

## Additional information for the Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Excerpts from Public Hearing transcript for December 11, 2019 (Issue 4). If not otherwise noted, Deputy Minister of Education Nicole Morgan is the speaker being quoted.

### Page 4-5:

“So currently, there are 13 schools that have started using this automated attendance calling system. It’s just a really quick and informative way that parents can just know if their child was at school that day.

I can certainly provide for you the list of schools that are using that messenger system.”

The following 13 schools are piloting this feature of the School Messenger system:

1. Porter Creek Secondary
2. Robert Service School (Dawson)
3. F.H. Collins Secondary
4. Khàtinàs.àxh Community School (Teslin)
5. Vanier Catholic Secondary School
6. Elijah Smith Elementary School
7. Wood St. Centre
8. Selkirk Elementary School
9. Golden Horn Elementary School
10. École Émilie-Tremblay
11. Holy Family Elementary
12. Hidden Valley Elementary
13. Christ the King Elementary

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“For Yukon communities that do not have private market housing, we work with the Yukon Housing Corporation and community contacts to identify options for staff housing on a case-by-case basis. To meet the growing demand for housing in communities, the Yukon Housing Corporation is supporting the development of new rental housing and home ownership in Yukon through the municipal matching rental construction grant and housing initiative. These are some of the broad strokes of where the Department of Education meshes with the Yukon Housing Corporation, which looks after a lot of that housing.

If this is helpful, we can provide a written return. I have it here with me, but obviously it is probably painful for me to read what each school community has going on, but we can give you a breakdown by community: if it is identified as having no private market, what the current housing needs are for the school staff, and any vacancies that are at the school.”

As of December 19, 2019, 61 educators are currently in staff housing, in 56 Government of Yukon housing units and 5 in units leased from other owners. There are also two teacher’s residences in schools, one in each at Kluane Lake School (Destruction Bay) and at Nelnah Bessie John School (Beaver Creek).

| Community                       | Private market | Government owned or leased housing                   | Housing needs  | Staff vacancies                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------|--|--|--|
| Beaver Creek                    | No             | 1 Non-YHC, as well as teacher’s residence in schools | Housing needs met through teacher’s residence in school and department lease of cabin. |  |
| Carmacks                        | Yes.           | 9 YHC  | Housing needs met through staff and private housing.                                   |  |
| Dawson                          | Yes            | 6 YHC  | Housing needs met through staff and private housing.                                   |  |
| Destruction Bay/Burwash Landing | No             | 1 teacher’s residence in school                      | Housing needs met through teacher’s residence in school and private housing.           | 1 teacher vacancy starting Jan 30, 2020    |
| Faro                            | Yes            | 3 YHC  | Housing needs met through staff and private housing.                                   |  |
| Haines Junction                 | Yes            | 1 YHC  | Housing needs met through staff and private housing.                                   | 1 teacher vacancy as of December 19, 2019. |
| Mayo                            | Yes.           | 4 YHC  | Housing needs met through staff and private options.                                   | 1 teacher vacancy as of December 19, 2019  |
| Old Crow                        | No             | 7 total (6 YHC + 1 non-YHC)                          | Housing needs met through staff and private housing.                                   |  |

| Community      | Private market | Government owned or leased housing | Housing needs   | Staff vacancies                            |
|----------------|----------------|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Pelly Crossing | No             | 8 total (5 YHC + 3 non-YHC)        | Housing needs met through staff housing and a Memorandum of Understanding with Community Nursing for three units above the Nursing station. |  |
| Ross River     | No             | 6 YHC                              | Housing needs met through staff and private housing.  |  |
| Teslin         | Yes            | 4 YHC                              | Housing needs met through staff and private housing.  |  |
| Watson Lake    | Yes            | 12 YHC                             | Housing needs met through staff and private housing.  | 1 teacher vacancy as of December 19, 2019. |

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“That being said, I also looked into the annual reports of the department. In 2014, Eliza Van Bibber School was working, through their school growth plan and through the school community, to set a goal around improving students’ writing. They were doing that through their school-wide writes, and they wanted to reduce the number of students who were “not yet meeting” by 10 percent. They did a number of initiatives that I could tell you about if you want to hear more — but to get the point and be brief, the short of it was that they did make a significant improvement. It is reported in the 2014 annual report of the Department of Education.

So, two things going on — we don’t know: Did they both have an impact? Did just one have an impact? It speaks to, again, that earlier conversation about how we need to be presenting data, using it at the school level, and then keeping the trend going. What happened at Eliza Van Bibber — again, personnel changes, and nobody really followed what was going on with that initiative and where it is at today.”

