



# Action Plan to Improve JK-12 Student Outcomes in the NWT

2020/21 - 2023/24

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT

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## Purpose of the Action Plan

In 2018-2019, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE, Department) conducted a Formative Evaluation of the *Education Renewal and Innovation Framework* (ERI Evaluation). During the same time, the Office of the Auditor General of Canada (OAG) conducted a performance Audit (OAG Audit) of early childhood to Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 (JK-12) education in the Northwest Territories (NWT). Both the ERI Evaluation and the OAG Audit generated several recommendations to improve student outcomes in the NWT; most of which overlapped specific to the area of JK-12 education<sup>1</sup>. ECE fully agrees with the recommendations made in the OAG audit report. Rather than develop separate Action Plans to respond to the recommendations of each report, this Action Plan identifies how ECE plans to implement actions to address the recommendations contained in both reports and complete the 10 year ERI Framework.

ECE remains cognizant that the development and implementation of this Action Plan is just one step toward improving student outcomes. If this Action Plan is to have much success, education bodies, Indigenous governments and organizations, communities, educators, families, and students themselves must have a role to play in improving student outcomes in the NWT.

### Education Renewal and Innovation Framework Formative Evaluation

The *Education Renewal and Innovation Framework (ERI): Directions for Change* is guiding the education system. This document was published in October 2013, following years of extensive engagement, research, and planning. After its publication in 2013, the first 3-year Action Plan in 2014 was developed. This was the beginning of a 10-year process intended to change the NWT's education system for the purpose of improving student experiences and outcomes, and to better support the development of NWT students as healthy, capable people.

The end of the 2018-2019 fiscal and school years marked the end of the first five years of ERI. At this halfway mark in ERI's lifespan, ECE undertook a formative evaluation to assess the work undertaken as part of ERI, to see whether the Department was on track to achieve the comprehensive changes the Framework proposed. The evaluation also addressed ECE's Planning and Accountability Framework requirements to complete a comprehensive, outcomes-oriented review of the education system against its overall mandate every five years. Thus, ERI's implementation at its five year mark was used as the foundation for this review and used to help inform changes to the education system moving forward.

The evaluation answered three questions:

1. What are the ERI goals and commitments, and how are they measured?
2. How were the ERI commitments implemented?
3. What are the results of ERI initiatives and how are these initiatives contributing to the ERI commitments?

Each of these questions were answered through a mixed-methods approach analysis of approximately 32 performance measures established for the education system, and an in-depth examination of nine ERI initiatives using a case study approach.

Department staff were provided opportunities to review draft versions of the report, case studies and recommendations. Feedback from Department staff was incorporated into the final version of the 2019 *Education Renewal and Innovation Framework: Formative Evaluation Report* (ERI Evaluation).

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<sup>1</sup> The ERI Evaluation did not examine early childhood programming.

## OAG Performance Audit on Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education

In March 2018, the OAG announced that they would undertake a Performance Audit in the area of early childhood to Grade 12 education. Through their examination, the OAG covered the period of April 01, 2015 to May 31, 2019.

Based on initial interviews with ECE about its programs and services, the OAG narrowed the focus of the audit to examine whether ECE planned, supported, and monitored the delivery of equitable inclusive education programs and services that reflected Indigenous languages and cultures to support student outcomes and close key achievement gaps.

Specifically, the OAG examined ECE's responsibilities in the following areas:

- Inclusive Schooling;
- Indigenous languages and culture-based education;
- Equitable access to quality education;
- Programming, staff qualifications, and training in day cares; and
- Key student outcomes.

ECE staff provided support and all documentation related to the scope of the audit, participated in a number of interviews and answered various follow up questions, as required, during the OAG's planning, examination and reporting phases.

In addition to conducting interviews with departmental staff as part of the examination phase, the OAG also travelled to communities to carry out interviews with various stakeholders across education bodies and schools.

Consistent with other audits completed by the OAG, the Department was provided the opportunity to review a draft of the report and the recommendations. ECE accepted all recommendations contained in the report and provided responses to the recommendations which are contained in the final audit report.

After completing their work, the OAG tabled the *Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly – 2016: Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education in the Northwest Territories* (the OAG Audit) on February 6, 2020.

# Operating Environment of Licensed Early Learning and Child Care Programs

## Governance Structure

ECE is responsible for regulating the NWT's early learning and child care sector and ensuring compliance with the *NWT Child Day Care Act* and *Standards Regulations*. The *NWT Child Day Care Act* (the Act) is the legislation that outlines how children should be cared for in facilities outside of their homes in the NWT. The *Child Day Care Standards Regulations* further explain the Act and specify ratios for early childhood educators and children, documentation, including health and safety inspections of the facility, and minimum education requirements for primary staff.

The early childhood sector in the NWT includes licensed centre-based and out-of-school (before and after school) programs and licensed family day homes. There are unlicensed family day homes that ECE does not track, regulate or fund but enforces compliance with the maximum ratio standards in accordance with the *NWT Child Day Care Act* and *Standards Regulations*.

The Department does not deliver early childhood programs directly to children and families. Not-for-profit community organizations, Indigenous Governments, and individuals operate early learning and child care programs; which may be overseen by boards composed of stakeholders who represent the community's interests and contexts on behalf of children and families enrolled in programs.

## Context of the Early Learning and Child Care Programs

In March 2019, there were 113 licensed early learning and child care programs in the NWT; 35 centre-based programs; 27 out-of-school (before and after school) programs; and, 51 family day homes. As of December 2019, the NWT has 116 licensed early learning and child care programs operating throughout the NWT. The majority (approximately 60%) of licensed programs are located in Yellowknife. In fiscal year 2018-19, the department allocated nearly \$12,390,900 million in federal and territorial funding to support early childhood development. This is in addition to funding provided by other social envelope departments, such as the Department of Health and Social Services (HSS), to support children and families from prenatal and throughout their childhood.

Of the 33 communities in the NWT, 11 communities do not have licensed early learning and child care programs; this number fluctuates over time. ECE works with communities to identify their needs and support the establishment of programming that best meets those needs.

The NWT has a high percentage of children who are vulnerable requiring additional supports as indicated by the Early Development Instrument (EDI). The EDI is a population-based measurement of children's developmental health. It is a reflection of the early childhood experiences prior to age five and indicates the percentage of children who are on-track, at-risk, or vulnerable. Children are considered vulnerable when, without additional support, they may continue to experience challenges. ECE recently published the *Early Development Instrument (EDI) Measuring Children's Developmental Health NWT Change Over Time Report 2012-2017*. The *Change Over Time Report* suggests a trend of increased vulnerability over time in the NWT (an increase from 38.1 to 42.1% in the six-year time period).

## How does ECE support operators in the delivery of Licensed Early Learning and Child Care Programs?

Understanding unique community needs and preferences for early learning and child care as noted above is an important consideration when determining what supports should be offered to a community.

ECE has an Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Division, located in Yellowknife, comprised of eight staff, and seven Early Childhood Consultants (ECCs) who work out of the regional ECE Service Centres. The ELCC Division is responsible for ensuring that both licensed and unlicensed programs comply with the legislation. This includes funding, licensing, inspecting and providing ongoing support to not-for-profit organizations, Indigenous governments and individuals who operate early learning and child care programming. ECE licenses and inspects programs; ECE does not deliver early learning and child care programming. Where there is interest from non-profit organizations, Indigenous governments and individuals, ECCs work with those parties to support them through the process, in order to meet the requirements for licensing.

In addition to supporting the establishment of licensed programs, ECE provides funding towards the establishment and ongoing sustainability of licensed programs. This includes the New Child Care Spaces funding (or start-up funding), Early Childhood Program (ECP) attendance-based operating subsidy, health and safety funding to assist with health and safety repairs and maintenance as required by Environmental Health and/or the Office of the Fire Marshal. ECE provides one-time grants to help programs purchase resources, including: the Provider Enhancement Grant (PEG), the Cultural Resources Grant, and the Technology Grant.

ECE is phasing in Supporting Child Inclusion and Participation (SCIP) funding, which will replace the Healthy Children Initiative (HCI) funding. SCIP is focused on supporting children who may be at-risk and/or have specific developmental needs. SCIP funding can be accessed by licensed and unlicensed programs through a proposal-based process.

ECE also supports access to quality early learning and child care programs by providing professional development and in-service opportunities to early childhood educators. Funding is provided for the delivery of Aurora College's full-time Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Diploma in Yellowknife and part-time distance delivery of the certificate program. These supports help address the quality of early learning and child care programs. ECE is in the process of piloting the *NWT Early Learning Framework* (ELF) which is an overarching document that is intended to support the professional practice of educators that work with young children in licensed early learning and child care programs prior to school entry. The ELF identifies knowledge and practices that are essential for quality early childhood programs, as they nurture the learning and development of young children within a variety of contexts.

# Operating Environment of the JK-12 Education System

## Governance Structure

ECE is responsible for the NWT's education system from JK-12. The system consists of the Department and 10 education bodies (similar to school boards).

The NWT *Education Act* defines the powers and responsibilities of the Minister, education bodies, education staff, students and parents. It further defines provisions regarding access, records, resolution and appeals mechanisms, cultural diversity and language of instruction, and governance and financial matters.

