Building a Learning Organization: A Framework for Action

YUKON EDUCATION COMPREHENSIVE HUMAN RESOURCE PLAN

GOVERNMENT OF YUKON

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1.0 Introduction

Yukon Education is embracing the 21st century with a focus on creating an outstanding organization and being a leader in education in Canada’s north. With the advent of the 21st century, Yukoners have provided their energy, commitment and ideas to creating new structures and programs to support lifelong learners and the growth of our labour market. Through the territory-wide Education Reform Project (2002-2004), the Auditor General’s Report of Canada (January 2009), and annual Employee Engagement Surveys (since 2008) Yukon Education has received feedback on its human resource planning processes, structures, and workplace culture. Recommendations from staff demonstrate support to enhance leadership, mentoring, professional development, evaluation, and human resource management practices throughout the Department. Information gathered from research and our staff and stakeholders confirms that our employees are our greatest resource.

Within a diverse northern territory, Yukon Education has no shortage of opportunities and challenges. Yukon Education provides a K-12 public school system for children and supports the development of the labour market, immigration, post-secondary education, and adult learning. To be responsive to current and northern realities our focus is to build an outstanding organization.

The mission of Yukon Education is to support lifelong learning. It is without question that we are committed to building a culture of learning within the workplace. To consistently reach for high standards and results, while supporting and nurturing the holistic and unique needs of each learner, requires our employees to remain open to their own learning. We recognize that our quest to be an outstanding organization requires an ongoing commitment that begins with each employee. Yet building a culture of learning is the responsibility of all managers and directors. If we successfully cultivate and support a workplace that values growth, innovation, and learning, we know we will be better positioned to attract top talent, retain employees, and continue to offer top quality programs and services.

To accomplish this, Yukon Education is focusing on two goals: improve short and long term strategic human resource planning and strengthen a positive and supportive workplace for all staff. These goals represent a focus on both the workforce and workplace. Improving human resource operations – how we attract, recruit and hire talented people with the right fit – helps us manage the challenges of declining enrolment, the increasing complexity of student needs, and staff turnover. Improving how we support our employees will impact engagement, productivity, and effectiveness and ultimately address our core purpose: success for each learner.

1.1 The Strengths We are Building On

Over the last five years Yukon Education’s senior managers have placed a strong emphasis on the development of leadership and team coherence at both the corporate and branch levels. At the most senior level of the organization, the Executive Management Team, comprised of the Deputy Minister, Assistant Deputy Ministers, the Finance Director, Human Resource Director, Policy, Planning and Evaluation Director and Communications Coordinator have reflected on how to improve the ways the group makes decisions and works together. Changes that promote improvement and growth at the
most senior level of the organization promote a workplace culture of learning, problem solving and leadership.

At the branch level, Public Schools’ Senior Management Team has invested significant time and energy in enhancing the leadership capacities of its staff. The Public Schools Branch developed An Educational Leadership Framework for Yukon Principals and Vice-Principals and has concluded work on a similar document for elected school council members. Investing in leadership is not new for this branch. The Public Schools Branch has had an active Leadership Advisory Committee for the past five years, which is comprised of a variety of stakeholder groups. This group developed a three year leadership development strategy that has just been reviewed and revised and will guide programming in this area for the next three years. The Leadership Advisory Committee has been instrumental in the development of the two documents mentioned above, and a Yukon Educational Leadership Training Course that ran two years, which has resulted in a number of Yukon educators taking on either formal roles within Yukon schools or in Yukon Education or informal leadership roles as chairs of committees or learning teams.

Senior managers have worked hard to increase the leadership capacities within the branch to enhance the programs, services, and quality of teaching and administration throughout the territory.

In turn, the Advanced Education Branch has built a strong team through its commitment to regular all-staff meetings to develop a proactive workplace culture to improve programs and services.

1.2 Why are we undertaking a human resource plan?

There are three significant drivers for undertaking a human resource plan: employee engagement survey results, Auditor General of Canada recommendations, and a desire to focus on the structure and culture of the organization to improve educational outcomes for Yukon learners. First, the Executive Management Team is committed to improving the Department’s level of employee engagement to ensure satisfaction in areas such as leadership, fair human resource practices, and organizational support, and communication among other factors. Secondly, in January 2009, the Auditor General of Canada encouraged Yukon Education to improve its planning processes and practices, particularly with respect to human resources. Thirdly, Yukon Education has undergone significant change in the last five years, marked by changes in community needs, new federal programs, the response to Education Reform - New Horizons, and staff turnover. With so much change in a relatively short period of time, many staff expressed interest in seeing how all the Departmental initiatives fit together and align with a broader vision. Aligning organizational structures, initiatives, and developing a culture of collaboration and trust is a priority for the Executive Management Team. Given these factors, the Executive Management Team is invested in working on the organizational culture and structures in order to integrate human resource planning into the broader strategic goals and objectives of the organization.
The Department’s comprehensive human resource plan, *Building a Learning Organization: A Framework for Action*, underscores our commitment to improving staff engagement, planning processes and student success. The *Framework for Action* is linked to the *Government of Yukon’s Corporate Human Resource Strategy 2011-2014*, whose purpose is to improve key areas of human resource management throughout the Yukon government. The guiding principles contained therein will also guide the implementation of the Department’s Framework for Action. These guiding principles are:

