



CYFN Education

Prepared by Jennifer Wykes



The role of CYFN Education Department:

Coordinates and provides two in-services to Community Education Liaison Coordinators/ Education Support Workers/ Education Outreach Coordinators (CELCs/ESWs/EOCs);

Coordinated the Joint Education Action Plan development and currently coordinates the JEAP Implementation Strategy;

Consults with Yukon First Nations to ensure their goals and aspirations are reflected in work and negotiations at the central level;

Is represented on the First Nation Education Commission (FNEC), coordinates FNEC meetings and provides administrative and secretarial support;

Sits on various working groups, boards and committees as pertains to education initiatives in which Yukon First Nation students, families and communities have a stake;

Develops and rolls out projects, with the guidance of FNEC, that reflect the vision and objectives contained within the JEAP.

The Education Team

The Council of Yukon First Nations welcomes Rose Sellars to the Education Department as Programs Coordinator. She joins Jennifer Wykes who has taken on the director's position.



2014-15 Projects

*A Parent /
Community
Empowerment Pilot
Project*

*The development of a
YFN Policy and
Protocol Framework*

*The continued
development of a
YFN Student
Achievement / Data
Strategy*

The Joint Education Action Plan

Background

The JOINT EDUCATION ACTION PLAN (JEAP) is a document developed under the tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Education Partnerships. The JEAP commits the three Parties (Canada, Yukon and Yukon First Nations) to work together under “a common vision wherein Yukon First Nations’ students achieve or exceed the full educational outcomes, levels and successes, to the highest standard within Yukon and Canada.” The JEAP comprises a brief background, a common vision and guiding principles for the purpose of addressing student success rates among YFN learners. Priority areas established under the JEAP include:

K-12 Culture and Language

- Culturally Inclusive Councils, Staff & Students
- Culturally Inclusive Schools
- Culture & Language Curriculum
- K-12 School Language Programs
- Culturally Relevant Programs

Authority, Control and Responsibility

- Community Priorities, Implementation & Capacity Building
- Challenges & Barriers
- YFNs Jurisdiction & Implementation

Sustainability, Supports and Success

- Funding, Supports and Resources
- Capacity Supports
- Policy & Protocol Framework
- Accountability, Assessment & Evaluation
- Relationships & Partnerships

Closing the Academic Achievement Gap

- Family & Community Engagement & Supports
- Foundations for Success
- Student Supports
- Literacy & Numeracy in English
- Transitions

CYFN Education has used the annual YFN Education Summit (March 2013, 2014, and 2015) to gain feedback and direction from communities for input into the JEAP process and development.

The JEAP represents collective action on common education issues and interests that will benefit all Yukon First Nation students, while supporting and strengthening local First Nation efforts in education.

The Joint Education Action Plan (JEAP) was approved by Leadership on March 28, 2014. Yukon Education officially confirmed its agreement with JEAP on October 7, 2014.



Update

Since the approval of the JEAP, a working group comprising representatives of the three Parties have been co-developing the JEAP implementation strategy. Once again, the YFN Education Summit of March 2015 was used as a forum for gathering input by Yukon First Nations and developing a first draft of the implementation strategy.

The working group has since met on several occasions with Judy Arnold, the Deputy Minister of Education, to discuss actionable items and roles and responsibilities within the Draft JEAP Implementation Strategy.

Highlights within the Implementation Strategy include:

- Mandatory cultural awareness training and community orientation for all educators and education staff;
- The development of standards for culturally inclusive schools;
- Mentorship programs to support young First Nation leaders;
- Address challenges regarding available supply of FN language teachers;
- Develop an early learning strategy for FN children;
- FN language immersion kindergarten program (pilot);
- Standardised high school FN language programs available in all high schools or online;
- Development of a culture and language curriculum framework;
- Enactment of the Central Indian Education Authority;
- YFN Choice School;
- FNEC and CELC/ESW/EOC professional development program;
- YFN Policy and Protocol for engagement and consultations;
- Jointly developed data framework to track student progress and data sharing agreements in place;
- Parent and community engagement/empowerment strategy;
- Minimum standards and expectations in the area of student counseling and supports;
- Flexible learning options available in all schools;
- Contribution agreements, TORS and adequate human and financial resources to support JEAP initiatives;
- Quarterly and annual reviews of the JEAP.

The document remains a draft at this time as FNEC and Yukon Education are currently reviewing the work plan as an outcome of the Summit. First Nations (FNEC and CYFN Education) are also awaiting Yukon Education's commitment to actions and resources required to implement the strategy. However, the relationship is currently positive with Yukon Education and there are verbal discussions on investments in YFN Education as part of the *New Vision* being advanced by Government.

There will be an *Education Visioning – Working Together Partnership Session*, hosted by Yukon Education in October, which will be the launch of this *New Vision*. YFN Leaders and FNEC are encouraged to attend.



CYFN Projects 2014-15

YFN Policy and Protocol

A YFN policy document entitled *Jyts'ı 'ndasats'edaye* "This is how we work" was developed with the guidance of a First Nation Education Commission subcommittee. The document is a framework for the development of programs and services for Yukon First Nation learners at all stages of lifelong learning. It addresses the four key priority areas within the JEAP as well as data and student information. The full implementation of these policies will require commitment on the part of all governments: within all Yukon educational institutions and among all First Nation communities.