Although the Department does not deliver services directly to students, it is responsible for ensuring that all students have equitable access to education programs and services. Under the *Education Act*, responsibility for the delivery of education belongs to the education bodies. Education bodies are composed of elected and/or appointed individuals who represent their community's interests in the planning and delivery of educational programming for their school(s).

Each education body has a Chairperson who represents their region at the Education Leaders' forum with the Minister. Education body Chairs do not only represent their regions and communities; their responsibility extends to collective work towards common goals and priorities for the NWT education system as a whole.

There are eight Superintendents responsible for providing overall leadership for their education body, which consist of District Education Authorities (DEAs) and Divisional Education Councils (DEC), and to the schools in their DEC or DEA.

The NWT Superintendents' Association (NWTSA) meets regularly with the ECE Assistant Deputy Minister, Education and Culture and other senior departmental officials. This NWTSA-ECE Committee is responsible for advancing work as directed by the Minister and Education Leaders, and carrying out administrative / operational work.

## Context of the Education System

The history and legacy of residential schools continues to affect students and their families in all regions of the NWT. This is an important, overarching reality when considering the context of education in the NWT.

The *Education Act* specifies that students in the NWT must have access to education programs that meet the highest possible standards and that reflect NWT cultures. Students may receive their education in one of the NWT's 11 official languages, nine of which are Indigenous. The *Education Act* also states that every student is entitled to access the regular education program in their home community and receive the support services necessary to do so.

Education bodies employ about 850 educators and oversee operations to deliver education to approximately 8,700 students at 49 schools. The majority of NWT schools are very small. About 60% of schools have fewer than 150 students, and about 12% of schools have fewer than 20 students. Nine of the smallest schools do not offer a grades 10-12 high school program.

Small schools, even those with a high school program, are often unable to offer the same educational programming options as larger schools in Yellowknife and regional centres; however, ECE has developed initiatives to support the increased provision of equitable access to education for all students. Examples include the introduction of the Northern Distance Learning program as well as the Career and Education Advisors.

Just over 60% of NWT students are Indigenous and the student population in most of the smallest schools is 100% Indigenous. Despite these high percentages, the recruitment of local Indigenous teachers and Indigenous language instructors is a significant challenge for education bodies.

Educator recruitment and retention, overall, is also an ongoing challenge for education bodies, particularly in small remote communities, which are often coupled with limited access to adequate and affordable housing, licensed early learning and child care programs, health care, and other services.

In the 2018-2019 fiscal year, ECE allocated nearly \$155 million to the education bodies, which is nearly 50% of the Department's budget. The education bodies then use this funding to deliver the education program in the following categories, which align with the NWT School Funding Framework:

- Administration and School Services
- Territorial Schools
- Inclusive Schooling
- Indigenous Languages and Education.

While the majority of this funding is budgeted and spent at the discretion of education bodies, funding allocated specially for Inclusive Schooling and Indigenous Languages and Education is conditional funding that must be used as directed by either the *Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling (2016)* or the *Indigenous Languages and Education Policy (2018)*.

### **How does ECE support Education Bodies in the Delivery of the Education system?**

Education bodies are supported by four divisions and a secretariat at ECE: Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC); Curriculum Development and Student Assessment (CDSA); Educator Operations and Educator Development (EOED); Student Support and Wellness (SSW); and the Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat (ILES)

These divisions work closely with education bodies with the goal of increasing student education outcomes, and they also contribute to the GNWT's mandate item of implementing United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) through school-based Indigenous language and culture programming. These divisions are also responsible for the following core business activities: the development and implementation of curriculum standards; development, implementation and monitoring of Ministerial Directives for education bodies; teacher, principal and instructor certification, training and professional development; and the implementation of accountability mechanisms for education bodies.

ECE provides funds directly to education bodies to deliver the Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 (JK-12) education program.



# ECE's Approach to Improving Student Outcomes

## Linkage to the GNWT Priority and Mandate

Priorities of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly specific to early learning and child care are to improve early childhood development indicators for all children, and to advance universal child care by increasing availability and affordability. Improving early development indicators for all children is an ongoing focus for the Department of ECE in collaboration with HSS. The development and piloting of the ELF for licensed early learning and child care programs is one way that ECE will contribute to the quality of early experiences for children. With free, play-based JK/K programming for four and five year old children in the NWT, the focus to enhance the availability and affordability of early learning and child care will be for families with children from birth to age three.

Specific to the JK-12 system, increasing student education outcomes to the same level as the rest of Canada is a priority of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, as is implementing the UNDRIP. Despite efforts to improve student outcomes and the progress made in some areas, the findings from both the OAG Audit and the ERI Evaluation are clear:

- Key achievement gaps have persisted, especially for students in small communities;
- Need to focus on more equitable programming;
- The system is overstretched and needs to focus its priorities; and
- Need to do a better job of monitoring the system to determine whether the work ECE is undertaking is making any difference to close the achievement gap.

In order for the NWT to address the priorities of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, difficult and strategic decisions need to be made from early learning and child care programs through to Grade 12 education. These decisions need to be made collaboratively with partners, including Education Leaders, Indigenous governments, NWTSA, and the NWT Teachers' Association (NWTTA).

The first step to making these decisions requires ECE to focus on minimizing barriers to student learning, to allow for system-wide improvements that the JK-12 system will be held accountable for, and that align with the reality of limited resources. The decisions will also have to balance the need for consistency in education standards across the NWT with the ability of Indigenous governments and communities to influence the education program in a way that supports and reflects the language and culture of the community.

## Quality Licensed Early Learning and Child Care Programs

High quality early learning and child care programs delivered by qualified early childhood educators can help prepare children for success in future school years. Through the three early childhood action plans, ECE is focused on providing professional development and in-servicing opportunities and increasing access to quality early learning and child care programming throughout the territory. Recognizing that each community has unique needs, ECE has engaged with the 11 communities without licensed programming to determine what will best suit their needs. ECE and HSS work collaboratively to implement the *Right from the Start Early Childhood Development (RFTS ECD) Action Plan*. In addition, ECE is implementing the *ELCC Bilateral Agreement and Action Plan* and *Supporting Access to Child Care Supplementary Action Plan* which align with the *RFTS ECD Action Plan*.

## Education Renewal and Innovation Framework

Recognizing the challenges in the elementary and secondary education system, ECE began transformative work in 2013-2014, with the implementation of the *ERI Framework: Directions for Change* and associated Action Plan. The Framework established a 10-year comprehensive rethink of the education system and encompasses numerous actions and innovative approaches to improving equitable education access and student outcomes across the NWT.

The end of the 2018-2019 fiscal and school years marked the end of the first five years of the ERI Framework. At this halfway mark in ERI's lifespan, ECE wanted to review the work undertaken as part of ERI to see whether the Department was on track to achieve the ambitious changes proposed and anticipated by ERI. To do this, ECE undertook a formative evaluation of the ERI Framework to assess the early implementation and results of the work undertaken to date, to help inform changes moving forward in order to meet its goals.

Now in the seventh year of research, development and implementation, ECE is using the results of the evaluation, the OAG Audit and the mandate of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly to refocus the ERI initiatives in efforts to improve student outcomes.

Decreasing the achievement gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, or between small communities and larger centres, really means addressing the inequities students and schools face, which is often related to student wellbeing. With that said the purpose of ERI remains the same; implementing initiatives to improve the NWT education system for all learners so that they can meet the challenges of today as capable northern citizens.

## Action Plan Development

The ERI Evaluation and the OAG Audit reconfirmed the need for changes to be made to the education system and educational programming based on experience, research and analysis as identified by the ERI Framework.

ECE has created a revised Action Plan for ERI that follows ECE's approach to improving student outcomes; first starting with actions that focus on quality early learning and child care, through to those actions that support a quality JK-12 education system.

The development of this action plan was the result of numerous meetings with education branch staff, including extensive engagements with the NWT Superintendents Association (NWTSA) to ensure an operational lens was taken into consideration. These meetings and engagements involved in depth analysis of current and future planned initiatives, considering their successes, challenges and overall benefits to the education system. These discussions also focused on system-wide capacity to manage and absorb change.

A revisioning and development of shared priorities with NWTSA helped to focus decisions on what initiatives should be kept or added, and what initiatives might not continue. The resulting shared priorities were agreed to by Education Leaders and the Department of ECE:

1. *Student achievement in Literacy and Numeracy*
2. *Language and Culture*
3. *Student & Educator Wellness*
4. *Personalized and Inclusive Education*
5. *Key Competencies*

Throughout this process, all recommended actions have been linked to either the recommendations of the ERI Evaluation, the results of the OAG Audit Report, the mandate of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly or the nine ERI commitments.

