



What We Heard Report
**NWT Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12
Curriculum Renewal**

November 2021

Government of
Northwest Territories

If you would like this information in another official language, call us.

English

Si vous voulez ces informations dans une autre langue officielle, contactez-nous.

French

Kīspin ki nitawihtīn ē nīhiyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.

Cree

Tlıchö yatı k'èè. Dı wegodi newö dè, gots'o gonede.

Tłicho

?erihtl'is Dëne Sųłiné yati t'a huts'elkér xa beyáyatı thepä ɬat'e, nuwe ts'ën yólti.

Chipewyan

Edi gondı dehgáh got'je zhatié k'ée edat'eh enahddhé nide naxets'é edahví.

South Slavey

K'áhshó got'jne xədə k'é hederi ɬedjhtl'é yeriniwé nídé dúle.

North Slavey

Jii gwandak izhii ginjìk vat'atr'ijahch'uu zhit yinohthan jì', diits'at ginohkhii.

Gwich'in

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta.

Inuvialuktun

Institut

Hapkuat titigat piumagupkit Inuinnagtun, uyaptinnut hiyajarlutit.

Inuinnagtun

Indigenous Languages:

French:

867-767-9348

866-561-1664 Toll Free

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Executive Summary.....	3
Why Renew the Curriculum?.....	3
Consultation and Engagement	4
What We Heard	4
Introduction.....	5
Background	5
Why Renew the Curriculum?	6
Methodology.....	7
The Engagement and Consultation Process	7
Further Investigation	8
What We Heard	9
The Importance of Indigenous Ways.....	9
High School Transitions	10
Rigour in the Curriculum.....	11
Accountability for Learning.....	12
Key Learning for Life.....	13
Other	14
Additional Feedback.....	15
Feedback from Review.....	16
Conclusion	17
Appendix A Full List of Engagements & Consultations.....	18
Appendix B ECE JK-12 Curriculum Renewal Presentation	20
Appendix C ECE JK-12 Curriculum Renewal Update – What We Learned (so far...).....	21

Executive Summary

This *What We Heard Report* presents the primary findings from an Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement process that supports the exploration into Northwest Territories (NWT) Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 (JK-12) curriculum renewal and the possibilities for a renewed western provincial partnership. These findings, based entirely on what participants said, will help to inform decisions made about renewing the curriculum and future partnerships.

Why Renew the Curriculum?

The development, maintenance, and renewal of school curriculum are time-consuming, yet necessary processes. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) regularly reviews its curriculum and resources to ensure they align with the NWT's priorities and values for education.

There are five identified drivers for the need to renew the NWT's JK-12 school curriculum at this point in time.

1. Much of the current NWT JK-12 school curriculum is outdated.
2. Alberta Education is currently in the process of changing its entire K-12 curricula. As Alberta provides the NWT with a significant portion of its curriculum and all of its large-scale student assessment tools, change in the NWT is inevitable.
3. The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has committed to implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRCC) Calls to Action and the United Nation's Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Ensuring an alignment between this commitment to Indigenous perspectives, culture, and languages and the curricula that is developed, adopted, or adapted is an important step to meeting the commitment.
4. Current research and trends highlight a move to competencies-based curriculum. This new framework for curriculum design is expected to have a significant impact upon student learning and teacher practice and is seen to be driving curriculum renewal in jurisdictions in both Canada and around the world.
5. Although desirable to create all JK-12 school curriculum in the NWT, the GNWT simply does not have the human and financial resources to do so. As such, a partnership with a larger jurisdiction is needed for access to curriculum, as well as assessment tools, and to ensure recognized credentials that allow for seamless access to post-secondary programs.

Regardless of which jurisdiction the NWT partners with for curriculum, foundational NWT curriculum such as Dene Kede and Inuuqatigiit, Locally Developed Courses (LDCs), and NWT created curriculum such as Our Languages, Northern Studies, Health and Wellness, and Junior Kindergarten/Kindergarten will remain in place.

Consultation and Engagement

In 2019, the Department of ECE hired a research company, Malatest, to explore which western Canadian provincial curriculum was best aligned with 34 identified NWT education priorities.

In 2021, ECE undertook an Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement process to hear from various educational partners across the NWT about their concerns, ideas, and questions around NWT JK-12 curriculum renewal. As proposed changes to curriculum could impact established Treaty rights, a duty to consult with Indigenous Governments was identified. This process involved consulting directly with Indigenous Governments and engaging with key education partners that included Indigenous Governments and Organizations; Education Bodies, including elected education leaders, superintendents, principals, and teachers; as well as the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (NWTTA) and other interested parties.

ECE invited these key education partners to attend a personalized two-hour Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement session and posted an open invitation for interested members of the public to 'Have their Say' by completing a web form on the ECE website. In total, 40 Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement sessions were held, and three web forms were received.

Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement sessions included a presentation on the NWT approach to curriculum development, which was comprised of a review of the preliminary research completed on curriculum alignment in the western Canadian provinces, followed by an open discussion. ECE staff took detailed minutes of questions, ideas, and concerns participants raised regarding JK-12 curriculum renewal during Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement sessions. All minutes were shared back with participants to ensure the discussions were captured accurately, and minutes were then updated to reflect any requested changes, additions, or omissions. Once completed, ECE staff undertook a thematic analysis of what participants said and five main themes emerged: The Importance of Indigenous Ways; High School Transitions; Rigour in the Curriculum; Accountability for Learning; and Key Learning for Life.

What We Heard

Of the five themes that emerged from what participants said in the Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement process, the two strongest themes were:

Importance of Indigenous Ways and High School Transitions. Participants from all sessions stressed the importance of having Dene, Inuvialuit, NWT Cree, and Métis, perspectives, priorities, content, and practices throughout the curriculum. Many participants also wanted assurance that a new curriculum would adequately prepare students for post-secondary schooling, the trades, and workplace employment so that students could achieve their goals.

The three other themes that were mentioned frequently although not nearly as often as the first two were: **Rigour in the Curriculum, Accountability for Learning, and Key Learning for Life.** Some participants spoke to the need for a challenging curriculum, including structures that ensure

quality education and an emphasis across all subjects that prepare students to be successful in real-life by taking initiative when needed, such as managing their personal finances.

Introduction

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) is actively exploring possible options for renewing the Northwest Territories (NWT) Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 (JK-12) school curriculum. This *What We Heard Report* presents the primary findings from a consultation and engagement process that supports the exploration into NWT JK-12 curriculum renewal and the possibilities for a renewed western provincial partnership. These findings, based entirely on what participants said, will help to inform any decisions made about renewing the curriculum and future partnerships.

Background

In 2019, ECE began preliminary research to explore the curriculum of the western Canadian provinces to determine which province best aligned with 34 longstanding NWT education priorities. In 2020, after completing the preliminary research, ECE began a deeper exploration into the renewal of the NWT JK-12 school curriculum and NWT curricular alignment specific to the jurisdictions of Alberta and British Columbia.

The need for deeper exploration into curricular alignment with Alberta and British Columbia followed the 2019 preliminary research that indicated the curriculum from the province of British Columbia was the most aligned with the 34 identified NWT educational priorities. However, considering the NWT's long-standing relationship with Alberta Education, as well as the announcement that Alberta had released a new draft K-6 curriculum in March of 2021 (that was not available when the preliminary research was completed), a decision was made to further explore the curriculum and student assessment tools of both British Columbia and Alberta.

In 2021, ECE undertook an Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement process to hear from various educational partners across the NWT about their concerns, ideas, and questions around NWT JK-12 curriculum renewal. This work involved consulting directly with Indigenous Governments and engaging with key education partners that included Indigenous Governments and Organizations; Education Bodies, which included elected education leaders, superintendents, principals, and teachers; as well as the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (NWTTA) and other interested parties.

Although the responsibility for establishing the NWT JK-12 curriculum is ultimately that of the Minister of ECE, it was quickly determined that engaging and consulting with key education partners needed to be central to the process of renewal to ensure there is public confidence that any decisions being made are in the best interests of NWT students and residents. As such, it is the Minister's intention that all feedback received from participants during the Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement process will be given full and thorough consideration prior to a decision being made regarding the renewal of the NWT JK-12 school curriculum and future provincial partners.

Why Renew the Curriculum?

There are five main strategic reasons or drivers to renew the JK-12 school curriculum:

The NWT JK-12 school curriculum is out-dated and is in need of renewal	<p>Review of curriculum is a necessary and a normal process that all jurisdictions complete.</p> <p>The current curriculum is a mix of curriculum created by the NWT or curriculum adapted/adopted from other jurisdictions in Canada, much of which dates back to the 1990s or early 2000s.</p>
Alberta's curriculum changes make change in the NWT inevitable	<p>Currently, Alberta Education provides the NWT with a significant portion of its curriculum and all of its large-scale student assessment tools.</p> <p>Alberta is currently in the process of changing their entire K-12 curricula. As such, Alberta's future change makes change in the NWT inevitable</p>
The GNWT has committed to implementing the TRCC's Calls to Action and UNDRIP	<p>The GNWT has committed to implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRCC) Calls to Action and the United Nation's Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).</p> <p>Ensuring an alignment between this commitment to Indigenous perspectives, culture, and languages and the curricula that is developed, adopted, or adapted is an important consideration necessary to meet these commitments.</p>
Research points towards Competencies-based Curriculum	<p>Current education research and trends in the learning sciences have pointed the highest performing education systems in the world towards Competencies-based Curriculum.</p> <p>This new framework for curriculum design is expected to have a significant and meaningful impact upon student learning and is a primary driver in curriculum renewal in jurisdictions in both Canada and around the world.</p>
Smaller jurisdictions need to partner with larger jurisdictions	<p>Capacity and resources required to develop and maintain curriculum and assessment tools compels smaller jurisdictions to partner with larger ones. This is particularly true at the high school level where it is important that students have seamless access to post-secondary programs with recognized credentials.</p> <p>In addition, partnering with a larger jurisdiction presents opportunities to share important teacher and student resources and large-scale student assessment tools that would otherwise have to be developed independently at great expense.</p>

Methodology

This *What We Heard Report* is both a summary of what key education partners expressed during the Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement process, and a key document in reaching a final Ministerial decision about the future of the NWT JK-12 curriculum.

