



Response to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Department of Education

December 11, 2019



Audit 2019 response

This report provides an update on action planning with partners and the implementation status of department activities underway to address recommendations from the 2019 June Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Yukon Legislative Assembly “Kindergarten Through Grade 12 Education in Yukon – Department of Education”.

The Department of Education has accepted all of the recommendations contained in the 2019 Auditor General’s report, and provided its initial response to those recommendations. The focus of this audit was whether the department delivered education programs that were inclusive and reflected Yukon First Nations culture and languages, and whether it assessed and addressed gaps in student outcomes.

The department is committed to working with students, educators, families, education partners, and Yukon First Nations governments to address the issues and recommendations contained in the Audit Report, to ensure students have the supports they need to succeed at school, and to improve educational outcomes for Yukon students.

The department is using the audit’s recommendations to guide its plans and decisions to improve and modernize learning supports for Yukon students, with Yukon First Nations governments and our partners in education. This document provides an update on the actions the department is taking to address the Auditor General’s recommendations from the 2019 report.

Audit report 2019 themes and actions



Yukon First Nations education

- Partnerships to support and improve First Nations student outcomes
- A protocol for collaboration with Yukon First Nations on cultural and language programming
- Guidelines for Yukon First Nations language instruction



Supporting student learning needs

- Review of inclusive and special education programs and services
- Formal Individualized Education Plan (IEP) policies and guidelines



Supporting staff learning needs

- System-wide check-in on K-12 curriculum implementation with school staff
- Continued development of professional learning resources and curriculum materials for educators
- Enhanced professional learning networks for staff



Focus on outcomes & quality assurance

- Yukon student outcomes improvement strategy and targets, focused on primary learning (ready to learn, literacy and numeracy)
- School Growth Plans, informed by student performance data
- Modernizing and tracking school staff evaluations

Action planning and implementation status

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<p>42. The Department of Education should develop and implement a strategy to address the long-standing gaps in student performance and improve student outcomes, particularly those of Yukon First Nations and rural students. The strategy should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyzing the root causes of poor student outcomes; • defining performance targets; • developing and implementing actions to reach those targets; and • evaluating the effectiveness of these actions to improve student outcomes 	<p>The Department of Education has gathered and published student performance indicators about Yukon students in Kindergarten through Grade 12, including urban, rural, and Yukon First Nations students. The Department acknowledges that it has not implemented a comprehensive strategy for measuring and analyzing differences in student outcomes and for targeting initiatives to address those differences.</p> <p>During the 2019-2020 school year the Department will seek to collaborate with Yukon First Nation governments, who are in the best position to understand and respond to Yukon First Nations students' educational needs, to develop and implement an outcome management</p>	<p>Work with Yukon First Nations and education partners to develop and implement a strategy to improve student outcomes, particularly for Yukon First Nations and rural students, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ analyzing the root causes of poor student outcomes; ○ defining performance targets; ○ actions to reach those targets; and ○ evaluating the effectiveness of those actions. 	<p>Underway. The department is developing its strategy to improve student outcomes, and expects to have it initially in place by August 2020. This strategy will include an analysis of the root causes that negatively impact Yukon student outcomes.</p> <p>Complete. The department worked with the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education and published initial performance targets for literacy and numeracy in Grades 4 and 7, as well as for high school graduation, in the Government of Yukon's Performance Plan in December 2018 and March 2019.</p>

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	<p>improvement strategy for the Yukon education system. This strategy, which will also include the participation of education partners, will identify programs and activities to better assist students who may need more support to improve their learning outcomes at school, and will also provide a framework of performance indicators and targets to track and measure student success and to evaluate program effectiveness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With Yukon First Nations and the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education, refine outcome indicators and performance targets such as cohort tracking through transition periods, student satisfaction, graduation rates, and primary years' literacy and numeracy. • Implement new data software and processes to improve access and usability of student performance data. 	<p>Underway. The department is continuing to work with the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education and Yukon First Nations on student outcome indicators and performance targets over the 2019-20 school year. This work will inform the department's strategy to improve student outcomes.</p> <p>Underway.</p> <p>Complete. The department created a Data and Analytics Unit in 2018, and has implemented new software and processes to manage and analyze student performance data. For example, the department redesigned its data system to enable more frequent (e.g. monthly, and by semester) reporting of its student data.</p> <p>Underway. The department is currently working to phase in 'data dashboards' that will enable on-demand access for authorized users.</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve data sharing with Yukon First Nations and analysis of First Nation student performance data. 	<p>Complete. As of December 2018, the department reports system-wide on how many students are ‘emerging or unknown’ rather than ‘meeting or exceeding’ to focus attention on students most in need of support.</p> <p>Complete. In August 2019, the department established an internal data review and approval process.</p> <p>Complete. In September 2019, the department developed and distributed school data profiles to Principals. Underway.</p> <p>The Data and Analytics Unit is working with Yukon First Nations to improve data sharing. A draft data sharing MOU is in development and a joint working group on data is being established for sharing of system-wide data about Yukon First Nations students, and cooperation on identifying root causes that negatively impact student outcomes and initiatives to improve student outcomes with the Chiefs Committee on Education. We expect that the</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining 'maximum potential' 	<p>MOU will be finalized in December 2019.</p> <p>Underway. The department expects that in December 2019 Yukon First Nations will receive finalized How Are We Doing Reports for 2017/2018 and 2018/2019.</p> <p>Planning. The department will develop a definition of 'maximum potential' through the review of inclusive and special education in the 2019-20 school year.</p>