The actions are categorized into the following seven themes:

- *Theme 1: Quality Early Learning and Child Care*
- *Theme 2: Workforce Development and Capacity Building*
- *Theme 3: Curriculum and Student Assessment*
- *Theme 4: Student Supports*
- *Theme 5: Training, Developing and Support for School Employees*
- *Theme 6: Governance*
- *Theme 7: Monitoring and Evaluation*

For each of these themes, actions to support educational outcomes in small community schools are prioritized, but are not the sole focus of the themes. Rather, as a result of the Minister's responsibility to provide quality education to the territory as a whole, ECE's actions must also focus on providing supports to all schools, regardless of size. This has been the approach taken to-date for all ERI actions, where all actions are intended to support ERI Commitment #5: *The GNWT will do its part to ensure that the strengths and realities of small communities are recognized and built upon in order to ensure equitable, quality education in all NWT Communities.*

For each of the relevant actions listed within these themes, the associated deliverables and timelines expected to complete those actions are included. The Action Plan also identifies the lead Divisions within ECE who will be held accountable for completing the action, and the partners ECE expects to engage with.

This Action Plan also includes the corresponding number of the relevant OAG recommendation, ERI Evaluation recommendation, Mandate item or ERI Commitment that the action is meant to address. Please refer to APPENDIX 1 for the complete *Action Plan to Improve JK-12 Student Outcomes in the NWT.*

ECE has also identified the specific actions that respond directly to only the OAG recommendations, corresponding to how they are ordered in the OAG Audit Report (refer to APPENDIX 2). Recognizing that ECE has actions that respond to more than one recommendation, efforts may appear to be duplicative; however, this simply reflects the fact that student outcomes are influenced by more than any single action.

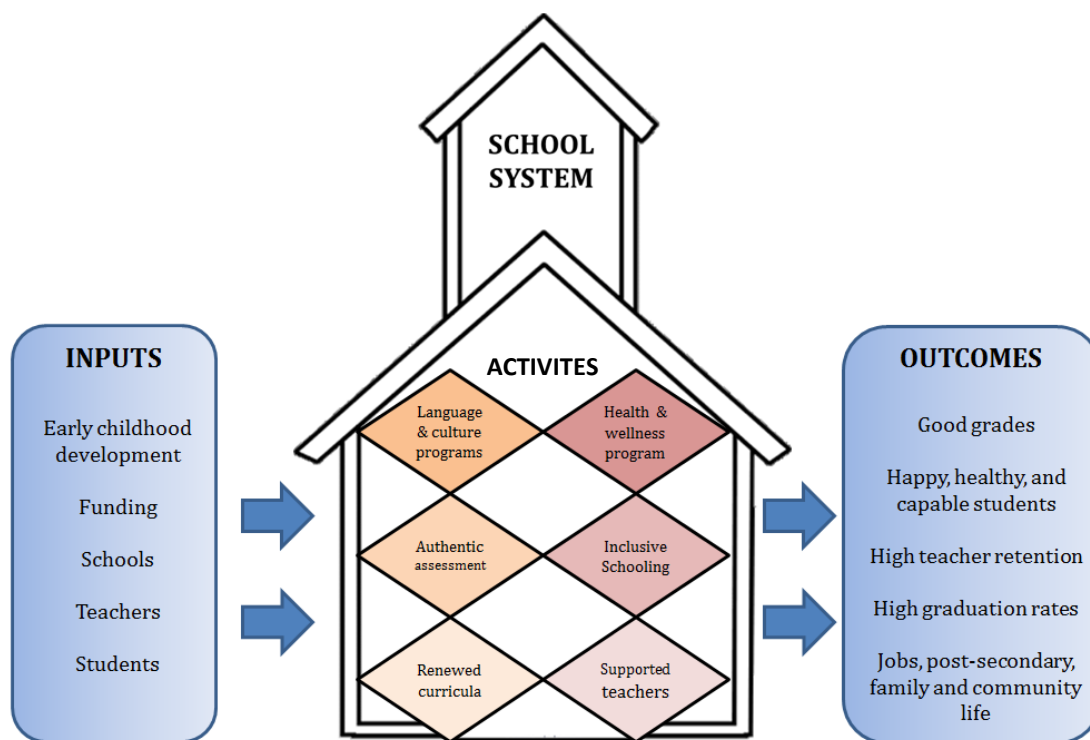
## Monitoring and Evaluating ECE's Efforts

In order to determine if the actions identified in the Action Plan will have any impact on improving student outcomes, ECE is expected to establish performance measures for each of the actions it plans to implement. The challenge ECE faces, however, is that changes in student outcomes often are not attributable to any one action or set of actions, nor are they likely to be achieved in the short-term. Rather, student outcomes are a result of a multitude of efforts undertaken by the early childhood and education systems, as well as those beyond the control of these systems, over a sustained period of time.

To mitigate this challenge, ECE is approaching the evaluation of these actions in a more systemic way. For example, quality licensed early learning and child care programming is monitored and evaluated in collaboration with HSS through the *RFTS ECD Framework and Action Plan*. The *ELCC Bilateral Agreement and Action Plan* also include indicators that are reported on annually to the federal government, and contributed to a national report on ELCC in Canada. *Supporting Access to Child Care Supplementary Action Plan* aligns with these indicators.

Additionally, ECE has established performance measures for the JK-12 education system as a whole (refer to APPENDIX 3) which will be reported on a regular basis to determine if the actions being undertaken by the education system, are in fact, contributing to improved student outcomes. These performance measures follow a logical approach to program planning as depicted by the Figure below, which assumes that if the education system has the appropriate resources to implement the actions (as measured by the system input measures), and these actions show success (as measured by the activity performance measures), then there is a likelihood that student outcomes will improve (as measured by the outcome performance measures).

Changes made to the system today will lead to improvements, but not overnight. Long term student outcomes may not even change in the four year lifetime of this action plan. However, changes made through this action plan will create the conditions for better long term student outcomes, such as happy, healthy, and capable students, in the coming decade.



Where possible, it is expected that these performance measures will be updated and be reported on each year in an Annual Report. Where performance measures are not reported on annually, those performance measures will be reported every five years as part of the comprehensive, outcomes-focused evaluation that is outlined in the Planning and Accountability Framework (PAF) requirements for the JK-12 education system.

In addition to the performance measurement reporting and the 5 year comprehensive evaluation, ECE also commits to conducting comprehensive reviews of specific initiatives as outlined in the Action Plan. Reporting on these reviews, combined with all of the accountability requirements in the PAF, will help ECE determine if their efforts are working toward improving student outcomes, and then to use those results to continue actions that are positively contributing to those outcomes, and adjust or abandon actions that are not.

# Appendix 1: Action Plan to Improve JK-12 Student Outcomes

## Theme 1: Quality Early Learning and Child Care

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is focused on advancing universal child care by increasing availability and affordability in a measurable and sustainable way that responsibly uses available resources and works with Indigenous governments and Organizations (IGOs), communities and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) to build capacity within this sector. The Departments of Education Culture and Employment (ECE) and Health and Social Services (HSS) are jointly responsible for leading work related to the *Right from the Start: Early Childhood Development Framework* and will be renewing their approaches to child development and care in light of the priorities of the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly and the Mandate of the GNWT. This includes the development of an *Early Learning and Child Care Strategy 2030* with a focus on improving the availability of early learning and child care throughout the territory.

In supporting the early learning and child care sector, the GNWT's strategy to-date has been to emphasize three pillars:

1. *Increase accessibility;*
2. *Increase affordability; and*
3. *Enhance the quality of programming.*

The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) audit addressed aspects of the third pillar (Enhance the quality of programming), specifically the need to support licensed child care providers to deliver high quality programming. This also includes the need to build from the existing skills and knowledge of educators working within programs and increase the number of qualified educators available to support the developmental needs of NWT children.

The actions found within this plan that pertain to early childhood are those that respond specifically to the OAG audit and are not meant to address the two other pillars of the GNWT's strategy for advancing towards universal access to child care as those will be found in other documentation.

### **The actions associated with this theme address the following OAG Recommendations:**

- 51: ECE should; develop guidance that clearly sets out how daycare operators can develop programming that meet the education requirements of the *Child Day Care Standards Regulations*; Track daycares' compliance with programming requirements, track the training needs of daycare operators and staff, and deliver the required training, as appropriate; and, establish a consistent method of assessing daycare staff and operators who lack formal qualifications.
- 62: ECE should develop and use performance measures that adequately measure the performance of the education system on an ongoing basis and should make the necessary modifications to its programs and services.

### **The actions associated with this theme also continue to work toward meeting the following ERI Commitments:**

- #4: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that learners experience supported and personalized quality education.
- #5: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that the strengths and realities of small communities are recognized and built upon in order to ensure equitable, quality education in all NWT communities.

