

Standing Committee on  
Government Operations



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# Report on the Review of the 2020 Audit of Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education, No. 2

19<sup>th</sup> Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly

Chair: Mr. Rylund Johnson

**MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT**

**REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2020 AUDIT OF EARLY  
CHILDHOOD TO GRADE 12 EDUCATION, NO. 2**

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September 28, 2023

SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Speaker:

Your Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to provide its *Report on the Review of the 2020 Audit of Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education, No. 2* and commends it to the House.



Mr. Rylund Johnson,  
Chair,  
Standing Committee on Government Operations

## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

### **REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2020 AUDIT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD TO GRADE 12 EDUCATION, NO. 2**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In November 2020, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) released an action plan to address deficiencies identified in an audit of the delivery of education in the Northwest Territories.

As the 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly draws to a close, the Standing Committee on Government Operations (Committee) sought to ensure accountability at ECE for implementing the Action Plan. Committee requested and received a status update on each of the 60 action items. Committee found that two thirds of the deliverables are either complete or on-track for completion within their original timelines. The remaining third of the deliverables have revised timelines, are delayed, or are on hold.

The results show that a lot of work has been done, but a lot of work remains to be done to ensure education programs and services are fair, inclusive, and culturally relevant. Committee urges the department to prioritize work on incomplete action items. Committee also encourages Members in the 20<sup>th</sup> Assembly to build on this review and develop a consistent approach to ensuring accountability for audit follow-up work.

#### **BACKGROUND**

On February 6, 2020, the Speaker tabled an audit report entitled *Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education in the Northwest Territories*.<sup>1</sup> This performance audit was conducted by the Auditor General of Canada, who is also the Auditor for the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT).<sup>2</sup>

The Auditor General sought to find out whether, to improve student outcomes, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) planned, supported, and kept track of the delivery of fair and inclusive education programs and services that reflect Indigenous languages and cultures. As a result, the Auditor General made nine recommendations.<sup>3</sup> ECE agreed with all recommendations.

Independently of the audit, ECE evaluated the *Education Renewal and Innovation Framework* (Evaluation).<sup>4</sup> The Evaluation also identified recommendations for improvement.

In response to the Auditor General’s report and the ECE Evaluation, the department released *An Action Plan to Improve JK-12 Student Outcomes in the NWT* (Action Plan).<sup>5</sup> The Action Plan addressed seven themes with 60 action items. Each action item is tracked in an online progress tracker.<sup>6</sup>

In June 2021, the Standing Committee on Government Operations (Committee) issued five recommendations to increase the impact of the Auditor General’s recommendations, by requesting additional actions and reporting.<sup>7</sup> The government tabled its response to the recommendations in November 2021.<sup>8</sup>

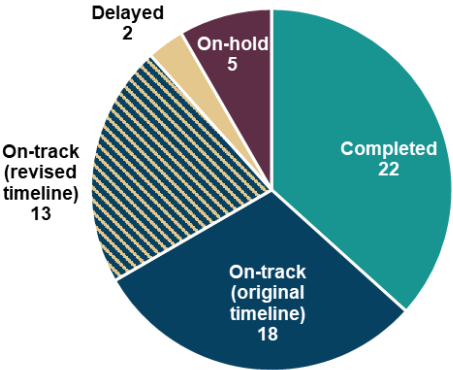
**AUDIT FOLLOW-UP**

Committee is responsible for holding the department accountable for addressing the administrative deficiencies identified in the audit. In June 2023, as the 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly was concluding its work, Committee sought to follow up on the education audit.

Committee requested an update on the department’s progress implementing its 60 action items and Committee’s five recommendations. Committee provided the department a response template to ensure a concise and comprehensive status update.

The department’s response is disclosed in Appendix A. 40 of the 60 action items – or two thirds – are considered either “complete” or incomplete but “on-track” according to their original timelines. 13 further action items are also “on-track” but now have “revised timelines” stretching into 2024 or 2025. The remaining 7 action items are “delayed” or “on hold”.

Figure 1: Progress on Action Plan Items



Source: Office of the Clerk analysis of ECE data.

Considerable work remains to fulfill the 38 action plan items that are not yet complete. Committee urges the department to prioritize work this work. Examples of incomplete items include:

Research and develop a 3-year pilot Indigenous Language Diploma (ILD). This deliverable was supposed to be completed by the end of 2022 but is “on hold”. ECE says it only received a program proposal from Aurora College in June 2023, and research and development will only start in 2023-24.

Develop greater integration of services for children and youth in the education system through expanding regional capacity. ECE wanted to do research and prepare for a pilot on expanding the Territorial-Based Support Team (TBST) to the regional level by the end of 2022, but this work is “on hold”. ECE says it has been difficult to staff TBST positions due to labour shortages. It is unclear what the department is doing instead to better integrate school-based services regionally.

