

FOR RELEASE
November 7, 2017

Yukon Minister of Education unveils art project celebrating redesigned curriculum

On behalf of the Government of Yukon, Minister of Education Tracy-Anne McPhee unveiled a visual art project today at Elijah Smith Elementary School to illustrate Yukon's redesigned school curriculum.

The artwork was produced in collaboration with local Yukon artist and storyteller Rhoda Merkel, Lance Burton and a group of young artists from the Youth of Today Society.

From August 2016 to May 2017, the Government of Yukon discussed changes to the school curriculum with Yukon communities. Merkel attended these events and spoke with students, parents, teachers and community members to collect their thoughts, opinions, questions and comments on what they were hearing.

Merkel created a story from the voices she heard, which was then expressed in images created by Burton and his group of young artists through drawings and digital graphics.

The original artwork is a large poster size canvas hand beaded by Merkel. It will be on display at the Government of Yukon's Main Administrative Building.

Quotes

"As we move through our first year of implementing the redesigned school curriculum, this amazing art piece is a visual representation of all we are trying to achieve for each and every Yukon learner – success and lifelong learning. Thank you to Rhoda, Lance and all of the young artists that helped bring our collective vision to life."

–Minister of Education Tracy-Anne McPhee

Quick facts

- Copies of this artwork will be put up in schools across the territory for students, parents, teachers and community members to enjoy.
- The redesigned school curriculum is being implemented in Kindergarten to Grade 9 this school year, and will be implemented in Grades 10-12 in September 2018.

Learn more: Curriculum artwork on Yukon Department of Education website

See backgrounder.

Contact:

Sunny Patch
Cabinet Communications
867-393-7478
sunny.patch@gov.yk.ca

Kyle Nightingale
Communications, Department of Education
867-336-0653
kyle.nightingale@gov.yk.ca

Backgrounder

The curriculum art project represents what Yukon citizens are excited to see in Yukon's redesigned school curriculum. It was produced in collaboration with local Yukon artist and storyteller Rhoda Merkel, Lance Burton and a group of young artists from the Youth of Today Society.

The outer circle represents a clock with Kindergarten to Grade 12 replacing the hours. The second most outer circle highlights the six core competencies that are a strong focus of the new curriculum. The next circle of images and statements point to the learning and skills that are important for Yukon students to be successful. Many of the images contain hands, a reference to hands-on, project-based learning. They also reflect the importance of reading, writing and math as foundational skills for student success.

The text and images in the inner circle demonstrate the Department of Education's commitment to working with Yukon First Nations to integrate language and culture into the school curriculum. The background colors reference the medicine wheel, an important symbol of balance in many First Nations cultures. The images show Yukon First Nations' values that can be passed on to students to live and learn.

Finally, the centre piece of the artwork includes students of Yukon with graduation gowns and a drum that says "life long learning" over a backdrop of Yukon communities and the globe. This is a powerful image that visualizes the main goal of our new curriculum: success for every learner and the drive to keep learning all throughout life wherever they may be.

"I hope that they find the Beat within their own Heart, where the Joy of Life and living is found."
– Yukon storyteller and artist Rhoda Merkel

News Release #17-239



Stay up to date with the latest Yukon government news by subscribing to our RSS feed here:
<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/rss.html>. Or follow us on Twitter @yukongov.