

DRAFT

How are we doing?
2013-2014

CYFN
FNEC
JEAP

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Introduction

This report's purpose is to present student demographic, attendance, and achievement data in a way that creates a comparative of Yukon First Nations (YFN) and Non-First Nations (Non-FN) students in the Yukon. The scope of this report is framed by a range of data sources presented from one academic year (2013-2014).

From this comparative, a picture is presented in order to shed light on the central question framed as "How are we doing?" With this question at the forefront, this report presents a wide range of both First Nations (FN) and non-First Nations student data in an attempt to answer this question through a comparative of a number of data sets.

As a significant part of the report attempts are made to identify potential problems to data which made hinder a comprehensive understanding of the achievement gap. At the core of these issues with data lies the complications created due to self-identification. This is due to not all FN students attending Yukon schools self-identifying, thereby limiting the accuracy of the data contained in this report. The accuracy of the figures presented on FN students and non-FN students must therefore be viewed and considered with this limitation in mind.

The report ends with concluding observations arising as a result of this data comparative, the intention being to support future work aimed at narrowing and eliminating student achievement gaps and improving outcomes for all Yukon students. The observation contained in this report are intended to assist the formation of 'next steps' aimed at improving educational outcomes for First Nations students.

Section 1: Enrolment

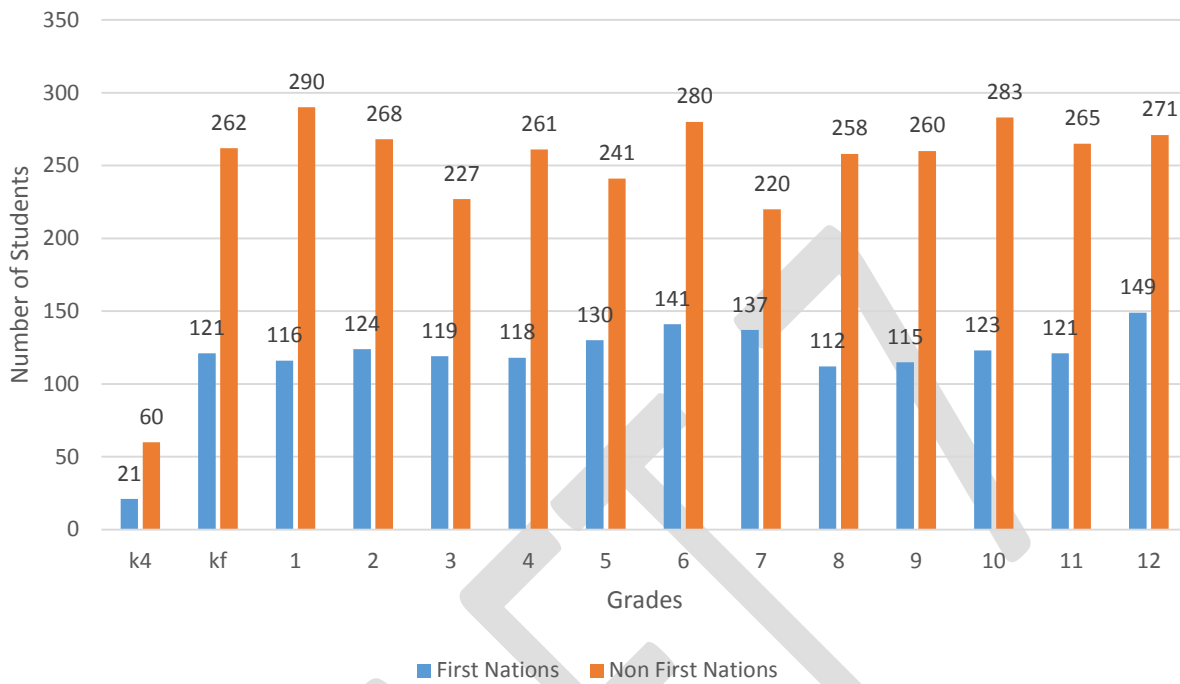
Based on the given data, nearly 1/3 of Yukon students are of First Nations ancestry, though this figure may be higher due to possible underreporting. The range of YFN students by grade is 26-38%. In total FN students make up 32% of the students in the Yukon. As mentioned in the introduction, potential underreporting due to self-identification has implications on the accuracy of the FN data in this report.

Using the previous year enrolment data as a comparative, it is possible to estimate the advancement rate of students. Where total enrolment for a grade in 2013-2014 is higher than a grade lower in 2012-2014 it is possible the change in enrolment is due to individuals moving in or students being unable to advance to the next grade. As seen in Figure 1.2 there are more students in grade 10 in 2013-2014 than there were students in grade 9 in 2012-2013. Conversely if there are less students in 2013-2014 than expected from the previous school years enrolment it is possible that the change is due to drop-outs, being unable to advance, or move outs.

While the enrolment demographics shows the distribution of YFN and non-YFN students, it also tells us that there are more non-YFN students than YFN students overall. Additional data is required to identify proportion of First Nation and Non-First Nations students enrolled out of total available for enrolment. This would assist in determining the proportion of students not enrolled in school.

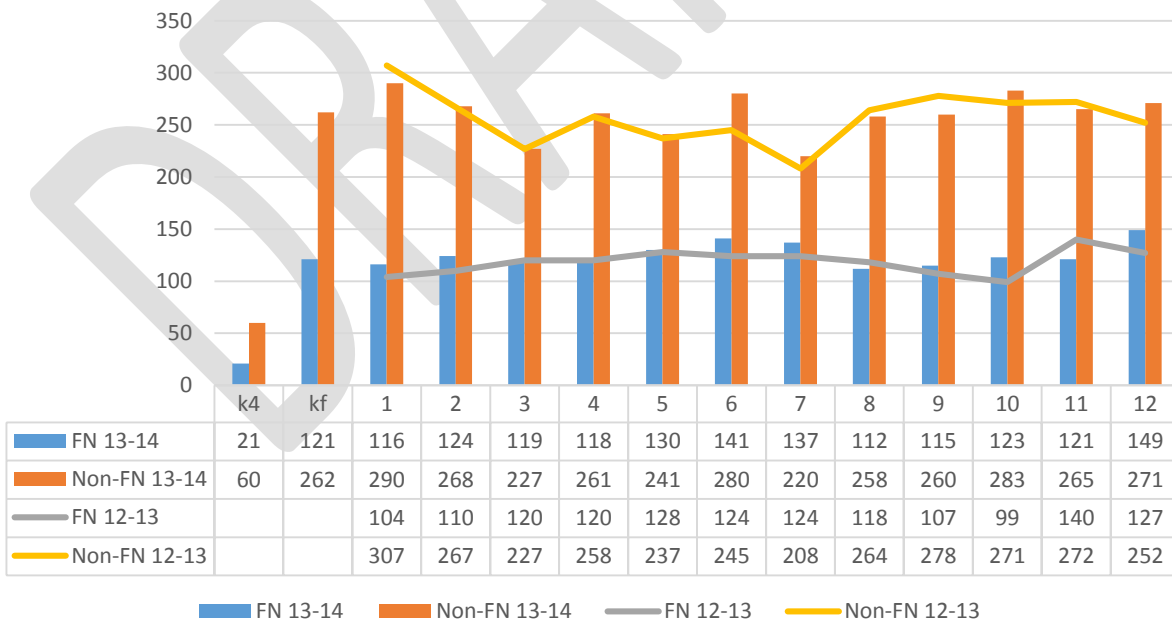
Self-identification continues to be an issue in terms of enrolment as it is difficult to determine the true number of FN and Non-FN students. In a year to year comparison the issue becomes more noticeable due to the fact that it is even more difficult to determine whether one student self-identified as FN constantly. In other words, it is possible that a student may identify as FN one year and not identify as FN another year. Thus, if this is consistently the case then the discussion of advancement rate using the enrolment data from previous years must also be reconsidered.