Committee also asked the department follow-up questions on key action items and deliverables. Committee wanted more information regarding Indigenous language education, equitable access to education, and the department’s use of data. Committee’s questions and the department’s responses are included in Appendix B.

## **CONCLUSION**

This concludes the Standing Committee on Government Operations’ Report on the Review of the 2020 Audit of Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education, No. 2.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: [https://www.ntassembly.ca/sites/assembly/files/td\\_11-192.pdf](https://www.ntassembly.ca/sites/assembly/files/td_11-192.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> The federal *Northwest Territories Act* sets out that the Auditor General of Canada is also the Auditor for the Government of the Northwest Territories. The Auditor General of Canada is also a statutory officer of the Legislative Assembly. This means their responsibilities are set out in legislation and that they operate independently from the Government of the Northwest Territories.

<sup>3</sup> Available at: [https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/nwt\\_202002\\_e\\_43522.html#hd2e](https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/nwt_202002_e_43522.html#hd2e).

<sup>4</sup> Available at: <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/services/education-renewal/education-renewal-and-innovation-5-year-evaluation>.

<sup>5</sup> Available at:

[https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/sites/ece/files/resources/action\\_plan\\_to\\_improve\\_student\\_outcomes\\_eng.pdf](https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/sites/ece/files/resources/action_plan_to_improve_student_outcomes_eng.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Available at: <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/progress-tracker>.

<sup>7</sup> Available at: [https://www.ntassembly.ca/sites/assembly/files/21-06-01\\_cr\\_15-192\\_report\\_on\\_the\\_review\\_of\\_the\\_agcs\\_2020\\_audit\\_of\\_early\\_childhood\\_to\\_gr\\_12\\_education\\_in\\_the\\_nwt.pdf](https://www.ntassembly.ca/sites/assembly/files/21-06-01_cr_15-192_report_on_the_review_of_the_agcs_2020_audit_of_early_childhood_to_gr_12_education_in_the_nwt.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Available at: [https://www.ntassembly.ca/sites/assembly/files/td\\_452-192.pdf](https://www.ntassembly.ca/sites/assembly/files/td_452-192.pdf).







**THIS INFORMATION CAN BE SHARED PUBLICLY**

July 21, 2023

RYLUND JOHNSON  
CHAIRPERSON  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

**VIA EMAIL**

**Follow-up to the Audit on Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education in the Northwest Territories**

Thank you to Committee for its June 22, 2023 letter requesting a progress update on the implementation of actions taken in response to the 2020 Office of the Auditor General of Canada audit on Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education in the Northwest Territories (NWT).

As per Committee's request, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) has reviewed all action items under the Action Plan to Improve Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 Student Outcomes in the NWT, as well as in response to recommendations made by Committee in November 2021. Status updates are included in the attached Appendix A. ECE is actively working to update the online progress tracker to ensure it is up to date and reflective of revised timelines.

I wish to thank the Committee for its continued interest in improving student outcomes and will be pleased to provide a briefing on this work at Committee's request.

R.J. Simpson  
Minister, Education, Culture  
and Employment

Attachment

- c. Members of the Legislative Assembly  
Principal Secretary  
Secretary to Cabinet/Deputy Minister, Executive and Indigenous Affairs  
Deputy Minister, Education, Culture and Employment  
Clerk, Standing Committee on Government Operations  
Advisor, Standing Committee on Government Operations  
Committee Members, Standing Committee on Government Operations

APPENDIX A

Action item / Committee Recommendation	Deliverables	Original timeline	Current status (complete; on-track; delayed; on-hold)	Status details	Revised timeline (if applicable)
<b>1.1 Develop an Early Learning Framework (ELF) and supporting handbook for early childhood educators</b>	Adapt British Columbia's ELF for the NWT context for use in the pilot phase.	2022-24: Q4	On track	ECE is reviewing and adapting the BC ELF for the NWT context. The Framework, intended for use in early learning and child care (ELCC) programs, will align with the new JK-12 curriculum. A pilot to review and adapt the BC ELF with community-based ELCC partners will take place over one year. The NWT ELF will be released by March 2024.	
	Pilot the ELF and provide ongoing in-servicing to support licensed early learning and child care programs for those piloting ELF.	2023-24: Q4			
<b>1.2 Offer professional development (PD) opportunities for early childhood educators</b>	Develop and deliver an annual PD and training plan to be delivered to licensed program operators and educators.	2023-24: Q1-Q4 and ongoing	Complete	<p>In the 2022-23 fiscal year, ECE provided a number of professional development opportunities for early childhood educators, including offering the NWT Early Childhood Essentials course, virtual and in-person sessions related to physical literacy, and forest and nature school philosophies.</p> <p>ECE has partnered with Red River College (RRC) to develop 12 workshops for early childhood educators based on the current research of best practices and reflective and respectful of the cultural landscape of the NWT.</p> <p>Participation in training is reported on annually through the Canada-NWT Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Extension</p>	
	Increase the participation rate of early childhood educators undertaking training offered by ECE.	2023-24 and ongoing			

