

# Department of Education

2023-24 Annual Report





This report fulfills the requirement of Section 5 (h) of the *Education Act*, which requires the Minister of Education to table an annual report on the state of education in the Yukon.

Under the *Education Act*, the Department of Education is responsible for delivering accessible and quality education to Yukon learners. We work closely with our partners in education – including school boards and Yukon First Nations – and school communities to develop and improve our programs and practices.

We have changed the timing of this report to align with the fiscal year, rather than the calendar year, to better match the school year and improve consistency in reporting. This change reduces duplication of effort and allows for more accurate data collection.

This report highlights the activities of 2023-24 fiscal year and reflects information current as of March 31, 2024.

# Contents

Message from the Minister	2
Message from the Deputy Minister	3
Priority Initiatives	4
Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education (RISE)	5
Joint Education Action Plan	7
Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners	8
Safety in Schools	9
State of the Education System	10
Early Learning and Child Care	11
K-12 Learning and Experience	14
Adult education and training programs	18
Indigenization and Reconciliation	21
Infrastructure and Operations	23
Education Appeal Tribunal	26
Human Resources	26
Financials	27
Celebrating staff and students	30
Appendices	31



## Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present the 2023-24 Annual Report for the Department of Education. This year has been one of continued collaboration and significant progress as we work together with our partners to reimagine the Yukon school system. Our government remains committed to creating new structures that better support learners, honour our long-standing commitments with Yukon First Nations, and ensure the health and safety of students and staff. By prioritizing collaboration and listening, we have been able to advance critical initiatives that reflect our shared vision for education in the territory.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all the administrators, educators, and staff who have worked tirelessly for the benefit of students and all Yukoners. Your dedication and resilience, especially in the face of challenges such as the ongoing national teacher shortage, have been truly remarkable. Your ability to adapt and make necessary adjustments has not gone unnoticed, and I deeply appreciate your unwavering commitment to supporting learners of all ages and one another.

This year, we have continued to work closely with the Chiefs Committee on Education and the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate to provide high-quality, culturally appropriate education for all Yukon students. Our shared goal is to ensure that education in the territory is reflective of Indigenous worldviews and responsive to the needs of all students. The ongoing development of the Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners and the progress made in implementing the Joint Education Action Plan are testaments to this collaborative effort. We remain committed to this work and to creating an education system that is inclusive, equitable, and reflective of the diverse communities it serves.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to these efforts. Together, we are building a stronger, more inclusive education system for all Yukon learners.

**Hon. Jeanie McLean, Minister of Education**

# Message from the Deputy Minister



Over the past year, the Department of Education celebrated important milestones that reflect our commitment to transforming education in the Yukon.

We have made meaningful strides toward reconciliation and the decolonization of our education system, with the ongoing work of the First Nation School Board serving as a prime example. The successful transition of eleven schools to the administration of the First Nation School Board is a historic achievement that underscores the power of collaboration. I extend my deepest gratitude to the Chiefs Committee on Education, the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, and the board's trustees, alongside individual First Nation Education Directors, for their dedication and leadership.

Our focus this year has been on creating safe, inclusive schools that build on student strengths and ensure that every child feels connected and supported. The progress made in areas such as the Ready-to-Learn Schools initiative and the implementation of the Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education workplan demonstrates our commitment to these goals. Additionally, the development of the new Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners, in collaboration with Yukon First Nations, marks a significant step forward in addressing the root causes of poor student outcomes and setting clear targets for closing educational gaps.

As we look ahead, we recognize that there is still much work to be done to achieve our vision of a renewed education system that better supports all students to succeed. We remain dedicated to this transformative work, knowing that it cannot be accomplished without the trust and partnership of educators, students, families, and all those who are at the heart of our efforts.

We are committed to continuing this journey together, striking a balance between making actionable progress and taking the necessary time to build trusting relationships. By asking questions, listening, and seeking diverse perspectives, we can create a new system that truly reflects the needs and aspirations of our communities. It is challenging work, but the importance of education in our society compels us to keep striving for improvement. Together, we will create an education system that serves all Yukon learners, now and in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Cameron', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Mary Cameron, Deputy Minister of Education**

# Priority Initiatives



# Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education (RISE)

Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education (RISE) is an initiative dedicated to creating an inclusive, equitable, and effective learning environment for all students, regardless of their backgrounds or learning needs.

## Ready-to-Learn

In the 2023-24 school year, the department trained more than 200 staff on baseline training for the Ready-to-Learn (R2L) program. Seven videos were created to provide insights into various aspects of the program, including its practical application, understanding brain development, the significance of relationships, and an overview of the Neurosequential Model in Education.

A Ready-to-Learn Symposium was held on May 3, 2024, in Whitehorse, attended by approximately 100 Yukon educators. The symposium celebrated educators committed to improving their practice and creating safer, more inclusive schools. It provided an opportunity to share knowledge, reflect, and act for the benefit of all students. Through training and symposiums like these, Yukon educators become equipped with the tools and understanding to implement Ready-to-Learn approaches, fostering conducive learning environments for all students.

During the 2023-24 school year, a total of seven new schools began implementing the Ready-to-Learn approach, and a number of schools were supported in pre-engagement preparation for future implementation. Ready-to-Learn has been implemented at 14 Yukon schools. The department is currently conducting a five-year review of Ready-to-Learn to understand its impacts and to support further enhancements for Yukon learners and educators.

## A Comprehensive Mental Health Approach

The department is creating an integrated health and wellness model based on three pillars: promotion, prevention, and intervention. In the 2024-25 school year this approach will be drafted and shared with stakeholders and partners to gain key perspectives and feedback. Collaboration with First Nations governments and will begin in the 2024-25 school year, to integrate First Nation ways of knowing, being, and doing, and ensure the model is developmentally and culturally responsive.

## School Wellness Specialists

A School Wellness Specialist role was created in partnership with partners and youth to understand support needs and delivery methods. The School Wellness Specialists provide various direct supports, including assessments, counselling, consultation, programming, case management, and education, tailored to the needs of individual schools and communities. Initial hiring and onboarding occurred in the 2023-24 school year to prepare the new specialists for supporting Yukon learners starting in the 2024-25 school year. Work continues with the First Nation School Board to implement these roles.

## Investments in youth mental health

We committed an additional \$500,000 towards initiatives aimed at improving the mental health of Yukon youth. This funding supported:

- The Ready-to-Learn program for Yukon schools.
- Mental Health and Wellness kits created by youth for youth.
- The Youth Summit.
- Other youth mental health initiatives, including training, the INtransformation Dome, and the TOZ "Our Suitcases, Our Stories" Art Installation.

### Role and qualifications for Learning Assistant Teachers

The department continued collaborating with partners on finalizing the role and qualifications for Learning Assistance Teachers and is now working on developing the implementation plan.

### Additional Learning Assistance Teachers and Educational Assistants

In the 2023-24 school year, the department allocated an additional 40 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions. This included:

- 13 additional Educational Assistants
- 15 Learning Assistance Teachers
- 12 School Wellness Specialists

### Training for Educational Assistants and Teachers on Call

Key activities included:

- A Professional Development day in November 2023 for Educational Assistants, Community Education Liaison Coordinators, Education Support Workers, and First Nation Advocates, featuring training from the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, the Department of Education's Student Support Services, and the Department of Health and Social Services.
- Transition of the current training course to the online YGLearn platform for better accessibility for educators.
- Development of a Memorandum of Understanding with Health and Social Services to support training for specific, complex medical needs.
- Ongoing discussions with stakeholders to establish a one-year training plan for Educational Assistants.

