minimum wage increases for early childhood educators. Through new monthly Wage Enhancement Funding, the Yukon's early childhood educators now have the highest minimum wage of over \$30 an hour for fully qualified early childhood educators. This enhancement includes an additional payment of 14% of wage costs to operators for mandatory employment-related costs, such as Canadian Pension Plan, Employment Insurance and Workers Compensation Board contributions. Improving wages is an important step in recognizing and validating the impact, expertise and essential services provided by early childhood

educators in the Yukon.

As the COVID-19 pandemic evolved in 2021, and the Chief Medical Officer of Health updated their recommendations for Yukoners, departmental support for early learning and child care evolved in tandem. As public health officials issued [new COVID-19 specific guidance for early learning and child care environments](#), the Department of Education provided operators with additional monthly funding to ensure enhanced cleaning measures remained in compliance with the updated guidance. As well, when the Chief Medical Officer of Health recommended that all families of non-essential workers keep their children at home for two weeks, the Department of Education ensured that all families were [reimbursed for licensed child care expenses for the month of July 2021](#). This decision to put people first helped protect families, operators, and staff from a significant financial loss while weathering the second wave of COVID-19.

Federal-Territorial support and initiatives

In addition to the Government of Yukon budgeting \$25.2 million towards early learning in 2021-22, the Government of Canada also made a significant investment of \$54.3 million in the next five years to further enrich the Yukon's universal child care system through:



We have agreements with the federal government to improve child care in the Yukon.

- recruitment, retention and the development of early childhood educators,
- culturally appropriate early learning and child care programming,
- inclusive early learning and child care, and
- supporting increased access to licensed child care, including start-up funding for new centres and enhanced wages for early childhood educators.

The new [Canada-Yukon Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, signed in July 2021](#), contributed nearly \$42 million over five years to build on Yukon's efforts to date to ensure that all families have access to an average of \$10 a day out-of-pocket parent fees for full-time regulated early learning and child care spaces for children under age six. This agreement also committed to adding 110 licensed child care spaces in the Yukon, with specific emphasis on spaces for diverse and vulnerable children and families – including children with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports, Indigenous children, Black and other racialized children, children of newcomers, and official language minorities.

Building upon this, the bilateral [Canada-Yukon Early Learning and Child Care Agreement](#) was also [extended in August 2021](#), with another \$10.1 million over four years to further improve access to high quality, affordable, flexible and inclusive early learning and child care programs and services. In addition, the Government of Canada also made a one-time investment of nearly \$2.5 million in 2021-22 to support development of the Yukon's local early childhood educator workforce with recruitment and retention efforts. This agreement, with the supplementary Workforce Development Annex, committed the Yukon to increase the subsidy system and supports for educators, such as increased training and certification opportunities for early childhood educators and program operators.

With this increased federal support, the Department of Education rolled out two new funding streams in 2021:

- The [Cultural Enhancement Funding](#) program provides programs and educators with access to \$800,000 to develop enhanced, culturally rich, early learning programs and environments, focused on:
 - o Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing, learning and being,
 - o place-based, outdoor, experiential learning opportunities,
 - o francophone language and cultures, and
 - o languages and cultures of other diverse populations.
- The [Early Learning and Child Care Benefits Funding](#) program establishes providing extended health insurance benefits to educators as a standard practice for the Yukon's universal child care model. The program includes \$800,000 in compensation for up to 8% of staff wages for employers to select and offer a comprehensive benefits package that meets the needs of their employees from a registered Canadian insurance provider. The benefits funding program is available to all licensed programs in the Yukon, including operators currently offering benefits for employees – who can receive retroactive funding for providing their employees with benefits from April 1, 2021.

More targeted initiatives supporting families, operators, and educators – and further developing and enhancing the Yukon's universal child care system – are underway and will be launched in 2022.

Kindergarten to Grade 12

The school year in review

Operational plans for 2020-21 school year

In the Fall of 2020, we were able to return all elementary school students to full-time, in-person learning. Students and staff at all schools still followed the health and safety recommendations set by Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health. These recommendations included physical distancing, the use of non-medical masks for all staff and students ages 10 and older (Grade 4 and up) in indoor school settings outside of the classroom, including hallways, the library and social areas.

The schools were also cleaning and disinfecting furniture and equipment more frequently and following hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Some school programming and activities were adapted. For example, singing and playing certain instruments are associated with a higher risk of COVID transmission, so to help mitigate the risks and return to playing and singing together, schools were to followed singing and music guidelines. Physical education classes followed the contact sports and sport and recreation guidelines, and teachers were encouraged to give physical education classes outside whenever possible.

\$20,209

Average spending
per student in K-12

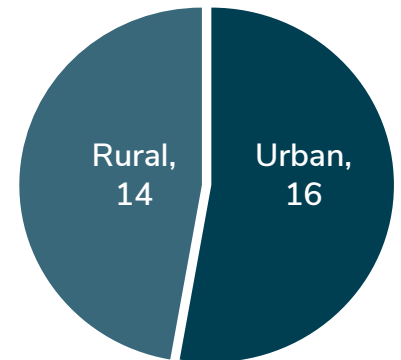
(based on October 31,
2021 enrolment)

To meet the health and safety guidelines set by Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Grades 10 to 12 students in Whitehorse at F.H. Collins, Porter Creek and Vanier Catholic secondary schools returned to learning in-class for half the school day, and learning away from class the remainder of the school day. It was a priority for the Department of Education to return Grades 10-12 students to classes in school full-time, as soon as possible, within the health and safety guidelines.

We monitored and adjusted supports in the short-term to meet student needs during the time they were partly learning away from class, while planning for the second semester.

We worked with secondary school administrators and engaged with Yukon First Nations and education partners to identify and determine where additional supports may be needed to ensure we continued to meet the learning needs of these students.

Total schools in
the Yukon



Busing adjustments

For the 2020-21 school year school busing had to be limited to meet the Chief Medical Officer of Health's 'Guidelines for School Bus Operations'. These health and safety guidelines were set in July 2020. The capacity in school buses had to be limited to two students per seat, and the first two seats were left vacant.

As a result of the restrictions on the number of students allowed in a school bus, we were not able to accommodate as many non-eligible families as we had in previous years. However, we were able to assign a spot for all eligible students registered for busing. Additional seats were made available as we added more bus routes as a temporary measure.

Parents and guardians were encouraged to transport their children to school, if possible, to allow more room on buses for students without other means of transportation.

All bus drivers and children over the age of 5 were to wear a non-medical mask. Parents were asked to monitor their children for symptoms every morning before taking the bus, and students, bus drivers and parents were asked to respect two metres of physical distancing while waiting for the bus and getting on the bus.

Bus drivers were encouraged to keep some windows slightly open to allow for natural ventilation, and the buses were cleaned and sanitized according to Yukon's cleaning and disinfecting guidelines.

Learning Continuity Requirements highlights

In 2020, we developed the Learning Continuity Requirements to guide our approach to learning over the COVID-19 pandemic. During the 2020-21 school year, the Continuity of Learning working group, comprised of a First Nations education consultant, superintendents, and policy staff, with input from all the department educational consultants, continued to meet regularly to adapt the document to best meet the learning needs of all Yukon students.

The group continued to work with Yukon educators and Yukon First Nations to ensure that they were responding to the challenges and unique situations of all Yukon students.

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.

The Continuity of Learning working group studied the data and all comments from the Learning during COVID-19 surveys and adapted a lot of the Learning Continuity Requirements to respond to the results of the surveys.

For example, both learners and parents expressed their concerns about not being prepared for the following year, or prepared for transition to post-secondary education. The Continuity of Learning Working group focused on learning recovery for each grade band K-3, 4-7, 8-12, and Second Language Learners. Also, the feedback from families, students and staff suggested more learning outdoors, experiential, hands-on and active learning.

The Learning Continuity Requirements were adapted to emphasize Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing, and being along with experiential, service learning and place-based learning. It was also critical to provide blended learning strategies to assist schools and teachers, to be prepared for any possible closures related to the pandemic.

Learning during COVID-19 survey

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, 2020, gathering information on the experiences and perspectives of students, families and school staff about learning from home.

The second survey was available for students, families, and staff to complete from November 23 to 30, 2020. Respondents were asked about their experiences and perspectives since the beginning of the 2020-21 school year on health and safety routines at Yukon schools, learning progress and supports, and blended learning for Grade 10 to 12 students at F.H. Collins, Porter Creek and Vanier Catholic secondary schools. The feedback from this second survey helped us continue to adapt instruction and operations in schools and identify additional supports to ensure student learning needs were met. Results informed professional development opportunities for teachers and informed updates to the Learning Continuity Requirements document.



We ran three Learning during COVID-19 surveys in total.

The third survey ran from June 9 to 23, 2021. Respondents were asked about their experiences and perspectives during the last half of the school year on health and safety routines at Yukon schools, learning following the return of Whitehorse grade 10-12 students to full-time, in-class learning in April 2021, and how the pandemic had impacted mental health and wellness. The feedback from this survey informed ongoing planning to support student learning during the 2021-22 school year and pandemic recovery. The results also helped inform efforts to increase awareness and accessibility of mental health and wellness supports for students, families, and staff.

The Department of Education received valuable feedback on what should be emphasized in professional development opportunities for educators. Some of the themes related to mental health literacy, blended learning, literacy, numeracy, Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing, and being, place-based learning, service learning and prioritizing learning standards.

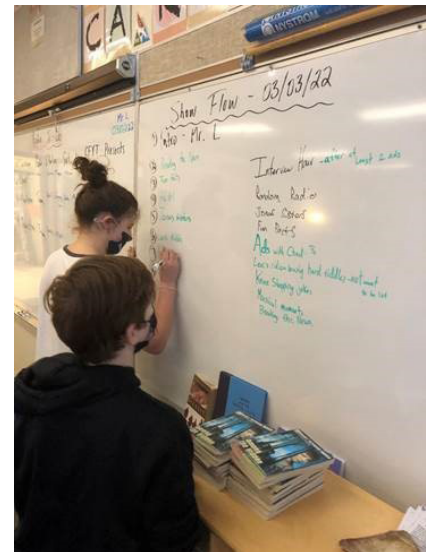
Supporting Grades 10-12 with blended learning

Online resources and a digital collaboration space for teachers was created to ensure we were meeting the learning needs of all students at the secondary level in the Yukon, including the Whitehorse Grades 10 to 12 students' needs while they were learning half days remotely, away from class.

All secondary teachers and administrators were added to the digital collaboration space that allowed teachers to share their experiences, challenges, and suggestions, and inform each other on professional development opportunities, and relevant information for secondary programming.

Lesson plans and professional development were developed and delivered to support educators, following the Safe 6 guidelines in the classroom and school setting. The Secondary Team discussed the benefits of blended learning for secondary students as well as the challenges the situation presented. The team provided secondary teachers with strategies and professional development opportunities related to blended learning.

Learning networks were facilitated featuring assessment and reporting, Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing, and being, prioritizing learning standards, blended learning, as well as place-based learning.



