



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

### Contents

1.1	Essential Documents.....	1
1.2	Education Renewal .....	3
1.2.1	Vision for the Future.....	3
1.2.2	Foundational Statements .....	4
1.2.3	Proposed Directions for Change .....	7
1.2.3	Next steps .....	9
1.3	Foundational Principles .....	10
1.3.1	Language and Culture .....	10
	Foundational Documents .....	10
	Dene Kede and Inuuqatigiit.....	11
	Language Instruction.....	14
1.3.2	Inclusive Schooling .....	16
1.4	Early Childhood .....	18
1.4.1	Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten .....	19
1.5	Infused Curricula .....	19
1.5.1	Career Development.....	19
1.5.2	Information and Communication Technology (ICT).....	21
1.6	Governance and Administration .....	22
1.6.1	Organizational Structures .....	23
	WHAT IS A DISTRICT EDUCATION AUTHORITY?.....	24
	WHAT IS A DIVISIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL?.....	24
	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEAs.....	24
	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DECs (and Yellowknife DEAs) .....	25
	Lines of Communication.....	25
1.6.2	Employee Conduct.....	26
1.6.3	Committees and Working Groups.....	26



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

This Handbook is for the use of all school staff in planning for the delivery of school programs. It is intended to serve the following purposes:

- to encourage and support innovation and excellence in the delivery of K to 12 education in NWT classrooms.
- to communicate procedures for organizing and operating schools to meet the needs of students;
- to communicate information regarding evaluation of student achievement, including the Alberta Provincial Achievement Tests and Grade 12 Departmental Examinations;
- to identify graduation requirements specified by the Department;

Policies, procedures and organizational information required to operate NWT K to 12 schools are included in this Handbook, or, where not included, directions are given outlining where this information can be obtained. In the absence of any such information, schools should refer to [www.ece.gov.nt.ca](http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca).

### 1.1 Essential Documents

The Government of the Northwest Territories encourages excellence in education, ongoing improvement of the teaching and the learning processes, and the innovation necessary to meet these goals. In a system of shared responsibilities with education bodies (both Divisional Education Councils and District Education Authorities), these innovations will arise from both the Department and all school jurisdictions.

School planning and operations are to be guided by:

- Education Act, 1995
- Regulations of the Education Act, 1996
- The Education Renewal and Innovation Framework: Directions for Change; 2013
- Aboriginal Student Achievement Education Plan; 2011
- Department of Education Ministerial Directives (brief summaries are available in Appendix A1)
  - NWT Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling; 2016
  - Enrolment of Students in French First Language Education Programs; 2016
  - Principal Growth and Evaluation in the Northwest Territories; 2012



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

- Cultural Orientation for Teachers; 2010
- Educating All Our Children: Departmental Directive on Student Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting; 2010
- NWT School Improvement and Reporting Directive and Framework; 2010
- Addendum to Directive on release of Alberta Achievement Results; 2006
- Release of Alberta Achievement Test Results; 2005
- Direction Regarding Criminal Records Checks Upon Recertification; 2006
- Standardized Testing – Alberta Achievement Testing; 2004
- Start and End Times for Teachers; 2004
- Departmental Directive on Aboriginal Language and Culture-Based Education Departmental Directive; 2004
- Evaluation and Promotion of Professional Growth for Teachers in NWT Schools; 2004
- School Fees for Treaty Rights Holders; 2003, clarification on Directive; 2004
- Recruitment of Teaching Personnel; 2001
- Career Development Across the Lifespan; 2001
- Management of Information in the Student Record and Other Records Pertaining to Students; 1998
- Child Abuse Protocol; 1998
- Magnet Facilities; 1998
- Religious Instruction in Public Schools; 1998
- Use of Education Facilities; 1998
- Private Schooling; 1997
- Home Schooling; 1997
- Preparing for Tomorrow – Community Secondary Schooling; 1994
- Dealing with Child Abuse: A Handbook for School Personnel, 2012

Electronic copies of all of the above documents are available in the folder that accompanies this handbook.

The Education Act and Regulations are also available through:  
<http://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/Legislation/SearchLeg&Reg.shtml>



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

### 1.2 Education Renewal

Education in the NWT, as in jurisdictions around the world, are in a period of profound change. Many indicators suggest that the model of education that has been used for over a century is no longer preparing young people for the world they encounter outside of school. Through a wide range of engagements with our partners in education in the NWT, as well as by research and data from across Canada, and from around the world, ECE is leading a comprehensive effort to renew education in our territory.

Called 'Education Renewal', this effort is now guided by a 10 year Framework *Directions for Change (2013)*, This Framework is available in all NWT schools, school board offices, and online at [www.nwtedrenewal.wikispaces.com](http://www.nwtedrenewal.wikispaces.com) and on the ECE website at : [www.ece.gov.nt.ca](http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca).

Much of the content of this section is available on the memory stick that accompanies this document in the *Section 1 Documents* folder as Education Renewal Context.

The purpose of the Education Renewal initiative and the goals of the Framework are to determine how we can improve the NWT education system for all learners so that they can meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as capable northern citizens.