The Engagement and Consultation Process

The Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement process is a significant aspect of ECE's exploration into JK-12 curriculum renewal. As proposed changes to curriculum could impact established Treaty rights, it was determined that the GNWT had a duty to consult with Indigenous Governments. As such, ECE made the decision to formally consult with Indigenous Governments on these aspects of the renewal process, as well as invite them to engage on all other aspects of curriculum renewal.

ECE invited key education partners to directly participate in the Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement process; however, other avenues for discussion were also created, including:

- An invitation on the [JK-12 curriculum renewal page](#) of the ECE website for any interested organizations who wished to participate in the process.
- An email account (NWTcurriculum_renewal@gov.nt.ca) where the public was invited to contribute feedback, questions, and comments.
- An online web form on the ECE website that served as an alternative and anonymous method for interested participants to provide their feedback, questions, and comments on JK-12 curriculum renewal.

After initial contact, ECE staff followed up with identified representatives and interested parties to set dates and times for a two-hour Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement session. Follow-up emails and phone calls were made to key education partners to maximize possibilities for participation. Additionally, ECE staff monitored the NWT curriculum renewal email account to note feedback, questions, and comments contributed. Only three members of the public contributed in this way.

In total, 40 Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement sessions were held between April and August 2021; the majority of which were held virtually (**Appendix A**). The Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement sessions consisted of a 45–60-minute PowerPoint presentation and allowed 60-90 minutes for open discussion and conversation (**Appendix B**).

The presentation outlined the current realities of JK-12 NWT school curriculum, namely the current practice of creating, adapting, and adopting curriculum, along with a summary of the preliminary research to rank the alignment of the four Western provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba) to the 34 NWT education priorities.

At the conclusion of the formal presentation, participants were invited to share their ideas and were assured that they would not be named or identified in any public documents. The discussion was prompted by the following three questions:

- What ideas, questions, and concerns do you have?
- What issues need to be considered in a potential partnership?
- Have we missed anything?

Discussions with participants ranged from 15 to 90 minutes long and included detailed note taking by ECE staff to capture what each participant said. After each session, the minutes were sent back to the participants to ensure accuracy.

At the conclusion of the engagement period, ECE staff reviewed the minutes of all 40 engagement sessions for common themes, including any written, email or web form feedback received. In this review, minutes were coded based on questions, ideas, and concerns that were raised by participants, and the coded responses were then entered into a spreadsheet. From this, ECE staff identified patterns among the codes and identified five themes. This report is a summary of those key findings and considerations.

Further Investigation

In addition to the consultation and engagement process, ECE staff have been working to find answers to the questions posed by education partners about what a continued partnership with Alberta or a new partnership with British Columbia would entail, as well as what the implications for such a partnership would be. This included investigating costs, systems compatibility, teacher training, and classroom resources. Much of this information was shared in the June 2021 ECE JK-12 Curriculum Renewal What We Learned (so far ...) update presentation (**Appendix C**).

This presentation offered a review of the additional research done on Alberta's new draft K-6 curriculum, to determine where it fits within the alignment of provinces to the NWT's education priorities. As well, it provides preliminary answers for the following Areas for Further Investigation identified in the Discussion Paper and the original presentation:

- Ease of adapting or adopting curriculum to reflect local cultures and context of the NWT
- Student assessment tools
- Student resources
- Compatibility with student information systems
- Online Learning Programs
- Distance Learning Programs
- School Staff Professional Development

This What We Learned (so far...) presentation was sent to all key education partners that participated in an engagement or consultation session in July 2021. Any additional feedback received from this information was then included in the coding spreadsheet and is reflected in this report.

What We Heard

The following is an overview of the most commonly mentioned themes across the open discussions in the consultation meetings with Indigenous Governments and engagement sessions with key education partners that included Indigenous Governments and Organizations; Education Bodies, which included elected education leaders, superintendents, principals and teachers; as well as the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (NWT TA) and other interested parties.

The following five themes are listed below in order of prominence beginning with the theme most mentioned and discussed:

1. The Importance of Indigenous Ways
2. High School Transitions
3. Rigour in the Curriculum
4. Accountability for Learning
5. Key Learning for Life

The Importance of Indigenous Ways

The 'Importance of Indigenous Ways' was the theme mentioned the most across Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement sessions and one that was also elaborated upon most extensively. 'The Importance of Indigenous Ways' included ideas offered by participants related to Dene, Inuvialuit, NWT Cree, and Métis cultures, perspectives, priorities, content in curriculum, and approaches to learning.

Specific feedback included highlighting the importance of:

- prioritizing Indigenous knowledge over any new curriculum
- the inclusion of Indigenous ceremonies, traditions, and music
- the inclusion of spiritual activities and cultural protocols
- the ongoing commitment to revitalizing the capacity for young people to speak their heritage language
- the reciprocal relationship between education and health and wellness among Indigenous families and communities
- choosing curriculum that clearly offers ways to educate students on local Indigenous history, perspectives, and worldviews.

Participants affirmed the commitment made by ECE to continue to use Dene Kede and Inuuqatigiit as foundational NWT curriculum, regardless of the jurisdiction chosen. Participants advocated for the importance of these two curricula, so that these foundational documents, and the ongoing need to train teachers, would not get lost in the transition.

Additionally, land-based knowledge and on-the-land learning with the inclusion of the Indigenous language of the community was widely viewed as essential by participants.

And finally, there was emphasis from participants on the need to have a curriculum that is flexible and can be adapted to the context of the NWT. Throughout the process of Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement, participants wanted assurance that, when considering “Indigenous ways” in another jurisdiction’s curriculum, ECE would not simply look for references in the curriculum content particular to the Indigenous people of those jurisdictions, since this content would not be applicable to the NWT. Instead, participants wanted the kind of flexibility that ran through the whole curriculum that would allow the adaptability at the local level to reflect the Indigenous values, beliefs, practices, and teachings of the place.

One participant advocated for this in the following way: “*Our communities are very different, so flexibility and ability to adapt is important to local context. We would love to see a curriculum that is adaptable for our students.*”

Further, participants wanted to make sure the importance of the relationship between communities, Elders, and Indigenous Governments was present in the curriculum itself.

Based on anecdotes from personal experiences and representations in the media, some participants expressed that they believed British Columbia was a good fit. Several participants shared their findings from their own investigations into British Columbia’s curriculum and expressed the belief that the curriculum is appropriate as it has Indigenous tools and methods that were explicit yet open enough so that they could be adapted if the NWT were to choose British Columbia as a jurisdictional partner. The concern was also voiced that the new Alberta curriculum may be weak in terms of possibilities for Indigenous content and was not likely to encourage the kind of collaboration desired.

High School Transitions

The second strongest theme that was mentioned across most Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement sessions was concern for what happens to graduates of the NWT JK-12 education system after they leave school. Participants very clearly wanted students to be adequately prepared for their futures.

One participant noted that, as curriculum for the school system is investigated, there needs to be “*...mention of what happens to students afterward. The purpose of school is not simply to prepare students for more school, but in the 21st century, there is not much work you can get without a [post-secondary] education.*”

The theme of ‘High School Transitions’ included feedback related to graduation requirements, the preparation of students for pathways after high school such as post-secondary education, the trades, and workplace employment. Participants elaborated upon the importance of ensuring that the curriculum for NWT students is flexible so that they may pursue a variety of pathways after high school.

Some participants voiced their desire to see trades included in the list of learning options that students have at the high school level. Other participants raised the importance of hands-on learning, practical skills, and the exploration of technology.

Throughout the Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement process, participants wondered how NWT graduation requirements would be impacted by a change in curriculum. In particular, they wanted ECE to inquire into the entry requirements of post-secondary institutions to ensure that any new curriculum would allow NWT students entry.

One participant asked: *"If we change to British Columbia, how does this affect post-secondary entrance requirements in Alberta and other provinces in Canada?"*

Some participants also expressed a more general concern for support for student transitions into post-secondary institutions, apprenticeships, and the workplace, which included a need for openness and choice in the curriculum. Participants expressed the desire for students to be able to try experiences for what might become their chosen career path during their time in high school.

One participant expressed the desire for these kinds of curriculum options as "*possibilities for [students'] futures in their community*" and how important it would be to involve the community in the conversation about what options to offer.

Rigour in the Curriculum

Another theme that emerged during Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement sessions with partners was 'Rigour in the Curriculum'. Participants frequently expressed the importance of providing students across the NWT with a quality education, **with a participant advocating that "*we are looking to have the best curriculum possible in order for our kids to be successful.*"**

Feedback around rigour indicated that the curriculum needed to be challenging. A high degree of challenge was viewed as a necessary characteristic of any education that would serve students well.

Some participants mentioned concern around the current situation where some students arrive at high school without the skills needed in order to be successful at that level. Their sense was that their previous educational experiences had not been rigorous enough. This idea was furthered as others expressed the importance of ensuring students enter high school having been appropriately prepared for the challenging courses offered at the high school level with regard to academics. Participants desired that high school courses remain as challenging as they are currently.

The importance of implementing a curriculum that emphasizes the development of literacy and numeracy skills was also voiced repeatedly during Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement sessions. In that vein, questions were raised about the academic nature and rigour of the newly implemented British Columbia curriculum and the Alberta draft K-6 curriculum. Based on personal anecdotes and media representations participants raised concerns about the degree of challenge in both of the curricula being considered.

Some other thoughts and considerations around the theme of ‘Rigour in the Curriculum’ were voiced by various participants during the sessions. These included ensuring the curriculum leads to an NWT High School Diploma representative of high standards. Another consideration had to do with being adequately prepared for entrance exams for any pathway that students might desire, be that a university entrance exam or trades entrance.

A participant shared their view that: “*We want our students to meet their academic goals.*”

Questions were posed about how the current NWT graduation requirements might change as a result of partnering with a different jurisdiction. The desire to keep possibilities open for student choice and for rigour in all pathways was identified.

