

## Letter from the Interim Executive Director



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Drin Hozo, and welcome to the 2022-23 school year, the first under the new First Nation School Board for your school! Today marks 2 weeks since the school board has officially been in operation, sharing authority over your school –and 7 others— alongside Government of Yukon. We are honoured and humbled to be in this position of leadership

to slowly and carefully usher in a new era of student-centered education that follows Yukon First Nations ways of knowing, being and doing.

We opened our first two days in operation by bringing together all our school staff (over 120 people!) into Whitehorse, on the Traditional Territories of Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta’an Kwäch’än Council, for 2 PD days on Aug 18 & 19. Our teachers participated with such openness and enthusiasm in our on-the-land sessions, displaying keenness to learn and grow. Change is not always easy, and I hope the PD days gave our teachers ideas and support.

This change is happening slowly. So far, the school year may be looking like any other, with issues like staffing shortages or EA removals, and more. We at FNSB acknowledge these realities and are working with Yukon government and YEAP to finalize

our funding resources. We are working our hardest to advocate for the resources and requirements needed for all our schools. Over the coming months, with the budget and authority to do so, FNSB will begin to directly address the needs of our schools.

We ask you to take the long view, as we gradually introduce changes at our 8 schools. We are here to support students, families, and school teams in the transition to local ways of knowing and doing in the delivery of the BC curriculum, while enhancing academic excellence. This year, we are asking our school communities to set their aims on the general themes of **Connecting to Land** and **Connecting to Community**.

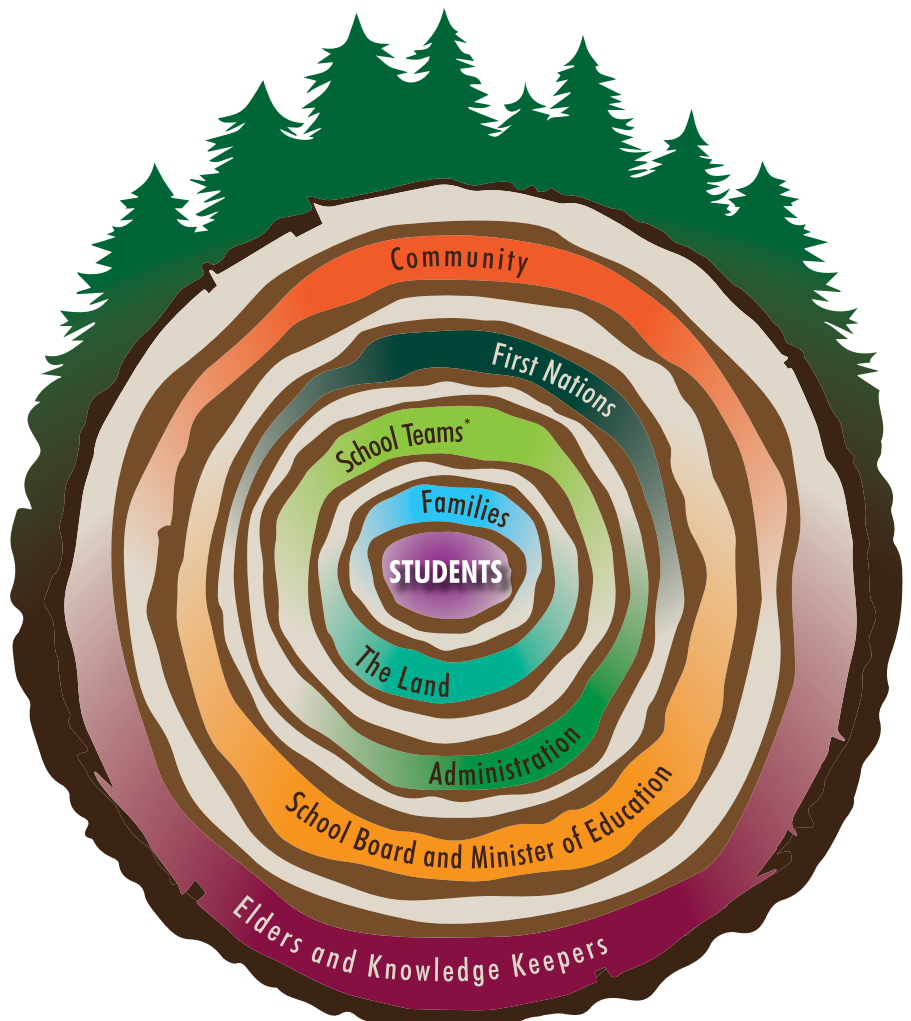
I look forward to our school year working together,