New educator positions

To respond to the need for more in-person support in schools, we hired 23 additional educators for the 2020-21 school year. Eleven of these additional educators went to work at the three Whitehorse high schools where students were on half-day schedules, as well as Wood Street Centre.

**537**

Full and part-time,
term and permanent
teachers in the Yukon
(not including CSFY)

These teachers worked in various positions, including providing blended learning and counselling supports, and also offered a new type of support as success coaches. Success coaches were able to work with high school students to support positive work habits, time management and organization, which helped to address their mental health and well-being by reducing stress and anxiety related to their school.

The other 12 educators went to support students in elementary and rural schools. These educators were able to help out in learning assistance teacher and counsellor positions to support students with diverse learning needs and students facing impacts on their learning from the suspension of classes during the 2019-20 school year. Adding these additional staff provided greater personal, social, emotional and academic support to students to improve their overall mental health and well-being.

School curriculum – core competencies for success

Our goal during the 2020-21 school year was always to get all Grade 10 to 12 students back to in-person classes full-time. However, the half-time learning schedule did allow them to develop important skills and competencies.

Many students were finding success with this approach to learning, also known as the blended learning model. We started implementing our modernized curriculum four years ago because we already knew that students are growing up in a rapidly changing world where they need new skills and knowledge to be successful.

As part of Yukon's modernized curriculum, teachers had already started to incorporate blended and personalized, flexible learning opportunities into regular programming. This modernized approach to education develops more confident, resilient, and self-motivated learners who can innovate, adapt and be successful in any environment. This kind of learning schedule reflects schedules that post-secondary students follow in normal times.



Blended learning supports students to develop successful learning habits and skills for the future, such as:

- Learning how to adapt and problem solve in any situation by setting goals, assessing their strengths and understanding themselves as learners;
- Learning time management, organization, problem solving and self-motivation; and
- Building confidence with technology and mobile devices to research, collaborate and seek out new information.

These competencies are found in the modernized Yukon curriculum and need to be nurtured as they will be critical in future years, whether for post-secondary education or student's careers.

Grades 10-12 back to full-time in-person classes

From the outset of the pandemic, our goal was to ensure that as many students could be learning in class as possible, while ensuring their health and safety. In March 2021, the Government of Yukon released the document [A Path Forward: Next Steps](#), that outlined how public health restrictions would be eased in the Yukon, including getting Grades 10-12 students back to full day in-class instruction.

Yukon's Premier and Chief Medical Officer of Health determined that the students in Grades 10 to 12 who were on the half-day schedule in Whitehorse, would be able to go back to full-time in-person instruction in the classroom in April 2021. With this news, we started planning with school administrators and school councils to determine how to adjust school operational plans.

Grade 10 to 12 students at F.H. Collins, Vanier Catholic and Porter Creek secondary schools returned to full-time, in-person classes on April 19, 2021.

Two planning days were scheduled to support school staff in adjusting their course plans for the remainder of the school year.

To support a safe transition, the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health provided health and safety guidelines, which allowed for relaxing the 2-metre physical distancing rule at these three schools.

Returning students to full-time, in-person classes provided students with opportunities to get back to regular school routines, including more support from their teachers. It also allowed for graduating students to reconnect with friends and teachers and to finish their school years as expected.

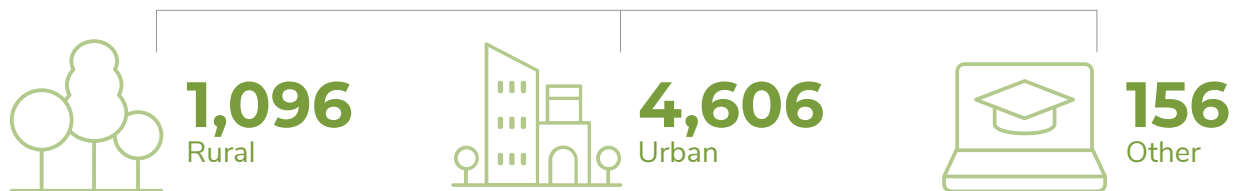
Technology support and COVID-19

Online and digital learning technologies and resources are a key part of modern learning. They are an important tool for blended learning and continued learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have supported students with access to devices if they do not have their own.

From the onset of the pandemic, we recognized that there would be challenges related to technology, as not all families would easily access devices to support their child in the eventuality of a move to remote learning during the pandemic.

During the 2020-21 school year, to further support equitable learning opportunities for students, we were pleased to partner with Yukon First Nations to purchase devices to support Yukon First Nation students. We contributed \$276,716 as part of this partnership to purchase 1300 devices.

5,702 Total students in Kindergarten to Grade 12
(includes early Kindergarten)



Planning for 2021-22 school year

In planning for the 2021-22 school year, the Department of Education continued to work closely with the Chief Medical Officer of Health to ensure the health and safety of all students, staff and communities. Based on the situation and the risks with COVID-19 at the time, we updated our health and safety guidelines for schools and transportation.

We based our planning on the best public health advice from our medical experts, lessons we learned from the previous school year, and from the outbreak during the summer of 2021. We had to plan according to the specific needs for settings with a significant number of unvaccinated children under 12, but also consider feedback received from students, parents, teachers, school bus drivers, First Nations, communities, and school councils.



Yukon Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Recovery Plan

For the 2021-22 school year, the Department of Education developed the [Yukon Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Recovery Plan](#) and [Guidelines for Schools for the 2021-22 School Year](#). These provided direction to schools to deliver educational programs and supports in line with territorial pandemic recovery efforts in the 2021-22 school year. The goal was to clarify expectations, provide guidance across a number of key topics, and include links to additional information and resources that would support decision-making and communication.

Data collected from three surveys completed by parents/caregivers, students, and educators across the territory informed decisions on recovery planning.

The well-being and mental health of our students and staff was a priority as we planned a return to school for the 2021-22 school year. Schools were encouraged to apply a compassionate and trauma-informed leadership lens in their recovery planning – one that would place people (and their mental and social-emotional well-being) at the center and would recognize the importance of meeting students and staff where they were.

Student assessment and reporting

As classes returned to in-person learning for the 2020-21 school year, educators returned to following the usual process for assessing students while checking on the impacts of the suspension of face-to-face classes.

Educators were asked to focus on the numeracy and literacy foundations and essential learning standards outlined in the curriculum during the suspension of face-to-face classes at the end of the 2019-20 school year. As part of recovering from the impact of at-home learning, teachers were asked to check-in on where their students were at in their learning, to help identify where focused attention is needed. As outlined in the Yukon Learning Requirements for 2020-21, school staff were recommended to focus on literacy and numeracy and essential learning standards.

During the 2019-20 school year, many territory-wide spring assessments were cancelled. During the 2020-21 school year, these assessments returned to their usual schedule. While there were some postponements and/or delays for some assessments, students were able to write all their regular assessments, including the:

- Boehm Test of Basic Concepts in Kindergarten,
- Early Years Evaluation in Kindergarten (EYE),
- Yukon Foundational Skills Assessments in Grades 4 and 7 (YFSAs),
- District Assessment of Reading Team for Grades 2-9 (DART),
- School Wide Writes for Grades 2-9 (SWW),
- Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) and Written Proficiency Assessment (WPA) for students in Intensive and Core French and French Immersion, and
- High school numeracy and literacy assessments for Grades 10 and 12.

To support learning recovery and identify areas of focus, the Yukon Learning Continuity Requirements for 2020-21 guided educators to use assessment data from territory-wide assessments such as the Boehm, EYE, DART, SWW and YFSAs at their school. Many of these assessments are written in fall and spring, enabling educators to evaluate areas for improvement after fall assessments and identify improvements during spring assessments.

Additionally, educators continued their regular assessment and reporting processes as outlined in the Communicating Student Learning Resource and Professional Development Tool, while adjusting some of their touch points with parents and guardians. For example, in-person meetings that are normally required were able to transition to virtual meetings by Zoom, using features like video sharing, audio and screen sharing for as close to an in-person experience as possible.

Student outcomes strategy

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.

Developing a strategy to address student performance gaps also supports identifying root causes that impact student performance and outcomes. As we recover from the impacts of COVID-19 on learning, this is more important than ever.



We measure success of students at key milestones during their learning, including in Kindergarten, Grade 4 and Grade 7. Successful transitions and the development of important numeracy and literacy skills are key to student success and increase the likelihood of graduation. As part of our pandemic response, we have sharpened our focus on students who need additional supports to succeed. The data we collect now highlights students who are “Emerging” or “Unknown” for their grade level and outcomes. This puts greater focus and attention on students who need more support.

To support better, evidence-based decision making across the education system, we are taking steps to modernize our student performance data systems and processes. For example, we are now completing and distributing annual school data profiles with three-year trends and Yukon First Nation student data, which support school administration to work with their school staff and use data for their school to implement strategies and approaches to improve student outcomes.

To be more transparent and accountable with the data we collect, Yukon-wide student data reports are now available on [Yukon.ca](https://yukon.ca). Additionally, Yukon First Nation student data is being shared through a data-sharing working group with Yukon First Nations, which includes a joint review and quality assurance process. This has resulted in publishing annual “How are we doing” reports that highlight Yukon First Nation student data.

The development of an overarching Student Outcome Strategy will better support a system-wide understanding of what is going on for all learners. It has been identified as an initiative we should work on together with Yukon First Nations and partners in Education.

Initial discussions with the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education began in 2019, but were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Follow-up discussions with Yukon First Nations through the First Nation Education Commission occurred in February 2021. The commission requested the department to work on a government-to-government basis with Yukon First Nations to develop the strategy. In agreement with the commission, the department is contracting a local consulting firm to lead engagement with Yukon First Nations to develop the strategy starting in 2022.