- Client/student focused and service oriented
- Valuing employees and building capacity
- Progressive, forward-focused and adaptable
- Accountable and transparent.

**1.3. Overview of the Framework for Action**

This *Framework for Action* document is divided into two sections. The first section is an overview of the themes that arose through the conversations with Department of Education staff. It provides the rich context for action that follows. The second section focuses on the objectives, strategies, and initiatives that will improve all dimensions of workforce planning and a positive workplace. These elements of the plan are informed by employee suggestions, comments, and feedback.

The objectives of the Framework for Action are also informed by the workforce data found in the document, *Yukon Department of Education Workforce Profile 2012*. The information and evidence within the workforce profile, and from Department of Education employees, informed the choice of objectives which focus on attracting, connecting, developing and leading/managing. The overarching architecture of the Framework for Action is reflected in the figure below. Each objective has one or two strategies to meet them, which in turn have action-oriented initiatives.
1.4 What we hope this will achieve and our performance measures

Building a Learning Organization: A Framework for Action is a four-year comprehensive human resource plan designed to provide proactive and strategic initiatives to address current and emerging challenges in the Department. It provides an overview of how Yukon Education will focus its efforts to attract, connect, develop, lead and manage its employees in order to successfully meet the organization’s strategic goals and objectives as outlined by the Department of Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016: Our Commitment to New Horizons. The Framework for Action is meant to be a living document whereby objectives, strategies and initiatives are monitored, evaluated, and adjusted in ways that are practical and have impact.

A human resources sub-committee of the Executive Management Team will monitor the plan with representation from all levels of the organization. The sub-committee will identify, test, and refine performance measures, monitor annual progress on the objectives and strategies, and make recommendations to the Executive Management Team on ways to adjust, if necessary, resources and priorities to ensure Yukon Education is always working towards success for each learner.

Performance measures will examine areas such as employee engagement; HR processes; Department of Education characteristics and employee work characteristics. See Appendix B for more detail.
2.0 What is important to Department of Education employees?

In the development of *Building a Learning Organization: A Framework for Action*, the Executive Management Team wanted to hear from employees at all levels of the organization. Using the principles of “collaborative loops” by Dick and Emily Axelrod, the Spark Working Group met with employees from a diversity of schools, units and branches based on the engagement principles (1) widen the circle of involvement, (2) connect people to each other, and (3) create communities for action.

2.1 Research Methodology

Our research methodology was based on both qualitative and quantitative methods. The intention of meeting with staff was to learn about their perspectives on human resource management and to provide an opportunity to contextualize the concerns raised by the annual Employee Engagement Survey results. We began with baseline data from the annual engagement surveys (2008-2011) that raised more questions. With the data we developed conversations with staff that would yield rich information on their work, workplace culture, and working relationships. These conversations were designed using Liberating Structures, a new facilitation and research tool that is participatory and engaging (see Appendix A). After a Department-wide invitation to schools, branches and units, a total of eight schools¹ and seven units/branches² indicated their willingness to participate. Each process with staff was designed around the essential question: “What are the conditions that enable you to bring your best to work”? The oral and written information produced by staff participants was then typed up and schematized³. Themes were triangulated⁴ with other existing data from the Employee Engagement Surveys for corroboration. Using mixed methods, information could be cross-validated in order to enhance the validity of the themes.

Quantitative methods were used to understand Department of Education workforce demographics of all staff. Data was extracted from multiple software systems in use by government human resource units, analyzed, and synthesized. This data presented an overall picture of workforce schematics, including age, gender, First Nations ancestry, retirement age, attrition, and out of territory hires. The quantitative

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¹ The following rural and urban schools chose to participate: Robert Service, Ghûch Tlâ Community, St. Elias Community, J.V. Clark, Whitehorse Elementary, Porter Creek Secondary, FH Collins Secondary, and Holy Family Elementary.

² Labour Market Development Unit, Apprenticeship Training Programs, Public Schools Senior Management Team, Student Support Services Unit, Human Resources Unit, Advanced Education Senior Management Team, and School Administrators.


workforce data is summarized in the document *Leaders for Learners: A Profile of the Yukon Department of Education Workforce* (2012).