The 2011 Aboriginal Student Achievement (ASA) Education Plan contributed significantly to this discussion and has helped to show the need to do more than simply tweak the existing system; it revealed the need to think differently about the system as a whole to better prepare all learners for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The people of the NWT want and deserve an education system that is accountable from the individual student to the entire system, and they are ready to face the challenges that exist to achieve their vision of education. Significant, sustained change will take determination, collaboration, time, and dedicated hard work from all involved in education and in the lives of northern learners and communities.

#### 1.2.1 Vision for the Future

**Vision:** *For northern learners to receive a quality education, to live fulfilled lives as capable people and contribute to strong, healthy communities.*



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

The two primary goals of the Education Renewal initiative when it began were to establish:

1. An effective, relevant NWT education system for all learners, and
2. An associated, practical reporting, management and accountability framework.

Secondary goals fall broadly under the following seven areas of focus:

1. *Student Success*
2. *Small Community Schools*
3. *Assessment Practices*
4. *Early Childhood Development*
5. *Professional Capacity*
6. *Culture, Identity, & Well-being*
7. *System Accountability*

### 1.2.2 Foundational Statements

Teaching and learning are undergoing a major shift world-wide. Our understanding of how the brain actually learns and how to best foster that learning are being challenged, as is our model for how to teach in a world that is filled with easy to access information. Previous approaches to teaching often focused on learning specific content, relied on subject areas being intentionally separated, required students to be sorted by age, and were intended to result in the sole acquisition of a specific set of skills or knowledge. Research, experience, and the needs of a rapidly changing world now point to the need for a more *ecological* understanding of the needs of learners, of *cross-disciplinary competencies* and of increased learner inquiry, ownership and choice.



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

The following eight foundational statements are intended to guide the Education Renewal initiative:

**Meaningful relationships with self, others, ideas, and the land are the foundation for all learning.**

### Relationships



*The school and community are connected. The active involvement and roles of all partners – students, family, community, school staff, educators, Aboriginal Governments, business, etc. -- are highly valued in the learning that occurs inside and outside school walls. Learning involves relationships with ideas, people, life experiences, languages, spirituality, and culture. All are rooted in the place where we live and learn, thus making it essential to connect to the land and people of that place. Through meaningful and respectful relationships, people can talk openly; develop a shared vision, and make decisions together on the directions of students' learning. Students contribute to their community and to their own life-long learning when their relationship with learning is one of true inquiry and discovery.*

**Education in the NWT is a living system of connections, each affecting an individual's relationships and well-being.**

### Ecological



*Education in the NWT can be compared to an ecosystem. The education system is a central and complex part of the North. Every action within the living system impacts more than just the school or its students; it impacts parents, educators, communities, and the wider territory. An ecosystem succeeds only when it is sustainable, with all parts respected and taken care of. The health of any single part of the system impacts others through the complex web of connections between them. To ensure system strength, all connections and their impacts on each other and the whole must be considered.*

**A positive sense of identity is actively supported.**

### Identity



*A person's sense of identity is formed and transformed by their relationships and their understandings of the world around them. In the NWT, the land has a great influence on peoples' identity. Northern languages, cultures, and values must be recognized by the education system so that learning connects with life experiences, spirituality, and identity, not just to facts and skills. The NWT education system must create opportunities for individuals and groups to express themselves, to feel empowered, and to apply both independence and choice in their learning.*



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

**Each person has multiple needs that must be met in order to grow and become a capable, contributing person.**

### Development of Self



*People learn best when their social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual needs are met. The NWT education system must provide safe, caring, and stimulating environments to allow all learners to explore and meet their different needs. This environment will impact each person's development of well-being, resiliency, self-worth, and ability to contribute.*

**People construct knowledge and learn individually and together.**

### Learning Together



*Every person and group makes unique and necessary contributions to learning. Ideas are created and grow through the different experiences, thoughts, and ways of knowing and doing contributed by each person. The NWT education system must ensure authentic and meaningful connections between learning and life and meaning and values. Learners co-construct knowledge as they inquire and problem-solve, wrestling with real-life challenges, issues, and questions that impact their community and themselves.*

**Diversity is recognized and valued in the education system.**

### Diversity



*When people have different social, cultural, historical, linguistic, geographic, economic, spiritual, and political backgrounds, they carry different world views, ways of learning, and ways of doing. Relationships in which people feel free to think and express uniqueness support meaningful learning and working environments. Diversity is essential, as it provides a more complete picture for understanding, constructing knowledge, and moving forward. By using the strength of these different world views, the NWT education system can meet the diverse needs of learners and communities with flexibility, equity, and respect.*



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

### The ongoing growth of learners is nurtured.

#### Strengths and Growth



*The NWT education system recognizes and respects that each person has defined experiences and strengths. The same respect for uniqueness applies to educators, groups, and communities. All learning environments, processes, and initiatives must begin with this in mind and serve to foster personal growth. We must help learners to self-evaluate and set personal challenges. We must encourage efforts and risk-taking since they generate ideas and creative solutions to problems, and foster resilience.*

### The development of competencies is supported in all learners.

#### Competencies



*Capable people have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to work through any situation. When learners explore real life situations that push them to think, work together, and act creatively, they use and further develop these competencies. By doing so, they shape their brain's activity and strengthen their neural connections. In an NWT education system that embraces competency-based learning, learners have ownership over learning choices and decisions. They are supported as they take responsibility for their learning and progress. In this environment disciplines are no longer fixed bodies of knowledge; they become something in which to experiment, venture into, and contribute. The teacher becomes a facilitator, a guide to the learning venture at hand.*

A fundamental understanding within Education Renewal work is that all people inside or outside of the school are learning, growing, and contributing. As such, the term 'learner' is used throughout this document to include students, Elders, educators, family, and community members.