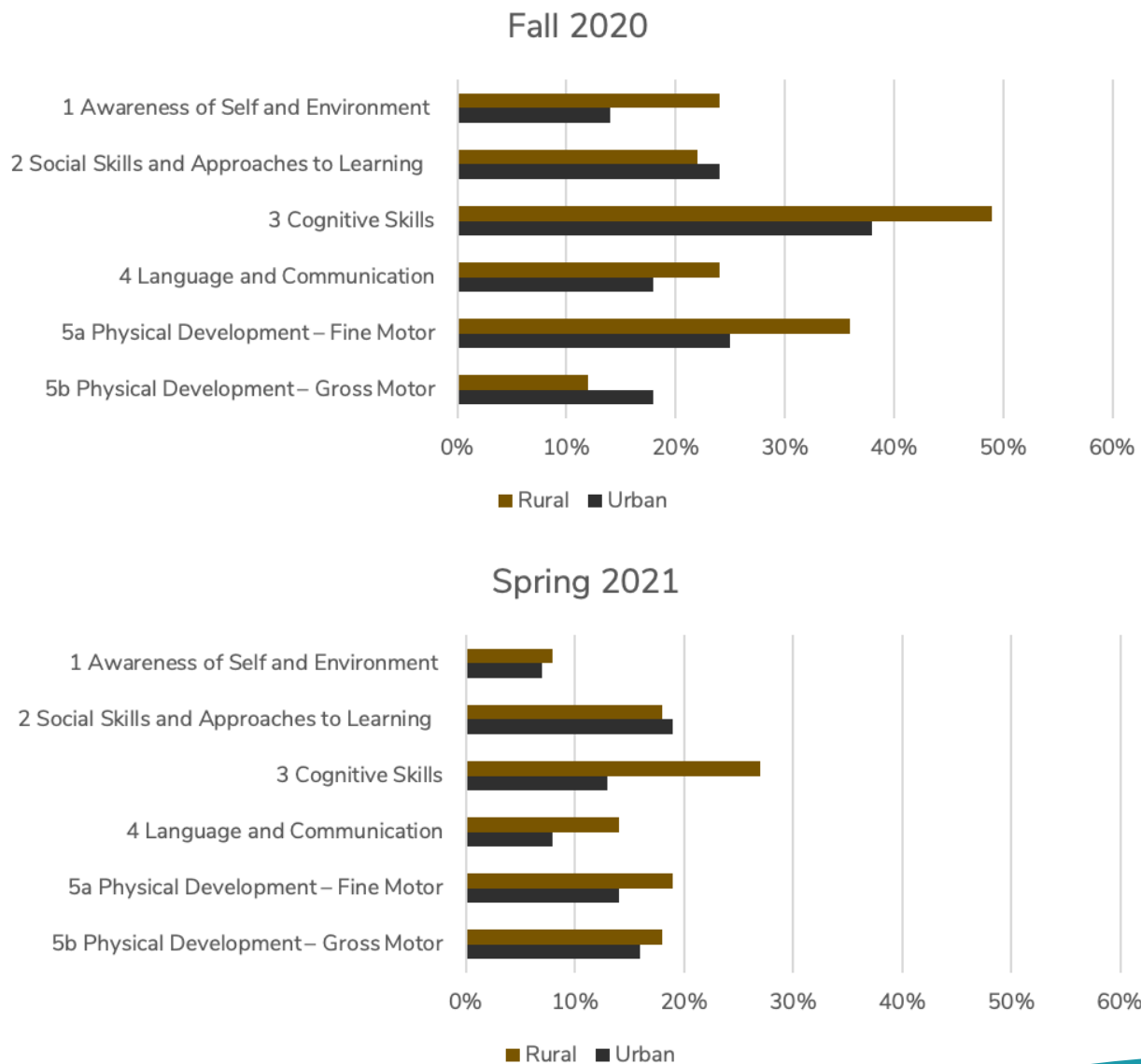


Early years evaluation results

The Early Years Evaluation (EYE) assesses student's skills and provides educators with important data they can use to better target instruction, and ensure appropriate supports are in place for students.

Early Years Evaluation results for urban and rural students in 2020-21

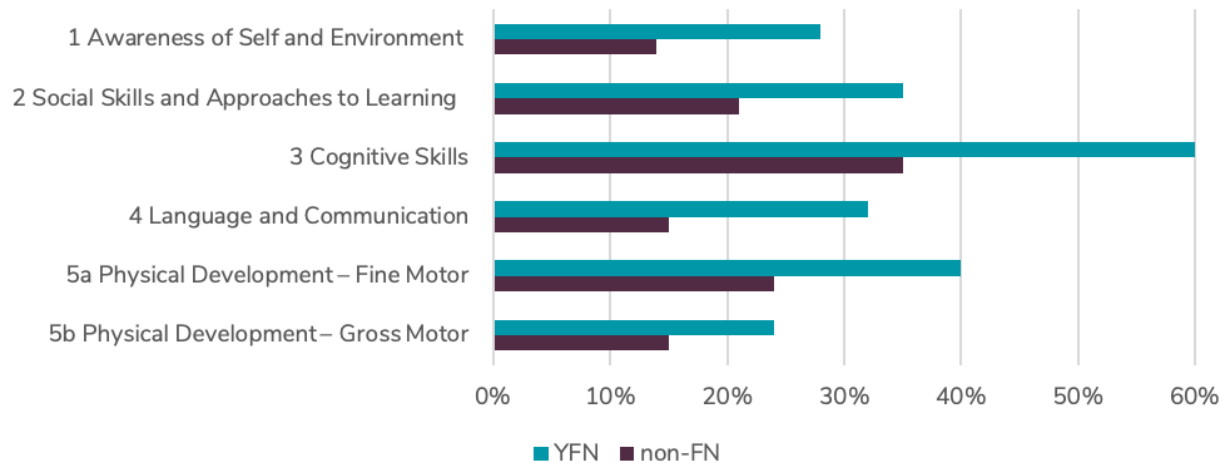
Percentage of students identified as experiencing some or significant difficulties



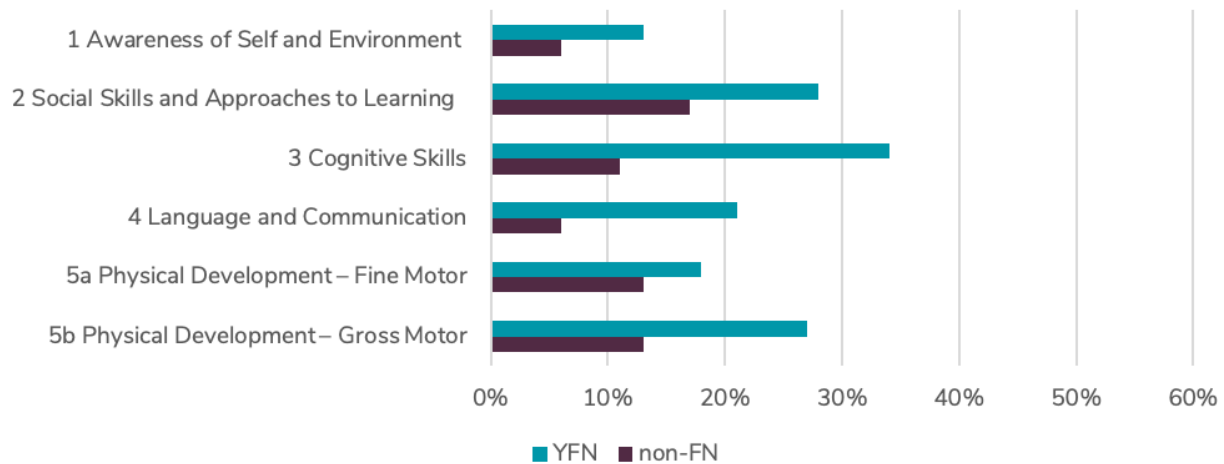
Early Years Evaluation results for Yukon First Nation and non-First Nation students in 2020-21

Percentage of students identified as experiencing some or significant difficulties

Fall 2020



Spring 2021

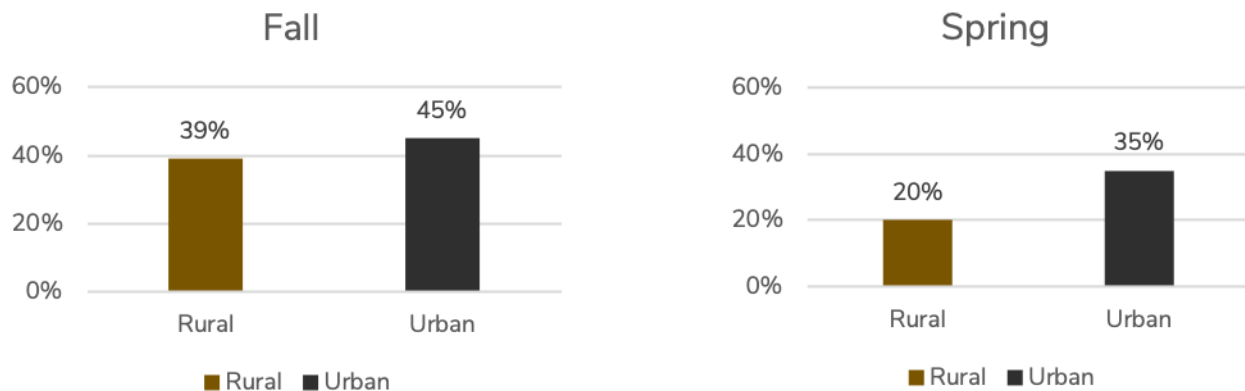


Boehm Test of Basic Concepts in Kindergarten

This test helps evaluate basic concepts that are essential for school success. It is used by teachers in kindergarten, first, and second grade classrooms.

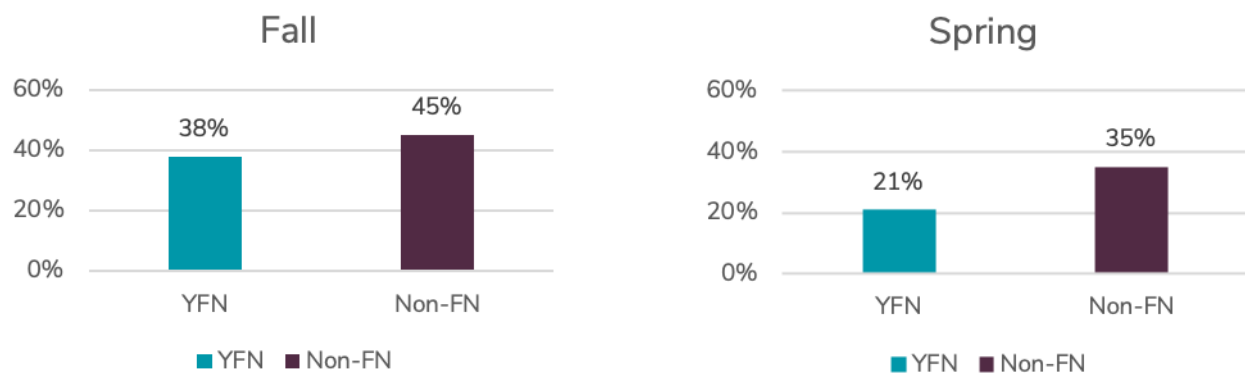
Boehm results for rural and urban students in 2020-21