### Psychoeducational assessments

Throughout the 2023-24 school year, the department ensured that psychological assessments were provided within six months of referral receipt by Student Support Services. Key steps included:

- Establishing a Standing Offer Agreement with four contractors to meet the service standard.
- Initiating twice-weekly training and information-sharing sessions for Learning Assistance Teachers to support this work in the school setting.

### Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)

The department provided clarifying information to school communities and parents/caregivers regarding:

- The option for special education students to choose between an IEP or a learning plan.
- The ability of students with an IEP to graduate if they meet the graduation requirements.

Additionally, the department:

- Established twice-weekly training and information-sharing sessions for Learning Assistance Teachers.
- Continued ongoing work based on communities of inquiry recommendations and analysis, and for communicating information about learning plans and processes.

### Communities of Inquiry

Six out of the seven Communities of Inquiry have been completed and recommendations submitted. The department will review recommendations and will provide next steps during the 2024/25 school year.



## Joint Education Action Plan

The department advanced the Joint Education Action Plan (JEAP) with a focus on:

- K-12 culture and language
- Authority, control, and responsibility
- Sustainability supports and success
- Closing the academic achievement gap

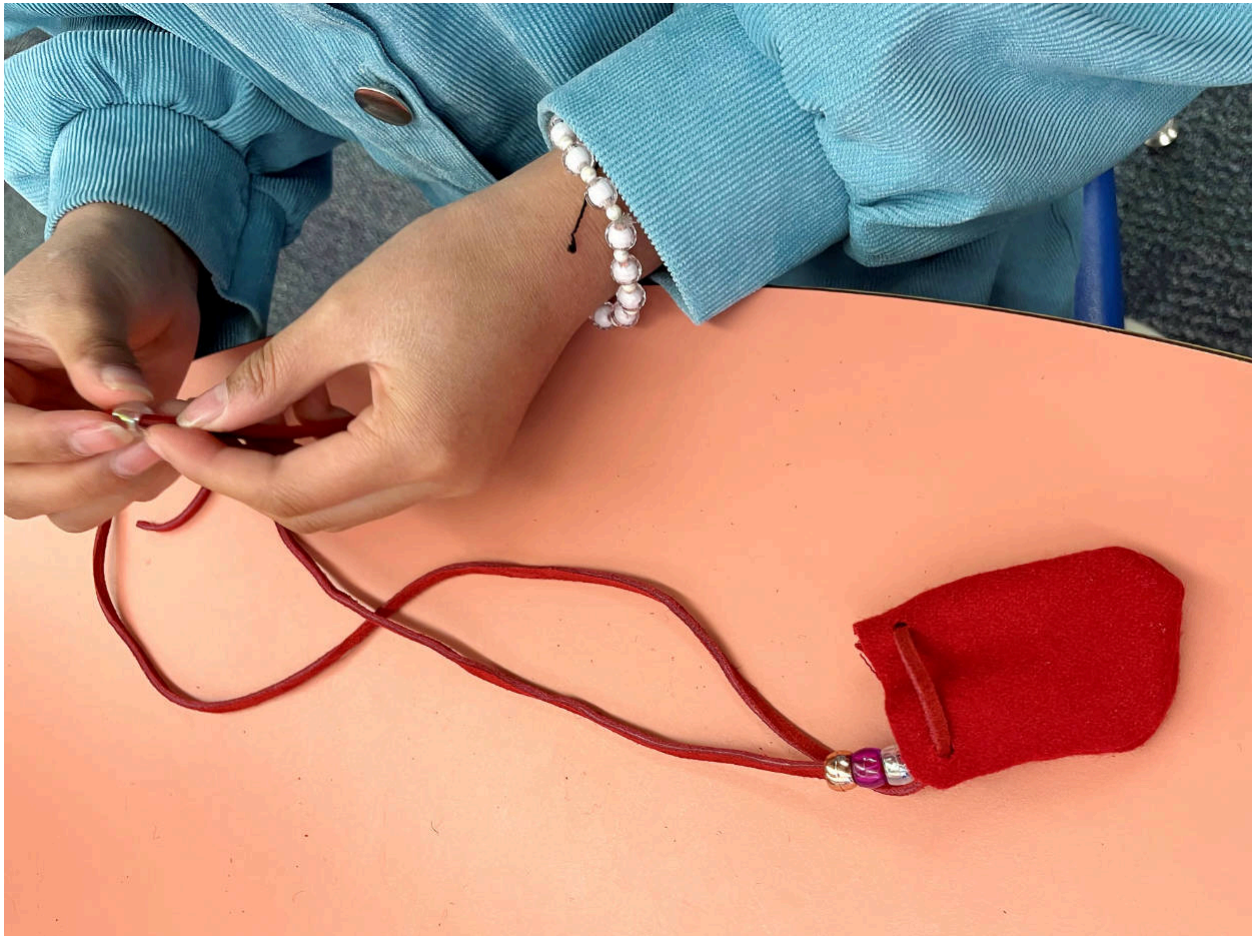
Key actions included:

- Committing \$1.83 million to support education priorities with 14 Yukon First Nations.
- Providing \$1.19 million to the Yukon Native Language Centre for language revitalization.
- Allocating \$2.6 million for school language initiatives.

- Working to establish student information sharing agreements with Yukon First Nations.
- Providing \$735,000 to the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate for JEAP support.
- Enhancing early learning and child care programs.
- Advancing the Ready-to-Learn Schools initiative.
- Developing localized and culturally inclusive curricula with Yukon First Nations.

Additionally, work began on renewing the Joint Education Action Plan for 2025-2035 in collaboration with Yukon First Nations and the Government of Canada.

Below  
Culture camp sewing





## Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners

In 2023-24, the Department of Education completed the next phase of work towards developing an outcome strategy for Yukon learners.

The department retained a consultant to seek and synthesize insights from First Nations and key education partners on what they understood to be the key competencies a K-12 education should impart to the students within it.

This collaborative effort resulted in the acceptance of 14 Learner Outcome Statements and 10 guiding values by the department. These statements set out the essential knowledge and skills that learners need to thrive in today's world. The Learner Outcome Statements also provide a clear focus for the future direction of efforts and resources to where they are most needed.

Advisory committees have supported the department in drafting the strategies needed to realize the Learner Outcome Statements. Final reviews of a draft outcome strategy are scheduled to take place in the 2024-25 school year with the aim of launching the strategy for the 2025-26 school year.



## Safety in Schools

In the 2023-24 school year, the Department of Education made significant progress in creating safer, more inclusive learning environments in Yukon schools. Key initiatives included expanding the Yukon SOGI Educator Network, which supports educators in fostering inclusive practices for sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI). The department also implemented updated SOGI policies and provided training for schools to encourage safety and inclusion in all spaces.