Eliza Van Bibber School’s work is a great example of a school focusing its school growth planning on student achievement and success, using student performance data and targets to improve student outcomes, and connecting learning to students’ communities and cultures. The school uses a balanced literacy approach to support student success in reading, writing, listening and speaking, which is when students learn literacy skills in all classes, not just English.

In 2013-14, this school looked at its data and identified writing as an area to improve in its School Growth Plan. They set a goal of reducing the number of students who were not yet meeting expectations by 10 per cent by the end of the 2014-15 school year.

Students participated (and continue to participate) in focused non-fiction writing opportunities about topics of their choice, such as culture camp, which were monitored and tracked every month. This data was compared and discussed at staff and school council meetings and with the community. The teachers and educational assistants provided regular feedback to all students on their work and helped students set goals in each class. School staff support each other in this work, as well as getting support from a Reading Recovery teacher when needed. Staff have worked with curriculum consultants to further develop their professional skills in working with students.

Students' results on the June 2015 assessment compared with the June 2014 assessment improved significantly during this period. For example, the number of students not yet meeting expectations in different aspects of writing decreased between 8-35%, and the number of students fully meeting and exceeding expectations increased between 16-40%. See pages 40-41 of the Department of Education's [Annual Report 2015](#) for more information.

Students were asked why they felt they improved. Their responses included: opportunity, focus on writing, practice, writing every day, love to spell, love to write and using letter sounds. Staff observed contributing factors to students' success such as: culturally relevant topics, strong parent-community school ties, a student-centred learning environment, the practice of daily independent writing, staff efforts, support from administrator, curriculum consultants and the Reading Recovery program, high level of student participation, a balanced literacy approach and professional capacity.

This just one example of how Yukon schools are successfully linking the school growth planning process to student success and the individual needs of the school community, as well as ensuring Yukon schools reflect Yukon First Nations cultures, languages, traditions and practices.

#### **Page 4-14**

“Chair: I have a question regarding individual education plans, or IEPs. There are two parts to it, I guess. The first would be: How are these plans tracked between teachers in regard to priority?

Also, I have heard over the past couple of days that IEPs are being changed or phased out. Is there something changing with IEPs as well?

Ms. Morgan: I can give you a very specific answer as a written return of what the changes are. Yes, there are some adaptations that are being made to the IEPs so that they will align with the curriculum redesign.”

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are a priority for the department. IEPs continue to be an important and mandatory tool to support students with special educational needs. The current and continuing process for IEPs is based on the eligibility parameters provided in the *Education Act*. If a student is eligible for an IEP, then the school staff have 60 days to develop and begin to implement and evaluate an IEP for the student. The IEP must be reviewed with all relevant parties three times throughout the school year.

The Schools and Student Services Branch has been working to clarify the process for developing IEPs to ensure that practices at the school level are aligned with the *Education Act*, and that IEPs are used for cases where students have intellectual, behavioural, physical or multiple challenges that make them unable to meet the curriculum goals and require a modified plan to set personal expectations and outcomes geared for a student's unique needs.

Alternative tools, such as Student Learning Plans, are used to support students who may need adaptations in order to meet curricular learning standards, either at or below their grade level. The Student Learning Plan provides documentation of the adaptations that are in place as a student transitions between grade levels and teachers to ensure the student has continued access (as needed) to the adaptations and the student's performance is assessed using these supports.

IEPs are responsive to the changing needs of students, and are updated three times a year to assess current goals and how success has been demonstrated. In Yukon's new curriculum, staff can now develop personalized and flexible learning goals for students with IEPs to demonstrate their learning and development, and support students with IEPs to meet the curriculum's broader core competencies of communication, thinking, and personal and social responsibility in a way that is meaningful to the student. We can then adjust the IEP over time as the student progresses in their learning.

Within a school, principals are responsible for ensuring the learning goals of IEPs are being met, and that the plans are evaluated and updated at least three times a year. The Learning Assistance Teacher (LAT) case manages IEPs within the school, and tracks IEP progress as a student moves between different grade levels and teachers. If a student moves schools, the new school's principal will become responsible for the IEP and the LAT in the new school will case manage the plan along with existing IEPs in the school. All IEPs hold equal priority.

Students with IEPs and their learning goals are tracked in the student information system. Teachers are responsible for the implementation of an IEP's goals and objectives and can access and view a student's IEP through the system.

The new Communicating Student Learning guidelines that are part of Yukon's curriculum redesign also inform communicating about learning progress and goals for students who have

IEPs. In fall 2019, updates based on parent and teacher feedback, were made to the *Communicating Student Learning Teacher Resource and Professional Development AppleBook*. This tool includes updated supports for teachers to help them identify meaningful ways to assess students with Student Learning Plans learning. Using this guide, we are helping teachers provide meaningful assessments for students with IEPs so these students can demonstrate success in a way that is personalized to the student's needs and aligns with the Dogwood Diploma and Evergreen Certificate pathways.

