



TOGETHER TODAY... FOR OUR CHILDREN TOMORROW

# COUNCIL OF YUKON FIRST NATIONS

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## CYFN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

2013-14

**Draft Annual Report**

DRAFT



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## Table of Contents

<b>CYFN Education Department .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>M.O.U. on Education Partnership .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Joint Action Plan on YFN Education .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>YFN Student Achievement Strategy .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>YFN Literacy Framework and Pilot Project .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Community Consultations and Communications .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>First Nations Education Commission (FNEC) .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>CELC-ESW-EOCs .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Attachments.....</b>	<b>8</b>



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## CYFN Education Department

The CYFN Education Department are supported by financial contributions on the part of Yukon Government (YG) and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC).

This year's funding through AANDC's Education Partnerships Program (EPP) assisted with:

- *Developing a Joint Education Action Plan on YFN Education by March 2014*
- *Developing a YFN Student Achievement Strategy*
- *Developing YFN Literacy Framework And Pilot Project*
- *Community Consultations and Education Agreements to advance local YFN education*

This year's funding through Public Schools Branch, Yukon Education assisted with:

- *Operations of the CYFN Education Department*
- *Director of Education position*
- *Education Coordinator position*
- *CELC-ESW-EC Training initiative*
- *FNEC meetings*

A new Director of Education was hired in September of 2013. Over the period of time where the Education Department was without a Director, the Executive Director of CYFN provided leadership and ensured that education initiatives were unfolding as per the work plan.

The CYFN Education Department now consists of an Education Director and an Education Projects Coordinator. Our work involves implementation of the provisions within the tripartite MOU, proposal based initiatives and technical work arising from the First Nations Education Commission (FNEC). Our work plan at the CYFN Education Department for the past year addressed the following major initiatives:

- Joint Action Plan for the success of FN learners
- YFN Student Achievement Strategy aimed at YFN students achieving and exceeding full educational outcomes, levels and successes to the highest standard within Yukon and Canada.
- YFN Literacy Framework and Pilot Project (inclusive of culture and language)
- Community Consultations and Agreements to support YFNs at the community level in moving self-determined educational initiatives forward
- CELC, ESW and EC Professional Development & Training Initiatives

## M.O.U. on Education Partnership

The MOU is essentially a commitment for YFNs, Yukon and Canada to work together to improve the learning outcomes for FN students and to establish a joint action plan for FN learners (for all parties signed on to the MOU). It is not a legal document and is non-binding. The MOU does not derogate or impact any other agreements that you might be engaged in with other governments, including any section 17

### 1.0 General Provisions

- 1.1 This MOU is a statement of intent by the Parties and does not create any legal obligations on any of the Parties; it is not intended to define, create, recognize, deny or amend any of the rights of the Parties.



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discussions/negotiations; intergovernmental agreements or other bi-lateral and tri-lateral agreements for example.

Within the MOU provisions, a Senior Officials group was established to oversee the joint action plan for FN learners. The Senior Officials in turn, appoint a Working Group. The Working Group's role is to create and implement the joint action plan to improve First Nations education in the Yukon.

The MOU had 9 signatories as of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013; and as of December 2013 through consultations and meetings the number of partners has increased to 15. The signatories to the MOU now include CYFN, Yukon and Canada, and 12 individual First Nations. For us here at CYFN, progressive change is most strongly felt through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) recently signed off by Canada, Yukon, CYFN and currently 12 Yukon First Nations. The MOU firms up a commitment on the part of all Parties to create and implement a Joint Action Plan. The plan will flow from "*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.*" Of worthy note, and central to the MOU, is the recognition of and need for culturally and linguistically appropriate education and the inclusion of "*the cultural and linguistic heritage of Yukon First Nations people*" in Yukon education curriculum.

The following parties have signed on to become partners within the tripartite memorandum of understanding on education partnerships.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>Carcross Tagish First Nation</i>            | 2. <i>First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun</i>      |
| 3. <i>Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation</i>          | 4. <i>Liard First Nation</i>                   |
| 5. <i>Ta'an Kwach'an</i>                          | 6. <i>White River First Nation</i>             |
| 7. <i>Kluane First Nation</i>                     | 8. <i>Champagne and Aishihik First Nations</i> |
| 9. <i>Selkirk First Nation</i>                    | 10. <i>Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation</i> |
| 11. <i>Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation</i>           | 12. <i>Teslin Tlingit Council</i>              |
| 13. <i>Yukon Government</i>                       | 14. <i>Council of Yukon First Nations</i>      |
| 15. <i>Federal Government, Aboriginal Affairs</i> |  |

## Joint Action Plan on YFN Education

In terms of moving forth with the development of a Joint Education Action Plan, a Senior Officials Group was established in November of 2013 to oversee the development and implementation of plan and consists of:

*Michelle Kolla, Executive Director, CYFN*  
*Valerie Royale, Deputy Minister, Yukon Education*  
*Dionne Saville, Director Regional General, Aboriginal Affairs*

A Working Group was also established in November 2013, for creating, monitoring and implementing the Joint Action Plan. Each party to the MOU appointed the following individuals.

