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Message from the Deputy Minister

In the five months that I have served as your Deputy Minister, I have been listening to staff feedback and working with leadership both in schools and at the main building to begin to develop a common understanding of where we are at as an organization.

We recognize there have been challenges in our working relationships and how we communicate with each other. We have heard directly from staff and see from the past employee engagement surveys that our staff in schools and in the main building feel our work has great purpose and a teamwork mentality, but we also see high levels of confusion, stress and anxiety in the feedback, a lot of which is arising from how we work together.

We want to do better and shift how we work together so we can be more effective and happy at work.

Research on organizational behavior shows that effective organizations foster a culture of growth mindset, where curiosity, self-regulation, personal responsibility and leveraging strengths are valued. It also suggests that effective

organizations prepare for the future by valuing and nurturing a culture of ongoing learning.

We need to become a learning organization, a concept first developed by Peter Senge in 1990.

A learning organization approaches work as learning in order to be effective, responsive and adaptable in a rapidly changing world.

We know that adult learners learn in the same way as young learners, so our learning environments should parallel those we are creating for Yukon students with the new curriculum, which is based on findings from the learning sciences (Helen Timperley, 2016).

We have mapped out what being a [learning organization](#) means for the Yukon Department of Education in our [Learning Organization Framework](#), which is based on how we are modernizing learning in schools with the new curriculum and the [OECD Principles of Learning](#).

The Learning Organization Framework is about how we work together, using the principles of learning, spiral of inquiry and competencies (from the curriculum and from Yukon government). It helps us to see ourselves and each other as learners, our workplace as a learning environment, and the elements of how we learn.

At the center of the framework are our learners and our goal for them, which was developed with education partners through the Advisory Committee on Yukon Education.

The purpose of becoming a learning organization is to become more effective in supporting learners and to make our organization a better place to work, by:



- Shifting how we work and our workplace culture
- Seeing ourselves and each other as learners, our workplace as a learning environment and our department as a learning organization
- Improving how we communicate, collaborate and coordinate our work

All staff in schools and in the main building are responsible for participating and shifting how we work together.

We will gradually start using this framework and shift into working as a learning organization as we continue to deepen our understanding of modern learning environments and the new curriculum.

A lead learning team has been established to guide and support us in this learning journey, including:

- Jeanette Gallant (Association of Yukon School Administrators)
- Souhail Soujah (Schools and Student Services Branch)
- Tracy Camilleri (Policy and Partnerships Branch)
- Jackie McBride-Dickson (Corporate Services Branch)
- Michael McBride (Executive Management Team)
- Holly Fraser (Lead/Community Relations & Engagement).

The lead team will organize themes and resources for inquiry and learning activities related to elements in this framework, to help everyone understand and utilize it together. Starting in November, school administrators and central supervisors will have access to a monthly activity kit to lead these inquiry and learning activities with their staff.

Working in education requires an individual and collective commitment to lifelong learning and

growth mindsets in all areas of our organization – from students to staff.

I look forward to learning with you as we continue this conversation and work to modernize learning in Yukon and support all of our learners.

Message from Human Resources

Employee engagement survey for school staff:
You should have received a link to the voluntary employee engagement survey from the Public Service Commission. We encourage you to participate and provide feedback. The survey is available to all school employees from Oct. 16- Nov. 6. It takes 5-20 minutes to complete the survey and can be done during work hours.

For more information, contact the human resources branch or visit the [2018 Employee Engagement Survey page](#) on Yukonnect. (Login to Yukonnect using your YESNET username prefixed with yesnet\ like so: yesnet\sjones).

Fentanyl and Cannabis

Conversations around fentanyl and cannabis have been prominent in our communities lately. The [Department of Education](#) and educators are teaching youth and parents about these substances in a few ways.

Through our [Physical and Health Education curriculum](#), the aim is to provide students with the knowledge and skills to make healthy choices and understand the risk of drugs and alcohol. The curriculum is flexible to address issues such as fentanyl and cannabis. Teachers should look for opportunities in the Physical and Health curriculum to address these topics.

