

Letter from the Interim Executive Director



Dear School Staff,

Drin Hozo! I hope you had a restful holiday and joyful new year!

2023 is set to be an exciting year for the First Nation School Board as we continue to expand our staffing, programs, and supports -- and as our newly elected trustees move full steam ahead on governing our school board.

December was a busy month gearing up for the holidays. Thank-you to Takhini Elementary and Grey Mountain Primary for inviting me to your concert and craft fair. I also enjoyed meeting with our five trustees for the first time in mid-December for two days of productive sessions. It is great to have such a dynamic team to governing our school board.

Looking at the month ahead, we have a busy travel schedule lined up for both our Literacy Coach Megan Norris, our Math Advocates, as well as YFNED's Education Analysts, so expect to see some of our crew at your school soon.

We will be releasing the data from our K-3 literacy assessments to our administrators who will be sharing these results with each classroom. Soon after that, parents with kids in K-3 classes will be receiving information about the results. Our Literacy Coach Megan Norris will be working closely with teachers on how to tailor this data into classroom strategies. Thank you for leading the way in Yukon with our Literacy Plan.

Melissa Flynn | ed@fnsb.ca

Math Advocates Multiply their Efforts!

As the New Year begins, the Numeracy team is looking forward to continuing the work they started in September. Over the fall semester, they visited Watson Lake, Ross River and Haines Junction once a month and spent time with teachers and students, gaining an in-depth understanding of the accomplishments and challenges at each school.

Over the coming months, they will be focusing on the Intermediate grades, and will be supporting students and teachers to develop stronger basic numeracy skills within the math curriculum. Every visit consists of a check-in with teachers, and support is provided around requests that are made or where it is needed. They will spend time in classrooms working with the teachers to do engaging activities or to assess progress. The goal is to make math equally accessible to all students and ensure that everyone's math skills are consistently at grade level or above.

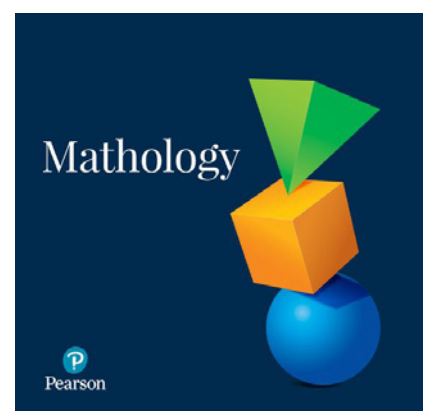
Pearson's Mathology is a new resource introduced this year, and all FNSB math teachers have been offered Professional Development introductory sessions. This is an online resource with many hands-on activities and different ways of teaching the material. An interesting feature is that in the primary grades there are little reading books that support the teaching of the material and Pearson (the publisher) has included some First Nations content in their stories.

THE JANUARY SCHEDULE FOR THE MATH ADVOCATES IS AS FOLLOWS:

Haines Junction:	Jan 9 & Jan 20
Ross River:	Jan 16-19
Beaver Creek:	Jan 24-26
Watson Lake:	Jan 31-Feb 2

Mathology

The FNSB is working collaboratively with the Department of Education in the purchase and rollout of Mathology textbooks to all our schools. Ann Larnder is an educational consultant from the Department of Education who is leading the Mathology rollout – she is offering a PD session on January 16. Contact Ann.Larnder@yukon.ca for more info.



LITERACY UPDATES



Our Coach is in Motion

Our Literacy Coach, Megan Norris, has a full-slate of travel and literacy work planned for January. Here is a rundown:

- In Old Crow, she will be providing a full-day of in-person professional development for Chief Zzeh Gittlit School staff (with a focus on primary grades) about how children learn to read and evidenced-based approaches to teaching reading in the classroom.
- Also in Old Crow, Megan is working with Chief Zzeh Gittlit School staff, in-person, to implement reading strategies and programming in the classroom.
- Back in Whitehorse, Megan will be meeting virtually 1:1 with all our primary grade teachers to support their classroom instruction in reading and writing.

Science of Reading Webinar

The Right to Read program is offering a fantastic 7-part webinar covering various subjects within the Science of Reading. There are four sessions left in the series, taking place in 1.5 hour evening sessions in January, March, April and May. FNSB will reimburse tuition fees. Please contact megan.norris@fnsb.ca for more info.

Please visit: <https://righttoread.ca/workshops/science-reading>



New Literacy Resources!