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<p>47. The Department of Education should implement its required oversight mechanisms to provide summary reports to the Minister and complete teacher evaluations.</p>	<p>The Department of Education is currently revising its School Growth Planning Policy. The Department will ensure that a process is in place to provide the Minister of Education with an annual summary of the goals, data trends, and objectives from school growth plans. This process will be developed and implemented by the end of the 2019-20 school year.</p> <p>Over the course of 2019, the Department will implement an improved process for annually monitoring the completion of teacher evaluations. The revised process will align with the new collective agreement with the Yukon Teachers' Association and will include requirements for completing and tracking teacher evaluations.</p>	<p>The department is working to implement its required oversight mechanisms to provide summary reports to the Minister and complete teacher evaluations. This includes working with staff to enhance understanding and take ownership of roles and responsibilities regarding School Growth Plans and teacher evaluations, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align new School Growth Plan process with best practices in improving student learning, with a focus on student success and embedding of Yukon First Nation ways of knowing and doing and being in schools. Establish a process for annual reports to the Minister of Education, with summaries of School Growth Plan goals, actions data trends and results. 	<p>Underway.</p> <p>Underway. In collaboration with the Advisory Committee for Yukon education, the department is revising its School Growth Planning Policy, including a more detailed process for meeting the continuing annual reporting requirement in the policy, to be completed by June 2020. The department's objective is to finalize the School Growth Planning Policy and implement the modernized process based on this policy for School Growth Plans starting in August 2020 for the 2020-21 school year.</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a process and system to notify school administrators when staff evaluations are due, prioritizing probationary employee evaluations. Establish a process for annual status summary report to the Minister of Education on completion of teacher evaluations as an additional oversight measure. 	<p>Underway. The department began introducing a new teacher evaluation process in 2018-2019, and has now implemented this “Yukon Framework for Teacher Growth”. A process for tracking teacher evaluations is now in place, including notifications to administrators about staff evaluations that are due.</p> <p>Underway. As an additional oversight measure, the department is also developing a summary report format annually reporting on teacher evaluations to the Minister that should be complete by February 2020, with the first summary report being submitted to the Minister of Education by July 1, 2020.</p>

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<p>70. The Department of Education should conduct a full review of the services and supports for inclusive education. It should exercise a leadership role by, for example, engaging with teachers, parents, and specialists to determine how the Department can help teachers maximize student success. The review should include examining how best to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate whether its approach to inclusive education is working; • determine whether services and supports are having the desired effect; • determine whether sufficient resources are in 	<p>The Department of Education will seek to collaborate with Yukon First Nation governments to conduct an in-depth review of its services and supports for inclusive education. This review will ensure all students have access to quality education by addressing their diverse learning needs in a supported environment that allows them to meet their maximum potential. The review will start in Fall 2019 and provide recommendations by Spring 2020, and will result in the development of appropriate strategies, to be implemented starting in the 2020-21 school year.</p> <p>The review will focus on inclusive education supports and services for Yukon students, including the delivery and monitoring of special education programs. We will seek to conduct the review in</p>	<p>The department will conduct a review of the delivery of inclusive and special education to Yukon students in the 2019-20 school year, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arranging for an external consultant to lead the review. • Gathering perspectives from staff, Yukon First Nations and partners about these services. 	<p>Planning.</p> <p>Planning. The start of this review was delayed in order to have further conversations with the consultant on the review, and with Yukon First Nations about their preferred approach for engagement on the 2019 Audit. The updated timeline for the initial recommendations for the review is projected for January – June 2020.</p> <p>We are currently working with the consultant to finalize plans for the review to start before January 31, 2020, and with the Council of Yukon First Nations, the Chiefs Committee on Education and the First Nations Education Commission on responding to Audit 2019 as a whole over the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years.</p>

