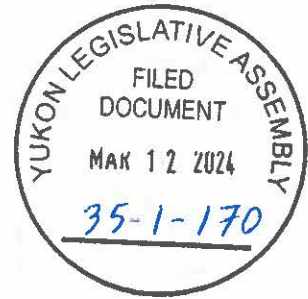


March 6, 2024

By Email: Jeanie.McLean@yukon.ca



Hon. Jeanie McLean
Minister of Education
Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate
Yukon Legislative Assembly
Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon
Y1A 2C6

Dear Minister McLean,

Re: Unilateral Changes to Educational Assistant Staffing and School Allocations

Recent changes made by the Department of Education (DoE) to the Educational Assistant Staffing and School Allocations procedures and policies (New EA allocation policy and procedures) are harmful and will result in inequitable and diminished critical services in Yukon schools. The DoE has unilaterally revised the 2016 EA Allocation process which was collaboratively established by public consultation, engagement and respectful dialogue in 2016. These recent harmful changes to the EA allocation policy and procedures have been made unilaterally, without public consultation or engagement and absent ongoing communication with important community stakeholders.

Disregard for stakeholders

The Yukon Association of Education Professionals (YAEP), LDAY Centre for Learning (LDAY), Yukon First Nation Education Directorate (YFNED), Autism Yukon (AY) and the Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards & Committees (AYSCBC) are critical public stakeholders and, together, represent an essential source of expertise and valuable information regarding support for vulnerable and high needs students. The DoE has failed to seek input, or any kind of feedback, from our organizations regarding the changes. It is disheartening, if not disrespectful, that we are now learning of these potentially very damaging changes from worried schools and their communities and not the Yukon Government (YG).

Before implementing changes to the EA allocation and criteria we believe that it is essential that the YG seek to address concerns, and receive feedback and input from YAEP, LDAY, YFNED, AY and the AYSCBC regarding the New EA allocation policy and procedures for the 2024/25 school year.

Will YG put in place an opportunity to have concerns addressed and feedback received before this potentially detrimental shift becomes operationalized?

Letter - YAEP, LDAY, YFNED, AY & AYSCBC to YG re revised EA allocation procedures and policy



Contracted consultant – but no report?

We have learned that significant time, resources, and efforts were made by DoE in 2023/24 to engage an external consultant to review the DoE's EA Allocation policy and procedures, and to provide a report regarding the same. That independent consultant "En-Gauge Consulting" interviewed and engaged with a range of stakeholders, both internal and external, in 2023 and facilitated group workshops on November 20 and 21, 2023.

We ask that the DoE to be transparent and share with our organizations a copy of the report prepared by En-Gauge Consulting. It is important that YG detail which specific findings, recommendation, and, or aspects of the report were utilized or relied on to rationalize the current changes to the EA allocation policy and procedures.

Flawed new EA allocation policy and procedures

First, in our view, the new scoring and eligibility matrix that is used to determine allocation of EAs marginalizes and significantly undervalues what they call the Independence Area of Impact. The Independence area includes Personal/Social Wellbeing, Communication, Academic Achievement, Transition and Motor Skills which are different areas of need requiring different strategies and should not be lumped together under one area. Further the Independence area appears to be equally weighted balanced against the three other areas identified (Health/Medical and Personal care, Safety and Sensory). The result is that the five very important aspects of the Independence Area lead to one score apparently to be measured equally against the other three areas. It can be concluded that the needs identified in the Independence Area will not be met, and many vulnerable learners who do not have Health/Medical/Personal Care, Safety or Sensory Needs will be given little priority or support.

Second, the DoE has implemented an arbitrary base allocation of EAs to lower grade classrooms regardless of the actual needs of students in those classrooms. This arbitrary base formulaic approach perpetuates inequity because it prevents Administrators from most effectively aligning limited EA resources with the student learning and educational needs unique to each school.

We seek a detailed explanation for the specific nature of the changes which have been made to the EA allocation policy and procedures for this coming school year. We also seek an explanation for the logical basis and rationale for each of the changes that have been implemented.

Is it the intent of YG intent on continuing the implementation of the New EA allocation policy and procedures absent any form of public consultation, dialogue or communication?

The New EA allocation policy and procedures for the 2024/25 school year enables the DoE to distance itself from the actual learning needs of students and reduce service to a matrix, rather than being based on the actual needs of the students and will potentially result in a significant reduction in service.

Less support for vulnerable students regardless of concerns shared by partners and community cannot be the goal of the YG.

We look forward to your timely response.

Respectfully,



Stephanie Hammond - Executive Director
LDAY Centre for Learning



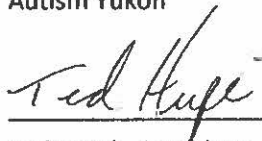
Melanie Bennett - Executive Director
Yukon First Nation Education Directorate



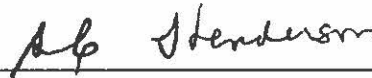
Katie Swales - President
Autism Yukon



Rebecca Fenton - Executive Director
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