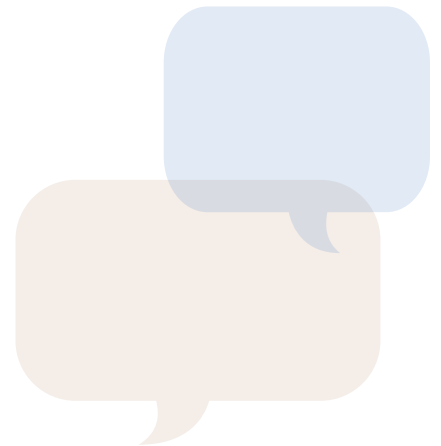
FNSB has purchased some of the important literacy resources that were discussed at our Literacy PD sessions. We will be distributing one copy of the following manuals to each school:

- The University of Florida Literacy Institute (UFLI) Manual.
- Equipped for Reading Success: A Comprehensive, Step-by-Step Program for Developing Phonemic Awareness and Fluent Word Recognition.

Phrase of the Month

Every month we will introduce you to a common word or phrase in all 8 Yukon First Nation languages. Choose the phrase(s) for the Traditional Territory where you live and try to use this as often as you can in your speaking and writing. Check www.ynlc.ca for sound clips and more resources.

English	<i>We are happy to see (all of) you</i>
Southern Tutchone	<i>Dákwānī'j yū shàw ghàniddhän.</i>
Northern Tutchone	<i>Dàye yésóots'enindhän, dàkhwäts'enè'in yū.</i>
Gwich'in	<i>Nakhwanyàa'in geenjit shòh iidìlii.</i>
Tlingit	<i>Yak'ê ixhwsatìní.</i>
Kaska	<i>Dahgáts'enehtān yéh gutie.</i>
Hän	<i>Nëkhwëtr'ënoh'qy häjit shò tr'inlqy.</i>
Upper Tanana	<i>Nohts'eneh'jj tsin'jj choh ts'eninḥän.</i>



TEACHERS: We encourage you to try using your local First Nations language in your classroom at least once every day. Start with our “word or phrase of the month”!

The FNSB Team Grows!

We are thrilled to welcome two amazing new members to the First Nation School Board team.

Ruby Grant (Khàshdáxh Tlá), Executive Assistant

Ruby is a Dakh'awedí woman, a descendant of the Fox family from Teslin. For the past 15 years, Ruby has worked for Yukon Education in the First Nations Initiatives Branch. As the FNSB Executive Assistant, she will be an integral member of the newly forming team at the First Nation School Board and will cross paths with so many of our school teams and families. Welcome Ruby!



Sean Smith (U'yenets'echia), Language and Culture Strategist

Sean is a Kwanlin Dün First Nation citizen whose parents are artists Ann Smith and Brian Walker. He lives in Kwanlin with his wife Sarah, their three children and their dog Marshall. Sean brings a wealth of knowledge and passion for language and culture, having devoted much of his life to revitalization of Yukon First Nations culture. Over 5 years, he has held different positions at the Yukon Native Language Center and is learning fluency in both Southern Tutchone and Tlingit. He also served six years as a Councillor for the Kwanlin Dün First Nation. He is the current President of the Northern Cultural Expressions Society as well as a Co-Chair on the Yukon Climate Leadership Council. We are thrilled to welcome Sean to the school board team!



UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Takhini & Grey Mountain: Decolonizing Education Through Authentic Play

On January 16, Takhini Elementary will be holding a PD, also attended by the educational team at Grey Mountain Primary, that will look at the theory and applied practice of authentic play and its place in Indigenous pedagogy as it can apply to curriculum delivery. Denise Finlay, Shanelle Bath, and Dr. Bee Brigaldi will be facilitating the session, bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience in Indigenizing education, mental health and community healing.

Ross River: January 16 PD on Community Planning with YFNED's Mobile Therapeutic Unity and Mathology

Beaver Creek: January 16 PD on Seasonal Rounds and Community Wellness

St. Elias: January 20 will have a half-day session on Mathology. And a half-day physical literacy



Denise Finlay

Photos from the Ross River Craft Fair

Students at Ross River School worked as elves in Santa's Workshop for 2 weeks leading up to their December 10 Christmas Craft Fair. The fair was a huge success, raising close to \$1000 for the school. The students made an array of beautiful ornaments and decorations. Some students also sold their own products, including paintings, self-portraits, and Christmas cards, learning valuable entrepreneur skills.





If you have photos or stories to share in future FNSB newsletters or on our new Facebook and Instagram pages, please email communications@fnsb.ca