

EDUCATION RENEWAL FACT SHEET

NWT Education Renewal is a comprehensive 10-year initiative focused on reviewing and renewing the K-12 education system in the Northwest Territories.

The Need for Change

The work of Education Renewal has been prompted in part by the recommendations of the Office of the Auditor General (2010), as well as through growing evidence from NWT data, research and engagement with many education partners. While there are many examples of extraordinary schools, teachers and learning programs in the NWT, the data, research and feedback from partners indicate that the current approach to education is not producing the overall levels of student achievement that should reasonably be expected from the investments that are being made.

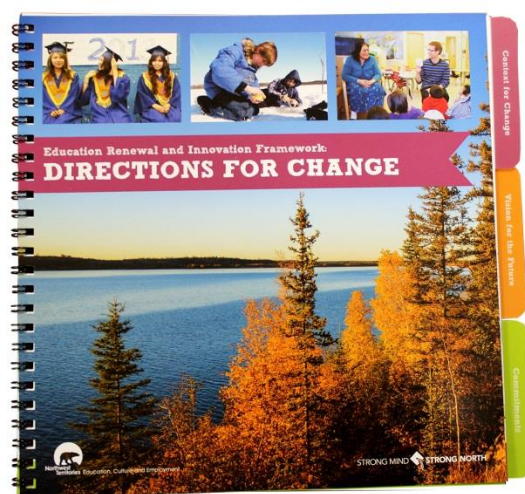
Further reasons for educational change include:

- Poor attendance, particularly of those students in small communities
- A realization that student success is defined and affected by more than academics. Health and wellness, personal and environmental factors such as poverty, addictions, and the legacy of residential schools affect many students.
- A shift towards 21st century learning and teaching. Brain research on how people actually learn suggests a major shift in what has long been believed about learning (and teaching) and aligns with some fundamental Aboriginal understandings. Learning needs to be:
 - Driven by the learner, and built upon what each learner can already do;
 - Supported by caring, positive relationships;
 - Collaborative, involving resources beyond the classroom and school; and
 - Flexible, since no two people are the same.

Directions for Change

The new vision for NWT schools was captured in the *Education Renewal Framework: Directions for Change*, which was tabled and made public in October 2013. Some of the main beliefs that are outlined in the Education Renewal Framework are:

- That students must have the opportunity to explore their gifts and things that interest them
- Schools must offer students the right supports for the best start in life, and choices for their future
- Teachers should be equipped to guide students through their learning
- Teachers must have good working conditions and professional learning opportunities



The Education Renewal framework will guide the implementation of changes over the next several years and can be found at www.ece.gov.nt.ca

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Change in Action

More specific plans are detailed in the *NWT Education Renewal Action Plan*, focusing on three years at a time. All the areas within the Action Plan are being collaborated on with many partners across the territory, from Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) staff to teachers, principals, Elders, parents, District Education Authorities and District Education Council members, students, Aboriginal government and Non-Governmental Organizations. Other Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) departments, like the Department of Health and Social Services, are partnering in this work. Nationally and internationally-recognized experts are helping to guide the conception and implementation of many areas of focus.

An important foundational statement recognized in Education Renewal is to acknowledge diversity. Every school in every community in the NWT is vastly different. Although some have similar needs, NWT regions are so unique and diverse that a “one size fits all” approach will not work. This is why having pilot projects taking place in regions is so important. Evaluation of pilot projects inform how to proceed, and ensures that the changes that are being made benefit students, teachers and school communities.

Some actions are already being piloted in schools. Example of pilots that are taking place right now include:

- Expanding the NWT high school distance learning program so that high school students in smaller communities have access to rich collaborative learning in their academic subject areas;
- Supporting teachers as they learn about self-regulation knowledge and practice in their classrooms so that they can best support students in their learning; and
- In-servicing brand new teachers to the north so that they can learn about the unique cultures and histories of the NWT and prepare them for a better entrance to their school and community.

As pilots like these examples unfold, evaluation is also taking place, to ensure that these changes are best supporting students and teachers.

To learn more about NWT Education Renewal, review *the Education Renewal and Innovation: Directions for Change Framework*, and visit www.ece.gov.nt.ca