The department prioritized student protection from harm by adults by enhancing its onboarding process and ensuring all new and existing school-based staff receive mandatory training on recognizing and responding to abuse and inappropriate behaviours. This ongoing training underscores the department's commitment to safeguarding students and creating a culture of safety.

Infrastructure improvements were also made to enhance accessibility and security in schools, including the installation of accessibility features such as ramps and specialized swings, as well as security cameras and automatic door openers in various schools.

The department's ongoing commitment to creating safe, inclusive, and supportive schools is further reflected in the Ready-to-Learn initiative, which trained more than 200 staff members in promoting positive social changes and wellbeing for students. This initiative is part of a broader effort to reimagine inclusive and special education, ensuring that every student in Yukon feels connected and supported throughout their educational journey.

### Safer Schools Action Plan

The Government of Yukon announced the full implementation of the 23 actions outlined in the Safer Schools Action Plan on June 20, 2023. Significant progress has been made through this plan to enhance student safety in educational settings.

In February 2024, the Yukon Ombudsman issued a second report, *Left in the Dark: Safer Schools Action Plan Assessment*. The Department of Education responded by accepting all the Ombudsman's recommendations in principle.

The Student Protection Policy and related procedures have been in place since September 2022. The policy and procedures, and their implementation, were reviewed with schools and education partners in 2023. Work is underway to strengthen those documents based on feedback received and address the recommendations from the Yukon Ombudsman.

The Yukon government remains committed to building on the work achieved through the Safer Schools Action Plan. Ongoing efforts are focused on continued improvement, implementation, and operationalization of strategies, policies, and procedures to ensure the protection of Yukon students.

Left  
Hand Games at Ama Ku

# State of the Education System





## Early Learning and Child Care

Since the implementation of universal child care in April 2021, and as of March 31, 2024, a total of **477 additional child care spaces** have been created in Pelly Crossing, Whitehorse, Ross River, and Dawson. These programs continue to expand and grow, benefiting more children and their families. As of March 31, 2024, 1,896 children and their families were benefiting from universal child care, saving up to \$8,400 a year per child enrolled in a licensed program.

In the 2023-24 fiscal year, the department provided \$9,788,917 to licensed programs to support wages and benefits for early childhood educators. Additionally, Yukon families saved \$14,153,927 in child care costs through the Government of Yukon's universal child care and subsidy programs.

During this period, 87 bursaries were awarded, including 85 part-time and two full-time bursaries. Of the full-time bursaries, one recipient was from a rural community and one from a Whitehorse French-language program. Twenty-three of the part-time bursaries went to recipients in rural Yukon.

### Key highlights

- On April 5, 2023, the Government of Yukon signed a three-year funding agreement (2023 to 2026) with the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate and the Early Years Program to offer a First Nations-designed “Understanding the Early Years” course.
  - The first course was launched in Dawson City on September 11, 2023, with 14 early childhood educators participating from three local child care programs.
  - A second course was offered in Watson Lake from November 6 to 8, 2023, with five participants, including a local high school student interested in a career in early learning.
  - Successful completion of the course results in a level one early childhood educator certificate.
- In September 2023, the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon (CSFY) officially assumed control and management of the Garderie du petit cheval blanc (Garderie) early learning and child care centre. This change is the result of collaboration between the Government of Yukon and CSFY to establish a process for CSFY to manage French early learning and child care centres in the Yukon.
- More than \$2.6 million was invested in renovations and furniture for the new Child Development Centre space.
- From November 27, 2023, to February 29, 2024, a public engagement for the review of the Child Care Act was conducted. Several hundred responses were received from parents, early childhood educators, operators of family day homes and early learning and child care centres, First Nations governments, education partners, and interested stakeholders.
- Financial support was provided to Yukon University to offer early learning courses in rural communities. In winter 2024, 26 students from eight rural communities were registered for early learning classes. This funding will continue in 2024-25.
- On March 31, 2024, the Minister of Education signed an early learning and child care infrastructure agreement with Canada. Under this agreement, the Government of Yukon will receive \$7,689,753 over three years, with a fourth year of funding anticipated.



Minister McLean announcing the new funding agreement with the Government of Canada to create more child care spaces in the Yukon.



*Fairness For Every Generation*  
**MORE CHILD CARE SPACES**  
*Une chance équitable pour chaque génération*  
**CRÉER PLUS DE PLACES EN GARDERIE**

Yukon | Canada

# K-12 Learning and Experience

## French Language Programs

- In October 2023, 2,447 students were enrolled in French Second Language programs throughout the Yukon.

The Department of Education collaborated with various community and partner organizations to develop and enhance French language programming. These partnerships included the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, First Nation School Board, French Second Language Advisory Committee, Canadian Parents for French, and l'Association franco-yukonnaise.

In the 2023-2024 school year, the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon launched a new French First Language Program in Dawson City. This in-person program, offered to elementary students up to Grade 4, operated in a rented space at 486 King Street. The inaugural year saw seven students enrolled, supported by a team of two teachers and one educational assistant.

To address recruitment and training needs, French Programs promoted teacher recruitment by participating in a pan-Canadian job fair tour and collaborating with l'Association franco-yukonnaise. This partnership brought prospective French language teachers to the Yukon, offering them the opportunity to explore the territory's education system. Additionally, the department supported l'Association franco-yukonnaise in hosting a local French Summer Institute, catering to French Second Language (FSL) educators of all proficiency levels. To further support teacher training, French Programs developed a series of locally produced pedagogical videos that will be used in future training sessions.

French Programs also supported a variety of initiatives aimed at promoting French language learning outside the traditional classroom setting. These initiatives included after-school French programs and a Grade 12 trip to Martinique. Moreover, the development of F.H. Collins Secondary School's new French Immersion experiential program, STEAM, was overseen by French Programs. This integrated semester offers students hands-on learning experiences in Sciences, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics.

Staffing challenges were addressed through the employment of French Monitors, who played a crucial role in supporting French language education across the territory. The department began the 2023-24 school year with four monitors and increased this number to seven by the end of the year. These monitors worked with students at 13 schools, including nine in Whitehorse and four in the communities of Haines Junction, Faro, Mayo, and Dawson.

Cultural events and activities were a significant focus for French Programs, with events like "Chante-la ta chanson" held on March 8 at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre (KDCC) for students from Kindergarten to Grade 7, "La Folie Furieuse" on April 16 at KDCC for Grades 6-7, and the "Olympiades culturelles" on May 14 at Rotary Park for Grades 8-12. Other notable events included a special concert by Major Funk on April 8 at KDCC and a Francophone Author Tour featuring Valérie Fontaine from April 22-26.

Spring 2024 also saw the celebration of traditional "Sugar Shacks" at Yukon schools, with 14 events held across the territory. These events featured the distribution of approximately 100 litres of maple syrup, resulting in around 7,000 servings of maple taffy for students.

Right

A French Monitor at the École Selkirk Elementary 2024 sugar shack event.









Above  
Nân Käy Ketsèadän yū, the new outdoor learning space at Elijah Smith Elementary.