Percentage of students identified as needing classroom intervention



Boehm results for Yukon First Nations and non-First Nations students in 2020-21

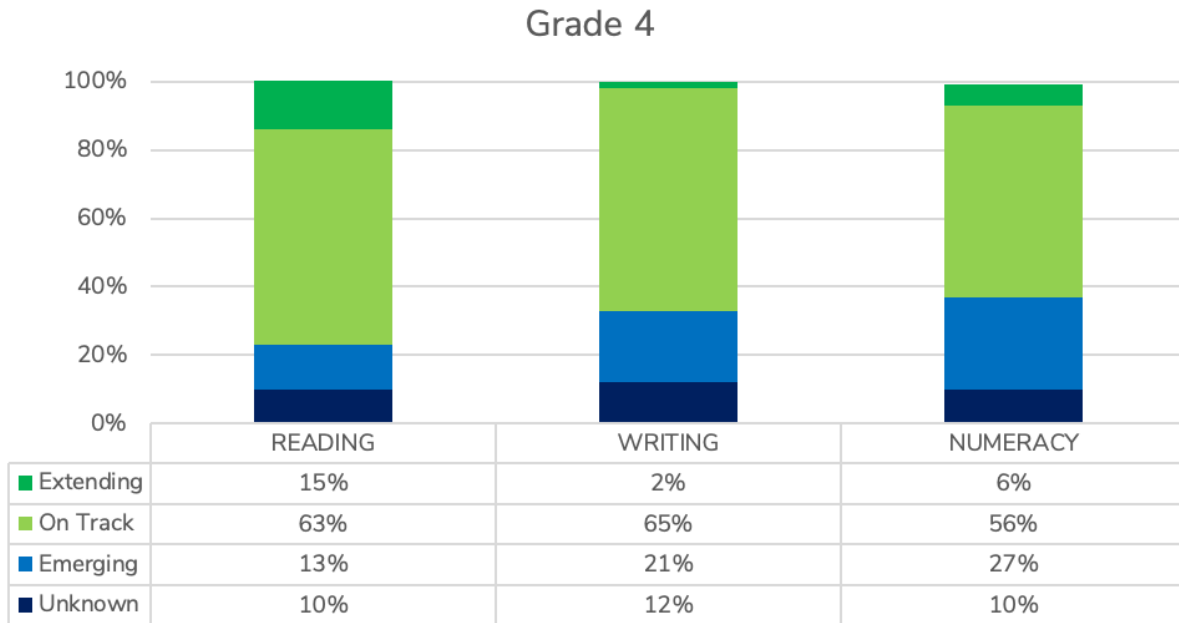
Percentage of students identified as needing classroom intervention



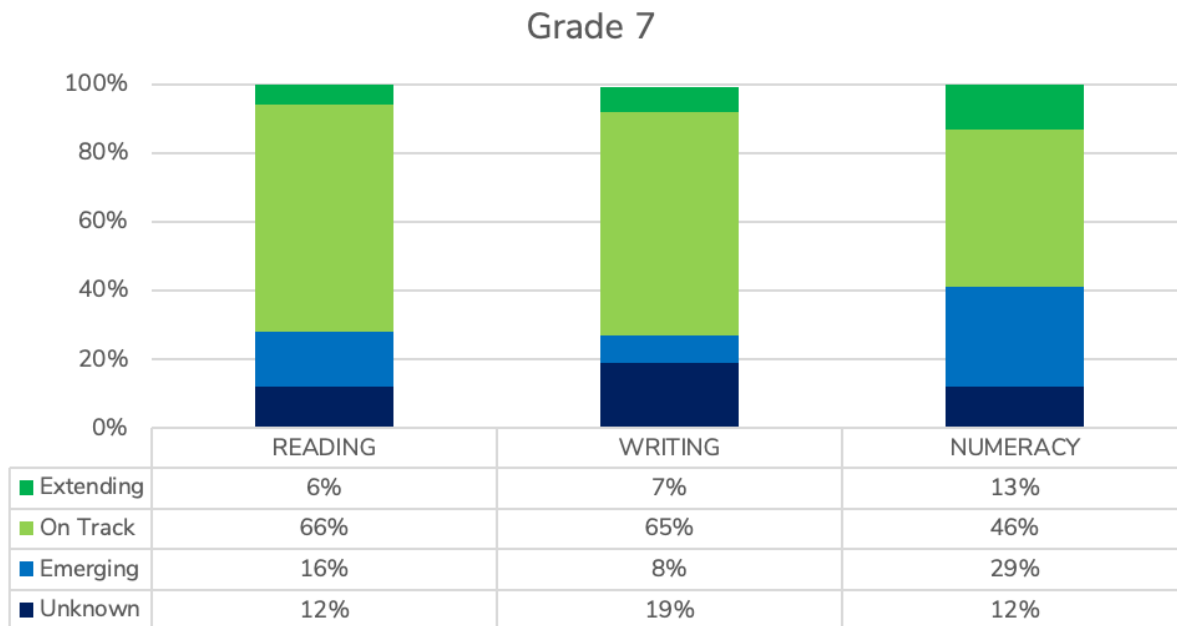
Yukon Foundation Skills Assessments

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

Yukon-wide 2020-21 Grade 4 Foundation Skills Assessments results



Yukon-wide 2020-21 Grade 7 Foundation Skills Assessments results



Graduation years

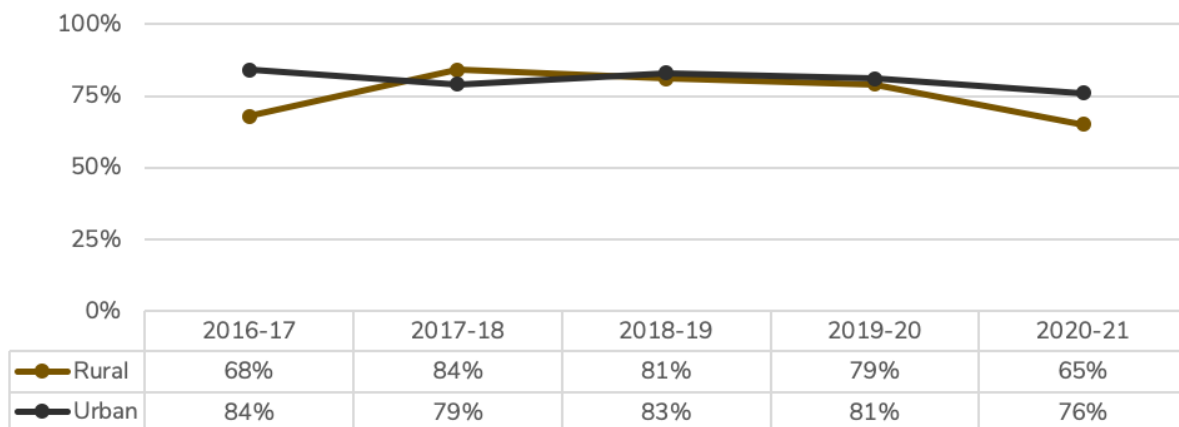
High school numeracy and literacy assessments

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 the 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, after implementation was delayed, was available for the first time for students to write during the 2020–21 school year.

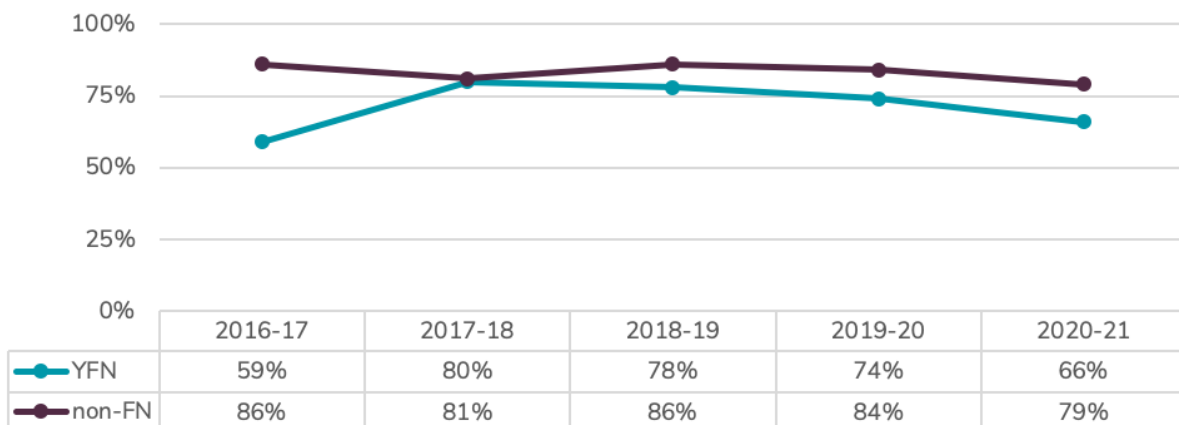
Graduation rates in Yukon

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 2016-17 to 2020-21



Graduation rates for non-First Nations and Yukon First Nations students from 2016-17 to 2020-21



Graduation ceremonies return for 2020-21 school year

Many school communities were able to host traditional cap-and-gown ceremonies and prom events with COVID-19 restrictions in place for the 2020-ways we celebrate important achievements and milestones for students in their learning and in their lives was an important step in recapturing a sense of normalcy, supporting their mental health and well-being and honoring the incredible resiliency, perseverance and optimism they have shown during their graduating years.



Supporting students with diverse learning needs

Students with diverse learning abilities and special education needs are more severely impacted when regular school routines are disrupted by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Yukon Learning Continuity Requirements for the 2020-21 school year outlined for school staff the importance of continuing to support students with diverse learning needs and ensuring equity in access to learning opportunities. This included making sure programming continues to align with the goals in student learning plans, that learning supports continue to be offered and maintaining regular communication with families.

While Grade 10-12 students in Whitehorse were on a half-day of in-person learning schedule during the 2020-21 school year, school administration and staff identified students with diverse learning abilities and special education needs who required full-time in-person support. To ensure staff could properly support these students, adjustments were made to allow them to attend school full-time, in-person. This enabled them to continue more consistent, regular school routines and ensure they received the in-person support they needed.

Understanding the adverse effects of the pandemic on students with diverse learning abilities and special education needs and maintaining our focus on reviewing and improving inclusive and special education has become a key driver of our pandemic recovery and overall system renewal.

221

Paraprofessionals
are working in Yukon
schools

Review of Inclusive and Special Education

One of the key recommendations of the 2019 audit report is recommendation 70, which recommended the Department of Education conduct a full review of its services and supports for inclusive education, including engaging with teachers, parents and specialists to determine how to maximize student success.

In response to the recommendations of the 2019 audit report, Dr. Nikki Yee led a full review of Yukon's inclusive and special education services and supports over 2020-21. Dr. Yee is an Assistant Professor at the University of the Fraser Valley. She is an expert in the field of inclusive and special education.

Central to Dr. Yee's review was hearing and understanding different perspectives and experiences from across the education system. Dr. Yee's review focused on hearing from students, parents, teachers, administrators, Yukon First Nations, community members and partners and stakeholders in education.

Dr. Yee's review was originally launched in January-February 2020, starting with internal meetings with Department of Education central administration and school administrators. Opportunities with Yukon First Nations, families, school-based staff and other education partners and stakeholders were planned for spring 2020 but delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to this delay, the review was extended to May 31, 2021. To ensure that work continued while resources were pivoted to support the return to in-person learning, we shared an Interim Update at that time, which provided a recap of work on the review completed so far. This included initial engagement work and reviews of Yukon's current service model for inclusive and special education programs and resources for the education system to consider for inclusive and special education.

Over the 2020-21 school year, Dr. Yee restarted her work and conducted focus groups, individual interviews and received written submissions into March 2021. Additionally, families, school and central administration staff, Yukon First Nations government staff and citizens, school councils, education partners and stakeholders were invited to share their experiences and perspectives through an online tool.