## Theme 1: Quality Early Learning and Child Care

#	Action	Divisions / Partners	Recommendations and Priorities			Deliverables	Timeline Year: Quarter	Budget \$ / Division
			ERI	OAG	ERI Eval			
1.1	Develop an Early Learning Framework (ELF) and supporting handbook for early childhood educators	Divisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ELCC</li> <li>• PRE</li> </ul> Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licensed ELCC Programs</li> </ul>	4	51, 62	n/a	Pilot the ELF and provide ongoing in-servicing to support licensed early learning and child care programs for those piloting ELF	2021-22: Q4	\$40,000 / ELCC
						Finalize the ELF and handbook for early childhood educators based on evaluation results	2022-23: Q4	
1.2	Offer professional development (PD) opportunities for early childhood educators	Divisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ELCC</li> </ul> Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licensed ELCC Programs</li> </ul>	4, 5	51	n/a	Develop and deliver an annual PD and training plan to be delivered to licensed program operators and educators.	2020-21: Q4	\$801,000 / ELCC
						Increase the participation rate of early childhood educators undertaking training offered by ECE.	2021-22: Q1 to Q4	

Division/Partner Legend	
ELCC	Early Learning and Child Care division at ECE
Licensed ELCC	Licensed Early Learning and Childcare programs
PRE	Planning, Research and Evaluation division at ECE

## Theme 2: Workforce Development and Capacity Building

Planning for, and developing, a strong and stable northern work force to meet the needs of the NWT's education system must be a priority. Through this theme, the system takes a collaborative approach to planning to better understand the current and future labour force needs of schools, including positions such as Indigenous Language Instructors (ILIs) or Support Assistants (SAs). It requires the development of shared strategies across education bodies to ensure that, wherever possible, northern and Indigenous employees are available and have the skills to meet the needs of the public education system and students within it.

The need for new ILIs is particularly critical. Efforts to revitalize Indigenous languages across the territory is a precondition for ensuring that the system has the instructors it will need to ensure a bright future for these languages. Due to the state of Indigenous language erosion, and the need to develop capacity among language speakers, the design and implementation of an array of post-secondary programs is required to support Indigenous languages revitalization. Without post-secondary programs to transfer language skills and ensure speakers have the skills to teach others, the education system will not be able to successfully deliver instruction in Indigenous languages.

As the OAG Audit outlines there is also a need for other programming at the post-secondary level to prepare future employees of the JK-12 education system, such as SAs. This plan proposes that a certificate level credential be developed to ensure opportunities for future Support Assistants to enter employment in the education system with a credential and the foundation of knowledge and skills to immediately begin to meet the needs of the students they work directly with.

Finally, the process of Indigenizing education allows for the understanding of the true history of Indigenous people in the NWT through courses such as Northern Studies. These courses will not only encourage students to have pride in who they are and understand the resiliency of the people they come from and live with, but can also help them see the value of education in Indigenous culture. The domino effect can be to inspire students to train to become Indigenous Language instructors or to support others in education by becoming teachers or support assistants.

### **The actions associated with this theme respond to the following OAG recommendations:**

- 27: ECE should work with the education bodies to fully implement the Indigenous languages curriculum, and recruit and train the number of required Indigenous language instructors.
- 34: ECE should update its guidance for support assistants and provide them with adequate training to help ensure that students' needs are met.
- 64: ECE should monitor student progress on Indigenous language acquisition, assess the adequacy of its curricula for culture-based education, and adjust its approach as needed.

### **The actions associated with this theme also continue to work toward meeting the following ERI Commitments:**

- #1: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that the school and community work together to build and renew positive relationships.
- #3: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that educators have access to experiences and resources that enhance their wellness in order for them to focus on excellence in teaching.
- #5: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that the strengths and realities of small communities are recognized and built upon in order to ensure equitable, quality education in all NWT communities.



## Theme 2: Workforce Development and Capacity Building

#	Action	Divisions / Partners	Recommendations and Priorities			Deliverables	Timeline Year: Quarter	Budget \$ / Division
			ERI	OAG	ERI Eval			
2.1	JK-12 Indigenous Language Instructor Employment Plan	Divisions: • ILES • EOED  Partners: • FIN • Education bodies (EBs)	1, 3, 5	27, 64	n/a	Develop an employment plan that will outline the approaches ECE and education bodies will undertake to address systemic needs for JK-12 Indigenous Language Instructors (ILIs). This plan will examine the current supply, project attrition, & identify strategies to supply instructors.	2020-21: Q1 to Q4	\$50,000 / ERI
						Begin introducing specific actions to increase the supply of ILIs.	2021-22: Q1 to Q4	
2.2	Certificate of Indigenous Language Revitalization (CILR) program	Divisions: • ILES • PRE  Partners: • IGOs • AC • UVic	1, 3, 5	27, 64	3, 4, 6, 7	Deliver the two year pilot program in partnership with regional Indigenous Governments, Aurora College and the University of Victoria (UVic)	2018-20: Complete	2018-20: Complete
2.3	Advance the 2020-21 NWT Mentor Apprentice Program (MAP)	Divisions: • ILES • PRE  Partners: • IGOs • AC • UVic	1, 3, 5	27, 64	3, 4, 6, 7	Pilot the MAP through a partnership with regional Indigenous Governments	2019-20: Q1 to Q4	2019-20 Complete  \$1.5 M / ILES
						Based on the 2019/20 MAP evaluation, deliver the 2020/21 MAP in partnership with regional Indigenous Governments	2020-22: Q1 to Q4	
2.4	Research and develop a 3-year pilot Indigenous Language Diploma (ILD)	Divisions: • ILES  Partners: • IGOs • AC • UVic	1, 3, 5	27, 64	n/a n/a	Research and development of the 3-year pilot ILD program in partnership with Aurora College, University of Victoria and regional Indigenous Governments	2020-22: Q1 to Q4	\$1.2 M / ILES
2.5	Increase the number of Indigenous language scholarships	Divisions: • ILES  Partners: • AC	1, 3, 5	27, 64	n/a n/a	Increase number of Indigenous language scholarships, i.e. future ILD students	2022-23: Q2	\$150,000 / ILES
2.6	Pilot a program to support training for JK-12 Support Assistants	Divisions: • SSW • PRE  Partners: • AC	3, 5	34	3, 4, 7	Pilot a program to support JK-12 Support Assistants	2020-21: Q1 to Q4	\$730,000 / ERI
						Partner with Aurora College to establish ongoing certification training program	2022-23: Q1 to Q4	

Division/Partner Legend					
AC	Aurora College	FIN	GNWT Department of Finance	PRE	Planning, Research and Evaluation division at ECE
EB	Education Bodies	ILES	Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat at ECE	SSW	Student Support and Wellness division at ECE
EOED	Education Operations and Educator Development division at ECE	IGO	Indigenous Government Organizations	UVic	University of Victoria

### Theme 3: Curriculum and Student Assessment

Curriculum forms the basis of the education system as it describes what students should be learning, and when they should learn it. It provides teachers with broad guidance on how these concepts should be taught, leaving the specific strategies and resources required to their professional discretion.

The NWT's curriculum is largely adopted and adapted from other jurisdictions such as Alberta, with some NWT developed curriculum in key areas such as Junior Kindergarten/Kindergarten (JK/K), Indigenous languages and Northern Studies. It is also in need of modernization, and like other provinces and territories, the NWT must ensure that its curriculum is designed to meet the needs of its student population.

The NWT is currently exploring ways in which it can ensure that the curriculum offered in NWT schools is best suited for NWT students, and one from which they gain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to succeed in today's world.

Classroom assessments are also an integral part of the instructional process and can serve as meaningful sources of information about student learning. Student assessment practices in the NWT need to be strengthened, modernized and supported to ensure students are being properly assessed, evaluated, and reported on, and to ensure that parents and guardians are made fully aware of how their students are progressing in school.

#### **The actions associated with this theme address the following OAG recommendations:**

- 27: ECE should work with the education bodies to fully implement the Indigenous languages curriculum, and recruit and train the number of required Indigenous language instructors.
- 64: ECE should monitor student progress on Indigenous language acquisition, assess the adequacy of its curricula for culture-based education, and adjust its approach as needed.
- 74: ECE should; use a more valid method to calculate graduation rates; identify, collect, and analyze the data required to adequately measure student outcomes so that it can identify necessary changes to the education system; make the changes that it has identified through data analysis.

#### **The actions associated with this theme continue to work toward meeting the following ERI Commitments:**

- #1: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that the school and community work together to build and renew positive relationships.
- #2: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that student wellness and the development of a positive sense of identity are promoted and embedded in school experiences, programming and environments.
- #4: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that learners experience supported and personalized quality education.
- #5: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that the strengths and realities of small communities are recognized and built upon in order to ensure equitable, quality education in all NWT communities.
- #6: The GNWT will do its part to renew the K-12 curriculum and ensure it is taught in relevant, research-based, innovative ways.
- #7: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that assessment of learning and action taken in response to systemic data are comprehensive and growth-oriented.

