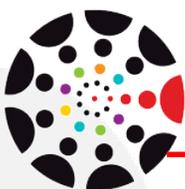# Yukon Government Department of Education EA Allocation Process Improvement Project Summary & Recommendations

April 2024

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The Educational Assistant Allocation Process Improvement Initiative was conducted with the Yukon government's Department of Education, under Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education (RISE). This initiative is an inititial step in reviewing the existing process and seeking diverse perspectives from a small group that had been a part of the EA allocation process. This initiative and the subsequent report is one piece of the work the department is undertaking on reviewing the EA allocation process. The department also undertook comprehensive research, exploring how EA allocation processes were conducted in other jurisdictions, adding valuable insights to inform ongoing efforts. It's important to note that further consultation and collaboration are essential, emphasizing that this initiative represents just the start of the journey towards reshaping the allocation process. This is just the beginning of work in Yukon to review the existing EA allocation process and move towards an improved process for all involved.

This report outlines the initial stages of work for the EA Allocation Process Improvement Initiative involved utilizing a process improvement tool called the "DMAIC" model (Design, Measure, Analysis, Improve, and Control) to support a phased approach to accomplishing the work. Phase One of the Initiative involved an analysis of the current state to thoroughly understand and document the issues identified by approximately thirty role representative stakeholders. This data collection and analysis was completed through in-person anonymous interviews with two consultants. The goal of this work was to gather feedback on themes related to current strengths, barriers, challenges, bottlenecks, and timing issues that impact the effectiveness of the EA allocation process. Additional feedback was gathered on communications surrounding the process and decision-making, suggestions for more openness, transparency and objectivity, efficiencies for submitting and tracking applications, and suggestions for how to address student needs that arise during the school year. The thirty interviews were themed, and a baseline SIPOC process improvement tool (Suppliers, Inputs, Process, Output, Customer -see separate attachment) was established to document understanding on the "current state" allocation process. The summary interview themes were integrated into Phase Two of the planning and facilitation of the EA Allocation Process Improvement Initiative.

Phase Two of the Initiative focused on the "What" and "How" for establishing process improvements for the EA Allocation Process. The background and learnings from Phase One informed the design and delivery of Phase Two, which took place in the form of a two-day collaborative, iterative process improvement planning session, comprised of 4 separate topic sessions, that emerged as key priorities to focus on from the anonymous interviews. Research was also conducted from four different provinces (British Columbia, Newfoundland, Ontario, and Manitoba) to reflect approaches and ideas for consideration and improvement related to Educational Assistant comparative information on: educational background and requirements, hiring process, funding for EA hiring, allocation efficiencies, rubric forms and application process, assessment approach (criteria for decision-making), shared accountability for decision-making, and a sampling of best practices. The research was compiled into a 3-page document for sharing at the 2-day process improvement session (See Appendix B in this document).

The "What" of the 2-day process improvement planning session focused on high priority improvement topics identified in the interviews based on density count and analysis. The opening session overview provided a welcome, purpose, desired outcomes, and agenda review. The following session topics and agendas were designed to provide context on each topic from the interviews, provide relevant information from the provincial research, and engage participants in a collaborative process improvement exercise to support improvements. The "How" was focused on creating opportunities for connecting, collaborating, and co-creating proposed solutions to enhance the EA allocation process.

The four deep dive topics (as determined by themes and key issues from the interviews) focused on for the two-day process improvement planning session were:
1) Efficiencies (timing, timelines, system, and process for submitting)
2) Rubric forms (intensive & shared) and application process (high volume, redundant workload for some students, subjective, and not reflective of all classroom dynamics)
3) "Needs based" and Establishment of draft Prioritization Criteria (this topic was modified in the session based on feedback gathered in real time)

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4) Shared Accountabilities and Collaborative Decision-Making.

A wrap-up session that walked participants through the key take-aways and work done in each break-out session was provided, as well as the opportunity to collaboratively prioritize additional key priority topics identified in the interviews and planning sessions.

The Educational Assistant (EA) Allocation Process Improvement Planning Sessions took place on November 20th and 21st at the Sternwheeler hotel conference room. The focus of this summary report is to share the outcomes and learnings from this two-day event, as well as the documents referenced at the event. The intention for the planning and design of the sessions was to demonstrate new ways of thinking and working together as Department of Education members. The interactive sessions integrated principles of collaboration, engagement, and iterative planning and modelled **the goals of the improvement project to support an open, transparent, and objective allocation process** as values for how the participants in the sessions worked together.

The interview summary themes can be reviewed in Appendix A of this report. The table of comparative provincial research can be reviewed in Appendix B of this report. Both Appendix A and B were provided and reviewed in the improvement planning sessions. The feedback gathered from the Improvement Planning participants is reflected in this report, as captured on the materials and flip charts from the facilitated Deep Dive topic sessions. Consultant recommendations are based on the combined interviews and the in-person sessions. (See Consultant Recommendations in this report).

The consensus from participants of the 2-day improvement planning sessions indicate that there is keen willingness and desire to collaboratively work together on topics that matter. The EA allocation process, as a topic, was an excellent starting point for establishing new ways of thinking and working together.

ACTIONS SUMMARY (SHORT-, MEDIUM-, AND LONG-TERM GOALS)

Each facilitated section of the day concluded with the identification of actions that could be taken within the context of short (next EA cycle), medium (within a year), and long-term (greater than a year) goals. Following is a summary of proposed actions for each deep dive topic addressed that came out of the improvement planning sessions:

1) **Efficiencies (timing, timelines, system, process for submitting):**

Short-Term Goals:
- Hiring EAs between April-June.
- Whole school vs. individual approach.
- School submission (1 form).

Medium-Term Goals:
- Executive Director/ Superintendent allocation (with SSS).
- EA's for K-3 for every school.

Long-Term Goals:
- Funding/ research (wellness evaluation and support).
- 1:1 long-term needs model (how often to do allocation process).

2) **Rubric forms (intensive & shared) and application process:**
Short-Term Goals:
- On-line forms.
- One form.
- Background/ examples.

- Float teachers/ school (protect EA/ LAT time).
- Send out scoring sheets.

Medium-Term Goals:
- Early intervention EAs – K-3.
- Work with HR and whole system approach (EAs, LATs, Teachers, Supports).
- Intervention supports (very high behavioural/ safety needs).

Long-Term Goals:
- Specific therapeutic school for the Yukon.
- Data system to run reports (larger system supports).

3) **'Needs based' & prioritization criteria for decision-making & sharing:**
Short-Term Goals:
- Identify and document current resources (including contact information) available to help meet school needs and share with all school administrators and LATs.

Medium-Term Goals:
- Finalize role clarity for teachers and EAs, and how they work together and communicate broadly.
- Establish a framework to help determine resource allocation for meeting school needs. This work could be done by Superintendents, ED's, administrators, and SSS.

Long-Term Goals:
- Identification of appropriate resources (classification of care that provides medical resources during school hours) to support highly intensive medical needs.
- A therapeutic school for dedicated supports (very highly intensive, safety and well-being needs).

4) **Shared accountabilities & collaborative decision-making:**
Short-Term Goals:
- Submit resource requests to SSS on February 1st.
- Whole school vs. individual application (including school cover letter).
- Aim to hire EAs between April and June.