Additionally, it was noted by some participants that Indigenous perspectives and rigour in the curriculum are not at odds.

One participant offered an extensive example, provided by her Elder, about why it is extremely important for NWT students to know much more than they do about the trees and rocks of the NWT. For the Elder, this knowledge was crucial for the ability to seek out the right kinds of rocks for fire circles and the right kind of wood for smoking dry fish. The participant made the case that the capacity to do this is equally as academic as other topics people may be more accustomed to associating with school. The example implied a necessary depth of understanding and the capacity to discern and make the right kinds of choices, based on many interconnecting factors.

Accountability for Learning

‘Accountability for Learning’ emerged as a theme as participants raised concerns regarding the need to have a way of measuring the effectiveness of any curriculum that is implemented. Participants made references to the need for an assessment of teacher practices as they implement new curricula, and to the importance of having a student assessment tool that would account for student achievement of curriculum goals. Feedback from the Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement sessions on the topic of accountability ranged from questioning the effectiveness of how a new curriculum would be measured, to inquiring about how the information gathered would be used to monitor implementation. Several comments focused on the importance of accountability measures.

To quote a participant: “*It will be very important to have an assessment tool in place to allow the monitoring of the curriculum and make sure our students are being adequately prepared for graduation and post-secondary.*”

There were participants that questioned what type of large-scale student assessment tools would be used if the NWT switched to a new jurisdiction for its curriculum. Others expressed the idea that course-based assessments, such as Diploma Exams, were a way to ensure teacher accountability and wondered what other assessment tools might be used to ensure quality teaching for quality learning. Participants also inquired about what student assessment strategies and protocols British Columbia currently has in place. While some participants expressed their reservations around

moving away from Grade 12 course-based assessments, such as Diploma Exams, other participants wanted to know if competency-based assessments would provide similar student achievement data for accountability purposes.

With graduation in mind, participant comments underscored the importance of ensuring that any new curriculum appropriately prepares students to both meet graduation requirements and successfully leave the school system with what they require for their next steps.

Key Learning for Life

The theme of 'Key Learning for Life' included mention of topics that ranged from personal finances to mental health and well-being. Participants expressed the concern that, beyond the learning in core subject areas, students needed to be prepared to enter a world that requires the ability to think for oneself and to think quickly to respond to a situation. Others felt that students need to be able to assess a situation that has a lot of interconnecting factors and be able to **"use their common sense"**, as one participant put it.

One individual voiced their views in the following way: **"What is the goal of giving these kids an education? We want these kids to be employable—life skills and academics. They need both to be truly successful."**

Fundamental abilities that students should leave school with, regardless of their pathway through high school, were categories under this theme, including specifics such as time management and organization. Many participants felt that personal finance education, or financial literacy, was very important. Some participants also emphasized employable life skills that could be relevant across all subjects, such as digital literacy.

One participant asserted that: **"We want to have capable citizens. Kids are digital citizens, and need to know how to be safe online, how to research online. Being capable includes being a good digital citizen."**

Conversations about careers and career education were something participants felt should be embedded in the curriculum. Included in the particulars that were also mentioned were: healthy relationships, anti-racism education, and LGBTQ2S+ education. Some participants named the importance of seeing healthy relationships, mental health, and self-regulation in the curriculum itself. Others stressed the importance of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) history and perspectives being included in curriculum.

Another participant shared that: **"The British Columbia curriculum is good on the fundamentals and getting kids ready for life. We need that in our curriculum—getting kids ready for life after school."**

Other

In addition to the five themes mentioned across the Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement sessions, there were other ideas, issues and concerns expressed by individual participants that were not necessarily noted by other participants.

These ideas, summarized as questions, were:

- Are small schools taken into account in this JK-12 curriculum renewal investigation?
- Is home schooling taken into account?
- What professional associations are available for Education Bodies, if ECE goes with a jurisdiction other than Alberta?

Additional Feedback

Participants brought up concerns about the limited time allocated for the Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement process and felt that the timeline to make a decision about a new jurisdictional partner was too fast. There were requests from participants to form their own committees or working groups or to meet multiple times over a longer period of time.

Other participants expressed the desire to work together comprehensively and constructively in an ongoing relationship, beyond the decision-making stage and into the implementation stage of JK-12 curriculum renewal. Participants stressed that additional time would be needed to do this properly, than would be afforded by the proposed timelines.

Additionally, although the presentation given by ECE at the outset of the Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement sessions set the parameters for discussion around JK-12 curriculum renewal and the possibility of a new jurisdictional partner, participants raised questions and ideas related to the implementation of a new curriculum that do not impact the decision that must be made first.

Participants expressed concerns around:

- How will the curriculum be implemented? All at once or phased-in?
- What training will teachers be offered?
- How will the change be communicated to parents?
- How will Indigenous Governments, Organizations and Elders be involved in the planning for implementation?
- How will implementation be equitable? Will ECE take into account the realities of small communities?

Feedback from Review

The Department of ECE sent the draft *What We Heard* Report to each of the organizations which participated in the Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement process for feedback. Overall, these organizations confirmed that the *What We Heard* Report captured the necessary considerations for curriculum renewal in the NWT, from the perspective of their organization.

Participants confirmed the significant need of the **Importance of Indigenous ways** theme. Feedback emphasized the need to consult with Indigenous governments throughout the renewal process and expressed how crucial Indigenous languages are to those ways.

Participants also re-emphasized the **High School Transitions** theme, as concern was again expressed over the low educational outcomes of many northerners who are not able to pursue employment or post-secondary training.

Additionally, the need for students to learn the competencies which will allow them to transition to the world of work or post-secondary education was mentioned. That feedback reiterated the ideas expressed in the **Key Learning for Life** theme. The feedback also noted the value of digital competencies for full contribution in contemporary society.

All feedback expressed a desire to be involved in the planning for implementation of a new curriculum and beyond, which was also heard in the initial consultation and engagement phase. Some feedback also expressed an eagerness for a decision to be made as soon as possible.

Conclusion

ECE would like to thank all of those who participated in the Indigenous Government consultation and education partner engagement process by listening to the presentation and sharing their questions, concerns, and ideas, or by contributing comments online or via email. Your input is valued and much appreciated.



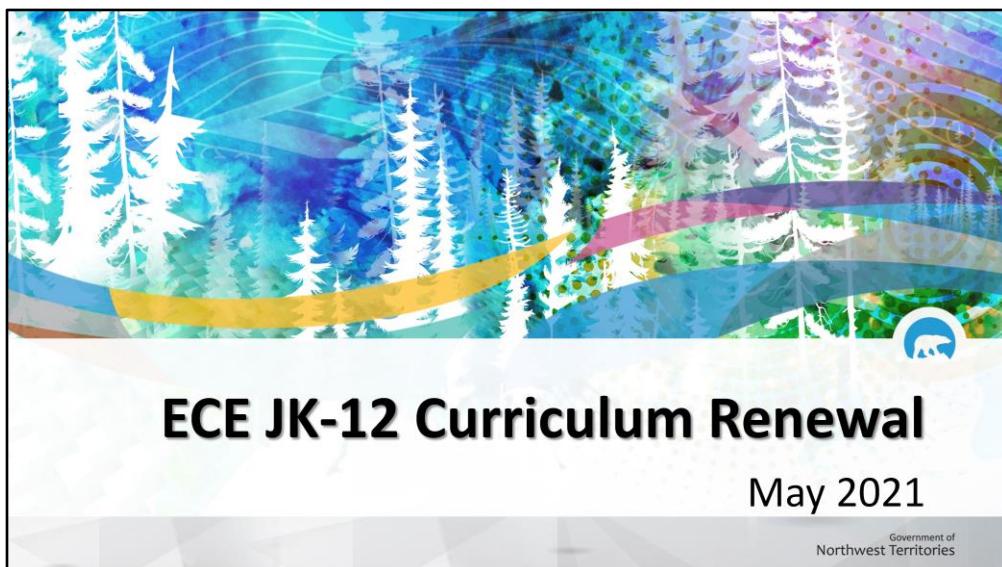
Appendix A

Full List of Engagements & Consultations

Date	Type	Education Partner
March 16, 2021	Engagement Session	Curriculum & Assessment Sub Committee
March 18, 2021	Engagement Session	NWT Superintendents' Association (NWTSA)
March 24, 2021	Engagement Session	NWT Education Leaders
March 30, 2021	Engagement Session	NWT Teachers' Association (NWTTA) - Executive Council
April 7, 2021	Engagement Session	Curriculum & Assessment Sub Committee
April 12, 2021	Engagement Session	South Slave Divisional Education Council (SSDEC)
April 12, 2021	Engagement Session	Hay River District Education Authority (HRDEA)
April 13, 2021	Engagement Session	Standing Committee on Social Development (SCOSD)
April 14, 2021	Consultation & Engagement Session	Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC)
April 14, 2021	Engagement Session	NWTTA Regional Presidents
April 15, 2021	Consultation & Engagement Session	Kátł'odeeche First Nation (KFN)
April 19, 2021	Engagement Session	Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1)
April 19, 2021	Engagement Session	Commission scolaire francophone (CSF)
April 20, 2021	Consultation & Engagement Session	Tłı̨chǫ Government (TG)
April 20, 2021	Engagement Session	Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YCS)
April 21, 2021	Engagement Session	NWTTA Membership (Teachers)
April 22, 2021	Engagement Session	NWTTA Membership (Teachers)
April 23, 2021	Engagement Session	Northwest Territories Association of Communities (NWTAC)
April 24, 2021	Engagement Session	NWTTA Membership (Teachers)
April 26, 2021	Engagement Session	Sahtu DEC administrators (SDEC)

