



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

November 25, 2020

Dear School Staff:

Re: School staff input for inclusive and special education review

We are writing you to provide an update on the review of inclusive and special education services in response to recommendations from the Auditor General of Canada in the 2019 Audit Report on Kindergarten to Grade 12 education in Yukon.

In September 2020, the review was extended across this school year due to COVID-19 and to allow for more time to safely gather experiences and perspectives on these programs and services, including from school staff. Dr. Nikki Yee, consultant leading the review, has also released an [interim report](#) on work completed so far, which staff are encouraged to read, as a springboard to further engagement.

We think it is critical that school staff have an opportunity to provide input into the review; therefore, we have taken steps to offer a variety of opportunities for input to be gathered. Due to the large number of educators across the territory it will not be possible for Dr. Yee to meet with everyone. As such, we have worked together to ensure she can hear from a representative sample of educators and school staff. In addition, all school staff, students, and families will have the opportunity to share their experiences and perspectives through an online tool that will be available in December. Dr. Yee, and ultimately all staff across the Department of Education and our partners, will be able to learn more from the experiences shared through the online tool and use the patterns within the data to better understand what is happening in inclusive and special education across the territory.

Focus groups with school staff:

- December 8th – Zoom focus group with School Counsellors and Learning Assistance Teachers.
- January 15th PD Day – Zoom focus group in morning with educational assistants; Zoom focus group in afternoon with teachers, Aboriginal language teachers and any school administrators who did not meet with Dr. Yee last school year.

For December 8th LAT and School Counsellor focus group:

We will work with school administrators to ensure substitute staff are in place to cover absent school counsellors and learning assistance teachers. The Student Support Services unit will cover the costs of substitute staff on this day. An introductory video from Dr. Yee and some background information will be sent ahead of this date so staff are prepared to participate.

January 15 PD Day focus groups:

To ensure representation from across schools, myself and Dr. Yee are requesting schools to identify 1-2 teachers and/or Aboriginal language teachers and 1-2 educational assistants who can represent the voices of the staff in their schools. School administration should work with their school staff to identify their representatives. School administration should submit the names of their representatives to their Area Superintendent by December 11. Dr. Yee will provide some further information and materials by e-mail in the coming days to help gather perspectives to be shared in the focus groups.

School administrators who have not previously met with Dr. Yee are also invited to attend at this time. There are also an additional 20 openings for additional educators who wish to attend the focus groups. Further details about how to access these openings will be provided in upcoming communications.

Online tool available to all staff:

The online tool provides an opportunity for all school staff to share their experiences and perspectives on inclusive and special education services and will be used as part of Dr. Yee's overall review. The online tool allows participants to share as many stories as they would like and to answer a few short questions about their experience. The stories collected are anonymized so that no stories shared are connected with the person filling it out. Any information that could identify you or others, or specific situations is removed from the data.

We will be sharing the link with school administrators and staff and will be working with school administrators to ensure both staff and students have time at school to fill out the online tool.

Background information on Dr. Nikki Yee:

Dr. Yee recently completed a PhD in Special Education at the University of British Columbia, with a focus on Indigenous and inclusive education. She has 12 years of diverse teaching experience from pre-Kindergarten to university and has provided special education supports for schools.

More information:

- Questions? Contact your school administrator
- [Nikki Yee's interim report on inclusive and special education in Yukon](#)
- [News release: review of inclusive and special education extended](#)
- [News release: review of inclusive and special education launched](#)

Sincerely,



Nicole Morgan
Deputy Minister of Education



Nikki Yee
Consultant