



NWT School Attendance Fact Sheet

Attending school every day is essential to student learning and academic success.

Several factors can affect school attendance, including relationships with peers and adults at school, access to programs and resources, and a relevant curriculum, as well as factors outside of the school setting, such as overall health and well-being, sleep, nutrition and home life. When students develop strong relationships, are engaged in their learning, and have their needs met, their attendance improves.

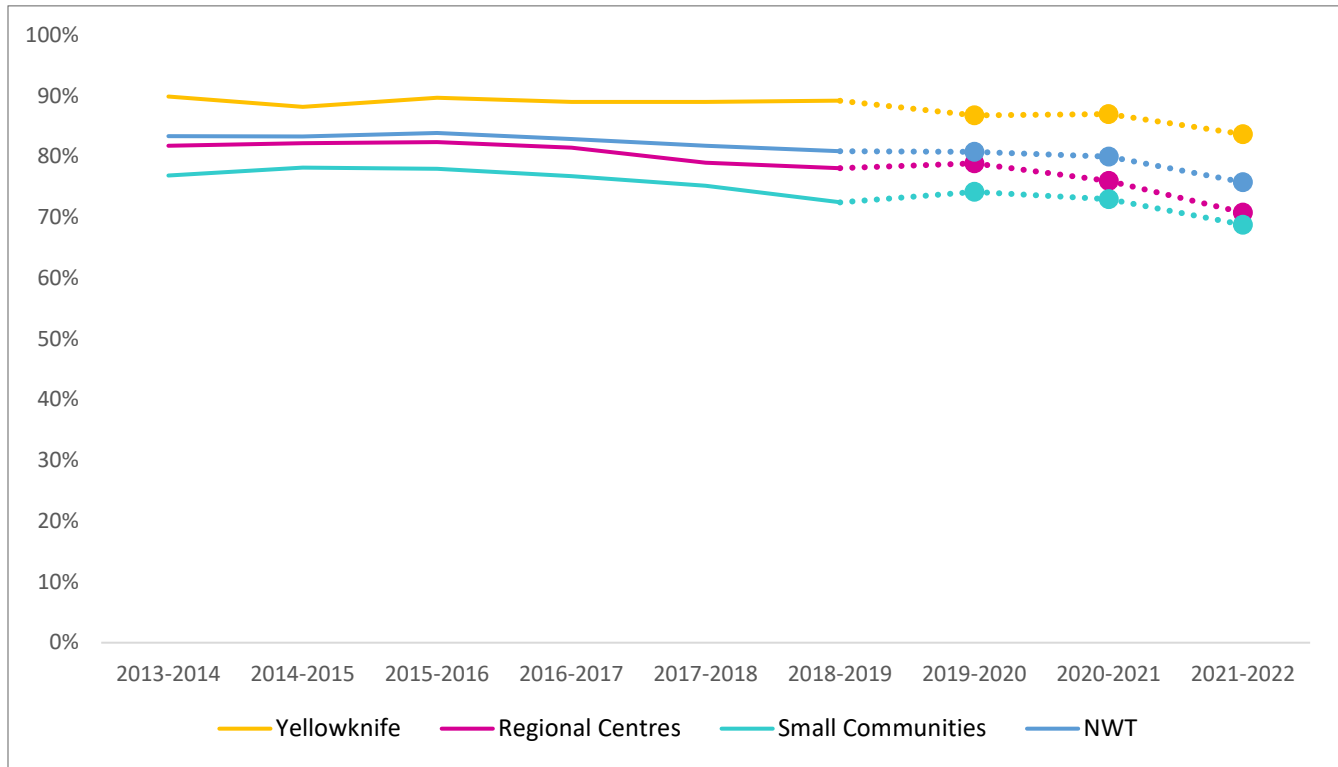
This annual fact sheet offers a glimpse at attendance rates over time for students in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 (JK-12) across Northwest Territories (NWT) schools, with a focus on the 2021-22 school year. Attendance rates are only one indicator of how the education system is doing as a whole and can be connected to academic success. Schools and education bodies also monitor attendance and may have programming or supports in place to respond to any attendance issues or concerns in real-time.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in the middle of the 2019-20 school year, has complicated attendance data.

Data presented for the 2019-20 school year only reflects the portion of the year before territory-wide school closures, when students attended classes in-person (September 2, 2019 to March 13, 2020). Subsequent school years (2020-21 and 2021-22) also faced school closures due to the pandemic, as well as spring flooding in the Hay River area. These three school years are therefore not comparable to previous years and are presented differently (Figure 1).