Date	Type	Education Partner
April 26, 2021	Engagement Session	Sahtu DEC (SDEC)
April 27, 2021	Engagement Session	NWT Education Leaders
April 27, 2021	Engagement Session	Yellowknife Education District #1 Trustees (YK1)
April 28, 2021	Consultation & Engagement Session	Kátł'odeeche First Nation (KFN)
May 4, 2021	Engagement Session	Beaufort Delta DEC (BDDEC)
May 6, 2021	Engagement Session	Aurora College Transformation Team (ACTT)
May 6, 2021	Engagement Session	Dehcho DEC (DDEC)
May 10, 2021	Consultation & Engagement Session	Délı̨nę Got'ine Government (DGG)
May 10, 2021	Engagement Session	Sahtu DEC (SDEC)
May 11, 2021	Engagement Session	Fort Resolution DEA (FRDEA)
May 12, 2021	Engagement Session	Regional Indigenous Language & Education Coordinators (RILE)
May 12, 2021	Engagement Session	NWT Dene Nation
May 18, 2021	Consultation & Engagement Session	NWT Métis Nation
May 25, 2021	Engagement Session	NWT Education Leaders
May 25, 2021	Engagement Session	Fort Providence DEA (FPDEA)
May 26, 2021	Engagement Session	ECE - Education Branch
May 28, 2021	Engagement Session	ECE - Education Branch
June 1, 2021	Engagement Session	ECE - Education Branch
June 3, 2021	Engagement Session	Ndilq̄ DEA (NDEA)
June 25, 2021	Engagement Session	Dehcho First Nations (DFN)
June 28, 2021	Consultation & Engagement Session	Salt River First Nation #195 (SRFN)
June 30 & August 10, 2021	Consultation & Engagement Session	Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN)

Appendix B ECE JK-12 Curriculum Renewal Presentation



ECE JK-12 Curriculum Renewal

May 2021

Government of
Northwest Territories

The NWT JK – 12 curriculum is out of date and in need of renewal. ECE regularly reviews its curriculum and resources to ensure they align with the NWT’s priorities and values for education. Exploring what options are available is a normal part of reviewing and renewing curriculum. As such, ECE has conducted research to explore how other provinces and territories approach curriculum, including British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Yukon. **Please note that research done on Alberta, was done prior to the recent release of their new DRAFT K-6 curriculum.*

Historically, the NWT has had a longstanding and close relationship with Alberta Education in the areas of curriculum and large-scale student assessments tools. Alberta Education is currently in the process of changing their curricula for every subject and grade from Kindergarten to Grade 12. This makes significant curricular change in the NWT inevitable, as the implementation of this new curricula will require a large systemic overhaul in the NWT and additional resources to guide this transition.

Development of curriculum and related programs in the NWT must meet the needs and interests of NWT students and communities. It must be a curriculum that is grounded in Indigenous world views and reflect the identities of our northern children and support them in becoming capable people.

The following presentation provides an overview of the NWT JK-12 Curriculum Renewal Discussion Paper which outlines ECE’s exploration of curriculum renewal in the NWT. As such, it provides a common starting place whereby questions, concerns, and comments may be raised. Information gathered through these discussions will be used to inform decisions regarding the renewal of NWT JK-12 school curriculum and future partnerships.



Presentation Outline

- Understanding Curriculum
 - *Create, Adapt, and Adopt*
 - *Curriculum that Meets NWT Goals*
 - *NWT Created Curriculum*
 - *Locally Developed Courses*
 - *NWT Specific Programming*
- Recent Developments in Alberta
- Researching Curriculum
 - *Research Themes*
 - *Research Findings*
 - *Areas for Further Investigation*
- Proposed Timeline
- Before Making a Decision
- Questions and Comments

This presentation will cover the following items:

Recent Developments in Alberta - Moving towards a decision about curriculum in the NWT requires understanding the recent developments in curriculum in Alberta Education.

Understanding NWT JK-12 Curriculum - this section provides some background on curriculum. It briefly describes:

- What is involved in curriculum development in a JK-12 system
- The goals for education in the NWT, and
- The areas of the current education system that will remain in place regardless of any change of curriculum or jurisdictional partnership.

Researching the Curriculum of the Western Canadian Provinces - this section summarizes the research ECE undertook to see how aligned the curricula of the 4 western provinces are to the NWT's goals. It outlines the questions and methodology for the research and the findings of the research based on the 4 themes necessary to meet the goals for education in the NWT, as well as the areas of further investigation needed.

Proposed Timeline – this slide speaks to the proposed timeline for a decision about curriculum and implementation

Before Making a Decision – This slide reiterates that no decision has been made, and will not be made without input from education partners including Indigenous Governments, Education Bodies, and the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association.

Questions and Comments – This is where we hear from you.



Understanding Curriculum

- The overall goal of the NWT education system is to develop an **NWT Capable Person**.
- Curriculum is primarily designed for teachers as they use it as the basis for planning instruction and student assessment.
- Curriculum sets out the concepts, attitudes and skills that students are expected to demonstrate at various stages of their development.
- Curriculum development requires considerable financial and human resources, as well as time.



The overall goal of the NWT education system is to develop an **NWT Capable Person**. A capable person is one who demonstrates integrity in relationships that honour self, others, the land, and the spiritual world. Through these relationships, a capable person grows and develops physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

As per the Education Act, the Minister of ECE is responsible for the establishment and approval of curriculum for all subject areas from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 (JK-12).

Once approved, curriculum documents are shared with Education Bodies and are added to the list of NWT Approved Curriculum, which is expected to be taught in all NWT schools, to all NWT students.

Curriculum is primarily designed for teachers as they use it as the basis for planning instruction and student assessment. In some cases, *support materials* such as unit or lesson plans, or recommended teacher or student resources, are also developed to accompany the curriculum. Curriculum sets out the concepts, attitudes and skills that students are expected to demonstrate at various stages of their development.

Over time, curriculum design has shifted away from learning outcomes and has moved to towards “competencies”. Outcomes emphasize content, whereas Competencies are more holistic and emphasize the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values a capable person needs to know and do in whatever situation arises.

Renewal of NWT JK-12 curriculum will include transition towards competencies-based curriculum and having teaching practices and instruction that is more in line with modern curriculum research and theory, cognitive neuroscience, and the learning sciences.

Creating curriculum and student assessment tools and resources is very time consuming and requires a lot of human resources and expertise. Additionally, teachers must be supported to use curriculum, and this too requires human and financial resources.

Understanding Curriculum

Create, Adapt & Adopt

- **Create:** Some curriculum are developed in the NWT and include content that is specific and relevant to NWT students
- **Adapt:** Some curriculum are adapted from other jurisdictions, making changes to fit the NWT context
- **Adopt:** Other curriculum are adopted from other jurisdictions without any changes (i.e. high school mathematics)



For a small jurisdiction like the NWT, developing JK-12 curriculum for all subject areas and grades, as well as accompanying student assessment tools, is beyond the human and financial resources available.

As a result, the NWT has taken a “create/adapt/adopt” approach to curriculum development. This means where possible, ECE will create its own curriculum, but also either adapts or adopts a curriculum from another province for use in the NWT.

Create: ECE has had the opportunity to create some curricula, teachers guides and resources, in house, including:

- JK-12 Our (Indigenous) Languages (2020)
- Junior Kindergarten/Kindergarten (JK/K) (2017)
- Grade 4 Social Studies
- Grades 4-9 Health and Wellness Curriculum (draft 2021)
- Northern Studies 10 (2015)
- Experiential Science 10 – 20 – 30 (2006)
- Literacy with Information, Communications Technology (2012)
- Dene Kede (1993) and Inuuqatigiit (1996)
- Wide variety of Locally Developed Courses (in partnership with Education Bodies or with Indigenous Governments)

Adapt: Occasionally, some NWT curriculum will be adapted from other jurisdictions, making specific changes to outcomes and content to fit the NWT context. For example,

- NWT Social Studies (grades 1, 2, 3 and 5) (2012) was adapted from Manitoba

Adopt: Other NWT curriculum will be adopted from other jurisdictions without making any changes to the curriculum itself. For example:

- Alberta Math Curriculum (grades 1-9)
- Saskatchewan Arts Curriculum (grades 1-9)
- Alberta High School Curriculum (grades 10-12)

At this time, NWT schools have access to good but dated curriculum and student assessment tools. However, ECE lacks the ability to modernize the curriculum at the scale and pace required by creating new made in NWT curriculum for all JK-12 subject areas and grades. It is not feasible for the GNWT to create all JK-12 curriculum from scratch.

Understanding Curriculum

Curriculum that Meets NWT Goals

- Curriculum needs to be reflective of the cultures, languages, and identities of students in the NWT.
- Curriculum needs to be competency-based:
 - Engages student interests, ownership, and involvement
 - Relevant to student lives and meets the needs of students
 - Introduces modern skills, ideas, and attitudes that support student success and help students become capable people
 - Emphasizes critical thinking and transferable skills, as opposed to memorization



Curriculum must be reflective of the cultures, languages and identities in the NWT as this...

Curriculum that is competency-based:

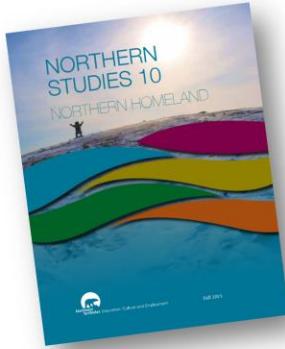
- ✓ Engages student interests, ownership, and agency. (i.e. competency-based)
- ✓ Relevant to the lives and meets the needs of students
- ✓ Introduces new modern concepts (skills, ideas, attitudes) that will support NWT students to be successful throughout their lives and become capable people
- ✓ Emphasizes critical thinking and transferable skills, as opposed to memorization.

Specific NWT Examples of competency based curriculum include:

- Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten (JK/K) play-based curriculum
- JK-12 Our Languages curriculum
- Grades 4-9 Health and Wellness Curriculum
- Northern Studies 20 course (currently being developed)

Understanding Curriculum

NWT Created Curriculum



Indigenous perspectives and worldviews in Curriculum must remain

- *Dene Kede*
- *Inuuqatigiit*
- *Our Languages* Indigenous language Curriculum
- Northern Studies 10, 20 and 30



Over many years, the NWT has worked hard to build an NWT Education system that reflects and honours the languages, cultures and worldview of the students we serve.

The current system has curriculum and programming that is foundational and cannot be replicated or replaced by any other jurisdiction.

