



ASSOCIATION OF YUKON SCHOOL COUNCILS, BOARDS & COMMITTEES

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March 20, 2020

Nicole Morgan
Deputy Minister
Department of Education
Government of Yukon
P.O. Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

Dear Ms. Morgan,

Re: Meeting with AYSCBC

Thank you again for offering to have Assistant Deputy Ministers Lori Duncan and David Wipf meet with our Executive earlier this month. Below is a summary of the issues that were raised.

Yukon School Councils' Spring Conference & AYSCBC AGM

In consideration of COVID-19 implications and the increasing impact for families, the AYSCBC will not be holding a School Councils Spring Conference. The AYSCBC Annual General Meeting (AGM) will proceed, however, with a modified format to meet the minimum requirements as outlined in the Association Bylaws and the *Societies Act*. More details will be forthcoming.

Inclusive Education Review

As relayed, we welcome the review of Inclusive and Special Education that was launched last month by the Yukon government. While we are encouraged to hear that school councils will be an important part of the review, we have not been apprised as to how councils will be meaningfully engaged in the review and when this will occur. As explained, it is imperative that the review be conducted in a clear, transparent manner with concrete objectives, action items, timelines and deliverables for improving learning opportunities for all Yukon students.

Education Audit Progress Report

In the absence of a spring conference, we would like to request a copy of the department's action plan in response to each of the Education Audit recommendations including the following:

- A detailed list of the proposed actions to be taken as well as an overview of what actions have taken place since the audit was issued in June 2019
- Proposed timeline(s) for completing each action item
- An estimate of the resources (human, financial, in-kind) to complete each of the action items
- How, when and by whom the action plan will be monitored

First Nation Language and Culture

As outlined in the Education Audit, there is currently no policy for Yukon First Nations language instruction. The audit goes on to recommend that the department of Education develop policies and guidelines to support First Nation language learning.

As you're aware, attracting and retaining First Nation language teachers is a significant issue for many Yukon schools. In the absence of a policy and that of qualified teachers, a number of schools have requested support with developing skills and training for teachers who may demonstrate levels of fluency but do not hold a language certificate. We are pleased to hear of the work being undertaken with the Yukon Native Language Centre and the Simon Fraser University to develop initiatives focused on fluency as well as mentorship opportunities. Any additional information that we can share with School Councils including work to develop a policy framework in collaboration with First Nation governments, councils and others, would be appreciated.

Authority of Yukon School Councils

In recent months, the AYSCBC has been asked to meet with a number of school councils to discuss their concerns as they pertain to the overall engagement of school councils in decisions surrounding schools, programs and policies. Examples include the recruitment of and retention of First Nations Language teachers, overall staffing levels, expansion of classroom numbers and programming changes in schools. Section 113 of the Education Act states that *"A Council shall (a) review, modify if necessary, and approve the school objectives, educational priorities and courses of study by grades, as prepared by the school administration, and other matters required for the effective functioning of the school"*. Ensuring all partners are aware of their respective roles and responsibilities is essential for accountability and effective decision making. Moving forward, we would recommend a working group of school council members, association and department representatives be struck to discuss the roles and responsibilities of School Councils and the Ministry as it pertains to this particular section of the Act.


Student Attendance

Student attendance, as you are aware, is another significant issue in our school communities and one that requires a multi-faceted approach. We would appreciate a written update regarding the work being undertaken by the Yukon government (department of Education, Health & Social Services, Youth Directorate) to address this issue. We will also be following up with the Yukon Child and Advocate Office and the **Every Student, Every Day Initiative** to learn more about their work and to find ways in which we can work collaboratively to address this important issue.

Again, thank you for your assistance. Finding ways to effectively collaborate with our partners is a key mandate of the association. We look forward to our continued discussions and working together on behalf of our stakeholders in support of student learning.

Sincerely,

~~Sandra Henderson~~
~~Chair~~


Sheri Graham
Vice-Chair

c: Honourable Tracy-Anne McPhee, Minister of Education
Lori Duncan, Assistant Deputy Minister of First Nations Initiatives
David Wipf, Assistant Deputy Minister of Schools & Student Services