

NORTHERN DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION REPORT

JULY | 2025



K'áhshó got'jne xada k'é hederi ʔedjht'é yeriniwé ni dé dúle.
Dene Kádá

ʔerihť'is Dēne Sųłiné yati t'a huts'elkēr xa beyáyati theʔą ʔat'e, nuwe ts'ēn yótti.
Dēne Sųłiné

Edi gondi dehgháh got'je zhaté k'éé edat'éh enahddhę nide naxets'é edahí.
Dene Zhaté

Jii gwandak izhii ginjik vat'atr'ijáhch'uu zhit yinothan jì', diits'at ginohkhii.
Dinjii Zhu' Ginjik

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta.
Inuvialuktun

Ć'đ< nŋ^{sb}Δ^c ΛrlJ&ŕ^c Δ.đ'ŋĐŕ^{sb}γLŋ^b, >ŕ^cŋ^{sb}Δ^c >đ'bcŕ^{sb}e^{sb}Đŋ^c.
Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.
Inuinnaqtun

kīspin ki nitawihtīn ē nīhīyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.
nēhiyawēwin

Tłıchq yati k'èè. Dı wegodi newq dè, gots'o gonede.
Tłıchq

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NWT Education Bodies Participating in NDL:

- BDDEC Beaufort-Delta Divisional Education Council
- DDEC Dehcho Divisional Education Council
- SDEC Sahtu Divisional Education Council
- SSDEC South Slave Divisional Education Council
- TCSA Tłı̄chǫ Community Services Agency

Executive Summary

Background

Northern Distance Learning (NDL) is an online learning program that emerged in 2010 as an alternative to traditional brick-and-mortar classes and existing distance learning programs in the NWT. Its primary goal is to provide equitable access to academic programming (dash 1 courses) to students in small community schools. Equitable access means the opportunity to take the academic courses necessary for admission into post-secondary institutions, in a dedicated classroom in a student's home community. The program's secondary goal is to provide an opportunity for NDL students to achieve a level of academic success that would allow them to enroll in post-secondary programs.

Evaluation Design

In response to NDL's widening scope and potential for significant impact, this summative evaluation was intended to render a judgment on the program's success in meeting its goals within the allotted resources.

The evaluation was guided by the following six questions:

1. Was NDL implemented as intended?
2. Did small community schools have equitable access to NDL?
3. To what degree was NDL effective in achieving its planned outcomes?
4. How did NDL student achievement compare with that of non-NDL students enrolled in traditional academic courses?
5. To what degree was NDL efficient in achieving its goals with allotted resources?
6. Were there unanticipated outcomes associated with the NDL program?

Evaluation Methods

Evaluators worked in collaboration with the ECE NDL Program Coordinator and other program area experts. The evaluation used qualitative and quantitative data obtained from program and student records. Additionally, a key informant interview was conducted with an NDL Program Coordinator and NDL Instructional Designer.

Quantitative data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel, generating tables and charts to assess trends and comparisons with the data. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis methods.

Comments and statements with similar ideas and topics were grouped in Google Sheets to develop themes.

Results

Was NDL implemented as intended?

The criteria assessment for this question was incomplete due to missing performance targets for several evaluation indicators. Out of the eight evaluation indicators for this question, only three had confirmed performance targets for comparison with actual NDL performance data. These indicators were:

- 1a2. Number of schools participating in NDL per year (targets of 11, 15, 20, and 20 schools participating, respectively, for each school year between 2018-2022).
- 1b4. Attendance rates per year (yearly target of 90% attendance rate).
- 1c1. Student satisfaction rates with NDL courses, per year (yearly target of 80% student satisfaction rates).

Based on the assessment of those indicators¹, the program would be assessed as “*not implemented as intended*,” as fewer than 60% of performance targets were met annually. However, the lack of confirmed targets for several indicators prevents a definitive assessment of whether the program was implemented as intended. Performance targets need to be developed for: the number of NDL courses offered per year, enrollment rates per year, the number of students taking NDL courses each year, and attrition rates per year.

Key findings:

1. **Number of schools participating:** The number of schools participating increased from 11 in 2018-2019 to 15 in 2019-2020, meeting the NDL performance targets for those years. Growth continued in the 2020-2021 school year with 19 schools participating. Despite the increase, this was just below the target of 20 schools participating. The following year saw a decrease in participating schools, from 19 in 2020-2021 to 16 in 2021-2022. This number would also be below the performance target (20) for 2021-2022.
2. **Number of NDL courses offered:** As the program continued to expand, so did the number of course offerings. This number steadily increased from 16 in the 2018-2019 school year to 31 in the 2022-2023 school year.
3. **Student enrollment:** Student enrollment in the program steadily increased from 62 students in 2018-2019 to 85 students the following year, then to 92 students in 2020-2021. This number then declined to 60 students in 2021-2022 but rose again to 73 in 2022-2023.

¹ Evaluation criteria assessment for Question 1: Fully implemented as intended = 80%+ of performance targets were met, year to year. Partially implemented as intended = 60-79% performance targets were met, year to year. Not implemented as intended = <60% performance targets were met, year to year.

4. **Student attrition:** The number of early leavers grew significantly from four students in 2018-2019 to 62 in 2020-2021 but decreased to 29 students in both 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. This seems to indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic did not have a negative impact on enrollment. Rather, it might have had an impact on attrition.
5. **Student attendance:** Between 2018-2023, average attendance rates were consistent at around 80%, except in 2019-2020, when attendance dipped to 73%. Attendance rates between 2018-2023 were all below the target of 90%. While attendance rates were comparable to territorial high school averages, it should be highlighted that the program demonstrated a slight upward trend after 2019-2020, contrasting with the territorial averages' slight decline
6. **Student satisfaction:** An analysis of student satisfaction surveys revealed that students were moderately satisfied with the program overall, with average satisfaction rates at around 66%. These rates, however, did not meet the yearly target of 80% student satisfaction rates.
7. **Promising practices:** When analyzing the promising practices that could have positively impacted the processes and implementation of NDL, the following emerged from an analysis of Education Bodies' contribution agreements and reporting:
 - Promising Practice #1: Invest in In-class Support Persons (ISP).
 - Promising Practice #2: Ongoing communication with parents and teachers.
 - Promising Practice #3: Tutoring and homework clubs.

Did small community schools have equitable access to NDL?

The criteria assessment for this question was incomplete due to missing data collected for several evaluation indicators. Only two of the four performance targets were comparable, which include:

- 2a1. Principal/superintendent-perceived impact of school contribution requirements on the school's financial situation (yearly target of contributions not perceived as burdensome by participating schools)
- 2c1. Yearly cost of NDL to participating schools per enrolled student (target: the cost of NDL per enrolled NDL student in schools with similar NDL student counts was similar, within a 10% variance)

Of these, one target was met, and one was not. According to the evaluation criteria², meeting fewer than three performance targets would indicate that "*access was not equitable*." However, with only two targets available for comparison, a definitive assessment of the program's equitable access could not be fully determined.

² Evaluation criteria assessment for Question 2: Access was Equitable = Three or more of the performance targets were met. Access was Not Equitable = Fewer than three of the performance targets were met.

Key findings:

1. **Perceived impact of school contribution:** There were no comments suggesting that the contributions were perceived as burdensome by participating schools (Appendix C).
2. **NDL contributions:** The average total contributions to all NDL programming decreased over time, from \$43,403.18 in 2018-2019 to \$37,098.75 in 2022-2023, with contributions varying significantly between schools. Few schools received contributions within 10% of the average NDL contributions each year.
3. **Yearly cost of NDL to participating schools per enrolled student:** Comparing costs per student among schools with similar enrollment showed minimal differences initially. For instance, single-student schools had a 0.4% difference in cost per student in 2018-2019, but disparities grew over time, reaching an 8.9% difference by 2021-2022. Schools with 8 or more students exhibited differences exceeding 10% in later years, highlighting that similar student counts do not necessarily equate to similar costs per student.

To what degree was NDL effective in achieving its planned outcomes?

The criteria assessment for this question was also incomplete due to incomplete performance targets and missing data collected for several evaluation indicators. Of the eight evaluation indicators, only three had confirmed performance targets with actual NDL performance data for comparison. These indicators were:

- 3a2. Proportion of students (in each course and grade) with a final mark above 65% (yearly target of 65% of students between 2018-2023).
- 3a3a. Yearly credit acquisition rates for NDL students by course, by community, gender, ethnicity and overall (yearly target rates of 60%, 65%, 80%, and 80% respectively, for each school year between 2018-2022).
- 3b1. Percent of NDL students who pass departmental exams by course per year (targets only confirmed for 2018-2019 school year, which was 20% for social studies, 20% for English language arts (ELA), and 10% for math).

Of the eleven comparable targets, only five (45%) were met. According to the evaluation criteria³, with *less than 50% of performance targets met annually*, the NDL program would be deemed as “*low in effectiveness*” in achieving its planned outcomes. However, due to the absence of confirmed targets for several indicators and incomplete data collected, a comprehensive assessment of how well NDL achieved its planned outcomes could not be fully determined.

³ Evaluation criteria assessment for Question 3: Highly Effective = 80%+ of performance targets were met from year to year. Moderately Effective = 50-79% of performance targets were met from year to year. Low in Effectiveness = <50% of performance targets were met from year to year.

Key findings:

1. **Proportion of students with a final mark above 65%:** The proportion of NDL students passing with a final grade above 65% increased steadily from 43% in 2018-2019 to 82% in 2022-2023, with the yearly target (65%) met only in 2022-2023.
2. **Credit acquisition rates:** When looking at credit acquisition rates per year, average rates decreased from 77% in 2018-2019 to 57% in 2019-2020. Average rates then increased to 75% in 2020-2021 and then to 96% in 2021-2022. The average rate would then decrease to 75% in 2022-2023. Overall, the average credit acquisition rate between 2018 to 2023 was 75%.
3. **Diploma exam passing rates:** Diploma exam data was available for only two academic years, with a total of 78% (39 out of 50) of NDL students passing their exams in 2018-2019 and 2021-2022. In 2018-2019, students took exams for three courses, with only Social Studies 30-1 achieving a 100% pass rate. In 2021-2022, exams were taken for seven courses, all of which had at least 50% of students passing. Four courses – English Language Arts (ELA) 30-1, Math 30-1, Physics 30-1, and Chemistry 30-1 – each achieved a 100% pass rate.
4. **Proportion of students who receive student financial assistance (SFA):** SFA data shows that NDL has helped students get into post-secondary programs. From 2019-2020 to 2021-2022, every student with at least 20 NDL credits reported having unconditional acceptance to a post-secondary program. However, SFA data also shows that staying in a post-secondary program may be a challenge. The proportion of NDL graduates who remained in post-secondary for a second year decreased over the years. Additionally, the proportion of graduates who received SFA the year of graduation also decreased, going from 40% in 2019-2020 to less than 20% in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.

How did NDL students' achievement compare with that of non-NDL students enrolled in traditional academic courses?

Based on evaluation criteria⁴, student achievement between NDL and non-NDL students varied over the four years. The number of NDL students enrolled in courses was considerably smaller than the number of non-NDL students. This difference in group size means that passing rates for NDL students were more sensitive to changes in individual performance.

As a result, direct comparisons may not fully reflect the progress made by the NDL students. Therefore, it is difficult to conclude the passing rate comparisons.

To what degree was NDL efficient in achieving its goals with allotted resources?

Based on the evaluation criteria⁵, *“actual costs aligned with or were no more than 5% above the budgeted amounts”*. As a result, the NDL program was considered *“somewhat efficient”* in achieving its goals with the resources allocated. Additionally, due to instances of underspending across the program budgets, there are opportunities to redirect funding for better resource utilization.

ECE NDL annual budgets were typically underspent by amounts between \$300,000 and \$1,200,000

over time. Education bodies, on the other hand, were typically within their annual budgets overall. SDEC was the only education body that underspent its budget annually in the last five years. BDDEC had the most overspend overall.

Were there unanticipated outcomes associated with the NDL program?

The following unanticipated outcomes emerged from an analysis of Education Body contribution agreements and reporting:

- Improved student confidence and personal growth
- Exposure to broader opportunities
- Peer collaboration and community building

Conclusion

The evaluation results highlight that the NDL program provided students with access to high-level courses and created positive academic outcomes in small communities across the territory.

However, the evaluation also faced limitations in fully determining the extent of NDL's implementation and impact were successful. The absence of clear performance targets and inconsistencies in data collection made it challenging to assess the program comprehensively.

⁴ Evaluation criteria assessment for Question 4: Comparable Achievement = The achievements of NDL and non-NDL students were similar. Lower Achievement = The achievements of NDL students were less than the achievements of non-NDL students. Higher Achievement = The achievements of NDL students were greater than the achievements of non-NDL students.

⁵ Evaluation criteria assessment for Question 5: Efficient = Actual costs align or were below budgeted costs. Somewhat Efficient = Actual costs align or were no more than 5% above budgeted costs. Not Efficient = Actual costs were more than 5% above budgeted costs.

Recommendations

The following is a summary of the recommendations that emerged from the evaluation findings:

Recommendation #1: Support the implementation of the promising practices. These promising practices highlight the elements of a supportive environment that contribute to student success in the NDL program.

Recommendation #2: Incorporate current and/or former NDL students into current orientation sessions. Incorporating past or current NDL students into the orientation sessions to support those who are new to NDL could better prepare them for the program. In some communities, NDL students have served as role models, inspiring others to succeed; thus, a mentorship role for them could better support new students in the program.

Recommendation #3: Explore opportunities to redirect NDL funding. Given the instances of underspending across the NDL program budgets, there are opportunities to redirect funding, particularly in ways to support communities where their education bodies are overspending.

Recommendation #4: Continue to strengthen strategies and opportunities that support peer collaboration and community building. With the ability to connect students across the territory, there is an opportunity to strengthen a sense of community and enhance the collaboration skills of students in an online environment.

Recommendation #5: Establish Clear and Meaningful Evaluation Indicators.

Develop and formalize comprehensive performance targets for all key indicators (e.g., course offerings, enrollment, attrition, credit acquisition, and post-secondary outcomes). Reassess the evaluation framework to ensure indicators are relevant, measurable, and aligned with program goals and data availability.

Recommendation #6: Revisit data collection methods. Identify a sustainable way to consistently and accurately collect quantitative and qualitative data to support fuller program assessments.

Recommendation #7: Strengthen the integration of student feedback into program evaluation and monitoring.

Introduction/Description of the Program

Program Background

In the 1990s, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) started offering secondary school programming in small communities where Grades 10-12 had not previously been available. However, since that time, NWT schools in small communities⁶ have struggled to provide an equitable level of education across the territory. Due to small student numbers, it has proven challenging, and sometimes impossible, for small schools to offer a full range of academic-level courses. This is a typical challenge in rural and remote schools across the country and not specific to NWT.

As a result, high school students in these communities did not have an opportunity to take academic courses or were taking them in split classrooms that combined general (dash 2) and academic (dash 1) courses. Also, students in small schools often did not demonstrate high levels of success for a variety of reasons. This severely limited the types of post-secondary options for them because completion of academic courses is a common entry requirement in many colleges and universities. For example, University of Alberta⁷ requires English Language Arts 30-1 to be completed for entry into any of its bachelor programs.

In response, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) introduced several distance learning and alternative approaches. These included the home boarding program and courses through Alberta's Distance Learning Centre (ADLC). Success rates with both, however, were generally low. Credit acquisition rates approached 30% - an outcome that, partially, can be attributed to the self-directed nature of these approaches.

In 2010, the Northern Distance Learning (NDL) program emerged as an alternative to the existing distance learning programs. NDL was developed and piloted by the Beaufort-Delta District Education Council (BDDEC). It was delivered by teachers from Inuvik's East Three Secondary School via videoconference and assisted by in-classroom monitors who supervise and assist the students.

⁶ *Small Community* is one in which five or less members of the NWTTA reside and is isolated from other communities by more than a 30 km all-weather road. Small community populations range from 70 to 285 (<https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/services/ressources-pour-les-enseignants-la-recherche-dun-emploi-aux-tno/community-information>).

⁷ University of Alberta. Admission Requirements.

<https://www.ualberta.ca/admissions/undergraduate/admission/admission-requirements>.

Between 2014-2015 and 2016-2017, NDL expanded to seven schools and demonstrated an average credit acquisition rate of 71%, which was significantly higher than the 30% achieved through other approaches. By the end of 2020-2021, NDL had expanded to 19 NWT schools.

The program attributes its success to the hybrid learning approach, which is sensitive to the realities of the local communities. Namely, NDL combines live instruction (synchronous learning),

Program Goals

NDL is an online learning program that emerged in 2010 as an alternative to traditional brick-and-mortar classes and existing distance learning programs. Its primary goal is to provide equitable access to academic programming to students in small community schools⁸. Equitable access means the opportunity to take the academic courses necessary for admission into post-secondary institutions, in a dedicated classroom in a student's home community. The program's secondary goal is to provide an opportunity for NDL students to achieve a level of academic success that would allow them to enroll in post-secondary programs. More information about NDL's goals can be found in the Program Logic Model in Appendix A.

Program Funding

The approach to NDL funding is based on cost-sharing between participating schools and ECE. ECE provides funding to the BDDEC and to participating education bodies through contribution agreements. The funds are then allocated by those education bodies to participating schools. In addition, individual schools (excluding the schools in Inuvik District Education Authority) contribute a sum that includes 30% of their Senior Secondary Materials and Distance Learning (SSMDL)⁹ funds plus a flat rate contribution based on the number of students enrolled in NDL. The flat rate contributions are as follows:

- 1-4 NDL students = \$20,000
- 5-9 NDL students = \$30,000
- 10+ NDL students = \$40,000

⁸ Small community schools should be differentiated from "small schools" as defined by the *School Funding Framework* (i.e., schools with less than 10 senior secondary full-time equivalent enrollments). In this case, small community schools are schools located in small NWT communities; some of these schools will fall under the definition of a "small school", while others will not.

⁹ SSMDL is a category in the School Funding Framework that provides funding for trades programs operations and management, libraries, and distance learning.

Program Courses and Enrollment Capacity

NDL once had to offer courses on a 3 to 4-year rotating basis because the program lacked teaching capacity to offer a full complement of courses each semester. Science courses such as Chemistry, Physics and Biology, and Grade 12 courses in English and Social Studies were often cycled in this manner.

Since 2021-2022, NDL has employed 5 full-time teachers to provide enough academic courses that a school could program all academic courses necessary to satisfy high school graduation requirements. Based on a 20-to-1 student teacher ratio - and the capacity to offer 40 courses a year, NDL has a 400-seat capacity per semester (800 per school year).

NDL considers 7 schools in a single course to be an optimal amount for active participation through videoconferencing. At one time, schools were limited to one networked NDL classroom and access to only 4 NDL courses offered each day. Since 2022-2023, NDL has been using the GNWT network that allows NDL to accommodate students in smaller spaces besides the 'NDL classroom'; schools now take multiple NDL courses simultaneously.

Program Staffing

Staff

NDL courses are taught by 5 ECE-funded, BDDEC-hired teachers in Inuvik. For many years, these teachers taught on a part-time basis with the rest of their teaching duties being 'down-the-hallway' in their regular brick and mortar classes at East Three Secondary School.

In addition to teachers, students are supported by "In-class Support Persons (ISPs)". Over the years, these supports came from a variety of sources: Canadian University Students Overseas (CUSO) volunteers, local people, and school-based staff deployed in whole or in part with NDL students.

Until the 2023-2024 school year, ECE provided some funding to supplement Education Bodies' funding of these supports.

For the 2022-2023 school year, administrative staff included one full-time manager (NDL Manager) located in ECE, Yellowknife; one full-time NDL coordinator (Online Blended Learning Coordinator, "OBLC") located in BDDEC, Inuvik; one full-time technology coordinator (Technology Coordinator) located in ECE, Inuvik; and one program coordinator (Program Coordinator) located in ECE, Inuvik.

Oversight

In addition to staffing, an NDL working group was established to contribute to teacher training, course development, and program oversight, including monitoring and evaluation. Membership in the working group included:

- Distance Learning and Literacy with Information and Communications Technology (LwICT) Coordinator (ECE);
- NDL Coordinator (BDDEC);

- Teaching and Learning Coordinators (ECE);
- Director of Teaching and Learning (ECE); and
- Adult and Post-Secondary Education Coordinator (ECE).