Medium-Term Goals:
- K-3 EA supports.
- Include in school letters which students will be receiving intensive support (to reduce paperwork).
- 1:1 long-term allocation (I.e., intense medical, not having to duplicate application process annually).

Long-Term Goals:
- Increase funding for school-based resources.
- Shared accountabilities/ collaborative decision-making Working Group to support resource allocation distribution (Overall decision-making).
- Area-based meetings to feed data/ input into the overall decision-making process (above).

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DEEP DIVE TOPIC #1: EFFICIENCIES

Interview summary feedback, provincial research, and the world café themes were shared to help prime the group discussion on efficiencies (timing, timelines, system, process for submitting). Also, a more thorough walk through of the swim lane map was done prior to the afternoon session. The efficiencies deep dive focused on the themes surfaced from the interviews related to: timelines for requesting and receiving EA allocations, the system/ tool used to manage the allocation process, and the process for submitting EA requests.

Areas that were highlighted for review and opportunity in the deep dive session were based on specific timelines. Several suggestions were made for the start of the EA allocation process and timeline. It was suggested that applications for EAs should be based on a school's vs individual needs requests. There was some interest in a more collaborative model including Superintendents, Administrators, and School Supports being involved right at the start of the process. Several suggestions were made about having more involvement or communication with parents at the start of the EA allocation process. There was consensus that a more wholistic system-wide approach with improved transparency would benefit the allocation process. Specific suggestions at the start of the process would include more information (historical data, base index numbers, etc.) to schools in a letter. Aligning the process with the teacher hiring timeline was also identified as being beneficial. There was also agreement of having hired support/coverage for those involved in submitting the EA allocations (back-filling). It was also noted that schools should provide a summary document outlining the school's overall requests when submitting EA applications.

There was overall agreement that the EA process this past year, with more interaction with SSS was appreciated, and there is opportunity to look at ways for more collaboration before the allocation numbers are finalized.

*Swim lane document is provided as a separate attachment.

Following are the short, medium, and long-term actions/ goals that were identified in the session:

Short-Term (next EA cycle) Goals:
- Hiring EAs between April-June.
- Whole school vs. individual approach.
- School submission (1 overall form).

Medium-Term Goals:
- ED/ Superintendent allocation (with SSS).
- EAs for K-3 in every school.

Long-Term Goals:
- Funding/ research (wellness evaluation and support).
- 1:1 'long-term need' model (how often to do allocation process).

DEEP DIVE TOPIC #2: RUBRIC FORMS

Topic #2 was focused on making improvements to the rubric, using a fishbone diagram as the facilitation tool. The fishbone diagram used the synthesized learnings from the World Café session as affinitized topics for the six key bones. Those six areas in no specific order were:
- Parent involvement.

- System input: form automation.
- One form - combine shared and intensive.
- Collaborative decisions – who should be involved.
- School and/or individual application, and
- Content clarification.

The session focused on each fishbone with suggestions and discussions around each key topic, which resulted in the development of short, medium, and long-term improvements around the rubric.

Fishbone diagram notes:

Parent Involvement:

- Parents should/could be informed if an EA is requested. What might be an appropriate communication plan to the family.
- Consideration of different involvement/process for elementary vs. high school.
- Having parent involvement is considered a strength in the application process.
- Checkbox on rubric to indicate that parents were informed.

System Input – Form Automation:

- Having the form be completed online.
- Online form would allow for faster processing.
- Better long-term data.
- Inform and support this approach with training.

One form- Combine Shared and Intensive:

- Form would distinguish between shared or intensive.
- Communicate with those who allocate (LATs/teachers). More involvement with those who are requesting, and the request submitted.
- Simplified option/process for a repeat long-term intensive student.

Collaborative Decisions – Who Should be Involved?

- Those who allocate (EA's, LATs, Teachers) should be involved in the process.
- Would there be a way to have floater teacher to help during the allocation process?
- Should it be a support request form that is shared with C & A (Example).
- When allocations are not given, include recommendations.

School and/or Individual Application:

- Can we think of how to support shared needs class-wide (Tier 2)?
- When is the need something other than an EA?
- Therapeutic school needed.

Clarification – EA and/or Other Supports?

- Objective and strengths based.
- Examples of what constitutes different levels.

- Having open-ended comments box is important. Allows for more explanation and nuances.
- Other supports provided (attendance, plans full/partial, assistant tech).

Short-Term Goals:
- On-line forms.
- One form.
- Background/ examples.
- Float teachers/ school (protect EA/ LAT time).
- Send out scoring sheets.

Medium-Term Goals:
- Early intervention EAs – K-3.
- Working with HR and whole system approach (EAs, LATs, Teachers, Supports).
- Intervention supports (very high behavioural/ safety needs).

Long-Term Goals:
- Specific therapeutic school for the Yukon.
- Data system to run reports (larger system supports).

DEEP DIVE TOPIC #3: 'NEEDS BASED' & PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA FOR DECISION-MAKING

Topic #3 was divided into two sections. The first part of the session focused on the language of 'needs based', and the second part of the session was planned to begin dialogue on establishing prioritized criteria for decision-making to help support a more open, transparent, and objective allocation process. Many schools are already triaging student needs when the allocations are determined, and the goal was to gather learnings from how schools are allocating EAs to help create clarity and consistency.

Section One of Topic 3 provided space for large group discussion using a 3W exercise to explore the following questions: "What" is perceived by the language of 'needs based', "What" might be additional ways of framing to more clearly communicate and reflect how EAs are allocated, and "What" might be needed to create understanding on how needs inform the allocation process. The groups' responses for each question are captured here:

'Needs Based' Language 3W exercise:
1) **What is perceived by the language of 'needs based'?**
   - Greater needs = greater support
   - Sometimes diagnosis based
   - Deficit based
   - Student needs can change over time
   - Perceptions of what are 'greater' needs
   - Chosen positive language – needs remain unclear
   - Can lose facts in translation
   - Toxicity of positivity (need candor/ reality based)
   - Needs vs. wants (not always best approach)
   - Unclear of what 'needs' are/ are needs being met?
   - Identified needs = getting support
   - Traditional/ classroom 'needs' focus
   - Academic needs not supported
   - Compartmentalized needs vs. whole child

- Perception of deciding based on budget
- Is meeting 'needs' Education's mandate? (EAs do it all)
- Public perception of what EA's do
- Children have rights to access education
- Needs is broad spectrum (challenges to opportunities)

2) **So, what might be additional ways of framing to more clearly communicate and reflect how EAs are allocated?**
- Safety is a top priority need
- If someone asks, 'how is this decided', need clarity, consistency across territory
- Need a 'bottom line'/ alternate pathways for challenges beyond defined needs
- Needs based, culture and resource informed
- Continuum approach:
  - Needs based ➡ Resource allocation ➡ EA allocation

3) **Now what might be needed to create understanding on how needs inform the allocation process?**
- Publicize document that communicates the variety of student needs and resources available (awareness of EA numbers/ budget)
- Streamlined process to allocate resources to meet needs:
  - Options pre 1:1
  - Algorithm
  - Checklist (UDL)
- Clarity on current school dynamics and how diverse needs are met (not only academic goals)
  - Integrate complex child data upstream to be more proactive (involve HR)
  - Needs = committed to meeting in some way

The second part of Deep Dive 3 was intended to begin the conversation and dialogue to gather the learnings from participants on how some schools are currently triaging their student needs based on the allocations provided. The interviews had surfaced this topic, based on density count as a topic of value for exploration and learning. As the discussion began, it became apparent that a re-framing for the large group discussion would be necessary to achieve the goal of collaborating effectively and productively.