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Action item / Committee Recommendation	Deliverables	Original timeline	Current status (complete; on-track; delayed; on-hold)	Status details	Revised timeline (if applicable)
				Agreement (2021-2025) and the Canada-NWT Canada-wide ELCC Agreement (2021-2026).	
<b>2.1 JK-12 Indigenous Language Instructor Employment Plan</b>	Develop an employment plan that will outline the approaches ECE and education bodies will undertake to address systemic needs for JK-12 Indigenous Language Instructors (ILIs). This plan will examine the current supply, project attrition, and identify strategies to supply instructors.  Begin introducing specific actions to increase the supply of ILIs.	2020-21: Q1-Q4  2021-22: Q1-Q4	Complete  On-track	The Indigenous Language Instructor Employment Plan was developed during the 2021-2022 school year. The plan examined the current supply, project attrition and includes three components necessary for ILIs.  During the 2022-2023 school year, ECE worked with education bodies to identify potential trainees, determine funding sources and created learning guides.  For the 2023-2024 school year, ECE will implement specific actions with three trainees in the Beaufort Delta Divisional Education Council.	
<b>2.2 Certificate of Indigenous Language Revitalization (CILR) program</b>	Deliver the two-year pilot program in partnership with regional Indigenous Governments, Aurora College and the University of Victoria (UVic).	2018-20	Complete		

APPENDIX A

<b>Action item / Committee Recommendation</b>	<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Original timeline</b>	<b>Current status (complete; on-track; delayed; on-hold)</b>	<b>Status details</b>	<b>Revised timeline (if applicable)</b>
<b>2.3 Advance the 2020-21 NWT Mentor Apprentice Program (MAP)</b>	MAP piloted through a partnership with regional Indigenous Governments in 2019-2020.	2019-2020	Complete	<p>Informed by the most recent 2022-2023 MAP evaluation, ECE will begin its fifth year of MAP delivery in 2023-2024 (inclusive of the 2019-2029 MAP pilot), partnering with one more Indigenous Government, the NWT Métis Nation, who join the other six Indigenous Governments (Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Gwich'in Tribal Council, Sahtu Dene Council, Dehcho First Nations, Tłı̨chǫ Government, and Akaitcho Territory Government) in the community-based MAP initiative.</p> <p>ECE received a record number of MAP applications (almost 100) during the 2023-2024 recruitment period, selecting 61 MAP pairs who completed the June-July 2023 training. MAP pairs are currently underway with their language learning for an 8-month timeline from July 2023 to February 2024.</p>	2023-24
	MAP evaluations in 2019-2020, 2020-2021 completed. Based on these evaluations, MAP is delivering its second full-year program with MAP pairs having completed training in July 2021.	July 2021			
	In partnership with six Indigenous Governments, now offering 8-month MAP language learning from August 2021 to March 2022.	March 2022			
	The 2021-2022 MAP evaluation in preliminary stages for continuous quality improvement purposes.				
<b>2.4 Research and develop a 3- year pilot Indigenous Language</b>	Research and development of the two-year pilot ILD program in partnership with Aurora College, University of Victoria and Indigenous Governments.	2020-22: Q1-Q4	On-hold	In June 2023, ECE received a proposal from Aurora College to advance the ILD program, as the NWT post-secondary approach to Indigenous language revitalization within their own current and future program of studies. Once the details of the proposal are	2023-24

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Action item / Committee Recommendation	Deliverables	Original timeline	Current status (complete; on-track; delayed; on-hold)	Status details	Revised timeline (if applicable)
<b>Diploma (ILD)</b>				finalized, ECE will provide funding for 2023-2024 research and development of the program.	
<b>2.5 Increase the number of Indigenous language scholarships</b>	Increase number of Indigenous language scholarships	2022-23: Q2	Complete	There were 37 applicants for the 2022 ILR Scholarship intake in December 2022. In 2022, the annual number of ten scholarships increased due to the large number of 2022 applications, with 19 successful applicants. The next intake for scholarships is December 1, 2023	2023
<b>2.6 Pilot a program to support training for JK-12 Support Assistants</b>	Pilot a program to support JK-12 Support Assistants.	2020-21: Q1-Q4	On-track	Due to COVID, this timeline was delayed somewhat. The pilot began in January 2022 and will be completed in June 2024.	2024-25 Q1
	Partner with Aurora College to establish ongoing certification training program.	2022-23: Q1-Q4	On-track	As Aurora College is currently transforming into a polytechnic university, ECE partnered with Douglas College to offer the pilot with the understanding that ECE would engage with Aurora College when they were ready and eventually move the program over to Aurora College. ECE and Aurora College are in engagements currently with a projected timeline of a partnership in the fall of 2024.	2024 Q3-4
<b>3.1 Implement the JK-12</b>	Deliver 2-year large scale JK-12 OLC pilot including development of teaching resources and assessment tools, and	2019-20	Complete		