## Integrating culture and nature into student learning

Integrating nature and culture into student learning is a vital component of education in the Yukon, as it fosters deeper engagement and enriches the curriculum in meaningful ways. The Department of Education is committed to supporting off-site experiential learning, where students actively participate in hands-on activities that connect them with the land, their heritage, and their communities. These experiences encourage curiosity, creativity, and problem-solving, while allowing students to explore and understand the world around them. Across the Yukon, schools offer a diverse range of outdoor learning opportunities, from bison hunts to canoe trips, each designed to provide culturally relevant and immersive educational experiences.

For example, each spring, Elijah Smith Elementary School, in collaboration with the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, hosts a week of experiential culture-based activities for Grade 7 students. Led by Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, students engage in activities such as caribou hide tanning, crafting button blanket dolls, and playing hand games.

This year, the camp featured a new heated wall tent, named Nân Käy Ketsèadän yū by Kwanlin Dün First Nation Chief Sean Smith. This new space will serve as a year-round resource for future generations at Elijah Smith Elementary.

## Third offering of Dashāw k'e

Eleven student leaders successfully completed the third offering of Dashāw k'e at F.H. Collins Secondary School. This multi-credit, semester-long program provided Yukon First Nations culturally-centred education. Initiated by the First Nation Education Commission and the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, Dashāw k'e began in 2021 as a half-day program and has since evolved into a semester-long course.

Supported by First Nation Education Advocates, Junior Advocates, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers, students engage in Indigenous learning through activities such as drum-making, painting, a moose harvest trip, and oral language presentations. The program enhanced students' understanding of local cultures and significantly improved their attendance. Participants spoke highly of the skills gained, the cultural impact, and the connections formed through the program.

## Locally developed courses

The amendment to the *Education Act* in April 2024, through Bill 307, marks a significant change in Yukon's educational landscape by removing restrictions on locally developed courses (LDCs). This change allows schools to offer all 28 elective credits required for graduation through LDCs, provided they have the necessary resources. The initiative is designed to enhance education by encouraging the creation of courses that meet the unique needs of Yukon schools and communities, promoting collaboration with Yukon First Nations and educational partners to develop engaging, culturally relevant content.

While participation is not mandatory, this initiative enables schools to tailor their curriculum to students' interests and community resources, while still adhering to Yukon-wide graduation requirements. The Department of Education supports this effort through an active LDC Committee, which follows guidelines and recommends courses for approval by the Minister or delegate to ensure they meet educational standards. The amendment paves the way for a more localized, flexible curriculum, fostering courses in diverse subjects such as Academic Language ELL, Ancestral Technology, Outdoor Education, and Yukon First Nations Leadership.

### Doing things “in a good way”

“In a good way” is an expression used by many First Nations to denote participation that honours tradition and spirit. Among Yukon First Nations people, this is embodied through traditions, practices, and protocols. Teachings of wisdom, love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility, and truth are important pieces in this work. From a First Nations worldview, work done “in a good way” is a sacred endeavour that illuminates the connections between the spiritual and physical world.



# Adult education and training programs

## Apprenticeship

### Key achievements and milestones reached in 2023-24:

The department introduced a new interim Apprenticeship Level Evaluation process in fall 2023, which combines class marks, level exam marks, and employer recommendations. This new process assisted nearly 50 apprentices in advancing their apprenticeship journey and received overwhelmingly positive feedback.

In November 2023, we hosted the first Apprenticeship Awards Celebration since COVID-19, presenting three years' worth of awards to 220 attendees.

The department launched a regular Program Update email, a newsletter designed to keep all Yukon apprentices and their employers informed about program developments.

### Major projects and initiatives undertaken

The branch is updating its forms, and apprentices will soon be able to complete forms online.

An update to the apprenticeship database is underway to allow for more efficient collection of apprentice data.

### Noteworthy statistics

- As of July 2024, the Yukon has a record number of 495 current and active registered apprentices. Of these, 114 (23%) self-identify as Indigenous, and 68 are women.
- In 2024, as of July 24, a total of 52 Journey person certificates have been awarded.
- A record number of trade students are attending Yukon University for their technical training.
- The year 2024 marks 60 years of Apprenticeship in the Yukon.

Below

Minister McLean and award recipients at the 2023 Apprenticeship Awards.





## Student employment programs

- Both the Summer Student Employment Program (STEP) and the Summer Career Placement Program (SCP) saw a significant increase in the number of new employers applying for wage subsidies in 2024.
- In 2024, 56 private employers applied for 82 positions, with 16 of those employers being new to the program.
- A total of 88 STEP student positions were filled this summer, with 29 in private businesses and 59 in various Yukon government departments.
- Additionally, 28 students were hired through the Summer Career Placement Program.

## Student financial programs

### Key achievements and milestones reached in 2023-24

- The updated Student Portal was launched in July 2023, providing students with an easily accessible platform to submit their applications for funding, check their status, and access decision letters.
- The updated Student Financial Assistance Database was also launched in July 2023. This new database streamlined application management and processing for Student Financial Assistance (SFA) Officers, improving business processes and significantly reducing the time it takes for students to receive decisions on their funding. Students now receive responses to their funding requests within days, compared to the many weeks it took before the system was updated.

### Major projects and initiatives undertaken

- Continuous development work is ongoing to complete the modernization of our technology systems.

### Noteworthy statistics

- Throughout the 2023-24 academic year, over 1,202 applications for funding were awarded through the Student Financial Assistance Office, resulting in disbursement of over:
  - \$4.8 million in Yukon Grant funds,
  - \$380,000 in Student Training Allowance,
  - \$480,000 in Yukon Excellence Awards, and
  - assessment of federal loan and grant amounts for 350 Yukon students.
- The office also provided financial support to 231 apprentices throughout the 2023-24 academic year as they attended training to progress in their certification.

### Other highlights

- Senior leadership participated in establishing the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee of Student Financial Assistance (ICCSFA) Strategic Plan for 2024-2027. The Yukon government's participation ensures that the unique needs of Yukon students are reflected at a national level.



Above  
Esthetics School 4: Elements Esthetics  
Academy founder Ammanda Partridge.

### Training programs

The Yukon welcomed a new private training institution in January 2024 with the successful registration of Elements Esthetics Academy. This addition brings the total number of private training institutions in Yukon to three, which now includes Alkan Air Flight Academy, Elements Esthetics Academy, and the Yukon Tourism Education Council.



# Indigenization and Reconciliation

## Review of Systemic Racism

In December 2023, the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (YCAO) announced a review of systemic racism in the Yukon education system, coordinating efforts with the Yukon First Nations Education Commission (FNEC) and receiving support from the Yukon First Nations Education Directorate (YFNED). The Executive Director of YFNED publicly announced this review on March 20, 2024. The Department of Education is cooperating with the review, providing information in phases, and looks forward to receiving the YCAO's recommendations.

## Yukon First Nations Language revitalization

The department supported the revitalization of Yukon First Nations languages through:

- A pilot program that allows for two teachers to study their languages full-time, building on fluency that will support their delivery of Yukon First Nations languages in the classroom.
- A pilot program at Porter Creek Secondary School to increase integration and enrichment of language and culture learning opportunities throughout the school, working with students.
- Providing \$1.19 million to the Yukon Native Language Centre for language resources and courses.
- Allocating \$2.6 million for language initiatives in schools.
- Yukon First Nations K-12 Language Framework and Action Plan through the First Nations Education Commission.