### 1.2.3 Proposed Directions for Change

Nine commitments were made in the 10-year Framework to shape the development of a detailed Action Plan which will again involve collaboration among a wide range of educational, government, community, and other partners throughout the territory and beyond.





## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

The GNWT will do its part to ensure:

- 1. That the school and community work together to build and renew positive relationships.**
  - ✓ By improving understanding and meaningful partnership between the school and community.
- 2. That student wellness and the development of a positive sense of identity are promoted and embedded in school experiences, programming, and environments.**
  - ✓ By creating flexible structures, learning environments, programs and resources that best support the needs of students and the development of their sense of identity.
- 3. That educators have access to experiences and resources that enhance their wellness in order for them to focus on excellence in teaching.**
  - ✓ By supporting conditions for excellence in teaching by enhancing professional supports, accountability, and evidence-based practices.
- 4. That learners experience supported and personalized quality education.**
  - ✓ By developing programs, structures, and processes to best support student success and the diverse needs of life-long learners.
- 5. That the strengths and realities of small communities are recognized and built upon in order to ensure equitable, quality education in all NWT communities.**
  - ✓ By providing equitable and specific supports to enhance learning in small school contexts.
- 6. Renew the K-12 curriculum and ensure it is taught in relevant, research-based, innovative ways.**
  - ✓ By developing and redesigning curricula, teaching and learning practices, and resources to support a renewed definition of student success in the NWT.
- 7. That assessment of learning and actions taken in response to systemic data are comprehensive, strength-based, and growth-oriented.**



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

- ✓ By gathering, interpreting, and sharing meaningful data about the progress of learners and their environments, in relation to authentic indicators of success, in order to inform education planning and decision making.
- 8. That the education system is monitored, measured and reported on to provide transparency and accountability in order to best support student success.**
- ✓ By developing clear and appropriate monitoring and accountability processes to ensure K-12 programs support the needs of NWT learners, staff, teachers, schools, communities and to clarify roles and responsibilities within the education system.
- 9. Continue to work with Aboriginal governments to be successful as they draw down jurisdiction over the education of their people.**
- ✓ By maintaining the willingness to enter into formal or informal arrangements with Aboriginal governments to facilitate a greater role for them in the education system.

### 1.2.3 Next steps

2014/15 marked the beginning of a period of activity geared at developing a rolling 3-year Action Plan in support of the *ERI Framework: Directions for Change*. That action plan continues to evolve each year, with next steps in existing initiatives being addressed, and learning from previous steps being used to guide the adjustment, continuation or ending of various projects.

#### Education Renewal initiatives:

Because Education Renewal is a comprehensive effort to renew education in the NWT, the list of initiatives is both long, and evolving. Some of the projects underway at the current time include:

- Healthy Food in Schools
- Self-Regulation pilot regional training, online courses for teachers, school-based resources.
- Whole Region Writes pilot project (Sahtu)
- Literacy in the Disciplines symposiums/ regional teams
- Mental Health in Small Communities pilot project
- Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practice pilot project



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

- Renewal of Aboriginal Language and Culture-Based Education Directive
- Development of *Our Languages* –Aboriginal language curriculum
- New Educators in the North orientation
- Renewal of, and support for, Teacher Induction and Mentorship Program
- Northern Distance Learning pilot project expansion
- JK-9 Health and Wellness curriculum

### 1.3 Foundational Principles

#### 1.3.1 Language and Culture

The NWT endeavours to ensure that all schools provide students and educators with learning environments that foster and respect the values, worldviews, and languages of the community in which they live and work. The *NWT Education Act* ensures the delivery of culture-based school programs as part of the regular education program, as well as the provision of Aboriginal language learning opportunities.

Culture-based education is education that reflects, validates and promotes the cultures and languages of the Aboriginal peoples of the NWT. It is education that honours all forms of traditional knowledge, ways of knowing and worldviews. Rather than teaching aspects of Aboriginal culture, the NWT seeks to ground all teaching and learning in culture and place. In other words, the goal is to teach *through* culture, not just *about* culture.

The NWT is the only jurisdiction in Canada that names nine (9) official Aboriginal languages alongside English and French through its Official Languages Act. The Act recognizes that many languages are spoken and used by people of the NWT and is committed to the preservation, development and enhancement of Aboriginal languages. The nine (9) Aboriginal languages belong to three different language families: Dene, Inuit and Algonquian/Cree.

#### Foundational Documents

Education in the North is guided by foundational documents, including the *NWT Education Act and Regulations*, and the *Education Renewal Framework: Directions for Change*, as well as by Ministerial Directives and Curricula.

In terms of Aboriginal Language and Culture, there is one Directive and two additional foundational curricula that are expected to be followed in all NWT schools:



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

- Dene Kede (For schools in the Dene Nations: Gwich'in, Sahtú, Dehcho, Tłı̨chǫ and Akaitcho)
- Inuuqatigiit (For schools in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region)
- Departmental Directive on Aboriginal Language and Culture-Based Education

### Dene Kede and Inuuqatigiit

To respect the worldview and language of the land of the first peoples of the NWT, two foundational curricula have been developed: *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit*. All school administrators and teachers are expected to bring forward the Indigenous worldview of their communities in all of their teachings, using the curricula appropriate to their school and community, dependent on the region.