The Physical and Health Education curriculum has learning outcomes from Kindergarten to Grade 12 related to the use of harmful substances such as poisons, prescription



medications, alcohol and cannabis, as well as fentanyl and other illicit drugs:

- **Kindergarten to Grade 3:** avoiding harmful substances such as poisons found in household cleaners or prescription medications found in the medicine cabinet.
- **Grades 4 and 5:** managing problems related to mental well-being and substance use, understanding the potential effects and harms of psychoactive substances such as cannabis and strategies for preventing personal harms.
- **Grade 6:** responding to emergencies and strategies for managing personal and social risks related to psychoactive substances and potentially addictive behaviours.
- **Grade 7:** strategies to protect themselves and others from potential abuse, exploitation and harm in a variety of settings.
- **Grades 8 to 12:** healthy choices and their influence on physical, emotional and mental well-being, managing problems related to mental well-being and substance use and how advocating for mental health and well-being of others connects students to the community.

Cannabis legalization: It is the responsibility of all school staff to ensure students learn in a safe environment. The use of cannabis continues to be prohibited on school grounds for students and staff. For information about your responsibilities on cannabis use and the workplace, see the *Substance Use and Impairment in the Workplace Policy* available on [Yukonnect](#) or on FirstClass under the **Policies and Guidelines** conference in **Teacher's Global Conferences**.

Information available: Attached is some information from Health and Social Services that may be helpful in conversations with students and parents. Hard copies of fentanyl

information sheets and posters are also being sent out to the schools.

Presentations: some schools are hosting specific presentations:

- F.H. Collins is planning a parent presentation on fentanyl with Dr. Brendan Hanley, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Mental Wellness and Substance Use counsellors from Health and Social Services and reps from the BYTE youth organization. F.H. Collins is looking at opening this to parents of students at all Whitehorse high schools. More info to come.
- Porter Creek has hosted grade-level assemblies to provide information on fentanyl.
- Vanier is also hosting a parent presentation with info on cannabis and fentanyl.
- Some schools have also brought in Mental Wellness and Substance Use counsellors to do presentations on cannabis for specific grade levels.

You should contact your school principal to see if your school is planning presentations on fentanyl and cannabis. Check the resources below to see how you can support student and parent learning about these subjects.

Resources

- [Know your source](#)
- [Overdose awareness](#)
- [Opioids info from Gov. of Canada](#)
- [HSS Fentanyl information](#)
- [HSS Fentanyl info sheet](#)
- [Cannabis information](#)
- [Yukon.ca/cannabis](#)
- [Key things Yukoners need to know about cannabis video](#)
- [Nikki Krocker, Curriculum Consultant](#)
- Mental Wellness and Substance Use Counsellors are available to all schools and can do specific presentations on fentanyl and cannabis. In Whitehorse, contact Jane



Gaudet at jane.gaudet@gov.yk.ca or 867-393-6907 to set something up in your school. In the communities, you can contact your nearest Mental Wellness and Substance Use office at:

- o Dawson City: 867-993-4300
 - o Watson Lake: 867-536-3222
 - o Haines Junction: 867-634-7504
 - o Carmacks: 867-338-4180
- Naloxone kit training – contact your principal to schedule this training.
 - [Blood Ties Four Directions](#) – contact Jesse Whelen, the Harm Reduction and Wellness Counsellor at wellness@bloodties.ca for support on drug education.
 - [BYTE youth organization](#)

K-12 Assessment Guidelines

Administrators worked with their school communities to determine if their school will follow Option 1 or Option 2 this year:

- [K-9 Interim Guidelines](#)
- [Grade 10 Interim Guidelines](#)
- [Grade 11-12 Interim Guidelines](#)

This work includes following an Assessment and Reporting Plan. If you are unsure of your school's plan, please ask your principal.

Please note: reporting by learning standards means that content and curricular competency portions of the standards are considered.