#### **Page 4-14 to 4-15**

“We also continue to move into our new student information system. We started that work — I need to be careful, but I believe it was in 2017 when we started the implementation into the new student information system. The IEP lives inside of that system as well, and so there are adjustments that are being made.

I’m happy to provide a written response with more detail on that if you would like.”

All Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are documented within Yukon’s Student Information System known as Aspen. We have not made any changes to how this data is recorded and stored; however, we are currently focusing on how we are using this data system to produce more relevant and meaningful reports on IEPs.

We want to use this data to better understand and report on how many students are on IEPs and to monitor and evaluate the progress of these students. By understanding how to better use this data, we can:

- make more timely decisions to support the needs of all students on IEPs;
- identify where more supports are needed for students who are not meeting the expectations of their plan; and
- be able to report more conclusively on how our supports for students with exceptionalities help them to reach their maximum potential.

This work is ongoing, and we anticipate having new methods to report on and evaluate IEPs by the end of the 2019-20 school year.

#### **Page 4-15 to 4-16**

“Then I can go through — there is a parent guide and I can provide some examples of parent support that we have to help them understand where decisions are made, how decisions are made, and where their rights are to appeal decisions. I can provide that to you maybe as a written addition.

I can go through the whole referral process. It's two pages long. But again, I'm happy to provide it as a written —

Chair: Yeah. That would be great if you could provide that.

Ms. Morgan: Yeah, it's a commonly asked question and so we're happy to provide that if you would like."

The Department of Education makes every effort to provide support so that all students can reach their learning goals.

If a parent would like to get support for their child, they should first speak with their child's teacher about any concerns. The teacher will work with the parent to adjust the student's learning where needed, and can identify if the student is meeting expectations for their age or grade level.

The teacher will determine the needs of the student and provide support in the classroom. For example, teachers might allow more time for tests or choose materials better suited to a student's learning style. Decisions at this level are made by the classroom teacher.

If the student needs different support, the teacher will refer the student to the school-based team, which includes:

- the student's classroom teacher;
- the principal or vice-principal;
- a learning assistance teacher or other specialist teacher;
- a school counsellor;
- the parents;
- the student (where appropriate);
- consultants from the Department of Education; and
- when needed, representatives from other community services.

The parent can also request a meeting with the school-based team to assess the needs of their child. The school-based team discusses the student's learning needs based on observations from school and from home. The team will work with the classroom teachers, and develop strategies, to support the student's needs and learning goals. The school-based team decides on specific interventions, adaptations and/or strategies to be implemented with the student. If the supports are successful and are required for ongoing success, then the school-based team may recommend a Student Learning Plan for the student.

The school-based team may request more formal involvement of Student Support Services if a student continues to have significant academic, social-emotional and/or behavioural difficulty during and after the implementation of school-level strategies. When requested and agreed

upon by parents, school staff and consultants, Student Support Services will consult to provide recommendations to support the student. Through a collaborative process with the school and parents, Student Support Services may decide that formal assessments should be completed, with the goal to better understand a student's strengths and needs. Note in Yukon, formal assessments are not required in order for a student to receive supports for their learning.

The process for a formal assessment involves the school having the parent/guardian sign a referral for a consultant from Student Support Services to be involved. Once this occurs, then a consultant will require informed consent from the parent/guardian before they can arrange for the assessment. As part of this assessment phase, staff will initially review student records; interview school staff, parents and the student, where appropriate; and/or observe the student in the classroom. They will work with the student directly to complete formal standardized assessments and recommend educational planning. The information and recommendations from the formal assessment will be used to determine the most appropriate supports and programming for the student.

When the assessment is completed, the parent will be contacted to arrange a meeting to:

- explain the results;
- discuss the recommendations; and
- involve the parent in making any related decisions.

This report is the foundation for planning and is shared with others, including the school-based team and, if appropriate, the student. Student Support Services will recommend to the parent and school staff the interventions and supports the student may require to access the curricular content or meet the goals outlined in an Individual Education Plan, should the student be eligible for an IEP as per the *Education Act*.