The following section provides an overview of the key themes that arose in the conversations with participating staff.

### 2.2 Workplace Culture and Climate

School staff and Department-based staff shared perspectives on workplace culture and climate. Many staff shared positive comments about their workplaces, colleagues, and senior leadership. In many units, branches and schools, staff told stories of positive working relationships, supportive supervisors, and nourishing learning environments. However, in conversations with different staff teams, a sample of staff wants to be more included and valued for their wisdom and perspectives. Many staff also expressed interest in being consulted and included during complex decision making and changes that affect their everyday working lives (for example, the implementation of YSIS or an additional Kindergarten report card). A common interest among a diversity of staff is that Yukon Education clearly articulates its vision and priorities and consistently demonstrates follow through. Where there was staff input into both the selection of the student information system and the additional Kindergarten report card and considerable conversation on the vision and priorities within the strategic plan, it would seem that better communication is required for greater understanding and in order to have staff feel as though they are connected to these important aspects of the department.

### 2.3 Orientation

There were many comments that addressed the need for improved orientation for new employees. “Comprehensive,” “thorough” and “relevant” were descriptors we frequently heard. There is a general interest in strengthening the orientation in Yukon Education in order to effectively connect new employees to their responsibilities, new work teams, and the overall Department of Education culture.

### 2.4 Professional Development

There were suggestions by staff to improve the access to, content of, and delivery methods of professional development (PD). Teachers, particularly those in the rural communities, are supportive of in-servicing that can be embedded in the school to maintain the integrity and continuity of the classroom. Department of Education staff also emphasized interest in ongoing opportunities for PD. Staff is also interested in understanding how PD is budgeted and allocated. All staff teams indicated that ongoing and relevant PD helps them bring their best to their work. Understanding the difference between the role that the YTA plays in PD and Department of Education in-servicing would also be helpful in clarifying the budgeting responsibilities.

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5 This has also been raised within the context of completed School Reviews through the School Growth Process.
2.5 General Support
For many staff the focus was on better personal and professional support in the classroom. For example, for the teaching staff, the availability and effectiveness of Educational Assistants (EAs) was a prominent theme. While there were a large number of requests for more EAs in classrooms, others noted that better training and education would be helpful for paraprofessionals. Housing opportunities were suggested to enhance retention rates of educators in rural communities.

2.6 Human Resource Management Practices
Many staff expressed that strengthening human resource management practices would support the operations of the Department. There was interest in moving toward a more proactive, strategic recruitment system. Increasing the transparency of the hiring process and providing ongoing management training for administrators/managers in hiring and coaching performance was suggested.

2.7 Yukon Education as a Learning Organization
Overall, the feedback from Department of Education staff articulated an interest in – and commitment to – learning and growth. Bringing their best to their work, in the service of a child’s learning or a client’s needs, was often contextualized in an individual’s professional learning goals and a positive and supportive workplace. This energy, commitment, and enthusiasm for all lifelong learners were the common thread between each staff team. In this way, supporting Leaders for Learners is at the centre of our framework for action.
3.0 Values

Values guide the practice of human resource management in the Department. *Leaders for Learners: A Framework for Action* introduces a set of four core values which guide behaviour, decision making, relationship building, and leadership practices. The four values that guide human resource management are featured below in Figure 2.

We demonstrate respect by being thoughtful, considerate and mindful of the dignity and honour of others.

We demonstrate accountability by showing how we have fulfilled our responsibilities.

We demonstrate integrity by taking personal responsibility for our actions and modelling respectful and ethical professional relationships.

We demonstrate fairness by ensuring our decision-making is transparent, impartial, understandable, and communicated in a timely manner.

Figure 2: Department of Education Human Resource Management Values
4.0 Goals

*Leaders for Learners: Framework for Action* is focused on two goals:

1. Improve short and long-term strategic human resource planning and;
2. Strengthen a positive and supportive workplace for all staff.

To meet these longer-term goals, *four objectives* have been developed:

- Attract talented people with the right fit to a northern education community;
- Effectively connect and retain employees in positive healthy workplaces;
- Support the career development of all employees through effective and meaningful professional development;
- Support the growth of leadership at all levels of the organization and improve the human resource management capabilities of supervisors.

**Objective 1: To attract talented people with the right fit to a northern education community.**

As a northern territory, Yukon has a unique profile of learners which include small rural and remote communities, large First Nation populations, and a growing immigrant community primarily originating from South Asian countries. Approximately 95% of our professional teachers are recruited from outside Yukon. Attracting quality educators to our rural communities is expected to remain somewhat of a challenge in the next decade.