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Action item / Committee Recommendation	Deliverables	Original timeline	Current status (complete; on-track; delayed; on-hold)	Status details	Revised timeline (if applicable)
<b>Our Languages curriculum (OLC) and Indigenous Languages and Education (ILE) Handbook</b>	continue to provide in-servicing to pilot teachers				
	Implement OLC in all NWT schools and ensure that all schools are using the ILE Handbook.	2020-24: Q1-Q4		OLC has been implemented in all NWT schools (other than those that offer French programming) using the Draft ILE Handbook. The final version of the ILE Handbook will be released at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year.	2023-24 Q2
<b>3.2 Explore Grades 1-12 curriculum partnership with an alternate jurisdiction (options and opportunities for adoption and adaptation)</b>	Prepare a curriculum options paper for the Minister of ECE.	2019-20	Complete	Adaptation and implementation of the new curriculum has begun, and Grades 4-6 & 9 will be trialed in all schools in September 2023. Full implementation and adaptation is expected to take 6-8 years.	
	Engagement with Indigenous governments and education bodies.	2021-22			
	Assuming positive decision, begin adaptation and implementation of new curriculum.	2021-22: Q1-Q4			
<b>3.3 JK-4 Literacy &amp;</b>	Develop a Junior Kindergarten to Grade 4 (JK-4) Literacy and Numeracy Strategy in collaboration with education bodies.	2021-23: Q1-Q4	On-hold	The renewal of the JK-12 school curriculum will have a significant impact on how students are supported in literacy and	

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<b>Numeracy Strategy</b>	Release, distribute, in-service and implement the JK-4 Literacy & Numeracy Strategy.	2023-24: Q4		numeracy. The implementation of the BC curriculum is expected to address this action with the expectation being that it is no longer required because it has been addressed by this system change. Once the new curriculum is implemented, the need for this action will be revisited.	
<b>3.4 Develop Northern Studies 20 curricula with Education Bodies and Indigenous Governments.</b>	Develop the course scope and sequence, while engaging with Education Bodies and Indigenous Governments.	2020-22	Complete	The new Northern Studies course was successfully piloted in 2022-23 and is now available for full implementation in the Fall of 2023 for all interested NWT schools.	
	Small-scale pilot of Northern Studies 20 in select schools across NWT.	2022-23			
	Full-scale pilot in all high schools across the NWT.	2023-24: Q2			
<b>4.1 Provide distance learning opportunities in all NWT small schools through Northern Distance</b>	Increase the number of small schools with NDL program from 15 to 20 in 2019-20.	2020-21	Complete		
	Increase the number of courses offered through NDL from 17 to 27.	2023-24			



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Learning (NDL)					
4.2 Expand the Career and Education Advisor (CEA) program	Create 12 CEA positions distributed throughout NWT regions by 2024	2023-24: Q4	On-track	There are currently 8 CEA positions distributed throughout NWT regions. ECE plans to staff a second Beaufort Delta CEA position or an intern.	2023-24: Q4
	Increase the percentage of Grade 9 to 12 students who met with a CEA from 780 (70%) in 2019-20.	2023-24: Q4		Data for 2022-2023 school year has not been analyzed yet. CEAs are working on compiling data from June 2023.  The data for 2021-2022 school year was compromised by the COVID-19 pandemic, as service delivery was only available from March to August 2022; however, the available data did show a slight increase in percentage of students who met with a CEA.	
4.3 Common JDs for JK-12 Support Assistants	Create and implement a common job description for JK-12 Support Assistants.	2019-20	Complete		

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<b>Action item / Committee Recommendation</b>	<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Original timeline</b>	<b>Current status (complete; on-track; delayed; on-hold)</b>	<b>Status details</b>	<b>Revised timeline (if applicable)</b>
<b>4.4 Update JK-12 Support Assistant section of the Inclusive Schooling Handbook</b>	Revise and update JK-12 Support Assistant section of the Inclusive Schooling Handbook.	2020-21: Q1-Q4	Complete		
<b>4.5 Develop greater integration of services for children and youth in the education system through expanding regional capacity</b>	Explore regional approaches to expand the current capacity of Territorial-Based Support Team.	2020-21: Q4	On-hold	<p>It has been difficult to staff the TBST positions due to nationwide shortages of specialists in Educational Psychology, Behavioral Psychology, Mental Health Counselling, Speech Language Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Social Work, and/or Low Incident Disability Specialist.</p> <p>Due to the difficulty staffing the Territorial team, ECE has not been able to expand to the regional level.</p>	
Identify a pilot or demonstration site for the model to be deployed and evaluated.	2021-22: Q4				