Enrolment 2013-2014



Source: Yukon Department of Education

Enrolment/advancement



Source: Yukon Department of Education¹

¹ 2012-2013 enrolment data is the enrolment for the previous grade, moved up a year to visualize the difference.

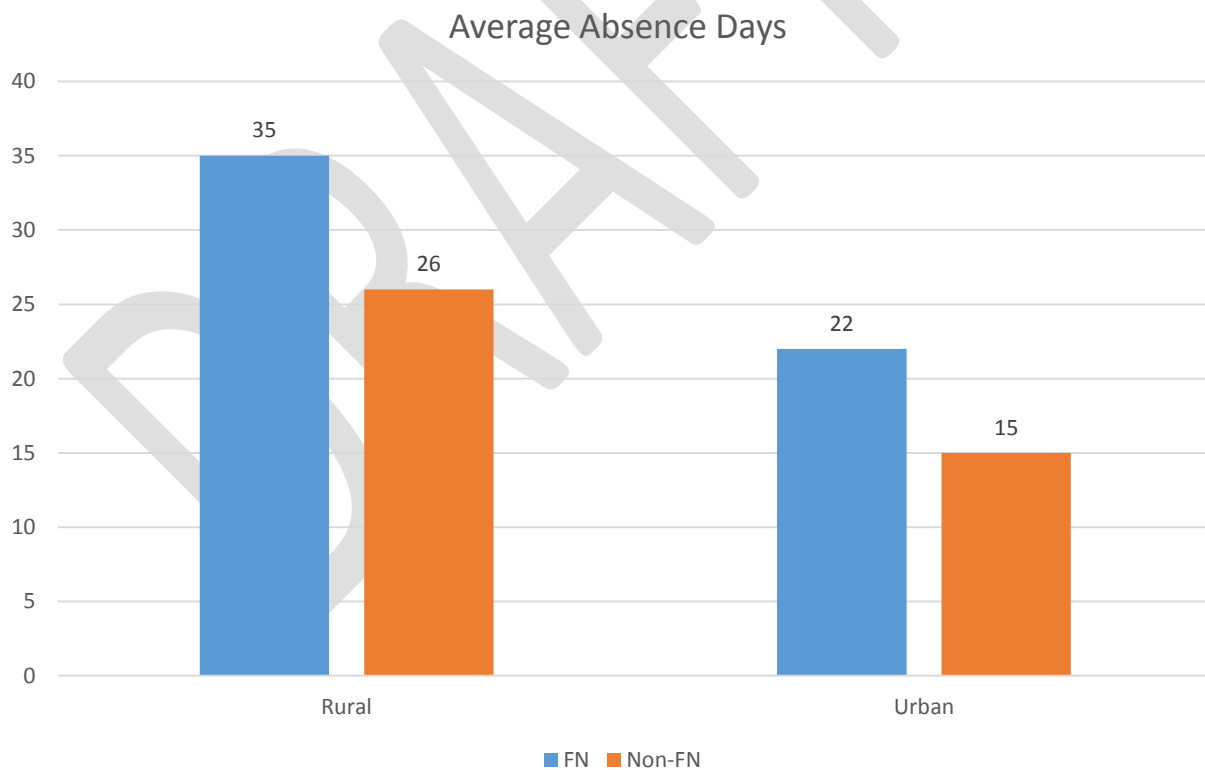
Section 2: Attendance

Attendance is a significant factor which contributes to academic achievement. Thus, a review of attendance rates, as identified using average absence days, will help identify potential problems.

According to Yukon Department of Education the Yukon Average Absence figures do not vary considerably from the average of 20 days from year to year for all grades. Due to lack of data from previous years about the average absence days for each grade it is difficult to determine whether the average absences remain relatively stable.

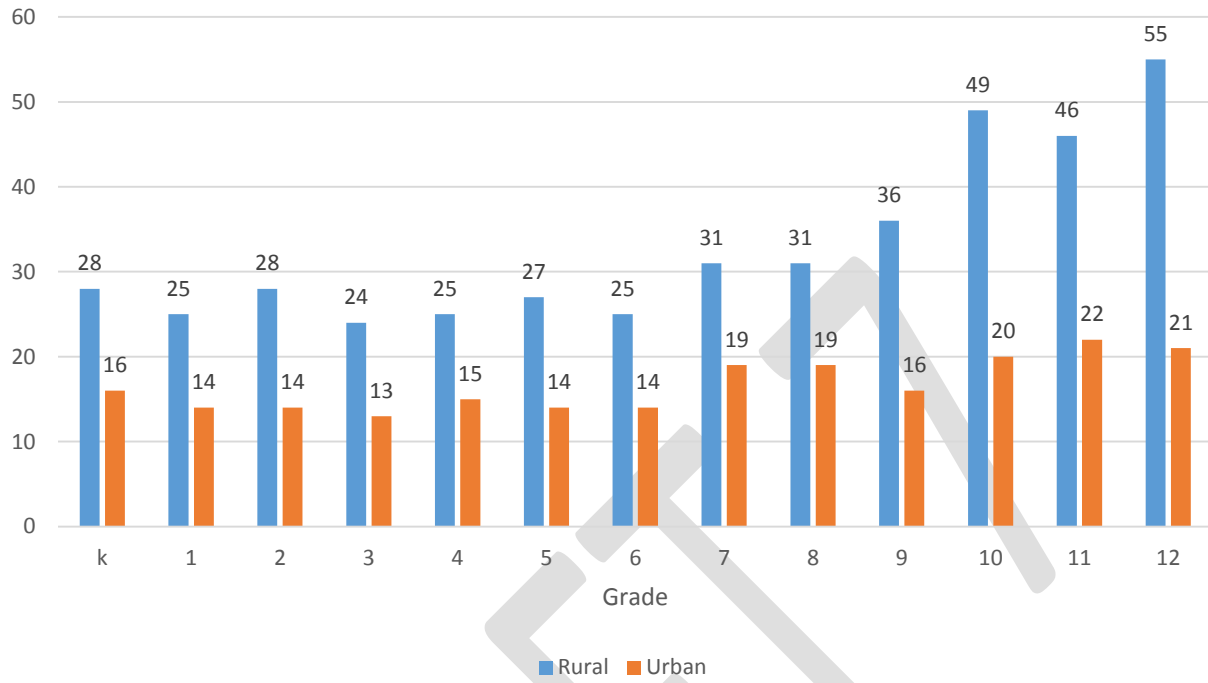
Average absence days per school year is shown to be higher for YFN students than for non-YFN students in both urban and rural areas. In comparing rural and urban areas the average absence days per school year is higher for rural areas than urban areas. Thus, urban non-YFN students are shown to have the fewest number of days absent while rural YFN students are shown to have the greatest number of days absent.