Curriculum and any accompanying resources must be designed or adapted to make space for Indigenous worldviews, ways of knowing, and perspectives. Current research sees a great deal of alignment between Indigenous worldviews and competencies based curriculum.

The NWT has already taken steps to develop and implement territory wide curriculum and courses that allow for the worldviews and perspectives of Indigenous Peoples of the NWT to be not only included, but celebrated and foundational.

These curriculum will remain in use throughout the NWT:

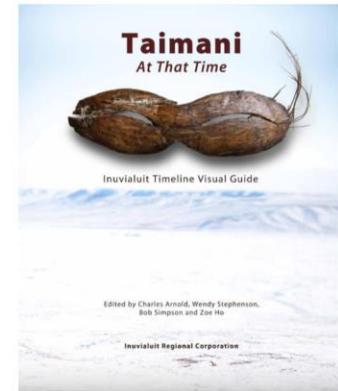
Dene Kede and Inuuqatigiit will remain as foundational curricular documents for teaching and learning in the NWT. Any changes to curriculum will need to account for the use of these documents.

***Our Languages* Indigenous language Curriculum** will remain as the NWTs Indigenous languages curriculum.

Northern Studies 10 will remain as a graduation require for all NWT students, and the development of **Northern Studies 20 and 30** will continue to ensure NWT students continue to learn about the treaties, land claims and histories of the NWT.

Understanding Curriculum **Locally Developed Courses**

Locally Developed Courses (LDCs) allow students to earn high school credit in courses that are largely designed by their communities, regions, or Indigenous governments.



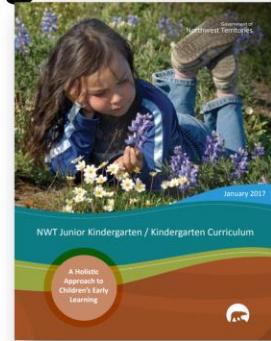
Education bodies will continue to be encouraged and supported to create Locally Developed Courses (LDCs) that meet the educational needs of the students in their specific regions.

This opportunity makes it possible for students to earn high school credits in courses that are largely designed by particular communities, regions, or Indigenous governments.

Understanding Curriculum

NWT Specific Programming

- Play-based Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten
- Northern Distance Learning
- Indigenous language instruction
- French 1st and 2nd language instruction
- Faith-based education



NWT specific programming will remain in place, understanding that some aspects may need updating when a new curriculum is implemented, including:

Play-based Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten programming will remain in place in all schools; however, the introduction of any new grade one curriculum will require some efforts to ensure a smooth transition from Kindergarten to grade one. The JK/K curriculum and programming may need to be updated to ensure this transition is supported.

Northern Distance Learning will remain in place, understanding that there may be a change to the courses offered in this program with the implementation of a new curriculum.

Indigenous language instruction, including core and immersion programming will remain in place with continued training and support provided to Indigenous language instructors and schools to implement the new *Our Languages* curriculum.

French 1st and 2nd language programming, including core, immersion and intensive programming will remain in place, understanding that some updating may need to be done with a renewed curriculum.

Faith-based education in Yellowknife Catholic Schools will continue to be offered in identified Catholic schools.



Recent Developments in Alberta

- ECE has a long-standing relationship with Alberta Education.
- Alberta is currently renewing their curriculum and plans to roll out the K-6 curriculum beginning in the 2021-22 school year.
- NWT needs new curriculum whether its primary partner continues to be Alberta or another jurisdiction.
- Any changes to NWT curriculum would need to be carefully considered to ensure it aligns with overall NWT education goals and is best fit for NWT JK-12 students.

As the Department of ECE moving forward with any renewal of curriculum in the NWT, it is important to remember and recognize that the NWT has a long-standing relationship with Alberta Education.

Alberta has been preparing to update its own curriculum since 2009 and while this was initially well received in the NWT, the more recent pace and direction of change in Alberta curriculum changes has shifted and therefore careful consideration of adopting their new curriculum needs to be considered.

As previously mentioned, Alberta's new K-6 draft curriculum was released on March 30, 2021. They have indicated that they will roll out this curriculum with interested, voluntary schools in fall 2021.

NWT needs new curriculum whether its primary partner continues to be Alberta or another jurisdiction.

ECE has undertaken work to review the curriculum of all four Western Canadian provinces including Alberta in order to determine the degree to which they align with the NWT's goal of moving to competency-based curriculum. This work was known as "curriculum options" research and the following slides will outline what research was undertaken and what ECE has learned.



Researching Curriculum

In 2018-2020, ECE researched how best the Western Canadian provinces aligned with NWT priorities for education: British Columbia (BC), Alberta (AB), Saskatchewan (SK), and Manitoba (MB).

The following questions were asked:

1. Which of the Western Canadian provinces is the best aligned with the priorities and directions of the NWT in the areas of curriculum, assessment and other associated components of the education system?
2. Based on this information, what are the implications for the NWT of changing the relationship with Alberta or partnering with a different province?

In 2019, Malatest, a research company located in Alberta, was hired to research and evaluate the JK-12 curriculum of the Western Canadian provinces for alignment to NWT education priorities and goals.

The Western Canadian provinces were selected because of their demographics that require Indigenous representation in curricula, geographic proximity which would make professional development possible, and ECE's prior long standing working relationship within the Western Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP) for all K-12 curriculum.

ECE conducted research that led the development of a paper to provide options to improve the outcomes of NWT JK-12 students.

This research...

- Examined how the Western Canadian provinces approached competency-based curriculum, student assessment, inclusion and reflection of Indigenous perspectives, and other key parts of the education system.
- Determined the relative alignment of each jurisdiction to NWT priorities and goals.
- Described the practical implications (risks and opportunities) of changing (or not changing) the education system in the areas examined.

Note: Costing, timelines and detailed implementation planning that might arise out of decisions based on the paper were out of scope for the project.

Researching Curriculum **Research Themes**

- Theme 1: Competency-based Curriculum (being a Capable Person)
- Theme 2: Inclusion of Indigenous Perspectives
- Theme 3: Inclusive Schooling (all children and youth belong)
- Theme 4: Large-scale Student Assessment Tools



Research Methodology

Malatest examined a sampling of curriculum and policy documents related to grades over a range of subject area documents, using a comprehensive collection of 34 NWT education priorities. These criteria represent a comprehensive collection of educational priorities of the NWT as identified through a wide range of public engagement processes from 2010 – 2019 across the NWT.

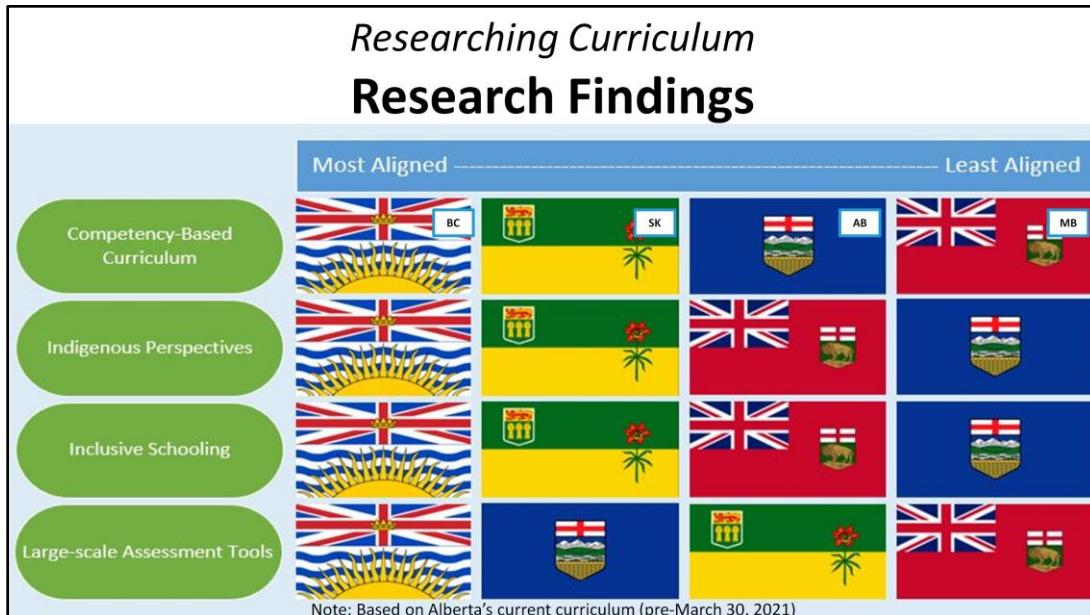
Research findings were grouped under the following themes:

Theme 1: Competency-based Curriculum - ‘Being and Becoming an NWT Capable Person’ is the core concept upon which any new NWT curriculum is developed. Competencies are over-arching and interrelated organizers that help a person both ‘know’ and ‘do’. They include, but are more than just, skills and values, and put less value on facts and skills taught out of context. What students need to know and do in this kind of curriculum includes knowing how to make choices and how to use their resources in changing situations. Competencies allow a capable person to navigate in the bush as well as to deal with a new problem in a school or work situation. A competency-based approach to curriculum is now almost universal in education systems today.

Theme 2: Inclusion of Indigenous Perspectives – Since the beginning of the territorial government’s responsibility for education in the NWT in 1967, there has been a consistent vision that K-12 curriculum and teaching and student resources used in NWT schools need to reflect the Indigenous people of this place. Indigenous perspectives on learning, doing and being as well as Indigenous content visible in curriculum and learning materials, and intentional efforts towards school-community-Indigenous government relationship building and reconciliation, are key aspects of education in the NWT.

Theme 3: Inclusive Schooling - Inclusive schooling is a foundational part of the NWT’s education system. Supporting access to education for all JK-12 children and youth including diverse learners and particularly students with complex needs and exceptionalities represents a major part of the NWT education system. In the NWT, a large percentage of the JK-12 student population requires additional supports and interventions. Funding and support approaches must adequately and appropriately meet the territory’s needs.

Theme 4: Large-scale Student Assessment Tools – For public assurance purposes, education systems must have the means to monitor the degree to which JK-12 students are learning what they are expected to learn. The NWT is keenly aware that with small student numbers, territorially-developed standardized testing will always be a challenge. For most large-scale student assessment, the NWT must use externally developed student assessment tools developed by other jurisdictions, none of which necessarily align perfectly with NWT curricular outcomes, but have been chosen according to best match.