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<p>place to support inclusive education;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prioritize students for specialized assessments; • assess and track specialist recommendations; and • assess and track teachers' use of recommended strategies. 	<p>partnership with Yukon First Nations because they are best placed to understand and respond to their citizens' educational needs and to direct targeted resources to support the success of First Nation students. The review will also consider perspectives from Yukon educators, parents, school councils, the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, and the Yukon Teachers' Association, all of whom have important responsibilities in supporting students.</p> <p>The Department notes that the actions it takes in response to other recommendations contained in this audit report will also improve its ability to provide inclusive education services and supports to all Yukon students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with Yukon First Nations and with the Advisory Committee on Yukon Education in developing the department's response to the recommendations from this review from June-August 2020. 	<p>The target timeline for completing the initial recommendations for the review is still June 2020, and the department expects to receive the consultant's report by June 1, 2020.</p> <p>Planning. The department will work with Yukon First Nations and the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education in August and September 2020 to develop its response to the recommendations from the review, and will begin implementation of the response in the 2020-21 school year.</p>

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<p>89. The Department of Education should complete and implement its policy to collaborate with Yukon First Nations to meet the Education Act's requirements. It should also develop a strategic action plan with specific, measurable actions and timelines to support its work with Yukon First Nations.</p>	<p>Collaboration with Yukon First Nation governments on education priorities is essential to make sure that Yukon schools meet the needs of Yukon First Nations students and offer all Yukon students real opportunities to learn about Yukon First Nations languages, cultures, perspectives, and traditional knowledge.</p> <p>Over the 2019-20 school year, the Department of Education will seek to partner with Yukon First Nations to complete and implement a policy for collaborating with Yukon First Nations to meet the requirements of the <i>Education Act</i> and to improve educational outcomes for Yukon First Nation students.</p> <p>The department will focus its strategic plans (e.g. its Business Plan and its curriculum implementation plan)</p>	<p>The department will work with Yukon First Nations to establish and implement a framework for collaboration on joint education priorities, both at the collective and community levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with Yukon First Nations to complete a 'Collaboration with Yukon First Nations Under the <i>Education Act</i> Policy'. 	<p>Underway.</p> <p>Planning. In Spring 2020, the department will consult with the Chiefs Committee on Education, the First Nation Education Commission, Council of Yukon First Nations and the Joint Education Action Plan Senior Officials Group on an appropriate policy and/or strategic plan for ongoing collaboration between the government and Yukon First Nations to address education priorities.</p> <p>The target date for finalizing the policy and/or plan will be determined in collaboration with Yukon First Nations as part of these discussions.</p>

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	<p>accordingly, and ensure that they have specific, measurable actions and timelines.</p> <p>The Department has also established the position of Assistant Deputy Minister, First Nation Initiatives. This Assistant Deputy Minister will plan and organize the Department's work to engage with Yukon First Nation governments and to implement agreed to strategies at both the Yukon-wide and local school levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Yukon First Nations to identify and implement collective education priorities. 	<p>Underway.</p> <p>Underway. The department is negotiating an agreement with the Chiefs Committee on Education to establish greater Yukon First Nation authority and control over First Nations education. This agreement is tentatively expected to be completed by September 2020.</p> <p>Underway. The JEAP Senior Officials Group met on November 25, 2019, and agreed that the priority areas in the Joint Education Action Plan should continue to be pursued through collective and community level agreements and initiatives. The next meeting is being scheduled for April 2020.</p> <p>Underway. The department is working with CYFN and CCOE representatives on data sharing arrangements to facilitate monitoring, analyzing, and reporting on the</p>