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	Collaborate with other departments to finalize a model for integrated service delivery that involves provision to services in schools.	2022-24: Q4		Conversations continue with HSS to look at alternatives for rehabilitation services in schools.	2023-24: Q4
<b>4.6 Improve mental health counseling services to children and youth</b>	All regions supported by 42 Child and Youth Care Counsellors and 7 clinical supervisors.	2021-22: Q4	Complete	ECE and HSS have partnered with an outside contractor to conduct the fast-tracked, program-wide evaluation, to be completed in August 2023.	
	Counselling will be provided to schools with fewer than 75 students through a traveling itinerant mental health team.	2022-2023	Complete	Service being provided by Northern Counselling and Therapeutic Services in small communities.	
	Provide classroom-based (Tier 1) and school-wide (Tier 2) mental health training, resources and strategies for prevention.	2019-24: Q1-Q4	On-track	For the 2023-2024 school year, there is a proposed plan for a redesign that will allow for universal and small group intervention and prevention supports (Level 1 and 2) as well as targeted clinical interventions for moderate to severe mental health concerns (Level 3) and supports which require interventions outside of the education system (Level 4).	Continuing in 2023-24

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Action item / Committee Recommendation	Deliverables	Original timeline	Current status (complete; on-track; delayed; on-hold)	Status details	Revised timeline (if applicable)
<b>5.1 Implement an online educator certification and credentialing system for early childhood and JK-12 educators</b>	Online system in use for all new certification applications.	2020-21: Q3-Q4	Completed for JK-12  Delayed for ELCC	The JK-12 educator certification system is operational and has been made available to new and returning educators in the 2022-23 school year.  ECE has committed to the development of a certification process through the Canada-wide ELCC Agreement and consideration of an online system to support that, is being explored. This work is separate from the JK-12 certification system that has been established.	2024-2025 – certification system for ELCC
	All certification files prior to 2021-22 moved into new system	2023-24: Q4	On-track	The transfer of certification files prior to 2021-22 into the new system is ongoing.	
<b>5.2 Training and supports for small-school principals</b>	Conduct research on best practices and survey principals of small schools.	2020-21: Q3-Q4	Complete		
	Develop program of training and supports.	2021-22: Q1-Q4	On -track	Professional learning for small school principals is in the JK-12 Educator Professional Learning Plan for Curriculum Renewal. This includes the creation of an online Professional Learning Community in the 2023-2024 school year.	2023-24: Q1-Q4
	Pilot program with interested schools and principals.	2022-23: Q1-Q4	On-track	Small school principals will have the opportunity to participate in online courses and in-person training sessions and events in the 2023-24 school year.	2023-24: Q1-Q4

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Action item / Committee Recommendation	Deliverables	Original timeline	Current status (complete; on-track; delayed; on-hold)	Status details	Revised timeline (if applicable)
<b>5.3 Training and supports for teachers of multi-grade classrooms</b>	Conduct research on best practices and survey principals of small schools.	2020-21: Q3-Q4	Complete		
	Develop program of training and supports.	2021-22: Q1-Q4	On-track	Professional learning related to Multi-Age Groupings has been included in the JK-12 Educator Professional Learning Plan for Curriculum Renewal. This includes a MAG specific classroom training course for educators as a part of the suite of Curriculum Renewal courses being rolled out in the 2023-2024 school year.	2023-24: Q1-Q4
	Pilot program with interested schools and principals.	2022-23: Q1-Q4	On -track	Educators will have the opportunity to participate in online courses and in-person training sessions and events in the 2023-24 school year.	2023-24: Q1-Q4
<b>5.4 Education System Training and Support Plan</b>	Inventory of planned professional development and training opportunities offered at school, regional and territorial levels.	2020-21: Q3	Complete		
	Offer in-person and distance professional development and training opportunities for education body elected representatives, school employees in partnership with education bodies.	2021-22: Q1-Q4	Complete		