The difference between FN and non-FN attendance gets wider in the higher grades. Where non-FN student's average absence days remain relatively stable, FN student's average absence days rises sharply. This is especially the case for rural students where the difference between in average absence days for FN and non-FN students is nearly 30 days.



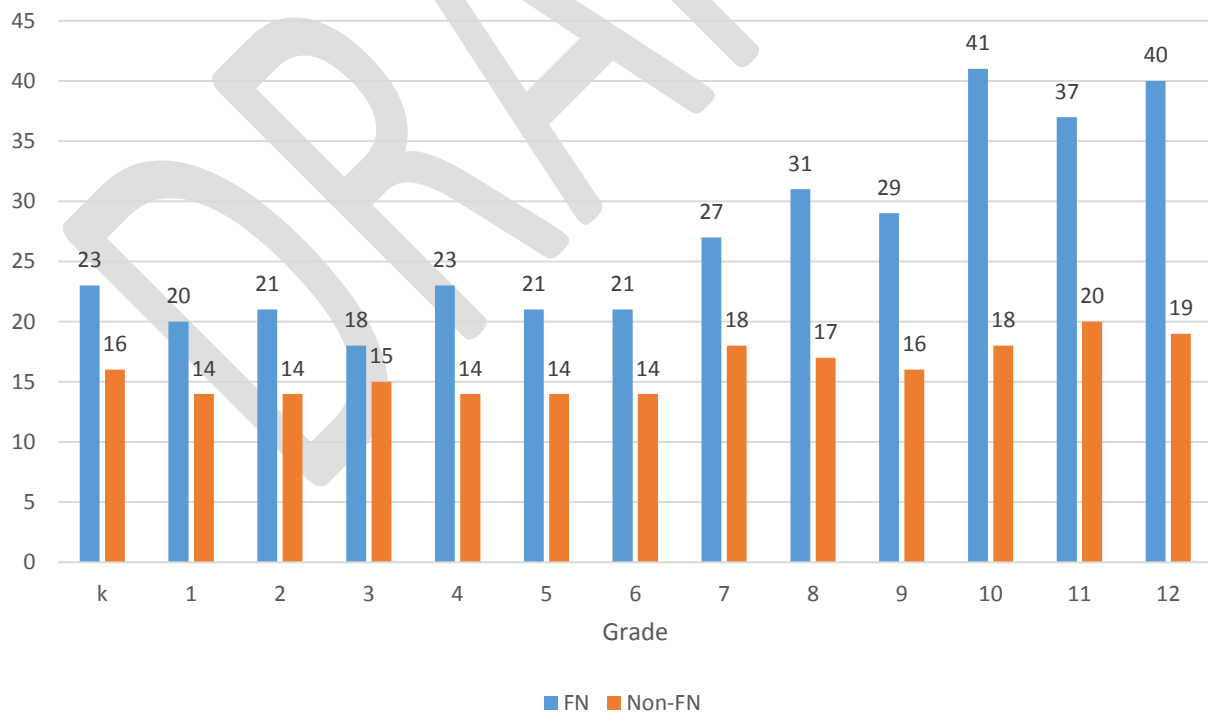
Source: Yukon Department of Education

Average Absence days by grade (Urban/Rural)



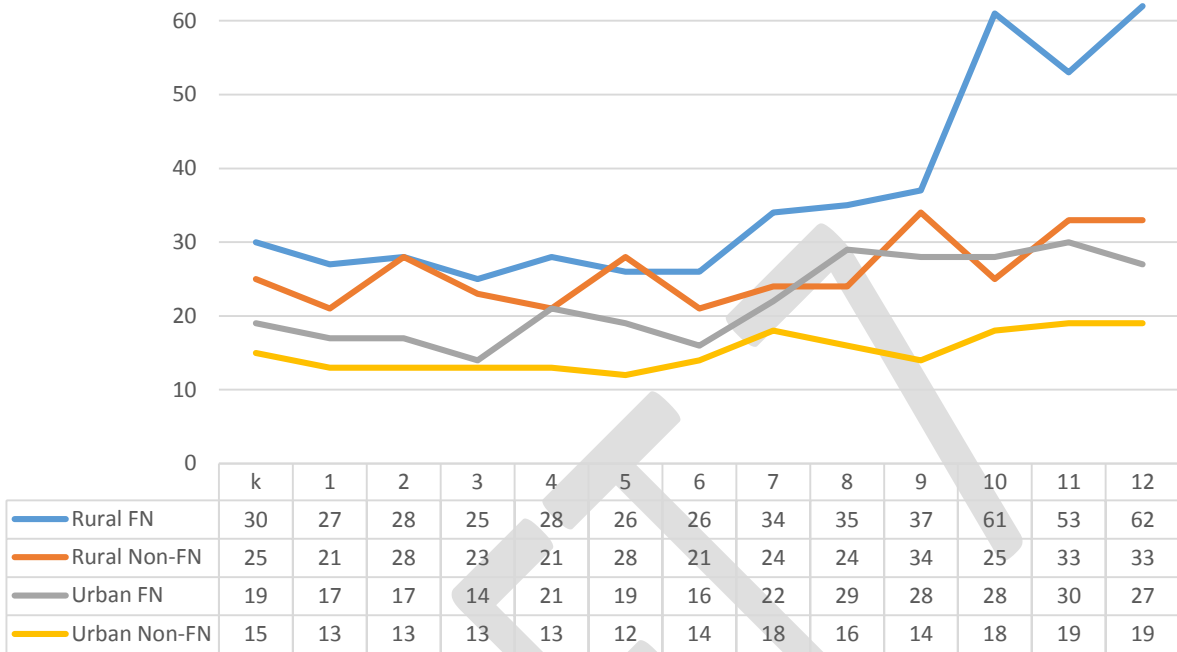
Source: Yukon Department of Education

Average Absence days by grade (FN/Non-FN)