These curricula are informed by a number of philosophical perspectives or worldviews that shape understanding of the Dene and Inuit core concepts as well as the traditions of lifelong learning. *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit* both promote meaningful language use, as Language is interwoven with culture and heritage through meaningful experiences.

### Dene Kede

Dene Kede encompasses the language, culture and the way in which five Dene nations view the world: Gwich'in, Sahtú, Dehcho, Tłı̨chǫ, and Akaitcho.

Kindergarten to Grade 6 takes a thematic approach teaching the four fundamental relationships central to the Dene perspective: The Land, The Spiritual World, The People and The Self.

Dene Kede: *Trails to Becoming*, is a recommended teacher orientation tool.

### Inuuqatigiit

Inuuqatigiit is a foundational curriculum document developed by Inuit and Inuvialuit educators and Elders from the eastern and western Canadian arctic, and grounded in the belief of the Elders that education must be community-based.

The curriculum is based on the Inuit belief that learning is a process that takes many different forms, and is intended to develop pride of identity and language in the students through five main goals: Maintain, Strengthen, recall and enhance Inuit language and culture in the community and school; Enhance unity within Inuit groups; Create a link between the past and present; Encourage the practice of Inuit values and beliefs; and Encourage pride in Inuit identity to enhance personal identity.



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

### Aboriginal Language and Culture-Based Education Directive

*This Directive is under active revision at the current time. It will be replaced during the 2017-18 school year. An update for this Directive will be distributed to Education bodies when the revision is complete*

In 2004, a Departmental Directive for Aboriginal Language and Culture-Based Education (ALCBE) was developed. All school administrators and teachers are expected to read and follow this Directive.

The purpose of this directive is to:

- ensure the school system supports and reflects Aboriginal language and culture based education;
- give direction and ensure accountability for the use of the funding provided by the GNWT to DECAs and DEAs for language and cultural programming;
- provide direction and support to DECAs and DEAs for planning, developing, delivering, supporting and evaluating Aboriginal language and culture programming in the NWT schools;
- clarify roles and responsibilities related to the support of language and culture based education programs in NWT schools.

#### Guiding Principles of the Directive:

- Parents, grandparents, family and community members are a child's first teachers;
- Aboriginal children are more successful when the school affirms their culture;
- The land is a place of learning and is an important part of the successful learning of Aboriginal languages and cultures; and
- Communities have much to offer the education system.

In accordance with the Directive, schools are directed to offer key cultural experiences to students, as part of culture-based education. These activities explore the languages, cultures, histories, activities, skills, knowledge, traditions and values of Aboriginal peoples of the NWT. Key cultural experiences must be culturally authentic, realistic, and natural, and are best done in a traditional setting (ie: on-the-land), using as much Aboriginal language as possible.



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

### Key cultural experiences include:

- Attending cultural trips on-the-land, such as Aboriginal language camps or hunts;
- Learning traditional skills, such as sewing, snowshoe making, or drum making;
- Participating in cultural activities, such as drum dances or feasts;
- Playing traditional games, such as drumming, chanting, or storytelling; and
- Assisting with traditional food gathering and preparation, such as hunting, trapping, berry picking, making bannock, and fishing.

***Under the directive, DEAs/DECs have primary responsibility for developing a culturally appropriate plan of action for their schools. They may wish to establish an Aboriginal Language and Culture Advisory Planning group comprised of Elders, parents, Aboriginal Language Specialists, or community members.***

The NWT has developed two territory-wide programs aimed at Indigenizing education in NWT Schools. Each of these programs were first piloted as a part of the 2011 Aboriginal Student Achievement Education Plan and have since become mandated programs in all NWT schools.

### Elders in Schools

The NWT honours the vital role that Elders play to promote the integration of languages and culture in school programming. Elders have valuable skills and knowledge they can share with students and staff.

The Elders in Schools program was developed to ensure that Elder involvement in education is increased and strengthened. The broad program objective is for students to learn about northern heritage and place through authentic experiences led by Elders. These learning experiences help students shape their identity as people of the NWT. The Elders in Schools Handbook lays out protocols, steps and considerations to be followed when working with Elders in schools and also shares some promising practices.

### Cultural Orientation Days

All NWTTA members receive two days of culturally appropriate orientation to the region, community, or territory. The experience helps to ensure teachers understand the unique culture, history, traditions, and values of the Aboriginal peoples in the NWT and in particular of the people in the region and community in which they live and work.



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

Topics that may be covered during the orientation are:

- History of formal education in the NWT, including the residential schools experience;
- Traditional ways of learning, being, and teaching;
- Legends and stories of the community and region;
- Basic conversation in the community/regional Aboriginal language;
- Key cultural experiences on-the-land and within the community;
- Customs and protocols of the community and culture;
- Culture-based education and incorporating Dene Kede or Inuuqatigiit; and
- Significant places and people in the community.