*Ed Schultz, FNEC member, LSCFN was chair, now Roberta Hager, FNEC Alternate Co-Chair, FNNND*  
*Albert Trask, ADM, Yukon Education*  
*Tina Jules, CYFN Education Director*  
*Tosh Southwick, FNEC Co-Chair, KFN*  
*Janet McDonald, Director of FNPP, Yukon Education*  
*Kathleen Coventry, Aboriginal Affairs, Federal Government (will be replaced)*



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The Working Group met in December of 2013 and direction was given to incorporate main recommendations from past education reports into the drafting of the joint plan. Some of the main documents included were:

1. 1973 Together Today for our Children Tomorrow
2. 1987 KWIYA Report
3. 2001 CYFN Education Report
4. 2002 Education Act Review
5. 2005 AFN First Nations Education Plan
6. 2008 Education Reform Final Report
7. 2008 YFN Students Succeed: YFN EAC Terms of Reference
8. 2008 One Vision, Multiple Pathways: Secondary School Program Review
9. 2009 Auditor General's Report on Yukon Education
10. 2010 Cant & Jim's Synthesis of Meetings re: Partnership in Education
11. 2013 Tripartite MOU on Education Partnerships, including Mtg. Minutes
12. CYFN Resolutions RE: Education & Language
13. CYFN - FNEC Documents: Terms of Reference, Draft Action Plan & Program Reports
14. Yukon Education Annual Reports

Presentations were provided and feedback was received from people that participated in the following events and meetings:

- YFN Education Summits hosted in March 2013
- FNEC meetings from October 2013, December 2013, February 2014
- CELC meetings/training October 2013
- YFN Literacy Framework Development Workshop in January 2014
- YFN Student Success Workshop in February 2014
- YFN Education Summit in March 2014
- First Nation presentations were available for individual Yukon First Nations

The recommendations from the reports and meetings/gatherings provided a framework for the vision, guiding principles, priorities and goals for the action plan. In the spring of 2014 the Working Group met and agreed upon the existing Joint Education Action Plan. The plan consists of a Vision, Guiding Principles, 4 Priorities and a set of Goals under each priority, along with interwoven threads.

On March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014, the YFN Joint Education Action was reviewed and approved by Leadership. Currently Yukon Education is reviewing and undergoing the identification of its vetting process for such as document.

The Joint Education Action Plan will be a living document that will undergo further reviews and adjustments through consultations and meetings with YFNs, Yukon Government and other stakeholders. The JEAP is intended to remain flexible and open to improvements as initiatives unfold over the next few years.

The Joint Education Action Plan is attached for your information.

## YFN Student Achievement Strategy

Judy Arnold and Janet McDonald at the Department of Education; Gerry Ewert and Melissa Carlick from YFN Statistics Branch and the Director of Education at CYFN comprised the team of individuals that worked to produce a draft YFN Student Achievement Report: How Are We Doing? The overall project goal was to improve student-learning outcomes through creating a report that provided baseline data and information needed to inform education practice, programs and services. Please see attached report that will undergo further work in 2014-15 so as to align further with community, partner and stakeholder perspectives.



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Funding pending, the localized YFN Student Achievement Reports and the Education Programs, Services and Supports Reports will be produced in partnership with specific First Nations that have expressed interest in working on a pilot project. To date, NNDFN, CTFN, TTC and LFN have expressed interest in this initiative.

*YFN Student Success Workshop* was hosted for 3 days from February 18-20, 2014. The Workshop provided presentations from Department and First Nation education experts on student achievement within relevant contexts and heard from an Education Panel with youth representatives. The presentations included an overview of the draft YFN Student Achievement Report and information on other research that is relevant such as REEES. The participants included Elders, educators, youth and other stakeholders. Engagement activities to produce feedback were provided in the following areas:

- Philosophical Perspectives on Student Success (visual metaphors)
- Definitions of Student Success
- Identification of Gaps in the Data Sets
- Perspectives on Measurement Tools

## YFN Literacy Framework and Pilot Project

Judy Arnold and Janet McDonald at the Department of Education and the Director of Education at CYFN comprised the working team for this project. The overall project goal was to improve student-learning outcomes through beginning with developing common understandings of YFN perspectives on literacy and connecting this to the current existing perspectives on literacy within the mainstream education system. This project produced a draft YFN Literacy Framework with a focus on Cultures and Languages and funding pending, will implement a pilot project for the next fiscal year.