### Theme 3: Curriculum and Student Assessment

#	Action	Divisions / Partners	Recommendations and Priorities			Deliverables	Timeline Year: Quarter	Budget \$ / Division
			ERI	OAG	ERI Eval			
3.1	Implement the JK-12 <i>Our Languages</i> curriculum (OLC) and Indigenous Languages and Education (ILE) Handbook	Division: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CDSA</li> <li>ILES</li> <li>PRE</li> </ul> Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EBs</li> <li>IGs</li> </ul>	1, 2, 5, 6	27, 64	3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Deliver 2-year large scale JK-12 OLC pilot including development of teaching resources and assessment tools, and continue to provide in-servicing to pilot teachers	2019-20: complete	\$850,000 / ERI
						Implement OLC in all NWT schools and ensure that all schools are using the ILE Handbook.	2020-24: Q1 to Q4	
3.2	Explore Grades 1-12 curriculum partnership with an alternate jurisdiction (options and opportunities for adoption and adaptation)	Division: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CDSA</li> </ul> Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EBs</li> <li>IGs</li> </ul>	5, 6	74	n/a	Prepare a curriculum options paper for the Minister of ECE	2019-20: Complete	\$4.265 M / ERI
						Engagement with Indigenous governments and education bodies	2021-22: Q1 to Q2	
						Assuming positive decision, begin adaptation and implementation of new curriculum.	2021-22: Q1 to Q4	
3.3	JK-4 Literacy & Numeracy Strategy	Divisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CDSA</li> <li>ELCC</li> <li>SSW</li> <li>ILES</li> <li>EOED</li> <li>PRE</li> </ul> Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EBs</li> </ul>	5, 6	n/a	3, 4, 6, 7	Develop a JK-4 Literacy & Numeracy Strategy in collaboration with education bodies	2021-23: Q1 to Q4	\$275,000 / ERI
						Release, distribute, in-service and implement the JK-4 Literacy & Numeracy Strategy	2023-24: Q4	
3.4	Develop Northern Studies 20 curricula with Education Bodies and Indigenous Governments.	Divisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CDSA</li> <li>ILES</li> </ul> Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EBs</li> <li>IGs</li> </ul>	1, 5, 6	64	n/a	Develop the course scope and sequence, while engaging with education bodies and Indigenous Governments	2020-22: Q2 to Q4	\$1.260 M / CDSA
						Small scale pilot of Northern Studies 20 in select schools across NWT.	2022-23: Q2	
						Full scale pilot in all NWT high schools across the NWT.	2023-24: Q2	

Division/Partner Legend			
EB	Education Bodies	IG	Indigenous Government
ELCC	Early Learning and Child Care division at ECE	DOJ	GNWT Department of Justice
EOED	Education Operations and Educator Development division at ECE	PRE	Planning, Research and Evaluation division at ECE
CDSA	Curriculum Development and Student Assessment division at ECE	SSW	Student Support and Wellness division at ECE
ILES	Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat at ECE	UVic	University of Victoria

## Theme 4: Student Supports

Not all students enter the education system on equal footing. Every student is unique and has specific needs that must be addressed. Student supports range in intensity from teacher observations and feedback to learners, to medical diagnosis and individualized support plans that follow students from JK-12. No matter the students' needs, there is an expectation that the system and those working within it will aspire to meet those needs.

NWT's education system employs a tiered system of support, which means that the majority of students require provisions that all students can benefit from, but increasingly small numbers of students require additional support. The first tier in this model includes universal supports which can include school-wide behaviour plans, instructional strategies employed by teachers and programming that is available for all students. Examples of these types of supports for all include: instructional strategies, programming such as Child and Youth Care Counsellors (CYCCs), and Career and Education Advisors (CEAs) among others. The second tier of supports is for those students who require targeted assistance in order to succeed. Examples of these supports can include support plans with modifications, diagnosis of needs and provision of assistive technology to support learning. The third and final tier is known as intensive and requires individualized intensive supports and often referrals to specialists or support from outside agencies

ECE intends to build upon the progress made to date to establish the types of supports available for students regardless of which tier they find themselves in. This will involve work to continue to roll out successful universal programs such as NDLC, CEAs and CYCCs. It will also involve increasing education system capacity to work with other agencies such as Health Authorities in order to ensure that targeted and intensive supports are also coordinated and readily available.

### **The actions associated with this theme address the following OAG recommendations:**

- 34: ECE should update its guidance for support assistants and provide them with adequate training to help ensure that students' needs are met.
- 45: ECE should identify what is required to provide equitable access to quality education for all students and take action. This should include providing additional supports to principals of small schools and teachers in multi-grade classrooms.

### **The actions associated with this theme continue to work toward meeting the following ERI Commitments:**

- #2: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that student wellness and the development of a positive sense of identity are promoted and embedded in school experiences, programming and environments.
- #3: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that educators have access to experiences and resources that enhance their wellness in order for them to focus on excellence in teaching.
- #4: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that learners experience supported and personalized quality education.
- #5: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that the strengths and realities of small communities are recognized and built upon in order to ensure equitable, quality education in all NWT communities.

## Theme 4: Student Supports

#	Action	Divisions/ Partners	Recommendations and Priorities			Deliverables	Timeline Year: Quarter	Budget \$/ Division
			ERI	OAG	ERI Eval			
4.1	Provide distance learning opportunities in all NWT small schools through Northern Distance Learning (NDL)	Divisions • CDSA • PRE  Partners: • EBs	4, 5	45	3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Increase the number of small schools with NDL program to 20 from 15 schools in 2019-20	2020-21: Q4	\$10.95M / CDSA
						Increase the number of courses offered through NDL to 27 from 17 courses	2023-24: Q4	
4.2	Expand the Career and Education Advisor (CEA) program	Divisions: • SSW  Partners: • EBs	2, 4, 5	n/a	n/a	Create 12 CEA positions distributed throughout NWT regions by 2024	2023-24: Q4	\$1.27M / SSW
						Increase the percentage of grade 9 to 12 students who met with a CEA from 780 (70%) in 2019-20	2023-24: Q4	
4.3	Common JDs for JK-12 Support Assistants	Divisions: • SSW  Partners: • EBs	3, 4, 5	34	n/a	Create and implement a common job description for JK-12 Support Assistants	2019-20: Complete	\$0 Internal / SSW
4.4	Update JK-12 Support Assistant section of the Inclusive Schooling Handbook	Divisions: • SSW  Partners: • EBs	3, 4, 5	34	n/a	Revise and update JK-12 Support Assistant section of the Inclusive Schooling Handbook	2020-21: Q1 to Q4	\$30,000 / ERI
4.5	Develop greater integration of services for children and youth in the education system through expanding regional capacity	Divisions: • SSW • PLC  Partners: • DOJ • HSS • NTHSSA • EBs • IGs	2, 4, 5	n/a	3, 4, 6, 7	Explore regional approaches to expand the current capacity of Territorial Based Support Team	2020-21: Q4	\$700,000 / ERI
						Identify a pilot or demonstration site for the model to be deployed and evaluated	2021-22: Q4	
						Collaborate with other departments to finalize a model for integrated service delivery that involves provision to services in schools	2022-24: Q4	
4.6	Improve mental health counseling services to children and youth	Divisions: • SSW • PRE  Partners: • HSS • NTHSSA • EBs • IGs	2, 5	45	3, 4, 5, 6, 7	All regions supported by 42 Child and Youth Care Counsellors and 7 clinical supervisors	2021-22: Q4	\$1.29M / ERI,  \$550,000 / SSW,
						Provide classroom-based (Tier 1) and school-wide (Tier 2) mental health training, resources and strategies for prevention	2019-22: Q1-Q4	\$3.35M / HSS

Division/Partner Legend			
EB	Education Bodies	IG	Indigenous Government
ELCC	Early Learning and Child Care division at ECE	DOJ	GNWT Department of Justice
EOED	Education Operations and Educator Development division at ECE	NWTHSSA	NWT Health and Social Services Authority
CDSA	Curriculum Development and Student Assessment division at ECE	PRE	Planning, Research and Evaluation division at ECE
ILES	Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat at ECE	SSW	Student Support and Wellness division at ECE
HSS	GNWT Department of Health and Social Services	UVic	University of Victoria



## Theme 5: Training, Developing and Support for School Employees

The ERI Framework placed a great deal of emphasis on supporting NWT educators in order so that they may be in the best possible position to meet the needs of students. In large part this is because research indicates that effective, highly competent teachers have the greatest impact on student learning.

In the NWT training and professional development of education staff is a shared responsibility. For example teachers as professionals have access to a negotiated professional development fund as part of their Collective Agreements that affords them an opportunity to undertake professional development of their choosing. In addition, ECE and education bodies share responsibility for supporting educators and other education staff in the areas of professional development and training to assure they have the right competencies to support students' success in school and upon graduation in today's world. Providing education staff with the training, support, information and opportunities to collaborate with their colleagues in other communities and schools is one of the most profound ways in which we as an education system can support them and in turn support our students.

Recognizing this need, ECE intends to design and introduce training that is specifically targeted towards those employees who work in the smallest schools in order to address equity issues in education delivery. This also requires ECE to work to address broader systemic challenges to how training and supports are provided in order to ensure that resources are used effectively. This aspect of the education system requires modernization in order to be more responsive to the needs of education staff and to close the gap between large and small schools. To address these systemic challenges ECE must ensure that modern educator standards and certification requirements are maintained and tailored to meet the specific highly specialized needs of educator groups that work within NWT schools including principals, program support teachers, instructional coaches, classroom teachers and support assistants. These standards will form the basis of how these employees are evaluated as well as how they are supported through a variety of professional development and training opportunities over the course of a given school year and over the course of these employees' tenure within the education system.