**Strategy 1.1 Continue to increase the number of highly skilled educators in Yukon schools**

For long-term workforce planning, Yukon Education must identify positions and skills that are in either high demand or short supply. Identifying the skills and capabilities of our current and future staff, and recruiting strategically for them, is a central strategy to ensure Yukon Education meets its strategic goals and objectives.

**Initiative 1.1.1 Develop a “Staffing Needs Profile” to determine the essential competencies and skills that support 21st century learning to guide strategic, future recruitment.**

- Identify the essential and desirable competencies that educators require in order to provide conditions for learning in the 21st century.
• Modify hiring practices to ensure that selection and interview formats align with assessing for 21st century competencies including a rigorous pre-selection process.

Initiative 1.1.2 Develop a recruitment strategy to increase the options for attracting candidates for hard to fill positions.

• Identify and prioritize high demand and low supply specialist areas.

• Develop strategies for recruiting specialty teachers.

Initiative 1.1.3 Develop a “Staffing Needs Profile” to determine the essential competencies and skills for Department of Education staff that will guide both the project management and senior leadership of the organization.

• Identify the essential and desirable qualities that public servants require in order to provide excellence in educational leadership and public service.

Strategy 1.2 Increase the number of practicum students that choose the Government of Yukon Department of Education as the employer of choice.

The Yukon Department of Education relies heavily on employees from outside the territory, due to limited graduates through the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program. Attracting teacher preparatory students to Yukon is a helpful way to test for fit and to build strong and early relationships with future employees. Targeting practicum students is a strategic way to attract desirable employees with competencies that match our needs. Formalizing efforts that have taken place with multiple university teacher prep programs would benefit Yukon Education and school host sites.

Initiatives 1.2.1 Develop a Northern Practicum Program to attract teachers in training from university programs

• Develop formal relationships with select universities who provide teacher training programs to help identify and select practicum students to take their practicum in rural or urban schools.

• Provide financial support to secondary students in their third or fourth year who are interested in doing their practicum in rural or urban schools.

• Provide a support network of teachers for each cohort.

• Provide a mentor teacher and organized activities for the student with the host community.
1.2.2 Create a Rural Yukon Student Teacher Bursary to encourage students to plan to teach in rural and remote schools upon the completion of their degree

- Establish that students who receive a bursary agree to live and work as a teacher in a rural school for three full-time years (or equivalent).

- Begin reception of applications in mid-October for the following academic school year.

Strategy 1.3 Provide leadership support for School Councils to attract and hire highly skilled principals to provide exceptional educational leadership in their respective schools

School councils play a significant role in hiring school principals. Providing effective and comprehensive support to school council members, such as clarifying roles and responsibilities of members, considerations and processes when hiring principals and providing training to help carry out their roles will benefit all school communities. Yukon Education will be launching the Leadership Practices Framework for Yukon School Councils in the fall of 2012.

- Complete the accompanying Toolbox and training program to align with the Leadership Practices Framework for Yukon School Councils.

Strategy 1.4 Promote the professional field of education in Yukon

The professional field of education attracts highly trained teachers and administrators who provide educational services and programs in all Yukon communities. Furthermore, the teaching profession is one of the largest employment groups in Yukon. To support efforts in attracting and retaining skilled educators, Yukon Education will develop a strategy to enhance public appreciation and awareness of careers related to education and the teaching profession.

1.4.1 Support the renewal of the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program (YNTEP)

- Work in partnership with Yukon College to implement the recommendations of the YNTEP Review Report

Other initiatives may involve:

- Increasing the awareness of the teaching profession in Yukon across the territory and throughout Canada.

- Elevating and promoting the status of the teaching profession and related careers within the education sector workforce in Yukon.
• Communicating the benefits and opportunities of a career as an educator in Yukon to targeted audiences.

**Objective 2: To effectively connect and retain employees in positive, healthy workplaces.**

A warm welcome, an effective orientation and/or induction practices within organizations helps to integrate a new staff member with the workplace culture. Once staff has joined a team, developing the breadth and depth of capabilities becomes a significant investment. Finding innovative ways to support and retain employees within Yukon Education helps to ensure organizational memory, specialized expertise, and a positive workplace. Two areas of significant concern in our organization are the large number of staff who come from outside the territory and the high turnover of rural staff members. How can Yukon Education welcome and support new employees more effectively in a way that encourages them to contribute for longer periods of time? Creating a positive and dynamic learning organization, whereby staff members are well connected and supported, is central to our success.

**Strategy 2.1 Support new employees in their transition to Yukon Education**

_Effective orientation and induction programs for new employees are a common strategy for integrating and developing talent in an organization. For example, induction programs are vital in providing sustained support for new teachers during the transition from student to professional. Given high rates of turnover in rural communities, and significant attrition with new teachers in Yukon, strengthening the New Teacher Induction Program can help alleviate the overwhelming feeling that is commonly associated with the first two years of teaching and improve learning outcomes for students._

**Initiative 2.1.1 Develop a New Teacher Development Program** to bridge the transition from pre-service to professional service.