*The YFN Literacy Framework Workshop* was hosted for 3 days from January 22-24, 2014. The workshop provided the opportunity to incorporate YFN perspectives into the Yukon Literacy Strategy. The workshop helped to clarify individual YFN philosophies and definitions of literacy from a traditional perspective and in certain ways helped to identify the First Nation cultural perspectives, ways of knowing and doing that could support excellence in English – reading, writing, speaking, understanding (and other areas) –the cultural piece to support students. Please see the attached Literacy Framework Workshop Report for specific details on the feedback and information provided through small group sessions. The participants from the workshop were provided with presentations and engagement activities in the following areas:

- Proven practices in Indigenous/Aboriginal Literacy
- YFN philosophy and definition on Literacy
- Indigenous/Aboriginal Models of Literacy Frameworks, Strategies and Plans
- Vision, Priorities, Goals and Outcomes/Next Steps for YFN Literacy
- Connecting to Yukon Literacy Strategy

The workshop also provided insight into performance measurement as it concerns YFN students, it planted seeds and is certainly a beginning to supporting YFNs in developing local FN literacy frameworks.

## Community Consultations and Communications

Community consultations and communications is an on-going initiative. Presentations are available to individual YFNs as a means to providing updates and to receive input, feedback and direction. Presentations have been provided to FNEC, CELCs, ESWs, EOCs and to FNNND, THFN, CTFN, TKC and SFN. Over 2014-15 a series of community visits will be planned alongside FNEC representatives, CELCs-ESWs-EOCs or Education Director/Manager with each individual FN.

The CYFN Education Department provides newsletters that provide a reader friendly update to all partners and stakeholders involved in YFN education. As well, written reports are provided to YFN Leadership and





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these are also reviewed with FNEC. Regular meetings with the Department of Education are ongoing to review progress on the numerous initiatives. See attached newsletter.

**YFN Education Summit – Joint YFN Education Plan** was hosted on March 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The Education Summit was well attended by YFNs and the draft Joint Education Action Plan was presented and further feedback and input was received to make the plan more meaningful and relevant to individual YFNs.

The overall message was that the plan would need to go out to communities and that further work would be needed to share information about the plan and to receive community level input from parents, community, students and leadership.

## First Nations Education Commission (FNEC)

The FNEC was re-established in April of 2013 by resolution from the YFN Leadership. CYFN Education provides technical and administrative support to FNEC. CYFN Education organizes and coordinates meetings; prepares agendas, minutes and other materials for meetings; prepares common briefing notes; drafts reports; solicits research and writes proposals for funding to support the FNEC. Please see attached Leadership resolution re-instating the FNEC on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013. The Commission's mandate is as follows:

The Commission has had meetings in August 2013, October 2013, December 2013, February 2014, May 2014 and June 2014. The Commission is currently working on identifying its priorities, goals and work plan and this work will continue over 2014-15. As well, the Commission deals with many education issues and concerns as related to YFN education and through consensus decision making they put forth strategies and recommendations aimed at advancing YFN education with respect to improving student learning outcomes for YFN students and improving the involvement and engagement of YFN students, parents, families and communities.

## CELC-ESW-EOCs

The CELCs gathered twice this past fiscal year for 2 day sessions.

The first session was held on October 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> and consisted of Yukon and CYFN Education department updates. This forum provided the opportunity for CELCs to become informed of and ask questions about new initiatives, projects and programs that are being undertaken and/or rolled out within and across the territory. Highlights included: *Blended Learning*, a technology-based pilot project (using the Moodle platform) headed by Yukon Education being offered in Watson Lake; *REM (Rural Experiential Model)* also headed by Yukon Education targeting rural high school students; Yukon Education's *Learning Together Program* and CYFN's *Language Nest* and *Language Revitalization* project which focus on parent engagement and early learning and; the work being done on the draft *Joint Education Action Plan*, coordinated by CYFN. The session also provided an opportunity for CELCs/ESWs to share their work and initiatives they are involved with at the schools and at the local level.

The CELCs came together for a second time on February 4-5<sup>th</sup> 2014. The highlights of this session included a text, *The Courage to Teach*, which they began as a cohort in the initial phases of building a *Professional Learning Community*. The PLC is a forum of collaboration in which CELCs become involved in, guide and reflect on the learning-teaching process. Subsequent to this, representatives from YG Ec-Dev Department hosted a proposal writing workshop through which CELCs jointly designed their next training session program and drafted a proposal to the Community Development Fund. This new directive afforded the CELCs to assume a leadership role by developing a program around self-identified needs and interests and gain experience on proposal writing. The next session will be led by Tr'ondek Hwech'in CELCs in Dawson



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City which will consist of an environmental scan of programs and services geared to youth and an experiential program developed by CELCs. This program is scheduled for August 2014, pending additional funding resources expected through the CDF proposal.

The CELCs/ESWs/EOCs were also invited to attend the teacher professional development Summer Academy earlier in the year (August 2013). The focus of the Summer Academy was the Residential School era to increase teacher awareness on the intergenerational effects of Residential School.

## Attachments

1. YFN Literacy Framework Workshop Report
2. Joint Education Action Plan – A Living Document
3. FNEC Resolution