Territorial implementation of the NDL program was overseen by a Steering Committee comprised of the following members:

- Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services (ECE);
- Assistant Deputy Minister, Education and Early Childhood (ECE);
- Superintendent, Beaufort-Delta District Education Authority (BDDEC);
- Director, Teaching and Learning (ECE);
- Director, Planning, Research and Evaluation (ECE);
- Director, Finance and Capital Planning (ECE);
- Manager of Application and Data Maintenance (ECE);
- Distance Learning and LwICT Coordinator (ECE);
- NDL Coordinator (BDDEC); and
- Math & Science Coordinators (ECE).

Program Plan and Technical Requirements

NDL has expanded the types of spaces in the school plan that enable effective NDL programming. In the early days of NDL, a separate learning space of no less than 18m² was required that could accommodate 5-8 students plus hardware requirements. NDL used a virtual network (called “V-Connect”) in this space that provided reliable connectivity. The virtual private network has since been replaced with the GNWT Network, but these ‘classroom spaces’ continue to require a monitor (in-person support), videoconferencing equipment, and document cameras.

The GNWT Network has proven able to ensure high-quality video transmission and access to the learning management system (Moodle is used to house electronic course materials). Use of the GNWT Network over the school’s wireless router allows NDL students to also study in other places in the school where they can connect to the Microsoft 365 and Teams videoconferencing sessions.

This expansion of learning areas allows multiple NDL courses to be taken simultaneously. Some NDL schools use conference rooms, portions of the library, and even portions of classrooms where other courses are taking place. This is possible through the use of noise-cancelling headsets with microphones for two-way communications and built-in cameras on the students’ Microsoft Surface Pros. While these student devices are funded through NDL, purchasing course materials (e.g., lab equipment and supplies) is the responsibility of individual schools.

Program Eligibility Criteria

From NDL’s inception, eligibility criteria were established to enter the program to ensure that students could achieve the highest levels of success. The criteria are reviewed each year; the current 2024-2025 list is here:

1. **Completed application.** There is one application for students to complete, which includes a *Statement of Reasoning, Learner Profile, Parent/Guardian Consent* and the student's *Validation Statement*. Completing the application is one indicator that the student has the qualities of an independent learner.
2. **High attendance rate.** Students who succeed in NDL typically have high attendance rates in school. Students who have not attended school regularly may not be eligible.
3. **Prerequisite scores of 65%.** For a student to be successful in NDL, they should be prepared to be challenged. A student should achieve at least 65% in prerequisite courses. Although 65% is the recommended course score, students who have passed courses with a score below 65% will still be considered.
4. **Proper prerequisite courses.** As with all NWT high school students, NDL students must complete the proper prerequisite courses to be registered in their selected course. Dash 1 courses require the completion of dash 1 prerequisites.
5. **Past NDL experience (if applicable).** If a student has not been successful in previous NDL courses, the program may not be suitable for them. When a student has challenges passing NDL courses, the principal, student and parents should discuss how to support the student's learning and whether NDL is the best fit.
6. **Age.** Students must be under the age of 21 at the beginning of the school year to be eligible for NDL.

Program Outcomes

NDL students are expected to achieve a variety of short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes as a result of their participation in the program (see Program Logic Model in Appendix A, p. 46). Short-term outcomes can occur within one semester and continue to accumulate until the student exits the program. Medium-term outcomes build on short-term outcomes and are expected to occur at the Grade 12 level. Long-term outcomes are expected to occur within 2-3 years after NDL students graduate from high school.

The more a student takes NDL courses, the more likely they are to achieve some short-, medium- and long-term outcomes than students who take fewer NDL courses. The NDL Program Monitoring Plan contains targets for each school year.

Short-term Outcomes

In the short term, NDL strives to increase student enrollment in academic courses in small communities, compared to pre-NDL enrollment levels in the same schools (accounting for changes in the total number of students).

It is also expected that the majority of NDL students will acquire course credit, and a certain proportion will have a course mark of 65% or above.

Medium-term Outcome

The majority of students completing departmental exams on their NDL courses are expected to pass the exam.

Long-term Outcome

The majority of NDL graduates are expected to directly¹⁰ enroll in post-secondary programs.

Program Assumptions and External Factors

During the evaluation process, where expected outcomes are not being achieved, it will be necessary to consider whether the underlying program assumptions hold true and/or whether external factors may have influenced the program delivery and outcomes.

Assumptions

For NDL to achieve its expected outcomes, the following assumptions were made:

- Small community schools have adequate space necessary for NDL classrooms.
- Small community school calendars match the NDL calendar.
- Teachers in East Three Secondary School are qualified to teach academic courses via NDL learning approach.
- Students in small communities are motivated to take academic courses.
- 90% attendance is optimal for students to achieve success in NDL courses.
- 65% course mark average in NDL courses is necessary for success in postgraduate programs.
- Students in small communities want to pursue post-secondary education and have the support needed to apply for admission.
- Students in small communities have access to the financial resources necessary to pursue post-secondary education.

External Factors

The following factors outside of the program's control could have impacted its success:

- Factors affecting the quality of the network and other technical equipment (e.g., weather, service interruptions).
- Availability of volunteer monitors and housing for them in the communities.
- Availability of teachers who are willing and able to teach NDL courses part-time.
- Physical and mental health of the students, as well as their family and community circumstances.
- Ability and willingness of parents and guardians to provide appropriate, supportive learning environments.
- Other programs and initiatives that may impact small community schools, student success in academic courses, and their post-secondary outcomes.

¹⁰ Direct enrollment refers to a situation where a high school graduate is not required to upgrade the courses for which they have received credit through NDL.

Evaluation Methodology

Evaluation Design

In response to NDL's widening scope and potential for significant impact, the intent of this summative evaluation is to render a judgment on the program's success in meeting its goals within the allotted resources. More specifically, the evaluation will aim to achieve the following objectives:

1. To determine whether NDL is effective in:
 - Providing equitable access to academic programming to students in small community schools.
 - Providing an opportunity for NDL students to achieve a level of academic success that would allow them to enroll in post-secondary programs.
2. To determine whether NDL is efficient in the use of its resources.
3. To provide recommendations that could inform decisions about continuation, discontinuation, or modification of the NDL.

To reach these objectives, the evaluation will be guided by the following six questions. Further details - including indicators, performance targets and required data, are outlined in the Evaluation Matrix (Appendix B, p. 47.).

1. Was NDL implemented as intended?
 - a. Did the program deliver the intended number and quality of courses in the intended number of schools, to the intended group of students?
 - b. What were the program utilization rates overall and in each community?
 - c. Were the students satisfied with the courses?
 - d. What were the promising practices, challenges and unmet needs that may have affected program implementation process and effectiveness over the years?
2. Did small community schools have equitable access to NDL?
 - a. Did the school contribution requirements impact the financial situation of participating schools differently?
 - b. Did the school contribution requirements pose a barrier to NDL access for non-participating small community schools?
 - c. Was the yearly cost of NDL per enrolled NDL student similar for participating schools?
3. To what degree was NDL effective in achieving its planned outcomes?
 - a. Did the students achieve the intended short-term outcomes, and did the outcomes differ depending on students' home community, gender, ethnicity and grade level?
 - b. Did the students achieve the intended medium-term outcomes, and did the outcomes differ depending on students' home community, gender, ethnicity and grade level?
 - c. Did the students achieve the intended long-term outcomes, and did the outcomes differ depending on students' home community, gender, ethnicity and grade level?
 - d. What was the most significant impact of NDL on students in small community schools?
4. How did NDL student achievement compare with that of non-NDL students enrolled in traditional academic courses?

5. To what degree was NDL efficient in achieving its goals with allotted resources?
 - a. How did the actual program costs compare with the budgeted costs?
6. Were there unanticipated outcomes associated with the NDL program?
 - a. Were there positive unanticipated outcomes associated with NDL?
 - b. Were there negative unanticipated outcomes associated with NDL?

The scope of this evaluation included small community schools in the NWT that participated or were expected to participate in NDL from 2018-2019 to 2022-2023 (5 school years). This evaluation assessed how the program was delivered, as well as its outcomes.

This evaluation did not investigate the issue of duplicate funding, which could have occurred at the school level if students took an NDL class and a traditional class at the same time.

Data Collection Methods, Procedure and Instruments

Principles

The evaluation adhered to *Program Evaluation Standards*¹¹ developed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (JCSEE) and adopted by the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) in 2012. These standards ensure:

1. The evaluation process and products meet the needs of program stakeholders (utility standards).
2. The evaluation is effective and efficient (feasibility standards).
3. The evaluation is proper, fair, legal, right and just (propriety standards).
4. The evaluation results and judgments about quality are dependable and true (accuracy standards)
5. The evaluation's processes and products are adequately documented (accountability standards).

Data Collection Methods

Evaluators worked in collaboration with the ECE NDL Program Coordinator. The evaluation used qualitative and quantitative data obtained from program and student records. Details about which data and records were required to answer each evaluation question and sub-question are outlined in the Evaluation Matrix (Appendix B, p. 47). Where information needed clarification, program area experts were engaged with.

¹¹ Canadian Evaluation Society. <https://evaluationcanada.ca/program-evaluation-standards>

Primary sources of data included, but were not limited to, the following:

- NDL Handbook
- Financial Management Board approved funding requests and submitted Information Items
- NDL school contribution agreements and associated annual financial reports
- NDL budgets for 2018-2019 – 2022-2023 school years
- NDL program monitoring plans for 2018-2019 – 2022-2023 school years
- NDL annual reports for 2018-2019 – 2022-2023 school years
- NDL program monitoring sheets for 2018-2019 – 2022-2023 school years
- Student records data stored at PowerSchool and/or CMAS (case management systems)
- Data stored in Moodle (course management system) for 2018-2019 – 2022-2023 school years
- Raw results of annual student satisfaction surveys

Additionally, a key informant interview was conducted with the NDL Program Coordinator and NDL Instructional Designer.

Data Analysis Methods

Quantitative data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel, generating tables and charts to assess trends and comparisons with the data.

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis methods. Comments and statements with similar ideas and topics were grouped together in Google Sheets to develop themes.

Evaluation Limitations

The limitations that impacted the reliability and validity of the evaluation findings, as well as their mitigation strategies, are summarized in the table below.

Limitation	Mitigation Strategy
The evaluation relied heavily on the accuracy and thoroughness of program records and student records systems (CMAS, PowerSchool).	Evaluators cross-checked data obtained from program monitoring sheets and annual reports with data from automated student records systems (PowerSchool, CMAS).
It was impossible to causally attribute many of the outcomes to the NDL program directly due to a non-experimental evaluation design, and the fact that NDL is only <i>one</i> program that influences student outcomes.	Contextual factors were considered and described in the report.
The lack of performance indicator targets and a lack of consistent and available data resulted in a weakened assessment of the program overall.	Data gaps were acknowledged and described in the report.

Evaluation Results

Evaluation Question #1: Was NDL Implemented as Intended?

This question attempted to determine whether planned activities were carried out in accordance with the NDL performance targets.

Program Expansion: Number of Schools Participating

Program expansion is primarily dictated by schools self-identifying their interest in participating. Program participation is based on student needs – if students do not require NDL courses, schools will not need to participate. Although it is not expected to have students participating from every school every year, it was targeted that 11 schools would be participating in the 2018-2019 school year, 15 in 2019-2020, and 20 in both 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, no targets were determined for 2022-2023 at the time of this report.

Overall, there was a gradual increase in participating schools over the years (Table 1, p. 23). The number of participating schools increased from 11 in 2018-2019 to 15 in 2019-2020, meeting the NDL performance targets for those years. Growth continued in the 2020-2021 school year with 19 schools participating, however, this was just below the target of 20 schools participating. The following year saw a decrease in participating schools, decreasing from 19 in 2020-2021 to 16 in 2021-2022 - which would also be below the performance target of 20 schools for that year.

Between the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years, 15 of the 19 schools consistently participated. Schools in the Beaufort Delta Region had the most consistency in participation, with no decreases in school participation over the years (Table 1, p. 23).

Although student demand for NDL courses is a primary factor in a school's participation, another factor is the school's capacity to offer the same courses. For instance, larger schools, such as Chief Jimmy Bruneau in Behchokò and Mackenzie Mountain school in Norman Wells, will offer these courses themselves, reducing the number of students who need NDL courses.

In a key informant interview with the NDL Program Coordinator, it was noted that external factors, such as principal longevity and superintendent buy-in, can impact a school's consistent participation in NDL – such that the most consistent schools often had the least Principal turnover.

Table 1. Schools participating in NDL program per year

School	Community	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Total number of BDDEC Schools Participating		4	5	5	5	5
Mangilaluk School	Tuktoyaktuk	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Moose Kerr School	Aklavik	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chief Julius School	Fort McPherson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Helen Kalvak School	Ulukhaktok	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Angik School	Paulatuk		✓	✓	✓	✓
Total number of SDEC Schools Participating		3	3	5	5	4
Chief Albert Wright School	Tulita	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chief T'Selehye School	Fort Good Hope	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
?ehtseo Ayha School	Deline	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mackenzie Mountain School	Norman Wells			✓	✓	
Colville Lake School	Colville Lake			✓	✓	✓
Total number of DDEC Schools Participating		2	3	3	2	3
Líídljì Kúę Regional High School	Fort Simpson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Echo Dene School	Fort Liard	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Deh Gáh Elementary & Secondary School	Fort Providence		✓	✓		✓
Total number of SSDEC Schools Participating		1	2	2	1	1
Deninu School	Fort Resolution	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Łutselk'e Dene School	Łutselk'e		✓	✓		
Total number of TCSA Schools Participating		1	2	4	3	4
Chief Jimmy Bruneau School	Behchokò	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mezi Community School	Whatì		✓	✓	✓	✓
Alexis Arrowmaker School	Wekweètì			✓		✓
Jean Wetrade Gamètì School	Gamètì			✓	✓	✓
Total number of schools participating		11	15	19	16	17
NDL Performance Target		11	15	20	20	N/A

Check mark (✓) = school participated that year. Gray boxes = school chose not to participate that year. Red text

= number below NDL performance target.

Program Expansion: Number of NDL Courses Offered

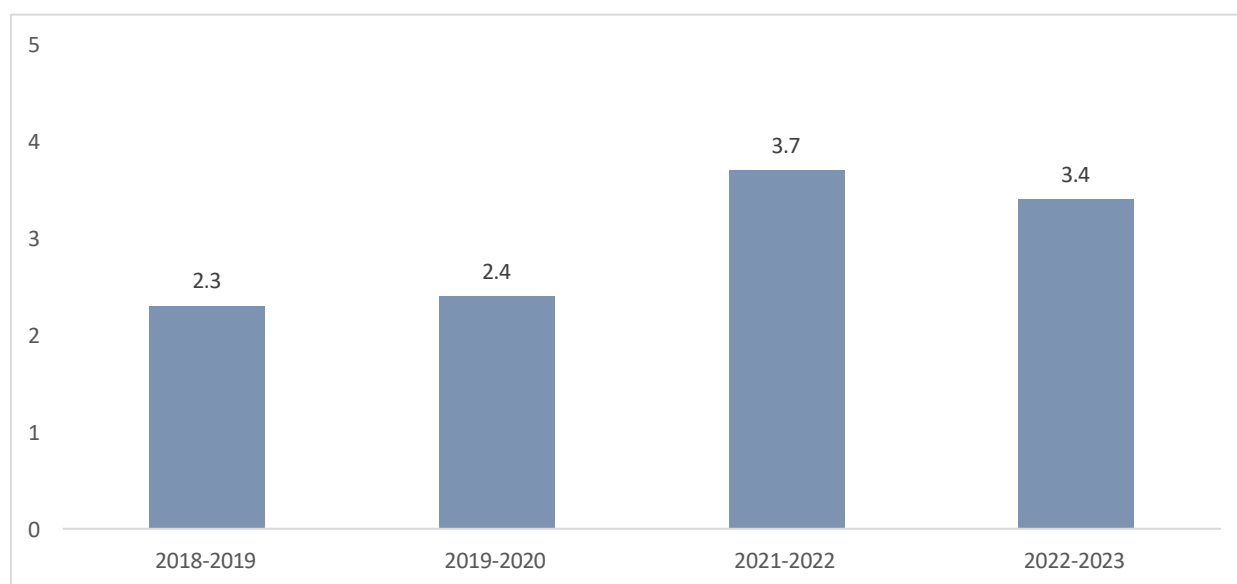
As the program continued to expand, so did the number of course offerings, increasing from 16 in the 2018-2019 school year to 31 in the 2022-2023 school year (Table 2, p. 24). As seen in Figure 1 (p. 24), there was a general increase in the average number of courses per student with each year, showing that students could take more courses as the program expanded. The increase in course offerings is a testament to the benefits of having 5 full-time NDL teachers and a reliable GNWT

network, allowing the capacity for multiple NDL courses to be taught simultaneously. Additionally, NDL teacher capacity increased from 2.75 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in 2018-2019 to 5.0 FTE teachers in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.

Table 2. Number of courses offered per semester per year

Year	Semester 1	Semester 2	Total
2018-2019	8	8	16
2019-2020	9	8	17
2020-2021	9	10	19
2021-2022	16	15	31
2022-2023	16	15	31

Figure 1. Average number of NDL courses per student per year



One of the purposes of NDL is to provide participating schools with an opportunity to offer a full range of academic courses (dash 1 courses). NDL consistently offered 5 types of grade 10 level courses over the span of 5 years, providing the necessary pre-requisites to grade 11 level and, subsequently, grade 12 level academic courses (Table 3, p. 25). Almost all the dash 1 courses were offered each year, except for Math 30-1, which was not offered in the 2019-2020 school year (Table 3, p. 25).

Prior to 2021-2022, NDL did not have enough full-time teachers dedicated to NDL to allow for consistent and regular course offerings. This meant that some courses could not be offered in some years due to teacher capacity. All possible courses were offered in both the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years as a result of having 5 full-time teachers.

Table 3. Course types offered per year

Course Type	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Total number of grade 10 course types offered	5	5	5	5	5
Art 10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ELA 10-1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Math 10C	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Science 10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Soc 10-1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total number of grade 11 course types offered	5	6	6	8	8
Art 20		✓	✓	✓	✓
Bio 20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chem 20			✓	✓	✓
ELA 20-1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
His/Geo 20				✓	✓
Math 20-1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Physics 20	✓	✓		✓	✓
Soc 20-1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total number of grade 12 course types offered	3	2	4	8	8
Art 30				✓	✓
Bio 30			✓	✓	✓
Chem 30				✓	✓
ELA 30-1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
His/Geo 30				✓	✓
Math 30-1	✓		✓	✓	✓
Physics 30		✓		✓	✓
Soc 30-1	✓		✓	✓	✓
Total Number of Course Types offered (total number of checks)	13	13	15	21	21

Checks (✓) = course offered. Gray boxes = course not offered.

Comments about the NDL program in Education Body annual reports and annual contribution agreement reports highlighted praise for the NDL’s impact in expanded course-offerings and locally available education (Appendix C, Impacts, p. 54). Overall, the comments illustrated how NDL gave students in small communities access to courses they wouldn’t normally have, helping them meet academic goals without leaving their home community.

Student Enrollment

Student enrollment increased from 62 students in 2018-2019 to 73 students in 2022-2023 school. Despite the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years experiencing similar numbers of NDL

enrollment (62 and 60, respectfully), there was a decrease in the overall proportion of high school (HS) students engaged in the program, decreasing from 11% to 8%.

Table 4. Proportion of NDL students of each local high school population

	2018-2019	2019-2020*	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023*
Number of NDL Students enrolled	62	85	92	60	73
Total Number of HS Students in participating schools (head count)	589	-	766	764	-
Proportion of NDL Students	11%	-	12%	8%	-

**Total number of high school (HS) students in participating schools (head count) data was not available for that year. Dash (-) = no data.*

Of the available data, student enrollment reduced over time from grade 10 to 12 across all the years (Table 5, p. 26). This follows a similar pattern in the NWT¹ where high school enrollment rates decreased after grade 10 between the 2019-2019 and 2022-2023 school years.

Table 5. NDL student enrollment by grade each year

Year	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
2018-2019*	-	-	-	62
2019-2020	54	23	8	85
2020-2021	53	23	16	92
2021-2022*	-	-	-	60
2022-2023	41	18	14	73

**No breakdown of enrollment by grade was available for this year, only total enrollment. Dash (-) = no data.*

The average enrollment was between two and five students per school per year, with most schools having one to nine students per year (Table 6, p. 27). BDDEC schools had the most students enrolled in NDL on average, with about 25 students per year, while SSDEC schools had the fewest students enrolled in NDL on average, with about 9 students per year.

