



Deputy Minister's office (E-1)
PO Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

September 16, 2020

Dear parents/guardians:

Re: Review of inclusive and special education

I am writing to provide you with an update on the review of inclusive and special education.

Extending the review

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are extending this review into the 2020-21 school year to provide more time and opportunities to safely connect and gather perspectives with families, educators, school communities, partners and Yukon First Nations. This includes ensuring engagement opportunities originally planned for April and May 2020 are able to go forward this school year.

The review consultant, Nikki Yee, has provided an interim update from the information gathered to date about Yukon's current service model for these programs and questions and resources to consider as the review moves forward is now available at yukon.ca/en/review-inclusive-special-education-interim-update. The interim update will be referenced during engagement with education partners and Yukon First Nations.

Engagement on the review

As part of this review and our effort to improve our services, we want to hear from students, families, educators, communities, partners and Yukon First Nations about these areas of education.

This review began in February 2020, starting with the Department of Education's current practices, procedures and legislated responsibilities, and initial meetings with central administration staff and school administrators. Further engagement opportunities with families, educators, school communities, partners and Yukon First Nations that were originally planned for April and May 2020 had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

These opportunities are being adapted and rescheduled for November 2020, including:

- An online tool to gather perspectives and experiences from students, educators, families, partners, school communities, staff and the public;
- Focus groups led by the review consultant, with educators (including learning assistance teachers, school counsellors, educational assistants and school-based teams), the Yukon Teachers' Association, Yukon First Nations, School Councils and

associations, and professionals who work with children and youth with special educational needs;

- Additional interviews as identified by the review consultant.

The online tool is being developed collaboratively with Yukon First Nations and partners in education through the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education to ensure we are asking effective questions about our inclusive and special education services. The online tool will be open to the public. Employees in schools and the Department of Education's central administration building will also be encouraged to share their perspectives and experiences through this tool.

In addition, the online tool, families can also contact their School Council or staff of their First Nation government who can share perspectives on their behalf through focus groups with the review consultant or the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education.

Reporting back to the public, education partners and Yukon First Nations

The purpose of this review is to identify barriers and opportunities in the current service model and questions and resources to consider, starting with hearing from families, educators, and communities about their experiences with current programming, as well as learning about what other jurisdictions are doing.

Ms. Yee will share her final report from this review and a summary of what we heard from families, educators, school communities, partners and Yukon First Nations in March 2021. Her report will include identifying recommended areas for further inquiry and considerations for the department about inclusive and special education as it continues to work with partners to modernize these programs and address the recommendations from the 2019 audit report.

This report and recommendations from the 2019 audit report will then be used to frame collaboration with partners in education through the Advisory Committee on Yukon Education and Yukon First Nations on next steps to improve and modernize these programs to more effectively support student learning needs and outcomes, including some initial actions for the 2021-22 school year.

I look forward to providing you with further updates when opportunities to share your experiences and perspectives with inclusive and special education in Yukon open in November.

Sincerely,



Nicole Morgan
Deputy Minister of Education