RE: FNEC Draft Recommendations to the Student Financial Assistance Act Review.

The FNEC Teleconference to review the Student Financial Assistance Act options put forward by the Department of Education was attended by: Tosh Southwick (FNEC Co-Chair, KFN); Lynn Sparks (TKC); James Smarch (TTC); Ashley Doiron and Dexter MacRae (THFN); Paula Banks (CAFN); Jennifer Wykes (CYFN); Rose Sellars (note taker, CYFN).

**DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following pages provide specific draft recommendations.

Draft recommendations for questions 1 and 5 are presented first as they can be easily addressed separately. Draft recommendations for questions 2, 3 and 4 have been combined as they are all related and are more complex.

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Question #1

Do you think Yukon students should be eligible for the Yukon Grant, even if they receive financial assistance for their post-secondary studies from the Government of Canada as well?

Draft Recommendation:

Remove clause 9(2) which restricts students from receiving funding from the government of Canada and the Yukon Grant.

**Do you wish to add, remove or amend the above option?**

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| **FNEC agrees that clause 9(2) which restricts students from receiving funding from the government of Canada and the Yukon Grant should be removed.** |

**If so, how:**

**If not, do you agree with this recommendation?**

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Question #2

Do you think there should be a difference in funding for students who attend their post-secondary studies outside of the Yukon as compared to those who study in the Yukon?

The travel allowance question has four options for your review. The legislation would list one option.

Option 1: Average the amount currently spent on airfares and distribute evenly amongst all students.

 Pros:

* Same amount of funding for all students
* Promotes attendance at Yukon College
* Less administrative
* Students at Yukon College would receive $1450 more per year

 Cons:

* Does not increase the budget
* Students attending institutions outside Yukon (approximately 85% of all Yukon Grant recipients) would receive $350 less per year
* Does not provide additional funding for travel costs
* Outside Students who are not currently eligible for an airfare (i.e. students who do not return for the summer) will receive approximately $1450 more
* Could increase the budget (i.e. Single Student Training Allowance students will likely choose the Yukon Grant)

Option 2: Increase the amount of Yukon Grant for students attending Yukon College by $1800.

 Pros:

* + Same amount of funding for all students
	+ Promotes attendance at Yukon College
	+ Less administrative
	+ Students at Yukon College would receive $1800 more per year

 Cons:

* + Will increase the budget by $180,000
	+ Does not provide additional funding for travel costs
	+ Outside Students who are not currently eligible for an airfare (i.e. students who do not return for the summer) will receive$1800 more
	+ Could increase the budget (i.e. Single Student Training Allowance students will likely choose the Yukon Grant)

Option 3: Provide a $1000 travel allowance and average the remaining savings amongst all students.

 Pros:

* + Will not increase the budget
	+ Provides additional funding for travel costs
	+ Students at Yukon College would receive $650 more per year
	+ More reflective cost of a return airfare for most students

 Cons:

* + Different amount of funding for all students
	+ Less promotion of attendance at Yukon College
	+ Outside students who are not currently eligible for an airfare (i.e. students who do not return for the summer) will receive$650 more
	+ Students attending institutions outside Yukon would receive $150 less

Option 4: Pay for actual costs of travel

 Pros:

* + Would likely reduce the budget
	+ Provides additional amount for travel costs
	+ Reflective of the actual costs for airfares
	+ Outside students who are not currently eligible for an airfare will not receive additional amount

 Cons:

* + Different amount of funding for all students
	+ Less promotion of attendance at Yukon College
	+ Students at Yukon College would not receive additional funding
	+ Administratively burdensome for both staff and students
	+ Would reduce amounts for most students who attend outside the Territory

**Do you wish to add, remove or amend any of the above options?**

**If so, how:**

**Which option do you prefer?**

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| **FNEC recommends option 2: Increase the amount of Yukon Grant for students attending Yukon College by $1800.** |

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Questions #2, 3 & 4

1. Should the ‘Dependent’ and ‘New Resident’ student categories be removed from the Act?
2. Should there be a clear and consistent definition of residency to determine whether a student has ‘continuously resided’ in the Yukon?
3. Should students who have achieved high school equivalency, by attending adult education or similar programs in the Yukon, be eligible for the Yukon Grant?

There are several recommendations and draft definitions in the following pages to address questions 2, 3 and 4. It is important to note, with the removal of dependent and new resident student categories, there will no longer be categories of students. Rather, students must now meet either the resident or completion of public school criteria to become eligible.

RESIDENCY:

The following draft definition of residency will be added to the legislation:

Definition of resident: You must normally reside in and consider the Yukon your home. It is the place where you routinely return at the end of temporary absences. You do not always need to be physically present in the Yukon but absences must be temporary both in time and in the sense that Yukon remains unequivocally your home. Your absence must not indicate your intention to take up residency somewhere else. In most cases, while students are in full-time post-secondary education outside of the Territory they are still considered to be resident of the Territory. Generally, Yukon residents file as a Yukon citizen with Canada Revenue Agency, have valid Yukon health care insurance and, if you drive a vehicle, you have a valid Yukon driver’s license.

First we will deal with residency but keep in mind that students will need to meet residency AND completion of public school.

**Do you wish to add, remove or amend the above definition?**

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| **FNEC agrees with this definition of residency.** |

The following residency options have been presented. The legislation would list one residency option.

Residency Option 1: You are a Yukon resident if you have resided in the Yukon for 2 years prior to your post-secondary classes starting.

