

FIRST NATION EDUCATION COMMISSION

DRAFT BRIEFING NOTE

TOPIC: YUKON LITERACY STRATEGY

PREPARED BY: FNEC Co-Chairs: Shandell McCarthy, CAFN & Tosh Southwick, KFN

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1. Issue:

Yukon First Nation input, involvement, engagement and endorsement of the Yukon Literacy Strategy. Literacy statistics¹, across the spectrum of lifelong learning: early childhood; kindergarten to grade 12 and adult literacy for Yukon First Nations reflect the need for all partners to coordinate and collaborate efforts for improving the literacy rates. This is true for all Yukon First Nation languages and the English language.

2. Background: See attached *Backgrounder for the Yukon Literacy Strategy*

3. Current Situation or Status:

There are 14 Yukon First Nations in the Yukon, with 8 distinct languages. Eleven of the fourteen Yukon First Nations have self-government agreements. In January of 2014, Yukon First Nations came together to begin the process of identifying language group visions, philosophies, definitions and priorities for literacy.

At that time, Shawn Kitchen, ADM Advanced Education, Yukon Government presented the Yukon Literacy Strategy to receive feedback from Yukon First Nations. The feedback is captured within the attached report: *Yukon First Nation Literacy Framework Workshop Report: Working Together, Moving Forward*.

The workshop also identified common elements and provides details on Yukon First Nation perspectives on literacy that are important for all literacy stakeholders to understand. This framework will undergo further development and localization with each Yukon First Nation over the next one to three years, pending financial supports.

Participants also provided feedback to support the Yukon Literacy Strategy in becoming more inclusive of Yukon First Nation perspectives, positions and priorities concerning literacy. Some highlights that flowed out of the workshop are:

- Yukon First Nation perspectives on literacy are unique to each language group, yet common elements exist between Yukon First Nations and other literacy strategies, such as the Yukon Literacy Strategy;

¹ PIAAC, Department of Education Annual Reports, Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Draft Yukon Education Report on First Nation Student Achievement: How Are We Doing?, past Yukon First Nation Language Assessments (ALS, Government of Yukon).

- It is important for all stakeholders and partners to understand that Yukon First Nations are another level of government in the Yukon and thus consider themselves as partners;
- The presentations by Advanced Education and the opportunity to offer feedback were appreciated and the opportunity to work alongside each other to improve literacy rates is at hand;
- Although representatives from Yukon First Nations were e-mailed and invited to Working Group meetings, not all Yukon First Nations were able to participate on a consistent and regular basis in an initiative that is close to the heart and well-being of First Nation individuals, families and communities;
- There is a general understanding that the process for the inclusion of Yukon First Nation input and feedback needs to be looked at closely and that First Nations need to identify optional methods that would increase participation and engagement in such initiatives as the Yukon Literacy Strategy. As well, First Nations recognize the need to clearly define the process for what constitutes consultations and what is providing feedback or input; and
- It was emphasized that further collaboration and engagement is necessary at the community level to ensure that the YFN Literacy Plans (common and specific) are further developed.

4. **Decisions Required:**

- a. Do FNEC officials want to provide feedback into the Yukon Literacy Strategy? If not, what are the next steps? If yes, what are the next steps?
- b. Do FNEC officials want to endorse the Yukon Literacy Strategy? If not, what is the direction? If yes, what are the steps?
- c. Do FNEC officials want to seek ratification from Leadership? If not, what is the direction? If yes, what are the steps?
- d. What do FNEC officials want to present to the Yukon Literacy Strategy Working Group on May 22nd? Who should present?

5. **Funding Requirement:** Need to consider requesting funding from Advanced Education for the resources applied to seeking First Nation perspectives and input into the Yukon Literacy Strategy. FNEC recommended at the February meeting to establish a Sub-Committee on Literacy – perhaps a request for funding the committee and for supporting the work that may need to unfold at the community level as it concerns literacy.

6. **Note:** None

7. **Time Required:** Each First Nation may want to review the Yukon Literacy Strategy at the community level and may wish to identify specific projects to put forward in the action plan. This would take time and resources.

8. **Draft Motion/Resolution:** To be determined