Providing teachers and school administrators with the opportunity to learn about the community they live and work in can help develop positive relationships between teachers and their students and parents, as well as with the community at large

### Language Instruction

There have been many significant changes to the ways Aboriginal people lived in the past. These changes include factors such as residential schooling, living in a static community setting, and participating in a non-traditional work force. With all these changes, one of the most significant impacts has been the steady decline of Aboriginal language use in the NWT.

Languages are the foundation on which cultures are created. Language is integral to healthy communities, individual self-esteem and the growth and development of people. Through the use of languages, people express their unique worldview, value and self-worth. Language helps people define relationships and collect and share knowledge to solve the challenges they face.

Statistics show that there is a rapid decline in the use of all Aboriginal languages, particularly amongst the speakers of Aboriginal languages in the NWT. A very low percentage of children are now learning the languages naturally at home. Most fluent speakers of the languages are age 50 years and over. For those reason, ECE, education bodies, and schools have developed and are continuing to develop supports that integrate Aboriginal Culture and Language programs in the NWT schools.



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

### A Whole School Approach to Model Language Learning

Each staff member has a role in helping to maintain and revitalize the language of the community, regardless of their own ability to speak the language fluently. When teachers try to learn an Aboriginal language in the school and community, it shows that there is value in the language. When teachers have troubles remembering words or proper pronunciations, it can model the learning process for students helping them to feel safe to try as well.

Some suggestions on how teachers can incorporate Aboriginal languages in the school include:

- Attending and participating in Aboriginal language classes with students;
- Greeting students each morning in the language of the community;
- Teaching O Canada and school prayer in the Aboriginal language;
- Integrating Aboriginal language into other subject matters; and
- Using Aboriginal language signage or labeling throughout classrooms and the school.

### Aboriginal Language Learning Classes

The Education Act in the Northwest Territories allows the ability to provide Aboriginal language learning through first language instruction, immersion and second language instruction. The level of language programming is largely dependent on sufficient demand, availability of qualified teachers who are fluent speakers and availability of sufficient and suitable program materials.

If English is the language of instruction, another NWT Official Language must also be taught as part of the education program.

Currently there are no NWT schools offering first language instruction in an Aboriginal Language. In most NWT schools, English is the main language of instruction and an Aboriginal language or French is taught as a second language through either a second language, ‘core language’, approach or immersion.

### Immersion Language Learning

In an immersion language approach, all regular instruction is taught in an Aboriginal language. Aboriginal language immersion classes are in place in three NWT communities: Behchokò (K-2), Inuvik (K) and Fort Providence (K-3).





## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

Although immersion programming is proven to be the most effective way for students to learn a second language, it is very difficult to implement as it is dependent on the availability of qualified teachers who are fluent speakers, and on the access to sufficient and suitable program materials.

### Core Language Learning

In a core language approach, students attend language classes throughout the week in one of the official languages for a minimum of 90 hours per year from grades one through nine. The majority of NWT schools offer this type of programming. Additional Aboriginal language courses for senior secondary students, grades 10-12, are also available in some schools.

### Our Languages Curriculum

Our Languages is a draft ECE curriculum for Aboriginal Language Instruction in JK-12 core Aboriginal language classes throughout the NWT. The draft curriculum is aligned with the two foundational documents, Dene Kede and Inuuqatigiit, and focuses on student attainment of five language learning levels: Emergent, Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, and Proficient.

Our Languages draft curriculum is scheduled for a small scale pilot in September 2017 with full scale pilot in 2018 and implementation in September 2019.

### 1.3.2 Inclusive Schooling

For many years, the approach to educating students with special needs in the NWT was based on the challenges of the student, and the need to provide specialized services outside the regular classroom. Gradually, the emphasis began to shift to one that recognized the importance of addressing diversity in the classroom. To successfully meet unique student needs meant that teachers needed to be supported and equipped with resources to meet them.

The most recent version of the *Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling 2016* defines the standards, processes and roles of those involved in meeting student needs. At the same time, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) released *Programming for Student Success*, which contains guidelines and resources for staff on how to meet diverse student needs.



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

In a school which is truly inclusive, practices are in place to ensure that every child feels accepted, valued and safe. It is essential that programming decisions are made collaboratively and are based on the strengths of a student.

The Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling 2016 identifies the following core values and beliefs:

- All students can learn;
- Students learn in different ways, at different rates and in different places;
- Students come from diverse backgrounds and these differences must be respected;
- Students have the right to an appropriate education program and required supports; and
- Parental involvement is essential.

Realizing the vision requires a set of compatible and deliberate practices including:

- Leadership at both the DEC/DEA level and school level welcomes all students, based on the belief that all can learn and that there is value in diversity.
- Parents are actively involved in educational programming.
- Instructional leadership and support are provided by the principal and program support teacher, to assist classroom teachers with educational programming for all students.
- Teachers, with support, teach all students.
- A collaborative culture exists within schools (school team) and between schools, families and communities (interagency team), where a problem solving approach is used to address the needs of individual students.
- Appropriate support services are provided, having been determined collaboratively by parents, education staff, and others involved in a student's program.
- Support assistants within classrooms helping teachers implement programs for various students, not just one.
- Staff development opportunities are provided which enhance staff ability to teach and support diverse learners.



