

**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 School Staff,

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. It has also been a transition for all of us now working under the new First Nation School Board. 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 of 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 m̄hsi' 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). M̄hsi' cho to all our school staff for welcoming these amazing teams and building relationships with their staff.

We recently received our funding from Yukon government and will begin hiring some positions at the First Nation School Board office, however it is only after the trustees are elected and the next fiscal year approaches that we will be fully resourced. We will slowly be developing and implementing changes and supports at your schools.

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 using the First Nations Graduation Planner booklet. The Graduation Planner 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 comprehensive information useful to any student. The Analysts are planning their travel schedule

now. If you wish to contact them, email [education@yfned.ca](mailto:education@yfned.ca).

The team at YFNED is also developing a choose-your-own-adventure style interactive 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 five 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

Màhsi' cho to all primary teams for engaging in the new Literacy Screening tool through our PD sessions offered over the last two weeks. We appreciate your support and your hard work completing these assessments before October 15. Extra thanks to Ross River School whose teaching staff already finished their assessments and sent them into us. Amazing!

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 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](http://www.ynlc.ca) for sound clips and more resources.

English *Thank-you*

Gwich'in *Màhsi' choo*

Hän *Màhsi' cho*

Kaska *Sógá sénlá'*

Northern Tutchone *Másin cho (or) Niyę sáw nîidhín*

Southern Tutchone *Shàw níthän (or) Kwàràschis*

Tlingit *Gunáichish*

Upper Tanana *Tsin'jj choh*



## WE ARE A CIRCLE

*We are a circle  
All connected  
To each other  
On this land*

*We are Grey Mountain  
We're the Yukon River  
With every creature  
Hand in hand*

*Ta'an Kwach'an Council  
Kwanlin Dün First Nation  
We say Thank You  
You share your land*

*Shàw níthän and Kwàràschis  
Shàw níthän and Kwàràschis  
Shàw níthän and Kwàràschis*

*We are a circle  
We are a circle  
We are a circle*

## Numeracy Project

It has been a great start to the years. 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.

## We are a Circle

This September, Kathleen Coventry, Grade 1 teacher at Grey Mountain Primary, wrote and choreographed a beautiful land acknowledgement song called "We are a Circle" that shows the school's commitment to walking the path of reconciliation. The whole school now performs this song at all assemblies and other school events, using hand and body movements with each line. We will be recording this song at GMP's next assembly and posting the video on our website at [www.fnsb.ca/learningtools](http://www.fnsb.ca/learningtools) after October 11. You are welcome to use this song and/or change it to suit your community.

## October Language Challenge

**Teachers:** We encourage you to try using your local First Nations language in your classroom at least once every day. Start with our "Word of the Month"!

## 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](http://www.electionsyukon.ca).

For further details, learn about online iVoting, or to download a nomination package, go to [electionsyukon.ca](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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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