Average school attendance in the NWT was 75.8% in the 2021-22 school year. This means, on average, students in the NWT miss more than one day of school each week. Attendance rates have been on the decline in recent years, which is likely a direct impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 1: Average rate of attendance by community type*, 2013-14 to 2018-19, and 2019-20 to 2021-22



*Regional Centres includes Inuvik, Hay River, and Fort Smith. Small Communities are those outside of Regional Centres and Yellowknife.

* The attendance rates for the 2019-20 school year only reflect the portion of the year that included in-person instruction (September 2, 2019 to March 13, 2020). As a result, attendance rates are not directly comparable to previous years because they do not reflect the entire school year.

* The attendance rates for 2020-21 and 2021-22 are also not comparable due to the continued impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as flooding in the Hay River areas. The dashed line connecting those data points is a reminder that trends between them cannot be interpreted.

Table 1: Average rate of attendance (%) by grade and community type, 2021-22

	JK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
NWT	70.9	72.8	75.6	77.1	78.6	76.5	78.3	76.1	76.6	76.0	77.1	70.9	79.7	85.0
Small Communities	60.8	65.0	68.6	70.4	71.1	73.5	76.0	68.5	69.6	69.4	69.3	65.3	72.4	76.8
Regional Centres	65.8	69.5	67.5	72.2	74.3	68.5	71.2	71.4	71.3	67.9	75.3	67.9	74.9	80.0
Yellowknife	80.3	79.7	83.0	84.1	86.5	82.7	83.7	83.8	84.2	85.4	83.3	82.4	86.4	88.5