DDEC schools had the largest increase in student enrollment from one year to the next, increasing from 15 in the 2018-2019 school year to 31 in the 2019-2020 school year. Additionally, DDEC schools had the most students enrolled in the 2019-2020 school year (31) and the 2020-2021 school year (34). Despite the increase in student enrollment in those years, DDEC schools also had the largest decrease in student enrollment from one year to the next, decreasing from 34 in 2020-2021 to 10 in 2021-2022. SDEC schools had a steady increase in student enrollment, increasing from 5 students in 2018-2019 to 18 in 2021-2022.

¹ JK-12 Education System Performance Measures Technical Report 2022-2023. Figure 5, page 20. (https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/sites/ece/files/jk-12_annual_pm_report_-_2022-2023_-_english.pdf)

Table 6. NDL student enrollment by community

School	Community	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023*	Average**
Total number of students in BDDEC Schools		26	30	21	21	-	25
Mangilaluk School	Tuktoyaktuk	--	--	--	--	-	--
Moose Kerr School	Aklavik	8	--	--	--	-	--
Chief Julius School	Fort McPherson	9	14	--	--	-	8
Helen Kalvak School	Ulukhaktok	--	--	--	--	-	--
Angik School	Paulatuk		--	--	--	-	--
Total number of students in SDEC Schools		--	--	9	18	-	10
Chief Albert Wright School	Tulita	--	--	--	--	-	--
Chief T'Selehye School	Fort Good Hope	--	--	--	--	-	--
?ehtseo Ayha School	Deline	--	--	--	--	-	--
Mackenzie Mountain School	Norman Wells			--	--	-	--
Colville Lake School	Colville Lake			--	--	-	--
Total number of students in DDEC Schools		15	31	34	10	-	23
Líídlíj Kúę Regional High School	Fort Simpson	--	9	16	--	-	8
Echo Dene School	Fort Liard	8	15	9	9	-	10
Deh Gáh Elementary & Secondary School	Fort Providence		--	9		-	8
Total number of students in SSDEC Schools		11	--	11	--	-	9
Deninu School	Fort Resolution	11	--	8	--	-	8
Łutselk'e Dene School	Łutselk'e		--	--		-	--
Total number of students in TCSEA Schools		--	10	17	--	-	10
Chief Jimmy Bruneau School	Behchokò	--	--	8	--	-	--
Mezi Community School	Whatì		--	--	--	-	--
Alexis Arrowmaker School	Wekweètì			--		-	--
Jean Wetrade Gamètì School	Gamètì			--	--	-	--
Total number of students enrolled each year		62	85	92	60	73	75

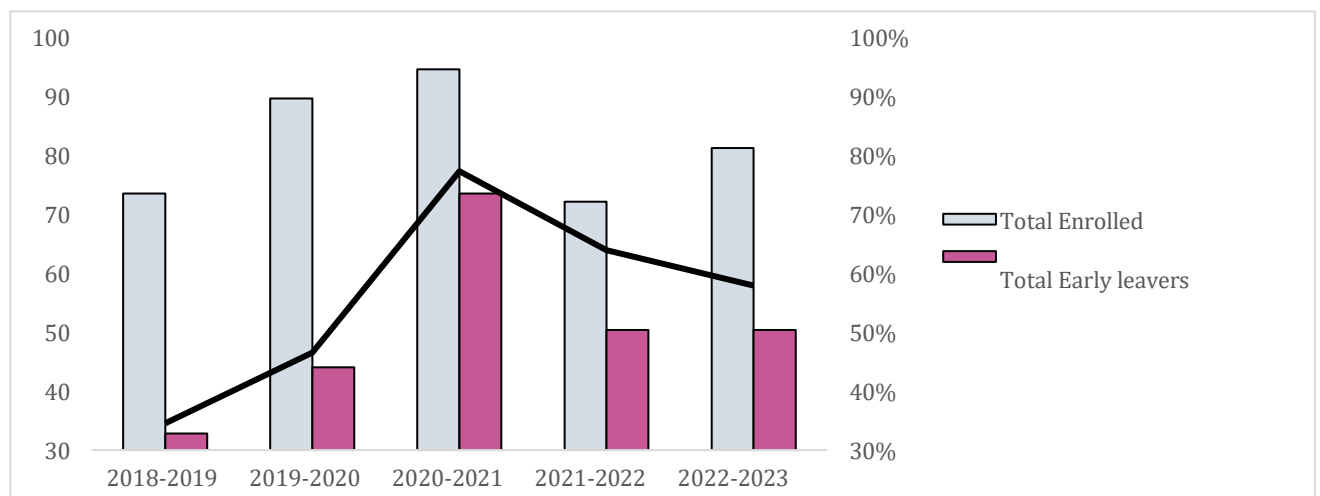
Asterix (*) = total is 73, yearly total data was collected for this year, but incomplete data was collected for each community. Dash (-) = incomplete data. Double Asterix (**) = average is based on 2018-2019 to 2021-2022 school years. Gray boxes = no participation that year. Double hyphen (--) = suppressed data. Small numbers (counts of 7 or under) are suppressed for privacy purposes.

Student Attrition

The 2018-2019 school year had the lowest proportion of early leavers² (6%), but it rose to 24% the following year in 2019-2020 and then to 67% in 2020-2021 (Figure 2, p. 28; Table 7, p. 29). The number of students enrolled in 2020-2021 increased, while the attrition (number of early leavers) also increased (62 students) in that same year. Attrition then decreased to 29 students in both the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years. This seems to indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic did not have a negative impact on enrollment, rather, it might have had an impact on attrition as the number of early leavers increased from four students in 2018-2019 to 20 students in 2019-2020, then to 62 students in 2020-2021 (Figure 2, p. 28). Comments about the NDL program in reports noted that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted the NDL program, as school closures and a shift to remote learning negatively impacted student success (Appendix C, Challenges, p. 60). The lack of in-person support and communication between students, ISPs, schools, and the NDL program made it difficult for students to stay engaged, leading to low attendance and course completion rates. Students, who initially enrolled with a desire to succeed, were unable to receive the support they needed due to the pandemic.

Additionally, other comments in reports mentioned poor attendance, challenging courses, and the influence of their peers as other reasons for early leavers (see Appendix C, Challenges, p. 60). Poor attendance emerged as a recurring reason for students leaving the program, with some students being removed or dropping courses as a result. Additionally, feedback from principals indicated that some students experienced difficulty with the courses, were not prepared for the academic rigor, and were less likely to sign up for NDL if their peers were unsuccessful in NDL.

Figure 2. NDL student enrollment and attrition by school year



² Early leavers defined as student dropping out of NDL for both semesters and thus all NDL courses; dropping particular courses but remaining in NDL with other courses.

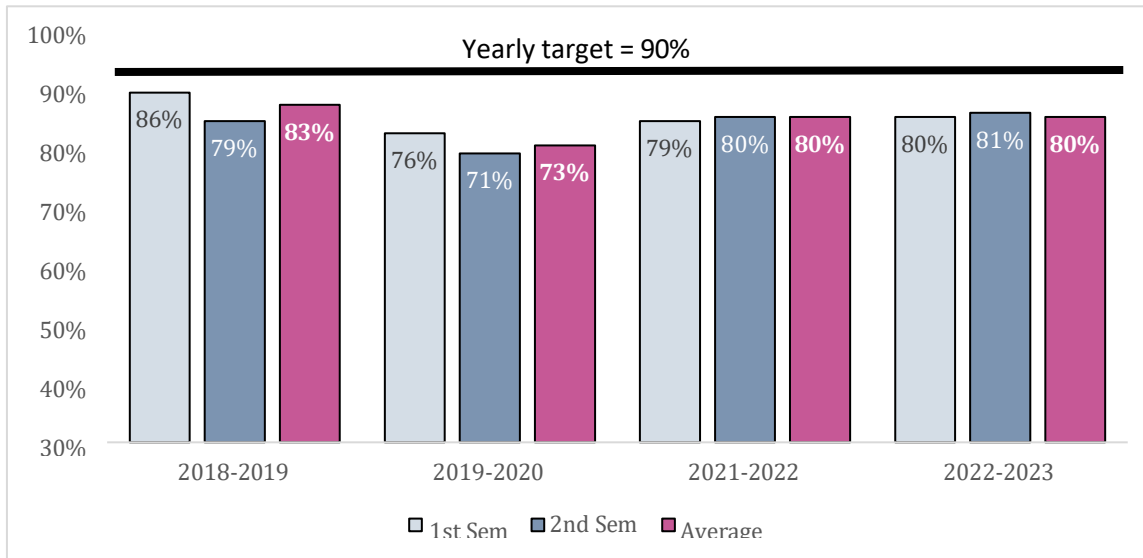
Table 7. NDL student enrollment and attrition by school year

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	Total
Total Enrolled	62	85	92	60	73	372
Total Early leavers	4	20	62	29	29	144
Proportion of Early leavers	6%	24%	67%	48%	40%	39%

Student Attendance

Of the students who stayed in the program, yearly average attendance rates were relatively consistent with most rates near 80% (Figure 3, p. 29). These rates, however, did not reach the yearly target of 90%. These attendance rates are also comparable to the territorial averages for high school students,³ however, where the territorial averages have a slightly downward trend after the 2019-2020 school year, the NDL program had a slight upward trend (Figure 4, p. 30).

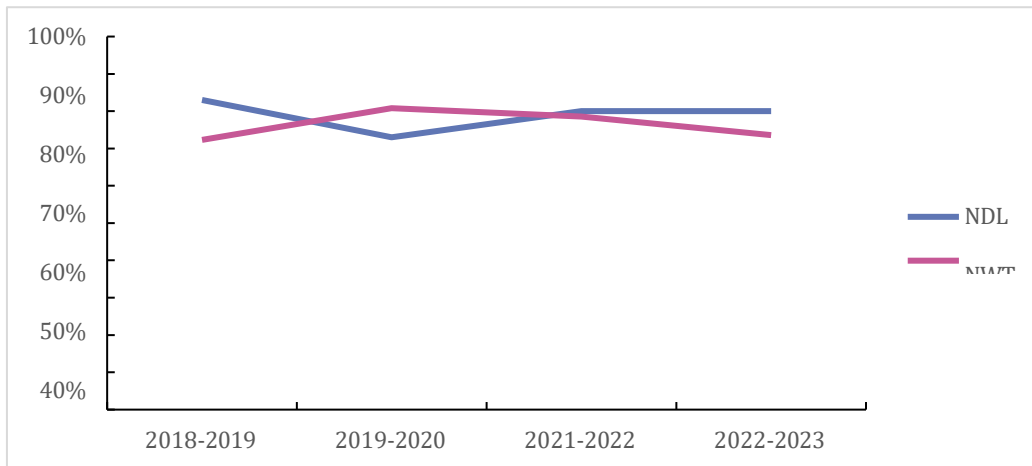
Figure 3. NDL student attendance rates based on course attendance rates*



*No NDL attendance data was collected for the 2020-2021 school year.

³ JK-12 Education System Performance Measures Technical Report 2022-2023. Figure 26, pg. 64. Retrieved from: https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/sites/ece/files/jk-12_annual_pm_report_-_2022-2023_-_english.pdf

Figure 4. NDL student attendance rates compared to NWT high school average attendance*

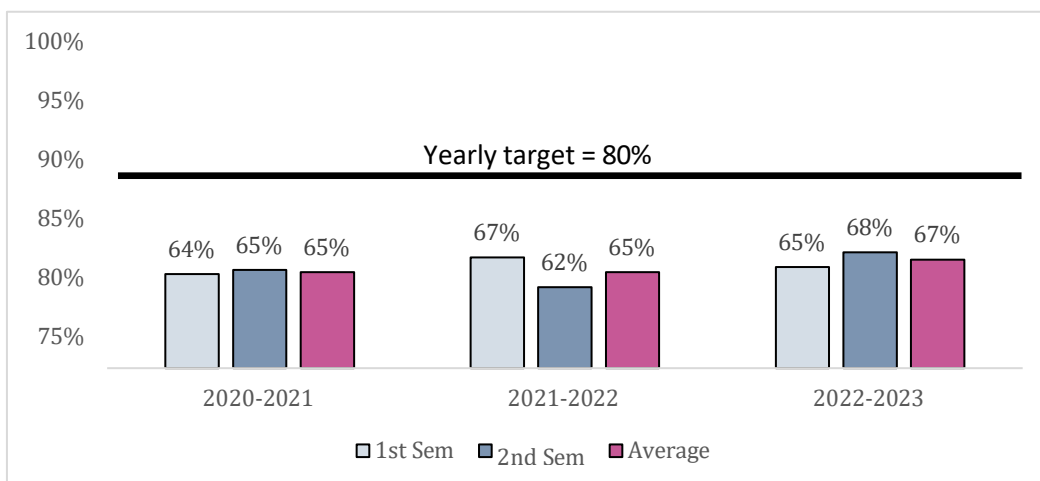


*No NDL attendance data was collected for the 2020-2021 school year.

Student Satisfaction

An analysis of the available data from student satisfaction surveys revealed that students were moderately satisfied with the program overall, with average satisfaction rates at around 66% (Figure 5, p. 30). These rates, however, did not meet the yearly target of 80%. In 2018-2019, survey data was only collected in the second semester and had a score of 75.54%. However, the response rate for this survey was very low (13 respondents), thus, the results of this survey were not representative of the NDL students' population. In 2019-2020, the survey was only implemented in the first semester due to COVID-19, and the data collected the overall satisfaction rate was not collected for comparison.

Figure 5. NDL student satisfaction rate*



*Satisfaction rates data for 2018-19 and 2019-2020 were not included in this figure.

Promising Practices⁴

In assessing the promising practices that may have affected program implementation and effectiveness over the years, an analysis of Education Body annual reports and contribution agreement reporting (see Appendix C, Promising Practices, p. 68), revealed the following:

- **Promising Practice #1:** Invest in ISPs.
- **Promising Practice #2:** Ongoing communication with parents and teachers.
- **Promising Practice #3:** Tutoring and homework clubs.

Promising Practice #1: Invest in ISPs.

In-class support persons (ISPs) or monitors are important to the program's success as they provide crucial support to students. Reports consistently highlighted their dedication, noting their willingness to offer extra help outside of school hours. Furthermore, it was mentioned that ISPs play a vital role in helping students manage challenging coursework and stay on track.

Promising Practice #2: Ongoing communication with parents and teachers.

Ongoing communication with parents and teachers can strengthen student support. Regular updates to parents about missing or incomplete work can help keep families engaged in their child's education. A parental package could provide information on the NDL and ways to offer support. Ongoing communication with NDL teachers can help identify challenges early, while feedback from students, ISPs, and administrators can improve strategies of support. Overall, ongoing communication with parents and teachers would support a collaborative and supportive environment for students to thrive.

Promising Practice #3: Tutoring and homework clubs.

Tutoring sessions and homework clubs, supported by teachers and ISPs, were valuable in helping students complete their work and address academic gaps. Some ISPs even provided tutoring to students in other communities after school hours. Study halls further reinforced this support, offering a space for all students – not just those in NDL, to finish assignments and receive extra help regularly. Tutoring sessions and homework clubs could create valuable opportunities for students to receive the academic support they need to succeed.

⁴ As per the Canadian Public Health Association's definition, "a promising practice is defined as an intervention, program, service, or strategy that shows potential (or "promise") for developing into a best practice." Retrieved from: <https://www.cpha.ca/promising-practices-canada>

Evaluation Criteria Assessment

Out of the eight evaluation indicators for evaluation Question one, only three of them had confirmed performance targets for comparison with actual NDL performance data (Table 8, p. 32). Out of the 14 yearly targets in total, only 11 yearly targets were comparable – either there wasn't a performance target for a specific year confirmed, or there wasn't any data collected for a specific year. Only two of the 11 (18%) comparable yearly targets were met. Based on the evaluation criteria, with *“less than 60% performance of targets met, year to year,”* the NDL program would be assessed as *“not implemented as intended”*. However, given the number of indicators without targets confirmed, an assessment on whether the NDL program was implemented as intended cannot be fully determined.

Table 8. NDL performance indicators for evaluation Question 1

Evaluation Indicators	Baseline	Performance Targets	Actual performance	Target Status
1a1. Number of NDL courses offered per year.	No baseline established	No targets confirmed.	See Table 2.	-
1a2. Number of schools participating in NDL per year.	No baseline established	Number of participating schools: 4 yearly targets 2018-2019 = 11 2019-2020 = 15 2020-2021 = 20 2021-2022 = 20 2022-2023 = No target confirmed.	Number of participating schools: 2018-2019 = 11 2019-2020 = 15 2020-2021 = 19 2021-2022 = 16 2022-2023 = 17	2/4 comparable yearly targets met.
1b1. Enrollment rates per years.	No baseline established	No targets confirmed.	See Table 5.	-
1b2. Number of students taking NDL courses each year.	No baseline established	No targets confirmed.	-	-
1b3. Attrition (dropout and exclusions due to poor attendance) - per year	Zero	No targets confirmed.	See Table 7.	-
1b4. Attendance rates per year	N/A	Attendance rates per year: 5 yearly targets 2018-2019 = 90% 2019-2020 = 90% 2020-2021 = 90% 2021-2022 = 90% 2022-2023 = 90%	Attendance rates per year: 2018-2019 = 83% 2019-2020 = 73% 2020-2021 = no data 2021-2022 = 80% 2022-2023 = 80%	0/4 comparable yearly targets met.
1c1. Student satisfaction rates with NDL courses, per year	N/A	Student satisfaction rates per year: 5 yearly targets 2018-2019 = 80% 2019-2020 = 80% 2020-2021 = 80% 2021-2022 = 80% 2022-2023 = 80%	Student satisfaction rates per year: 2018-2019 = no data 2019-2020 = no data 2020-2021 = 65% 2021-2022 = 65% 2022-2023 = 67%	0/3 comparable yearly targets met.
1d1. Promising practices as reported by schools.	N/A	N/A	See above.	N/A

<p>Evaluation criteria assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully implemented as intended = 80%+ of performance targets were met, year to year Partially implemented as intended = 60-79% performance targets were met, year to year Not implemented as intended = <60% performance targets were met, year to year
--

Gray boxes = Evaluation indicators without performance targets for comparison. Red font = target not met.

Evaluation Question #2: Did Small Community Schools Have Equitable Access to NDL?

This question attempted to determine if participating and non-participating schools alike had equitable access to the program.

NDL Funding

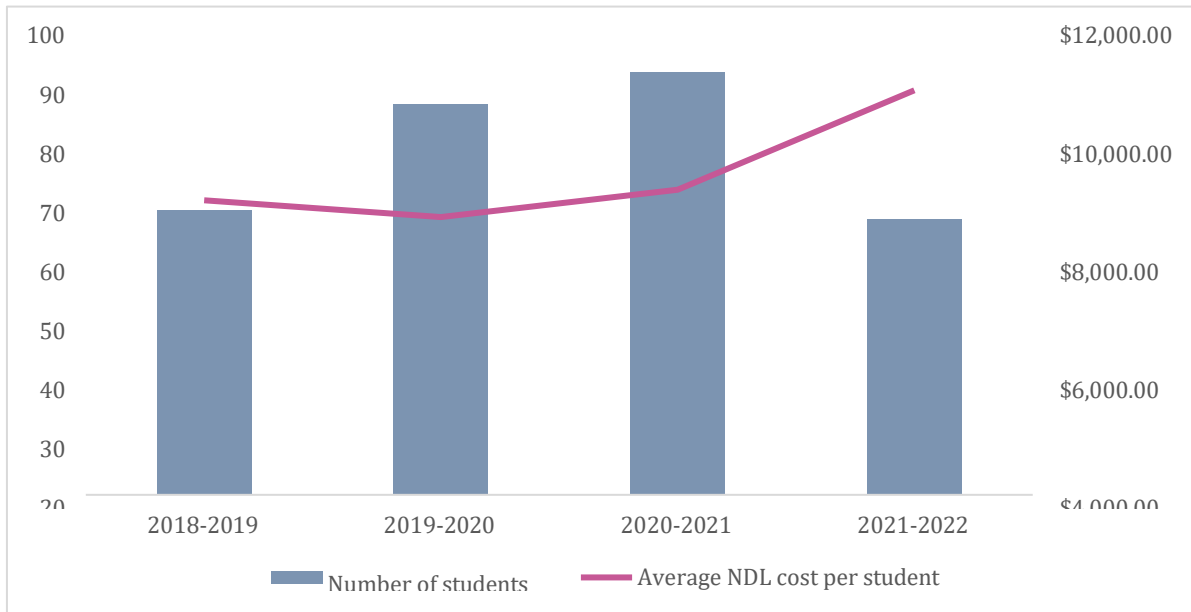
The approach to NDL funding is based on cost-sharing between participating schools and ECE. ECE provides funding to participating education bodies through contribution agreements. The funds are then allocated by those education bodies to participating schools. Additionally, participating schools contribute 30% of their Senior Secondary Materials and Distance Learning (SSMDL) funds towards NDL funding. In total, schools have a budget that includes the 30% of SSMDL plus a flat rate contribution based on the number of students enrolled in NDL. The flat rate contributions are as follows:

- 1-4 NDL students = \$20,000; 5-9 NDL students = \$30,000; 10+ NDL students = \$40,000

Given the cost-sharing model, contributions between schools were quite varied. Overall, the average annual contribution to all NDL programming was around \$39,987 per school. There was slight decrease in the average contribution amounts from \$43,403.18 to \$37,098.75 per school from 2018-2019 to 2022-2023 (Appendix D, Table 1, p. 85).

