



ASSOCIATION OF YUKON SCHOOL COUNCILS, BOARDS & COMMITTEES

P.O. Box 30071, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 5M2

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July 22, 2020

Honourable Tracy-Anne McPhee
Minister of Education
Department of Education
Government of Yukon
P.O. Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

Dear Minister McPhee,

Re: School Re-Opening Planning

Thank you again for the opportunity to meet with our Executive on July 6th.

As relayed, we wish to thank the department for hosting weekly Zoom calls with Yukon School Councils this past month. Likewise, thank you also for the opportunity to provide input on the COVID-19 survey for students, families and staff. While we are appreciative of these efforts, we wish to raise a number of concerns regarding the lack of engagement with School Councils and families pertaining to the recent announcement to relocate the Wood Street Centre programs as well as the decision to deliver half-day in-class instruction and half-day remote learning for Grade 10-12 students in Whitehorse.

As first conveyed in our correspondence dated June 5th and thereafter, hearing directly from families, students and staff regarding their experiences with remote learning including obtaining input regarding internet capacity, availability of devices and technology, communication with the school/teachers, access to curriculum and resources, mental health supports and other key questions, is critical to strengthening and informing planning efforts underway. This unfortunately did not occur prior to the deliberation of those specific decisions referenced above. Despite the commitment to share information as information becomes readily available, School Council members were not made aware of these decisions until they were publicly announced. With the COVID-19 survey set to close later today, we would like to know how the results will be shared, when and with whom they will be shared and how the findings will be considered, particularly in light of these recent decisions.

As relayed by the department on multiple occasions, school operational plans cannot be confirmed until detailed guidelines have been made available by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. While some preliminary information has been shared, it is our understanding that detailed guidelines have not been made available as of yet. If this is the case, how can operational decisions for individual schools be finalized before detailed guidelines are provided?

As articulated in letters to the editor, social media posts, protests and other public forums, families and students have put forward various alternative options for consideration as it pertains to the upcoming school year. Many other perspectives will also be conveyed in the survey which is currently underway. We would ask that these critical voices be heard and that consideration be given to the input provided including each of the solutions put forward. It is essential to hear from families and staff about the impact COVID-19 has had on their child's learning and to learn from those experiences as we move towards the 2020/2021 school year. Regardless of what stage is in place when the school year begins next month, we need to ensure an equitable, effective education system is in place that supports learning while also maintaining robust health and safety measures.

Again, thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra Henderson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sandra Henderson
Chair

c: Yukon School Councils
Catholic Education Association of Yukon
Nicole Morgan, Deputy Minister of Education
David Wipf, Assistant Deputy Minister