**We are happy to see (all of) you**

**Gwich'in** Nakhwanyaa'in geenjit shòh ìidìlii.

**Hän** Nèkhwètr'ènoh'ay häjit shò tr'inlay.

**Northern Tutchone** Dàye yésóots'enindhän, dàkhwäts'enè'in yū.

**Southern Tutchone** Dákwānī'j yū shāw ghānīddhän.

**Upper Tanana** Nohts'eneh'jī tsin'jī choh ts'eninthän.

**Tlingit** Yak'é ixhwsatìní.

**Kaska** Dahgáts'enehtān yéh gutie.

**Tagish** Dahts'eneh'jīh sùkùsen.

Credit: Yukon Native Language Centre

Below

FH Collins student artwork.





## Education Agreements

First Nation governments are essential partners in supporting students and in teaching about Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, doing, and being. The department works with individual First Nation governments on government-to-government funding agreements to improve educational outcomes for their citizens and learners on their traditional territories at local schools.

In 2023-24, the department committed \$1.83 million to support this work with 14 Yukon First Nations.

The Government of Yukon and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in completed discussions and negotiations towards a Letter of Agreement to outline the Yukon government's commitment towards achieving co-governance of education Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Traditional Territory.

- The Government of Yukon is proud of the education partnership with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. This partnership embraces Dënezhu ways of knowing, doing and being to provide students with an enriching educational experience rooted in culture and traditions.
- The Letter of Agreement was signed in August 2024 on Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Traditional Territory.
- This Letter of Agreement aligns with the requirements of s.17.7 of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Self-Government Agreement and provides important guidance while the 17.7 agreement is renewed and finalized.

## The Collaboration Framework

In the 2023-24 school year, the department worked in partnership with First Nations governments to establish the Collaboration Framework, to highlight the collaborative activities being undertaken or being planned to address our joint education priorities.

## First Nations Credit Policy

The new policy on Accreditation of Yukon First Nations Cultural, Language, and Traditional Knowledge Learning aligns with Path 1 of the Integrated Outcome Strategy for Yukon Learners, promoting Indigenization and decolonization. This policy also supports the Joint Education Action Plan by granting Yukon First Nations the authority to develop and deliver educational programming for K-12 students, which will be recognized for credit towards graduation. After incorporating feedback from Yukon First Nations, the policy was approved by the First Nations Education Commission and is set to be implemented in the 2024-25 school year.

## Attendance Policy

In collaboration with the First Nations Education Commission, the department has updated its attendance system, Aspen, to positively recognize student participation in First Nations cultural events. Absences for these and other cultural or religious activities can now be recorded with new codes, reflecting a commitment to integrating First Nations cultures into our educational framework and fostering respect and belonging for First Nations students.



## Infrastructure and Operations

### Whistle Bend Elementary School opening

On May 29, 2024, the Government of Yukon held a community open house to introduce the first elementary school built in Whitehorse in more than 20 years. More than 500 people attended to tour the new school, which can accommodate up to 425 students from kindergarten to Grade 7 from Whistle Bend and nearby neighbourhoods. The school welcomed its inaugural cohort of students in August 2024.

Whistle Bend Elementary School incorporates modern educational practices and technology, designed to prepare students for their futures. The building is a two-story, energy-efficient structure with ample windows and skylights to allow natural light to flood the interior spaces. The long-term name for the school has not yet been determined. The school council plans to collaborate with students, families, and staff to select a name that embodies the values of the school community.

Above  
The new Whistle Bend  
Elementary School.



**Yāw kets'ádán kù  
yest'etsi shì**

**Future new  
school site**

**Emplacement de  
la future école**





## École Whitehorse Elementary School replacement

The construction of the new École Whitehorse Elementary School (EWES) is a key project for the Government of Yukon, aimed at replacing aging schools in Whitehorse with modern facilities that meet current and future needs. Announced in June 2022, this initiative represents a significant investment in the educational infrastructure of the community.

In August 2023, Kobayashi + Zedda Architects (KZA) was contracted to oversee the design process, which included a Phase 1 site analysis on the Takhini Educational Land Reserve. KZA submitted a report in January 2024 that presented three potential location options for the new school.

In March 2024, the departments of Education and Highways and Public Works engaged with the Project Advisory Committee and community stakeholders to gather input on the proposed sites, ensuring that the chosen location reflects the needs and preferences of the community.

## Kêts'ádań Kù Project

The construction of Kêts'ádań Kù, a new school in Burwash Landing, is a top priority for supporting Kluane First Nation citizens. Throughout 2023, regular meetings of the oversight committee and project management team ensured the project's steady progress. In June 2023, a community celebration marked the site clearing, with the Minister of Education, the Chief of Kluane First Nation, and community members in attendance. The construction tender was issued on April 4, 2024, with further progress planned for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

Left

The future site of Kêts'ádań Kù in Burwash Landing.

## Whitehorse Schools Capital Planning – Public Engagement What We Heard Report

In spring 2023, the department launched a public survey and conducted open houses to gather input from the public and school communities on their experiences with Whitehorse school facilities and to better understand how to meet K-12 programming needs. Alongside the survey and open houses, the department hosted focus groups for educators, learning stewards, and students, and held meetings with Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. Approximately 1,000 Yukoners participated in this engagement, and a **What We Heard** report was published in November 2023, summarizing the findings and feedback received.

## School drinking water

In March 2024, just before spring break, students at Del Van Gorder School in Faro discovered lead in the school's water using a test kit. Follow-up testing by the Department of Highways and Public Works on April 5 confirmed that one of the three water fountains exceeded the new Canadian drinking water guidelines for lead. In response, the department immediately shut off the affected fountains and provided bottled water and dispensers to ensure the safety of students and staff. Further testing and remediation efforts are planned for all Yukon schools to ensure safe water supplies.

## School safety transportation plans

The Department of Education collaborates with the road safety branch of Highways and Public Works (HPW) to facilitate back-to-school advertising campaigns, provide parents with information on school parking lot driving flows, and deliver traffic, pedestrian, and cyclist education and awareness to students.

A recent initiative was the creation of a student safety handbook and map, which has been distributed to community schools. Ongoing efforts are in place to roll this out to schools in the Whitehorse area as well.

## Education Appeal Tribunal

The Education Appeal Tribunal is an independent body established under the *Education Act* to resolve specific disputes that cannot be settled within schools. These disputes may involve decisions regarding special needs, student records, suspensions, and locally developed courses. The tribunal provides a process for parents or guardians to appeal decisions that significantly impact a student's education, health, or safety. Below is a summary of the tribunal's activities, including the number of appeals, mediations, and hearings conducted over the past year.

<b>EAT statistics – April 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024</b>	
Appeal requests received this year	6
Cases outstanding from previous years	3
Requests discontinued by applicants	3
Resolved by department	1
Not within EAT jurisdiction	1
In mediation	1
Resolved through mediation	1
Pending	2
Hearings	0

## Human Resources

Under the Confidence and Supply Agreement, the Yukon government committed to increasing the number of Educational Assistants, Learning Assistance Teachers, and creating new wellness counsellor positions for the 2023-24 school year, with further increases planned over the next two years.

