

Success for Each Learner

What We Heard – New vision

A report on what we heard from our partners at the October 7, 2015, meeting about building a new vision for education in Yukon

About this report

This report summarizes what the Department of Education heard from partners at a meeting on October 7, 2015 about building a new vision for education in Yukon.

This meeting was attended by:

- Teachers, administrators and the Yukon Teachers' Association
- School councils and the Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards and Committees
- Yukon First Nations, the Council of Yukon First Nations and the First Nations Education Commission
- Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon
- Catholic Education Association of Yukon
- Yukon College

Through facilitated group discussions and individual feedback, our partners provided the following responses about our six questions.

1. What are 3-4 things that, if we did them immediately, would make a difference for students?

Partners provided many ideas in response to this question. Main themes included:

- More authentic learning experiences – real life applications
- More social emotional learning, counselling and professional development for trauma-informed care for educators – students need to be ready to learn
- Parent involvement and community engagement
- Increased flexibility and support for expanding programming options and modern instructional approaches – hands-on, minds-on - especially for grades 7 - 12
- First Nations culture and languages and learning on the land, with credits
- Improve student attendance and engagement
- Improve transitions from early education to Kindergarten, elementary to secondary school, secondary to post-secondary and adulthood
- Invest in effective teachers and work to retain good teachers, especially in communities
- More diverse resources and more opportunities for rural students, especially for communities that don't have K-12

2. Reports and Recommendations

a. As you know we have had many reports about education over the years. Should we do a more thorough review of all of them or some of them before we move forward?

The majority of responses expressed that we should review these reports, but not in depth. There were several suggestions that we scan these previous reports and recommendations and identify which still require action/response, ideally within the next few months.

A few groups said we should stop doing reviews and focus on taking action. Many groups urged that the focus must be on moving forward and that any scan of previous reports and recommendations should not slow down this process in taking action.

b. If you think we need to review some of them, which ones would be important?

Several groups identified key reports such as the Council for Yukon Indians' Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow, Department of Education's Education Reform Project, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada findings.

One group suggested the Office of the Auditor General of Canada's 2009 Report. Another group felt we should review all of them.

c. If a review is needed, who should be involved?

The majority of responses expressed that partners and existing working groups should be involved in this review.

One group suggested Community Education Liaison Coordinators also be partners involved in the review. Another group suggested hiring a contractor.

3. Partners and Stakeholders

a. Is there a difference between partners and stakeholders?

The majority of groups agreed there is a difference. Partners are directly impacted and involved in the success of students; stakeholders have a vested interest/involvement.

b. What groups or groups of people would you define as our partners?

The majority of groups agreed that those invited to the new vision meeting meet their definition of partners in education. Many noted students are also partners.

c. Who else needs to be at the discussion tables as partners?

The majority also identified that students are also partners who need to continue to be involved in this process in some way.

A few groups suggested additional partners to add, such as the Department of Health and Social Services, Community Education Liaison Coordinators, etc.

d. Which stakeholders need to be invited to be part of this work?

Groups suggested a number of stakeholders to be involved, including the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Justice, daycares, early childhood educators, Elders, Child Development Centre, NGOs such as LDAY, BYTE, FASSY, etc., business and employers, etc.

4. Committees

a. Do we need a steering committee for this work?

The majority agreed that this process does need a steering committee. Many expressed that the well-being and success of students should be the central focus of this work.

A few groups noted that the steering committee should represent a range of perspectives and possibly include key stakeholders such as the Department of Health and Social Services.

b. If so, who should be on it?

The majority expressed that membership of the steering committee should include the partners from the new vision meeting, the Minister, DM and ADMs.

c. Do we need sub-committees?

The majority felt that we will need some subcommittees for some issues and to seek input from stakeholders, but that we should use existing working groups as much as possible.

Some groups noted that any subcommittees should report back to steering committee and have clearly defined roles and timelines.

d. If we need sub-committees, what topics or issues would it be essential for them to address?

Many groups indicated that subcommittees should address topics that are not already being addressed by existing working groups, as directed by a steering committee.

A few groups suggested that subcommittee work could focus on the themes and ideas from responses to Question 1.

5. Consultation and engagement

a. We need to engage in dialogue and consultation to address the unique needs of all our communities as we move forward. What process should be used to consult?

The majority of groups thought that the process should use a similar model to the new vision meeting: direct and face-to-face meetings in the communities and with partners involved (e.g., government-to-government meetings with First Nations, town halls, etc.), on the land when possible. Groups suggested it would help to provide information before the meetings.

A few groups noted that the Department of Education's consultation process for the review of the *Students Financial Assistance Act* was well done and could be a good model to explore.

b. Will the process look different in Whitehorse or rural communities? If so, how?

The majority said that the process should look different/unique for each community.

c. How do we ensure that people who need to be consulted are not missed?

Suggestions included:

- Create a Student Advocate position to ensure student voices are heard;
- Host BBQs/dinners; offer door prizes
- Send flyers home with students, create phone trees
- Incorporate culture into events

6. Ongoing Communications

What strategies should be used to make sure that everyone is kept up to date with findings and actions coming out of this process?

(Note: We know that one strategy does not work for everyone so suggestions for a number of strategies would be helpful.)

The majority asked for direct contact through in-person, face-to-face meetings in the communities, community dinners, etc., and online communications through the Education website, social media and email newsletters such as the Deputy Minister's Friday Updates.

A few groups suggested that regular reporting on this process' meetings and activities should also happen at other meetings (school councils, conferences, school assemblies, staff meetings, Chief and Council, etc.).

One group specifically requested that we not use videoconferencing.