Melissa Flynn  
 ed@fnsb.ca

## FNSB Org Chart

This Org Chart isn't your typical top-down model with boxes and arrows. It reflects the crucial shift in perspective we wish to carry out in our FNSB-run schools. It shows the student in the center with all other entities radiating outward in wrap-around rings of mutual support. Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Community form the outer layer, protecting and preserving the whole through their wisdom and guidance. All rings come with unique responsibilities and jurisdiction, and no one ring is more important or more powerful than the next. By using the image of a tree in a forest, we convey our connection to the land, the ultimate teacher. As we shift towards this model, we encourage everyone – school staff, families and students alike – to reflect on how this might change the way you relate to and interact with education in your school. This is a living document that aims to portray a new, wholistic worldview built on relationships between all the layers.

## FIRST NATION SCHOOL BOARD ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



\* Teachers, Learning Assistance Teachers, Educational Assistants, School Staff, and First Nation Education Staff

## Support from the Education Analysts at YFNED

The Education Analysts at Yukon First Nation Education Directorate (YFNED) will be supporting FNSB school staff over the year with plans to visit all schools this fall. The Education Analysts are Lindsay Moore, Darby Newnham and Chris Stacey and will be working with teachers and other school staff to integrate tools like the Seasonal Rounds and the First Nations Graduation Planner into their planning and teaching. They will be sharing the updated 2022/23 version of the Graduation Planner – a comprehensive and detailed guide to help students navigate high school, plan their educational journey, and live up to their potential. The Analysts will be workshoping the Planner with counsellors and teachers, as well as students, families, and local First Nations. The Graduation Planner and the Seasonal Rounds can be viewed at: [www.fnsb.ca/learningtools](http://www.fnsb.ca/learningtools)



## DRAFT: GWITCH'IN

### Dinjii zhuh k'yuy tr'igwindàih

#### OUR WAY OF LIFE

Yukon Gwich'in means "People of the Lakes". Thousands of lakes are found in the Old Crow Flats which is an important area used for hunting, trapping and fishing. Old Crow was named after a prominent chief who led the Vuntut Gwich'in around the turn of the century. Dinjii K'yuyuk, whose name means "Crow may hawk". The documents are named Crow Mountain and Crow River in honor of Old Crow. Old Crow is one of 19 Gwich'in communities in the Yukon First Nation that extends across northeastern Alaska, Yukon and western Northwest Territories.

Some of the most ancient archaeological evidence of humans in North America, has been found in the Old Crow area. Further testament to their ancestry in the Vuntut Gwich'in oral history stories that tell of people living here long ago, when Crow created the world at the confluence of the Crow and Porcupine Rivers.

The traditional story of the Vuntut Gwich'in centered around the drainage of the Old Crow River including Old Crow Flats, west of Crow River, east of Benny Creek, north to the British Mountain divide and south to the Keele Range divide, in both Yukon and Alaska. The Vuntut Gwich'in were nomadic, traveling extensively through their traditional territory on seasonal basis to sustain themselves and their connection to the caribou that also inhabit the area.

