

Letter from the Interim Executive Director



On a trip this week to Old Crow, is Melanie Bennett (left), Executive Director of Yukon First Nation Education Directorate, and Melissa Flynn (right), Interim Executive Director of the First Nation School Board

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Drin Hozo and happy autumn! I hope you've had a chance to be out on the land enjoying the beautiful colours as we moved from summer to fall. I also hope you and your children have had a positive experience as your school transitions to the First Nation School Board and starts to incorporate First Nations worldview into teaching and learning. For me, as the Interim Executive Director of the FNSB, this last month has been an exciting and busy time of building relationships, supporting school teams, listening to the wisdom from the Interim Governance Committee and slowly building a foundation from which we can create lasting, positive changes at our schools.

I would like to offer a heartfelt m̄h̄si' cho to Yukon First Nation Education Directorate for all that they do in our schools, from the

Nutrition Program (snacks, meals and feasts) to the Mobile Therapeutic Unit (therapists and wellness program) to the First Nation Education Advocates (culture camps and 1:1 student support) plus the hard work of their Education Analysts (Grad Planner, Seasonal Round). M̄h̄si' cho to all our school staff for welcoming these amazing teams into our schools.

November is trustee election month for the FNSB. I encourage all parents of children at our FNSB schools to get out and vote or consider a nomination for a position on our board. See the last section of this newsletter for more details. Use your vote to shape the future of education in the Yukon!

Melissa Flynn
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Update from Analysts

The Education Analysts at YFNED will be travelling to all our FNSB high schools to work with teachers and counsellors on how to use the First Nations Graduation Planner. This informative booklet lays out all the options, choices and various requirements for high school students to navigate their way through their learning journey. Although it was created by YFNED to help Indigenous students, the guide offers all the information any student will need to plan out their coming years. There is also a great poster we

will be distributing to classrooms that is part of the Grad Planner suite of tools (see image below).

The team at YFNED is also developing a choose-your-own-adventure style **web app**, to invite students to access information from the planner and begin thinking about their journey through education. It is called "Choose Your Path" and will be launched in the coming months. Stay tuned!!



Culture Week at Takhini Elementary School

Culture Week at Takhini Elementary from Sept 19 – 22 was packed with activities and teachings. The whole school participated in hand games with Knowledge Keeper Roger Ellis, berry picking and jam making, traditional song and dance with Dakwakada dancers, story-telling with Southern Tutchone speakers from Yukon Native Language Centre, and salmon filleting demonstration done by Yukon First Nation Education Directorate junior advocates outside in a canvas wall tent. Each class got to participate in each activity once or twice throughout the week. The students were taught traditional ways to preserve and keep food during the seasons, like smoking and salting salmon, and jarring berries picked by the students themselves. They learned about Yukon First Nations history through storytelling and song and dance. Knowledge keeper Lorraine Stick also joined for an afternoon to make bannock with the students.

The week ended off with a very well-attended school family feast on Thursday night, which had an amazing turnout. There was bison soup with bannock provided by the YFNED nutrition team. After dinner, everyone joined in a massive session of hand games, bringing together families, school staff and Knowledge Keepers. Māhsí' cho to everyone who participated and helped make this week a success, including YFNED Advocates Ryan Troke and Heidi Harry, as well as Priscilla Dawson for being a language and cultural champion.



First Nation School Board Ceremony in Haines Junction

On Tuesday, Sept. 20, the people of Dakwākāda/Haines Junction came together for an incredible day to share in celebration of the First Nation School Board assuming authority of their school. This huge and heart-warming ceremony organized by Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, St. Elias Community School and the First Nation School Board ushers in a new era of education for the community. Over 200 people gathered under a big tent in the school's field for singing, dancing, a salmon and bison meal, speeches and presentations. It ended with all participants forming a human circle around the school, bringing together the wider Haines Junction community, the school and students, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, and the First Nation School Board.

We are still in planning ceremonies with our other 5 communities and anticipate these events to take place at different times over the coming months/year.



Photos by Alistair Maitland



Speech Language Pathologist Megan Norris in one of the training videos shared with staff.

New Literacy Screening Tool

All our Primary Teams (teachers, LATs, EAs) took part in after-school PD sessions we offered over the last two weeks to train them on how to use the new Literacy Screening Tool. They are working hard to complete these assessments by mid-October.