Prioritized Criteria for Decision-Making: (this part of the session was **re-focused to identify what the current classroom needs are, what resources are currently available, and what resources are needed to meet needs**):

Identified Needs	Current/ Available Resources	Resources Needed
A. Medical/ intensive: • Diabetes • Visual impairment • Mobility • Monitoring • Toileting	• Educational psychologists • EA (intensive/ shared) • Consultants (OT, PT, Speech) • Medical consultant	• Nurse • Support worker • Elder (culture supports) (that don't qualify for an EA)
B. Neurodiversity: • Autism (case by case) • Non-verbal • ADHD	• Physician support • Consultants • Sensory neurodiversity groups • Borielle resources (?) • Pull out groups • LDAY (?) • EA's currently support when behaviours	• Elder (culture supports) • LAT in classroom • Academic needs/ supports: • Teacher training (UDL) • Shared EA support • Executive functioning Supports • Therapies (therapeutic Supports)

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	prioritized	• School wellness specialists • Specialized teams (Observing, interacting, modelling)
C. Safety/ Mental Health: • Physical safety (self, peer, staff) • Dysregulation • Big behaviours • Results in needing diff. environment/ supports	• School youth advocates • Education support workers • Intensive/ shared EA's • In school counsellors (some schools have) • Food programming	• Counselling (teaching & social/ emotional) • Staffed sensory room • Adequate learning assistance (pride in learning) • Indigenous advisors (2/ School) • Elders (culture supports/ school at large) • Resource rooms (relational component/ safe spaces) • Rainbow rooms • In school counsellors
D. Academics: • Literacy • Numeracy	• LATs (not consistently Available)/ lack of space/ rooms • Multicultural association • YFNED advocates	• LAT's (additional/ different programming) • Literacy/ numeracy supports • ELL's • Additional EA training for Literacy/ numeracy help
E. Students dealing with trauma: • Toileting • Non-verbal (time period) • Absences	• Similar to Mental Health	• Trauma informed training (cultural component Missing) • Not consistent • Developmentally responsive • Early intervention • Cultural training

Additional comments/ considerations for the above table:
- Short-term/ emergency support to identify needs/ plans resources needed.
- Relational connection/ pairing is a benefit.
- A lot of the current resources apply to all categories or child development.
- Consider applying "home supports" for students and families to all 'resources needed' if open to it.
- Education/ health contracts to support clinical counsellors under consideration.
- Therapeutic school in the Yukon is needed (needs beyond what schools can provide).
- Need to support shared understanding across all schools of what is being funded in the Yukon context.
- Increase opportunities for sharing ideas/ collaboration/ learning from each other/ across schools is needed.

Note: Resources available for First Nations students – additional supports (I.e., FNEL worker, ESW's, inclusion workers – federal funds/ Jordan's principle).

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Topic 4 focused on surfacing ideas for improvement on how to support increased focus on shared accountabilities and more collaborative decision-making between Student Support Services and the key roles involved in the EA allocation process (I.e., Superintendents & ED's, Administrators, LATs, HR, Finance) to help shift the culture and experience towards working more collaboatively. The interview themes highlighted that the historical EA allocation process had created a sense of competition, versus collaboration, and the way that decisions were made previously had reinforced divides between who makes the allocation decisions, and those impacted by the decisions.

Current State Improvements: The following suggestions emerged from the session on how to make improvements within the current state context of the EA allocation process, without making any major changes to the structure and process. There was recognition that more significant changes would take time and agreement, and not everything could be fixed in a brainstorming session.

- Engage Superintendents/ ED's/ Boards in discussion/ review of requests prior to submission:
    - Criteria would be helpful to establish (otherwise perceived as subjective)
    - Help to understand and support needs
    - OMCR discussions – address needs
- Identification in initial school letters which students will be getting intensive support (will reduce paperwork).
- TOC notification for consistent approach (all schools) for LATs to meet with teachers to identify needs/ EA requests.
- Send out letter, rubric, and visual representation.
- Database/ tool that includes WRA's, screeners (create charts to help identify needs).
- Bundle EA allocation numbers with teacher FTE allocation and elementary transitions (Feb.)
- Include CDC requests for known children (projected) – intensive student head's up.
- Final CDC requests (that are known) for shared supports in March (meeting with SSS, Superintendents, ED's, CDC to discuss possible needs).
- CDC and SSS sharing information with schools to help provide a head's up.
- February 1st: possibility of submitting requests to SSS (not Mar.1).
- Automate report completion/ save time on compiling and data entry time (more time for discussion vs. data entry).
- Move final meeting with Superintendents/ ED's to before final allocation numbers/ letters go out (letters should not surprise, but be confirmation of shared understanding).

Future State Improvements: The following suggestions emerged from the session on how to make improvements that were recognized as requiring more time, planning, and engagement.
- **Overall decision-making:** team approach (small Working Group) to establish a shared accountability approach, including the following roles:
    - Superintendents/ ED's/ French School Board
    - SSS – Manager
    - Administrator representative (can rotate)

- **Area-based meetings** to feed data/ input into the overall decision-making (above):
    - Superintendent/ ED and SSS, Manager meet with areas (administrators, LAT lead, school council rep, FN rep, YAEP) to discuss needs/ resource identification (no base caps in these meetings).
    - Discuss how needs are being met/ discuss emerging needs.

- **Timing:** By moving process steps up by 1 month (from March to February), this will give HR an additional month to get letters out and support hiring EAs for June.
- Schools want to do EA hiring starting in April.

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The following short, medium, and long-term goals provide the discussion summary requested actions that were in addition to the more detailed feedback that was gathered on the swim lane diagram in the session (reflected above).

Short-Term Goals:
- Submit resource requests to SSS on February 1st.
- Whole school vs. individual application (including school cover letter)
- Aim to hire EAs between April and June.

Medium-Term Goals:
- K-3 EA supports.
- Include in school letters which students will be receiving intensive support (to reduce paperwork).
- 1:1 long-term allocation (I.e., intense medical, not having to duplicate application process annually).

Long-Term Goals:
- Increase funding for school-based resources.
- Shared accountabilities/ collaborative decision-making Working Group to support resource allocation distribution (Overall decision-making).
- Area-based meetings to feed data/ input into the overall decision-making process (above).

IDENTIFIED PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT ROADMAP

A significant number of additional improvement topics surfaced in the interviews beyond EA allocation, and during the 2-day facilitation. The goal of gathering the additional topics was to have the participants at the event review and consider which topics, out of all the possible improvement areas, matters most to continue collaboration and work on. All of the improvement topics were listed, and each participant was given 3 sticky dots. The topics with the most sticky dots are identified as the suggested roadmap for continued improvements. The bolded topics below indicate that current work is being done by RISE on these areas.