To support this commitment, the Department of Education made a significant investment in 81 new full-time positions over the next three years, starting with the 2023-24 school year.

Additionally, the department has allocated \$1M to support school educator recruitment and retention initiatives.

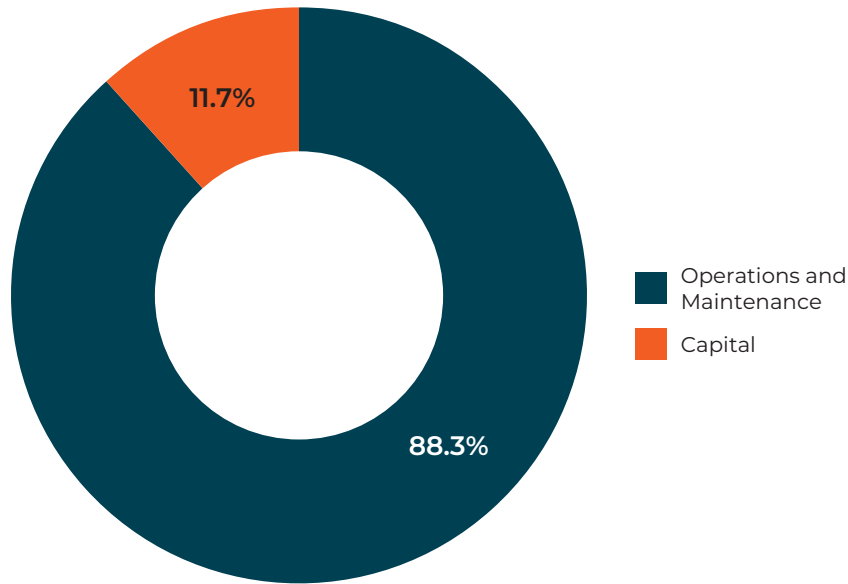
To streamline the hiring process and improve the recruitment experience for applicants, the department has transitioned to e-recruitment for hiring Teachers on Call. Beginning September 2024, this system will also be used for all other educators, including teachers and educational assistants, aligning with the recruitment practices of other Yukon government departments.

# Financials

## Education's total budget

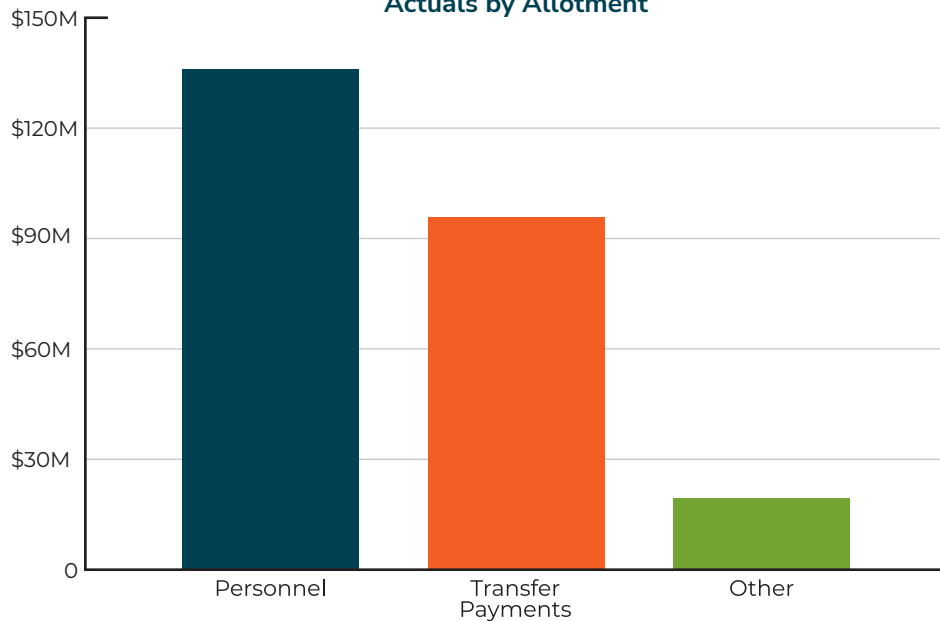
The Department of Education's total budget for 2023-24, including supplementary estimates, was \$252.0 million for Operations and Maintenance and \$33.5 million for Capital expenditures.

**Total Budget 2023-24 (unaudited)**



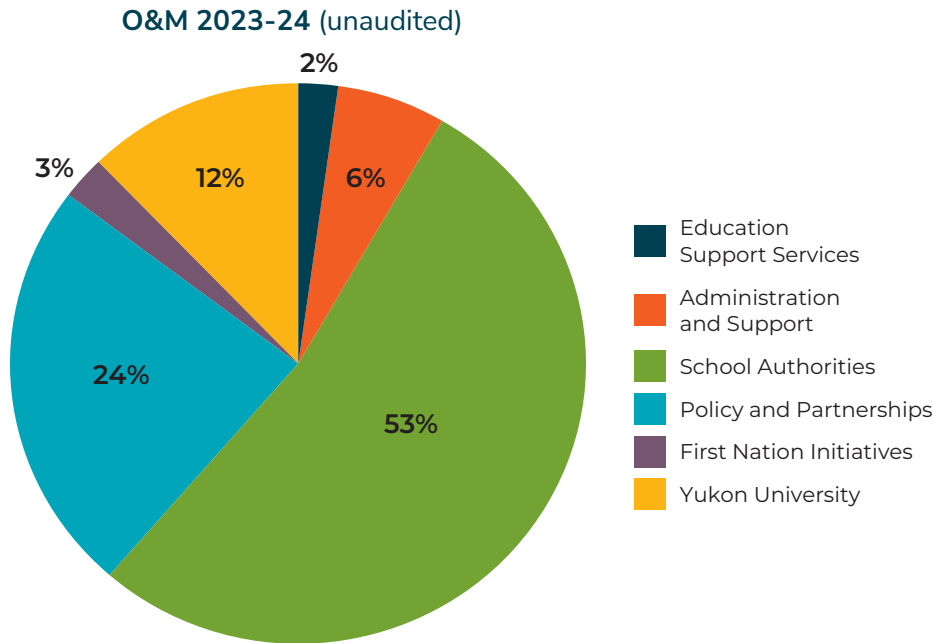
For the 2023-24 fiscal year, the department estimated that it spent \$251.3 million of its Operations and Maintenance budget, resulting in a 0.3% budget lapse (\$698K). The largest expense for the department is personnel, as we employ approximately 2,200 Yukoners.

**Actuals by Allotment**





The department's expenses are distributed as follows:



The department's expenses are primarily allocated to the three school authorities. Additionally, the department is engaged in the Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education (RISE) initiative, which aims to transform and empower all Yukon students throughout their learning journey—from childcare to apprenticeship and university.

The chart above presents our expenditures by category; the following details the specific programs and services included in each of these areas.

**EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES**

- Deputy Minister's Office
- Communications
- Human Resources
- Finance

**ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT**

- ADM Office
- Technology and Student Information
- Student Support Services
- Facilities and Transportation

**POLICY AND PARTNERSHIPS**

- ADM Office
- Policy, Planning and Evaluation
- Curriculum and Assessment
- Information Technology and Support Services
- Data and Analytics
- French Programs
- Training Programs
- Early Learning and Child Care

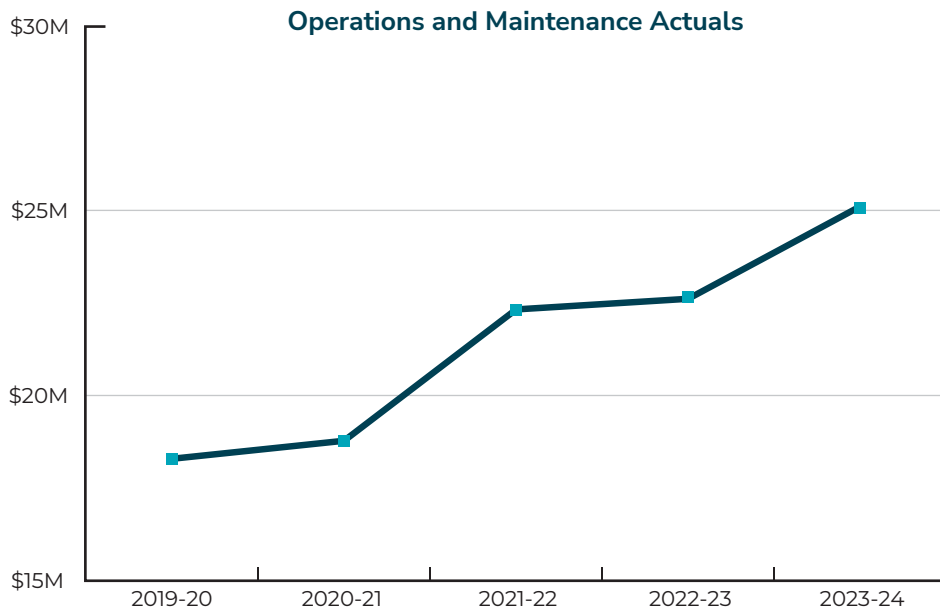
**FIRST NATION INITIATIVES**

- ADM Office
- First Nations Language Initiatives
- First Nations Education Agreements
- First Nations Program Delivery and Curriculum Development

**SCHOOL AUTHORITIES**

- First Nation School Board
- Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon
- K-12 Education

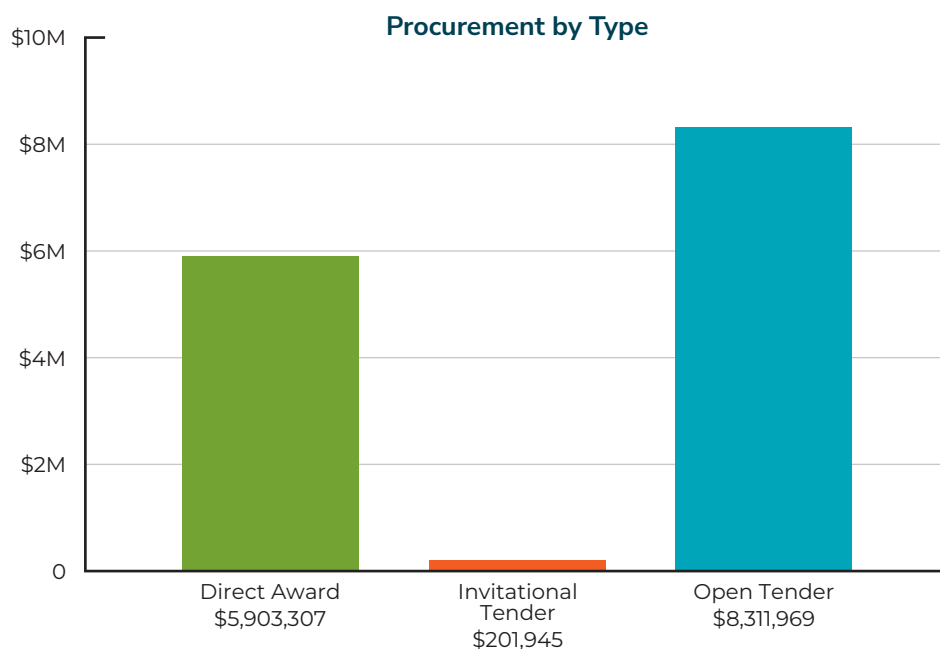
In 2023-24, the Department of Education continued to invest in new schools and Yukon University. Over the last five years, Education has seen steady growth in Operations and Maintenance actuals.



### Procurement

The Department of Education purchases goods and services to fulfill its mandate and deliver essential services to learners. We are committed to ensuring a fair and competitive procurement process.

In 2023-24, the department purchased goods through direct award (\$2.1M; for certain school-related items), invitational tender (\$129K), and open tender (\$4.0M). For services, the department spent \$4.3M through open tender, \$3.8M through direct award, and \$72K through invitational tender.



# Celebrating staff and students

## Premier's Award winners

### Neurodiversity Culture and Programming at Hidden Valley Elementary School (Team)

The inclusive neurodiversity program at Hidden Valley Elementary School has made a significant impact on the success of the Yukon education system's goals. This program provides exceptional service to neurodiverse students, fostering their individual growth and development across various competencies, including intellectual, physical, social, emotional, cultural, and aesthetic areas. Students who previously struggled have achieved curriculum goals, demonstrating marked improvements in communication, empathy, and academic abilities.

The program has also enhanced access to public educational services, making them more accessible and reliable for neurodiverse students. Through individualized planning, direct instruction, and ongoing assessments, learners have gained more control and engagement in their educational journey. Built on creativity and innovation, the program addresses the unique needs of neurodiverse learners, demonstrating significant improvements in learning outcomes. It serves as an effective model of inclusion and equity, with potential for replication in other Yukon schools.

### Learning Network Leaders and Facilitators (Team)

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and during the ongoing recovery period, educators have faced several complex challenges, including lack of student engagement, teacher morale and burnout, poor student attendance, learning gaps in the "COVID cohort," and issues with classroom management and discipline. Despite these challenges, a dedicated team of educators stepped forward to transform how educators learn and lead as teams within their schools and communities. The Learning Network facilitators and leaders provided an enriched learning experience, enabling teachers to explore, be creative, and innovate, all while keeping students at the center of their efforts. Teachers were able to demonstrate their learning by implementing these practices in their day-to-day work in schools, contributing to a renewed sense of purpose and effectiveness in the educational community.



# Appendices:

## A: First Nation School Board 2023-2024

### Nurturing Yukon Learners through community wisdom

The First Nation School Board works to empower and inspire learners, families, and communities to lead necessary change in education and society through Yukon first Nations ways.

### Our Path

From *Together Today for our Children Tomorrow* (January 1973), to the Kwiya Report (August 1987) to the Auditor General's reports in 2009 and 2019, and the Joint Education Action Plan (JEAP) 2014-2024, Yukon First Nations leaders have been calling for change in education for all Yukon learners. After the 2019 Auditor General's Report, the Chiefs Committee on Education re-established and formed the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate and in 2021, the *Agreement Respecting Education and the Establishment of a First Nation School Board in Yukon* was signed by 10 Yukon First Nations, representing the Chiefs Committee on Education, and the Minister of Education. The agreement recognizes long-standing concerns about unacceptable education outcomes and sets up the school board under Yukon's *Education Act*, allowing true legal partnership between Yukon First Nations and Government of Yukon to run public schools in the territory.