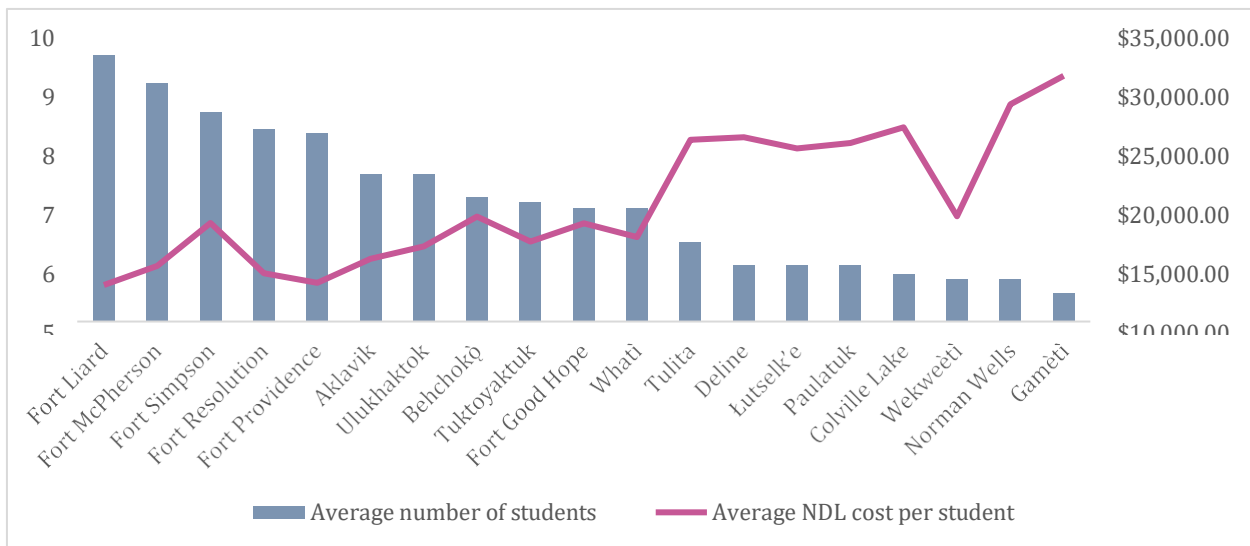
In terms of cost per student, total NDL costs per student were relatively consistent across the years with an average of \$8,378.78 per student (Figure 6, p. 34; Appendix D, Table 2, p. 79). However, when looking at school years with a similar number of students, the NDL cost per student was much greater in 2021-2022 (\$10,577.15) with 60 students than in 2018-2019 (\$7,700.56) with 62 students (Figure 6, p. 34). When looking at cost per student between schools, more students meant less costs per student and vice versa (Figure 7, p. 34).

Figure 6. Total number of NDL students vs. total NDL cost per student



Average NDL cost per student = total NDL contribution divided by total number of students.

Figure 7. NDL enrollment vs. NDL cost per student by community



In comparing costs per student between schools with similar headcounts, schools with only one student had the least amount of differences in comparison to one another (Table 9, p. 35). However, these minimal differences would increase over time. In 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, there were minimal differences in cost per student between schools with eight students (5.0%) and schools with seven students (5.6%). In contrast, in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 all the schools with eight or more students had differences of more than 10% in cost per student between them. Overall, this shows that similar student counts do not necessarily mean similar costs per student.

Table 9. Percent (%) difference in NDL cost per student between schools with similar headcounts

Number of students enrolled	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
1	0.4%	2.5%	3.5%	8.9%
2		3.4%	17.0%	9.8%
3			4.7%	
4		12.6%		27.8%
5	20.7%		7.7%	7.3%
6			17.9%	4.5%
7		5.6%		
8	5.0%		35.4%	
9			24.1%	12.6%

*% Difference = (1-(NDL cost per student school a / NDL cost per student school b))*100%. For 3 or more schools to compare, the average % differences were calculated. Red font indicates differences of more than (+/-) 10%. Gray boxes = no data. No comparative data after 9 students.*

Another measure of equity from a funding perspective would be NDL contribution by school as a proportion of the total school expenditure per year. However, analysis was not conducted by the evaluator due to limited access to data on total school expenditure for each NDL school.

Evaluation Criteria Assessment

Only two out of the four performance targets were comparable due to a lack of data for analysis (Table 10, p. 36). Of the two performance targets, one was met, while the other was not met. Based on the evaluation criteria, with “fewer than three of the performance targets were met,” this would mean that NDL “access was not equitable.” However, due to only two performance targets being comparable, an assessment of the equitable access of the NDL program cannot be fully determined.

Table 10. NDL performance indicators for evaluation Question 2

Evaluation Indicators	Baseline	Performance Targets	Actual performance	Target Status
2a1. Principal/superintendent-perceived impact of school contribution requirements on the school's financial situation.	N/A	Contributions were not perceived as burdensome by participating schools.	There weren't any comments suggesting that the contributions were perceived as burdensome by participating schools (See Appendix C).	1/1 comparable targets met.
2a2. NDL contribution (flat rate and SSMDL) by school as a proportion of the total school expenditure per year.	No baseline established.	The proportion of the total expenditure that individual contributions make was similar across all schools.	Limited access to total school expenditure data for analysis.	-
2b1. Principal/superintendent perceived impact of school contribution requirements on NDL access (non-participating schools only).	N/A	Non-participating school principals and superintendents did not see the existing school contribution requirements as a barrier to NDL access	No data from non-participating schools.	-
2c1. Yearly cost of NDL to participating schools per enrolled student [cost per student = NDL contribution by school (flat rate + SSMDL)/number of enrolled NDL students]	No baseline established.	The cost of NDL per enrolled NDL student in schools with similar NDL student counts was similar, within a 10% variance	See Table 9. Out of the 20 comparable data points, only 12 data points showed similar costs of NDL per student between schools with similar student headcounts, within a 10% variance.	0/1 comparable targets met.
Evaluation criteria assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access was Equitable = Three or more of the performance targets were met • Access was Not Equitable = Fewer than three of the performance targets were met = access not equitable 				

Gray boxes = Evaluation indicators without performance targets for comparison.

Evaluation Question #3: To What Degree Was NDL Effective in Achieving its Planned Outcomes?

This question attempted to determine if the program met the expected short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes.

Short-term Outcome: Greater Than 65% Final Scores

Student performance in NDL courses showed notable trends over time. The 2018-2019 academic year demonstrated to be challenging with only two courses obtaining an average grade above 65% (Table 11, p. 39) and only 43% of students (Figure 8, p. 38) passed with a grade of 65% or greater. That year, diploma exams were worth 30% of a student's final grade in grade 12 courses – meaning that poorer performances on the diploma exams meant lower final grades overall. This trend of relatively low final grades overall continued over the next two years.

In 2019-2020, despite an increase in the proportion of students who passed with a grade of more than 65% (Figure 8, p. 38), only four courses that year had an average grade above 65% (Table 11, p. 39). However, the higher scores for grade 12 courses that year could be attributed to diploma exams being cancelled in the second semester due to COVID-19 and students receiving their class mark as their final mark for those courses.

In 2020-2021, only three courses had an average grade above 65%, with a total average grade of 61% for that year, an improvement from the previous year (Table 11, p. 39). Diploma exams were also optional in 2020-2021, with class marks being the final marks students received in their grade 12 courses.

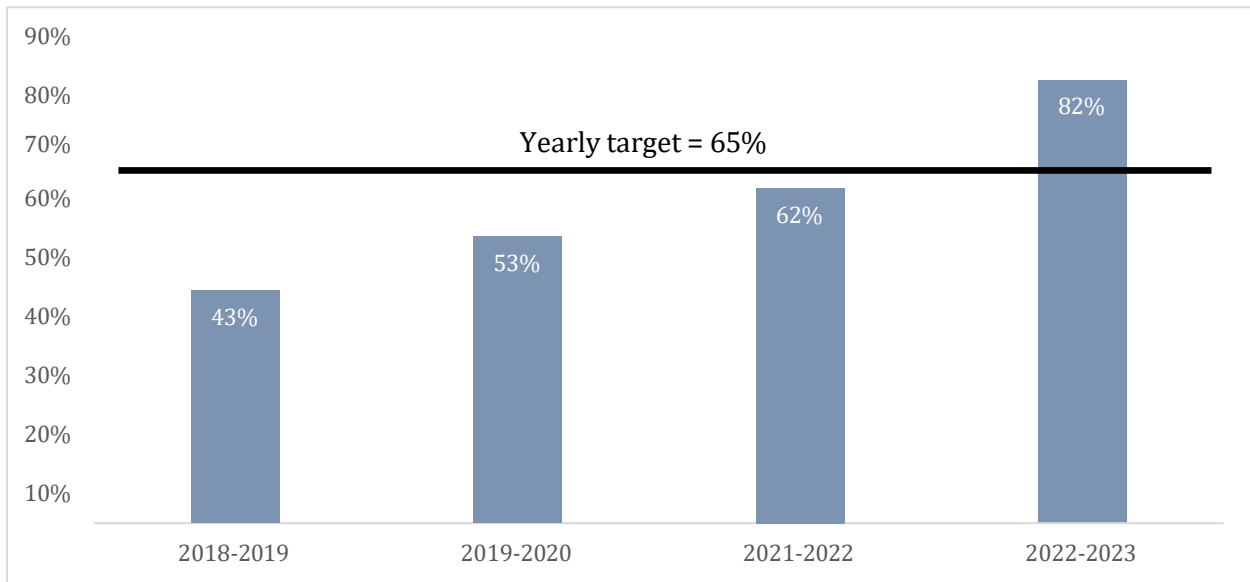
A significant shift occurred in 2021-2022, with a notable improvement in student performance. This was also the same year that five full-time teachers were hired. That year, nearly all courses surpassed the 65% average, except for ELA 10-1 (Table 11, p. 39). Several contextual factors may have contributed to this increase. Diploma exams were only worth 10% opposed to 30% of a student's final grade in grade 12 courses, reducing their impact on final grades. Additionally, NDL program area experts noted that NDL schools became more selective in their admissions process, resulting in a smaller student population with a higher proportion of academically prepared students.

The effects of COVID-19 shutdowns also played a role in this increase in performance. According to program area experts, no new lessons were taught in January 2022, giving students a full month to catch up on coursework. At the same time, teachers had become much more prepared for asynchronous teaching and received extensive in-servicing on Moodle, improving the quality of online instruction. In-class support staff were particularly strong in 2021-2022, which proved to be an essential component of student success. With fewer total students, but a greater concentration of high-level learners than in previous years, overall performance trends reflected this shift.

Overall, the trend of the proportion of NDL students who passed with a final grade above 65% steadily increased over the years (Figure 8, p. 38). Despite these improvements, the yearly target for student success was only met in the 2022-2023 school year. Interestingly, the total average grade that year was only 60% and most of the higher grades came from grade 12 courses (Table 11, p. 39).

Overall, there were gradual improvements over the years and a notable peak in the 2021-2022 school year. Of the 21 courses analyzed, only nine had an average above 65% over time. Notably, just one of these was at the grade 10 level, while four were grade 11 courses, and the remaining four were at the grade 12 level. This data indicated that arts and math/science-based courses were better suited to an online learning environment, whereas courses like English and Social Studies, posed greater difficulties for students.

Figure 8. Proportion of NDL students who passed with a final grade of more than 65%



No data collected for 2020-2021 school year.

Table 11. NDL student average grade per course

Course	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	Average over time
Art 10	67%	71%	65%	81%	47%	66%
ELA 10-1	53%	45%	52%	59%	53%	52%
Math 10C	65%	40%	53%	72%	69%	60%
Science 10	51%	29%	48%	76%	61%	53%
Soc 10-1	51%	26%	63%	69%	52%	52%
Art 20		67%	62%	73%	68%	68%
Bio 20	58%	35%	50%	81%	70%	59%
Chem 20			64%	78%		71%
ELA 20-1	58%	56%	72%	69%	56%	62%
His/Geo 20				79%		79%
Math 20-1	74%	44%	63%	75%	70%	65%
Physics 20	64%	48%		84%	54%	62%
Soc 20-1	60%	43%	52%	86%	56%	59%
Art 30				69%	76%	73%
Bio 30			62%	79%		71%
Chem 30				95%	79%	87%
ELA 30-1	62%	66%	66%	76%	55%	65%
His/Geo 30					0	0%
Math 30-1	47%		65%	75%	71%	64%
Physics 30		70%		99%	84%	84%
Soc 30-1	15%		76%	91%	56%	60%
Total Average	56%	49%	61%	78%	60%	62%

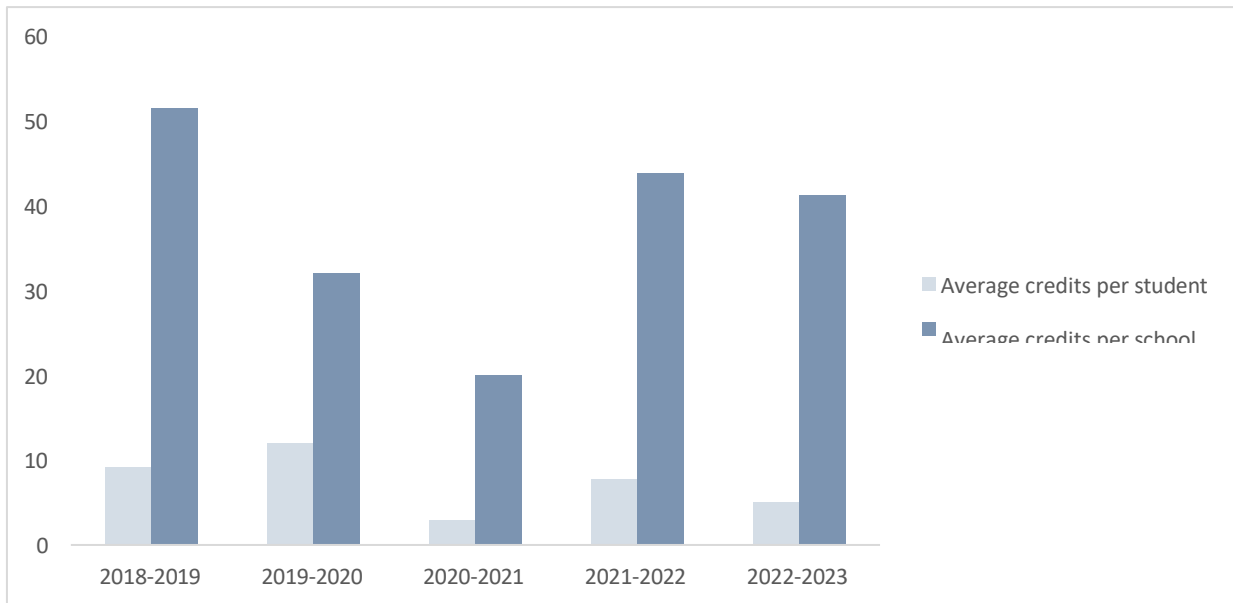
Composite scores were used for courses offered twice. All scores are calculated with early leavers removed. Scores highlighted in green are scores >65%. Gray boxes = courses not offered.

Short-term Outcome: Credit Acquisition

In terms of credit acquisition⁵, average credits earned per school peaked in 2018-2019 at approximately 52 credits, whereas average credits earned per student peaked in 2019-20 at approximately 12 credits (Figure 9, p. 40). In 2020-2021, both credits earned per student and credits earned per school decreased to their lowest average at approximately three and 20 credits, respectively. Both averages increased to approximately eight and 44 credits in 2021-2022 before slightly decreasing to approximately five and 41 credits in 2022-2023.

⁵ Credit acquisition is the earning of credits as a result of passing a high school course with a grade of at least 50%. Retrieved from: <https://www.alberta.ca/graduation-requirements-credentials-and-credits#jumplinks-2>

Figure 9. Average credits received through NDL, per student and per school



When looking at credit acquisition rates per year by course, average credit acquisition rates decreased from 77% in 2018-2019 to 57% in 2019-2020, the lowest credit acquisition rate across the school years (Table 12, p. 40). This is consistent with the previous section, where it was found that the 2019-2020 school year also had the lowest total average grade across the school years.

2019-2020 was a challenging academic year in general, given that this was the first year impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with challenges as noted in previous sections.

Average credit acquisition rates steadily increased in the next few years, with a 96% credit acquisition rate in 2021-2022 (Table 12, p. 40). The average rate would then decrease to 75% in 2022-2023. Overall, the average credit acquisition rate between 2018 to 2023 was 75%. Program performance targets were only met in the 2018-2019 (60%) and 2021-2022 (80%) school years (Table 12, p. 40). Only two courses had an average acquisition rate of at least 90% over time, and both of those courses were grade 12 level courses (Art 30 and Physics 30).

Table 12. Credit acquisition rates for NDL courses

Course	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	Average over time
Art 10	75%	79%	90%	100%	56%	80%
ELA 10-1	73%	52%	60%	78%	69%	66%
Math 10C	95%	80%	48%	92%	94%	82%
Science 10	67%	35%	47%	100%	89%	68%
Soc 10-1	56%	18%	67%	100%	64%	61%
Art 20		73%	80%	100%	100%	88%
Bio 20	91%	38%	63%	100%	93%	77%
Chem 20			86%			86%
ELA 20-1	75%	73%	77%	86%	85%	79%

His/Geo 20						
Math 20-1	100%	50%	78%	86%	91%	81%
Physics 20	89%	56%		100%	67%	78%
Soc 20-1	89%	44%	88%	100%	67%	78%
Art 30				100%	80%	90%
Bio 30			86%	83%		85%
Chem 30				100%	75%	88%
ELA 30-1	89%	64%	86%	100%	62%	80%
His/Geo 30					0	0%
Math 30-1	75%		64%	100%	75%	78%
Physics 30		75%		100%	100%	92%
Soc 30-1	25%		100%	100%	75%	75%
Total Average	77%	57%	75%	96%	75%	75%

All rates are calculated with early leavers removed. Rates highlighted in green are rates that met the evaluation targets (2018-19 = 60%, 2019-20 = 65%, 2020-21 = 80%, 2021-22 = 80%, 2022-23 = no target determined but visualized at 80%).

Although not an exact comparator, insights in the comparison to territorial course completion rates by grade level shows that NDL had lower rates in general across each grade level between 2018/2019 – 2020/2021 (Figure 10, p. 41). In 2021-2022, during NDL’s peak academic performance year, credit acquisition rates were higher than the territorial course completion rates. Credit acquisition rates, however, would be lower than the territorial rates the following year in 2022-2023.

Figure 10. Credit acquisition rates for NDL courses by grade vs. NWT high school course completion rates⁶¹⁷



The trend of English and Social Studies courses performing lower than Math and Science courses overall can also be seen in this section. This further illustrates that there may be challenges in delivering these types of courses online, as students seem to struggle with these types of NDL courses more.

⁶ Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 (JK-12) Education System Performance Measures Technical Reports from 2018-2019 to 2022-2023. Course completion rates. Retrieved from: <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/services/jk-12-school-curriculum/performance-measures-reports>

Medium-term Outcomes: Passing Diploma Exams

Diploma exam data for NDL was only available for two academic years: 2018-2019 and 2021-2022. In 2019-2020, June 2020 exams were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020-2021 exams were optional in both January and June, with fewer than 30 exams written across the territory that year. In the 2021-2022 school year, only the January exams were optional. Some schools, however, received exemptions for the June exams due to the spring flooding. NDL diploma exam data for 2022-2023 was not available for analysis at the time of this report.

In 2018-2019, only 13 students in NDL had written exams; of them, six (46%) had passed (Table 13). In 2021-2022, 37 students had written diploma exams, with 33 (89%) of them passing. Overall, approximately 78% (39 out of 50) of all NDL students who took a diploma exam in the 2018-2019 and the 2021-2022 school years passed (Table 13, p. 42).