Source: Yukon Department of Education

Average Absence days by grade



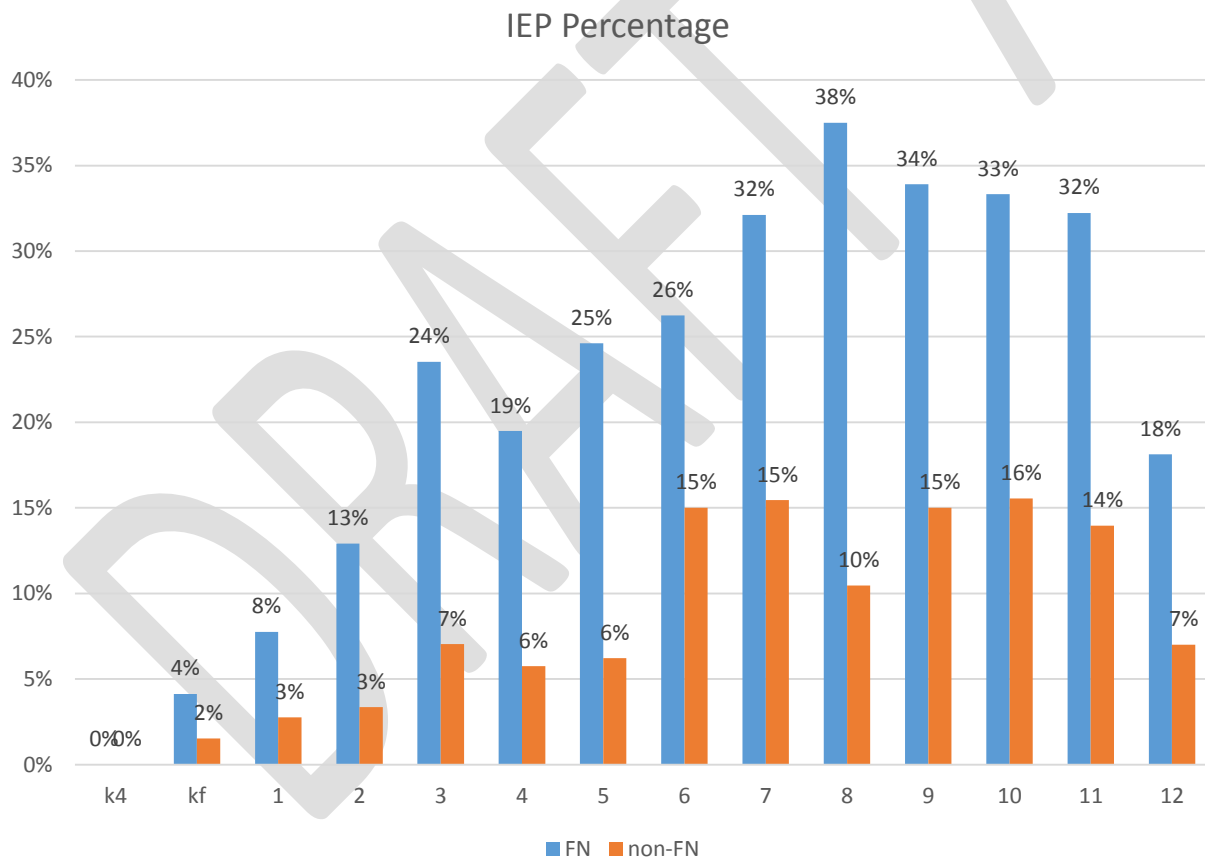
Source: Yukon Department of Education

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Section 3: Individualized Education Plan

The Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are “educational measures to help meet the needs of the student. Some students need minor changes and minimum support. Others have more complex needs.” IEP cover a variety of concerns such as educational programming, social skills, technology, and healthcare to name a few.

In considering the proportion of IEPs, we look at comparing the proportion of FN students on IEPs compared to the proportion of non-FN students on IEPs using enrolment to calculate the proportions. There is a higher proportion of FN students on an IEP on all grade levels compared to non-YFN students. The proportion of students on IEPs increases until grade 8, but slowly decreases in high school for YFN students.

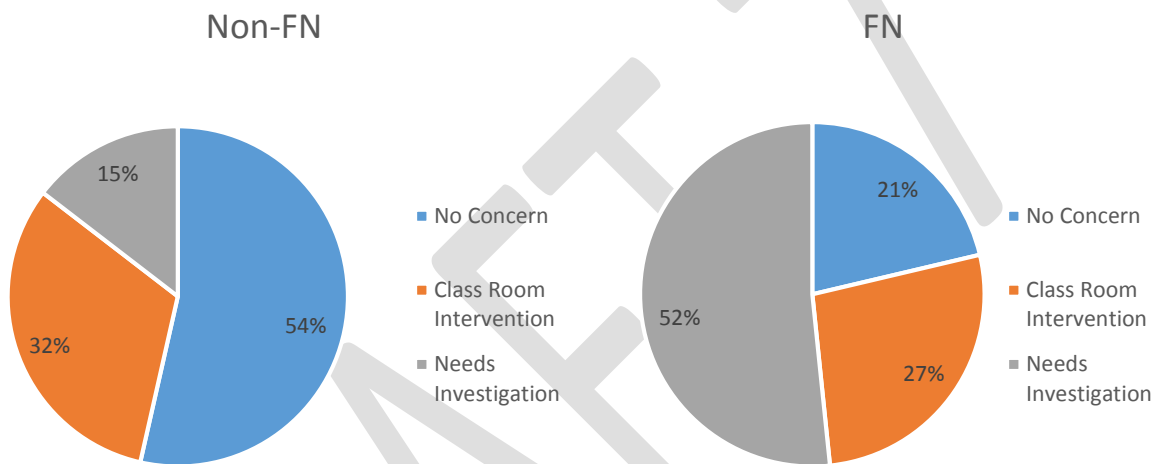


Source: Yukon Department of Education

Section 4: Boehm Spring

The Boehm Test of Basic Concepts examines 50 common language concepts with Kindergarten students. For example, in one activity students are asked to pick the word that matches a picture.

Figures indicate that a lower percentage of YFN students require definitive classroom interventions than non-YFN students. However, a higher percentage of YFN students could benefit from further investigation. Having such a large group of students who require further investigation makes it difficult to determine the gap since those students could belong to either the no concern group or the class room intervention group after further investigation.