 Pros:

* Models existing independent criteria
* Based on students’ residency

Cons:

* Does not allow students to qualify through parents’ residency
* Most other jurisdictions have a one year residency rule

Residency Option 2:

1. Mature student: If you have been out of high school for four years or available to work for 2 years you are a Yukon resident if you have resided in the Yukon for one year prior to your post-secondary classes starting, or
2. Recent graduate: If you have not been out of high school for four years available to work for 2 years you are a Yukon resident if your parents have resided in the Yukon for the previous 12 months.

 Pros:

* Consistent with most other jurisdictions in Canada
* If family moves away, recent graduate students become eligible in another province or territory within one year
* Requires continuous residency

 Cons:

* + - Reduces the current residency requirement by one year
		- Recent graduate criteria is based on parents’ residency
		- Recent graduate students whose parents move away would be ineligible after one year

COMPLETION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL:

A draft definition of completion will be finalized and added to the legislation:

With the assistance from Public Schools Branch and Yukon College a definition of completion needs to be drafted. Points to consider include: completion versus successful completion, two distinct grades (i.e. a repeated a grade), programs that are not based on a typical school year (blended learning, ILC, part-time attendance, etc.).

**Do you have any input into the points to consider?**

Completion of Public School Option 1: You complete two years of high school (grades 8 – 12) in the Yukon Public School System or two years of Adult Basic Education (ABE) at Yukon College

 Pros:

* + Allows long-time residents who obtain their high school equivalency through ABE at Yukon College to access funding

 Cons:

* + May be other equivalency programs we have not considered
	+ Allows non long-time residents who move here after completion of public school and attend ABE at Yukon College to become eligible

Completion of Public School Option 2: You complete:

1. Two years of high school (grades 8-12) in the Yukon Public School System,
2. Two years of Adult Basic Education at Yukon College, or
3. 5 years of elementary school (grades 1-7) in the Yukon Public School System.

 Pros:

* Allows long-time residents who completed elementary or ABE at Yukon College to access funding

Cons:

* May be other equivalency programs we have not considered
* Need to ensure elementary records are available
* Allows non long-time residents to become eligible (i.e. who move back many years after completing elementary or move here after high school is complete and attend AEB at Yukon College).

Completion of Public School Option 3: Allow 1 year of funding for any year completed in Yukon Public School System (grades 1-12) to a maximum of five years.

 Pros:

* + Allows long-term residents who completed any years in the Yukon Public School to access funding

 Cons:

* + Could reduce the number of years for some students as right now only need to attend two years to get five years of funding
	+ Does not allow students who have completed their high equivalency through ABE at Yukon College to become eligible
	+ Need to ensure elementary records are available

**Do you wish to add, remove or amend any of the above options?**

**If so, how:**

**Which option do you prefer for residency?**

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| **FNEC recommends the use of the *draft definition of residency* to determine residency.** |

**Which option do you prefer for completion of public school?**

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| **FNEC recommends that in order to be eligible for financial assistance, an individual must meet the *draft definition of residency* (above) and have *registered* in either 4 years of elementary school or two years of high school or one year of adult basic education (ABE) as outlined in Option #4 below. FNEC further recommends that school *completion* not be made a qualifying requirement for financial assistance.****Option #4: Students are eligible for financial assistance if at any time in their past they have either:**1. **registered for four years of elementary school (grades 1-7) in the Yukon school system;**
2. **registered for 2 years of high school (grades 8-12) in the Yukon school system; or**
3. **registered for 1 year in ABE at Yukon College.**
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Other Administrative Draft Recommendations

In addition to the above draft recommendations, there are three administrative options for your consideration:

Use one flat rate (depending on the travel allowance decision) to calculate and trace the amount of funding eligible by week rather than semester, quarter or academic year.

 Pros

* Would eliminate tuition, book and living categories
* More equitable for students attending non-traditional (i.e. for 2 semesters) years

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| **FNEC agrees with the one flat rate per week of study option.** |

Remove the clause that requires a student to maintain an average of 65% or higher to receive the full amount of funding in subsequent years.

 Pros

* Eliminates duplication of monitoring student progression (i.e. institutions already monitor)
* More equitable for students who have a ‘heavy academic course load’
* Removes financial barrier for those who may be struggling
* Less administrative for both students and staff

 Cons

* Would slightly increase the budget

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| **FNEC supports the removal of the clause that requires a student to maintain an average of 65% or higher to receive the full amount of funding in subsequent years.** |

Expand the current powers of the Students Financial Assistance Appeal Committee to allow more powers than the current limited sections they can hear appeals for and recommendation of policies where appropriate.

 Pros:

* Provides for decisions for uncommon or unique situations
* Models existing practices

 Cons:

* Need to ensure consistent definitions are created so students who do meet the intent of the Yukon Grant would not be approved for funding

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| **FNEC agrees with the expansion of the current powers of the Students Financial Assistance Appeal Committee and requests *guaranteed representation of YFNs on the committee.*** |

**Do you wish to add, remove or amend any of the above options?**

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| ***FNEC recommends that all Adult Basic Education be provided to students at no charge or that student assistance for ABE be provided outside of the 5 year maximum grant allocation****.* ***To reflect this, FNEC recommends a new category of funding specifically for students requiring academic upgrading or skills development and that there be two years of funding available outside of the grant and training allowance specifically for ABE. This is to ensure that students can do the necessary upgrading and still have financial supports to pursue and finish their degrees****.* |