In 2018-2019, of the three courses for which exams were taken, only Social Studies 30-1 had more than 50% of students passing (100%; two out of two). In 2021-2022, of the seven courses which exams were taken, all of them had at least 50% of students passing, with four courses (ELA 30-1; Math 30-1; Physics 30-1; Chem 30-1) having all the students passing.

As noted in a previous section, in 2021-2022 NDL schools became more selective in their admissions process, resulting in a smaller student population with a higher proportion of academically prepared students. This could be why almost 90% of students who took exams that year passed. Additionally, diploma exams were only worth 10% of a student's final grade that year – meaning that less pressure could have been felt by students writing exams that year, leading to better performance.

Table 13. Proportion of NDL students passing diploma exams

Year	Course (proportion of students passing)	Total number of students taking the diploma exam	Total number of students passing the exam	Proportion of students passing
2018-2019	SS 30-1 (2/2=100%) ELA 30-1 (4/9=44%) Math 30-1 (0/2=0%)	13	6	46%
2021-2022	SS 30-1 (2/4=50%) ELA 30-1 (10/10=100%) Math 30-1 (5/5=100%) Physics 30-1 (1/1=100%) Chem 30-1 (2/2=100%) Bio 30-1 (5/6=83%) Art 30 (8/9=89%)	37	33	89%
Total		50	39	78%

SS 30-1 = Social Studies 30-1. ELA 30-1 = English Language Arts 30-1. Chem 30 = Chemistry 30-1. Bio 30-1 = Biology 30-1.

Long-term Outcomes: Post-secondary Programs

For this evaluation, receiving financial assistance through the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's Student Financial Assistance Program (SFA) was used as a proxy for post-secondary enrollment. SFA is only awarded to students enrolled in an approved post-secondary program.

SFA data shows that NDL has helped students get into post-secondary programs. From 2019-2020 to 2021-2022, every student with at least 20 NDL credits reported having unconditional acceptance to a post-secondary program (Table 14, p. 43). This could be attributed to NDL’s positive impact on post-secondary preparation, as mentioned in comments from Education Body annual reports and contribution agreement reports (Appendix C, Impacts, p. 54). For instance, it was mentioned that the program had boosted student confidence and motivation by preparing them for academic challenges and showing them that they could succeed in a post-secondary environment.

Additionally, the program’s use of technology had prepared students for the modern learning methods now common in post-secondary education.

However, staying in a post-secondary program may still be a challenge. The proportion of NDL graduates who remained in post-secondary for a second year decreased over the years, going from 25% in 2018-2019 to 0% in 2020-2021. However, it is not known whether these students were entering programs that were only one to two years long or if they had left early after their first year. Additionally, the proportion of graduates who received SFA the year of graduation also decreased, going from 40% in 2019-2020 to less than 20% in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. COVID-19 could have played a role in these downward trends as the decreases in proportions took place after 2020 (Table 14, p. 43).

Table 14. Proportion of NDL graduates who received SFA

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Students enrolled into post-secondary with at least 20 NDL credits reporting unconditional acceptance.	-	100%	100%	100%
Proportion of NDL graduates who received SFA the year of graduation	25%	40%	13%	17%
Proportion of NDL graduates who started their first year of post-secondary education two years after graduation	38%	27%	17%	-
Proportion of NDL graduates who remained in post-secondary for a second year (i.e., continued to receive SFA for at least 2 years)*	25%	13%	0%	-

**Available data did not indicate if students were entering programs that were one to two years long or if they had left early after their first year.*

Evaluation Criteria Assessment

Out of the eight evaluation indicators for evaluation Question three, only two of them had confirmed performance targets with actual NDL performance data for comparison (Table 15, p. 44). However, within these indicators, some performance targets were incomplete. Additionally, some performance data was also incomplete. Only five out of the 11 (45%) comparable targets were met. Based on the evaluation criteria, with “<50% of performance targets were met from year to year,” the NDL program would be deemed as “low in effectiveness” in achieving its planned outcomes.

However, given the number of indicators without targets confirmed and the number of performance data not collected or analyzed, an assessment of the degree to which NDL achieved its planned outcomes cannot be fully determined.

Table 15. NDL performance indicators for evaluation Question 3

Evaluation Indicators	Baseline	Performance Targets	Actual performance	Target Status
3a1. Number of students enrolled in academic courses by community and by course (# students enrolled before NDL, # students enrolled each year after NDL introduced)	No baseline established.	No targets confirmed.	Data not collected.	-
3a2 Proportion of students (in each course and grade) with a final mark of 65% and above by course, by community, gender, ethnicity, and overall	No baseline established.	Proportion of students with a final mark of 65% and above: 5 yearly targets 2018-2019 = 65% 2019-2020 = 65% 2020-2021 = 65% 2021-2022 = 65% 2022-2023 = 65%	See Figure 8. Proportion of students with a final mark of 65% and above: 2018-2019 = 43% 2019-2020 = 53% 2020-2021 = n/a 2021-2022 = 62% 2022-2023 = 82%	1/4 comparable targets met.
3a3a Yearly credit acquisition rates for NDL students by course, by community, gender, ethnicity and overall		Early leavers excluded: 2018-2019 = 60% 2019-2020 = 65% 2020-2021 = 80% 2021-2022 = 80% No targets confirmed for 2022-2023.	See Table 12. Yearly credit acquisition rates for NDL students overall (early leavers excluded): 2018-2019 = 77% 2019-2020 = 57% 2020-2021 = 75% 2021-2022 = 96% 2022-2023 = 75%	2/4 comparable targets met.
3a3b. Total number of students passing an NDL course divided by the total number of students attempting an NDL course, <i>excluding</i> voluntary and involuntary dropouts	No baseline established.	Early leavers excluded: 2018-2019 = 60% 2019-2020 = 65% 2020-2021 = 80% 2021-2022 = 80% No targets confirmed for 2022-2023.	Not enough data collected for analysis (missing a breakdown of total number of students, only have percentages of students)	-
3a3c. Total number of students passing an NDL course divided by the total number of students attempting an NDL course, <i>including</i> voluntary and involuntary dropouts	No baseline established.	Early leavers excluded: 2018-2019 = 60% 2019-2020 = 65% 2020-2021 = 80% 2021-2022 = 80% No targets confirmed for 2022-2023.	Not enough data collected for analysis (missing a breakdown of total number of students)	-
3b1 - % of NDL students who pass departmental exams by course, per year	No baseline established.	2018-2019 - Social studies=20% - ELA=20% - Math=10% No targets confirmed for the years 2019-2020 to 2022-2023.	See Table 13. 2018-2019 - Social studies=100% - ELA=44% - Math=0%	2/3 comparable targets met.

3c1 - % of NDL graduates who receive SFA the year after graduation	No baseline established.	No targets confirmed.	See Table 14.	-
3d1 - School reported impact of NDL on students	N/A	No targets confirmed.	See sections above.	-
Evaluation criteria assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly Effective = 80%+ of performance targets were met from year to year • Moderately Effective = 50-79% of performance targets were met from year to year • Low in Effectiveness = <50% of performance targets were met from year to year 				

Gray boxes = Evaluation indicators without performance targets for comparison. Red font = target not met.

Evaluation Question #4: How Did NDL Student Achievement Compare with That of Non-NDL students Enrolled in Traditional Academic Courses?

This question attempted to determine whether achievement levels between NDL and non-NDL students were comparable, better or lower.

Credit Acquisition Rates (Passing Rates) Among NDL and non-NDL Students by Course, Ethnicity, and School Year (Excluding Voluntary and Involuntary Dropout)

Table 16 (p. 46) presents passing rates for NDL and non-NDL students from 2019–2020 to 2022–2023, excluding students who voluntarily or involuntarily dropped out. Overall, passing rates varied by course and year, with fluctuations observed across both groups.

In Math 20-1, NDL students showed steady improvement, with passing rates increasing from 50% in 2019–2020 to 100% in 2022–2023. This surpassed non-NDL students, whose rates remained consistently high, between 90% and 94%. A similar trend was observed in Science 10, where NDL student passing rates rose from 63% to 100%, while non-NDL rates declined slightly to 82% in the final year.

In contrast, ELA 10-1 and ELA 20-1 results were more stable for non-NDL students, with passing rates consistently above 90%. NDL students, however, had lower outcomes in earlier years—65% and 38% in ELA 10-1 for 2019–2020 and 2020–2021, respectively, and 57% and 67% in ELA 20-1. These results improved significantly by 2022–2023.

Table 16. Passing rates of NDL and non-NDL students by course, ethnicity, and school year (excluding voluntary and involuntary dropouts).

	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	NDL Students	Non-NDL Students	NDL Students	Non-NDL Students	NDL Students	Non-NDL Students	NDL Students	Non-NDL Students
Overall								
Art 10	78%	83%	100%	89%	100%	88%	33%	84%
Art 20	60%	89%	86%	93%	100%	85%	100%	86%
Biology 20	100%	90%	40%	89%	100%	94%	83%	90%
ELA 10-1	65%	91%	38%	97%	73%	94%	83%	95%
ELA 20-1	57%	97%	67%	96%	90%	95%	100%	95%
ELA 30-1	100%	94%	100%	100%	100%	97%	91%	94%
Math 10C	71%	88%	21%	94%	86%	84%	100%	88%
Math 20-1	50%	92%	86%	90%	89%	90%	100%	94%
Science 10	63%	81%	67%	86%	100%	85%	100%	82%
SST 20-1	100%	94%	50%	99%	90%	97%	62%	95%
Indigenous								
Art 10	78%	74%	100%	84%	100%	82%	33%	78%
Art 20	60%	87%	86%	89%	100%	78%	100%	83%
Biology 20	100%	80%	50%	80%	100%	87%	83%	92%
ELA 10-1	68%	84%	29%	95%	73%	91%	83%	88%
ELA 20-1	57%	97%	67%	90%	88%	94%	100%	90%
ELA 30-1	100%	92%	100%	100%	100%	93%	91%	86%
Math 10C	71%	79%	21%	89%	86%	72%	100%	83%
Math 20-1	50%	84%	86%	68%	86%	76%	100%	96%
Science 10	63%	68%	64%	72%	100%	76%	100%	70%
SST 20-1	100%	84%	50%	96%	88%	98%	62%	91%
Non-Indigenous								
Art 10		98%		99%		96%		93%
Art 20		95%		98%		96%		90%
Biology 20		97%	0%	97%	100%	97%		89%
ELA 10-1	0%	95%	100%	98%		96%		98%
ELA 20-1		98%		100%	100%	96%		98%
ELA 30-1		96%		100%	100%	99%		97%

Math 10C		97%		97%		94%		92%
Math 20-1		96%		98%	100%	96%	100%	94%
Science 10		95%	100%	98%		93%		94%
SST 20-1		99%		100%	100%	96%		96%

Passing rate is calculated by dividing the total number of students who Passed a course by the total number of students who attempted the course. Data for the 2018-19 is not available. Blanks stand for no record or record of zero. Figures highlighted in green are when NDL students performance is the same as or greater than non-NDL students.

Credit Acquisition Rates Among NDL and non-NDL Students by Course, Ethnicity, and School Year (Including Voluntary and Involuntary dropout)

Table 17 (p. 47) presents the overall passing rates for NDL and non-NDL students from 2019–2020 to 2022–2023, including students who voluntarily or involuntarily dropped out. The data shows that non-NDL students consistently maintained high passing rates across most subjects and years, typically above 85%. In contrast, NDL student performance was more variable but showed clear improvement over time.

For example, in ELA 10-1, NDL student passing rates declined from 59% in 2019–2020 to 38% in 2020–2021, but rebounded to 73% in 2021–2022 and 83% in 2022–2023. Non-NDL students remained consistently above 90% throughout.

In Art 20, NDL students demonstrated steady improvement, with passing rates rising from 60% in 2019–2020 to 100% in 2022–2023. In contrast, non-NDL student passing rates declined slightly over the same period, from 88% to 84%.

Table 17. Passing rates of NDL and non-NDL students by course, ethnicity, and school year (including voluntary and involuntary dropouts).

	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
	NDL Students	Non-NDL Students	NDL Students	Non-NDL Students	NDL Students	Non-NDL Students	NDL Students	Non-NDL Students
Overall								
Art 10	78%	82%	100%	85%	100%	86%	33%	79%
Art 20	60%	88%	86%	86%	100%	84%	100%	84%
Biology 20	33%	89%	40%	83%	100%	94%	83%	90%
ELA 10-1	59%	91%	38%	96%	73%	94%	83%	95%
ELA 20-1	57%	97%	67%	95%	90%	95%	100%	95%
ELA 30-1	100%	92%	100%	100%	100%	96%	91%	93%
Math 10C	33%	88%	21%	89%	86%	83%	100%	87%

Math 20-1	50%	91%	86%	88%	89%	90%	100%	94%
Science 10	63%	80%	67%	81%	100%	85%	100%	82%
SST 20-1	100%	94%	50%	99%	90%	97%	62%	95%
Indigenous								
Art 10	78%	72%	100%	79%	100%	81%	33%	71%
Art 20	60%	87%	86%	79%	100%	77%	100%	80%
Biology 20	33%	78%	50%	70%	100%	87%	83%	92%
ELA 10-1	62%	84%	29%	94%	73%	91%	83%	88%
ELA 20-1	57%	97%	67%	89%	88%	94%	100%	90%
ELA 30-1	100%	87%	100%	100%	100%	91%	91%	84%
Math 10C	33%	78%	21%	82%	86%	72%	100%	81%
Math 20-1	50%	82%	86%	63%	86%	76%	100%	96%
Science 10	63%	68%	64%	64%	100%	76%	100%	70%
SST 20-1	100%	84%	50%	96%	88%	98%	62%	91%
Non-Indigenous								
Art 10		98%		98%		96%		93%
Art 20		92%		98%		96%		90%
Biology 20		97%	0%	97%	100%	97%		88%
ELA 10-1	0%	95%	100%	97%		96%		98%
ELA 20-1		98%		98%	100%	96%		98%
ELA 30-1		94%		100%	100%	99%		97%
Math 10C		97%		95%		93%		91%
Math 20-1		96%		98%	100%	96%	100%	94%
Science 10		95%	100%	98%		93%		94%
SST 20-1		99%		100%	100%	96%		96%

Passing rate is calculated by dividing the total number of students who Passed a course by the total number of students who attempted the course. Data for the 2018-19 is not available. Blanks stand for no record or record of zero.

Evaluation Criteria Assessment

Passing rates of NDL and non-NDL students varied across courses and school years. In all years, the number of NDL students enrolled in each course was considerably smaller than the number of non-NDL students. This difference in group size makes NDL passing rates more sensitive to individual performance, which can exaggerate fluctuations in percentage-based outcomes. As a result, comparisons between the two groups should be interpreted with caution and considered within the context of enrollment differences.

The low student count could be attributed to disruptions in the NWT education system. In recent years, the NWT education system has faced significant interruptions due to unplanned school closures, leading to loss of instructional time. The COVID-19 pandemic led to school closures in 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years. Although the 2022-23 school year was the first year since the pandemic began not to experience a school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools, with the exception of Yellowknife Education District N0. 1 and Yellowknife Catholic Schools, still experienced unplanned closures that year. While various factors contributed, the main reasons were wildfire evacuation, weather, staff illness and infrastructure issues.

Only courses that were taken by NDL students in each of the four school years being evaluated were included in these tables. Gender breakdown was not provided to remain consistent with the Report. Additionally, ECE does not typically provide gender breakdowns in our reporting.

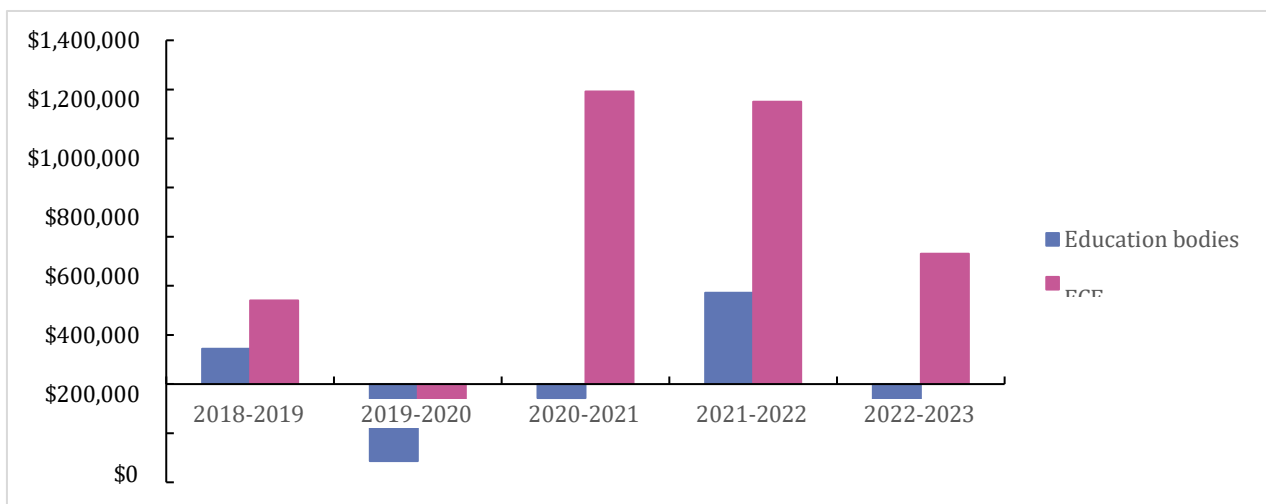
Evaluation Question #5: To What Degree Was NDL Efficient in Achieving its Goals with Allotted Resources?

This question attempted to determine whether resources have been put to optimal use.

NDL Spending

ECE NDL annual budgets were typically underspent by amounts between \$300,000 and \$1,200,000 over time (Figure 11, p. 49). Education bodies, on the other hand, were typically within their annual budgets, only slightly overspending overall. SDEC was the only education body that underspent its budget annually in the last five years (Table 16, p. 46). BDDEC had the most overspend. For the years when ECE NDL budgets could be underspent, there could be an opportunity to support education bodies that could be overspent to better support them.

Figure 11. NDL spending differences between annual budget and actual spending between ECE and Education Bodies



Spending difference = annual budget - actual spending. Red font indicates overspending.

Table 18. NDL spending differences between annual budget and actual spending between ECE and education bodies expanded

		2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	Overall
ECE difference in spending overall*		\$341,125	-\$84,733	\$1,192,091	\$1,149,301	\$530,967	\$3,128,751
Total education body difference in spending		\$143,713	-\$313,061	-\$57,489	\$372,160	-\$156,772	-\$11,449
Difference in spending subtotals for each education body	BDDEC	\$191,096	-\$337,713	-\$173,919	\$170,751	-\$219,690	-\$369,475
	DDEC	-\$78,216	-\$46,029	-\$35,041	\$27,071	\$44,879	-\$87,336
	SDEC	\$10,756	\$60,867	\$123,967	\$128,258	\$17,265	\$341,113
	SDEC	\$20,091	\$9,964	\$27,504	-\$4,990	-\$1,226	\$51,343
	TCSA	-\$14	-\$150	\$0	\$51,070	\$2,000	\$52,906

*Spending difference = annual budget – actual spending. Red font indicates overspending. *ECE NDL spending.*

Evaluation Criteria Assessment

Based on the evaluation criteria, “*actual costs overall aligned with or were no more than 5% above budgeted costs*” (Table 17, p. 47). Thus, the NDL program was “somewhat efficient” in achieving its goals with allotted resources.

Table 19. NDL performance indicators for evaluation Question 5

Evaluation Indicators	Baseline	Performance Targets	Actual performance	Target Status
5a1 Budgeted and actual costs per District Education Council and for ECE overall	N/A	Actual program costs generally aligned with or were below budgeted costs	See table 16. Some years were below budgeted costs, but some years were greatly over budgeted costs.	Performance target was partly met.
Evaluation criteria assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient = Actual costs align or were below budgeted costs • Somewhat Efficient = Actual costs align or were no more than 5% above budgeted costs • Not Efficient = Actual costs were more than 5% above budgeted costs 				

Evaluation Question #6: Were There Unanticipated Outcomes Associated with the NDL Program?

This question attempted to determine whether there were unanticipated outcomes so that recommendations can be made to reduce negative outcomes and amplify positive outcomes.