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			<p>performance of the Yukon education system.</p> <p>This includes work to finalize a new MOU and a Data Working Group on sharing system-wide First Nation student data with the Yukon First Nations. It is expected that this will be completed in December 2019.</p> <p>Planning. The department is also working with the Council of Yukon First Nations, the Chiefs Committee on Education and the First Nations Education Commission to engage Yukon First Nations on responding to Audit 2019 as a whole upon their request, including the review of inclusive and special education. This collaboration will take place over the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years.</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Yukon First Nation governments on Education Agreements identifying community-level educational priorities. Identify additional funding to support the implementation joint education priorities, including collective education priorities and the Joint Education Action Plan, and community education priorities and Education Agreements with Yukon First Nation governments. 	<p>Underway. Update on Education Agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kwanlin Dün First Nation – signed a new agreement in June 2019. Teslin Tlingit Council – in negotiations for a new agreement Carcross/Tagish First Nation – in negotiations to renew agreement Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in – existing section 17.7 agreement. Selkirk First Nation – existing agreement. Kluane First Nation – existing agreement. <p>Underway. The department has identified \$1.5 million to support community-level education priorities of the 14 Yukon First Nations, as well as an additional \$300,000 to allocate to implementation of collective education priorities such as areas of the Joint Education Action Plan.</p>

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<p>93. The Department of Education should meet regularly with Yukon First Nations to assess the status of the Joint Education Action Plan’s initiatives and determine how and when to complete those that remain.</p>	<p>The Department of Education acknowledges there is room to improve and reinvigorate the work on the priorities identified in the Joint Education Action Plan, which has not yet been adequately implemented. The plan was jointly developed and endorsed by all 14 Yukon First Nations, the Government of Yukon, and the federal government.</p> <p>The department will seek without delay to resume meetings with Yukon First Nations and federal government representatives on this plan. The Department will seek to continue to meet on a regular basis, subject to agreement by Yukon First Nations, for the duration of this plan (that is, to 2024).</p> <p>At these meetings, the department will seek to establish and prioritize agreed to initiatives to implement the plan, both on a Yukon-wide basis and at the local community level, to</p>	<p>The department will resume meeting with Yukon First Nations and the Government of Canada to assess the status of the Joint Education Action Plan, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting of the Senior Officials Group to discuss next steps for the Joint Education Action Plan working group. • Establish and prioritize agreed-to initiatives with Yukon First Nations, and when and how to complete them. 	<p>Underway.</p> <p>Complete. The Senior Officials Group met on November 25, 2019, and agreed that the priority areas in the Joint Education Action Plan should continue to be pursued through collective and community level agreements and initiatives.</p> <p>Planning. The parties will continue to meet to monitor implementation of the Joint Education Action Plan. The target date for the next Senior Officials Group meeting is planned for April 2020.</p>

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	agree to timelines, and determine how to appropriately resource this work.		

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<p>99. In partnership with Yukon First Nations, school boards, and school councils, the Department of Education should develop policies and guidelines to support First Nations language learning. While developing the policies and guidelines, the Department should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with these partners to determine the language goals for individual schools; consider a range of approaches – for example, exposure classes to full immersion programs – that depend on the specific language, student population density, and community interest; and 	<p>The Department of Education acknowledges the importance of meeting its obligation under subsection 52 (5) of the <i>Education Act</i>. Under this subsection, the department is to, in consultation with Yukon First Nation governments and school boards and school councils, establish approved policies and guidelines on the amount of instruction and timetabling for the instruction of Yukon First Nation languages.</p> <p>The department supports Yukon First Nations in their commitment to restore and revitalize their languages as a critical priority. The department recognizes that revitalizing languages and restoring Yukon First Nations control over and responsibility for their languages are essential to the Government of Yukon’s work toward reconciliation.</p>	<p>The department will work with Yukon First Nations the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon Native Language Centre to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine how school-based Aboriginal language instruction programs can best support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the revitalization of Yukon First Nations languages; the certification of teachers for these language programs in schools; and develop and revise the Yukon First Nation language curriculum for use in schools. 	<p>Planning. The department has held meetings with the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon Native Language Centre to discuss these programs and the transfer payment agreement for the Yukon Native Language Centre to provide related services. These discussions are ongoing, and the department’s focus will be on seeking collaboration with the CYFN and the YNLC to develop a policy that supports the YNLC’s focus on developing Yukon First Nation language fluency, and the Department of Education’s focus on Yukon First Nation language learning by Yukon students, both during regular school hours and outside the regular classroom. The target date for completion of this policy will be determined in collaboration with the YNLC and CYFN as part of these ongoing discussions.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify options to support Yukon First Nation languages both during regular school hours and outside the regular classroom. 	<p>The department will seek to work with Yukon First Nations as well as with school councils and the Yukon Francophone School Board over the course of the 2019-20 school year to develop and implement a Yukon First Nations Language Instruction in the Schools policy to support and enhance Yukon First Nations language learning in Yukon schools, with full consideration of the specifics of this recommendation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Yukon First Nation language position within the Department of Education to coordinate the department's work. 	<p>Planning. The department is working on a position focused on Yukon First Nation language education in its First Nations Initiatives Branch to be in place before the end of the 2019-20 school year.</p>