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

### Inclusive Schooling Principles

<b>Equal access</b>	Equal access means students have the right to participate in programs offered in regular instructional settings with their age peers and to have access to services that enable them to be successful.
<b>Strengths -based</b>	Diverse instructional strategies are used that respond to a variety of learning styles and intelligences that build on a student's strengths, interests, and passions.
<b>Community-based</b>	Education programs are provided in the home community. Community-based schooling facilitates student participation in culturally relevant programs and offers the greatest support for student success.
<b>Parental involvement</b>	Every effort is made to involve parents in decisions about educational programming and support services for students.
<b>Collaboration</b>	While classroom teachers retain primary responsibility for all students in their class, they require support from parents, administrators, and other professionals to make programming decisions.

### 1.4 Early Childhood

Children's experiences during their early years are critical in forming the foundation for their development throughout their lives. During these years, children develop healthy bodies, self-confidence and a strong sense of self-esteem. They learn their own culture and language – a strong basis for all other learning. NWT early childhood programs support the development of community based child care programs and support parents and the community in their delivery.

Programs and projects are based upon current early childhood research and best practice, which states that from conception and up to age six, all children develop the foundation of their physical, social, emotional, spiritual and intellectual skills and attitudes. Increasing positive stimulation, providing learning and supportive opportunities for parents as well as encouraging parents to read to their children all promote early childhood development. Potential difficulties in the child's later life can be minimized or prevented through effective early intervention with suitable programs and services.



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

### 1.4.1 Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten

Although Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten (JK/K) are not mandatory in the Northwest Territories, for many children they are the transition years into the formal education system. JK programs are available to children who are age 4 by December 31 of the current school year and K programs are available to children who are age 5 by December 31 of the current school year.

Children’s first introduction to formal schooling lays the foundation for their learning paths.

The *NWT JK/K Curriculum* for four and five year olds is play-based and supports children’s learning and development in JK/K. It is play-based and supports children’s cognitive, social, emotional, creative and physical development. Through play, children are provided opportunities to explore, inquire, communicate, and problem-solve. It is firmly grounded in family, community, identity and culture while making connections between home and school to develop lifelong competencies

## 1.5 Infused Curricula

The following curricula are not intended to be taught as separate subjects or classes, but as essential components that shape learning across all curricula. Sometimes the skills in these curricula may require direct instruction in distinct classes, such as use of particular computer programs or completion of the Career and Program Plan through a designated tool. While these skills may not be formally assessed, they are meant to inform lesson planning, instruction, and assessment.

### 1.5.1 Career Development

Career development occupies a pivotal role in schools. It links the needs of students to the community and it provides a bridge between the individual’s current and past activities to his or her future.

Schools are creating and supporting a career development climate through the infusion of career awareness throughout other curricula. From Junior Kindergarten to grade 12, the foundation for lifelong career development is established. As defined in *The Departmental Directive for Career Development Across the Lifespan (2001)*, this includes:



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

- A career development culture in the classroom, where teachers help students connect to and value work of all kinds, and experience a range of work choices, both traditional and contemporary.
- A developmental, progressive framework with clearly identified learning outcomes.
- Exposure of students to a variety of experiences to acquire skills and explore abilities and interests.
- Providing students and staff with high-quality career, labour market and financial information.
- Building strong partnerships with families, communities and employers to strengthen support for student choices and future success.
- Ensuring students have the skills, knowledge and attitudes to successfully make transitions from the school system to further education and/or work.

The following resources have been developed by Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment to support career development in the elementary and junior secondary grades:

- NWT Blueprint for Life/Work Designs: A Teacher Resource Manual (2003)
- Grades 4 to 6 Career Awareness Resource (2002)
- Linking Professions (2001) for Grades 7-12
- Making Connections (2000) for Grades 7-9

Additionally, the following “Focusing my Future My Way”™ programs are recommended for use in NWT classrooms:

- *Smart Focusing*™ for grades 8 and 9. (Can be used to develop students’ Career and Program Plan. See last paragraph of this section.)
- *Career Focusing*™ for high school (to achieve the career outcomes of Career and Life Management)

The above programs are available in the NWT through a licensing agreement that requires that all teachers implementing the programs receive training in program implementation. For information on training, please contact coordinator of Career Development in the Early Childhood and School Services Division of ECE.

Another resource, *Career Cruising*, [www.careercruising.com](http://www.careercruising.com), is available on-line to all NWT schools. Career Cruising provides assessment tools, an index of hundreds of job



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

descriptions and career path planning and education pathway recommendations. Each school in the NWT has username and password access codes. To find your school's passwords contact coordinator of Career Development in the Early Childhood and School Services Division of ECE.

The completion of a Career and Program Plan (CPP) is a graduation requirement, must be completed before a student enters grade 10, and is worth one compulsory credit towards graduation. The CPP enables the student to choose suitable courses for grade 10 and is updated annually. By reassessing his or her goals in light of the year's academic and life experiences, the student can appropriately select courses for the upcoming year. More information on the CPP is available in the Senior Secondary School Administrators' Handbook in section 6.1.2. The template for the Career Program Plan is available on the ECE website [www.ece.gov.nt.ca](http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca)

### 1.5.2 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Today, technology is a part of almost every aspect of life and learning. Technology enables work and communication for business and pleasure with a strong emphasis on hardware, software, "apps", portable devices, as well as being networked and online. However, it is not enough for students to be "ICT literate." 21<sup>st</sup> century citizens need a broader literacy that guides the use of these tools and applications. This "literacy with ICT" includes "learning about and choosing ICT to critically, creatively, and ethically use, produce, and communicate meaning."