The analysis led to ECE ranking each of the provinces against the major themes outlined above in order to determine the degree to which the JK-12 curriculum was compatible with NWT needs.

In all four themes that were examined, weighted and ranked, **British Columbia was the most closely aligned to the NWT's priorities.**

It is important to note that the Alberta curriculum evaluated in the jurisdictional scan is the current curriculum in place (not the revised drafts). When it becomes available, ECE will need to review the new Alberta curriculum using the same research methodology and criteria as in the jurisdictional scan.

Theme 1: Competency-based Curriculum. BC has implemented a systemically-renewed K-12 curriculum over the past 4 years, including assessment tools and approaches.

Theme 2: Inclusion of Indigenous Perspectives.

BC was consistently the strongest of the 5 jurisdictions examined. Partnerships in the development of their new curriculum including the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) were particularly strong. Commitment to Indigenous perspectives was strong and reflected in materials and assessment tools.

Theme 3: Inclusive Schooling.

The inter-jurisdictional scan results, conversations with key Ministry personnel, and current practice in the NWT in the area of inclusive learning find the highest alignment for the NWT to be with BC. The NWT is already using many materials from BC as there is strong alignment with our territory.

Theme 4: Large-scale Student Assessment Tools.

BC's programming in the area of large-scale student assessments would provide student achievement data at grade 4 and 7 in reading, writing, and numeracy. It would also provide data at grade 10 and 12 for literacy and numeracy.

Researching Curriculum

Areas for Further Investigation

Building on the research that has been done to date, ECE has further questions and areas to investigate before making a decision about the JK – 12 curriculum.

- Ease of adapting or adopting curriculum to reflect local cultures and context of the NWT;
- Student assessment tools and student resources;
- Compatibility with student information systems;
- Student Online and Distance Learning programs; and
- School Staff Professional Development.



The areas for further investigation include the questions that ECE is still researching or hopes to find the answer to, which will help inform decisions made in the future.

ECE needs to understand clearly how, and if, a new curriculum can be adapted to reflect local cultures and context of the NWT. The following questions will try to get at this answer:

1. *Will the NWT be able to adapt a new curriculum?*
2. *Will the new curriculum require significant adaptations or can portions of the curriculum be adopted as is?*
3. *Will the new curriculum require changes to NWT graduation requirements and high school programming?*

ECE needs to understand the implications and costs related to accessing large-scale student assessment tools, classroom assessments and teaching resources. The following questions will try to get at this answer:

1. *Can the NWT access large-scale student assessment tools and if so, what is the cost?*
2. *How are JK-12 students assessed or evaluated in the classroom?*
3. *Do they have a student assessment strategy or protocol that the NWT can access and if so, what are the costs?*
4. *What JK-12 teaching resources will accompany the new curriculum and what are the costs of these resources?*

ECE uses two different student information systems and would need to understand if either of these systems would need to change with the implementation of a new curriculum. The following questions will try to get at this answer:

1. *Is the student information system compatible with the NWT's current systems?*
2. *Would the NWT be required to use a different system? If so, at what cost?*

ECE will need to understand what online or distance education programs are offered and access implications for NWT students. The following questions will try to get at this answer:

1. *Does the jurisdiction offer online or distance education courses?*
2. *If so, can the NWT access these courses and what are the associated costs?*
3. *What changes (if any) would need to be made to NWT Northern Distance Learning (NDL) to accommodate the shift to a new curriculum?*

ECE needs to understand the implications, opportunities and costs related to accessing professional development (PD) opportunities and supports. The following questions will try to get at this answer:

1. *What access would NWT school staff have to PD opportunities?*
2. *What degree of support could the NWT school staff expect?*
3. *What costs are associated with accessing these PD and/or supports?*



Proposed Timeline

- Engagement & Consultation: April - mid June 2021
- Review of Alberta's new DRAFT K-6 curriculum: end of May 2021
- *What We Heard Report*: end of June/ early July 2021
- Making a Decision: end of August / Early September 2021
- Curriculum Implementation Planning, Communications and Training 2021-2022 School Year (Sept 2021-June 2022)
- Tentative grade 1-12 Curriculum Implementation beginning 2022-2023 School Year – proposed phased-in approach.

ECE will be completing formal consultation with Indigenous Governments and engagement with key educational partners during the spring of 2021 (April –mid June 2021). The public will have the opportunity to provide feedback and comments on JK- 12 curriculum renewal through an online form on the ECE website.

The new Alberta K-6 curriculum will be reviewed by Malatest, the company who conducted the original research. The review will be completed before a decision is made; the target completion date (end of May 2021) is subject to the availability of Malatest.

Once consultation and engagement are complete, ECE will draft a *What We Heard Report*, summarizing information, questions, and concern heard during discussions.

The *What We Heard Report* will be shared with participants for their review and comment. ECE will revise the report based on feedback from participants. A final report will be distributed at the end of June 2021. Along with internal research and investigation, the *What We Heard Report* will inform the decisions about the NWT JK- 12 curriculum and future partnerships. It is anticipated that a decision will be made about the NWT JK – 12 curriculum in August 2021 by the Minister of ECE.

Implementation Planning, Communications and Teacher Training including subject advisory groups: 2021-2022 School year (Sept 2021-June 2022)

The timeline for implementation of a new curriculum is being proposed to begin in the 2022-2023 school year, and likely to be a phased-in approach.

ECE is committed to supporting teachers, administrators, school staff and education bodies throughout the curriculum renewal process. This will include clear messaging for parents and families about the process and implications for students.



Before Making a Decision

- Renewing curriculum is a significant decision and requires careful research and comprehensive planning once a decision is made.
- Although the research has pointed to strong alignment with BC, before a decision can be made more information is needed to understand the implications of such a change, including the review of Alberta's new K-6 curriculum.
- ECE is engaging with Indigenous governments, Education Bodies, and the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association for their input, perspectives, and insights on the following discussion points.
- The public will have the opportunity to provide input and feedback via the ECE website @ www.ece.gov.nt.ca

Although preliminary research is pointing to a strong alignment with BC, more conversation and exploration is needed before making a decision to change jurisdictional partners, this includes reviewing Alberta's new K-6 curriculum.

This is a large undertaking that requires the input and consideration of Indigenous Governments, Education Bodies, and the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association.

As our partners, we would like you to be aware of the questions we are asking, and request you flag any questions or concerns that you would like ECE to address in our upcoming continued investigation/research from April –June 2021.

The public can now provide input on JK-12 curriculum renewal through the ECE website @ www.ece.gov.nt.ca



Questions and Comments

- What ideas, questions, concerns do you have?
- What issues need to be considered in a potential partnership?
- Have we missed anything?

Contact us at:

NWTCurriculum_Renewal@gov.nt.ca



In addition to preliminary research, more discussion and exploration is needed before a making a decision. This is a large project that requires the input of Indigenous Governments, Education Bodies, and the NWT TA.

At this time, we would like to encourage you, as representatives, to bring forward questions, concerns, and comments regarding the renewal of the NWT JK – 12 curriculum.

Information, questions and concerns gathered through discussions with ECE will inform future decisions about education in the NWT.

- *What ideas, questions, concerns do you have?*
- *What issues need to be addressed in a potential partnership?*
- *Have we missed anything (discussion points, generally)?*

Further questions, comments, and ideas can be sent to: NWTCurriculum_renewal@gov.nt.ca

Appendix C ECE JK-12 Curriculum Renewal Update – What We Learned (so far...)



**ECE JK – 12 Curriculum Renewal Update –
What We Learned (so far ...)**

June 2021

Government of
Northwest Territories

Presentation Overview

Government of
Northwest Territories

- Engagements To-Date
- Review of the Research on Alberta's New Draft K-6 Curriculum
- Answers for Areas for Further Investigation
 - Ease of adapting or adopting curriculum to reflect local cultures and context of the NWT
 - Student assessment tools
 - Student resources
 - Compatibility with student information systems
 - Online Learning Programs
 - Distance Learning Programs
 - School Staff Professional Development
- Proposed Timeline
- Have Your Say

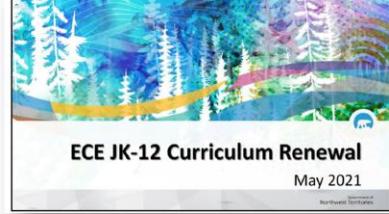


This presentation on JK-12 Curriculum Renewal follows this outline:

- 1) **Engagements To-date** - an overview of the number of engagements held to date, including the partner group and date of the engagement.
- 2) **Review of the Research on Alberta's New Draft K-6 Curriculum** – a review of the newest research and how this impacts Alberta's alignment to the NWTs education priorities
- 3) **Answers for Areas for Further Investigation** - providing the answers to questions identified in the discussion paper around what we have learned in the following Areas for Further Investigation:
 - Ease of adapting or adopting curriculum to reflect local cultures and context of the NWT
 - Student assessment tools
 - Student resources
 - Compatibility with student information systems
 - Online Learning Programs
 - Distance Learning Programs
 - School Staff Professional Development
- 4) **Proposed Timeline** – a review of the updated timeline
- 5) **Have your say** - a review of how you can still contribute feedback

Engagements To-Date

- 37 Total Engagements have been held with:
 - Education Bodies (DECs & DEAs)
 - Indigenous Governments
 - Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (NWT TA)
 - External Working Groups
 - Standing Committee
 - Other Public Groups



3

In the first round of engagement, we've held 37 engagement sessions with Indigenous Governments and Education partner groups.

ECE will continue to schedule engagements through to the end of the current school year. Some partners have completed an initial engagement already and have confirmed their desire for follow-up engagements as well. (Upcoming meetings in **BOLD**.)