Figure 2: Average rate of attendance in NWT by grade, 2021-22

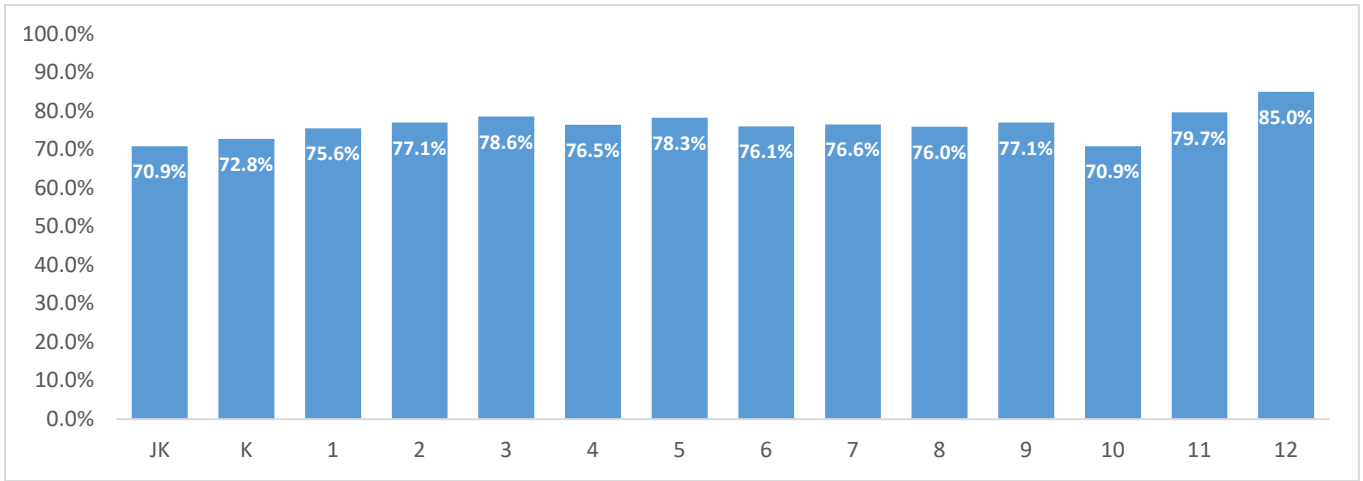


Figure 3: Overall average rate of attendance by community type, 2021-22

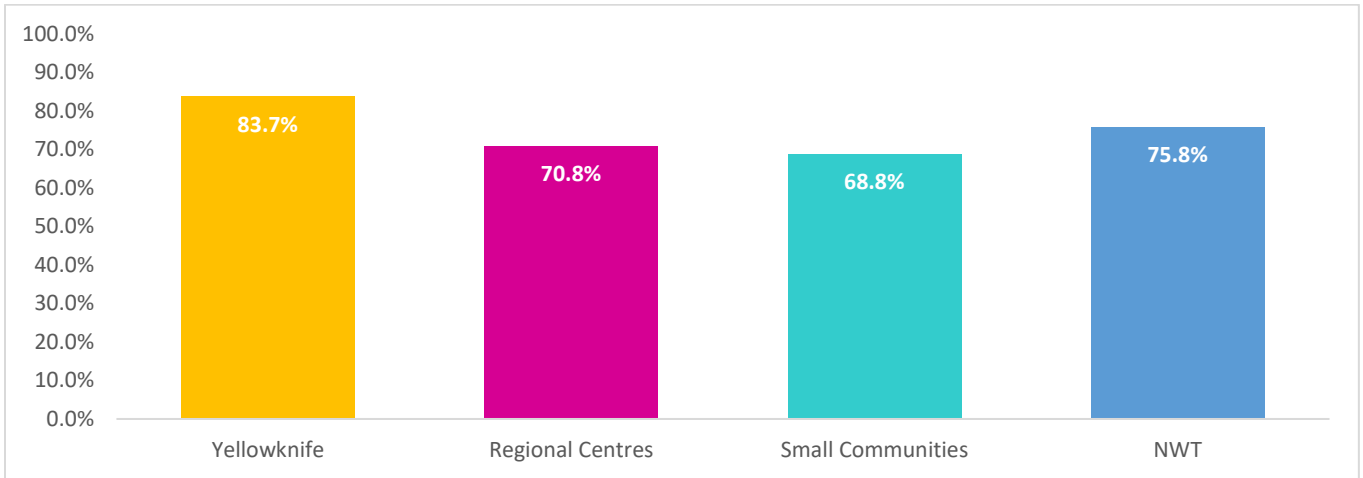
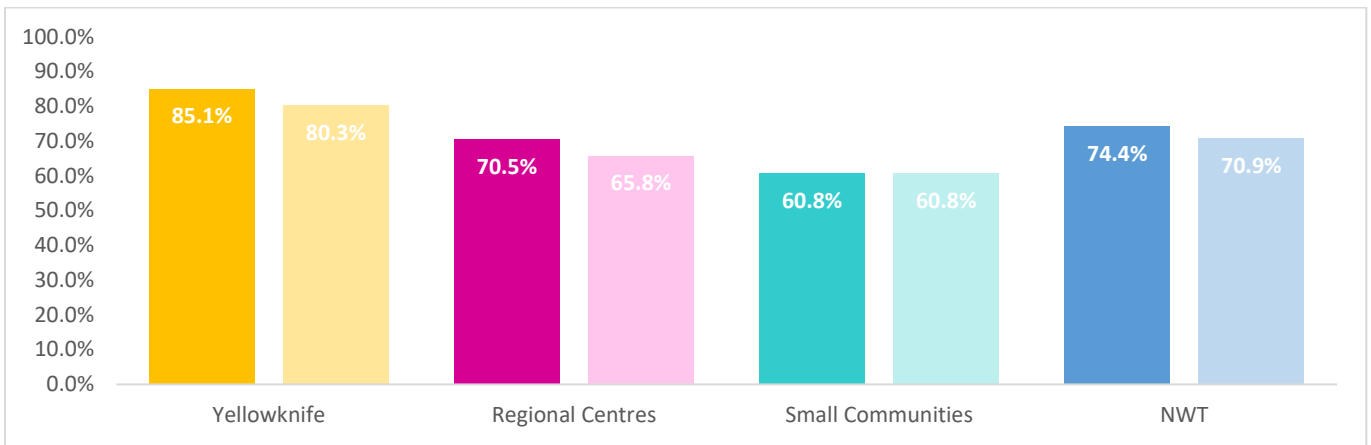


Figure 4: Average rate of attendance in Junior Kindergarten by community type, 2020-21 to 2021-22*



*Darker columns are 2020-21, lighter columns are 2021-22.

Attendance rates in Junior Kindergarten have been monitored since its full introduction in the NWT in 2017 as an optional enrollment. During the COVID-19 pandemic, enrollment and attendance in JK/pre-primary dropped across the country and internationally more so than in other grades. ECE will continue to monitor JK attendance rates to see if it returns to pre-COVID rates. Already the 2021-22 school year has seen an increase.

In Summary

Attendance rates are important indicators of the overall effectiveness of the Northwest Territories education system. They are monitored annually and used to inform the department's strategic planning and actions to improve student outcomes.

There is work underway on the NWT school system that aims to improve attendance rates in the NWT. The expectation is that as the education system becomes better at reflecting the cultures of the NWT, it will support students to flourish as capable and healthy persons and improve attendance.

Attendance rates will continue to be shared with education partners, Indigenous Governments, and the public as the Government of the Northwest Territories continues its work to improve student outcomes across the territory.