### **The actions associated with this theme address the following OAG recommendations:**

- 34: ECE should update its guidance for support assistants and provide them with adequate training to help ensure that students' needs are met.
- 45: ECE should identify what is required to provide equitable access to quality education for all students and take action. This should include providing additional supports to principals of small schools and teachers in multi-grade classrooms
- 51: ECE should; develop guidance that clearly sets out how daycare operators can develop programming that meet the education requirements of the *Child Day Care Standards Regulations*; Track daycares' compliance with programming requirements, track the training needs of daycare operators and staff, and deliver the required training, as appropriate; and, establish a consistent method of assessing daycare staff and operators who lack formal qualifications.
- 63: ECE should complete the mid-term evaluation of the ERI Framework and refocus its efforts on actions that it should prioritize in the final years of the framework.
- 74: ECE should; use a more valid method to calculate graduation rates; identify, collect, and analyze the data required to adequately measure student outcomes so that it can identify necessary changes to the education system; make the changes that it has identified through data analysis.

**The actions associated with this theme continue to work toward meeting the following ERI Commitments:**

- #3: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that educators have access to experiences and resources that enhance their wellness in order for them to focus on excellence in teaching.
- #5: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that the strengths and realities of small communities are recognized and built upon in order to ensure equitable, quality education in all NWT communities.
- #8: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that the education system is monitored, measured and reported on to provide transparency and accountability in order to best support student success.

An important part of the successful implementation of this shift is ensuring that professional development and training is consistent and aligns with the common priorities at the school, regional and territorial levels. Greater coordination of focus and effort will be required to shift approaches to instruction, support the introduction of new curriculum and to support new initiatives in literacy and numeracy to name a few.



## Theme 5: Training, Developing and Support for School Employees

#	Action	Divisions / Partners	Recommendations and Priorities			Deliverables	Timeline Year: Quarter	Budget \$ / Division
			ERI	OAG	ERI Eval			
5.1	Implement an online educator certification and credentialing system for early childhood and JK-12 educators	ECE: • EOED • ELCC  Partners: • EBs • NWTTA	3, 5	34, 51	n/a	Online system in use for all new certification applications	2020-21: Q3 to Q4	\$915,000 / ERI
						All certification files prior to 2021-22 moved into new system	2023-24: Q4	
5.2	Training and supports for small-school principals	Divisions: • EOED • PRE  Partners: • EBs	3, 5	45, 63	3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Conduct research on best practices and survey principals of small schools	2020-21: Q3 to Q4	\$595,000 / ERI
						Develop program of training and supports	2021-22: Q1 to Q4	
						Pilot program with interested schools and principals	2022-23: Q1 to Q4	
5.3	Training and supports for teachers of multi-grade classrooms	Divisions: • EOED • PRE  Partners: • EBs	3, 5	45, 63	3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Conduct research on best practices and survey principals of small schools	2020-21: Q3 to Q4	\$215,000 / ERI
						Develop program of training and supports	2021-22: Q1 to Q4	
						Pilot program with interested schools and educators	2022-23: Q1 to Q4	
5.4	Education System Training and Support Plan	Divisions: • EOED • CDSA • SSW • ELCC • ILES  Partners: • EBs • NWTTA	3, 5	34, 51, 74	n/a	Inventory of planned professional development and training opportunities offered at school, regional and territorial levels	2020-21: Q3	\$0 internal / EOED
						Offer in-person and distance professional development and training opportunities for education body elected representatives, employees as well as school employees in partnership with education bodies	2021-22: Q1-Q4	
5.5	Develop competency-based educator standards and associated accountability mechanisms	Divisions: • EOED  Partners: • EBs • NWTTA	3, 5, 8	n/a	n/a	Standards and accountability mechanisms in place by the 2022-23 school year	2022-23: Q4	\$25,000 / ERI

Division/Partner Legend					
EB	Education Bodies	ILES	Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat at ECE	PRE	Planning, Research and Evaluation division at ECE
ELCC	Early Learning and Child Care division at ECE	IG	Indigenous Government	SSW	Student Support and Wellness division at ECE

EOED	Education Operations and Educator Development division at ECE	NWTTA	Northwest Territories Teachers Association	CDSA	Curriculum Develop and Student Assessment division at ECE
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## Theme 6: Governance

The current structure of the *Education Act* and as a result the NWT education system is a product of its legislative history and the evolution of the territory. The legacy of colonialism and ongoing intergenerational impacts of residential schools on Indigenous peoples in the NWT continue to impact peoples' relationships with education and views on how the education system should be governed and structured.

The existing *Education Act* represents an effort to decentralize authority and responsibility to the community level for many aspects of the education system particularly those that related to delivery of education. This is a response to the history of colonialism in the territory. The Act distributes a range of often overlapping powers to the education bodies which in some instances leads to confusion about whether the local District Education Authority, the regional Divisional Education Council or even the Minister has the ultimate authority to make certain decisions.

Community voice and local control of aspects of education delivery are critical to any well-functioning education system. However, greater clarity of roles and responsibilities amongst the various 'actors' within the system would help all parties maintain focus on students and student learning outcomes.

Increasingly there are questions being asked within the system related to the balance of local preferences with the need for accountability and results. These conversations often turn to questions about financial resources and how they are allocated across and within the education regions of the NWT. Any significant revision to the funding framework for education bodies and schools would be influenced by governance related changes driven by modifications to the *Education Act* and vice versa.

Also, the Act creates barriers to the implementation of system-wide improvements, and makes it difficult to hold any single body or person ultimately accountability for student achievement. Developing a clear picture of how standards for student learning are set, who is responsible for meeting those standards and how they are reported upon so that the public can clearly understand where strengths and areas of need are located is an important driver for the work in this theme.

Since 1995, many changes in the world of education have been driven by new research and technology. New understanding of how students learn, new technologies for delivery of distance learning or for the development of teaching resources are also driving the need to reconsider which actors within the system are best placed to perform certain functions related to education delivery.

The actions associated with this theme address do not address any specific OAG recommendations but are fundamental to all of the more substantive issues that were found by both the OAG Audit and the ERI Evaluation.

### **The actions associated with this theme continue to work toward meeting the following ERI Commitments:**

- #5: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that the strengths and realities of small communities are recognized and built upon in order to ensure equitable, quality education in all NWT communities.
- #8: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that the education system is monitored, measured and reported on to provide transparency and accountability in order to best support student success.

- #9: The GNWT will continue to work with Indigenous governments to be successful as they draw down jurisdiction over the education of their people.

While changes to the current governance and funding structure will not guarantee improved student outcomes for NWT students, ECE will be embarking on some governance changes that will focus on providing:

- Clarity of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities;
- Consistent approach to the planning, delivery, funding and administration of the education program and its associated infrastructure; and
- Focus on supporting students to help them achieve the best outcomes possible.

## Theme 6: Governance

#	Action	Divisions / Partners	Recommendations and Priorities			Deliverables	Timeline Year: Quarter	Budget Year: \$ / Division
			ERI	OAG	ERI Eval			
6.1	Modernize the Education Act in consultation with stakeholders	Divisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PLC</li> <li>• PRE</li> <li>• EOED</li> <li>• CDSA</li> <li>• SSW</li> <li>• ELCC</li> <li>• ILES</li> </ul> Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EBs</li> <li>• NWTTA</li> <li>• IGs</li> </ul>	5, 8, 9	n/a	2, 7	Research modernization options that will support Indigenous Government engagement and jurisdiction acquisition and develop discussion paper	2020-21: Q2 to Q4	\$306,000 / Corp. Services
						Consult and engage with stakeholders	2020-21: Q3 to Q4	
						Produce a “What we Heard Report” based on previous engagement	2020-21: Q4	
						Using the information gathered through research and consultation, prepare and submit a Legislative Proposal	2021-22: Q1 to Q2	
6.2	Review the JK-12 education funding framework in consultation with stakeholders	Divisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FCP</li> <li>• PLC</li> <li>• EOED</li> <li>• NWTTA</li> </ul> Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EBs</li> </ul>	5, 8, 9	n/a	2, 7	An updated JK-12 funding framework aligns with the updated Education Act	2022-23:Q4	\$465,000 Corp. Services

Division/Partner Legend					
EB	Education Bodies	IG	Indigenous Governments	PRE	Planning, Research and Evaluation division at ECE
ELCC	Early Learning and Child Care division at ECE	FCP	Finance and Capital Planning division at ECE	SSW	Student Support and Wellness division at ECE
EOED	Education Operations and Educator Development division at ECE	NWTTA	Northwest Territories Teachers Association	CDSA	Curriculum Development and Student Assessment
ILES	Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat at ECE	PLC	Policy, Legislation, and Communications division at ECE		

## Theme 7: Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to assure that the JK-12 education system is delivered effectively and efficiently to support student achievement, a systematic approach to monitoring, measurement and reporting is required. The challenge the Department faces is that changes in student outcomes often are not attributable to any one action or set of actions. Rather, student outcomes are a result of a multitude of efforts undertaken by the early childhood and education systems, as well as those beyond the control of these systems.

### **The actions associated with this theme address the following OAG Recommendations:**

- 45: ECE should identify what is required to provide equitable access to quality education for all students and take action. This should include providing additional supports to principals of small schools and teachers in multi-grade classrooms.
- 62: ECE should develop and use performance measures that adequately measure the performance of the education system on an ongoing basis and should make the necessary modifications to its programs and services.
- 63: ECE should complete the mid-term evaluation of the ERI Framework and refocus its efforts on actions that it should prioritize in the final years of the framework.
- 64: ECE should monitor student progress on Indigenous language acquisition, assess the adequacy of its curricula for culture-based education, and adjust its approach as needed.
- 65: ECE should strengthen its monitoring and inclusive schooling. This should include; conducting reviewing of inclusive schooling practices, including spot checks on individualized learning plans; analyzing information (including related to students' needs for specialist services) to assess whether students' needs are being met; making adjustments to the education system.
- 74: ECE should; use a more valid method to calculate graduation rates; identify, collect, and analyze the data required to adequately measure student outcomes so that it can identify necessary changes to the education system; make the changes that it has identified through data analysis.