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Action item / Committee Recommendation	Deliverables	Original timeline	Current status (complete; on-track; delayed; on-hold)	Status details	Revised timeline (if applicable)
<b>5.5 Develop competency based educator standards and associated accountability mechanisms</b>	Standards and accountability mechanisms in place by the 2022-23 school year.	2022-23: Q4	Complete		
<b>6.1 Modernize the Education Act in consultation with stakeholders</b>	Research modernization options that will support Indigenous Government engagement and jurisdiction acquisition and develop discussion paper.	2020-21	Complete	Research and engagement were completed in 2020-2021 and a What We Heard report released outlining the results of engagement.	
	Consult and engage with stakeholders	2020-21	Complete	A legislative proposal for Phase 1 amendments to the <i>Education Act</i> was completed in 2022-23 and a bill to amend the Act is currently in review by Standing Committee, with the target of receiving assent prior to the end of the 19 <sup>th</sup> Assembly.	
	Produce a “What We Heard Report” based on previous engagement.	2021-22: Q3	Complete		
Using the information gathered through research and consultation, prepare and submit a legislative proposal.	2022: Q1-Q2	Complete	Modernization is an ongoing process that will likely take place in phases. Further amendments to the <i>Education Act</i> pursued as part of modernization will be done following more in-depth engagement with Indigenous Governments and education partners in the 20 <sup>th</sup> Assembly.		

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<p><b>6.2 Review the JK-12 education funding framework in consultation with stakeholders</b></p>	<p>An updated JK-12 funding framework aligns with the updated Education Act.</p>	<p>2022-23: Q4</p>	<p>On-track</p>	<p>The review is underway and intended to identify opportunities to improve the School Funding Framework.</p> <p>Phase 1 (complete) addressed existing commitments to SCOSD with declining enrolment and the need to provide consistent and stable administrative and leadership to support small school boards.</p> <p>Additional Clerical Support for education bodies under 500 Full-Time Enrolment (FTE) and a minimum Secretarial and Custodial support by school was provided for the 2022-23 school year.</p> <p>Phase 2 (pending) will focus on the alignment with amendments to the <i>Education Act</i> and associated requirements in 2023-24.</p>	<p>2023-24 Q4</p>
<p><b>7.1 Develop plans to analyze and share results of the EDI, the MDI and</b></p>	<p>Develop and share approach to analyzing Early Development Instrument (EDI) data.</p>	<p>2021-22: Q3</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>ECE has worked with Offord to modify the instrument over the years, including JK &amp; licensed-based indicators and implemented “on track” indicators for NWT strength-based reporting.</p>	

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<b>the HBSC surveys</b>	Develop and share approach to analyzing Middle Development Instrument (MDI) data.	2021-22: Q4	Delayed	ECE plans to collaborate with UBC to modify the instrument to include NWT-specific indicators. This can include CYC participation and student wellness information.	23-24: Q3
	Develop and share approach to analyzing Health Behaviour of School-Aged Children (HBSC) data.	2022-23: Q4	Delayed	No opportunity to adjust this as it is an international tool. ECE plans to create a Standard Operating Procedure to better share the information as it becomes available.	23-24: Q4
<b>7.2 JK-12 Planning and Accountability Framework</b>	Reporting on education outcomes, including graduation rates	Annual	Complete		
	Education Body operating plans submitted.	Annual	Complete		
	Education Body annual reports submitted.	Annual	Complete		
<b>7.3 Student Behaviour, Referrals, and Intervention Tracking</b>	Completion of RFP process and confirmation of vendor delivery of platform.	2019-20: Q1-Q4	Complete		
	Development of data tracking module with vendor and providing education staff training.	2020-23: Q1-Q4	On-track	Development of the data tracking module and training is ongoing as we continue with the Student Incident Tracking Pilot in NWT schools for the 2023-2024 school year. An additional year for pilot expansion was needed due to technical difficulties and a pause during and recovery from COVID-19.	2023-24



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Action item / Committee Recommendation	Deliverables	Original timeline	Current status (complete; on-track; delayed; on-hold)	Status details	Revised timeline (if applicable)
	Launching and using the platform to report.	2023-24: Q1-Q4		The plan is a full-scale pilot 2023-2024 and full-scale implementation/launch in 2024-2025.	2024-25
<b>7.4 STIP evaluation</b>	Submit report on Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practices (STIP) to Standing Committee.	2019-20	Complete	Formative evaluation and report were completed in 2019.  As was communicated to the Standing Committee on Social Development on February 23, 2022, the summative evaluation is indefinitely deferred.	
<b>7.5 5 year review of ERI</b>	Complete the five-year evaluation of Education Renewal Initiative.	2019-20	Complete		
<b>Committee Recommendation 1:</b> The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the department of Education, Culture and Employment develop	N/A	N/A	N/A	In 2017-18, the JK-12 Education Systems Performance Measures Technical Report (Technical Report) was developed to report on the performance measures for areas highlighted in the OAG audit report, as well as the Action Plan to Improve Student Outcomes.  Three annual reports are published on the ECE website for the following school years: 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21. The report for the 2021-22 school year is expected to be published in July 2023.	