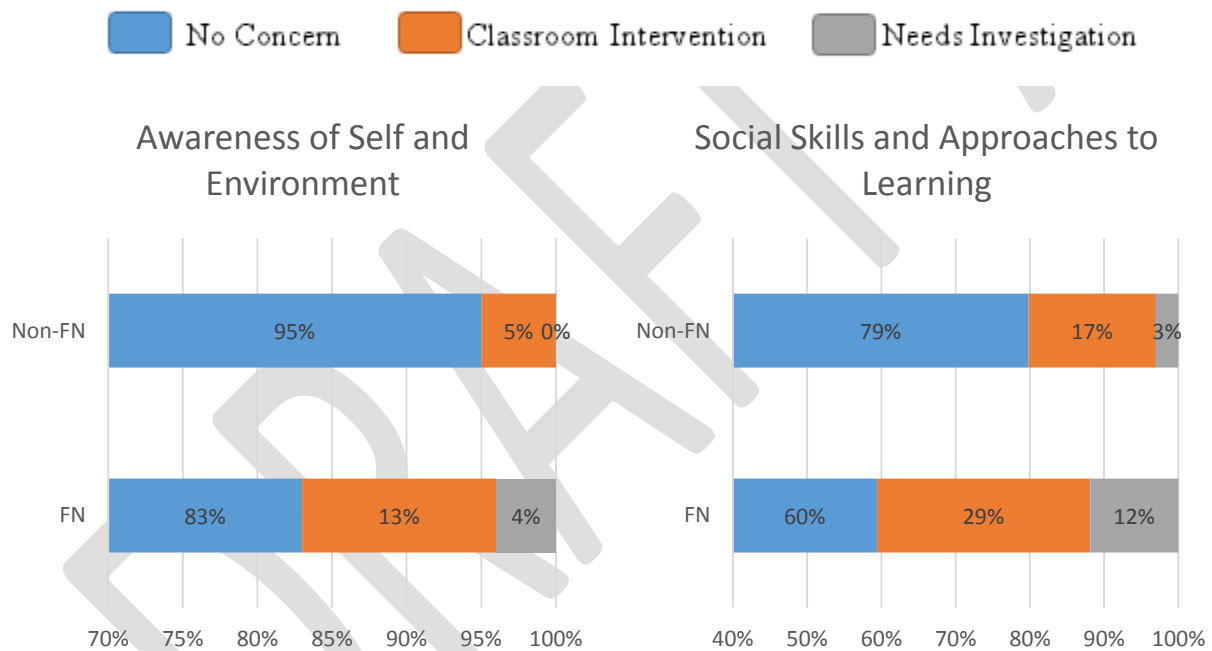
Source: Yukon Department of Education

Section 5: Early Years Evaluation

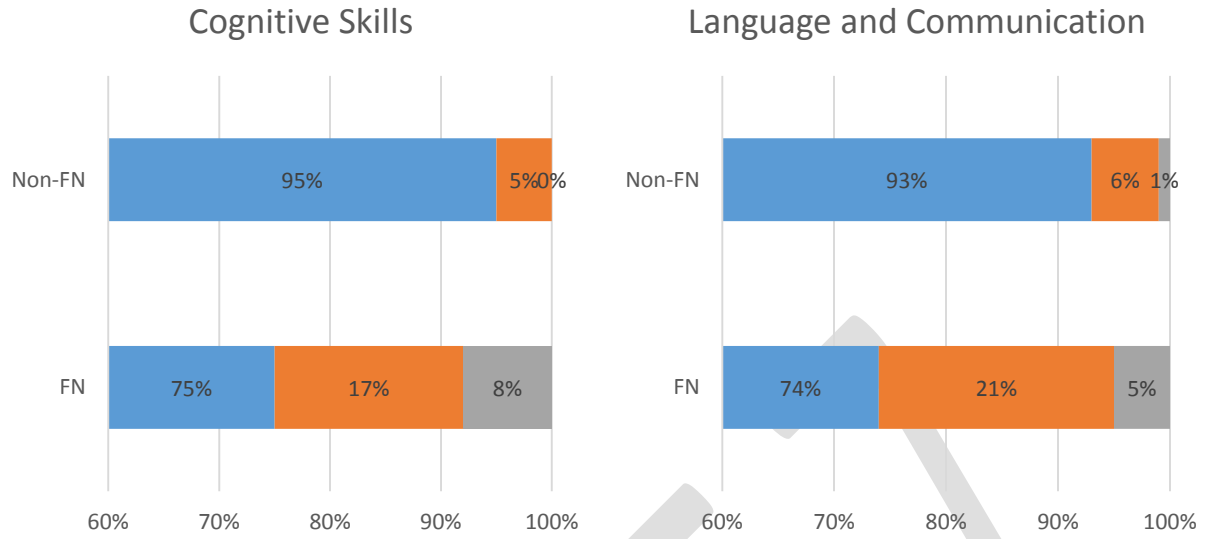
The Early Years Evaluation (EYE) is conducted using teacher observations across multiple domains: Physical Development, Language and Communication, Cognitive skills, Social skills, and Awareness of Environment.

If we consider the number of students that fall under the “No Concern” group the gap between non-FN students and FN students are significant for all domains. However the smallest gap is seen in physical development – fine motor. If we consider the number of students that fall under the “Classroom Intervention” group the largest gap are seen in Cognitive skills and Language and Communication.

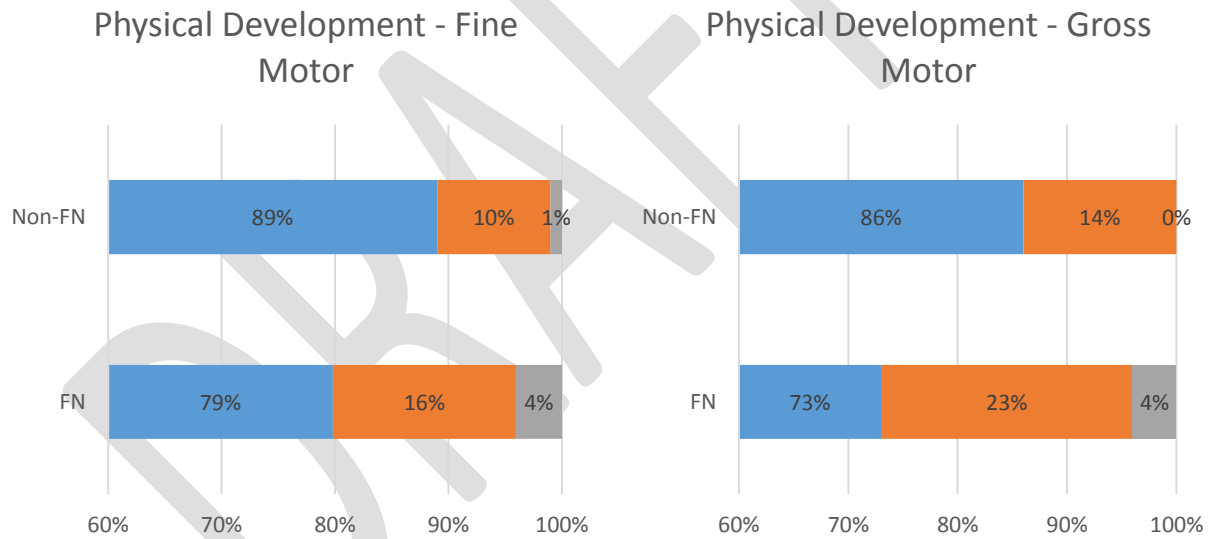
Much like the Boehm Springs results there are more FN students who needs further investigation to determine whether they need classroom intervention.