If a parent has any concerns during this process or with the implementation of school-based interventions, the parent should first speak to the student's teacher or the school principal. If the issues cannot be resolved at the school level, the parent or school principal may bring the concerns to the Superintendent and/or Director of Student Support Services. Parents may also request an appeal through the Education Appeal Tribunal. Information on submitting appeals to the tribunal can be found at [yukon.ca/en/education-and-schools/plan-elementary-and-high-school/submit-appeal-education-appeal-tribunal](http://yukon.ca/en/education-and-schools/plan-elementary-and-high-school/submit-appeal-education-appeal-tribunal).

## Page 4-19

"Ms. White: Just in noticing the time, I'm just going to read these questions into the record and ask for a written response so that I can move on.



How many rural schools has the new assistant deputy minister visited to date? How will the department evaluate the successes of the new ADM position? What outcomes, objectives, and metrics will be used to assess the efficacy of the position? Should it prove successful, is there potential for expanding the resources and staff available to this position? I will just thank you for a written response to those.”

#### Page 4-20

“From that meeting, we were starting to action some of the action priorities that are identified in the joint education action plan. From there, there were a number of meetings. There are several dates here. If the Committee so chooses, we will certainly provide the dates that they occurred, but essentially, from this time, a Chiefs Committee on Education technical group was established, and these meetings have been ongoing since — and discussions around framework agreement. We are hopeful that we will reach — let’s say this: The timeline around the work that is happening around the draft framework agreement is scheduled for, I believe, September 2020 — that we will be at a point where we have some actions out of that work.”

Since the release of the audit report, the department has met once with the Joint Education Action Plan Senior Officials Group, on November 25, 2019. At this meeting, we agreed that the four priority areas in the Joint Education Action Plan should continue to be pursued through collective and community level agreements and initiatives.

The JEAP Senior Officials group consists of representatives from:

- Council of Yukon First Nations and the Chiefs Committee on Education;
- Government of Canada; and
- Government of Yukon Department of Education.

We are currently scheduling the next meeting with this group for Spring 2020.

The department has had the following government-to-government meetings with individual First Nations to discuss education agreements since the new ADM began with the department in June:

- One with the Teslin Tlingit Council;
- Three with Carcross/Tagish First Nation;
- One with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations;
- Three with Kwanlin Dūn First Nation, for the agreement that has since been signed;
- One with Tr’ondek Hwech’in; and
- One with Ta’an Kwäch’än Council.

Department officials, including the ADM of First Nations Initiatives, has had the following meetings with the Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE): THIS SHOULD BE UPDATED

- June 11, 2019 - first technicians meeting
- June 18, 2019 - CCOE meeting with Minister of Education
- July 18, 2019 - technicians meeting
- August 2, 2019 - technicians meeting
- August 16, 2019 - technicians meeting
- September 4, 2019 - technicians meeting
- October 3, 2019 - legal technicians meeting
- October 23, 2019 - legal technicians meeting
- October 29, 2019 - received concept paper from CCOE legal
- November 7, 2019 - legal technicians meeting
- November 22, 2019 - CCOE Trilateral tech meeting scheduled

Since this fall, the ADM of First Nations Initiatives and her branch have been connecting with the following Yukon First Nations governments to begin discussions about developing or building on education agreements:

- Liard First Nation
- Ross River Dena Council
- Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation
- White River First Nation
- Kluane First Nation
- Vuntut Gwitchin
- Selkirk First Nation
- First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun

This branch will continue to discuss the establishment of additional education agreements with Yukon First Nations governments on an ongoing basis.

## Page 4-20

“Mr. Istchenko: In the department’s response, they make mention of the government’s commitment toward reconciliation. What specific actions is the department taking in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s education calls to action under the territorial responsibility?”

Ms. Morgan: There are a lot of things that I could read here for you. I’ll just do some high-level — and certainly, if you want me to provide more detail, we can do that.”

Education has an important role to play in reconciliation, as reflected in the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. We are working to address the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This includes greater partnerships with Yukon First

Nations, more culturally inclusive schools and curriculum, training for staff and working to eliminate educational and employment gaps.

The Government of Yukon works directly with Yukon First Nation governments, the Chiefs Committee on Education, the Council of Yukon First Nations and the First Nations Education Commission to support First Nation learners and to educate all Yukon students about First Nations peoples and the importance of reconciliation. We are working together on joint education priorities at the collective and community levels to find solutions that benefit students, schools and communities, now and over the long term.

The department's work with Yukon First Nations relating to reconciliation in education includes:

- the Joint Education Action Plan;
- Education Agreements with specific Yukon First Nation governments on community level joint education priorities;
- cultural and language programming for schools; and
- training and employment services for adult learners.