### **The actions associated with this theme continue to work toward meeting the following ERI Commitments:**

- #2: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that student wellness and the development of a positive sense of identity are promoted and embedded in school experiences, programming and environments.
- #3: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that educators have access to experiences and resources that enhance their wellness in order for them to focus on excellence in teaching.
- #4: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that learners experience supported and personalized quality education.
- #5: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that the strengths and realities of small communities are recognized and built upon in order to ensure equitable, quality education in all NWT communities.
- #8: The GNWT will do its part to ensure that the education system is monitored, measured and reported on to provide transparency and accountability in order to best support student success.

The Department has established a Planning and Accountability Framework (PAF) that outlines several accountability requirements to help determine if actions should continue, and adjust or abandon actions that are not. While this work will continue, the Department also understands the need to 'bridge the gap' between presenting data and how education bodies and schools can use it in order to improve student outcomes, through knowledge mobilization plans for such data sets as the Early Years Development Instrument (EDI), Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI), and the Healthy Behaviour and School Aged Children (HBSC) survey.

## Theme 7: Monitoring and Evaluation

#	Action	Divisions / Partners	Recommendations and Priorities			Deliverables	Timeline Year: Quarter	Budget Year: \$ / Division
			ERI	OAG	ERI Eval			
7.1	Develop plans to analyze and share results of the EDI, the MDI and the HBSC surveys.	Divisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRE</li> <li>ELCC</li> <li>EOED</li> <li>CDSA</li> <li>SSW</li> </ul> Partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EBs</li> <li>HSS</li> <li>IGs</li> </ul>	4, 5, 8	74	3, 4, 7	Develop and share approach to analyzing EDI data	2020-21 Q4	\$150,000 / ERI
						Develop and share approach to analyzing MDI and HBSC data	2021-22 Q1 to Q4	
7.2	JK-12 Planning and Accountability Framework	Divisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRE</li> <li>All ECE Edu Divisions</li> </ul> Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EBs</li> </ul>	8	45, 62, 64, 65, 74	3, 4, 7	Reporting on education outcomes, including graduation rates	2019-20 and Annually	\$0 internal / PRE
						Education Body Operating Plans submitted	Annually	
						Education Body Annual Reports submitted	Annually	
7.3	Student Behaviour, Referrals, and Intervention Tracking	Divisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SSW</li> <li>PRE</li> </ul> Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EBs</li> </ul>	2, 5, 8	74	3, 4, 7	Completion of RFP process and confirmation of vendor delivery of platform	2019-20: Q1 to Q4	\$465,000 / ERI
						Development of data tracking module with vendor and providing education staff training	2020-23: Q1 to Q4	
						Launching and using the platform to report	2023-24: Q1 to Q4	
7.4	STIP evaluation	Divisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRE</li> <li>EOED</li> </ul> Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NWTTA</li> <li>NWTSA</li> </ul>	3, 8	62	3, 4, 7	Submit report to Standing Committee	2020-21: Q3	\$0 internal / PRE
7.5	5 year review of ERI	Divisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRE</li> <li>All ECE Edu Divisions</li> </ul> Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EBs</li> </ul>	8	63, 74	3, 4, 7	Complete the 5 year Evaluation of ERI	2019-20: Complete	\$0 internal / PRE

Division/Partner Legend					
EB	Education Bodies	IG	Indigenous Governments	PRE	Planning, Research and Evaluation division at ECE
ELCC	Early Learning and Child Care division at ECE	FCP	Finance and Capital Planning division at ECE	SSW	Student Support and Wellness division at ECE
EOED	Education Operations and Educator Development division at ECE	NWTTA	Northwest Territories Teachers Association	CDSA	Curriculum Development and Student Assessment
ILES	Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat at ECE	PLC	Policy, Legislation, and Communications division at ECE	NWTSA	NWT Superintendents Association

## Appendix 2: Actions to respond to OAG recommendations

In an effort to demonstrate alignment, the specific actions that respond directly to the Office of the Auditor General’s (OAG’s) recommendations are listed below, as ordered in the OAG Audit Report. Recognizing that ECE has actions that respond to more than one recommendation, efforts may appear to be duplicative; however, this simply reflects the fact that student outcomes are influenced by more than any single action.

OAG Recommendation		Identified Actions
<b>Recommendation #27:</b> Indigenous Languages Curriculum & Teacher Recruitment	The Department of ECE should work with the education bodies to fully implement the Indigenous languages curriculum, and recruit and train the number of required Indigenous Language instructors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 2.1 – Indigenous Language Instructor Employment Plan</li> <li>○ 2.2 - Certificate of Indigenous Language Revitalization program</li> <li>○ 2.3 - Advance the 2020-21 NWT Mentor Apprenticeship Program</li> <li>○ 2.4 - Research and develop a 3-year pilot Indigenous Language Adult Immersion Diploma</li> <li>○ 2.5 - Increase the number of Indigenous Languages Scholarships</li> <li>○ 3.1 - Implement the Our Languages curriculum (OLC) and Indigenous Languages and Education (ILE) Handbook</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendation #34:</b> Support Assistant Training	The Department of ECE should update its guidance to support assistants and provide them with adequate training to help ensure that students’ needs are met.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 2.6 – Pilot a program to support training for Support Assistants</li> <li>○ 4.3 - Common JDs for Support Assistants</li> <li>○ 4.4 - Update JK-12 Support Assistant section of the Inclusive Schooling Handbook</li> <li>○ 5.1 - Implement an online educator certification and credentialing system for early childhood and JK-12 educators</li> <li>○ 5.4 - Education System Training and Support Plan</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendation #45:</b> Supports to Small School Principals and Teachers in Multi-grade Classrooms	The Department of ECE should identify what is required to provide equitable access to quality education for all students and take action. This should include providing additional supports to principals of small schools and teachers in multi-grade classrooms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 4.1 - Provide distance learning opportunities in all NWT small schools through Northern Distance Learning (NDL)</li> <li>○ 4.6 - Improve mental health counseling services to children and youth</li> <li>○ 5.2 - Training and supports for small-school principals</li> <li>○ 5.3 - Training and supports for teachers of multi-grade classrooms</li> <li>○ 7.2 - JK-12 Planning and Accountability Framework</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendation #51:</b> Guidance for Daycare Operators	<p>The Department of ECE should do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Develop guidance that clearly sets out how daycare operators can develop programming that would meet the education requirements of the Child Day Care Standards Regulations;</li> <li>○ Track daycares’ compliance with programming requirements, track the training needs of daycare operators and staff, and deliver required training, as appropriate; and,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1.1 - Develop an Early Learning Framework (ELF) and supporting handbook for early childhood educators</li> <li>○ 1.2 - Offer professional development opportunities for early childhood educators</li> <li>○ 5.1 - Implement an online educator certification and credentialing system for early childhood and JK-12 educators</li> <li>○ 5.4 - Education System Training and Support Plan</li> </ul>

OAG Recommendation	Identified Actions	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Establish a consistent method of assessing daycare staff and operators who lack formal qualifications to ensure they understand developmentally appropriate child care practices and can apply that understanding to daycare programming.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Recommendation #62:</b> Develop Performance Measures for the Education System</p>	<p>The Department of ECE should develop and use performance measures that adequately measure the performance of the education system on an ongoing basis, and make the necessary modifications to its programs and services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1.1 - Develop an Early Learning Framework (ELF) and supporting handbook for early childhood educators</li> <li>○ 7.2 - JK-12 Planning and Accountability Framework</li> <li>○ 7.4 - STIP evaluation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendation #63:</b> Prioritize and Refocus efforts of the ERI Framework</p>	<p>The Department of ECE should do the mid-term evaluation of the Education Renewal and Innovation Framework and refocus its efforts on actions that it should prioritize in the final years of the framework.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 5.2 - Training and supports for small-school principals</li> <li>○ 5.3 - Training and supports for teachers of multi-grade classrooms</li> <li>○ 7.5 - 5 year review of ERI</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendation #64:</b> Monitor Indigenous language and culture programming</p>	<p>The Department of ECE should monitor student progress on the Indigenous language acquisition, assess the adequacy of its curricula for culture based education, and adjust its approach as needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 2.1 - Indigenous Language Instructor Employment Plan</li> <li>○ 2.2 - Certificate of Indigenous Language Revitalization program</li> <li>○ 2.3 - Advance the 2020-21 NWT Mentor Apprentice Program</li> <li>○ 2.4 - Research and develop a 3-year pilot Indigenous Language Adult Immersion Diploma</li> <li>○ 2.5 - Increase the number of Indigenous language scholarships</li> <li>○ 3.1 - Implement the JK-12 <i>Our Languages</i> curriculum (OLC) and Indigenous Languages and Education (ILE) Handbook</li> <li>○ 3.4 – Develop Northern Studies 20 with Education Bodies and Indigenous Governments</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendation #65:</b> Strengthen monitoring of inclusive schooling Framework</p>	<p>The Department of ECE should strengthen its monitoring of inclusive schooling. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Conducting reviews of inclusive schooling practices, including spot checks on individualized learning plans;</li> <li>○ Analyzing information (including information related to student need for specialist services) to assess whether students’ needs are being met; and</li> <li>○ Making necessary adjustments to the education system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 7.2 - JK-12 Planning and Accountability</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendation #74:</b> Review data collection and analysis</p>	<p>The Department of ECE should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use a more valid method to calculate graduation rates;</li> <li>○ Identify, collect, and analyze the data required to adequately measure student outcomes so that it can identify necessary changes to the education system; and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 3.2 - Explore Grades 1-12 curriculum partnership with an alternate jurisdiction (options and opportunities for adoption and adaptation)</li> <li>○ 5.4 - Education System Training and Support Plan</li> <li>○ 7.1 - Develop plans to analyze and share results of the EDI, the MDI and the HBSC surveys.</li> <li>○ 7.2 - JK-12 Planning and Accountability Framework</li> <li>○ 7.3 - Student Behaviour, Referrals, and Intervention Tracking</li> </ul>