As part of the engagement work related to her review, Dr. Yee estimates she connected with approximately 300 to 500 people, reviewed notes from 31 focus groups and 26 individual interviews, and read more than 73 written submissions and 500 stories and comments shared through the online tool.



Report released in ceremony

Dr. Yee presented her powerful, wrenching and ultimately inspiring Final Report in June 2021. The report was released publicly during a ceremony at Haa Shagóon Hídi (Learning Centre) in Carcross with Ministers, Chiefs, Elders and members of the First Nations Education Commission and the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education gathered, and school communities tuning in remotely via livestream.

While Dr. Yee's report primarily focused on how to support students with diverse learning needs through special and inclusive education, colonial and contextual considerations were a critical part of the discussion.

The primary finding of Dr. Yee's report, consistent with the findings of the Auditor General, is that in many cases students' learning needs are not being met, with devastating consequences.

The ceremony held at Haa Shagóon Hídi was an important part of honouring the experiences that were shared during the review.

You can find Dr. Yee's Final Report on the Review of Inclusive and Special Education on [Yukon.ca](https://www.yukon.ca).



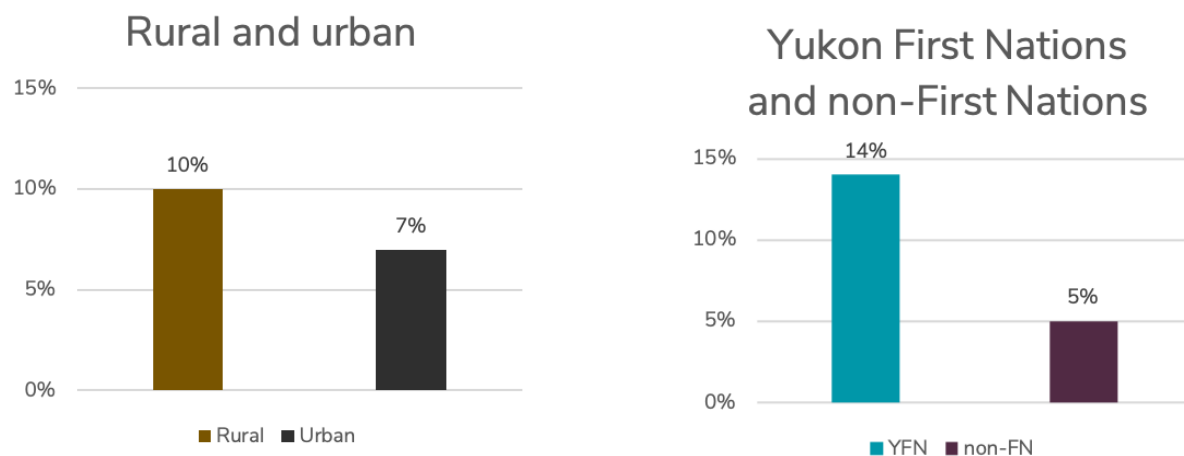
Individual Education Plans

One way we support and track students with exceptional needs in the Yukon is through Individual Education Plans. These plans are meant for students who have special education needs under the Education Act.

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.

During the 2020-21 school year, there were 437 students with an Individual Education Plan.

Students on Individual Education Plans in 2020-21



Child and Youth Advocate Office student attendance review released

The Child and Youth Advocate of Yukon, Ms. Annette King, also completed an important review of student attendance in Yukon during the 2020-21 school year.

The advocate's office released the comprehensive report on May 31, 2021. In the report, they acknowledged the impacts of COVID-19 on student attendance, notably that students were not able to attend school for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year after their March break. To assess student attendance fairly, the advocate collected data leading up to the suspension of in-person classes for the 2019-20 school year and not after.

In the report, the advocate identified many of the same obstacles and barriers to success as those identified by Dr. Yee. Specifically, the report identified the following six obstacles to student attendance: belonging and culture, safety at school, mental health and trauma, personal factors, lack of behavioural supports and lack of educational supports.

The Department of Education also accepted, in principle, all findings of the [Student Attendance Review](#).

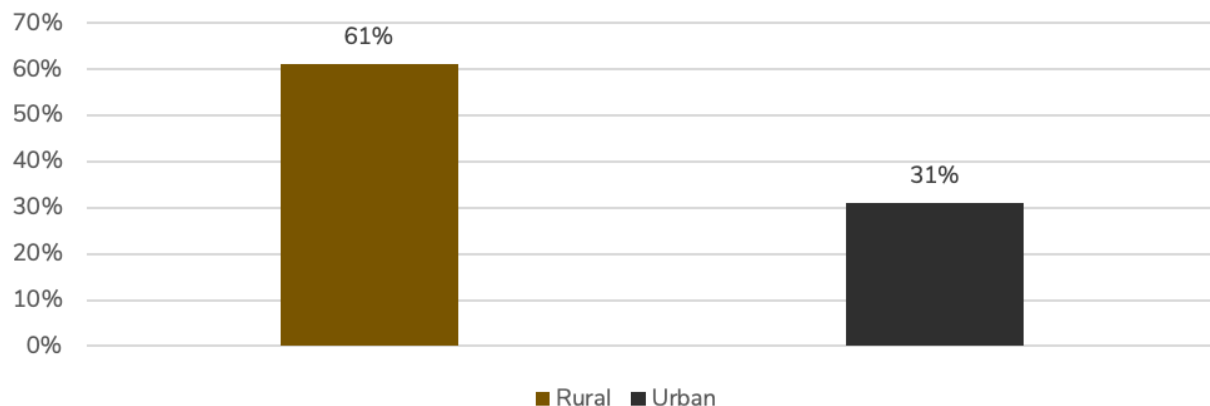
Every Student, Every Day attendance initiative

The Government of Yukon partners with the Victoria Gold Yukon Encouragement Society each school year to promote and administer the [Every Student, Every Day](#) attendance initiative.

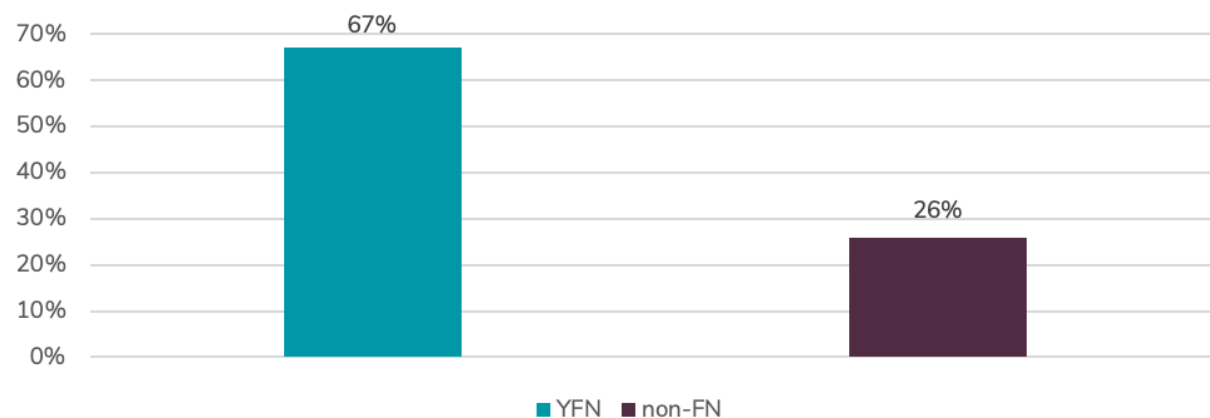
The initiative helped fund a wide range of creative and innovative student engagement attendance projects led by schools and local First Nations that helped to increase student attendance, especially as students got used to attending school in-person again.

The initiative raised \$150,000 for 24 student attendance projects over the 2020-21 school year. The funding supported First Nations initiatives such as the Ta'an Kwach'an Council's Steps to Success Attendance Incentive Program, which saw an outreach support worker work together with school administration staff on behalf of Ta'an Kwach'an Council citizens to support their engagement at school. It also supported an initiative at Gadzoos'daa Student Residence where modern musical elements and culture were integrated into programming to support increased engagement and attendance. At Robert Service School in Dawson City, the funding supported increased opportunities for students to gain interest and experience in trades work through their shop program and mentorship with trades professionals.

Rural and urban students who missed 20 or more days in 2020-21



Yukon First Nations and non-First Nations students who missed 20 or more days in 2020-21



Responding to the findings of the reviews

The Review of Inclusive and Special Education and Student Attendance Review helped us better understand the issues surrounding inclusive and special education in the Yukon and challenges with school attendance. Both issues have been magnified under the pressure of the pandemic. This shows us there is no more important work right now than to make sure our education system is inclusive and supportive of all students to learn and thrive. This work supports our pandemic recovery, and it also helps the renewal of the public education system in the Yukon.

Both reviews reflected a lot of what we've heard before from Yukon First Nations governments and citizens, educators, students, and families. The Department of Education accepted all findings of both reviews. Given the similarity in the findings between the Review of Inclusive and Special Education and the Student Attendance Review, the department agreed to address the findings together.

During summer 2021 leading into the 2021-22 school year, we established a committee made of members from the First Nation Education Commission and the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education to develop a work plan that is guiding the work to respond to the findings of the reviews. The work plan was shared during an Education Summit on Inclusive and Special Education on November 12, 2021 with educators from all Yukon schools, Yukon First Nation representatives and representatives from school councils, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other partners and stakeholders in education.

We established eight working groups called Communities of Inquiry during the summit, which are carrying the work of the work plan forward during 2021-22 and into the 2022-23 school year. These working groups include representatives from Yukon First Nations, school councils, NGOs in our communities, frontline and central administration education staff and other partners and stakeholders in education to reimagine Yukon's education system to better support Yukon First Nations students, students with diverse and special needs and all students in Yukon.

Supporting mental wellness in schools

Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health was clear that the suspension of in-person classes at the end of the 2019-20 school year negatively affected children and youth's mental health and well-being. Public health officials have also noted the increase of drug and alcohol use in Yukon communities due to the impacts of the pandemic.