• Public Schools Branch and the YTA lead in the creation of a comprehensive development program for new teachers. The program would support the professional growth of new teachers to support effective teaching, learning, and assessment practices. The program would provide the following integrated resources and supports:

  o Orientation for all new teachers (this is done annually)

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6 For other best practices refer to the “Supporting Beginner Teacher Program and Improve Teacher Retention in Northern Alberta” and the Ministry of Ontario’s “New Teacher Induction Program” (2010) for a particularly comprehensive example.
Mentoring for new teachers by experienced teachers (this has been done for years)

Professional development and training in areas such as:

- Literacy, differentiated instruction, classroom management, the Pyramid of Intervention, effective parent communication skills, and instructional strategies that address the learning and culture of students with special needs. (This is done on an annual basis)

Resources may include:

- induction manual
- teacher performance appraisal technical requirements manual
- resource handbooks for new teachers, mentors, and principals
- resources to support new teachers professional development (on key subject areas such as differentiated instruction, classroom management, pyramid of intervention, assessment framework)
- teacher performance appraisal system

**Initiative 2.1.2 Develop a new Orientation Program for Department of Education Staff and Support staff in schools**

- Update and revise Orientation Checklist for Supervisors.
- Develop a best practices document for on-boarding and orientation practices.
- Continue Deputy Minister “meet and greet” for all new staff.
- Continue to update the photo board to help current staff identify new and returning staff members.

**Strategy 2.2 Enhance Living Support to Rural and Remote Staff**

The majority of rural Department of Education staff is teachers where schools are the heart of small communities. Attracting and retaining skilled and talented teachers who enjoy the pace and culture of Yukon’s unique communities is essential for providing continuity in schools, improving the academic success of students, and ensuring successful secondary school transitions in Whitehorse for some students. The comparatively low availability of programs and services in rural communities is one barrier to long-term employment for professionals.
Initiative 2.2.1 In collaboration with the Yukon Housing Corporation, create solutions for staff housing shortages in rural communities to ensure that practicum and new teachers, administrators, and visiting specialist teachers have safe and affordable accommodations.

- Address housing shortages by developing innovative solutions in affected communities.
- Develop a Department of Education Housing Directive and Guideline to provide clarity and transparency for housing allocations.
- Provide housing supports to new rural teachers.

Strategy 2.3 Create opportunities for the flexible and ongoing use of technology to connect, share, and learn from staff

*Given our geographically dispersed workplaces (29 locations), overcoming distance barriers is an essential component of working effectively. The use of social media and new technologies is an important vehicle of communication, information sharing, and connecting among staff in rural and urban locations. Currently Yukon Education has two different software systems- First Class for teachers and the Government of Yukon’s Employee Intranet for all government staff members. Finding solutions to enhance collaboration and information sharing among staff is one key factor in improving communication at all levels of the organization.*

Initiative 2.3.1 Create a committee, which will examine and recommend how to improve the efficacy of communication between YTA and YEU staff.

- Consider options such as:
  - Developing a Department-wide intranet for employees to share information, network with colleagues, and encourage open and frequent communication;
  - Developing the SharePoint model of a Department of Education Intranet.
  - Providing strategic support to enable the ease and efficacy of departmental communications.
  - Developing an online tool to gather information on staff engagement concerns for all Department of Education staff using the innovative SenseMaker® program.

  ▪ Establish a pilot SenseMaker® project for Department of Education employees through the support of the Staff Development Branch, PSC.
• Create questions to prompt the sharing of narrative stories throughout the organization to provide real-time feedback on organizational issues, including the impact and effect of the Comprehensive Human Resource Plan.

• Use SenseMaker® information as a complimentary or replacement data set for YTA employees for the Government Employee Engagement Survey.

Strategy 2.4 Improving the recognition of staff and employee contributions

Recognizing and celebrating the contributions of government staff and educators helps to create a positive work environment – one in which employees feel valued. Developing a Department of Education recognition program will play a significant role in making employees feel appreciated for their contributions, ideas, and service.

Initiative 2.4.1 Develop a Department of Education Recognition Program for Educators

• Provide an innovative way to recognize the contributions of teachers when they retire that aligns with the General Administration Manual’s Gift Policy for government workers.

• Recognize the additional responsibilities taken by teacher leaders who facilitate professional development days for the Yukon.

• Provide a letter of recognition and thanks from the Deputy Minister upon retirement, transfer, promotion or resignation.