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Action item / Committee Recommendation	Deliverables	Original timeline	Current status (complete; on-track; delayed; on-hold)	Status details	Revised timeline (if applicable)
performance measures for each area highlighted in the compliance audit and the corresponding ECE action plan to achieve specific outcomes, and to report annually on these measures.				An online action tracker was also developed for the items in the Action Plan to track and report publicly on ECE’s progress on each item. The tracker is located on ECE’s website: <a href="https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/progress-tracker">https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/progress-tracker</a>	
<b>Committee Recommendation 2:</b> The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the department	N/A	N/A	N/A	ECE partners with Indigenous governments and communities to deliver Indigenous language revitalization initiatives, such as the Mentor-Apprentice Program (MAP). MAP evaluates adult learners using the Oral Proficiency Assessment (OPA) evaluation tool for monitoring and accountability purposes. Data from these assessments is collected at the beginning and end of the program for learners to better understand their proficiency levels and measure progress, and	

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Action item / Committee Recommendation	Deliverables	Original timeline	Current status (complete; on-track; delayed; on-hold)	Status details	Revised timeline (if applicable)
<p>of Education, Culture and Employment report annually on each action related to revitalizing official languages, including on the oral proficiency assessment tools, the Indigenous Language revitalization certification program and the mentor-apprentice program</p>				<p>for ECE to track the efficacy of the program. This data is shared with the learners and kept internally by ECE.</p> <p>The Annual Report on Official Languages is tabled annually and includes reporting on activities and financial information that support Indigenous language revitalization programs and services each fiscal year. ECE agrees with the Committee’s recommendation to report annually on Indigenous language revitalization efforts and initiatives and will continue to do so through the Annual Report on Official Languages.</p> <p>Education bodies also plan for and report annually on predetermined indicators related to Indigenous languages and Indigenizing Education under the NWT Education Body Accountability Framework. ECE provides continued support in developing language programming in schools, which includes the implementation of the Our Languages Curriculum and Oral Proficiency Assessments. ECE has revised the NWT Education Body Accountability Framework to include further information related to Indigenous language and culture-based programming.</p>	

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Action item / Committee Recommendation	Deliverables	Original timeline	Current status (complete; on-track; delayed; on-hold)	Status details	Revised timeline (if applicable)
<p><b>Committee Recommendation 3:</b> The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the department of Education, Culture and Employment include Indigenous language proficiency when hiring positions in the Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Proficiency of the incumbent in at least one NWT Indigenous language or French would be an asset. ECE’s language revitalization efforts aim to increase the pool of candidates with language proficiency for positions within ILES and throughout the GNWT. Hiring proficient language speakers or individuals learning Indigenous languages continues to be a priority for ECE.</p>	

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Action item / Committee Recommendation	Deliverables	Original timeline	Current status (complete; on-track; delayed; on-hold)	Status details	Revised timeline (if applicable)
<p><b>Committee Recommendation 4:</b> The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the department of Education, Culture and Employment conduct greater oversight on inclusive schooling practices, including through spot checks on individualized learning plans, and report annually on</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>In 2023-24, many education bodies will be piloting Grade 4-6 and Grade 8 of the adapted BC curriculum.</p> <p>ECE will be developing an internal and external Inclusive Schooling (IS) review process in collaboration with education bodies to ensure the IS model meets the needs of all students with the new curriculum. This review process will also include analyzing existing system information at ECE and the Department of Health and Social Services (HSS), as well as Jordan’s Principle/Child First Initiative for funding gap analysis and other relevant sources, to assess whether students’ needs are being met. Currently, under the NWT Education Body Accountability Framework, education bodies are expected to set and report on targets with specific performance measures. Each year, education bodies use information from their Annual Reports to inform the following year’s Operating Plans. The Accountability Framework also establishes a set of outcome-oriented performance measures for the education system, including those specific to SSPs and IEPs. ECE conducts a comprehensive review of the education system every five</p>	

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Action item / Committee Recommendation	Deliverables	Original timeline	Current status (complete; on-track; delayed; on-hold)	Status details	Revised timeline (if applicable)
the outcome-oriented performance measures.				years; the next review is scheduled for 2024. ECE has begun jurisdictional scans of BC school boards and other provinces with similar competency-based curriculums. This work will help inform changes to the way student programming is done in the NWT.	
<p><b>Committee Recommendation 5:</b> The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the department of Education, Culture and Employment bring forward a plan to better support schools in</p>	N/A	N/A	N/A	<p>Research on best practices to support small school principals and multi-age groups has been completed through the JK-12 curriculum renewal process.</p> <p>The Curriculum Renewal: JK-12 Educator Professional Learning Plan has been developed for the 2023-24 school year to support educators, including small school principals and multi-age grouping, during the transition to the new adapted curriculum. The plan is a multifaceted and tailored approach to educator professional learning and makes use of both asynchronous (online) and face-to-face opportunities to maximize the reach of the offered supports. ECE will also work with education body staff to tailor professional learning in ways that meet the varying needs and unique realities of regions.</p>	