Source: Yukon Department of Education



Source: Yukon Department of Education



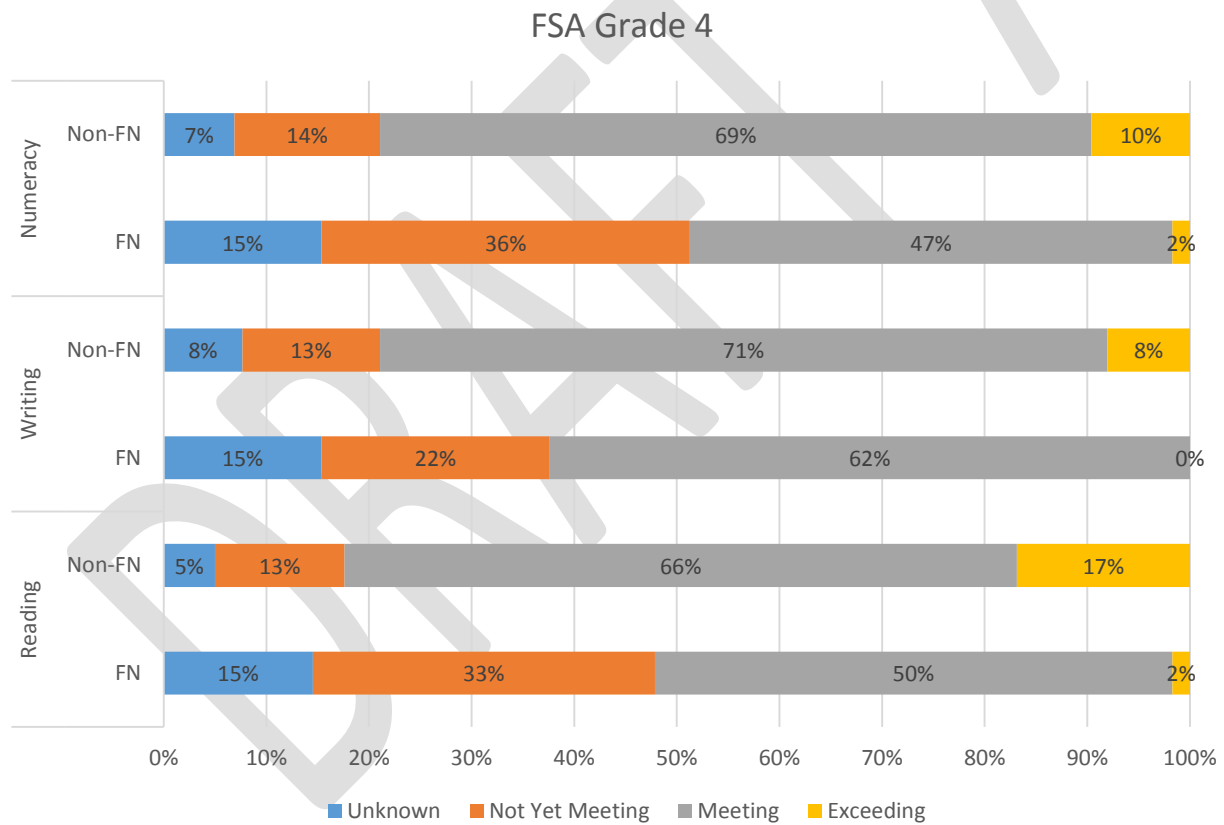
Source: Yukon Department of Education

Section 6: Foundational Skills Assessment

The Foundations Skills Assessments (FSA) are conducted for grades 4 and 7 in three categories: Reading, Writing, and Numeracy.

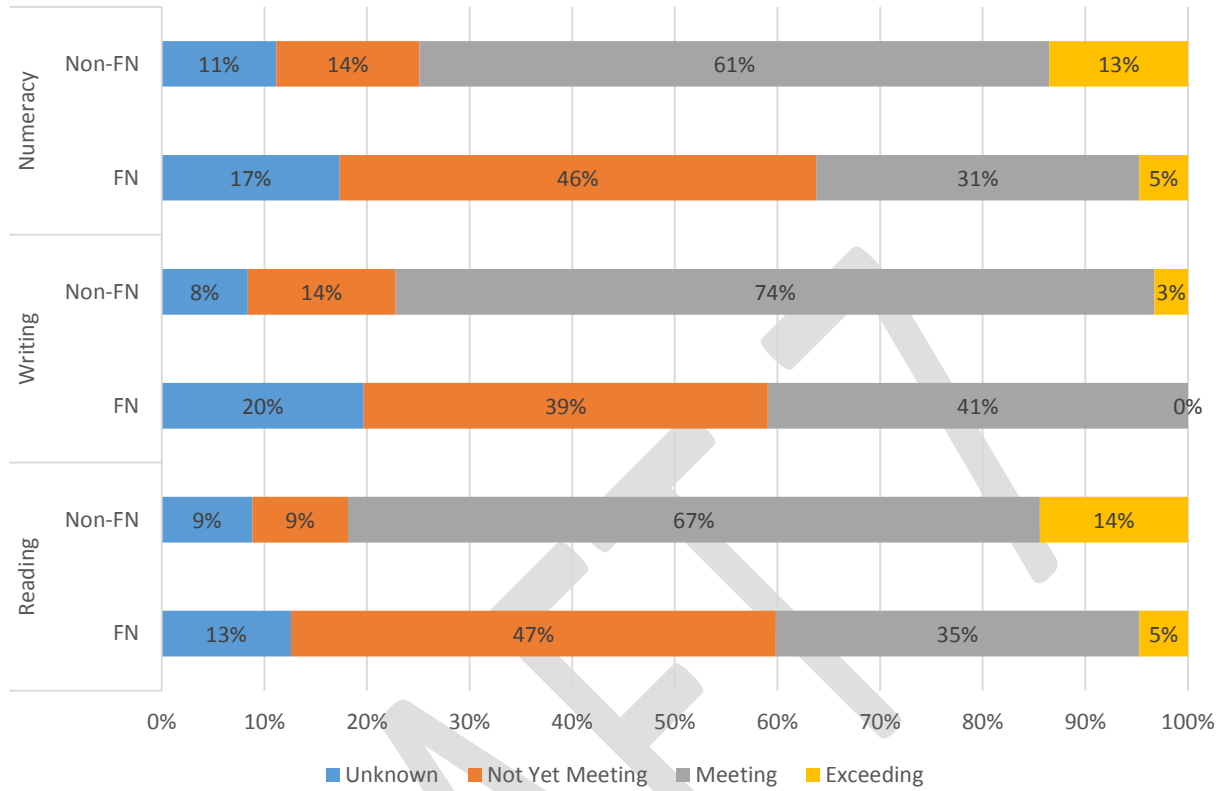
FSA results are similar for FN and non-FN in meeting expectations for Grade 4 writing, but are lower for FN students in Grade 4 reading and numeracy. A higher percentage of FN students are not yet meeting expectations in reading, writing, and numeracy when compared to non-FN students. For all student groups, writing appears to be the most difficult subject if one looks at the small numbers of students exceeding expectations. Non-FN students display relatively consistent results across all three categories.

The gap in FSA results are wider for grade 7 students consistently for reading, writing, and numeracy. Similar to the grade 4 results, writing appears to be the most difficult subject. Once again non-FN students display relatively consistent results across all three categories.