Additional Topics for Consideration (in priority order):
- EA onboarding/ checklists/ **training**
- EA wages/ incentives/ budget & resource allocation
- Additional resources (beyond EA's)
- EA hiring/ recruitment/ pool (HR)
- **EA role clarity**
- Teacher/ **ToC/ training** (how to utilize EA's)
- Special education culture development
- Policies/ guidelines (I.e., toileting, safety)
- EA check-in's (doing/ feeling)
- Other classroom supports
- During school year EA requests
- Database/ tool for collecting student data to support decision-making

Additional topics that did not receive any votes can be found in Appendix E.

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OVERALL FEEDBACK

At the end of each day, the positives and opportunities were shared by participants in the sessions. Following is a summary of the feedback gathered. The detailed feedback from both days can be found in Appendix F.

The summary positives and opportunities for improvement included:

Positives:
- Passion for the topic; this work matters
- Small group to large group discussions were beneficial (gathering broad ideas)
- Short, medium, and long-term planning ideas/ direction SSS is going in
- Child as the focal point
- Participants had a voice/ opportunity to learn about resources currently available
- SSS opening up this topic for improvement (took courage and vulnerability)

Opportunities:
- Would benefit from an overview of work already in progress/ what SSS is working on for improvements
- Cultural inclusion (needs/ opportunities)/ First Nations student communities represented
- EAs invited (not able to attend)
- Idea to attend school staff meetings to gather feedback/ ideas (go to the sites)
- Continued invitations to collaborate and improve processes

PARKING LOT

Items were flagged in the parking lot as topics that were out of scope for the sessions, but that participants wanted to capture for future consideration and response. Following is a summary of the themes. A detailed list of Parking Lot items can be found in Appendix G.

- Consideration of EAs/ teachers/ LATs/ administration being safe emotionally, mentailly, and physicially, and to determine if additional funding is available to support this.
- Look to leverage efficiencies (I.e., principals used to hire EAs, HR overseeing causes delays; NWT onboarding is done well, consider collaborating).
- Has anyone asked the schools if the allocation given 'hit the mark'? If EAs were trained to a higher degree, would that make a difference to the overall numbers?
- EA training/ support oversight: What can be taken from Early Childhood Therapy Assistants (CDC EA support in KY/ Early Kindergarten in communities) and/ or supported childcare educators (early learning) to better support EA's? (I.e., weekly supervision with CDC therapist, weekly tracking notes reviewed by a supervisor to give input on goals, strategies, etc.)

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The recommendations included below are a reflection and summary of the suggestions and findings from the various sources of data gathered through the interviews, provincial research, and planning sessions.

All of the recommendations to be actioned should integrate the principles of collaboration, transparency, active listening, and shared accountability to support a positive culture shift through trust building and engaging in new ways of thinking and working together. Consistent and inclusive integration of a wholistic approach, including families, rural and Indigenous voices into the planning, processes, and improvements.

Short - Term (30-60 days): Could be implemented before the next EA allocation cycle:
- **Rubric - Modification and improvements to the rubric form:**
  o Develop a PDF on-line form.
  o One form (combined intensive/ shared).
  o Clarification of definitions and integration of examples.
  o Provide the scoring sheets to all LAT's and administrators to increase transparency.
  o Engage a representative sampling of key roles to provide feedback for improvement on the changes prior to broad distribution and completion. Communicate that these changes are based on feedback from this collaborative process improvement initiative.

- **Efficiencies (Timeframes/ timelines):**
  o Adjust EA allocation submission date to align with teacher hiring (February).
  o Hiring for EAs between April to June. This will positively impact EA job satisfaction and retention.
  o School-based cover sheet of each schools' needs and requests reviewed with area Superintendents/ ED's prior to SSS submission. This will help to support accountability, awareness, and the transition to a more system-wide approach to meeting student needs versus a competitive approach to securing resources.

- **Needs-based and resource allocation:**
  o Identify and document current resources (including contact information) available to help meet school needs and share with all school administrators and LAT's.

- **Shared accountabilities and collaborative decision-making:**
  o Develop a transparent communication from SSS to the Superintendents, ED's, administrators, and LATs to include current year potential forecast to help support increased understanding and awareness.
  o Continue the meetings that started this past year between school administrators and SSS to discuss allocation requests and consideration of additional resource supports.
  o Integrate HR on goals for improvement (hiring timelines) and inclusion in planning and processes.
  o Develop communication and feedback loops to outline the EA allocation improvement process, short, medium, and long-term planning goals to help address resource needs. Send communication to all schools to support awareness, understanding, and engagement.

Medium – Term (within a year):
- **Rubric:**
  o On-line system that compiles all submissions for the allocation process with the goal of being able to run reports/ access data to inform decision-making, tracking, and trending.
  o Development of a new category on the one form for a 3-year allocation for identified intensive students (reduce redundancy of paperwork/ process for very highly intensive needs).

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- **Efficiencies (Timeframes/ timelines):**
  - Every class for all schools between K-3 to receive an EA. Additional resourcing required to bridge transition period.
  - Review and modify scoring index (excel spreadsheet) for better understanding of the equation.

- **Needs based and resource allocation:**
  - Finalize role clarity for teachers and EAs, and how they work together.
  - Establish a framework to help determine resource allocation for meeting school needs. This work could be done by Superintendents, ED's, administrators, and SSS.

- **Shared accountabilities and collaborative decision-making:**
  - Establish a cross-functional Working Group (SSS Manager, Superintendents, ED's, representative administrator) to shift the accountability and decision-making from SSS to a collaborative, representative decision-making body to determine resource allocation for areas.
  - Integration with HR to improve the onboarding of EAs and developing a centralized resource pool.
  - Site visits to rural and First Nations schools to engage staff in sharing information/ gathering feedback on resource needs and allocation process.
  - Develop a survey tool to gather feedback on elements and improvements regarding resource needs. This would solicit feedback from the broader representative voices and roles within the Department of Education.

Long – Term (greater than one year):
- Yukon university/ college training for EAs.
- Identification of appropriate resources (classification of care that provides medical resources during school hours) to support highly intensive medical needs.
- A therapeutic school for dedicated supports (very highly intensive, safety and well-being needs).
- Advocacy for increased financial resources for student and school-based needs.
- Increase EA wages & incentives to attract and retain EAs.
- Formalize the terms of reference for the cross-functional Working Group (SSS Manager, Superintendents, ED's, representative administrator) to shift the accountability and decision-making from SSS to a collaborative, representative decision-making body to determine resource allocation for areas.
- Continue to support strategic initiatives to establish a more collaborative, inclusive, and healthy workplace culture throughout the Department of Education. In all related projects moving forward (process improvement or workplace culture initiatives), ensure that elements, approaches, and plans directly reflect and consistently integrate commitments regarding decolonization, cultural awareness, and Indigenous learnings and best practices.