Unanticipated Outcomes

Through the analysis of education bodies’ annual reports and contribution agreement reporting (see Appendix C, Impacts, p. 54), the following themes of additional impacts of NDL on students were identified:

- Unanticipated outcome #1: Improved student confidence and personal growth
- Unanticipated outcome #2: Exposure to broader opportunities
- Unanticipated outcome #3: Peer collaboration and community building

Unanticipated Outcome #1: Improved student confidence and personal growth

According to some of the reports, some students have experienced increased self-confidence, motivation, skills and ownership over their learning. Reports highlight how NDL fosters a sense of responsibility and self-reliance among the students by reinforcing the importance of meeting deadlines and taking ownership of learning. Additionally, students develop a greater belief in their ability to pursue higher education or employment, equipping them with the skills to succeed in various paths.

Unanticipated Outcome #2: Exposure to broader opportunities

It was found that students were exposed to new perspectives, different cultures, and the broader world of education and employment opportunities. NDL is perceived to have broadened students' learning experiences by introducing new approaches and interactions, which many administrators found refreshing. Activities like university campus visits exposed students to future education and job opportunities. For instance, an NDL-sponsored trip to Calgary led all four participants to enroll in one of the universities they visited. This exposure helps students feel more confident in pursuing post-secondary education or employment, highlighting the program's positive impact on their futures.

Unanticipated Outcome #3: Peer collaboration and community building

NDL students developed strengthened relationships between students across communities and were supported in peer learning. Comments in the reports highlighted how the NDL fostered meaningful connections and collaboration among students, contributing to their academic and personal growth. Many students formed lasting friendships and built peer networks with others who shared similar academic goals. This sense of community was noted to have motivated them to excel, particularly in challenging courses. The opportunity to connect with peers across the territory was especially beneficial for those who thrived in small class settings while still enjoying new social experiences. These experiences appear to have enriched the students' educational journey and strengthened their sense of community and belonging.

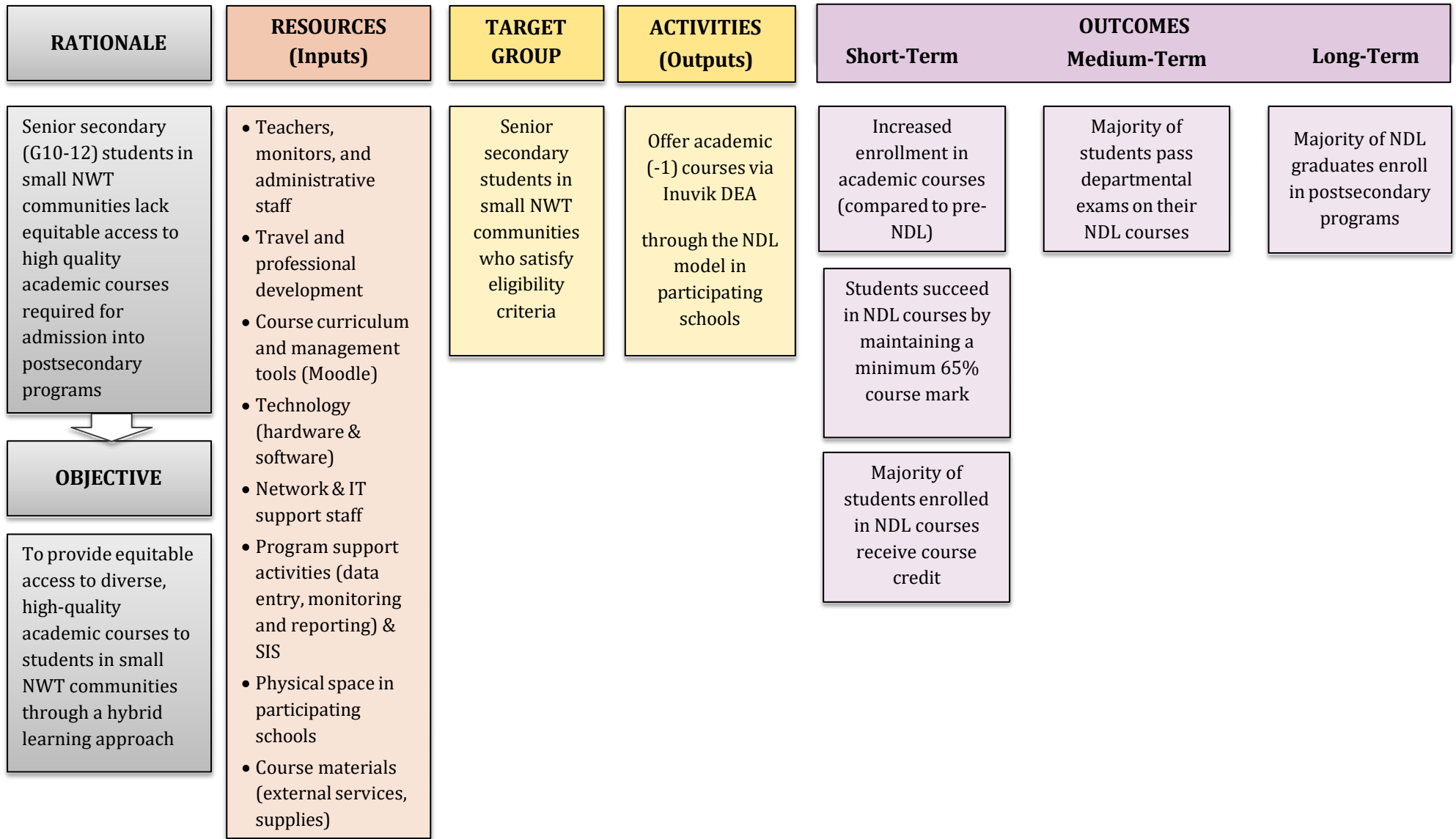
Conclusion

The evaluation of the NDL program highlights its positive impacts in small communities across the territory, where it has expanded access to high-level academic courses and contributed to improved student outcomes. Over the years, many students have not only met but exceeded minimum passing grades, earned course credits, and, in some cases, gained admission to post-secondary programs.

Beyond academics, the program has supported student confidence, personal growth, exposure to broader opportunities, and stronger peer and community connections.

However, the evaluation also faced limitations in fully assessing the program's implementation and impact. The absence of clear performance targets and inconsistencies in data collection made it difficult to evaluate progress across all indicators. Additionally, while student satisfaction surveys were collected annually, student perspectives were not fully integrated into the evaluation framework. Future evaluations would benefit from leveraging existing survey data more effectively and incorporating direct student input to provide a more complete understanding of the program's outcomes.

Appendix A: NDL Program Logic Model



Appendix B: NDL Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Question #1: Was NDL implemented as intended?

Evaluation Criteria:

Fully implemented as intended = 80%+ of performance targets were met, year to year

Partially implemented as intended = 60-79% performance targets were met, year to year

Not implemented as intended = <60% performance targets were met, year to year

Evaluation Question #1: Sub-Question	Evaluation Indicators	Baseline	Performance Targets	Data Source
1a. Did the program deliver the intended number and quality of courses in the intended number of schools, to the intended group of students?	1a1. Number and type of NDL courses offered per semester, per year	None confirmed	None confirmed	Source: -Annual Program Monitoring Sheets, -NDL Annual Reports for each school year
	1a2 Number, name and location or schools participating in NDL, per year	None confirmed	2018-2019 = 11 2019-2020 = 15 2020-2021 = 20 2021-2022 = 20	
1b. What were the program utilization rates overall and in each community?	1b1.Enrollment rates (yearly as well as in comparison to the total student population)	None confirmed	None confirmed	NDL Admin Records: -Annual program monitoring sheets -NDL Annual Reports -CMAS/PowerSchool records for 18/19 to 22/23
	1b2 Number of students taking NDL courses each year, by demographic characteristics (community, grade level, ethnicity, gender).	None confirmed	None confirmed	

Evaluation Question #1: Sub-Question	Evaluation Indicators	Baseline	Performance Targets	Data Source
	1b3 Attrition (dropout and exclusions due to poor attendance) - per year	Zero	None	
	1b4 Attendance rates, per year	N/A	90% each year	
1c. Were the students satisfied with the courses?	1c1. Student satisfaction rates with NDL courses, per year	N/A	Target 80%, each year	NDL Student Satisfaction Survey results from 2018/19 to 2022/23 Location: https://diims.gov.nt.ca/gnwt/lisapi.dll?func=ll&objId=156074160&objAction=browse&viewType=1
1d. What were the promising practices, challenges and unmet needs that may have affected program implementation process and effectiveness over the years?	1d1 Promising practices, required support, and challenges with NDL implementation - as reported by schools.	N/A	N/A	Appendix F of the Clearance Forms for 18/19 to 22/23

Evaluation Question #2: Did small community schools have equitable access to NDL?

Evaluation Criteria:

Access was Equitable = Three or more of the performance targets were met

Access was Not Equitable = Fewer than three of the performance targets were met = access not equitable

Evaluation Question #2: Sub-Question	Evaluation Indicators	Baseline	Performance Targets	Data Source
2a. Did the school contribution requirements impact the financial situation of participating schools differently?	2a1. Principal/superintendent-perceived impact of school contribution requirements on the school's financial situation.	N/A	Contributions were not perceived as burdensome by participating schools	Appendix F
	2a2. NDL contribution (flat rate and SSMDL) by school as a proportion of the total school expenditure per year.		The proportion of the total expenditure that individual contributions make was similar across all schools.	Contribution Agreements 18/19 to 22/23
2b. Did the school contribution requirements pose a barrier to NDL access for non-participating small community schools?	2b1. Principal/superintendent perceived impact of school contribution requirements on NDL access (non-participating schools only).	N/A	Non-participating school principals and superintendents did not see the existing school contribution requirements as a barrier to NDL access	Appendix F
2c. Was the yearly cost ¹⁸ per NDL student similar for participating schools?	2c1. Yearly cost of NDL to participating schools per enrolled student [cost per student = NDL contribution by school (flat rate + SSMDL)/number of enrolled NDL students]		The cost of NDL per enrolled NDL student in schools with similar NDL student counts was similar, within a 10% variance	Contribution Agreements for 2018/19 – 2022/23

¹⁸ The cost to school is equal to the sum of individual flat rate contribution and an SSMDL contribution.

Evaluation Question #3: To what degree was NDL effective in achieving its planned outcomes?

Evaluation Criteria:

Highly Effective = 80%+ of performance targets were met from year to year

Moderately Effective = 50-79% of performance targets were met from year to year

Low in Effectiveness = <50% of performance targets were met from year to year

Evaluation Question #3: Sub-Question	Evaluation Indicators	Baseline	Performance Targets	Data Source
3a Did the students achieve the intended short-term outcomes of the project and did the outcomes differ depending on students' home community, gender, ethnicity and grade level?	3a1. Number of students enrolled in academic courses by community and by course (# students enrolled before NDL, # students enrolled each year after NDL introduced)		18/19 = 19/20 = 20/21 = 22/23 =	ECE student records & NDL student records (PowerSchool)
	3a2 Proportion of students (in each course and grade) with a final mark of 65% and above by course, by community, gender, ethnicity, and overall	TBC	18/19=G10&G11 (20%) 18/19=G12 (10%) 19/20=G10 (30%) 19/20=G11 (60%) 19/20=G12 (20%) 20/21=G10 (30%) 20/21=G10 (60%) 20/21=G10 (50%) 21/22=G10 (40%) 21/22=G10 (70%) 21/22=G10 (60%)	Program records -Annual program monitoring sheets -NDL Annual Reports -CMAS records for 18/19 to 22/23
	3a3a Yearly credit acquisition rates for NDL students by course, by community, gender, ethnicity and overall 2024-08-07 3a3b. Total number of students passing an NDL course divided by the total number of students attempting an NDL course, <i>excluding</i> voluntary and involuntary dropouts		18/19 (dropouts excluded) 60% 19/20 (dropouts excluded) 65% 20/21 (dropouts excluded) 80% 21/22 (dropouts excluded) 80%	CMAS

Evaluation Question #3: Sub-Question	Evaluation Indicators	Baseline	Performance Targets	Data Source
	3a3c Total number of students passing an NDL course divided by the total number of students attempting an NDL course, <i>including</i> voluntary and involuntary dropouts			
3b Did the students achieve the intended medium-term outcomes of the project and did the outcomes differ depending on students' home community, gender, ethnicity and grade level?	3b1 - % of NDL students who pass departmental exams by course, per year		2018/2019: Social studies – 20% ELA – 20% Math – 10% 2019/2020: TBD 2020/2021: TBD	CMAS
3c Did the students achieve the intended long-term outcomes of the project and did the outcomes differ depending on students' home community, gender, ethnicity and grade level?	3c1 - % of NDL graduates who receive SFA the year after graduation			Student Financial Assistance program records, NDL records, Graduate records Location: SFA Division, NDL, Student Records
3d What was the most significant impact of NDL on students in small communities?	3d1 - School reported impact of NDL on students			-Appendix F of the financial reports for 18/19 to 22/23

Evaluation Question #4: How did NDL student achievement compare with that of non-NDL students enrolled in traditional academic courses?

Evaluation Criteria:

Comparable Achievement = The achievements of NDL and non-NDL students were similar

Lower Achievement = The achievements of NDL students were less than the achievements of non-NDL students

Higher Achievement = The achievements of NDL students were greater than the achievements of non-NDL students

Evaluation Question #4: Sub-Question	Evaluation Indicators	Baseline	Performance Targets	Data Source
No sub question	4.1 Credit acquisition rates among NDL and non-NDL students by course, by gender and by ethnicity a. Total # students passing an NDL course divided by the total # of students attempting an NDL course, <i>excluding</i> voluntary and involuntary drop-outs b. same as "a" except <i>including</i> voluntary and involuntary drop-outs	N/A	18/19 (dropouts excluded) 60% 19/20 (dropouts excluded) 65% 20/21 (dropouts excluded) 80% 21/22 (dropouts excluded) 80%	CMAS

Evaluation Question #5: To what degree was NDL efficient in achieving its goals with allotted resources?

Evaluation Criteria

Efficient = Actual costs align or were below budgeted costs

Somewhat Efficient = Actual costs align or were no more than 5% above budgeted costs

Not Efficient = Actual costs were more than 5% above budgeted costs

Evaluation Question #5: Sub-Question	Evaluation Indicators	Baseline	Performance Targets	Data Source
5a How did the actual program costs compare with the budgeted costs	5a1 Budgeted and actual costs per District Education Council and for ECE overall	N/A	Actual program costs generally aligned with or were below budgeted costs	-NDL budget - annual reports -contribution agreements

Evaluation Question #6: Were there unexpected outcomes associated with the NDL program?

Evaluation Criteria: N/A

Evaluation Question #6: Sub-Question	Evaluation Indicators	Baseline	Performance Targets	Data Source
6a Were there positive unanticipated outcomes associated with the NDL?	6a1 - Reported positive unanticipated program outcomes.	N/A	N/A	Appendix F of the Financial Reports for 2018/19 – 2021/22
6b Were there negative unanticipated outcomes associated with NDL?	6b1 - Reported negative unanticipated program outcomes.	N/A	N/A	

Appendix C: Thematic Analysis of comments from NDL Reports and Contribution Agreements

The following are quotes from education body contribution agreements and reports that were then grouped and themed (highlighted box in each table).

Impacts

Theme: Student Confidence and Personal Growth.
Summary: The NDL program has significantly boosted students' confidence and responsibility, helping them become more proactive in their learning. Through enriched courses, students have developed valuable skills, such as time management, meeting deadlines, and seeking help when needed. Many students have shown a strong work ethic, which has helped them succeed academically and aspire to higher education. As a result, they are not only achieving academic goals but also growing in confidence, independence, and self-esteem. The program has encouraged students, especially those from smaller communities, to believe in their ability to compete with larger communities, paving the way for greater opportunities in post-secondary education and employment. Increased student ownership of their learning, along with the development of technological skills, has further contributed to their success and overall growth.
Quotes:
"student gained more confidence in her ability to represent her ideas and thoughts; enriched courses like this enable them to achieve their goals"
"feel for speed"
"values education more"
"values her teachers"
"grow/achieve chosen path"
"They achieve the tools to go further in their educations, no matter what direction they may take."
"Students consistently completing their homework and assignments, logging into the remote classes made the difference and allowed the school to reach its goals"

<p>“Students are becoming increasingly aware of the expectations of meeting deadlines and becoming more responsible for their learning. For example, coming to class even when they do not feel like it, being proactive in seeking help etc (quote for Guides)”</p>
<p>“This is their second to last year in NDL, and all three students intend to enroll in college.”</p>
<p>“Therefore, learning how to be responsible and owning their learning is the first step in successfully starting their learning (quote for Guides)”</p>
<p>“Work ethic is developing (deadlines, regular, quality work) which will enable after-class, after-school production of good work; and they become models for new students”</p>
<p>“Outside of curriculum effect: student confidence and independence”</p>
<p>“Increased confidence results in desire to pursue higher education; NDL in education that leads to post-secondary opportunities”</p>
<p>“Having our students first achieve success at home by taking and passing academic courses builds their self-esteem.”</p>
<p>“It shows them they are capable and can be successful.”</p>
<p>“This will create a more informed student.”</p>
<p>“other students can be inspired to enter NDL & obtain university entrance courses”</p>
<p>“Student drive & determination”</p>
<p>“Heightened awareness of the independency it takes to complete higher level courses”</p>
<p>“Students want to achieve higher education”</p>
<p>“This then gives these students greater pride and that carries over to the rest of the student body.”</p>
<p>“When they see that they will all get the courses that they want and need, then they work harder and care more about themselves, their academics, and the school”</p>
<p>“Other students see the success of these students and realize that they can achieve that success as well.”</p>
<p>“Many took ownership of their learning and stayed after school to complete work”</p>
<p>“Students became confident in their abilities”</p>
<p>“students see college/university as a real opportunity”</p>
<p>“students became more confident in their abilities”</p>

“students are taking an active role in their learning”
“students are taking more risks”
“Students took ownership of their learning, many stayed after school to complete work”
“Students, especially students from smaller communities with limited opportunities, need to develop the confidence that they can compete with students in larger communities. This gives them the confidence to pursue post-secondary education opportunities, or even better employment opportunities.”
“Increased sense of self-confidence among students sets them up for academic success and more post-secondary choices”
“Students will be technologically intelligent and they will find less complexity in operating computers.”
Theme: Academic Achievement and Success.
Summary: The NDL program has shown positive academic results, including a 3% increase in students' reading growth and higher graduation rates. It provides an important pathway for academically inclined and independent students, offering a route to graduation for those seeking more challenging coursework. Many students have been successful in their NDL classes, with some passing NDL credits and achieving expected progress. The program has also proven effective in encouraging student attendance and motivating them to stay engaged in their studies. Approximately 70% of students who complete NDL pursue further education, often at universities, with some benefiting particularly from the program's support for neurodivergent students. Overall, NDL offers a consistent and reliable virtual learning experience, helping students design course pathways that align with their post-secondary goals.
Quotes:
“3% increase in students gaining at least one stanine (year's growth) increase in reading”
“Higher graduation rates”
“Student retention”
“NDL serves a need for the more academically inclined and independent students and promotes another graduation pathway for these students.”
“Students were engaged in the courses and we are excited by the opportunity to potentially receive a second endpoint to offer more courses.”
“The 2 students achieved the expected progress in both courses taken”
“The program is drawing attention to being “at grade level” and will possibly produce more NDL candidates.”