The document is currently a draft that FNEC will be taking to their individual leaderships in the near future to discuss ways to move the framework forward.

Vision

Our students are excelling in both worlds. They are rooted with fluency in their traditional language and knowledge of their culture and history and confidently living life side by side with others, in a multi-lingual and multicultural Yukon society.

Our students are lifelong learners and First Nation citizens that will empower present and future generations.

Our students know the traditional cultural way of life through seeing, knowing and doing and this is how they enrich and sustain their identities and beliefs.

Our students know and practice their traditional laws, values and morals and these have an important place in their education.

Our students have the opportunity to achieve language fluency; to acquire cultural competencies that are grounded in our stories, traditional ways and land-based learning opportunities that teach respect for self, others and the land.

Our students are all Yukon students regardless of ancestry; who appreciate the rich heritage of this land; know how knowledge is shaped; respect differences and connect through shared educational experiences.

YFN Student Success

The YFN Student Success project was initiated in 2013-14. The overall project objective is to work with Yukon Government to develop a data framework that tracks YFN student achievement over time. This progressive project entails expanding indicators of success (as determined by the department) to include culture and language indicators; thus the assessment framework will comprise data reflecting First Nations determined learning outcomes. Importantly, we want to have our youth recognized for the knowledge they bring to the classroom; and, rather than be penalized for school absenteeism, to earn credit for time spent learning on the land with families, communities and Elders as teachers. Currently, we are working with Yukon Government on data-sharing agreement(s), which will pave the way for the sharing of data between Yukon Government and individual First Nations as concerns YFN student citizens. The development of culture and language indicators, to be integrated into the annual *How Are We Doing? Report*, will be determined by each Local Indian Education Authority (LIEA). The project remains on the table and has been incorporated into the JEAP Implementation Strategy.



Parent and Community Empowerment

This project responds to one of the common threads that run throughout the JEAP: the need for community, family, parent and student involvement and engagement. This project addresses a core fundamental: that children and youth require healthy and supportive home environments and communities in order to succeed at school. This project is in its infancy and over the past year consisted of research on best practices and initiatives in other jurisdictions to determine how best to support and engage parents/caregivers in their children's learning process and education. A pilot project consisting of a community gathering in Carcross and parent survey was rolled out in Carcross / Tagish First Nation. This project was intended to frame a Yukon-wide initiative that will go forward in 2015-16.

CELCs/ESWs/EOCs

This year's CELC/ESW/EOC in service in Dawson City remains one of the highlights of this past year. Hosted by Tr'ondek Hwetch'in CELCs Ashley Bower-Bramadat and Julia Jennings, frontline staffs from across the territory were invited to attend a programmed session and experience 'a couple of days in the life' of counterparts in TH territory. The cohort did a day tour of the city to learn about educational and cultural programs and the strong partnerships that make it all happen. On day two, the group experienced a culture camp filled with back-to-back workshops reflective of the programming regularly organized by Tr'ondek's CELCs. We look forward to the opportunity to work with and visit all CELCs/ESWs/EOCs in their communities.

Projects Planned for 2015-16

A professional development and training program delivered to FNEC representatives, YFN Education Directors/Managers and CELCs/ESWs/EOCs. This capacity-building initiative supports the long-term objective of establishing a YFN School. It is intended to provide YFN Education Departments with conceptual and foundational tools for envisioning a YFN Choice School and all that will be required for its establishment and success. The training will be delivered in three phases: year one will consider the political landscape, legislative and financial components that frame Yukon's education system and experience. As a deliverable, and as determined by the Commission and on the advise of Leadership, an outcome of the first year of training maybe a YFN legislative framework or Education Act if they so choose. Year two will build upon the foundational pieces to consider the administrative functions of a school including school policies, teacher hiring and credentials; school councils and committees; decision-making, student supports and financial requirements etc. Year two and three will consider curriculum and student learning outcomes with YFNs determining *what we want our children to know and how we will teach it*. All three phases will lend themselves to YFNs driving the envisioning process to the establishment of a true YFN Choice School. FNEC will be the drivers of the training initiative, determining specific learning objectives throughout the phases.

Yukon First Nation Choice School Feasibility Study

(to be determined).

A pan-territorial Parent and Community Engagement and Empowerment Project.

This project begins with the recognition of the key role parents/guardians/caregivers play in the education and social development of their children and that their health and involvement is an important factor in student success. Due to the importance of parental capacity, involvement, and supportive home and community environments, this theme runs across and throughout the JEAP as a common thread linking all priority areas. The project at hand builds upon the parent empowerment/engagement strategy and pilot project developed with the community of Carcross/Tagish First Nation in 2014-15. The pilot was a first step in connecting with the community of parents to discuss both their needs as well as skill sets that they can bring to the school environment. The project has several intentions: it seeks to build and nurture student supports within the home using a holistic approach; forge deeper connections between the community and school, staff and teachers and; foster relationships and mechanisms for the involvement of parents in school decision-making processes. The project will be driven by a Parent's Committee (two reps from each YFN) and will be rolled out in the 14 YFN communities over 2015-16.



TOGETHER TODAY... FOR OUR CHILDREN TOMORROW

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