Establishing baseline data for both numeracy and literacy is a priority for the FNSB. In order to best serve our students, we need to know exactly what is happening with their learning, where the gaps are, while using the most up-to-date and evidence-based methodologies.

FNSB is focusing on collecting robust information about students' reading levels to establish a baseline of student's skill levels and support progress monitoring throughout the year. This data is also essential as we track the overall literacy progress at our FNSB schools over the coming years.

Word of the Month

Every month we will introduce 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 with your children. Check www.ynlc.ca for sound clips and more resources.

English	<i>Thank-you</i>
Gwich'in	<i>Màhsì' choo</i>
Hän	<i>Màhsì' cho</i>
Kaska	<i>Sógá sénlá'</i>
Northern Tutchone	<i>Másin cho (or) Niyę sáw nîidhín</i>
Southern Tutchone	<i>Shàw níthän (or) Kwààschis</i>
Tlingit	<i>Gunatchîsh</i>
Upper Tanana	<i>Tsin'ji choh</i>

Numeracy Project

It has been a great start to the years. Numeracy Coach Marie Daniels and her team of Math Advocates visited Watson Lake, Ross River, and Haines Junction in late August and Early September. They did a short in-service at Johnson Elementary in Watson Lake and made plans to visit all these schools in early October to continue the support. A math advocate is also going to spend the month of October up in Old Crow at Chief Zzeh Gittlit School, and more math advocates are being hired to deliver a broader array of supports to our schools.

Ready-to-Learn Program in five FNSB schools

The Ready-to-Learn Schools program has been delivered at Takhini Elementary School since 2019 with big positive impacts on the school. Now more schools across the territory will be offering the program, including at four more FNSB Schools: St. Elias Community School in Haines Junction, Nelnah Bessie John in Beaver Creek, and Grey Mountain Primary in Whitehorse.

This universal support program will train teachers and staff to create learning environments that are developmentally responsive, while recognizing that a child's chronological age may not match their emotional, cognitive or social age. It will also help educators understand how prolonged exposure to toxic stress impacts brain development, functioning and learning.

A key component of this initiative is teacher training in the Neurosequential Model in Education. This model was developed by brain development and trauma expert Dr. Bruce Perry (M.D., PH.D.). We are looking forward to aligning this approach with our First Nations partners.



First Nation School Board Elections

Yukon School Board Trustee election (for both FNSB and the French School Board CSFY) is happening now. There are many ways to vote: online, mail-in-ballot, and in-person at nine different polling stations across the territory. Five trustee positions are open for each board. For more details: www.electionsyukon.ca.

For further details, learn about online iVoting, or to download a nomination package, go to electionsyukon.ca

KEY DATES

- **Monday, October 17 – Thursday, October 27 at noon:** Candidates can submit nominations
- **Thursday, October 27:** A full list of candidates available at electionsyukon.ca
- **October 28 to November 7:** Applications for iVoting open
- **Saturday, November 5:** Early voting, 10 am to 4 pm at 9 Yukon schools and Elections Yukon headquarters
- **Monday, November 7:** Polling Day, 3 pm to 8 pm at 9 Yukon schools and Elections Yukon headquarters
- **Tuesday, November 8:** Official results of the Yukon school board elections will be posted on ElectionsYukon.ca



QUALIFICATIONS

To **vote** or **be nominated**, you need to meet the following qualifications:

You must swear (or affirm) that you are:

- ✓ a Canadian citizen
- ✓ at least 18 years of age on polling day (November 7, 2022)

To **vote** or **seek nomination**, please go to ElectionsYukon.ca for details.

AND that you have the right to vote and/or be a candidate in the First Nation School Board election based on:

A RESIDENCY:

- You are a member* or entitled to be a member of a Yukon First Nation
- Your ancestral language is one of the following First Nation languages:
 - Gwitchin
 - Hän
 - Kaska
 - Northern Tutchone
 - Southern Tutchone
 - Tagish
 - Tlingit
 - Upper Tanana
- You will be a Yukon resident for a minimum of three months as of polling day

* Member means a citizen of a Yukon First Nation, a beneficiary of a Yukon First Nation land claim, or a member under the *Indian Act* of a Yukon First Nation.

AND/OR

B ATTENDANCE:

- You are a parent** of a student attending a school operated by the First Nation School Board

** Parent means biological or adoptive parent, persons legally entitled to custody, or the persons who usually have care and custody of the child.

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