Initiative 2.4.2 Provide Department of Education Recognition Program for YEU and Management Staff

• Explore unique staff recognition program for YEU/Management staff that would honour and celebrate contributions to the education system.

• Provide a letter of recognition and thanks from Deputy Minister upon retirement, transfer, promotion or resignation.

• Human Resource staff provides advice to supervisors/managers on ways to provide informal recognition on a regular basis to employees, and reminders when employees have reached significant milestones in their years of service.
Objective 3: To support the career development of all employees through effective and meaningful professional development, training, and career broadening opportunities.

The provision of quality professional development and opportunities for career growth and diversification are central to the personal and career growth of staff in a learning organization. This is particularly important when significant changes continue in public education and our labour market. Learning new skills and competencies in a dynamic teaching and economic context is essential for achieving the Department’s strategic goals and objectives. Working with educators and public service officials to support their personal and professional growth will improve employee engagement, the quality of K-12 learning environments, and public service to adult clients.

Strategy 3.1 Strengthen the effectiveness of Professional Development

Professional development is provided to employees through two primary ways. For most YEU/management staff, professional development is identified through the Personal Development Plan (PDP) and Personal Performance Plan (PPP) in-service process whereby an employee chooses areas of growth or skill building. Through conversation with their supervisor, employees select professional development opportunities that can be resourced within budgetary limits. For YTA members, teachers and administrators have access to three professional development days in each academic school year, as outlined by the Education Act. In this case, each school selects what kind of professional development would best meet the needs of school staff. Yukon Education also provides additional in-servicing through the two-day Summer Institute, and in-service opportunities throughout the year. These opportunities are focused on Departmental priorities. Improving the clarity, focus, content and methodology of in-services and professional development will support employees at all levels of the organization.

Initiative 3.1.1 Encourage all staff members to have a career development or growth plan through the new Professional Performance Plan, Professional Development Plan, or the teacher’s and administrator’s evaluation processes in order to promote and encourage continuous growth and learning.

- Ensure all interested staff members have a training or growth plan in support of their own career development goals, if desired.
- Explore the possibility of providing support to clinicians/consultants in Yukon Education to maintain registration with professional associations to ensure that competencies and skills are maintained at the highest level in service to school-based teams.
Initiative 3.1.2 Support the delivery of more school-based in-service for teachers to increase the effectiveness of training while maintaining school and classroom integrity.

- Determine and prioritize changes to the methodology of professional development that may include timing, location, and training models.

- Undertake ongoing evaluation and assessment of professional development model(s) to ensure that they are adding value to the quality of learning for participants.

- Identify key knowledge and competencies that require ongoing training for established teachers (e.g. technology, split-grade instructional strategies, IEPs or SLPs).

Initiative 3.1.3 Develop and provide ongoing support for Educational Assistants and Remedial Tutors.

- In collaboration with the Yukon Teachers’ Association (SETSA) and key stakeholders, determine the core competencies of Educational Assistants and Remedial Tutors and provide support and specialty training to enhance professional development.

- Identify and deliver the best methods of training that addresses core competencies and specialty training for EA/RTs?

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of Educational Assistants and Remedial Tutors in the classroom, particularly in relation to the classroom teacher.

- Move towards common qualification standards for EAs and RTs.

Strategy 3.2 Develop the capacity for educational leadership within current staff by building foundational learning opportunities

In many parts of Canada, particularly in rural communities, there is a significant challenge attracting and retaining administrators. Within the Public Schools Branch, most of our candidates for administrator positions are applicants from outside the territory. Urban positions come available less frequently than rural administrator positions, given the higher turnover rate in rural schools. In order to support the growth of educational leadership capabilities among current teachers and staff, we need to continue to encourage interest in and successful transition to vice-principal and principal positions.

Initiatives may involve:

- Examining and reviewing the current barriers for teachers to consider educational leadership positions, such as the administrator.
- Examining and reviewing how to improve supports to teachers to successfully apply for and undertake a vice-principal or administrator position.

- Identifying and analyzing the factors that have enabled Yukon teachers to be successful in administrator positions.

- Synthesizing lessons learned to identify improvements to the Department’s current supports (such as the Leadership Program) to build successful foundational learning opportunities that have positive outcomes for Yukon educators.

**Objective 4: To support the growth of leadership at all levels of the organization and improve the human resource management capabilities of all supervisors.**

The identification and development of leadership capabilities in Yukon Education is informed by the Leadership Framework for Yukon Principals and Vice-principals and the draft Leadership Competencies initiative through the Public Service Commission for managers, directors, assistant deputy ministers, and deputy ministers. While there are differences in the way educators and public service staff express leadership qualities, due to the diverse work environments, skilled leadership is paramount in a learning organization. It is recognized that the management of people, finances, and strategic planning is one set of capabilities that aid the effective and smooth running of schools, units, and branches. Developing robust, efficient, and fair human resource practices and strong leadership practices are key priorities for the Department.