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YG Department of Education EA Allocation Process Interviews Summary Themes: November 20th & 21st 2023

Roles Interviewed – Alphabetical Order (Summary of 30 interviews):
- Administrators (principals, vice principals)
- CDC
- CYAO
- Data/ analytics
- Educational assistant
- First Nations Education Directorate
- HR
- LAT/ classroom teacher/ STEP
- Physical therapist
- School council
- SSS Manager
- Superintendents/ Executive Directors
- QUEP – Union representative

A standardized interview question set was used for the interviews. Following are the summary interview questions and summary themes:

1. **Strengths/ positives with current process:**
- **Meeting with SSS this past year:**
    - Well received, value dialogue, being heard, working together, having a voice in process
    - Help people prepare for the meeting (know what to expect)
    - Ideally, have another meeting after allocation given
- **Individuals currently in the ADM and SSS Manager, positions:**
    - Listening to understand
    - Committed to improvements, increased transparency, information sharing.
    - Responsive, engaging people
- **Documentation based on needs:**
    - Provides consistency, supports accountability
    - Opportunity to contribute input
    - Resourcing for more specific evaluations is not easily accessible in YG
- **Additional:**
    - That we have EAs, opportunities to contribute input
    - SSS consultants' knowledge of student needs
    - Positive steps in the right direction
    - Being a part of the hiring process

2. **Barriers/ challenges/ bottlenecks:**
- Parochial understanding of needs (focus on school, not awareness/ understanding of system needs)
- Lack of documentation to reflect objective decision-making regarding allocation (results in perceived lack of transparency, rationale, don't know how decisions are made)

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- o   Lack of prioritized criteria to inform decision-making
- Redundant and high-volume paperwork for intensive students each year when support will not change
  - o   Significant time involved for numerous roles
- Confusion, lack of understanding current allocation framework (base/ vulnerability index, individual, shared criteria)
- Rubric – subjectiveness creates inconsistencies, not reflective of current classroom needs (big behaviours), lacks examples, definitions:
  - o   Shared support rubric requires attention (current cut & paste, order of categories not matching between pages, shared support rubric not specific for child)
- Time intensive: Manager, SSS many hours, SSS consultants' full weeks in meetings
  - o   Timelines for EA notification creates distress, negatively impacts recruitment and feelings
  - o   Timing of rubric completion at same time as report cards (feel overwhelmed)
  - o   Lag in support for new students during school year
- HR – timing of letters, development of a resource pool:
  - o   Hiring – schools don't see all applicants because HR hands over who made the cut (don't look at fit)
- Competitive vs. collaborative process
- Lack of documentation/ system to access information on children needing support
- Shared support needs not being met effectively
- EA burnout (not getting breaks, lunches, training, incentives – working with most vulnerable children)
- Increased needs within student demographics for additional supports. I.e., # of students with autism, medical, behavioural challenges (not reflected in budget):
  - o   I.e., 80% or more students in kindergarten requiring increased supports (Early Years Assessment in Kindergarten)
  - o   Desire for a therapeutic school to support very high needs students
- Utilization of EA's in classroom/ role clarity/ training issues:
  - o   EAs filling in for teachers (shortage of TOC)
- Training and development to scaffold EA learning/ support not provided
- Lack of an EA pool for specialized needs
- Voice of child (child's needs first) discussion not happening before allocation rubric completed (I.e., what might the child need to be successful?)
- Children told they cannot come to school until they have an EA
- Political based system that does not consistently support equity, accountability, and transparency (loudest voice, advocacy gets resources)
- Divide between schools and the "Department" is significant
- Department of Education reputation is challenging (lots of public attention)
- Students with disabilities (little follow through, design needs not met, lack of accessibility)
- Transitions between elementary to high school

3. **Timing issues that inhibit effectiveness:**
   - Helpful to not complete rubrics at same time as report cards (overwhelming)/ could align with staffing planning (February)
   - Alignment with IEP development could be beneficial (EAs go to students with IEP's)
   - Alignment with staffing planning timeframe (Feb.)
   - Need to have allocation finalized to ensure EAs can receive offer letters by end of school year (work process backwards from June date)
   - Consider brief touch point with principals at end of August based on student movement
   - HR role to support timing/ process, not be a bottleneck
   - Increased Superintendent meeting frequency during key decision timeframes

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- Triage needs starting with students on IEP's (school-based teams meet 3x/year, by 2nd review should trigger EA paperwork, HR process)
- CDC rubric completion – not all parents ready to share information
  - Hard to send information earlier (student needs changing/ accuracy of requests would not be the same)
  - CDC timing not aligned with EA allocation process
- No time for training EAs

4. **Communication for understanding current process & decision-making:**
   - Request for rationale on decision-making to support justification/ transparency/ trust
   - Prioritized criteria for decision-making regarding allocation would be helpful for understanding/ rationale (for all roles involved):
     - Include communication on the 'formula' and how it works
     - Want to know 'why'
     - Schools already triaging based on number of EAs given (highest needs (medical/ safety)
     - Establish criteria on what a full-time EA allocation looks like
   - Clearly articulate the goals/ priorities of EAs
   - Communicate that allocation is determined on school-based needs, not in comparison to other schools (change management)
   - Shared ownership for decisions needed to support joint accountability
   - Continue involving people (not just in paperwork) that have knowledge, understanding of students in decision-making
   - Transparency (follow privacy) on process/ criteria (need trust in the process and criteria)/ communication with parents to build trust/ credibility
   - Early, open communication with parents (including CDC parents with transitioning students) to support transitions, awareness, goals, process to build relationships and trust

5. **Suggestions for more openness/ transparency:**
   - Training for individuals completing rubrics
   - Improved rubric (examples included, updated to reflect classroom needs)
   - Continue the meetings initiated this past year to discuss students/ needs (consider adding a mid-year check in)
   - Open communication with principals/ LATs
   - Clearly communicate prioritized criteria for EA allocation decision-making, constraints, and goals of EA resource (I.e., over time, reduced EA support as goals toward independence are achieved)
   - Share data (where possible) to support big picture understanding, constraints, opportunities, challenges, process
   - Follow up after school starts to support schools
   - Provide rationale, justification (based on clear criteria) for how decisions are made
   - Consider alternate approaches for allocation decision-making (possibly align decision-making with roles/ responsibilities accountable for the decisions), build in shared responsibility, shared decision-making
   - Communications campaign (get schools, principals, teachers on board, then parents)
   - Lack of trust with Department (constant change/ turnover, results in lack of relationships, impacts belief that improvements can happen – lack of follow through, need some stability to build trust)

6. **Triaging & decision-making:**
   - Schools are already doing triage work; align EA allocation and decision-making process improvements to support work already taking place at the school level

- Establish prioritized criteria for triaging EA allocation (highest priority needs – I.e., safety/ medical will be met first, early childhood interventions, CDC transition plans/ cognitive/ behavioural) – would reduce 'loudest voice wins'
- Improve rubric (definitions, examples, frequency, impact etc.)
- Include additional supporting documents (standardized) to help provide additional context on students (WRA's, incident reports, other supporting information)
- Look at patterns by school, look at like schools for commonalities (design resources/ training to support)
- Increased/ transparent advocacy for changing demographic/ student needs with government
- Establish a goal to enhance culture of special education and classroom management skills to support teachers/ EAs in utilizing appropriate resources for needs
- School-based teams/ principals know the needs
- Need frank discussions (what's realistic) based on resources
- For kindergarten, consider having a short-term intensive support with option to re-assess based on understanding (put a timeframe on it) for possible re-allocation