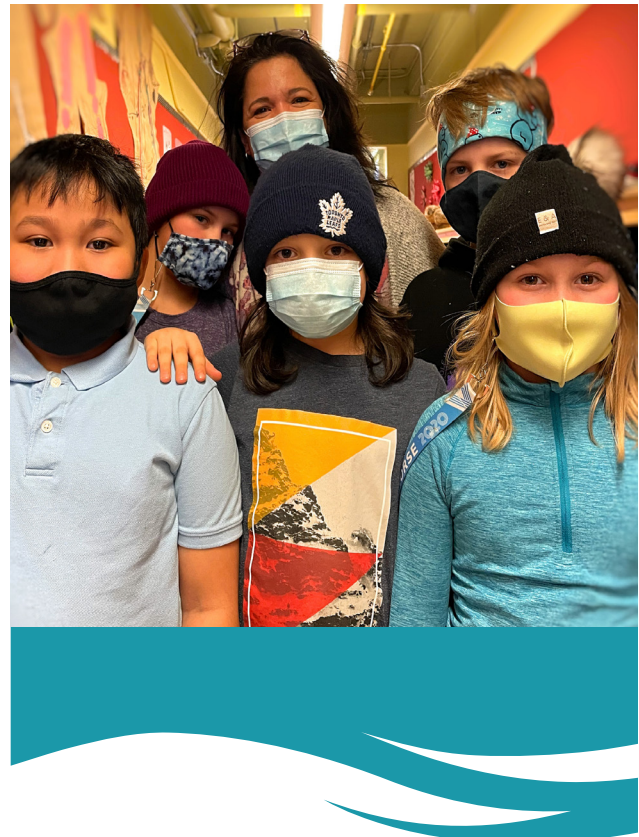
The Department of Education checked in with students, staff and parents on their learning and wellbeing through the Learning during COVID-19 surveys during the 2020-21 school year and into summer 2021. In the third Learning during COVID-19 survey, we asked students, staff, and parents about the impact on their mental health and wellness. We found that:

- 49% of students,
- 48% of school staff, and
- 46% of parents/guardians, said it had impacted their or their child's mental health 'very negatively' or 'negatively.'

Making sure students were able to get back to in-person learning during the 2020-21 school year was a major step toward improving their mental health and well-being. Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health and health officials across Canada have commented on the positive impacts of returning students to in-person learning so they can connect with their friends, teachers and support staff who can guide them in their learning.

Once back in school, school staff are better able to support students experiencing mental health and well-being challenges. School counsellors are trained and certified teaching professionals who provide personal, social, and emotional support to students. They also provide advice, guidance, and resources to help students plan for life after high school, including post-secondary and career planning. If students require support beyond the school counsellor, the school counsellor can refer them to the right supports, including through healthcare professionals and other resources.

Yukon's school curriculum supports students to become healthy, confident adults by teaching core competencies, such as positive personal and cultural identity that contributes to a positive sense of oneself. It also teaches about social awareness and responsibility, which supports students to appreciate the connections they have with others and the responsibility they have to respect and support one another. Additionally, students learn about safe decision making and healthy behaviours at an age-appropriate level across kindergarten to Grade 12. This helps them to navigate the challenges of learning and life, for example, they learn about risky behaviours such as using harmful substances such as tobacco, vaping, alcohol and cannabis. Developing positive habits and resiliency helps manage challenges and stress and support students in their overall well-being, especially as we navigate the pandemic in our education system.



As part of our efforts to support our Safe and Caring Schools Policy and create positive, respectful school environments that are supportive of students, we provide professional development opportunities to school staff to better support student mental health and well-being. For example, we offer Mental Health and High School Curriculum Guide training twice per year through the Student Support Services Unit. Training is also offered to support school staff in managing Trauma Sensitive Classrooms, creating positive school climates, suicide prevention and restorative practices in schools.

Share2Care initiative – Individual Learning Centre

Yukon's Individual Learning Centre was one of seven schools out of 199 proposals across Canada selected for their work on mental health during the 2020-21 school year. Through the Share2Care program, the school received a \$2000 grant to continue to support their Mental Wellness Retreat Days.

The Individual Learning Centre's Mental Wellness Retreat Days offer students who attend the school an opportunity to attend three, full-day wellness retreats.

The retreats are voluntary and provide opportunities for students to practice research-based skills and strategies to better handle anxiety and depression and improve overall wellbeing.

Reporting incidents of threat and violence in 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 or verbal assaults 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) 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.

During the 2020-21 school year, the use of the Nonviolent Physical Intervention by school staff was required in 37 (11.5%) of the WRAs submitted.

The number of reported, incidents, WRAs and VTAs are lower in the 2019-20 school year because in-person classes were suspended at the end of spring break. No reports were provided following the suspension of in-person classes.

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 2021-21 school year, 10 NCI trainings were held in Whitehorse. Additionally, all staff of J.V. Clark School and the Gadzoosdaa Student Residence were trained.

VTRA training is offered to school staff every other year and was provided in the 2020-21 school year. It will be offered again during the 2022-23 school year. We continue to support schools to implement PBIS through our PBIS coach, Student Support Services consultants, and educational psychologist.

Year	Number of reported incidents	Number of WRAs	Number of VTAs
2020-21	356	323	33
2019-20	62	50	12
2018-19	161	133	28

Educational Assistant Allocation

Educational Assistants are one of several resources that a school has to support students with diverse learning needs. Schools also support students with diverse learning needs by:

- developing inclusive classroom practices implemented by the classroom teachers to accommodate students of various learning levels,
- making school counsellors and learning assistance teachers available,
- working with central administration support staff such as Student Support Services and Curriculum and Assessment,
- collaborating with Yukon First Nation education staff in the school, such as First Nations' Education Support Workers and Community Education Liaison Consultants, and
- integrating community-based supports, such as those provided by Health and Social Services.

The Department of Education works together with school administrators to allocate educational assistants using a needs-based model. A needs-based model is meant to ensure allocations are fair and equitable across Yukon schools. Educational assistants are allocated to each school in the spring and the principal assigns them within the school to best meet student needs.

2020-21 Educational Assistant FTE allocation and number of persons employed

School	2020-21 EA Allocation as of June 2021	2019-20 EA Allocation as of June 2020	2018-19 EA Allocation as of June 2019
Chief Zzeh Gittlit (Old Crow)	3.5	5	4.5
Christ the King	13	14	14.75
Del Van Gorder (Faro)	3.5	4.5	4
Elijah Smith	13	16.25	14.5
Eliza Van Bibber (Pelly)	4.5	5.5	5.5
Emilie-Tremblay	7	8	8
Paul-Emile Mercier	1.25	2.0	N/A
FH Collins	15.5	15.5	15.4
Ghuch Tla (Carcross)	3	3.75	3.75
Golden Horn	5.60	5.75	5
Grey Mountain	5.5	5.5	5
Hidden Valley	10.75	9.5	9.84
Holy Family	7.5	7.5	7
Individual Learning Centre (ILC)	1.5	1.5	1.5
Jack Hulland	18.75	16.25	17.5
Johnson Elementary (Watson Lake)	6.75	7.5	7.75
JV Clark (Mayo)	3.5	3.75	4
Khàtinas.àxh Community School (Teslin)	2.75	3.75	4
Kluane Lake (Destruction Bay/Burwash)	1	1	1
Nelna Bessie John (Beaver Creek)	0.5	0.37	0.5
Porter Creek	17.5	13.5	14.375
Robert Service (Dawson)	10.50	9.5	10.5
Ross River	5.5	4.75	5.75
Selkirk	12.5	15	14.5
St. Elias Community (Haines Junction)	11.5	11	11.5
Takhini	11.5	10.25	11.5
Tantalus (Carmacks)	9.0	8.5	8.5
Teen Parent Centre (TPC)	1	1	1
Vanier	14.75	12.75	14.5
Watson Lake Secondary	3.0	3.5	4
Whitehorse Elementary	12.0	11.03	9.8
Student Support Services	7.267	7.267	6.377
Total	244.367	242.917	245.792

Collaboration with Yukon First Nations

Collective joint priorities

We continue to work collectively with Yukon First Nations, to implement actions that support outlined priorities identified by the Joint Education Action Plan (JEAP). The intention of the JEAP is to improve outcomes for First Nation students in the Yukon over a 10-year period.

JEAP's four pillars:

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



1,704

First Nation
Students in
Schools across
the Yukon

The agreed upon joint priorities are reflective of the Yukon First Nations and the Government of Yukon. Discussions continue to be 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 continue to work closely with the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate to ensure we are moving forward in the right direction of decolonizing our educational system.

Community joint priorities

Yukon First Nations are essential partners in supporting First Nations students and in teaching all Yukon students about Yukon First Nation ways of knowing, doing and being. We continue to look for opportunities on how we can continue improving educational outcomes and learning for First Nation students.



In 2020-21 and 2021-22, the Government of Yukon continued to work with individual Yukon First Nation governments to identify joint education priorities and develop Education agreements and funding for Yukon First Nations community education programs and related initiatives. We have Transfer Payment Agreements with all 14 Yukon First Nations to support education programs and related initiatives.

We have Education Agreements with:

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



Yukon First Nation School Board

In 2020-21, we made exciting progress with Yukon First Nations. Together with the Chiefs Committee on Education, we signed the Framework Agreement for the Yukon First Nation School Board in June 2021. This agreement paves the way for a new school board that incorporates key components of First Nations language, history, and culture into school communities throughout the territory.

School communities who were interested in transferring to the Yukon First Nation School Board were required to either submit a petition (community-led) or pass a resolution (school council-led). These petitions or resolutions triggered referendums, where all eligible Yukoners in the attendance area were able to vote on the decision.

Eight Yukon school communities had successful referendums and will transfer to the authority of the First Nations School Board in the 2022-23 school year. The schools are:

- Chief Zzeh Gittlit School
- Grey Mountain Primary School
- Johnson Elementary School
- Watson Lake Secondary School
- Ross River School
- St. Elias Community School
- Takhini Elementary School
- Nelna Bessie John School

The First Nations School Board is expected come into effect as of the new school year in 2022-23. As the process continues to unfold, we are excited to stand as allies alongside our partners to advance reconciliation as we move forward.

Yukon First Nations languages 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 plays an important role in the Yukon. It offers critical support and development for community-based language programs, training and certification for teachers, develops curriculum and resources, and ultimately, helps preserve Yukon First Nations languages.

In 2021, YLNC had a total of 8 successful graduates complete programming. It has an incredible impact on First Nations learners of all ages.



24

Yukon First Nation
Language Teachers
working in our
schools

First Nations language programs in Yukon Schools

These programs continue to play an essential part in reintegrating First Nation languages into school environments. First Nation language programs contribute to an enormous wealth of knowledge and are a key part of revitalizing lost language, culture and history. Students across the Yukon can learn First Nations language in their schools. We hope to continue expanding these learning opportunities to help revitalize First Nations languages.

In 2020-21, we offered Yukon First Nation language programs at the following schools.

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

In the 2020-21 school year, we estimate that 2,286 or 40% of students took a Yukon First Nation language program or class. These programs are well established and have high attendance in elementary schools across the territory.

School 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 audit report findings highlighted further work in this area, including reporting on school growth plans to the Minister of Education.

Despite the impacts of the pandemic, all schools engaged in the School Growth Planning process during the 2020-21 school year. Addressing the findings of the 2019 audit report, schools are now required to provide to their superintendent a “snapshot” of where they are at in their School Growth Planning process on May 15 on each school year. Their snapshot addresses the following topics:

- Focus of the School Growth Plan for the current school
- School Growth Plan activities for the current school
- What is the effect and how do we know?
- What’s next?

All schools reported the progress they made on their school growth plans to central administration by May 15, 2021. In turn, a final summary report was developed. The report was provided to the Public Accounts Committee during the January 2022 hearing.