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<p>109. The Department of Education should determine the human resources and training required to develop sufficient classroom support and materials to help teachers implement the new curriculum as it pertains to Yukon First Nations culture and languages.</p>	<p>The provision of training, professional development, support, and materials is critical for successfully implementing the curriculum.</p> <p>The department will continue to develop and distribute modernized guidelines and materials to educators each year. This will include seeking as a priority to continue to work with Yukon First Nations to embed Yukon First Nations ways of knowing and doing in the new Kindergarten through Grade 9 curriculum and resources.</p> <p>The department will improve educators' access to supports and materials over the 2019-20 school year. It will also provide collaborative professional development and training opportunities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • setting common professional development and non-instructional dates in Whitehorse for 	<p>The department will continue to enhance support for the ongoing implementation of the new curriculum for Kindergarten to Grade 12 in Yukon schools, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with Yukon First Nations, development of planning tools, training, resources and materials that embed Yukon First Nations ways of knowing and doing and being into learning at school. 	<p>Underway. The department has a number of ongoing initiatives to continue to provide educator resources and training to support the delivery of the curriculum, including resources and training relating to Yukon First Nations cultures and languages developed with Yukon First Nations. The department's First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit works with Yukon First Nations to develop curriculum materials and to deliver training and support to Yukon educators relating to how students learn about Yukon First Nations cultures, languages, and histories such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete. Draft sample units for K-12 integrating Yukon First Nations ways of knowing and doing and being for educators. • Complete. In partnership with Yukon First Nations, the department delivered Yukon First Nation orientation for new teachers at Brooks Brook in August 2019.

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	<p>collaborative learning, starting in the 2019-20 school year;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> having principals submit professional learning plans for their schools based on their staff's learning needs about the new curriculum for the 2019-20 school year; and dedicating one professional development day in the 2019-20 school year for learning about Yukon First Nation ways of knowing and doing, with orientations from Yukon First Nations and reviews of Cultural Inclusion Standards for schools and school growth plans. <p>In the 2020–21 school year, the Department will gather feedback from educators on the implementation of the new curriculum. This feedback will determine what further training and supports are needed to ensure educators have the skills and knowledge they need to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased collaborative professional learning and training opportunities for staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principals developing annual school professional development plans with their teams based on learning needs relating to the curriculum, starting in 2019-20 school year; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underway. Current field testing of a new Grade 5 unit about the history of residential schools in the 2019-20 school year. Planning. Grade 10 materials. Planning. Updates to the English First Peoples materials. Complete. Collaboration on a chum salmon project for Kluane Lake School. Complete. Purchased and distributed Indigenous atlases for each school. <p>Underway.</p> <p>Underway. In 2019, senior officials delegated the planning for annual professional learning for educators to Principals, with the requirement that the plans are collaboratively developed with staff and based on student and staff learning needs.</p>

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	effectively deliver the modernized curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Common dates for professional development and non-instructional days for Whitehorse schools each school year, starting in 2019-20; ○ A minimum of one day each year dedicated to professional learning about Yukon First Nations ways of knowing and doing and being and cultural inclusion standards for staff; and 	<p>These plans were submitted to the department in August 2019. Principals will provide an update to their Superintendents for the deputy minister on these plans in December 2019.</p> <p>Complete. In discussion with staff and School Councils, the central administration of the department established several common dates for professional development and non-instructional days for Whitehorse schools to support collaborative professional learning as of March 31, 2019.</p> <p>This included one day to focus on Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being and cultural inclusion standards for schools. Many schools held this day on August 20, 2019.</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase communication and access to curriculum materials and supports in the 2019-20 school year. ● In the 2020–21 school year, the Department will gather feedback from educators on the implementation of the new curriculum. 	<p>Underway. On a rolling basis, staff are taking the Yukon First Nations 101 course from Yukon College and the intention is for all staff to complete this course or equivalent.</p> <p>Complete. As of September 2019, the department increased the frequency of Educator Update newsletter to twice per month during the school year.</p> <p>Underway. Additional resources and curriculum support materials are being added on a continual basis to the Educators' Place, the online resource portal for Yukon teachers.</p> <p>Planning. This will include educator feedback on additional training and resources educators feel that the need in order to effectively implement the curriculum, including for how it pertains to Yukon First Nations cultures and languages.</p>