**Strategy 4.1 Increase human resource capabilities to enhance management excellence at all levels of the organization**

Managers at all levels of the organization face complex challenges and conflicts on a weekly basis. Growing skills and competencies in leading and managing people helps to build a healthy and dynamic organization. Many challenges at work can be circumvented by effective interpersonal skills with respect to leading and managing staff. Intentionally growing the strategic and practical human resource capabilities of all managers has the potential to influence the culture and effectiveness of the Department.

**Initiative 4.1.1 Create a new Corporate Human Resource Committee to strategically focus, monitor, and adjust organizational responses to human resource management challenges and opportunities.**

- Ensure that a representative group of managers at all levels of the organization are engaged in strengthening the integration of human resources into Department of Education business.
• Develop proactive solutions and provide recommendations on corporate HR issues and make recommendations to the Executive Management Team (EMT).

• Monitor and provide oversight on the implementation of the Building a Learning Organization: Framework for Action.

Initiative 4.1.2 Identify, define, and promote human resource values that will guide decision making, behaviour, and standards of professional conduct.

• Through the Comprehensive Human Resource Project identify and define key values that create the framework for integral human resource decision making throughout the Department.

• Promote human resource values in all human resource publications, daily managerial decision making, and formal human resource policies and processes.

• Encourage the modelling of these values through all human resource management processes in day-to-day responsibilities of supervisors and managers.

• Deal proactively with behaviours that are outside acceptable norms of the workplace.

Initiative 4.1.3 Increase the management capabilities of all managers, directors, assistant deputy ministers, and deputy minister in Yukon Education by:

• Develop clear, annual expectations of human resource management excellence in the PDP process through clarifying and raising expectations of performance in supervision and guidance of individuals and staff teams.

• Ensure that an appropriate and diverse body of staff at multiple levels of the organization are included in exploring and problem solving complex issues to improve Departmental decision making.

Initiative 4.1.4 Clarify the roles/responsibilities of the Executive Management Team (EMT)

• Develop a clear Terms of Reference and ensure all agenda items have clear objectives (for information sharing, discussion, or decision).

• Strengthen the decision making process at EMT.
Initiative 4.1.5 Continue to provide management training for new administrators, which aligns with the Public Schools Branch Educational Leadership Framework for Yukon Principals and Vice-Principals.

- Identify key competencies for new administrators and provide ongoing training using an in-service model.

Initiative 4.1.6 Conduct regular exit interviews with all employees to collect and synthesize data regarding workplace conditions, relationships, support and health.

- Develop a process whereby each staff member that transitions from Yukon Education (retirement, resignation, temporary assignments etc.) is given the opportunity to provide feedback on their workplace experience (support, workplace culture, relationships, expectations, etc.).

- Synthesize information on a quarterly basis and provide feedback to the Executive Management Team for consideration and follow-up actions.

Initiative 4.1.7 Explore new ways of structuring the Public Schools Branch to enable more time in schools to provide increased support

- Examine the challenges and opportunities with the current structure of the Public Schools Branch.

- Identify solutions to address challenges and build on strengths within the branch to improve supports for school-based staff.

- Identify solutions to address the alignment of responsibility and authority with Area Superintendents.

- Clarify roles and responsibilities and levels of decision making within the branch.

Strategy 4.2 Improve the ability to identify education sector workforce demographics and needs

Currently, workforce data for education employees can be found in a number of different software systems throughout the Government of Yukon. Significant amounts of data are located in Excel spreadsheets in the Human Resources Unit. Other data sets are located in corporate human resource software, called PeopleSoft. With multiple data sets and collection systems, it is difficult to develop an accurate picture of the Department’s workforce demographics. Improving data management systems would help to streamline workforce data collection, storage, transmission and report development.
Initiative 4.2.1 Develop new data collection practices to establish accurate, up-to-date and relevant workforce data.

- In collaboration with the Public Service Commission, exploring options for a streamlined process for workforce data collection, transmission, storage, and report development.

- Strengthening the human resource unit’s ability to use workforce data to strategically inform recruitment and retention initiatives through accurate and frequent reports to convey:
  - Short and long term workforce planning
  - Historical and potential workforce trends
  - Implications for integrated Departmental strategic planning

Initiative 4.2.2 Review the Staffing Protocol as to its fairness, equity, and effectiveness.