While all schools were able to complete their school growth plans in the 2020-21 school year, progress on updating the School Growth Planning Policy was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

One area we know we need to address is incorporating more data and evidence-based approaches to the School Growth Planning process. As the 2019 audit report has pointed out, the department should develop a Student Outcome Strategy to address gaps in student outcomes and performance. As we work toward developing this strategy, incorporating data into school growth planning will be key area to address. Incorporating an evidence-based, data-driven approach more consistently into the school growth planning process will support our schools and central administration to more effectively allocate staffing and resources and identify needed areas for professional development across the education system.

Work to improve the School Growth Planning process and updating the School Growth Planning policy is a scheduled item to address together with Yukon First Nations through the First Nation Education Commission and with partners in education through the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education over the 2021-22 school year.

Examples of effective school growth planning

St. Elias Community School – Haines Junction

At St. Elias School in Haines Junction, they asked “Will a commonly shared instructional focus [on]... numeracy skills and concepts help our students develop their ability to understand and use mathematical concepts, processes and skills to solve problems in a variety of contexts?”

Teachers at the school participated in a wide variety of professional development based on current research to support instructional approaches that enhance numeracy skills and concepts.

As a result of this focused effort on numeracy:

- High Schools students writing Numeracy 10 Assessments are showing some improvements over the past three years. Even through the pandemic, they’ve maintained or improved results.
- Grade 4 and 7 Foundation Skills Assessment (YFSAs) results also showed improvements.

Whitehorse Elementary School

At Whitehorse Elementary School, they focused on their French language learning, which was impacted by the suspension of classes during the 2019-20 school year.

They started the 2020-2021 school year instructing only in French to increase the amount of French spoken by students outside of classroom activities. As a result:

- Oral Proficiency Indicator (OPI) results from Grade 3 were extremely positive. Students were demonstrating strong oral language skills.
- The OPI results from Grade 6 were similar to other years, even with learners of different strengths.
- To share their progress with parents, teachers are using video to capture student’s progress.

Watson Lake Secondary School

At Watson Lake Secondary School, they asked, “If we use specific learning standards and consistently have targeted goals can we improve student learning?”

As a staff, they identified targeted common learning standards and engaged in professional development focused on helping communicate learning to students and families using “standards-based” grading and reporting. As a result:

- 83% of students (11 out of 13) who wrote literacy assessments in January were “Meeting Expectations; and
- More students moved out of Grade 10 into Grade 11 than in previous years.

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. Along with school councils, we also collaborate with the Association of Yukon School Councils Boards and Committees and the Catholic Education Association of Yukon to support the work of school councils and seek advice and input on issues affecting the entire education system.

Leading into the 2020-21 school year, school councils played an important role in reviewing their school's operational plan and raising important questions about health and safety planning at their school. They also played a valuable role in providing input on the Learning during COVID-19 surveys to check in with students, families and school staff over the 2020-21 school year.

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. In addition, there are 41 Guaranteed Representative seats for First Nations school council members in 18 schools across the territory. These positions are recommended for appointment directly by the First Nation government whose Traditional Territory the school is on. The Guaranteed Representatives have the same roles and responsibilities as other school council members.

Current school council members were elected during school council elections on October 5, 2020. They will sit until the day before their school starts in the 2022-23 school year. To acknowledge and recognize the time and effort they put into supporting their local school, all school council members receive honoraria. Following the October 5, 2020 election, an increase in honoraria rates came into effect that is now more aligned with the roles and responsibilities of school council members.



Every two years,
about 129 Yukoners
are elected as school
council members

Advisory Committee for Yukon Education

The Advisory Committee for Yukon Education is a key way the Department of Education strives to enhance collaboration and community involvement in school governance in education. The advisory 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.

The Advisory Committee for Yukon Education meets quarterly. During the 2020-21 school year, the committee focused discussion on responding effectively to the pandemic and continuing to address findings of the 2019 audit report.

A key priority for the committee is advancing the work to respond to the Review of Inclusive and Special Education and the Child and Youth Advocate Office's Student Attendance Review. In summer 2020 and into fall 2021, members of the committee volunteered to work collaboratively with volunteer members of the First Nation Education Commission and the Department of Education to advise on the Review of Inclusive and Special Education and develop the work plan to guide the department's work to address the findings of these reviews. As work progresses, the members of the advisory committee and the First Nation Education Commission will play an important role in providing feedback on key actions we take to improve our education system to better support Yukon First Nations students, students with diverse and special learning needs and all students.

We thank all 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.

French programs

French language education

With a growing population of people who speak French as a first or second language in the territory, the Government of Yukon encourages its students to become fluent in both of Canada's official languages. Yukon follows Quebec and New Brunswick with the third-highest percentage of French speakers in Canada.

We collaborate with the French-speaking community and partners in French instruction when developing French language programs and initiatives, including the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon. 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 training for French teachers.

In 2021, the Government of Yukon continued its collaboration with national organizations, such as the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) that tackles issues in French Second Language and French First Language education that are shared across Canada, as well as various other consortiums and the tripartite committee that works on ensuring the development of French first language education in Canada.

Bilateral Agreement

In 2018, territorial and provincial jurisdictions began negotiations with the federal government on the *Protocol for Agreements for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction*. This is a bilateral, multi-year agreement between the Government of Canada and the provinces and territories. The protocol sets the key parameters for collaboration between the two orders of government on official languages in education. Through this agreement, the federal government contributes to the costs incurred by the provinces and territories in the delivery of minority-language education and second-language instruction.

After three years of negotiations, the agreement that covers the 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years was signed on March 30, 2021. The agreement resulted in a combined contribution from the federal and the territorial governments of \$15 million over the three years covered by the agreement, for both French First Language and French Second Language programs.

With our 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 the 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 school (K to Grade 6), Académie Parhélie (Grades 7 to 12), and École Nomade (home-schooling for Grades 1 to 12). Académie Parhélie changed its name to Centre scolaire secondaire et communautaire Paul-Émile Mercier (CSSC Mercier) in November 2020 when the new French First language secondary school opened its doors.

In 2021, the CSFY is Yukon's only school board and is responsible for the administration, management and control of these schools and programs.

The Government continues to work with the CSFY to support the learning needs of French First Language students and provide them with an annual operations budget to manage its programming costs.

November 16, 2020, marked a significant milestone for the CSFY as the new French First Language secondary school CSSC Mercier opened its doors to students. The Government of Yukon worked with the CSFY on the planning of the new school, which also includes community spaces. This new school is part of the campus model for Riverdale, where groups, communities and cultures can gather, learn, and play in a variety of facilities. Construction started in the spring of 2019 and ended in the Fall of 2020.

For more information about French First Language school programs, please see the [Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon's annual report](#).

329

Students are enrolled in French First Language education

French Second Language

The Yukon 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.

859

Students are enrolled in French immersion programs

French immersion

French Immersion is a popular French Second Language program. According to Statistics Canada¹, French immersion enrolment in the 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 School (Kindergarten to Grade 7) and at Selkirk Elementary School (Kindergarten to Grade 5).

They also have the option of entering Late French Immersion in Grade 6. This program is offered at École Whitehorse Elementary.

F.H. Collins Secondary School offers French Immersion for students from Grades 8 to 12.

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

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.

2,611
Students are enrolled
in French Second
Language courses

Intensive French is currently offered in the following schools:

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

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, second language education 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.

We also offer the program Option Plus French, which is offered at Vanier Catholic Secondary School. This is a Social Studies 10 class in French.

Sharing best practices in language learning

Through a range of projects, professional learning opportunities and in-class support, French Second Language teachers from different schools and programs collaborated on best practices for second language teaching and assessment in 2020-21.

We typically offer the Neurolinguistic Approach (ANL) training in September, to help refine teachers' pedagogical approach to second language acquisition through the ANL strategies and philosophies on language use in the classroom. This also allows for the French Second Language educational consultants to develop a stronger relationship with the teachers and to better support them in the classroom.

CSSC Mercier opening ceremony

The Government of Yukon and the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon (CSFY) gathered on Friday, August 27, 2021, to celebrate the new French First Language Secondary School Community Centre, Centre scolaire secondaire communautaire Paul-Émile-Mercier (CSSC Mercier).

School staff and students joined dignitaries at the school to honour the collaboration that took place over five years, making it possible for French First Language secondary students in Whitehorse to continue learning their language in an innovative and flexible learning space that also serves as a community centre.

Vincent Bélanger, the Grade 11 student who won the school naming contest in 2017 got to meet Paul-Émile Mercier's granddaughter Suzel Hurtubise and his great-grandson, Thomas Mulcair. He says that he never thought that entering the contest would have such an impact for years to come.

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

In spring 2019, construction started on this school and the new school opened its doors to students on November 13 2020.



French cultural enrichment

Language and culture are intertwined. Students appreciate and retain French language when they can use it in real life cultural contexts. By enriching classrooms, schools and events with French culture, students gain a deeper understanding of the language. Eleven French language assistants (“French monitors”) from the Odyssey program worked in Yukon schools in 2020-21 to lead games, plays, songs and other French activities for students. Students also share their own cultures with the French monitors and their classmates.

During the 2020-21 school year, despite restrictions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, authentic language and cultural learning situations were created by bringing together French Second Language learners from different grades, programs, schools and communities in virtual events. In the fall, seven Whitehorse elementary schools prepared choreographies for the virtual *Danse-la ta chanson*, and high school students from five schools performed in French for *Secondaire en spectacle*. The performances were filmed in advance and presented online. Five schools received an online visit from author Mireille Messier, and the online event *La folie furieuse*, took place online through Zoom and Kahoot, with participation from Grades 6 and 7 students from five different schools. We also offered schools an online show with “Atlas Geocircus”. Schools had access to the show for one month with a password on Vimeo.

DELFLScolaire 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’s recognized in 165 countries and is valid for life.

Yukon students who have completed their final French course have an opportunity to earn an internationally recognized language certificate. This exam tests your ability to use French in real-life situations.

In April 2021, 35 Grade 11 and 12 students took the DELF exam. Five students completed the exam at A2 level, three students completed the B1 level, and 27 students completed the B2 level. They all passed and received their DELF Diploma.

French Interactive learning continues in communities

While school operations and school programming had to be adjusted, we were thankful that the French monitors were able to continue to support French language and cultural programming in our schools in new and creative ways.

During the 2020-21 school year, Annie Maheux was the French monitor in charge of conducting French language and culture activities for students in our rural schools. Without the option of travelling, her main tools were Zoom and her creativity. Here are some stories of how Annie was able to maintain meaningful learning opportunities for teaching language and culture at a distance.

Annie discussed the Quebec dish poutine with students at Ghùch Tlà Community School in Carcross. With the collaboration of their teacher, the students made their own poutine and proudly presented their feast to Annie at a distance. They were thrilled to share their tasting session with her via Zoom.

Through an interactive activity with Annie, Kluane Lake school students have connected with children from an after-school centre in Nantes, France, by preparing postcards for them. Annie was able to guide the students at a distance in drafting their postcards.