7. **Rubric - more objective:**
   - Establish a Working Group of key knowledgeable stakeholders (I.e., SSS consultants, LATs, principals, union, FNSB) to identify and draft improved rubric to reflect:
     o Examples
     o Clear definitions (behaviours, frequency, impact)
     o Identification of additional supports available (include spot for documentation)
     o Open space for additional comments (limited space)
     o Include dysregulation, safety as categories
     o Reduce information to consider in each box (don't string all characteristics/ criteria together)
     o Align to IEP goals, categories reflect competency-based plans
     o Ensure category sufficiently addresses behaviour/ safety
     o Consider ranking categories to reflect prioritized criteria for decision-making
   - Update rubric for shared supports to:
     o Align #'s between pages (chart #'s don't match up with back chart – category orders mixed up)
   - Determine if categories require weighting based on potential development of prioritized criteria for allocating EA's (not all challenges considered equal)
   - Consider having schools' rate/ prioritize their highest needs as a cover letter with submission
   - Align rubric with IEP goals (competency based)
   - Consider submission of WRA's, incident reports and any additional data as part of paperwork to provide a more complete picture
   - Have schools' rate/ prioritize their highest needs as part of submission process

8. **Efficiencies for submitting & tracking:**
   - Consider automation for rubric completion to reduce duplication/ increase efficiencies for analysis (comments still require review)
   - Clear, communicated timelines for due dates - start with end in mind (I.e., early June offer letters)/ work backwards)
   - Intensive/complex students that will require 1:1 EA allocation every year:
     o Establish a new classification to remove from annual paperwork (reduce volume)
   - Benefit of streamlining process would increase support time in classrooms/ building capacity/ training for EAs
   - Use Google Forms (can look at graphs, compiles, tracks data, reduce data entry)

9. **Needs that arise during school year:**
   - Develop triage criteria to address priority needs/ requests (rationale for where limited EA resources will go)
   - Consider accelerating response time for OMCR forms/ staffing committee (minimum 2-month turnaround)
   - Additional touch point between end of June and end of September to support changes/ needs
   - Need a process – not just begging, loudest voice wins
   - Establish an emergent needs fast-tracking assessment

10. **Key messages – what matters most:**
    - Involve the people on the ground at key touchpoints (build relationships, trust, collaboration)
    - Ensure clear understanding of shifting demographics (increased classroom needs based on increasing population needs), consider involving ED's, superintendents, SSS in communicating increased needs – need to know key messages are heard
    - Training for teachers and EAs to maximize resources, utilization, capacity, and job satisfaction (role clarity, utilization of EAs, learning and development on differentiated learning, universal design, special education)
    - Request to consider a therapeutic school in YT for high intensity needs (equity not necessarily met through inclusion)
    - Increase communication with councils (work to repair broken trust, defensiveness, historical challenges)
    - Consider additional resource/ support roles for schools beyond one size fits all (EA) – social workers, counsellors, etc.
    - Work with Yukon University to develop training/ programs for EAs/ teachers
    - Department is moving in the right direction for support; need to continue talking with people
    - Establish levels of EA designation to support advanced needs with specialized skills (and increase wage)
    - Needs/ voice of child should be considered as part of the process (support them in their goals to increase independence)
    - Need to develop an EA pool, hire for pool (I.e., use YG admin assistant pool level 7-9), let schools draw from pool
    - Support isn't just EA allocation, need clarity on other options/ resources
    - Work needs to be done to re-develop trust between the Department and the schools, and the Department and the public/ parents
    - Don't make changes to us without us (engage stakeholders/ those impacted to work through issues)

11. **Final comments from the Individual Interviews:**
    - Improving timelines for communicating employment letters for EAs is key for keeping good people
    - Policies needed to support schools in decision-making (I.e., process for toileting, criteria for sending students home due to safety concerns etc.)
    - Consider the differences between urban and rural, and work to accommodate the unique needs and challenges through collaborative discussions
    - Identify and align key work being done with Department mission, vision, values, and other RISE initiatives to strengthen the roll out and continue to demonstrate positive results
    - Outline and communicate (through multiple forums) the new EA allocation process and values driving the process (make this a win, to build trust & credibility)
    - Consider ways to support/ build capacity of those involved with the EA allocation process to increase understanding, goals, constraints, and next steps
    - Look to actively partner with Yukon university to develop training program and courses

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- To build trust with this process, keep communication open, transparent, give updates and engage stakeholders (don't try to tackle everything at once, take one thing, do it well and create small wins)

APPENDIX B: PROVINCIAL RESEARCH SUMMARY TABLE

The department contacted several jurisdictions to discuss their methods of EA allocation. By the time of the workshop, we had only received responses from a few jurisdictions. Further efforts are needed to reach out to additional jurisdictions.

ITEM	BRITISH COLUMBIA	NEWFOUNDLAND	ONTARIO	MANITOBA
Title Name	Inclusive Education Support Worker (IESW).	Student Assistants (SA)/Teaching and Learning Assistant (TLA).	Educational Assistant (EA).	Educational Assistant (EA).
Educational Background and Requirements	-Community College incl. Practicums, Certification Diploma: Special Ed. Assistant, Community Support Worker, ABA Training, Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, Criminal Records Check, Vulnerable Sector Check.	-Post-secondary training not required but recommended. First Aid, Vulnerable Sector Check, Criminal Records Check, Some level of training available through college -Level II teaching certificate.	-College Level Programs recommended, but not always required, co-ops/practicums and completion of *Crisis Intervention Training* -*Other certificates – Early Childhood Ed. (ECE), Childcare Worker, etc.* - Vulnerable Sector Check, Criminal Records Check.	-Educational Assistant Certification, Vulnerable Sector Check, Criminal Records Check, -Require and provide specific PD or training depending on the needs of specific students.
Hiring Process	-School division admin. typically oversees hiring of EAs and allocation of EA time in schools. -Interviews, reference checks, attention paid to practicum experience -Hiring varies from district.	-School division admin. typically oversees hiring of EAs and allocation of EA time in schools. -Interviews, reference checks, attention paid to practicum experience.	-School division admin. typically oversees hiring of EAs and allocation of EA time in schools. -Allocation based on student needs. -Interviews, reference checks, attention paid to practicum experience.	-School division admin. typically oversees hiring of EAs and allocation of EA time in schools.
Funding for EA Hiring	-Block Funding. -Ministry does not employ or manage Paraprofessionals. -Responsibility rests totally with school districts. -Funding for school districts based on student enrollment.	-Justification model – based on student characteristics and identified or potential concerns. -TLA allocation based on formula in K-6 schools: Less than 100 K-6 students = 0 TLAs 100-249 students = 1 TLA	-In some jurisdictions, there is a Ministry funded – algorithm that determines number of EAs allocated to schools based on number of student needs rubrics submitted. -Grant based allocations.	-Information not available currently. -Some examples of structural process (I.e., Dept. of Ed. or School Board determines policy, roles, job requirement of EA, and given Board determines which students require EA Support).