Self-assessments: Regardless of the option being followed this year, all K-10 students must complete a self-assessment of the core competencies to attach to the final summative report. More Information and samples: [Elementary](#), [Secondary](#). French translations of sample templates will be available soon.

Feedback on assessment: To finalize the assessment guidelines for 2019-20, we will be asking for another round of feedback in time for the Assessment Committee meeting in Spring 2019. Further info coming soon.

FreshGrade: 9 schools are using FreshGrade so far. There are 89 active teacher accounts and 122 Yukon classrooms are actively involved. There are 773 active student accounts and 313 active parent accounts. To sign up, contact yukonportfolios@yesnet.yk.ca. You will be sent information to get started. [Learn more.](#)

Numeracy and Literacy Assessments

Graduation numeracy assessment: The second sitting of the graduation numeracy assessment is scheduled for Nov. 5-7, with the French assessment available on the first day only. [Pre-assessment activities](#) for students are available to help them to prepare, including sample assessment and a video series.

DART Reading Assessment and School Wide Write (SWW) For Grades 2-9: Marking and data entry into the portal is complete. Like many of you did during the collaborative marking sessions, please continue to reach out to each other for support on how to use the data to move student learning forward.

Yukon Foundation Skills Assessments (YFSAs) for Grades 4 and 7: If you are a Grade 3-8 educator and are interested in gathering with colleagues in a standards-based collaborative marking session on Nov. 19-20, please [express your interest](#).

Students started the YFSAs on Oct. 1. More info and sample YFSAs at the [B.C. Ministry of Education website](#). YFSA Questions: Nikki.Krocker@gov.yk.ca



Important YFSA Dates	
Oct. 1-Nov. 9	YFSA administration
Nov. 9	Send booklets to Yukon Education Attn: Nikki Krocker
Nov. 15-16	Train the trainer session for collaborative marking
Nov. 19-20	Collaborative Marking
Nov. 23	Score entry deadline (done centrally)
November	Booklets sent back to schools
January	Standard setting session
February	Final student results

New curriculum: K-10

We continue to support the new curriculum implementation with PD day training and new resources for teachers.

Integrating Applied Design, Skills and Technologies (ADST) PD Day: Nov. 2 at Golden Horn Elementary School.

Open to all primary and intermediate educators that will explore integrating ADST K-3 or 4-7. This is a repeat of the workshop held on April 27, 2018.

New curriculum resources:

Science 8-10 Resources: If you are having issues accessing the digital resources please report issues to jane.downing@gov.yk.ca.

Science 10 resources were sent to schools the week of Oct. 22. Follow the instructions on the memo in the package to access the digital resources. Any technical issues should be reported to jane.downing@gov.yk.ca.

Social Studies 8-9 Resources: Based on positive reviews from Yukon teachers, Nelson's Social Studies 8-9 resources are in the process of being ordered.

Agency in the Schools new resources:

- Mindfulness Workshops, Yoga Sessions for grades K-12 by Roots2Mindfulness
- Yukon Biodiversity/Biodiversité du Yukon for Grade 3 by Remy Rodden
- Yukon Animals in Winter/Animaux du Yukon en hiver for Grades K-1 by Remy Rodden

Further curriculum resources

- [Sample templates for standards-based written interim reports](#)
- [K-9 classroom assessment and reporting support materials](#)
- [Yukon's new curriculum video](#)
- [First Nations teaching resources](#)

11-12 Curriculum Implementation

In Yukon, we have not been encouraging a trial of the new curriculum for Grade 11-12 as we transfer students at each grade level into the new graduation program. We will begin implementation in 2019-20. [French translations](#) of the Grade 11-12 curriculum are now available.

Action Items - summary

- Check out the resources available and on cannabis and fentanyl and see the attached information for teachers and parents.
- Digital Portfolio Sign-Up: yukonportfolios@yesnet.yk.ca
- Register your Learning Network: Paula.Thompson@gov.yk.ca
- [Download](#) the Communicating Student Learning Resource and Professional Development Tool.