#### HARVESTING PROTOCOLS

- Before you go outside please remember to consult with the community about your plan.
- A system of appreciation via the offerings to the land or community (cupcakes, food).
- Be mindful and respectful of the land and its resources. Show gratitude and do not harvest when under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Please collect only what you need and be sure to harvest only small amounts from each plant to ensure growth.

**NOTE**  
This chart is considered to be a living document. Yukon First Nations and YFNED developed this resource to support and revitalize educational programming. It is not intended to be "fetched or completed". There will always be ongoing adaptations and updates depending upon what each Nation feels is appropriate and what our changing climate requires.

Please remember that this chart is an attempt to represent a very complex and nuanced process on a single page. It is not perfect. The information shared here is considered to be general. It is to be used for broad conceptual purposes, providing schools with a starting point and a way for school, staff, and the local First Nation to plan with local and seasonal laws.

No one can do this on their own. Partnerships are essential and teachers need to actively involve themselves in the process. We hope that this chart inspires purposeful discussions and systematic changes that ultimately make school more engaging and relevant for Yukon's people.

**CHART KEY**

- BIRDS
- FISH
- PLANTS
- ANIMALS
- TRAPPING

There is a Seasonal Round in development for each of the 14 Yukon First Nations, reflecting regional dialects. Many are complete, others are still in progress.

## New Literacy Screening Tool

The First Nation School Board believes that in order to best support our students, we need to know exactly what is happening with their learning and where the gaps are, while using the most up-to-date research on teaching reading.

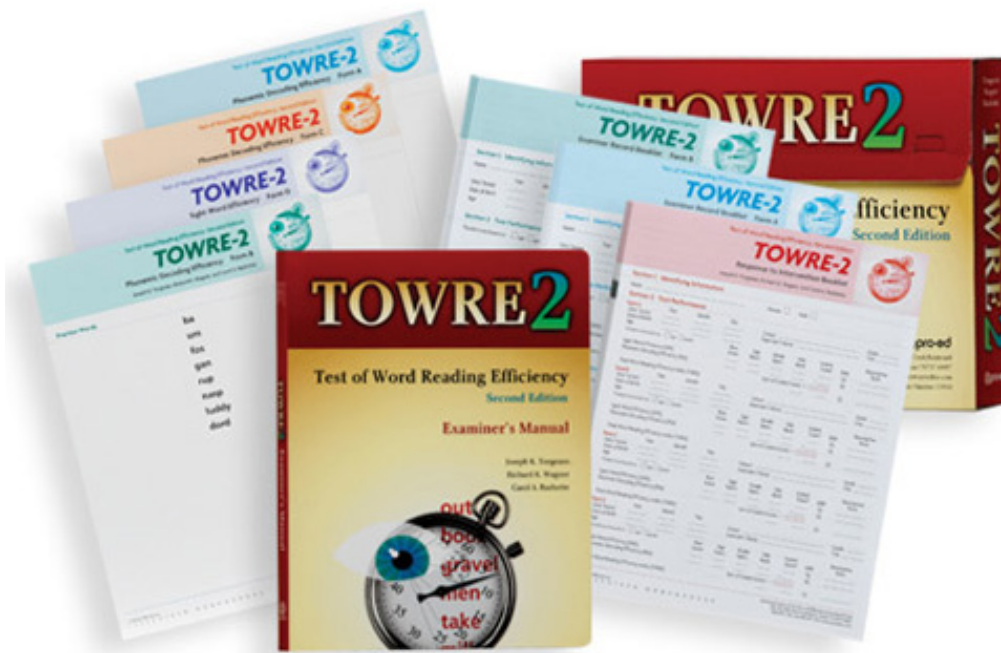
FNSB is focusing on gathering information about students' reading levels to get an understand of students' skill levels at the start and end of the year, and to keep track of progress throughout the year. This data is also important as we track reading growth in our FNSB schools over the coming years.