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		250-399 students = 2 TLAs, 400-549 students = 3 TLAs, Greater than 549 students = 4 TLAs.		
Efficiencies *(timing, timelines, system, process for submitting)*	-Assessments submitted in Spring for number of students with medical/special designation requiring EA.	-Student needs are typically assessed in Spring of each year. -TLA deployment to schools reviewed on ongoing basis.	-Process done once a year (May). -Potential to be completed twice yearly.	-Data not available.
Rubric Forms and Application Process	-Special Needs category considered. -Greater emphasis placed on understanding students' needs when decisions for support made.	-Application process for SA's. -Parents involved as members of program planning teams and directly involved in decision-making.	-Rubric system is employed. -Rubric system used with key categories (i.e., safety, academics, etc.). -Rubric info put into algorithm. *(*Only students under Level 1 or Level 2 provided partial or full EA support).*	-Data not available.
Assessment Approach *(Criteria for decision-making)*	-Historically, districts assigned EAs to individual students, depending on individual needs. -Currently remains most common practice among districts, but academic research does not support 1:1 model and does not align with legislation.	-Use of database to track info pertinent to special education programming and services. -Use of PowerSchool to help track and communicate needs of most vulnerable students.	-Algorithm developed in house and is adjusted yearly to maximize students who need support. -Prioritizes highest level needs (level 1-2).	-Data not available.
Shared Accountability and Decision-Making	-Really complex needs can direct additional funding to school board.	-TLA support based on collaborative discussions with school-based teams using wide range student and instructional data.	-Data not available.	-Data not available.
Best Practices	-B.C. values importance of collaboration and has documented and defined duties of teacher, EA, and joint activities of both. -All Provinces/Territories require EAs to have an SSD/Equivalent. -All jurisdictions require Criminal Records/ Vulnerable Sector Check. Some require "Child Abuse Registry Form" -First Aid Training Required	- All Provinces/Territories require EAs to have an SSD/Equivalent. -Every student has a learning profile, this helps to determine where needs are required (*Concept of a learning profile does not refer to an authorized form, but an understanding of the learner).	- All Provinces/Territories require EAs to have an SSD/Equivalent.	-Manitoba values importance of collaboration and has documented and defined duties of teacher, EA, and joint activities of both. - All Provinces/Territories require EAs to have an SSD/Equivalent.

Miscellaneous	-Three-tiered system of EA's: provide asst. to students with special needs, assist teacher in delivery of Spec. Ed. Programs, reinforcing the educational program.		-Two-tiered system employs both basic and special needs EAs. -Basic category of EA provides support to students, teachers, and contributes to learning of all students.	-Three-tiered system of EAs: 1) No formal training, 2) post-Secondary, 3) Area of Specialization. -Three tiers with separate unions and school boards.

APPENDIX C: 2-DAY PROCESS IMPROVEMENT SESSION OPENING AND INITIAL EXERCISE

The improvement planning session started with a land acknowledgement, invitation to prayer, an overview of the project and process steps undertaken to date. A review of summary interview themes, the four improvement topics that surfaced from the interviews, a review of the provincial research summary, an overview of process improvement concepts, and shared agreements and parking lot to support an effective and respectful environment for working together were also covered to help set the stage for the sessions. To help set an appreciative approach and foundation for the two day's work, a grounding exercise was facilitated to invite reflection and small group sharing. The following is a summary of the participants identified strengths to be leveraged for the two-day improvement planning session and 'what matters to me' (about how we work together), after participating in a liberating structure exercise called "1, 2, 4 all".

Summary Strengths to be leveraged/ What Matters To Me:
- **Strengths to be leveraged:**
  o Openness to the change process
  o Strengths based reflection on needs
  o Meetings that were held to discuss requests (possibly have 2nd meeting to discuss what was given)
  o Many caring professionals
  o Active listening
  o Communication, knowledge, and expertise
  o Collaboration/ collaborative spirit

- **What Matters Most for Working Together:**
  o Cultural reflections
  o Children benefit (more than process)
  o Parents feel confident in supports
  o Working together
  o Authentic openness to change
  o Supporting EAs with skills to serve needs (I.e., training)
  o EA wellness
  o Generous interpretations of what is shared
  o A willingness to do the difficult work (implementation, follow up, resolution)

APPENDIX D: LARGE GROUP SESSION: WORLD CAFE

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The participants were divided into four groups on day one to work on providing feedback for each of the four deep dive topics, moving to a new station every 15 minutes. Recognizing that not every participant could attend all four Deep Dive Sessions, the World Café format allowed for broad data gathering to help inform each of the Deep Dive Sessions. The table discussion ideas/ feedback for what to START, STOP, KEEP, LESS, MORE are captured here:

1) **Efficiencies (timing, timelines, system, process for submitting):**
   START:
   - Parent signature on application (or just included)
   - Supers/ ED's/ Principals – working with whole staff allocations
   - Elementary feeder school transition meetings need to happen prior to allocation
   - Re-assessment of need mid-year (Sept & Summer)
   - Overall staffing allocation should match FA timeline
   - CDC shared/ collaboration filling out transition/ request rubric
   - EAs hired by end of school year
   - Kindergarten – re-visit allocation end of September
   - Closer to the ground 'student-centered' decisions
   - CDC reports line up with the DoE process
   - Professional learning, onboarding etc.
   - Prioritizing funding and support for front-line educators (DoE staff = 198) vs. educators (1,000)
   - Critically looking at the efficiencies of the current top-heavy model of the DoE in the Yukon
   - Rural – urban transition support
   - Start meeting in rural communities and supporting process on the ground
   - Fillable PDF
   - Start having Supers/ ED's/ Principals do the allocation with SSS support

   STOP:
   - Having SSS do the allocation
   - Having to fill out paperwork/ rubric for intensive 1:1's who we know will need support the next year
   - Hiring in June (do earlier)
   - Too many hands in the process (HR, SSS, Supers/ ED's, school council, finance)
   - 'Gaming' the process
   - Stop making shared resource programs apply for EA allocation
   - Training course (more face-to-face training)

   KEEP:
   - Interviews with SSS team after rubrics are submitted
   - Reviews of requests with Supers/ ED's

   LESS:
   - Less paperwork to request EA support
   - Less emphasis on rubric

   MORE:
   - Collaborative conversations (perhaps with feeder schools)
   - CDC timeline and impact of child development doesn't fit well with DoE timeline
   - Hiring in March
   - Efficiencies in the hiring of specific 1:1 intensive
   - Support EA training needs to meet demand of students (I.e., the right people for the right role)

2) **Rubric:**
   START:
   - Schools perhaps fill out with parents
   - Type of learning plan or intensive

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- Include behaviour category
- Coversheet that includes school/ classs size lens
- Include definitions/ examples (I.e., throwing chairs, biting, screaming etc.)
  - Offer a guide-examples
- Include positive aspects of the learner/ column for strengths
- On-line fillable survey instead of paper rubric
- CDC and school team fill out rubric together
- Make one form that covers intensive & shared
- Clarification on what constitutes a 1:1 EA
- Make filling out and reading rubric electronic
- Assign budget, not bodies

STOP:
- Using subjective language in rubric
- Using systems that don't work
- Stop using it as a formula, I.e., different areas of input result in a percentage which results in a number. Each school may fill in differently + CDC does it with parents, therefore it looks different so how can you assign a number?