“Most of our students were successful in their NDL classes”
“Some students passed NDL credits”
“It encourages students to attend”
“Academic success”
“Provides motivation to attend NDL classes”
“About 70% of students who complete NDL go on to further education, usually to university. This year’s NDL grad has been accepted at U of Alberta. NDL, together with the ISPs, has been very effective for neurodivergent (autistic) students.”
“Consistency and reliability of delivering virtual learning in challenging academic courses. Motivated students with post-secondary aspirations are able to design course pathways to achieve the credits and pre-requisites needed for post-secondary.”
Theme: Post-Secondary Preparation.
Summary: The NDL program plays a crucial role in preparing students for post-secondary education by building their confidence and motivation. It equips them with the skills needed for future academic challenges, particularly in a technology-driven learning environment, which is becoming more common in colleges and universities. The program helps students adapt to the expectations of post-secondary education, ensuring they are not caught off guard when transitioning from their communities. By offering diverse learning experiences and exposing students to different environments, cultures, and perspectives, NDL enhances their overall growth and development. Students gain valuable insights into higher education opportunities, as evidenced by successful university tours and an increased desire to pursue post-secondary education. Ultimately, NDL opens doors for students, helping them build the necessary skills and prerequisites for further education and better career opportunities.
Quotes:
“It is important because it prepares students for the next academic challenge they will face. It gives them added motivation and the confidence that they can do this in a post secondary milieu.”
“It will most certainly prepare our students for learning in this new age of technology. Most colleges and universities have now adopted this approach (some as a result of Covid and many simply because this is the wave of the future)”
“As they prepare to go college, especially outside of the “protection of the community, they will not be caught off guard by the expectations that await them a college environment. (quote for Guides)”
“Helps with student growth in preparation for postsecondary opportunities”

“In the future, more students will have options for post-secondary careers.”
“This allows them to be prepared for the college and university classes that they want to pursue.”
“These NDL courses prepare them and give them a glimpse of what it will be like to attend post-secondary studies.”
“They are given an opportunity to work hard , study hard and be prepared for college or university.”
“E3 sees NDL as training participants for an online environment they will likely face in a post-secondary world”
“Helps prepare them for University”
“Provides a higher success rate for students who go to University (they are more prepared)”
Theme: Exposure to Broader Opportunities.
Summary: The NDL program offers students a diverse and unique learning experience, exposing them to new approaches, environments, and perspectives, which they find refreshing and rewarding. Despite a limited number of participants in some years, those who enrolled have shown significant success, and the community has expressed excitement about the program. NDL prepares students by providing them with the skills needed for post-secondary education and future career opportunities, opening doors to programs that require specific prerequisites. The program also broadens students' understanding of different learning environments, cultures, and opinions, enriching their personal development. Additionally, virtual university tours and real-world experiences, such as a trip to Calgary to visit universities, have motivated students to pursue higher education and expanded their view of the opportunities available to them. Overall, NDL fosters a sense of confidence and ambition, encouraging students to pursue better opportunities in both post- secondary education and employment.
Quotes:
“NDL really provides for diversity of learning; the students can learn new approaches and ways to do things, and get to work with new faces. From their vantage point, they find this very refreshing.”
“NDL provides our students with a unique learning opportunity that is challenging but rewarding.”
“The NDL program has opened the doors for eligible students. Although the school did not register many students last year, those who did participate were highly successful. The community was very excited.”
“NDL has had a huge impact and will allow students to apply for programs where they have prerequisite skills.”
“Expose to different learning environments, communities, cultures and opinions all have impacts on student development.”

“Attending the virtual university campus tours”
“Understanding that there is a wide array of courses available in University”
“As this was my first year here at Liidlii Kue Regional High School (LKRHS) I was not very familiar with the NDL Program. However, the NDL Sponsored trip to Calgary to tour the Universities was very rewarding for the students. Of the four students that attended this trip, I believe that all of them are planning to attend one of the Universities in Calgary”
“Students will not shy away from better opportunities regarding post-secondary, or even employment”
“Those students taking NDL courses had “heightened opportunities””
Theme: Peer Collaboration and Community Building.
<p>Summary: The NDL program fosters strong peer relationships among students, with many creating lasting friendships that extend beyond the classroom. It also encourages interaction with students from other communities who share similar academic goals, helping to build a supportive peer group. This collaborative environment pushes students to work at a higher level, especially in challenging courses like ELA-1, and provides opportunities to connect with peers from across the territory. For some students, the small class setting at E3SS is beneficial, offering a more personalized learning experience and the chance to connect with a diverse group of peers.</p> <p>Additionally, the program allows students to take courses with teacher feedback, offering a more interactive and engaging learning experience compared to online courses like those from ADLC.</p>
Quotes:
“The students created close friendships while in the class that extended beyond the NDL environment.”
“It was positive to have NDL students able to interact with students from other communities who had similar academic goals.”
“It creates a peer group for them.”
“pushed to work at a “higher level with other students”; noticed them “pushed in ELA-1””
“Make connections with student peers from across the territory”
“Positive – some students do better in a small class setting at E3SS and enjoy being able to connect with a different set of peers from across the territory.”
“the NDL program offers these students the opportunity to take these courses with other students/ peers with a teacher to give them feedback, as opposed to going online through ADLC.”

Theme: Skills Development.

Summary: The program helps students develop important skills, including independence, collaboration, and teamwork. It also fosters resiliency by supporting and encouraging students to overcome insecurities, such as speaking on the microphone and being on camera, helping them feel more comfortable in these situations.

Quotes:

“Build independent skills”

“Build collaborative and team building skills”

“Builds resiliency”

“Supporting and encouraging students to overcome insecurities so that they are comfortable speaking on the microphone and being on camera”

Challenges

Theme: Academic Challenges.

Summary: The NDL program faced significant challenges related to student attendance and engagement. Many students were removed from courses due to poor attendance or a lack of motivation. Despite interest in the program, some students were not eligible for courses or found them too difficult. There was a noticeable gap between -2 and -1 course levels, which hindered student participation. The remote nature of some courses, along with unengaging teachers, compounded these issues, leading to feelings of discouragement. Additionally, some students struggled with the academic rigor and found it hard to keep up. Parental understanding of course structures was also a challenge, as some parents did not fully comprehend the breakdown between different course levels, impacting their support. Even with efforts such as frequent calls and checklists, motivation remained low, and students were unwilling to put in the extra work required to succeed. This resulted in high failure rates and a lack of student enrollment in future NDL courses.

Quotes:

“We did need to remove a few students before the completion of the course due to their lack of attendance”.

“What balances can be had or actions taken that can help student shift their focus towards academics and NDL?”

“Many students dropped NDL courses or were exited due to poor attendance.”

“We need to figure out how to help students attend school.”

<p>“Attendance continues to be a challenge. Community consultation was conducted on 22-23 to discuss the long-term BDDEC vision and attendance. Follow up meetings in communities based on the initial feedback is scheduled for the fall of 2023.”</p>
<p>“We had several interested students, but they did not qualify for the courses. There is the desire, but we need to work on the gap in learning between the -2 courses and the -1 courses”</p>
<p>“Finding eligible students”</p>
<p>“course was too difficult”</p>
<p>“remote teachers were not very engaging”</p>
<p>“I don’t feel like it was successful in any capacity other than an experience for the student who went through the program. I think that student would have achieved much higher in Chemistry had she taken it on-site with a local teacher. The teacher did very little to build a relationship with the students and that played a significant role in her lack of success. Even though Chemistry 20 is an academic course, our students need to feel a sense of belonging and have their teachers get to know them, at least a little bit, on a personal level.”</p>
<p>“The school’s challenge: We had several interested students, but they did not qualify for the courses. There is the desire, but we need to work on the gap in learning between the -2 courses and the -1 courses”</p>
<p>“Students not prepared for academic rigours”</p>
<p>“We initially had three students sign up for courses. However, all three students either gave up trying very early on or dropped the courses.”</p>
<p>“Honestly, looking at the students coming up in Grades 7-9, LKDS will not likely have any students to be able to take part in NDL. There are no -1 students in that group and none that are independent enough to take on NDL.”</p>
<p>“One of the major challenges that our school faced during the 2019-2020 school year was the attendance.”</p>
<p>“Even though frequent calls were made home and checklists of incomplete work were given to the students, this did not seem to motivate them”</p>
<p>“Another challenge that we faced was that parents did not fully understand the course breakdown, even after being explained, between -1, -2, -3 courses. As a result, this led to lack of parental support when trying to get students to attend daily.”</p>
<p>“Students were not willing to put in extra hours after school above to classroom instruction to complete the work”</p>
<p>“Attendance.”</p>
<p>“We did not expect to have such a high rate of students who did not pass their courses”</p>

"Low attendance"
"Lack of motivation"
"Students find the courses difficult."
"The lack of achievement has been discouraging."
"If their peers were not successful in NDL, students will not sign up for NDL."
"Some students failed to pass the credits due to poor attendance"
"Students are non-attenders."
"Math was very hard to follow (I am a math/science guy and I sat in on a few lessons and I personally had no idea what was going on all of our kids dropped this math class"
"Student attendance was the main root of program challenges"
"The teachers worked to provide opportunities for success for the students but it was very hard for many to stay on task, remain driven and motivated to complete their courses."
Theme: Staffing and Human Resource Challenges
Summary: The implementation of NDL faced several staffing challenges, particularly in securing qualified and reliable personnel. Difficulties included hiring a suitable ISP (Instructional Support Person), with some positions remaining unfilled or staff leaving mid-year, leaving students without necessary support. Housing shortages further compounded the issue, with some staff unable to be retained due to a lack of accommodations. Recruitment and retention of Program Support Teachers and E-Learning Monitors was also problematic, and the lack of local hires and challenges in filling positions with experienced personnel impacted the quality and continuity of the program. These staffing issues affected the flexibility of school timetables and the availability of high-quality teachers for general students, reducing the effectiveness of the NDL program.
Quotes:
"Hiring a monitor was challenging [teachers spouse was hired]"
"No housing"
"Finding a suitable ISP was challenging. Also, same as above."
"It is always a challenge getting a monitor who can handle the technology, manage the students, and be familiar with the curriculum."

“Housing. Again, if the ISP is essential, they need somewhere to live. I am currently (20-21) short 3 teaching positions because of housing”
“NDL monitor left half-way through the year so it was very challenging to keep the NDL going at a level it requires”
“Challenge: difficult to fill with a local hire.”
“Difficulty finding people who are interested in volunteering in NWT; difficulties with retention. Many ISPs drop out about half-way through the school year.”
“Labour shortages within the community make hiring / retaining difficult.”
“Recruitment of new Program Support Teachers has been difficult.”
“ISP not strong”
“didn’t start with ISP”
“Lack of a reliable ISP was a huge challenge for us.”
“Finding and E-Learning Monitor that provides the necessary support for student success”
“Negative – providing the teachers for these classes does often impact the opportunities available to our general East Three Secondary students to have access to the high quality teachers throughout the day. It also limits the flexibility in developing the school timetable.”
“8 NDL teachers + their Moodle dev time took a chunk out of the school’s Brick and Mortar capacity”
“ISP leaving in November. No one to replace him.”
“Had 6 students enrolled in Math 30-1 and was forced to offer the class locally by an uncertified math teacher (although we have 2 endpoints).”
“We lost our ISP for about a month this year and so it was not ideal for our students to not have anyone there who could help them”
“Hiring a qualified NDL monitor with the funds available”
Theme: Scheduling and Calendar Misalignments.
Summary: Challenges related to scheduling arose due to mismatches between NDL class times and school schedules, including conflicts with lunch hours, start times, and community holidays. The lack of asynchronous options for students to catch up on missed lectures was noted, as well as difficulties arising from differing school calendars, bus schedules, and other logistical issues. There were also concerns about the disconnect between instructors and students, exacerbated by calendar differences, internet issues, and no clear system for

catching up on missed content. Despite these challenges, there is optimism with the hiring of a new, experienced ISP and recognition that additional supports, including asynchronous learning opportunities, would help students better participate in the program. The lack of alignment between school and NDL schedules led to the discontinuation of certain courses that couldn't fit within school hours, and there were also concerns about students missing breaks that their peers were receiving due to NDL scheduling constraints.

Quotes:

"Schedule is difficult to match with school schedules. Ex: lunch hours, start times, community preference for holidays, STIP"

"none other than calendar variations"

"It can also be a challenge to align schedules at the school with those of NDL"

"solution to the calendar problem"

"Outcomes that were outside of planning was the lack of asynchronous opportunity to watch missed lectures and catch up (calendar conflicts, etc.)"

"Disconnect between instructor and pupils, calendar differences, and internet issues and no "superb system of catching up""

I think we have a great new ISP with experience in Catherine Young coming in and I do think that that will make a significant difference. As we are going distance learning to start the school year, additional supports will be needed to ensure our student is able to participate in the actual classes. I'll say it again, NDL needs an asynchronous element to it.

"There also needs to be a better system for helping students get caught up, particularly when people will inevitably miss school in our contemporary setting with pandemics, closures and strains on mental health."

"The times don't match our school schedule; therefore, we did not offer the courses that did not fit in our school schedule."

"bussing schedule conflicts with NDL last class [i.o.w. school schedule conflicts]"

"perceives Will's schedl to be flexible; [Will doesn't set this sched alone but with]; they want more of their needed courses offered in Block 2/3."

"Calendars did not match and students needed to be in school when Moose Kerr was not in session (STIP)"

"Matching the school calendar at HKE with the school calendar of the NDL host school"

"Need a common calendar that is followed"

"Schedules not lining up (STIP days, school closure days, March Break, Exams schedules)"

"The School Calendar: Scheduling of STIP days, Breaks, start and end of the school year cannot always be lined up with the NDL program make it difficult for those students attending."

"They lose breaks that other students at LKRHS might get because they need to attend NDL courses during our STIP Days, March Break, etc."

"Scheduling courses for our students that are not in NDL classes all day"

"Scheduling classes for students who drop out of NDL"

"Split regular and NDL classes to give the students the option to do some of your face-to-face and some online (4 NDL classes are too many)"

Theme: Program and Resource Limitations - Technology and Infrastructure Issues

Summary: The NDL program faces multiple challenges primarily related to technology, including unreliable internet access and inadequate tech support, especially in the DDEC region. Internet connectivity issues often hinder students' ability to complete assignments, with slow speeds and frequent disruptions. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the program's ability to transition to an online learning model, though internet infrastructure and access remain ongoing obstacles. There is also a lack of bandwidth, limiting course availability and making it difficult to offer specialized courses, like Northern Studies, French, and others. Furthermore, there are constraints related to space for adding more endpoints to expand course options, which limits the flexibility of the program. Some schools also face difficulties with internet access at home, even though solutions like turbo sticks are available. In addition to technological issues, there are challenges in meeting students' basic needs, such as providing the necessary resources and academic support for successful learning. The limited number of endpoints and room constraints further complicate the program's ability to offer all the desired courses.

Quotes:

"Internet issues and lack of tech support (DDEC region issue)"

"Due to the nature of NDL, COVID shutdowns had less of an impact on student success due to its ability to move to an online blended learning environment. Some challenges still exist however in terms of internet infrastructure, speed and access."

"Internet connectivity and NDL Handbook completion."

"It is often difficult to offer specialized courses such as Northern Studies, French, Art, CTS, or Career and Life Management in very small schools due to a lack of teacher experience, limited course offerings, or reduced student need. An expanding NDL program that included such courses would be beneficial.

<p>"I'd like for this to grow but I'd like for our school to be teaching these courses to the other students in the Sahtu region."</p>
<p>"I think it's crucial that the instructor spend some time "doing the Maslow stuff before doing the Bloom stuff". All learners need their needs met before they can jump into academia and I don't think this was done to the capacity that it should have been this past year with NDL."</p>
<p>"We would have liked to add a second endpoint to increase course availability, but there isn't space to add on."</p>
<p>"There needs to be more discussion regarding what course offerings will be. Offerings were more limited this year than last. We would benefit from more core courses offered during Period 2 and 3"</p>
<p>"Our issues are mostly technology based as there is not enough bandwidth coming into Fort Resolution and as a result, the internet can drop frequently. There should be a separate modem for NDL so that there is some relief during peak internet use hours during the school day."</p>
<p>"Technology (slow connections, calls dropped)...[did not say what network was being spoken off]"</p>
<p>"Students in the program had limited access to Internet at home, however, turbo sticks were available to assist with this issue."</p>
<p>"We limited the number of students from E3SS that were allowed to enroll in the NDL classes."</p>
<p>"E3's access to the GNWT's DCN made it hard to access online digital storytelling"</p>
<p>"Challenges revolved around technology. The mondopad would have a variety of issues related to connectivity and microphone shutting the whole system down. NDL student was not as dedicated as he should be. He had trouble with attendance and wakefulness."</p>
<p>"Internet issues"</p>
<p>"Teachers asking for things not on the list of materials that was purchased. Trouble doing experiments in science classes"</p>
<p>"Only having one endpoint: Made it difficult to take advantage of all the courses that the NDL program offered."</p>
<p>"We are moving the Current NDL Class to a new room that can be partitioned into two areas, one for each endpoint. We will need to see how 1 ISP is able to manage for both endpoints. We may need to look into providing earphones of some form for each group if the noise from one area interferes with the other."</p>
<p>"It was very hard for students to work from home for a variety of reasons; no internet access at home, no quiet space to complete assignments without interruption, lack of in person academic support and the lack of motivation due to there being "no school"."</p>

Theme: Pandemic and Environmental Impacts

Summary: The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted the NDL program, as school closures and a shift to remote learning negatively impacted student success. The lack of in-person support and communication between students, ISPs, schools, and the NDL program made it difficult for students to stay engaged, leading to low attendance and course completion rates, particularly in the second semester. Additionally, other crises like floods and fires in the Dehcho region compounded these challenges. Students, who initially enrolled with a desire to succeed, were unable to receive the support they needed due to the pandemic, and the region is still working to address the long-term effects on student performance and attendance.

Quotes:

“Covid-19 really hurt some of our students in this program. Once the Schools were shut down, and learner packages were sent home, the communication between the students, ISP, School and NDL program really impacted some students negatively.”

“The Dehcho is still recovering from the recurrent floods, fires, and the Covid pandemic. All these events have impacted our student attendance and performance in ways that we are still uncovering and addressing.”

COVID-19. “Our students chose not to complete””

Second semester was not successful due to COVID because students were unable to complete the program. This was the only semester that had no students complete a course”

“Other than COVID, there were no other significant challenges.

“Due to COVID-19, this interrupted the daily instruction that students were used to.”

“Obviously there was no way we could have predicted the pandemic and the effects it would ultimately have on the success of our students. We start each year with students who want to be in NOL, they have a reason to be here and attend to receive the support to succeed academically. The pandemic forced school closures and we lost the ability to support them in the ways they needed.”

“Covid shut down the school.”

“Covid-19 obviously hindered some of our students in the NDL program in a negative way”

The biggest challenge we were faced with was the COVIO 19 Pandemic. It forced schools to be closed and with the lack of in-person support and daily interactions between students and teachers, we lost some of them.”

Promising Practices

Theme: Invest in ISPs.
Summary: The success of the NDL program heavily relied on the involvement of qualified and dedicated ISPs, with many attributing significant program achievements to the positive impact of their presence. Key characteristics of a successful ISP included being supportive, motivating, and able to model expectations for students. ISPs played a central role in monitoring assignments, providing extra hours for student support, and helping students stay on task. Some schools also benefited from having a second person to assist when multiple classes were conducted simultaneously. Additionally, strong communication, organization, and visual reminders from ISPs were crucial in helping students manage their work. The need for a full-time, skilled ISP, supported by additional staff, was emphasized as essential for program success, along with the recognition of the challenges students face in independent learning. Further funding and professional development for ISPs were recommended to strengthen the program.
Quotes:
"The greatest successes in the division happened when principals hired sub teachers to be the ISPs."
"Continued support for the ISP position."
"Constant positive reinforcement (leading by example ISP modelling for the students)"
"Having a good ISP is crucial to the survival of the program"
"Our students this past year were, for the most part, very well motivated and supported by the ISP, their peers, and their families"
"Was a "huge asset to our school" as main contact person, checking in with students so they felt supported"
"Key role"
"Coaches"
"Cheering squad"
"Heart of program"
"Set rules, regulation"
"Students are not prepared for the rigour of the -1 coursework and the Distance Learning. Hiring a skilled monitor made a huge difference competent monitor absolute must"

“Funding. If ISP is an essential position, then it must be funded fulltime”
“We have a very supportive and helpful monitor (one of a kind) who helps collect work and does checklists to keep students motivated and on task.”
“Our monitor is willing to spend extra hours after to help students with completing their assigned tasks”
“Having a second person to assist when there are 2 classes going on at the same time in separate rooms can sometimes be a bit chaotic and it would be good to have an additional support person in place to help assist the students.”
“The NDL monitor, Joanna Rowe, was an exceptional staff member; she was very dedicated to the program & helpful to be around”
“We had a very strong ISP who was able to help and model the expectations for all of our students very well”
“Our NDL monitor stayed after school to provide extra support to the students”
“Our NDL monitor arrived well before classes started to prepare all necessary materials”
“Hiring a qualified NDL monitor with the funds available”
“Was very adept at using visuals to remind students of upcoming assignments & summarizing key learning concepts”
“There should be a stronger focus on hiring teachers who can deal more effectively with the online nature of NDL and who also recognise the issues with independence that our students experience. I would suggest some specific PD in this area.”
“Having a full time NOL monitor and also additional support from an SA, gave the students opportunities to receive the help they needed and also allowed the two classrooms to be monitored during class time.”
“The monitor and SA were able to create white board charts to monitor assignments given and completion of work. Having scheduled work periods also helped to create time and a quiet space for students to complete their work and have on site help with questions etc.”
“More funding to hire a qualified NDL Monitor”
“Tech support also came from the ISP”
Theme: NDL Prep - Offer structured preparation and ongoing support for students transitioning into NDL programs. i.e. Mentorship from past NDL students
Summary: The feedback emphasizes the importance of preparing younger students for the NDL program and creating a solid foundation for future participants. There is a focus on engaging potential students earlier, such as through role models from older students who have succeeded in NDL. The students currently in the program are seen as paving the way, inspiring their peers in grades 7-9 to meet NDL

requirements and act as examples for others. It is also noted that there is a need for increased support, including providing students with resources like time management tools and guides for adapting to the online learning environment. Transition courses or support mechanisms for students who are not yet accustomed to the independence required by NDL are recommended.