ICT is best utilized infused into inquiry processes across the K to 12 curriculum: planning and questioning; gathering and making sense; producing to show understanding; and communicating and reflecting. These critical and creative acts will be strongly influenced by affective considerations of ethical and responsible use, implications for society, collaboration, in addition to personal metacognition, motivation, and confidence.

While this perspective does not support teaching ICT merely as a set of skills, it does not in any way minimize the need for CTS technology courses that introduce students to various fields of technology such as coding.



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

Through purposefully use, students and teachers will learn:

- that technology applications and systems often have similar designs and functions that can be learned and the knowledge transferred to new devices and contexts;
- about the social impact ICT has on lifestyle;
- how to determine which processes, tools and techniques to use, and when to use them; and
- how to critically, creatively, and ethically use a variety of information and communication technologies to problem solve, make decisions, inquire, collaborate, and communicate.

The NWT is committed to providing guidelines for the infusion of technology across the curriculum. This includes cooperation with DEC/DEAs to support teachers as well as students in the use of a continuum called “Literacy with Information and Communication Technology” (*LwICT*) which is available in 11 X 17 format in Appendices A3 and A4.

This curriculum is found at [ece.gov.nt.ca](http://ece.gov.nt.ca) > Programs and Services > NWT Curriculum and School List > NWT Curriculum.

### 1.6 Governance and Administration

There is an important difference between *governance* and *administration* and how these roles are carried out by DEA and DEC members or the Superintendent.

#### **Governance (DEA/DEC Member)**

Governance means:

- Setting the mission, vision, goals and objectives
- Developing and reviewing policies and procedures
- Providing guidance and direction to Administration (Superintendent and Principals)
- Developing strategic plans
- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of plans and procedures
- Allocating funds and resources
- Training members (Professional Development)
- Ensuring effective risk management policies are in place
- Making sure federal, territorial and municipal laws are followed



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

DECs hire, supervise and evaluate the Superintendent,

DECs hold their superintendent accountable for the results achieved by the organization through his/her annual performance review.

DEA/DEC members should also assess their own performance regularly.

It **is** the role of DEA members to oversee the general direction and programming in schools.

It **is not** the role DEA members to be involved in the daily operations of the school.

### Administration (Superintendents and Principals)

Administration means:

- Carrying out, or implementing, the mission, vision, values and strategic policies at the board and school level
- Leading the staffing committee which is responsible for hiring teachers and school staff
- Implementing the policies and procedures set by the DEA/DEC
- Managing finances, personnel and school programs
- Managing the daily operations of the school/division
- Creating a safe and caring learning and working environment
- Completing principal / teacher evaluations
- Organizing staff in-servicing and training
- Partnering and collaborating with community organizations

The Principal and Superintendent are responsible for the day to day operations of the school.

### 1.6.1 Organizational Structures

In the Northwest Territories (NWT), the *Education Act* gives District Education Authorities (DEA)s and Divisional Education Councils (DECs) the **legislative authority** (legal power) to provide leadership and guidance to the educational community.

NWT DEAs and DECAs provide each NWT community with the authority to meet the educational and cultural needs of students in the NWT in the JK-12 educational system.





## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

### WHAT IS A DISTRICT EDUCATION AUTHORITY?

The District Education Authorities (DEAs) are composed of elected individuals who represent their community's interests in the planning and delivery of educational programming in their school(s).

### WHAT IS A DIVISIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL?

Each Divisional Education Council (DEC) is composed of one DEA member from each community within the region. There may be additional members representing regional organizations who also sit on the DEC. The DEC is jointly responsible for the governance and direction of schools in their region.

DECs have been established for the:

- Beaufort Delta
- Sahtu
- Dehcho
- South Slave
- Commission scolaire francophone des Territoires du Nord-Ouest

The Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency (TCSA) operates with the authority of a DEC and each Tlı̨cho community has representation on the TCSA. However, each Tlı̨cho community does not have a DEA.

In Yellowknife, the Yellowknife Education District #1 (YK1) and the Yellowknife Public Denomination District (Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YCS)) operate with the authority of a DEA. These are the only two education bodies with the ability to raise operating funds through taxation. The Dettah and Ndilo DEAs are the most recently established education bodies and they contract their superintendency through YK1.

### KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEAs

- Establish goals and objectives for the DEA
- Make budgetary decisions
- Advise the Superintendent in the hiring of education and school staff
- Operate within federal, territorial and municipal laws
- Choose a representative to send to the DEC