OAG Recommendation		Identified Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Make the changes that it has identified through data analysis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 7.5 - 5 year review of ERI</li> </ul>

### Appendix 3: Performance Measures of the JK-12 Education System

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) is responsible for the delivery of Junior Kindergarten (JK) - Grade 12 education in the Northwest Territories (NWT). Along with students, teachers, parents, and education leaders, ECE also shares in the responsibility for the success of the students who participate in this system. Part of that responsibility includes identifying and reporting on key performance measures of the education system as a whole.

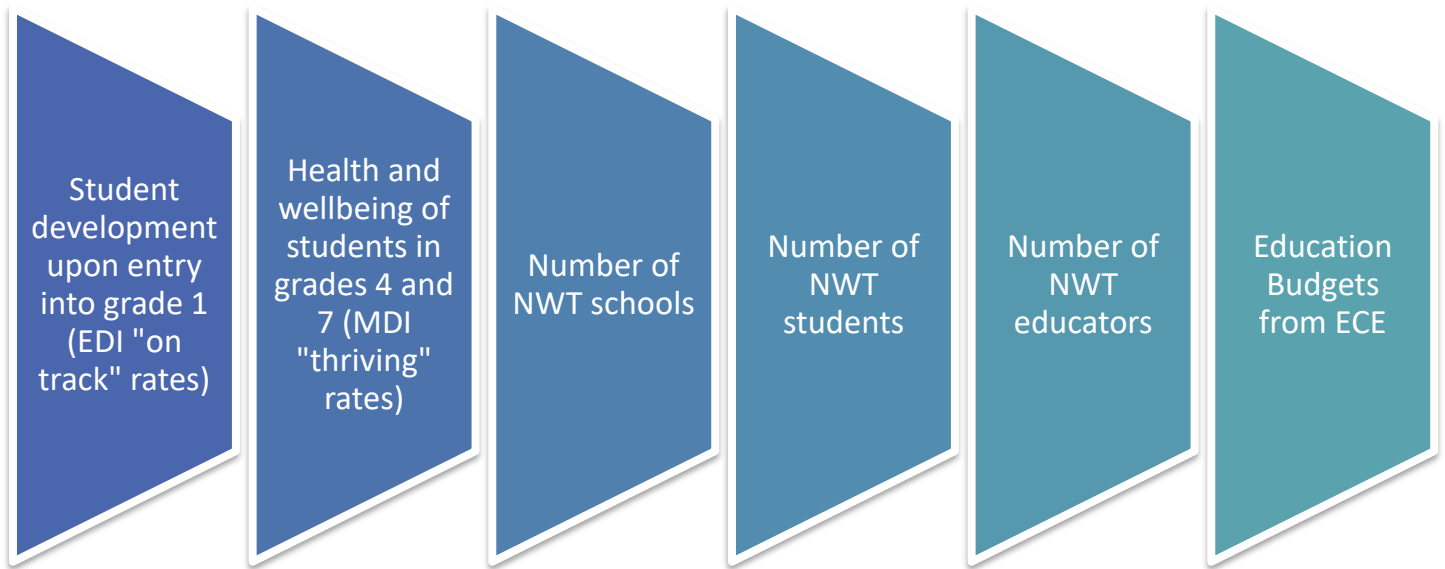
The following performance measures have been developed to monitor the JK-12 education system and will be released every year, as data is available. These performance measures will also be updated as actions change or are adjusted to assure that ECE is measuring the right things and how the actions are influencing the education system.

The performance measures each fall into one of three system categories: inputs, activities, and outcomes.

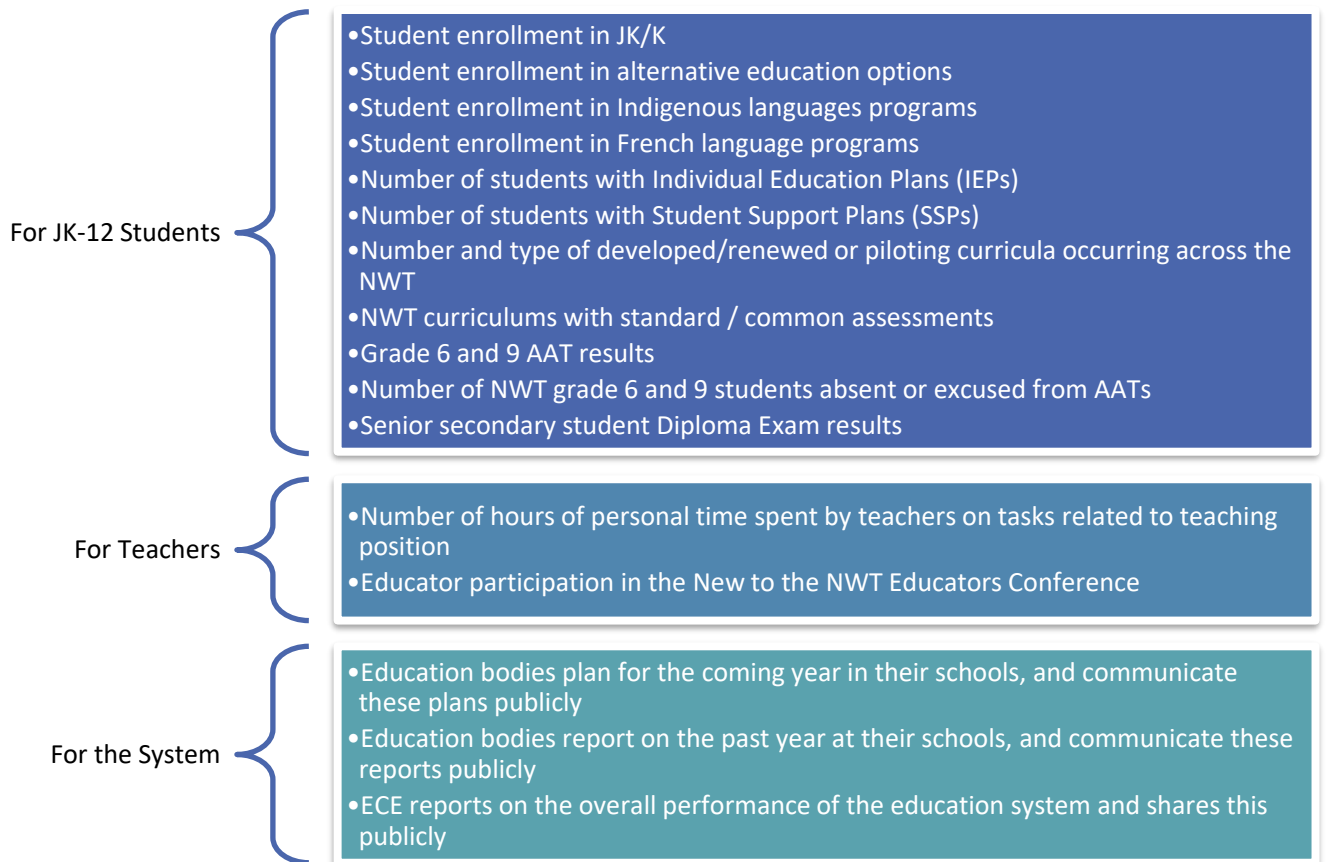
- An education system’s inputs are things that go into the system, like money, teachers and students. They are what the education system has to work with;
- An education system’s activities are those things that the system does, like programs, courses, and assessment practices. They comprise the different ways the education system is mobilized to teach and support students; and
- Finally, an education system’s outcomes are the results of the system. They are things like grades, graduation rates, and the wellbeing of students. They are what the system produces at the end.

Ideally, the outcomes of a good education system will be students who are happy, well, capable, and ready to start the next phase of their lives. Understanding the results of this report in the context of inputs, activities, and outcomes helps shed light on how the education system is doing as an integrated whole.

## Input Performance Measures



## Activity Performance Measures



## Outcome Performance Measures