Source: Yukon Department of Education

FSA Grade 7

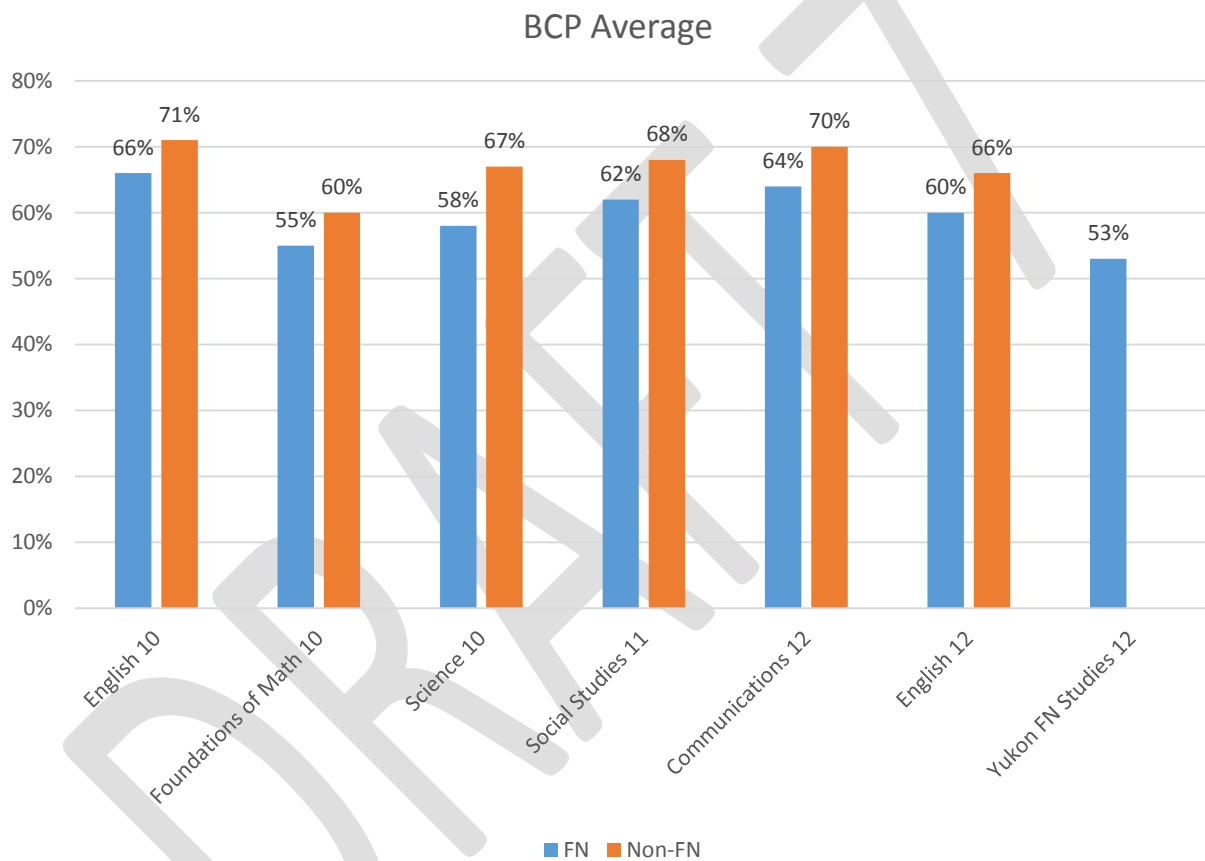


Source: Yukon Department of Education

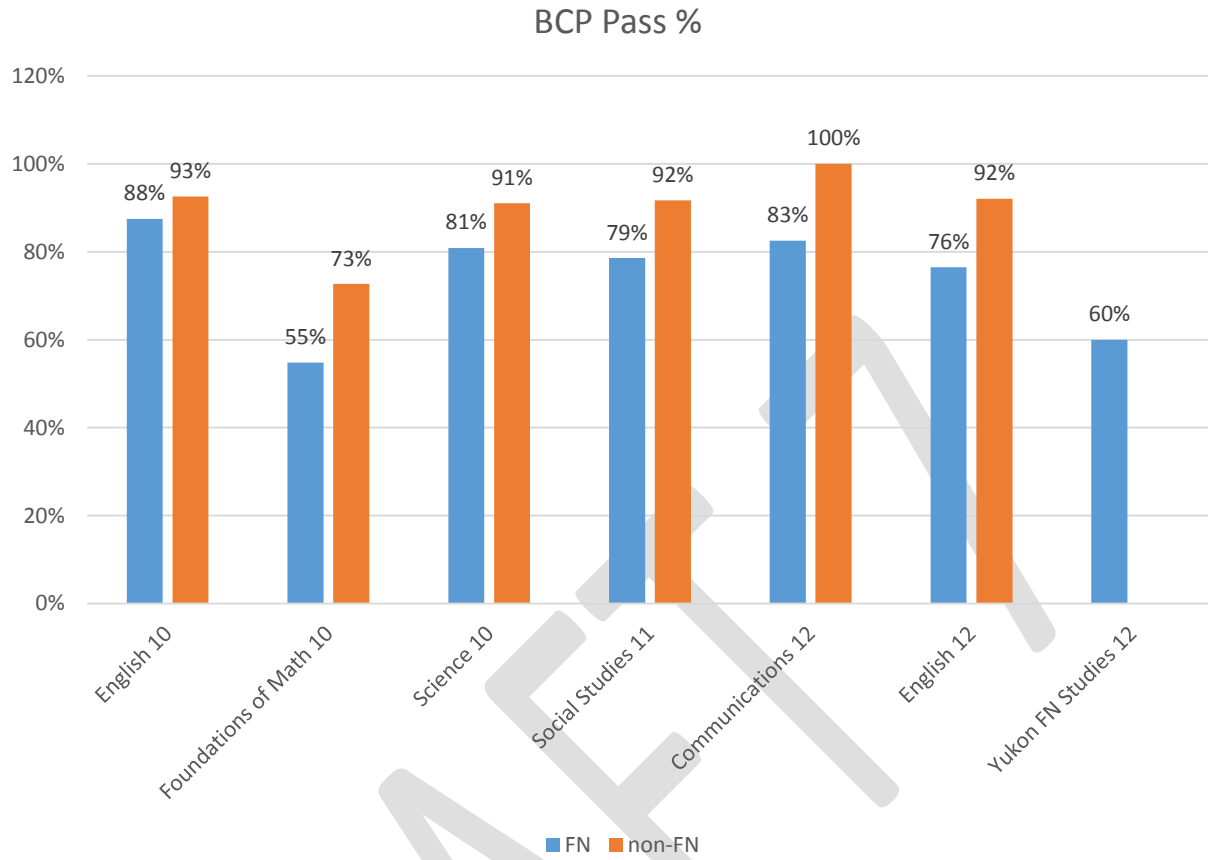
Section 7: BC Provincial Exam

The British Columbia Provincial Exam (BCP) results show that FN students attain a lower average consistently than non-FN students. Similar results are shown in the BCP pass % where less FN students pass the BCP than non-FN students. Both FN and non-FN students had difficulty with math at the grade 10 level, with 55% of FN students passing this exam.

Yukon FN Studies exam was written only by FN students, thus, making it impossible to compare results. However, it shows that lowest average and second lowest pass percentage out of the displayed BCP results.



Source: Yukon Department of Education



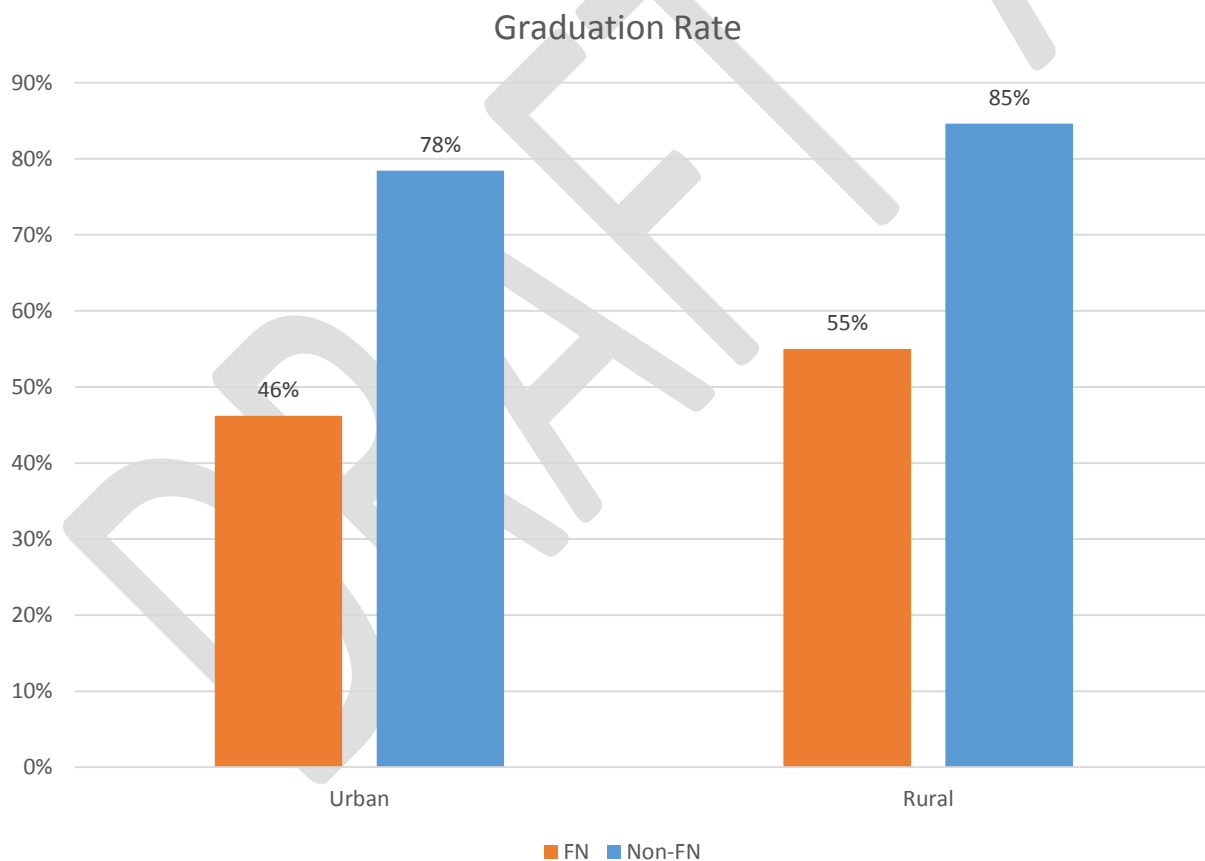
Source: Yukon Department of Education.