Education Bodies (DECs & DEAs):

- South Slave DEC & Administrators (April 12)
- Hay River DEA & Administrators (April 12)
- Yellowknife Education District 1 Administrators (April 19)
- Commission scolaire francophone TNO DEC & Administrators (April 19)
- Yellowknife Catholic Schools Board Trustees & Administrators (April 20)
- Sahtú DEC & Administrators (April 26) & (May 10)
- Education Leaders (April 27)
- Yellowknife Education District 1 DEC (April 27)
- Beaufort Delta DEC (May 4)
- Dehcho DEC (May 6)
- Fort Resolution DEA (May 11)
- Fort Providence DEA (May 25)
- Ndilq DEA (June 3)
- Education Leaders (June 22) – What We Learned

Indigenous Governments:

- Gwich'in Tribal Council (April 14)
- Kátł'odeeche First Nation (April 15)
- Tł'chǫ Government (April 20)
- Dél̨e Got'ine Government (May 10)
- NWT Metis Nation (May 18)
- Dehcho First Nation (June 25)
- Salt River First Nation (June 28)
- Yellowknives Dene First Nation (June 30)

NWT TA:

- President and Executive (March 30)
- Regional Presidents (April 14)
- Teacher Sessions (April 21, April 22, & April 24)

External Working Groups:

- Curriculum and Assessment Sub-Committee (March 16, April 7)
- Regional Indigenous Languages Coordinators (May 12)

Standing Committee:

- Standing Committee on Social Development (April 13)

Other Public Groups:

- Northwest Territories Association of Communities (April 23)
- NWT Dene Nation (May 12)



Researcher's Review of Alberta's new draft K-6 Curriculum

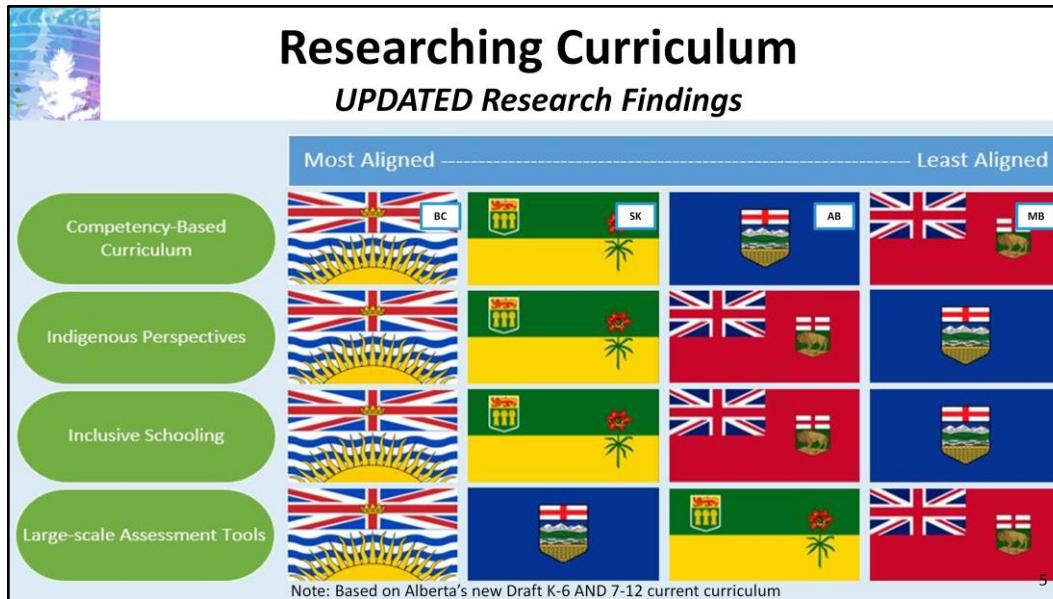
- Malatest reviewed the new draft Alberta K-6 curriculum using the same criteria and methodology
 - Jurisdictional report for Alberta was updated
 - ECE Report was updated
- ECE used the analysis to update the ranking of the provinces against the major themes.

4

The research company, Malatest, was hired to review the new Alberta K-6 curriculum, using the same criteria and methodology used in their original scan.

Malatest was asked to update their jurisdictional report for Alberta, as well as their Final Report, so that ECE could use the analysis to update the ranking of the provinces against the original four major themes:

- Theme 1: Competency-based Curriculum (being a Capable Person)
- Theme 2: Inclusion of Indigenous Perspectives
- Theme 3: Inclusive Schooling (all children and youth belong)
- Theme 4: Large-scale Student Assessment Tools



ECE staff used the updated research reports to review the ranking each of the provinces against the major themes outlined above in order to determine the degree to which the JK-12 curriculum was compatible with NWT needs.

The information in the chart remained unchanged, and in all four themes that were examined, weighted and ranked, **British Columbia remained as the most closely aligned to the NWT's priorities.**

Although the chart itself did not change, the analysis of the new information from the draft Alberta K-6 curriculum saw Alberta's alignment decrease in most areas.



Areas for Further Investigation

Specific questions regarding the following areas for further investigation were researched in more detail to support the decision making process:

- Ease of Adapting or Adopting the Curriculum
- Student Assessment tools
- Student Resources
- Compatibility with Student Information Systems
- Online Learning Programs
- Northern Distance Learning
- School Staff Professional Development



6

Building on the research completed by Malatest, ECE identified further areas to investigate before recommending a decision to the Minister about the best possible partner for NWT JK-12 curriculum.

Since the time of the engagements, ECE has researched and found answers to the questions identified.

The discussion questions fall under 7 main themes:

1. Ease of adapting or adopting curriculum
2. Student assessment tools
3. Student resources
4. Compatibility with student information systems
5. Online Learning Programs
6. Northern Distance Learning
7. School Staff Professional Development

The results of those findings are shared in the upcoming slides/pages and highlighted using the following coding:

- ✓ On track – no concerns
- ? Unsure – more research needed
- ✗ Concerns noted – will require significant changes or goes against NWT priorities .

Ease of Adapting or Adopting Curriculum

Alberta

- ✓ It is assumed that the NWT will be able to adapt the new curriculum;
- ✗ The new K-6 curriculum is content driven, which would require significant adaption;
- ✗ Adoption is unlikely in the lower grades, but unknown for the higher grades at this time;
- ✗ Uncertain of any changes to high school programming; however, it is assumed that the current 5 credit system will be maintained; and
- ✓ The NWT can retain NWT specific courses and requirements with a new curriculum.

British Columbia

- ✓ Yes, the NWT will be able to adapt the curriculum;
- ✓ The curriculum design is flexible, requiring little changes to core or curricular competencies;
- ✓ Most identified content would need to be adapted to the NWT; however, it is likely that there are areas that may be adopted;
- ✗ Graduation requirements will require updating and the NWT would need to decide whether or not to move to a 4 credit system; and
- ✓ The NWT can retain NWT specific courses and requirements with a new curriculum.



ECE needs to understand clearly how, and if, a new curriculum can be adapted to reflect cultures and context of the NWT.

Will the NWT be able to adapt a new curriculum?

Alberta

- Yes; although not yet confirmed specifically by AB, the NWT assumes that the ability to adapt the new curriculum will be approved, as it has been in the past.

British Columbia

- Yes; BC education is agreeable to ECE adapting their curriculum to meet the needs of the NWT.

Will the new curriculum require significant adaptations or can portions of the curriculum be adopted as is?

Alberta

- The new draft K-6 curriculum has a content-driven design, which would require significant adaptation before being used in the NWT; adoption is unlikely in the lower grades, but unknown for the higher grades at this time as the grade 7-12 curriculum is not yet available to us.

British Columbia

- The curriculum is designed to be flexible so that local content and perspectives can be easily integrated, hence little change would need to be made to the core competencies or curricular competencies.
- Content would need to be adapted to include NWT and local content; however, research is been done to confirm areas that may be adopted.

Will the new curriculum require changes to NWT graduation requirements and high school programming?

Alberta

- Uncertain as new Grade 10-12 curriculum has not yet been released; however, it is assumed that they will maintain the current 5 credit system.
- The NWT can retain NWT specific courses and requirements with a new curriculum.

British Columbia

- Requirements for graduation will need updating as the suite of courses are all different; however, the NWT can retain NWT specific courses and requirements with a new curriculum.
- A decision would need to be made around whether to move to a 4-credit system (which would require system changes), or to stay at a 5-credit system.

NOTE: Graduation requirements and high school programming:

- All Canadian provinces have comparable graduation requirements which means that the overall breadth of expectation will be comparable to existing NWT requirements. A decision will need to be made about any potential new graduation requirements given changes to the senior high program specific to Alberta or British Columbia.

Student Assessment Tools

Alberta

- ✓ Yes, the NWT will have access to Alberta's large scale assessment tools.
- ✗ A content-driven curriculum will likely require student assessment in the classroom that will focus more on memorization.
- ✗ Unsure of any new resources to support assessment using the new curriculum.
- ✓ Yes, the NWT will have access to assessment documents with no associated costs.

British Columbia

- ✓ Yes, the NWT will have access to BC's large scale assessment tools.
- ✓ Classroom assessment processes for formative and summative assessment practices will continue to exist with a competencies-based curriculum.
- ✗ New competency-based assessment practices will require teacher training support.
- ✓ BC has training videos for teachers on assessment
- ✓ Yes, the NWT will have access to assessment documents with no associated costs.



8

ECE needs to understand the implications and costs related to accessing large-scale student assessment tools and classroom assessments. The following questions will try to get at this answer:

Can the NWT access large-scale student assessment tools and if so, what is the cost?

Alberta

- Yes, the NWT will have access to Alberta's large scale assessment tools.
 - Alberta Achievement Test (AATs) in grade 6 & 9 and Diploma Exams in grade 12
- Current costs are \$650,000 annually for both AATs and Diploma Exams.

British Columbia

- Yes, the NWT will have access to BC's large scale assessment tools
 - Foundational Skills Assessments (FSAs) in grade 4 & 7, and Graduation Assessments in Grades 10 & 12
- Estimated cost is \$250,000 annually for both FSAs and Graduation Assessments.

How are JK-12 students assessed or evaluated in the classroom?

Alberta

- No changes to classroom assessment has been noted at this time; however, a content-driven curriculum will require student assessment in the classroom that will focus more on memorization.
- Unsure of any new resources that will be made available to support assessment using the new curriculum.