**TRC Call to Action 7:** *We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps*

Yukon's Comprehensive Skills and Trades Training Strategy identifies Aboriginal peoples as a priority under-represented groups in Yukon's labour market. Some examples of the department supporting Yukon First Nations learners and addressing educational and employment gaps includes:

- \$992,000 from 2017-2020 for Skookum Jim Friendship Centre's Youth Employment Centre to provide services. (\$332,324 in 2018-19).
- \$225,000 from 2018-2021 for Selkirk First Nation's Pelly Crossing Training Fund for training opportunities that will enhance individual skills required to obtain, maintain or advance employment for Yukoners. (\$75,000 per year)
- \$261,070 in 2018-19 for Kwanlin Dün First Nation's House of Learning to provide education upgrading, employment training, certifications and more.
- \$1.413M over three years, from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2022 for Kwanlin Dün First Nation's Traditional Knowledge & Employment Training Program.

**TRC Call to Action 57:** *We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous*

Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

The department's First Nations Programs and Partnerships unit provides cultural orientation to new educators and to school and program staff, that includes residential school awareness and First Nations history. The First Nations Programs and Partnership unit also offers an adapted Blanket Exercise participatory workshop activity for Department of Education staff and students that deepens participants' understanding of how federal policies and programs have impacted the lives of Indigenous people throughout Canada's history.

As part of the Joint Education Action Plan, the department is providing mandatory cultural awareness training for all staff on a rolling basis (Yukon First Nations 101 course from Yukon College, or suitable equivalent).

**TRC Call to Action 62 iv:** *Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education*

Department officials worked with the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Chiefs Committee on Education to establish an Assistant Deputy Minister of First Nations Initiatives position at the department.

The new ADM works in partnership with all Yukon First Nations on their collective and individual educational priorities, supports the work of the First Nations Programs and Partnerships Unit, and guides the implementation of initiatives to support the success of First Nations learners.

**TRC Call to Action 62 i:** *make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade 12 students* **AND**

**TRC Call to Action 63 i-iv: 63.** *We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:*

- i. *Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.*
- ii. *Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.*
- iii. *Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.*
- iv. *Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above*

Yukon's new school curriculum for K-12 includes Yukon First Nations cultures, languages, histories, and perspectives in all subjects at all grade levels developed with Yukon First Nations, including:

- draft Yukon and Yukon First Nation K-9 localized curriculum, adapted from British Columbia's curriculum, and currently working on the Grades 10-12 localized curriculum;
- sample K-10 integrated units with Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being developed with First Nations;
- culturally inclusive guidelines for assessing learning and reporting;
- Social Studies 10 unit about residential schools;
- Field testing a new Grade 5 unit about residential schools;
- 21 Yukon schools offer First Nations language programs.
- Resources such as Grade 1 books about Yukon First Nations people, Social Studies booklets for grades 4-5, the CHAOS experiential program for grades 9-10, Ancestral Technology 9 and 10, English First Peoples 10-12, and Yukon First Nations 12.
- External credits offered by Yukon First Nations: culture camps, First Hunt/Fish and Moose Hunt.

## Page 4-21

Chair: As you know, we had 11 questions, I believe, that we were going to submit to the department to receive written responses. I realize that this has been a very complex morning with a lot of questions and a lot of supplementary questions. In light of the time, there are eight more questions that we had anticipated asking this morning. Maybe I will just read those questions into the record now so that we have them on record and, when the department is providing the Public Accounts Committee with the responses to those other 11, we could also receive responses to these eight as well.

With regard to Recommendation No. 109 — insufficient supports, resources, and cultural training — we had three questions:

- Can you explain further how the department will determine the human resources and training required to develop classroom support and materials to help teachers implement the new curriculum as it pertains to Yukon First Nation cultures and language?

Answered in Written Questions #4

- Will the department be hiring more FTEs in anticipation of the increased workload?
- What are the timelines for implementation?

Answered in Written Question #5

- Does the department have any plans if the feedback on the implementation of the new curriculum is not as good as the department had hoped?

Answered in Written Question # 6

Further, the report deals broadly with capacity issues within the Department of Education and specifically with the teachers. We saw that the engagement survey saw an increase in negative answers since 2016 on the following statements: “My workload is manageable”, “My work-related stress is manageable”, and “I feel support during times of change”.

- How does the department plan to implement the recommendation of the Auditor General without increasing the strain on an already strained public service?

Answered in Written Question #7

- What additional staffing cost does the department anticipate with regard to the implementation of the recommendations?

Answered in Written Question #8

- What will the department be doing to prioritize the recommendations of the Auditor General?

Answered in Written Question #9

Two questions regarding the previous report from 2009:

- What are some of the more significant changes that have taken place in the department since the 2009 audit?

Answered in Written Question #12

- How will these changes address the shortcomings that this audit has identified?

Answered in Written Question #13