Section 8: Graduation Rate

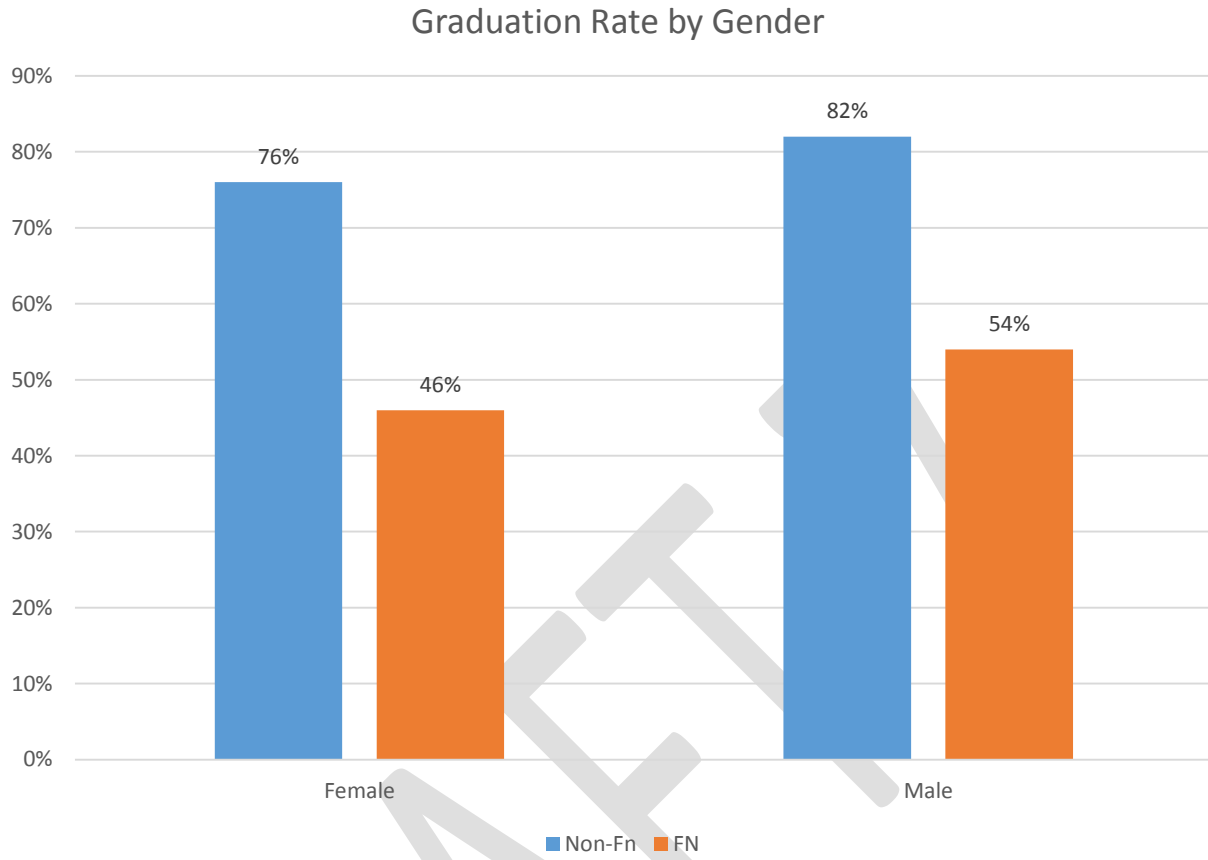
The graduation rate for FN students is significantly lower than that of non-FN students. Rural graduation rates are higher than urban for both FN and non-FN students.

A growing concern regarding graduation rate is the number of students that are simply pushed through to graduate without being adequately prepared. While the number of such students being pushed through is not recorded, anecdotal evidence suggests that this is more frequently the case in rural schools. Thus, it is possible that the higher graduation rates in rural areas is caused by students being simply pushed through the system.

The data also shows that there is a disparity between genders as the male graduation rate is higher for both FN and non-FN students. This is especially significant considering that for Canada as a whole females have a higher graduation rate than males. Thus, part of the next step should be to determine why the gender gap exists and how to address it.



Source: Yukon Department of Education



Source: Yukon Department of Education

Concluding Remarks

This report is framed by the question: “How are we Doing?” with respect to the success of First Nations Students in Yukon schools. While there may be individual cases of student success, the overarching theme that emerges at the end of this report is that in almost every category of data presented, First Nations students are not meeting with similar levels of success as non-First Nations students.

As seen in the Boehm Spring and EYE results the gap begins at the Kindergarten levels. The FSA and BCP results shows that the gap persists through the higher grades. Thus, the challenge is then to be able to identify the areas in which FN students specifically need assistance to close the gap. This report suggests certain areas in which the gaps are the largest which may assist in determining how to address education issues in the Yukon.

While absenteeism is higher in rural areas, graduation rate is also higher in rural areas. Although this would suggest that absenteeism may not be impacting graduation rates, this may not necessarily be the case. Considering that absenteeism is considered to be correlated to academic achievement, including graduation rate, further research is necessary to determine the cause of higher graduation rates in rural areas, as well as the disparity in absenteeism.

There are some areas that suggested for future work on the “How are we doing” report. The first is to improve the accuracy of data. Within the sphere of improving data the first issue to address would be self-identification. Without accurate measurement of FN status all data subsequently measured must be under scrutiny. Other data that requires more accurate measurement includes attendance, and graduation rates.

The second area suggested is, based on the figures shown in this report, to develop a plan of action that moves the “How are we doing?” question to “What are we going to do based on what we know?” This requires the development of a clear mission with goals, roles, and responsibilities as a means of improving the attendance and achievement for all Yukon students, and in particular Yukon First Nations students.