Quotes:

“We are hoping to engage potential students at a younger age for NDL.”

“For learners prepared to take NDL courses, this is an amazing opportunity. Parents are interested in the program also, we just need to get our students better prepared.”

“Students coming from Junior High were inspired by students in NDL.”

“Otherwise, they are role models for the younger ones.”

“Future students will get a first hand look at the success of their peers that have been involved with NDL and have positive peer role models in education.”

“Students in Grades 7-9 will be able to push harder to meet the requirements for the NDL courses.”

“The students who are taking the program are role models, they are paving the way for students to see that they can be successful here in our community.”

“Having previous NDL students come back as role models to talk to the junior and senior high students will help us pave the way for more interest and success with NDL.”

“For the new students, the monitor provided them with an “e-learning package” which contained tips on time management, creating a schedule, reducing distractions and stress management.”

“Similarly, they were given a sheet with instructions explaining how to access moodle, email, etc. If something similar can be put in place officially for incoming students, it would reduce the shock of the drastic change in learning environment and format”

“ECE should recognise that our students typically do not have the background supports. In particular, they are not used to the level of independence that is required. Our CUSO volunteers try to support them as much as possible to overcome this, but it would be helpful if there were a general recognition of this issue. It might be helpful to have a transition course for students who plan to take NDL.”

“Promising practice of letting Grade 9s’ sit in on some NDL classes to learn the expectations and routines”

“Ensuring that we get the right students (i.e. self-motivated, confident, etc.) signed up for the right course in the program.”

“Until our students are able to handle more independence and build their own structure/routine in relation to their academics, we can't be an NDL school unfortunately.”

Theme: Communication - Ongoing communication with parents and involving them in the process enhances engagement and support.

Summary: Effective communication is emphasized in the NDL program, with ongoing dialogue between students, parents, school administration, and NDL staff. Regular conversations focus on addressing challenges, ensuring students stay on track with their coursework, and providing support for career planning. Parents are kept informed through regular updates about missing or incomplete work, and a parental package is provided to help them stay involved in their child's progress. Continued collaboration with the NDL course teachers and administration helps identify strategies for student success and overcoming obstacles.

Quotes:

“Talked to student and parent”

“Open dialogue NDL & school admin”

“discussions with parents & students”

“lots of future talk with NDL admin & school”

“Regular communications to parents about missing or uncompleted work”

“Ongoing communication with NDL course teachers”

“Continue with talking to students, monitor, and administration to collect information regarding success and challenges they may face to help drive promising practices.”

“Continue to support students with career paths or job plans.”

“Parental Package to go home to parents”

Theme: Tutoring and Homework Clubs

Summary: Promising practices included offering tutoring and academic support outside of regular class time. Teachers and the ISP provided afterschool tutoring sessions, both for NDL students and others, with some sessions available to students in other communities. E3 supported a STEM tutor for all NDL students, ensuring access to additional help. The ISP also organized regular Study Hall sessions, where all students, including NDL participants, could finish assignments and receive extra help with their studies.

Quotes:

“Teachers offering tutoring was a promising practice”
“Homework clubs to cover academic shortfall”
“Tutoring afterschool [both ISP, and local DEA program]”
“E3 paid for a STEM tutor for all NDL students who would go back to school, be let in by principal for sessions.”
“Also they tutored students in other communities after school hours.”
“ISP providing homework/study hall open to all students (not just NDL) to finish assignments or get extra help”
“The ISP provided Study Hall, almost every day, for all students of the school, including the NDL students”

Required Support

Theme: Adequate Staffing and Funding.
Summary: The challenges highlighted revolve around inadequate funding for the e-learning and ISP (Independent Study Program) positions, making it difficult to find qualified candidates. Concerns were raised about the need for skilled educators in key subjects such as Math, English, Science, and Art to help facilitate learning in person and ensure student success. There were also challenges related to unexpected costs, such as the CUSO expense, and difficulties with teacher retention and the transition between curricula. Additionally, there is a call for more flexible funding to support regional approaches and ensure ongoing success, especially in the areas of equipment maintenance and ensuring that staff are adequately trained and supported. The importance of maintaining consistent ISP staff and providing better accommodations and allowances is also emphasized.
Quotes:
“Unable to find anyone to take this position (funding for this is woefully inadequate)”
“Ill equipped eLearning monitor”
“The unknown cost from CUSO (\$7700) at the start of the year was an unexpected expense”
“Early vetting of possible candidates for the e-learning position”
“Continue to ensure that funding is available so materials are ready and available for the start of the school year.”
In order for this program to be successful, we require a skilled educator to guide the children through the lessons in person.”

<p>“More money to provide better support for the ISP; better accommodations, higher allowance for food, etc.”</p>
<p>“We require a proficient Math, English, Art and Science teacher to facilitate the learning in person. They can encourage the students to attend and monitor attendance more closely; they can teach, tutor or coach in the classroom, and keep the students motivated to attend.”</p>
<p>“ISP contracts so they do not leave in the middle of the year CUSO International should send a replacement at no cost to the school/school board”</p>
<p>“Teacher retention is going to be a key to staffing our schools and consistent program delivery. The transition from the Alberta to BC curriculum will require extensive training, support and collaboration for all staff.”</p>
<p>“The greatest successes in the division happened when principals hired sub teachers to be the ISPs.”</p>
<p>“Increase flexible funding to allow for regional support/approaches.”</p>
<p>“Hiring an ISP because of inadequate funding. Students with the necessary requirements to be successful in higher level courses without an ISP.”</p>
<p>“Continued support for the ISP position. Enhanced understandings as to how the NDL equipment is maintained and how the maintenance aligns with regional IT security, internet access, and hardware/software policies.”</p>
<p>“More funding for ISP.”</p>
<p>“Price of ISP’s down to \$20,000 from \$50,000. Question long able to maintain volunteer program and adequate maintenance of NDL itself”</p>
<p>“Lack of qualified teacher to oversee their success”</p>
<p>“Issues with NDL teachers and SSP implementation/ complex need support”</p>
<p>Theme: Accessibility of Resources and Opportunities.</p>
<p>Summary: The availability of supplies and resources for NDL courses at the start of the school year has been consistently positive. Collaboration between NDL, Career and Education Advisors, and universities has supported students in making informed post-secondary decisions, such as university campus tours, course material lists, and planning for future careers. However, challenges remain, including the need for additional support, such as a second room and ISP, to effectively manage multiple endpoints and reduce distractions. There is also a need for more variety in courses, like Math -2, to better support university entrance requirements. A lack of variety in course offerings, especially in subjects like Art, has been criticized as ineffective. More funding may be required for practical improvements like soundproofing or providing additional resources for the NDL room. Further, students would benefit from clearer support in</p>

understanding how NDL ties into their future career opportunities, ensuring they feel more engaged with the program. Additionally, students struggle with balancing NDL commitments with school-wide events, leading to frustration over missed social opportunities.

Quotes:

"Supplies were always available for the start of the school year for the NDL courses to run smoothly"

"NDL in combination with Career and Education Advisors as well as Universities collaborating would really help our students."

"University Campus tours really help the students choose their desired University"

"Course Material lists for assignments/Labs etc."

"We may need more funding to provide earphones for each group if the noise from one area interferes with the other OR provide soundproofing material to the walls of this room so that students on one side or the barrier/ partition are less impacted by the students on the other side, offset the additional responsibilities on the ISP and provide them with a higher allowance for food and accommodations OR fund a second ISP, if necessary, to run the second endpoint."

"The Sahtu region is assisting NDL students to plan for post-secondary options through the services of the Career Education Advisor (CEA). This will facilitate greater uptake of -1 course offerings and enhance post-secondary readiness. The CEA assists students and parents in understanding prerequisites and post-secondary options."

"About 90% of NDL students struggle with the greater academic, organisational and attendance demands. Much of this situation is alleviated by one-on-one attention from ISPs; however, some students are unable to make the transition. NDL itself does not offer a wide enough variety of courses such as the Math -2 series which is acceptable for university entrance. Offering Art 10, 20, 30 is an ineffective use of student time; this is a course that's easily offered face-to-face."

"A second room and second ISP to offer more courses. ECE is supporting a second endpoint (on the network that allows the second room)."

"Buying things for the NDL room is not part of the contracts provisions for use of NDL assets—changing the wording"

"extra support is needed because we have e-learning in two different classrooms"

"Student need more supports to understand careers and how NDL supports them... this will produce more "buy-in" to NDL"

"Wants her students to visit the host school/teacher during some day trips"

"Student frustration on missing out on school-wide events; more balance is called for so students are not missing out on social events and opportunities that make them absent from NDL"

"Students had access to all needed materials for the class. High quality teachers with content expertise were chosen to instruct classes."

"Students will not shy away from better opportunities regarding post-secondary, over even employment."

Theme: Student Support and Preparation for Independence

Summary: The feedback highlights concerns about the challenges students face with independence in the NDL program, especially those from challenging home environments. Many students struggle with time management, lack of support, and the self-discipline required for independent learning, leading to higher dropout rates in post-secondary education. While NDL offers valuable opportunities, it is clear that students may not be adequately prepared for the program's rigor, which affects their success. In some cases, students have struggled academically and emotionally, with some even requesting to return to traditional in-person classes. The need for additional support, better preparation, and strategies to build student independence is emphasized as critical for NDL's success.

Quotes:

"However, given the amount of support they require, I am concerned that they may drop out of post-secondary at a higher rate because of the greater independence required."

"They require a great deal of support; there is sometimes a perception that the school revolves around them."

"It's important that we, as a staff, take a step back and look at steps moving forward to help our students reach a level of independence where they may be able to take on something like NDL."

"Regular follow-up eventually took place"

"Since students are referred to NDL by teachers, I assumed that the students enrolled in NDL would have the skill set and stamina to be successful in these courses. That was not the case."

"Teaching students time management"

"Student independence is a critical issue that flows through our school and is quite apparent throughout the district. NDL should not be treating these students as if they are the same as those who come from backgrounds that are more settled. Many of our NDL students struggle with home lives that are not supportive (there are drug and/or alcohol issues and/or other serious domestic problems). Our CUSO volunteers work hard to mitigate these issues."

"The twins that took Math 10C last year, struggled from the onset. They had asked their mother to drop the course and go back into the classroom, however, she wouldn't allow it. Truthfully, that was the moment we lost the girls academically as they gave up on all their other courses and have struggled since school started in August to even come to school. I want to be clear that I am not blaming NDL for

this but just that it was very eye opening for me as Principal to realize that our highest achieving students are not independent enough for the work that comes along with taking an NDL course.”

“NDL is a wonderful opportunity for students but without the proper supports and strategies in place, it just didn't work for us.”

“One of our NDL students did complete the courses she was taking in NDL and was able to graduate, however, another student was not confident with working independently and therefore asked to be reenrolled in the Fall where the teacher was present.”

“Trouble working on independent work and homework when unprompted”

"students, especially from smaller communities with limited opportunities need to develop the confidence that they can compete with students in larger communities. This gives them the confidence to pursue post-secondary education opportunities, or even employment opportunities”

“Students were unprepared for program’s rigor”

Theme: Communication and Coordination

Summary: The need for better communication is highlighted throughout, including timely notifications about course offerings and scheduling changes, allowing staff to plan accordingly. Schools also require earlier knowledge of the NDL course calendar to better coordinate their own schedules. There is a call for clearer communication between NDL teachers, students, and support staff, with specific attention to having backup personnel for administrative tasks if needed. A more efficient system for ordering and receiving materials in advance is also desired, to avoid delays in starting courses. Additionally, there is a concern about a lack of communication with parents, and the need for a better approach to supporting students with limited or no internet access at home.

Quotes:

"Supports requires: Clear communication on any course offering / scheduling changes so that I can plan scheduling for all my staff."

“Knowing the NDL course calendar sooner than later since E3 designs their calendar around NDL”

“Better communication between the NDL teachers and administration of the schools (maybe having a backup person delegated to print tests or quizzes if the ISP isn't there for those days etc.)”

“Better communication between NDL teacher/student/PST/ISP”

“Similarly, semester two started off well, then COVID occurred. Initially the students had a difficult time adjusting to the new format of learning. However, maintaining constant communication with them helped them to pull together and put out the effort required to successfully complete the courses.”

“Teachers did not communicate the needs to struggling students to stakeholders until after 1st quarter”
“It would be nice to know what materials are required to run a course well in advance so that it can be ordered and meet shipping deadlines.”
“Lack of parent knowledge/communication”
“Supplies were difficult to order and have shipped; receiving supply lists earlier would be best”
“Moving forward, we need to have a better system of communication, as well as a back up plan for those students who have no Internet Access at home.”
Theme: Emotional and Social Wellbeing
Summary: The challenges for students in the NDL program include feeling overwhelmed by workload expectations, lacking motivation, and struggling with self-esteem, particularly when failure occurs. Some students feel isolated, especially those who are the only one from their community in the program, and others struggle with shyness or insecurity in interacting with peers from different backgrounds. Additionally, the lack of proper support can exacerbate these issues, making it difficult for students to seek help when needed. The presence of a Child and Youth Community Counselor (CYCC) provides important social and emotional support for students.
Quotes:
“We had extra support from our CYCC (Child and Youth Community Counselor), who helped support student’s social and emotional wellbeing.”
“Without proper supports, student feel overwhelmed with workload expectations”
“Feeling alone (only student)”
“Failure detrimental to one’s self-esteem”
“Lack of student motivation/ shyness, insecurities in talking with peers from other communities / too scared to ask for help”

Appendix D: NDL Contributions

Table 1. Yearly NDL contributions per school

School	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	Average
Mangilaluk School	\$ 48,394.80	\$ 40,081.70	\$ 50,618.40	\$ 48,873.00	\$ 37,444.40	\$ 45,082.46
Moose Kerr School	\$ 43,957.50	\$ 43,957.50	\$ 44,825.70	\$ 35,009.30	\$ 33,996.80	\$ 40,349.36
Chief Julius School	\$ 46,164.30	\$ 55,838.80	\$ 46,707.00	\$ 45,300.90	\$ 43,206.90	\$ 47,443.58
Helen Kalvak School	\$ 34,970.90	\$ 35,049.80	\$ 35,207.30	\$ 47,529.60	\$ 47,455.20	\$ 40,042.56
Chief Albert Wright School	\$ 33,450.80	\$ 32,365.40	\$ 32,835.80	\$ 44,354.40	\$ 34,686.50	\$ 35,538.58
Chief T'Selehye School	\$ 37,647.80	\$ 34,102.10	\$ 33,740.30	\$ 46,184.70	\$ 46,904.10	\$ 39,715.80
ʔehtseo Ayha School	\$ 33,595.70	\$ 33,161.60	\$ 32,365.40	\$ 34,200.20	\$ 34,790.00	\$ 33,622.58
Líídlíí Kúé Regional High School	\$ 44,882.10	\$ 44,424.60	\$ 53,356.60	\$ 33,947.60	\$ 34,087.10	\$ 42,139.60
Echo Dene School	\$ 41,744.40	\$ 51,965.50	\$ 42,502.50	\$ 41,754.60	\$ 41,482.50	\$ 43,889.90
Deninu School	\$ 51,618.10	\$ 41,017.80	\$ 41,428.50	\$ 32,307.80	\$ 31,872.50	\$ 39,648.94
Chief Jimmy Bruneau School	\$ 61,008.60	\$ 54,013.70	\$ 64,127.10	\$ 54,452.00	\$ 50,348.30	\$ 56,789.94
Deh Gáh Elementary & Secondary School	n/a	\$ 41,586.90	\$ 32,258.30	n/a	\$ 32,270.60	\$ 35,371.93
Łutselk'e Dene School	n/a	\$ 31,872.50	\$ 32,750.00	n/a	n/a	\$ 32,311.25
Angik School	n/a	\$ 32,684.60	\$ 33,236.30	\$ 33,814.40	\$ 33,894.50	\$ 33,407.45
Mezi Community School	n/a	\$ 45,216.90	\$ 36,785.00	\$ 37,478.60	\$ 37,812.50	\$ 39,323.25
Alexis Arrowmaker School	n/a	n/a	\$ 26,030.00	n/a	\$ 25,625.00	\$ 25,827.50
Jean Wetrade Gamèti School	n/a	n/a	\$ 31,130.00	\$ 29,586.20	\$ 31,535.00	\$ 30,750.40
Mackenzie Mountain School	n/a	n/a	\$ 35,927.60	\$ 35,738.30	n/a	\$ 35,832.95
Colville Lake School	n/a	n/a	\$ 27,830.00	\$ 34,097.30	\$ 33,266.90	\$ 31,731.40
Total Average	\$ 43,403.18	\$ 41,155.96	\$ 38,613.78	\$ 39,664.31	\$ 37,098.75	\$ 39,987.20

Blue boxes = BDDEC schools, Pink boxes = SDEC schools, Light green boxes = DDEC schools, Light yellow boxes = SSDEC schools, Orange boxes = TCSA schools. Yellow boxes = within (+/-) %10 of the total average.

Table 2. Yearly cost of NDL per enrolled student per school

School	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	Average
Mangilaluk School	\$ 9,678.96	\$ 10,020.43	\$ 10,123.68	\$ 9,774.60	Inc. data	\$9,899.42
Moose Kerr School	\$ 5,494.69	\$ 6,279.64	\$ 7,470.95	\$ 11,669.77	Inc. data	\$7,728.76
Chief Julius School	\$ 5,129.37	\$ 3,988.49	\$ 9,341.40	\$ 9,060.18	Inc. data	\$6,879.86
Helen Kalvak School	\$ 8,742.73	\$ 8,762.45	\$ 11,735.77	\$ 7,921.60	Inc. data	\$9,290.64
Chief Albert Wright School	\$ 33,450.80	\$ 16,182.70	\$ 32,835.80	\$ 7,392.40	Inc. data	\$22,465.43
Chief T'Selehye School	\$ 12,549.27	\$ 17,051.05	\$ 11,246.77	\$ 7,697.45	Inc. data	\$12,136.13
?ehtseo Ayha School	\$ 33,595.70	\$ 16,580.80	\$ 32,365.40	\$ 8,550.05	Inc. data	\$22,772.99
Líídljį Kúę Regional High School	\$ 6,411.73	\$ 4,936.07	\$ 3,334.79	\$ 33,947.60	Inc. data	\$12,157.55
Echo Dene School	\$ 5,218.05	\$ 3,464.37	\$ 4,722.50	\$ 4,639.40	Inc. data	\$4,511.08
Deninu School	\$ 4,692.55	\$ 5,859.69	\$ 5,178.56	\$ 8,076.95	Inc. data	\$5,951.94
Chief Jimmy Bruneau School	\$ 12,201.72	\$ 18,004.57	\$ 8,015.89	\$ 13,613.00	Inc. data	\$12,958.79
Deh Gáh Elementary & Secondary School		\$ 5,940.99	\$ 3,584.26		Inc. data	\$4,762.62
Łutselk'e Dene School		\$ 31,872.50	\$ 10,916.67			\$21,394.58
Angik School		\$ 32,684.60	\$ 16,618.15	\$ 16,907.20	Inc. data	\$22,069.98
Mezi Community School		\$ 6,459.56	\$ 6,130.83	\$ 18,739.30	Inc. data	\$10,443.23
Alexis Arrowmaker School			\$ 13,015.00		Inc. data	\$13,015.00
Jean Wetrade Gamèti School			\$ 31,130.00	\$ 29,586.20	Inc. data	\$30,358.10
Mackenzie Mountain School			\$ 17,963.80	\$ 35,738.30		\$26,851.05
Colville Lake School			\$ 13,915.00	\$ 34,097.30	Inc. data	\$24,006.15
Total Cost per student (Sum of all NDL contributions/number of enrolled NDL students)	\$ 7,700.56	\$ 7,262.82	\$ 7,974.58	\$ 10,577.15	\$8,639.44	\$8,378.78

Blue boxes = BDDEC schools, Pink boxes = SDEC schools, Light green boxes = DDEC schools, Yellow boxes = SSDEC schools, Orange boxes = TCSA schools. Cost per student = NDL contribution by school (flat rate + SSMDL)/number of enrolled NDL students. Yellow box = within (+/-) 10% from the average. "Inc. data" = incomplete data (inaccurate student counts per community in 2022-23).