Every week, the students in our communities were eager to connect with Annie and her creative ideas. We thank all our rural teachers for adapting and enabling their students to access these important language and cultural lessons through technology.



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.

The Department of Education supports Yukon’s labour market by delivering funding through the Working UP, Staffing UP and Building UP programs. These programs are largely funded by two Labour Market Transfer Agreements with the Government of Canada, signed in March 2018. Through these agreements, \$7.4 million annually is provided to strengthen Yukon’s labour market. In addition, \$3 million in additional federal funding was provided in the 2020-21 budget year to support Yukon businesses and workers who have been most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and contributed to Yukon’s overall economic recovery.

In May 2020, we established a Yukon Adult Learning Continuity working group. The working group was tasked with identifying and recommending innovative solutions to ensure continuity of adult educational programs and services. Over the 2020-21 fiscal year, the working group supported identifying where to target funding to support Yukon’s economic recovery from the impacts of COVID-19.

Tech grant supports adult students to transition to online learning

Through the Working UP program, we provided a one-time payment of \$500 to 666 adult students to support them in transitioning to online learning. Due to the impacts of COVID-19, many postsecondary and training programs moved to online and remote learning, creating a very different experience for adult learners. This tech grant supported Yukon’s adult learners to purchase a new device to be able to learn online and remotely more effectively.

Working UP

The Working UP program assists individuals who need 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 \$1.65 million in supports for individuals in the 2020–21 fiscal year, through 847 agreements and grants.

Staffing UP

The Staffing UP program 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 \$ 1.28 million in funding to employers in the 2020–21 fiscal year, representing 74 agreements with employers, targeting those most affected by the pandemic. For example, funding targeted employers working in food production and distribution, and tourism. This saved or created over 330 jobs.

Building UP

The Building UP program 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 \$5.7 million in funding to 33 organizations, including First Nations governments. This funding supported 52 projects, serving more than 10,000 Yukoners.

Some examples of the projects this funding supported in the 2020-21 fiscal year include:

- Employment Central: to provide employment counselling and case management, job search/labour exchange for those seeking employment.
- Kwanlin Dun First Nation House of Learning: to provide case management, employment programming and cultural/wellness/on the land learning and opportunities for Kwanlin Dün Citizens to improve their learning and labour market outcomes.
- Association Franco-Yukonnaise: to provide services like Employment Central for the francophone community.
- Skookum Jim Friendship Centre Youth Program: to provide employment counselling and work experience for Youth.

Apprenticeship training programs

The Government of Yukon oversees the apprenticeship program through the *Apprenticeship Training Act* and the *Apprenticeship Training and Tradesmen's Qualifications Regulations*. There are 48 designated trades in the 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 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 2020 – 2021 there were:

- 537 registered apprentices in 48 designated trades,
- 122 Yukon apprentices who took in-school training at Yukon University, and various institutions in Alberta,
- 196 exams written for apprentices to move onto their next level,
- 44 Interprovincial exams written, and
- 49 journeyperson certificates issued.

In December 2021, the Yukon Apprenticeship Program had 427 registered apprentices, including 117 First Nations and 45 females. Most Yukon apprentices are employed by Yukon private sector businesses, with five individuals employed by Yukon government as of December 2021.

Through the COVID-19 pandemic, Training Programs Unit staff supported registered Yukon apprentices to complete their program requirements in partnership with Yukon University and Alberta Apprenticeship. During the 2020-21 academic year, apprenticeship training at Yukon University and Alberta institutions adapted to offer a new blended format of online and in-person learning, like other institutions across Canada. To support their transition to this learning format, Yukon apprentices were eligible for a one-time payment of \$500 to support the additional costs of online learning. For example, to put toward a new laptop to support their program.

To maintain program integrity and support students to complete their program requirements, we continued to require Yukon apprentices to write their level exams. To ensure the health and safety of students writing their exams, we provided safe, physically distanced spaces to complete exams. As a result of these steps taken, 100% of Yukon apprentices completed their level exams, with 88% passing their exams and completing their levels.

Apprenticeship graduates

Due to COVID-19 health and safety concerns, we were not able to host our annual awards banquet for apprenticeship graduates. However, despite the challenges created by the pandemic, we were still able to see 37 apprentices complete and graduate from the Yukon Apprenticeship program. We are excited to welcome these new journeypersons into the workforce in Yukon. They will provide valuable and experienced support to businesses in different sectors of Yukon's economy. 27 Yukon apprentices were acknowledged for their excellence in achievement, finishing with a mark of 85% or higher on their exams.



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 2020–21 academic year, more than \$7.5 million was awarded through student financial assistance programs.

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 postsecondary institutions. Students can receive the grant for a maximum of 170 weeks

In the 2020–21 academic year, the total Yukon Grant expenditure was \$3.77 million for 751 students. Eligible students received \$144 per week of study. Additionally, eligible students who studied outside Yukon received \$1500 for travel-related costs to help them travel between home and school. The average value to the student was \$5,637.

During the 2020-21 academic year, the Student Financial Assistance Unit started to offer a direct deposit system to students to receive their Yukon Grant funding. This was a significant administrative shift to better ensure access to funding for students. Previously, students received their funds at their postsecondary institution in-person. The new direct deposit system is better supporting students who have moved to remote and online learning and are not attending their postsecondary institution in person.



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 2020–21, the total expenditure on Training Allowances was \$412,382, allocated to 101 eligible students. Students received a baseline payment of

\$112 per week. The allowance increases with the number of dependents, up to a maximum of \$235 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 \$89 per week. The average recipient received \$4,083 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 2020–21 academic year, 186 students earned a Yukon Excellence Award through their secondary school courses. Last year, we distributed \$257,193; the average amount received per student was \$1,383.

Capital planning and facilities

Throughout 2020-21, the Department of Education started or continued several projects to provide more modern spaces for students and staff. As the population of the Yukon continues to increase year over year, it is imperative that our facilities adapt to the growing population. This includes building new schools, ongoing maintenance, and facility upgrades, among other short, medium and long-term projects that equip facilities with a sound learning environment.

Whistle Bend Elementary School

Work has started on the new Whistle Bend School. On October 15, 2021, a land blessing was done on the site, held by Minister Jeanie McLean and Minister Nils Clarke of Highways and Public Works. Also present was the contractor responsible for the build, Whitehorse-based Ketza Construction Corporation, and local First Nations members who blessed the land to put forth good intentions for the construction of the school as well as the future students, teachers, and staff.



Construction began shortly after the land blessing. As construction continues, we are working closely with our partners at Highways and Public Works to refine the design and groundworks of the build. The school will accommodate up to 425 students from kindergarten to Grade 7. Construction is expected to be completed during the 2023-24 school year.

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 with an accessible green space.

Kluane Lake School

In part of our ongoing commitment to the advancement of reconciliation, we are maintaining a strong working relationship with the Kluane First Nation on capital planning initiatives. Discussions and planning continues on relocating Kluane Lake School from Destruction Bay to Burwash Landing.

Design work is well underway, and community engagement on design options is ongoing. We expect the design will be finalized in the spring of 2022. Virtual community consultations took place in January 2021 to ensure that community partners had a chance to contribute to the process to review design concepts and site placement.

Ross River School

Engineering teams continue to monitor and assess the Ross River Elementary school quarterly to ensure the current building remains safe for students and staff.

The most recent assessment, completed in November 2021, confirmed that the school remains safe. Like previous reports, it notes that minor shifts in the structure have caused some doors to jam. Adjustments have been made to fix these doors.

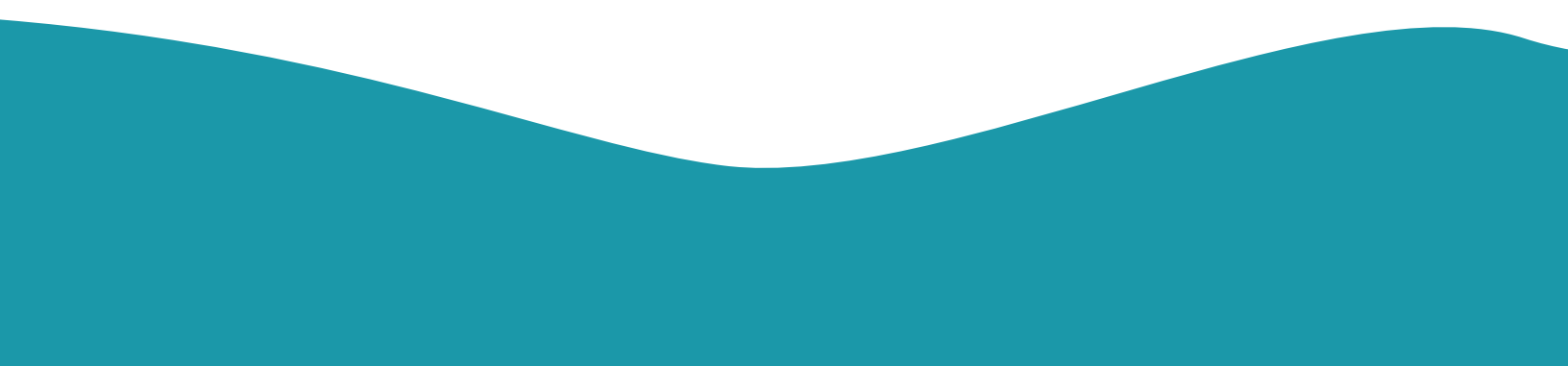
We are committed to ensuring that Ross River Elementary continues to be a safe learning environment that meets the needs of the community.

Robert Service School

Old portables at Robert Service School were decommissioned in 2019 and removed entirely in the summer of 2021. Robert Service has adapted to managing spacing needs in the main school building while central administration staff worked with the Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation and the school council during the 2019-20 school year to determine a path forward in replacing the space.

Work is now underway on a four-classroom addition. The visioning and design process for this space was informed by the school community and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. The new addition will be approximately 438 m², providing four new classrooms, two staff offices and two additional washroom facilities.

A tender was issued in February 2021 and awarded to Wildstone Construction. On October 6, 2021, site excavation for the addition began, paving the way to provide an additional learning space which will be an essential part of providing students and staff with the best possible environments to learn and grow.



French First Language school

The Government of Yukon 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, opening its doors to students on November 13, 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. There were 122 students enrolled at the new school in September 2021.

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.

Christ the King Elementary School parking lot

During the summer break, a tender was issued to upgrade the parking lot and drop-off area at Christ the King Elementary School to improve traffic flow. The project began on July 1, 2021 and continued through the summer months.

The project included several upgrades to improve the overall traffic flow. The project was successfully completed and has significantly improved traffic flow during peak drop-off and pick-up times.

School Modular Classrooms

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

A prefabricated modular classroom was procured for Hidden Valley Elementary School, although the permitting process has resulted in a few delays, the assembly of the unit is anticipated to be completed before the end of the 2021-22 fiscal year.

In addition, we have committed to and initiated a process to conduct a feasibility study, assessing potential locations for additional modular units in the future until infrastructure can be built as a more permanent solution.