KEEP:
- Keep the focus on strength based/ need reflection process at school level
- Breaking down by area of need

LESS:
- Deficit focus
- Paperwork/ need to condense

MORE:
- Operationally defined – perhaps separate sheet
- Relational focused
- Being kind to those making decisions
- Training on rubric (maybe LAT conference)
- One EA per classroom (primary classrooms – corporate memory, especially rural)
- Work with intensive student families
- If shifting to Supers/ ED's decisions, there will need to be consideration of the language used in the rubric – how will Supers/ ED's understand need?
- More opportunity to include nuances of student's plan/ program

3) **'Needs Based' & Prioritized Criteria for Decision-Making:**
   START:
   - Additional supports for students without EA's
   - Including culture in discussions and decisions
   - Considering SSP's equating to IEP's
   - Communication/ letter to parents for application on intensive requests (rationale)
   - Living wage for EA's
   - Look at school globally – zoom out, not just in
   - Start doing CDC transition visits (LAT/ kindergarten)
   - Trusting the judgement of school personnel making the requests
   - Use WRA's for decision-making
   - LAT leads in every school
   - Therapeutic school
   - Identify needs and the training needs of EA's system-wide

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- LAT responsibilities (role etc.)
- Policy for what is safe psychologically (for staff/ students)
- Training/ early based on school needs/ norms (multi-year)
- Transparent criteria
- Debriefs to communicate rationale after decisions
- Whole team meetings regarding gaps/ concerns (facilitated)
- Early intervention for learning needs to decrease behaviours downstream

STOP:
- Lack of acknowledgement for highly intensive behaviours
- Speaking to school's reputations
- Looking at EA's as separate supports (look at themes/ school needs)
- Wait time for allocation (we need it sooner)
- Needs based but finite number of resources
- Just giving allocation numbers with no rationale

KEEP:
- CDC transitions
- Needs based vs. diagnosis
- Continuing to look at individual needs

LESS:
- Weight on # of learning plans

MORE:
- Training for EA's (create career EA's)/ EA professional development
- Specific report back on allocation numbers
- Alternate supports when students don't get an allocation
- Assessment criteria/ rational behind decisions
- Clarity on what determines an intensive EA
- Inclusion of families and students

4) **Shared Accountabilities & Collaborative Decision-Making:**
   START:
- Decentralizing the process
- Share decisions of EA allocations in schools with LAT teams
- Distributed leadership to support EA's/ schools
- Look at schools as a whole with supports (LAT's/ EA's)
- Be a truly needs based allocation (increased population, increased complex needs)
- Evaluating the data of who and what is being asked for and how to best meet the needs
- Staff a school according to student needs
- Need to share information regarding needs system-wide ("de-siloization")
- Need to understand system-wide needs
- Additional on-boarding throughout school year so no subs needed
- An on-boarding consultant to support EA's
- EA and teacher training, together and across school so get same information
- More transparent communication with parents
- Honest conversations between schools, families, SSS, Department
- EA allocation to school group of feeder school families
- Consistent check-in with schools and families
- Considering scheduling for shared EA allocations (high school)
- Start mid-year reviewing evaluations to see how schools are meeting student needs

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- Hiring/ decision-making – a specialized professional to support EA's (a specialist who goes from school to school)
- Let's start being more proactive when behaviours start to emerge
- Loop of evaluation to see if we've 'hit the mark'
- Clarity from SSS staff seen at schools as a way to inform 'this school needs more help'
- Start mid-year evaluations to see how schools are meeting student needs

STOP:
- The judgements that are made prior to decisions (bias)
- Staffing at schools shouldn't be political
- Centralizing process
- Stop avoiding accountability
- Being a budget exercise on # of EA FTEs
- "Closed" process (no secrecy, no surprises)
- Using Aspen, find a new more flexible system
- Are FTEs only determined by budget and student populations? Because right now, it's less focused on student's needs, it's only reactive.

KEEP:
- EA FTE allocation for intensive follow student who moves schools
- Meet with schools about allocation requests
- Open communication in making changes

LESS:
- (no sticky notes)

MORE:
- Communication with FN partners
- More collaboration with YFNED
- IEPs; EA allocation – be clear
- CDC and school fill out rubric together
- Find a better platform for IEPs and SSPs (get rid of Aspen)
- LAT's role to hold up recommendations given in plans. Ensure they are being followed and support if needed.
- LAT's and teachers writing IEP's, SSP etc.
- More chances to share about a school's needs from admin/ LAT's to SSS
- Teachers need access to documents

APPENDIX E: ADDITIONAL TOPICS FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENT (TOPICS WITH NO VOTES)

Following are the areas/ topics for improvement that surfaced from the interviews and improvement sessions that did not receive any votes from participants. The bolded item reflects an area that is currently being worked on.

- Base/ vulnerability index
- Levels of EA designation
- EA resource website
- EA transfers from elementary to high school
- **Highschool resource rooms (list)**

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At the end of each day, the positives and opportunities were shared by participants in the sessions. Following is a summary of the feedback gathered.

Positives:
- Passion
- Topic matters
- Small group to large group discussions were beneficial
- Gathering broad ideas
- Short, medium, and long-term planning ideas
- Child as the focal point

Opportunities:
- Would benefit from an overview of work already in progress
- Cultural inclusion (needs/ opportunities)
- First Nations student communities represented
- EAs invited (not able to attend)
- Lack of parent representation (consider - gift cards for participating)
- Idea to attend school staff meetings to gather feedback/ ideas (go to the sites)

Day 2 Feedback:
Positives:
- People had a voice
- Participative
- SSS opening this topic up for improvement (took courage and vulnerability)
- Learning about resources that are currently available/ offered
- Direction SSS is going in by involving, listening, trying to support schools
- Trying something different
- Not blindsided (open communication)

Opportunities:
- Someone should come to school staff meetings to gather ideas/ feedback
- Leverage connections
- Learn more about resources that can be offered (off the list) and how they can be used
- Share what SSS is working on for improvements
- Invite a continued collaborative approach for improvement topics (if interested, here's who to contact)

APPENDIX G: PARKING LOT (DETAILED)

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Items were flagged in the parking lot as topics that were out of scope for the sessions, but that participants wanted to capture for future consideration and response. Following are a list of parking lot comments/ topics:

- Family accountability
- EA role on swim lane map (expand to year)/ include training
- EA role = education, health, safety (funding)
- Has anyone asked the schools if the allocation given 'hit the mark'? If EAs were trained to a higher degree, would that make a difference to the overall numbers?
- EA training/ support oversight: What can be taken from Early Childhood Therapy Assistants (CDC EA support in KY/ Early Kindergarten in communities) and/ or supported childcare educators (early learning) to better support EA's? (I.e., weekly supervision with CDC therapist, weekly tracking notes reviewed by a supervisor to give input on goals, strategies, etc.)
- NWT does a good job of staff onboarding; consider collaborating with them to learn best practices
- At one point, principals hired EAs. Now that HR oversees the EA hiring process, things have slowed down. Is this a systems issue or a control issue?
- How do we ensure that EA's/ teachers/ LAT's/ administration are safe emotionally/ mentally, and physically? How do we inform educators that this is likely part of the job or school environment?

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