**In February 2022, through referenda, the school board was established so that Yukon First Nations can authentically share authority with the Government of Yukon in delivering public-school education. At that time, eight schools joined the school board. In March 2023, three more schools joined. Currently, FNSB includes:**

- 822 students
- 180 teachers
- 9 Traditional Territories of Yukon First Nations
- 11 schools
- 7 Yukon languages, and
- 36 support staff who support our school teams in providing education from a First Nations perspective including a diverse and inclusive educational environment that celebrates the rich cultural heritage of our communities.

## 2023-24 Highlights

### Literacy Results

In June 2024, after only one year of FNSB's research- and evidence-based literacy plan, students' standardized test results increase for the first time in more than 30 years.

**“Nothing changes until something changes. Our results prove that being curious, following the most up-to-date research, and supporting our school teams with resources and coaching works. This increase in FNSB learners' literacy scores is a huge part of reconciliation in this territory. Normalizing low expectations in reading levels for Yukon students is not ok. Continuing the status quo in how we are teaching students when it is clearly not meeting their needs was not acceptable. As many previous reports state: change has been long overdue. These results are inspiring and show that we are on the right path.”**

FNSB Executive Director Melissa Flynn

## Dagoo Taii

Learners from Chief Zeh Gittlit worked for months to prepare for the Dagoo Taii (Over the Mountain People Trail) trip that took a multi-generational group (including land guardians and Elders) on a 500 km ski doo trip following a traditional travel route that connected people from Teechik (Old Crow) through Dagoh traditional territory to Teetl'it Zzeh (Fort McPherson).

Chief Zeh Gittlit students gained various certifications including Wilderness First Aid and chain saw safety, before hitting the trail. The team left Teechik (Old Crow) on March 27, travelling up the Choo' Deenjik (Porcupine River), through Chiitsiighe' (Salmon Cache), Mason Hill, Zzeh Gwatstal (La Pierre House) and all the way to Vihshraii Niivyaa (Curtain Mountain) cabin, which is the half way point. The group spent 2 nights at Vihshraii Niivyaa and harvested 7 caribou, shared stories, and took care of camp. They continued on through the Lachute River, over the pass through the Richardson Mountains to Ddhan Zhithan (Stoney Creek) and arrived in Teetl'it Zzeh (Fort McPherson) on March 30. The team was met by Teetl'it Zzeh community members, mostly family, and a delicious feast. The community hosted meals, games nights, and a ski doo rally for the group. After a few days gathering with family and community, they hit the trail back, returning to Teechik (Old Crow) on April 3.

**This is what education can look like when we enter into community and authentically work with families and Elders to learn what education means to them.**

A big mahsi' choo to everyone in community and funders who made this trip possible.

**“I had a good trip going over nice country. It was my first time coming this way so I enjoyed it, and seeing all this nice, new country. It’s a place I’ve never been before. It’s quite something to see all those mountains, seeing how our ancestors travelled over that and how long it would take them. I’m going to make sure I do it again – go out, go all over this country and figure it out.”**

Logan Kyikavichik, Student

If you would like to see the full FNSB 2023-2024 Annual Report, please visit [fnsb.ca](https://fnsb.ca)



## B: Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon 2023–2024

*It is with gratitude and respect that we acknowledge that we live and work on the Traditional Territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation.*

### My culture, my language, my bilingualism

The Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon (CSFY) was created in 1996.

It is responsible for education in French as a First Language throughout the territory. It runs three schools, one program, and one daycare:

- Émilie-Tremblay School (EET), four-year-old kindergarten to grade 6
- Paul-Émile-Mercier Secondary School Community Centre (CSSC Mercier), grade 7 to 12
- Nomad School, home schooling program, five-year-old kindergarten to grade 12
- Programme en français langue première de Dawson, four-year-old kindergarten to grade 5
- Garderie du petit cheval blanc, daycare, after-school program and summer camp

Here is a brief overview of the CSFY's 2023-2024 annual report, which highlights the four pillars of our strategic plan: our students, our education, our promotion and visibility, and our leadership.

The report is available in French at [commissionscolaire.csfy.ca/publications/](https://commissionscolaire.csfy.ca/publications/)

## Students

### Number of students in 2023–2024

- Émilie-Tremblay School: 235 students
- CSSC Mercier: 139 students
- Nomad School: 6 students
- Programme en français langue première de Dawson: 8 students
- Garderie du petit cheval blanc: 44 children

**Total:** 388 students, compared to 372 students in 2022-2023. In addition, 44 children were being cared for at Garderie du Petit Cheval Blanc, for a total of 432 children.

The year 2023-2024 was marked by two major events at CSFY: the opening of the Programme en français langue première de Dawson, as well as taking over the management of the Garderie du petit cheval blanc.

### Programme en français langue première de Dawson experienced significant growth due to increasing demand from parents.

The programme started the year with two teachers and a teaching assistant and was a success. The CSFY anticipates doubling the number of students for the 2024-2025 year and has thus added a teaching position as well as a new administrative assistant position.

### Completion of the integration of the Garderie du petit cheval blanc

The year was marked by the completion of the integration of the Garderie into the CSFY. The CSFY is now able to plan the expansion of daycare services in Whitehorse and Dawson.

## Education

### Programme en français langue première de Dawson

The CSFY collaborated with the Government of Yukon and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in government to establish the Programme en français langue première de Dawson. The CSFY is committed to collaborating with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to integrate their knowledge, culture and language into our Dawson program.

#### Here is what sets us apart:

- Intercultural Approach: Integrates francophone, anglophone, and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in cultures to promote mutual understanding and respect.
- Multidisciplinary Approach: Benefits from the network and expertise of CSFY, with various resources (books, games, magazines) for continuous learning.
- Adaptability: Flexibility to meet the needs of families, providing tailored support for all students.
- Stimulating Learning Environment: Uses innovative and engaging methods, such as small group work and experiential learning, including the forest school approach.

## Promotion and visibility

### 4th Symposium on Professional Development in Early Childhood

The CSFY and the Garderie du petit cheval blanc coordinated a 4th Professional Development Symposium in Early Childhood, which took place in Whitehorse from January 17 to 20, 2024. Under the theme "Cultivating Difference", a wide range of in-person and virtual conferences and workshops were offered. We give our thanks to the Government of Yukon and the Government of Quebec ([sqrq.gouv.qc.ca](http://sqrq.gouv.qc.ca)) for their financial support for this initiative.

### A digital library for the community

Our digital library is available for the whole community: [csscmmercier.cantookstation.com](http://csscmmercier.cantookstation.com)

### Board Game Library

The CSFY and the Garderie du petit cheval blanc administer the Board Game Library, which is a free French game-borrowing service for the entire community aged from 0 to 99 years.

### French Book Fair

Staff members of CSFY organized the 15th edition of the Book Fair on February 20-21, 2024. Books and games for all ages were sold for a total amount of \$15,800. We thank the organizing committee for this annual event, which is highly anticipated by the community. Profits were donated to various charities in the community.



A student tries out welding during a Youth Moving Mountains camp day at Yukon University.





