



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6



March 12, 2024

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Government
Director of Education
1242 Front Street
Dawson City, Yukon
Y0B 1G0

Dear Ms. Beaumont,

Re: Education Act Amendment

I'm writing to follow up on our recent call - thank you for making the time to meet with me. Learning more about the work that Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation has been doing on education was deeply inspiring. It is clear that Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation is leading the Yukon in many ways, not the least of which had been the success of the education program in Dawson for Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in students and others. Article 17.7 of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Self-Government agreement has laid out key principles for the design, delivery, and administration of educational programs within the Traditional Territory.

The successes of your programs provide a framework for the rest of the Yukon to look to. The trail you have blazed is a roadmap for Yukon communities and nations to work towards what you have achieved; an educational system that is built on self-determination, and a system that is responsive to the needs of students and the context their local environment.

The changes we are proposing to the Education Act are a small step towards removing the silos and segregation of knowledge that exists in the current system for those outside of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation.

Nevertheless, we hope that those changes will provide a tool for other school boards around the Yukon to push the education system forward to embracing some of the innovations that you have done so well. Hearing about the success Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation's education programming further motivated me to move these changes forward so that we can work towards a system where all Yukon students have access to an education system that understands their local context and meets their needs.

In general, Yukon schools follow the BC curriculum. While we acknowledge the challenges inherent in this structure, there are some changes that BC made to their education system that we would like to see mirrored in the Yukon. BC recently updated their policy on locally developed courses, allowing students to use Board Authority or First Nation (BAA or FNA) courses to fulfill elective graduation requirements. This means that BC students have more flexibility and choice in their learning and can explore topics such as traditional technologies, leadership and climate change.

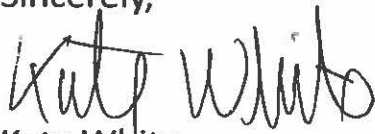
However, the Yukon's Education Act still limits the use of locally developed courses to no more than 20% of the course load for any student in a semester or school year. This effectively prevents Yukon high school students from taking any locally developed courses, since they usually take four courses a semester, and one locally developed course would exceed the 20% limit. This is unfortunate, as it deprives Yukon students of the opportunity to benefit from these courses and to learn more about their culture, environment, and community.

Therefore, we are proposing to amend the Yukon Education Act to align it more closely with BC's new policy. Our proposal is to remove the section of the Yukon Education Act that specifies the 20% limit. This would give Yukon schools more autonomy and flexibility in offering locally developed courses, and Yukon students more options and diversity in their learning.

We believe this change would be beneficial for both the education system and the students in the Yukon, it would enhance their academic achievement, personal development, and cultural awareness. I've included an attachment with more detailed information about the changes and what they would mean for Yukon students.

We know that your nation has already gone far beyond what we wish to achieve with this amendment for others. We would appreciate hearing feedback from you regarding this proposed change, and potentially a letter of support from you. This is something that we would like to present during the current sitting to get the changes in place for the upcoming school year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate White". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate White

Leader of the Yukon NDP

MLA Takhini-Kopper King