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

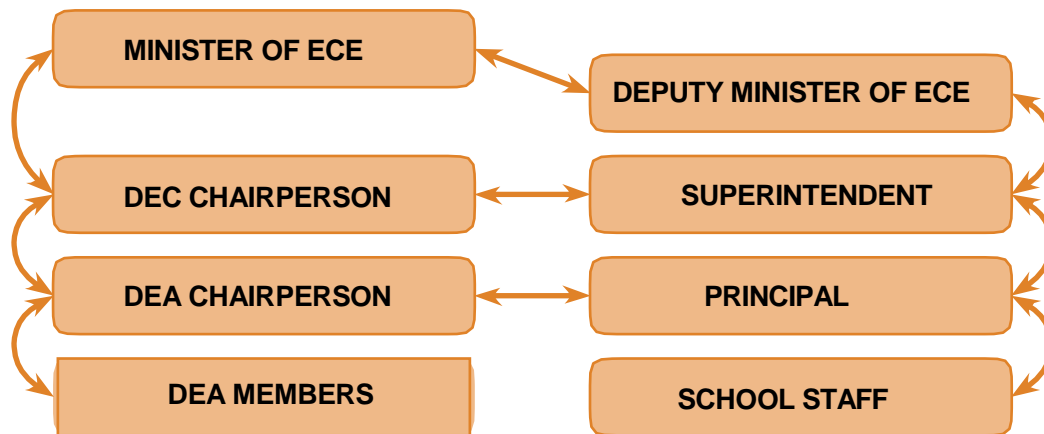
### KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEC (and Yellowknife DEAs)

- Hire the Superintendent as their only employee
- Establish goals and objectives for the DEC
- Make budgetary decisions
- Operate within federal, territorial and municipal laws
- Chairperson communicates with the Minister of ECE

### Lines of Communication

Open and respectful communication between all members is very important. While it is not possible for all members to agree on every issue, it is important that each member has the opportunity to contribute to the discussion. The voice of each member must be heard.

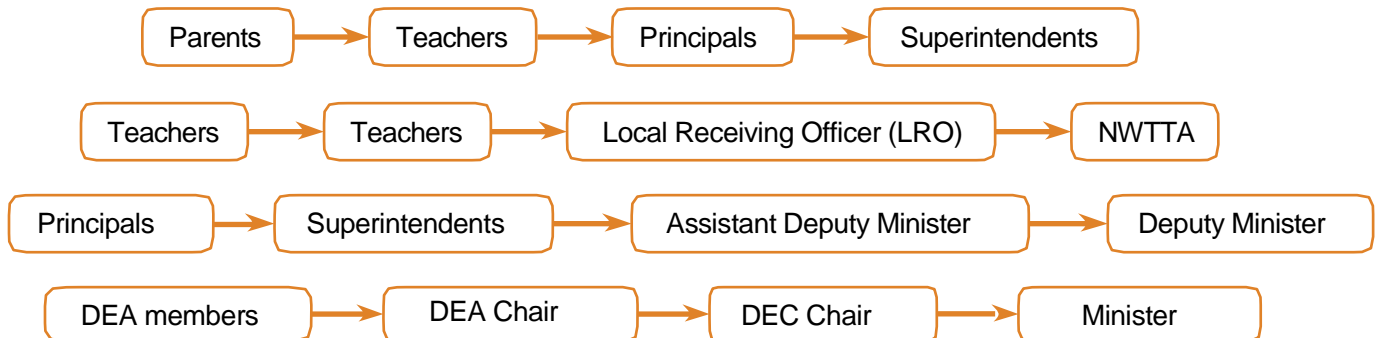
There are **protocols** (rules) which must be used when communicating beyond the DEA/DEC:





## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

When there are concerns or potential conflicts, the following lines of communication should be followed:



### 1.6.2 Employee Conduct

All employees belong to either the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (NWTTA) or the Union of Northern Workers (UNW). The following documents provide guidelines for employee conduct and relationships between employees:

- NWTTA Code of Ethics – online through Member Area access - login is required
- UNW – UNW Regulations available at <http://www.unw.ca/publications-and-forms>
- GNWT Code of Conduct online at <http://www.hr.gov.nt.ca/policy/documents/CodeofConduct.pdf>

Disputes between employees are to be handled in accordance with the appropriate procedures according to the applicable process.

### 1.6.3 Committees and Working Groups

There are a number of ongoing territorial committees that support JK to grade 12 education in the NWT. There are also a number of working groups associated with Education Renewal initiatives (some of these initiatives are listed in section 1.2). These working groups will vary over time according to the needs of each initiative.

The following ongoing committees guide and respond to issues that emerge in a range of areas related to NWT JK-12 schools.:



## Section 1 – Understandings of Education in the NWT

### **NWT Curriculum Implementation Committee (NWTIC)**

This committee is made up of representatives from each Education Authority and ECE, and deals with issues related to, and provides guidance to, the development and implementation of curriculum and teaching resources in the NWT.

### **NWT Superintendents' Association**

This body brings the Superintendents of all NWT regions together to share issues of common concern, and provide input to a wide range of policy, financial and programming issues developed by ECE.

### **Regional Inclusive Schooling Coordinators**

The members of this group are comprised of the Regional Inclusive Schooling Coordinators, Territorial Inclusive Schooling Coordinators, and other key ECE staff as needed. They collaborate to help advance inclusion across the territory, help draft policy documents and resource materials provide input towards inclusive schooling practices, processes & procedures, and provide professional development in inclusive schooling.

### **Safe and Caring Schools**

As per the *Safe Schools Regulations*, each school must establish a *Safe and Caring School Committee*. This committee must include the principal and a teacher representative from the school.

### **Student Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting Committee (SAER)**

This committee provides guidance to and deals with emerging issues related to student assessment in the NWT.

### **Senior Secondary**

Composed of ECE staff from the *Teaching and Learning* and *Health, Wellness and Student Support* divisions, this committee deals with issues related to senior high programming such as diploma examination accommodations and Locally Developed Courses.