- In consultation with the YTA, assess the effectiveness of priority placements and transfers, among others in the Staffing Protocol.
APPENDIX A - Overview of Participatory Research Methods

Liberating Structures were used to guide staff through a series of participatory processes. Liberating Structures is a series of dynamic group processes which help diverse groups of all sizes express common concerns. Boston College professor William Torbert first introduced the idea of Liberating Structures in 1991. It was developed because he was interested in how organizational structures can provide guidance whereby individuals develop the skills to guide themselves. The ultimate goal is continual quality improvement. Over time, facilitators and organizational development consultants began using it for process design to more effectively engage groups in system change. More recently, Keith McCandless and Henri Lipmanowicz began experimenting, testing, and developing Liberating Structures to engage participants on key questions or issues that unleash creative ideas and solutions.

Using the principles of reflection, dialogue, and iteration, Liberating Structures reduces the chance that an individual or interest group skews the results through their dominance in the conversation. Liberating Structures can be considered a form of Participatory Action Research (PAR) methods, which involves direct participation in a dynamic research process. The overall objective of PAR is to improve programs and structures with the information that results from the research.

Liberating Structures were chosen as the key research method as it provided the most flexible way to collect data in constrained periods of time. School based staffs were limited to short sections in their monthly staff meetings, which left between 20-45 minutes with groups between 10 and 55 individuals. Liberating Structures proved to be helpful in engaging all staff in short time periods. The Spark Working Group believed that the meaningful engagement of staff was the key to the success of the project.

The following Liberating Structures were utilized, depending on time constraints and the participation willingness of the staff team, and the names of the schools and/or units and teams.

1. “The Bridge” and “One Wish”: Identify what needs to change/strengthen to ensure that staff experience a positive workplace so they can bring their best to provide exemplary public service.
   - Student Support Services Unit, Labour Market Programs and Services Unit, Public Schools Branch
   - Senior Management Team, Human Resource Unit, Training Programs Unit, Immigration Unit

2. Focus Group: Identify key actions that Yukon Education should do or stop doing so that educators are able to bring their very best to their teaching/workplace every day. Robert Service School, J.V. Clark School, Ghiúch Tlà Community School, St. Elias Community School

3. “Appreciative Interview” and “25 Gets you 10”: Identify a time when you were able to bring your best to work and identify the conditions that made it possible. If we were to amplify those

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8 See www.liberatingstructures.com for more information, reference, and history.
conditions, what should Yukon Education do (or stop doing) to ensure you bring your best to work? *Whitehorse Elementary School, FH Collins*

4. **“Q Storming”:** Reflect on a time when you were able to bring your best to work in support of a colleague or student. Consider the ‘conditions’ that made this possible. After a minute of reflection, educators were invited to think of a question, that if answered, could substantially move Yukon Education forward. *Holy Family, Porter Creek Secondary School*
APPENDIX B – Potential Performance Measures

Employee Engagement

- SenseMaker®
- Yukon Government Employee Engagement Survey
- Absenteeism Rate – the number of work days missed due to illness per FTE.
- Vacancy Rate – the % of positions being actively recruited for at the end of a reporting period
- 1st Year Turnover Rate – the % of employees with less than 1 year of service who left the organization.
- Resignation Rate – employees who resigned from the organization as percentage of headcount.
  - Three to Five Years of Service Resignation Rate – the % of employees with between three and five years of service who resigned

Employee Characteristics

- External Hire Rate – people hired externally as a % of headcount
- Diversity Hire Rate – the % of people hired externally who self-identify as coming from a diversity category.
  - Female Percent – employees who are female as a percentage of headcount
  - Female Percent at Executive and Supervisory level – employees who are female as a % of Executive and Supervisory headcount
- Age Hire Ratios - the % of employees hired externally who are between five year age groups
- Point of Hire – the % of new hires from Canadian provinces and territories
- Retirement Rate – employees who retire as a percentage of headcount
  - Average Retirement Age – average age of employees who retire
- Average Length of Service – average length of employee service
- Part-time Percent – permanent employees who work part-time as a % of headcount
- Temporary Staff Percentage – non-permanent employees as a percentage of headcount.

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9 See HR Metrics Standards published by the HR Metrics Services: http://www.hrmetricsservice.org/0/pdf/standards_glossary.pdf
Human Resource Processes

- External Time-to-Fill – the average number of calendar days taken to fill a position from outside the organization
- HR Turnover – the number of HR staff leaving as a % of all HR staff
- HR FTE Ratio – the number of FTE per individual HR FTE.

Department of Education Characteristics

- In-service Days per FTE – the number of days spent on in-service per FTE
- Learning and Development FTE Ratio – the number of FTE for each FTE working in learning and development
- Churnover – rate of internal movement by employees as a percentage of headcount.
- Career Path Ratio – employees moving upward in the organization as a % of all employee movement
- Management Span of Control – average number of employees per Executive/Supervisor.