British Columbia

- Classroom assessment processes for formative and summative assessment practices will continue to exist with a competencies-based curriculum.
- New assessment practices will be needed, along with existing practices; as such teachers will need training support as they work with a new curriculum. BC has training videos for teachers on assessment

Do they have a student assessment strategy or protocol that the NWT can access and if so, what are the costs?

Alberta

- Yes, the NWT will have access with no associated costs.
- AB's assessment strategy is outlined in a range of documents about the Alberta Achievement Tests and Diploma Exams

British Columbia

- Yes, the NWT will have access with no associated costs
- BC's assessment strategy is contained in a series of documents related to the Foundational Skills Assessments and Graduation Assessments

Teaching Resources

Alberta

- ✗ The draft K-6 curriculum is content-driven and will likely require specific teaching resources, such as textbooks, novels, etc.
- ✗ Specifics around costs are unknown at this time.

British Columbia

- ✓ The curriculum was designed for local level resources, without requiring any specific teaching resources, such as textbooks, novels, etc.
- ✓ Existing resources in NWT classrooms can be used to support the curriculum, including *Literacy Place*, *Math Makes Sense* or *Jump Math*, or *Fountas and Pinnell*.



ECE needs to understand the implications and costs related to teaching resources.

What JK-12 teaching resources will accompany the new curriculum and what are the costs of these resources?

Alberta

- A content-driven curriculum will require the purchase of specific teaching resources, such as textbooks, novels, etc.
- It is unknown at this time what those required resources will be or what the cost of purchasing them will be – this is assumed to be a high cost.

British Columbia

- The curriculum was designed so that resources could be selected at a local level, without requiring the purchase of any specific teaching resources, such as textbooks, novels, etc.
- Existing resources in NWT classrooms can be used to support the curriculum, including literacy programs such as *Literacy Place*, math resources such as *Math Makes Sense* or *Jump Math* or diagnostic assessment tools such as *Fountas and Pinnell* or *Jerry Johns*.

Student Information Systems Compatibility

Alberta

- ✓ Yes, NWT schools can continue to use PowerSchool;
- ✓ No, ECE would not be required to use a different system; and
- ✓ No costs have been identified.

British Columbia

- ✓ Yes, NWT schools can continue to use PowerSchool;
- ✓ No, ECE would not be required to use a different system; and
- ✓ No costs have been identified.



ECE uses two different student information systems and would need to understand if either of these systems would need to change with the implementation of a new curriculum. The following questions will try to get at this answer:

Is the student information system compatible with the NWT's current systems?

Alberta

- Yes, we currently use PowerSchool which is compatible.

British Columbia

- Yes, NWT schools can continue to use PowerSchool.
- Many independent schools in BC currently use PowerSchool and it is compatible with BC's larger system.

Would the NWT be required to use a different system? If so, at what cost?

Alberta

- No, the NWT would not be required to use a different system.

British Columbia

- No, the NWT would not be required to use a different system.

Online Learning Programs

Alberta

- ✓ Yes; through identified school boards.
- ✗ No online French Immersion courses are available at this time.
- ✓ Costs range from \$100-\$200 per credit.

British Columbia

- ? Unsure of what online programs are available in BC; details are currently being researched.
- ✓ The Yukon also offer BC courses through their Aurora Virtual School.
- ? Unsure at this time if the NWT can access BC or Yukon online programming; this is still being researched



11

ECE will need to understand what online learning programs are offered and access implications for NWT students. The following questions will try to get at this answer:

Does the jurisdiction offer online or distance education courses?

Alberta

- Yes; although Alberta Education will no longer offer online courses through their Provincial Alberta Distance Learning Centre (ADLC). NWT schools can access online courses through the following four online schools: Vista Virtual School, Francophone Distance Education Centre, SCcyber E-learning Community and the Centre for Learning @Home.

British Columbia

- Yes; however, details are currently being researched.
- The Yukon also offer BC courses through their Aurora Virtual School.

If so, can the NWT access these courses and what are the associated costs?

Alberta

- Yes, a number of individual school boards will continue to offer online courses to NWT students in English and French First Language (for Rights Holders only); however, no school boards offering French Immersion courses have been identified at this time.
- Costs range from \$100-\$200 per credit.

British Columbia

- TBD, this is still being researched at this time

Northern Distance Learning

Alberta

- ✓ The structure and administration of NDL will not require changes;
- ? It is likely that all NDL courses would likely be new; however, no information about Alberta's high school courses has been released at this time;

British Columbia

- ? The structure and administration of NDL will not require changes;
- ? All NDL courses would be new;
- ? Would require a determination regarding which courses would be deemed 'higher-academic' or more difficult to offer locally in small schools.



12

ECE will need to understand what online or distance education programs are offered and access implications for NWT students. The following questions will try to get at this answer:

What changes would need to be made to NWT Northern Distance Learning (NDL) to accommodate the shift to a new curriculum?

Alberta

- Unsure at this time, as no information about Alberta's high school courses has been released but it is likely that the courses will be new; however, the structure and administration of NDL will not require changes.

British Columbia

- All high school courses would be new, and as they do not follow a course streaming model (-1,-2,-3), a determination regarding which courses would be deemed 'higher-academic' or more difficult to offer locally in small schools would need to be made; however, the structure and administration of NDL will not require changes.

School Staff Professional Development

Alberta

- ? Unsure what access NWT school staff would have to PD opportunities;
- ? Unsure what support NWT school staff could expect; and
- ? Unsure what costs would be associated with accessing PD and/or supports.

British Columbia

- ✓ Yes, NWT has been welcomed to attend PD opportunities;
- ✓ BC personnel have been very supportive to date, and have offered their support as and when needed; and
- ✓ Only costs associated to participating in PD would be related to travel; however, due to COVID-19, most PD is now virtual.



ECE needs to understand the implications, opportunities and costs related to accessing professional development (PD) opportunities and supports. The following questions will try to get at this answer:

What access would NWT school staff have to PD opportunities?

Alberta

- Unsure what access NWT school staff would have to PD opportunities, this is still being researched

British Columbia

- NWT school staff, board staff and Department staff are welcome to attend PD opportunities as and when they occur

What degree of support could NWT school staff expect?

Alberta

- Unsure what support NWT school staff could expect, this is still being researched

British Columbia

- BC personnel have been very supportive to date, and have offered their support as and when needed; it is expected that this will continue to be offered throughout a phased-in implementation of a new curriculum.

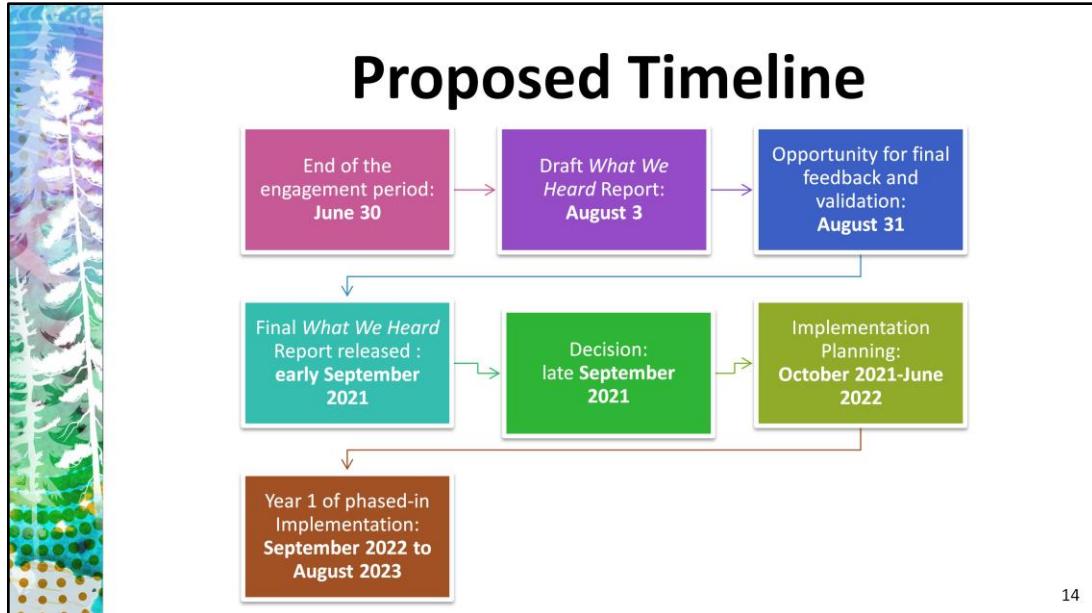
What costs are associated with accessing these PD and/or supports?

Alberta

- Unsure what costs would be associated with accessing PD and/or supports, this is still being researched

British Columbia

- Only costs associated would be related to travel; however, due to COVID-19, BC has moved to a mostly virtual PD platform removing all costs.



14

The proposed timeline

- End of the engagement period: June 30, 2021
- Draft *What We Heard* Report sent to all partners: August 3, 2021
- Opportunity for feedback on draft *What We Heard* Report: August 31, 2021
- Final *What We Heard* Report released: September 7, 2021
- Making a Decision: September 30, 2021
- Curriculum Implementation Planning: September 2021 – August 2022
- Year 1, beginning of phased-in grade 1-12 Curriculum Implementation: September 2022- August 2023



Have your say...

- Send feedback or request a follow-up engagement by emailing NWTCurriculum_Renewal@gov.nt.ca
 - Comment online at www.ece.gov.nt.ca



Feedback requested by June 30, 2021

15

We want to hear from you!

The more voices we hear from, the more informed the decision will be regarding the future curriculum of our NWT schools. Please review this PowerPoint and send your feedback via email @ NWTCurriculum_renewal@gov.nt.ca or via the ECE website @ www.ece.gov.nt.ca

Please provide any additional feedback by June 30, 2021.

Alternatively, if you wish to schedule a follow-up engagement, please let us know and we will work to arrange for a regional opportunity to all interested parties to participate.

If you have not yet scheduled a presentation on curriculum renewal, you are encouraged to reach out to ECE staff, at the same email, and find a date and time that can work for you.

Thank you so much.