Over the summer, we researched literacy screening tools and chose three: Test of Word Reading Efficiency-TOWRE-2, Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency-TOSWRF, and Test of Silent Reading Efficiency and Comprehension-TOSREC. We chose these tools because they are quick to complete – and they will give the school and parents an understanding of a student's overall reading skills. The tools will help shape reading instruction in the classroom, and allow school staff to keep track of student growth.

Grade 1-3 school teams will complete the screening tools at least 2 times per year. The School Board is actively training all our primary teaching staff on how to use this new tool.

This tool will also allow teachers to effectively communicate to parents their child's reading skills and help create home-based reading plans.

The decision to focus on a targeted plan for literacy was based on the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Right to Read Inquiry Report, which explains the importance of using evidence-based screening tools twice a year, and the 2019 Auditor General's Report, which describes the low reading and writing levels among students in the Yukon. Our responsibility to literacy success drives this plan.



## School Board Trustees Election

Yukon School Board Trustee election (for both FNSB and the French School Board - CSFY) will take place this fall. Co-located polling places will be open across the territory. Five trustee positions are open for each board.

Nominations will be open from **Monday, October 17** to 12 noon on **Thursday, October 27, 2022**. More information for candidates will be available soon.

Polling day will be **Monday, November 7, 2022**.

Exact details on qualifications for nominees and voter eligibility will be posted at both [www.fnsb.ca](http://www.fnsb.ca) and [www.electionsyukon.ca](http://www.electionsyukon.ca) very soon.



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## Interim Governance Committee

The following people were appointed to the Interim Governance Committee by the Minister of Education to assume the work and responsibilities of launching the First Nation School Board until trustee elections are completed this November. This ensures a successful start to the school year for schools moving to the new school board. The IGC will dissolve after the five trustees are elected in November.

Over the summer, the IGC has been hard at work developing the Policies & Procedures Manual for our new school board. They have been working with our HR specialist to write Job Descriptions for board staff. They also worked on developing the FNSB Org Chart above.



**Dr. Alyce Johnson**, PhD, is a Kluane First Nation Elder and former principal of Kluane Lake School. She holds a PhD in Indigenous Studies from Trent University and in 1973, was a youth signatory to *Together Today for our Children Tomorrow*.



**Erin Pauls**, is a former school teacher who won the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence for her work as director of Dusk'a Headstart Preschool. A member of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, and currently their Director of Education.



**Jocelyn Joe-Strack**, an Indigenous scientist, philosopher, entrepreneur, and member of Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. Currently the Research Chair in Indigenous Knowledge with Yukon University.



**Mark Wedge**, a Carcross/Tagish First Nation Elder and former chief. Mark has held, and currently holds, many leadership roles focused on education, and economic & social development.



**Melanie Bennett**, life-long educator and former school principal, member of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, and current Executive Director of the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate.



**Kirk Cameron**, Chair of the IGC, is a governance consultant, Whitehorse City Councillor, and former Deputy Minister and senior bureaucrat.

## Orange Shirt Day



Each year, September 30 marks the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, also known as Orange Shirt Day.

Orange Shirt Day honours the children who never returned home and Survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities. By wearing orange, we raise awareness of the inter-generational impacts of residential schools, and to promote the concept of "Every Child Matters." We wear orange to show a unified step towards reconciliation and building stronger relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

**On September 30, we encourage all students and staff at FNSB Schools to wear orange and honour Yukon's residential school survivors.**

Your kid doesn't have any orange shirts? Don't worry. We will be distributing free orange t-shirts to every student at our schools in the coming weeks!





## PD Day Recap

We had the extraordinary opportunity to bring together all staff and administration from our 8 schools for 2 days of PD in Whitehorse, which included on-the-land learning with Elders, Youth and Knowledge Keepers. We were honoured and delighted to share ways of incorporating Yukon First Nations culture into school learning – and we're excited to begin our tenure as a school board in the Yukon -- to serve all Yukon learners with a public-school education grounded in two worldviews. Many thanks to Yukon First Nation Education Directorate (YFNED) for supporting our first PD.



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