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<p>small communities , to ensure students across the territory have an equitable learning experience. The Committee further recommends that the department work with District Education Authorities to minimize the impacts of differing school calendars on Northern Distance Learning.</p>				<p>A Multi-Aged Groups (MAGs) specific classroom training course has been developed as a part of the suite of Curriculum Renewal courses being rolled out in the 2023-24 school year. In addition, a Professional Learning Community (PLC) for small school principals will be established in the 2023-24 to provide ongoing support in addition to online and in-person professional learning throughout the school year.</p> <p>The Northern Distance Learning (NDL) program has been expanded to 20 NWT schools and will now be offering 40 courses annually to students in small communities. ECE is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of a 3-year transition for territorial administration of the NDL program. The 2023-24 school year is the first year of an ECE developed NDL calendar to mitigate the impacts of differing school calendars. ECE is hoping this change, along with more course offerings and increased asynchronous study periods, will improve this issue.</p>	







**THIS INFORMATION CAN BE SHARED PUBLICLY**

August 24, 2023

RYLUND JOHNSON  
CHAIRPERSON  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

by EMAIL

**Follow-up to the Audit on Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education**

Thank you for your letter dated July 31, 2023, with the prioritized set of 10 follow-up questions on key actions and deliverables of the Department's work to improve student outcomes. These actions and deliverables were developed as a response to the 2020 Office of the Auditor General of Canada's report on Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education in the Northwest Territories (NWT), as well as the Department's own evaluation of its Education Renewal and Innovation Strategic Framework.

The Department appreciates your interest and attention to these important matters and would like to reiterate that all information provided below and in our response on July 21, 2023, can be shared publicly. As well, Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) can confirm that the previous updates provided to Committee on July 21 have been made to the online progress tracker on ECE's website.

**Topic: Indigenous languages**

- **Action item: Indigenous Language Instructor Employment Plan**
  1. **What is the current supply of Indigenous language instructors for each language?**

Response: In the 2022-23 school year, 58 of the 59.62 full-time positions were filled, which allowed 41 of 49 schools to offer Indigenous language programming as a second language, with five of these schools offering Indigenous immersion programming in the primary grades. The eight schools not offering Indigenous language programs include five schools that offer only French or English as a second language option and three schools that did not have Indigenous language instructors during the 2022-23 school year. ECE is unable to provide a detailed breakdown of staff by language due to the deadline of this response.

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**2. What is the need for Indigenous language instructors for each language?**

Response: Data collected in a 2022 survey conducted by ECE found that more than 50% of Indigenous language instructors plan to retire by 2027. Education bodies have also voiced challenges in replacing Indigenous language instructors (ILIs) when they retire or move on from their roles. Need for Indigenous language instructors is not available by each language but has been expressed across the NWT by entities representing or delivering language instruction in each Indigenous language.

**3. What specific strategy and actions, beyond the three trainees in the Beaufort Delta DEC, are being undertaken to increase the supply of Indigenous language instructors?**

Response: ECE is working with education bodies from all regions to design and offer an effective and responsive Indigenous Language Instructor Employment Plan (ILIEP) to address the systemic needs of Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 (JK-12) Indigenous language instructors in NWT schools.

The goal of the ILIEP is to expand the number of trained ILIs available for employment in schools. Partnerships with Indigenous Governments and regional education bodies will be necessary to effectively promote and manage this plan.

ECE intends to work collaboratively with Aurora College during the research and development stage of the Indigenous language diploma (ILD) to identify connections between the ILD and the ILIEP.

• **Action item: Indigenous language diploma program**

**4. After research and development in 2023-24, will the pilot start in 2024-25?**

Response: Yes. ECE intends to deliver a two-year pilot in one Indigenous language. Costing, timeline and ILD program design and development for future deliveries in all remaining NWT Indigenous languages will be informed by the pilot.

**5. Will the pilot program target creating new Indigenous language instructors, or improving the skills of existing instructors?**

Response: The pilot ILD program aims to build the workforce of Indigenous language adult speakers interested in career paths of their choice towards providing NWT Indigenous language services delivery and education in schools, hospitals, media, governments, communities, and homes. ECE supports the professional development of existing Indigenous Language Instructors in collaboration with the Regional Indigenous Language and Education Coordinators hired within education bodies.

- **Action item: N/A**

6. **What data is ECE using to determine whether actions on Indigenous languages are working?**

Response: ECE monitors progress on actions aimed at improving Indigenous languages in schools and communities in a variety of ways. Through annual education body operating plans and annual reports, ECE monitors school-based progress on implementing required actions of the NWT JK-12 Indigenous Languages and Education Policy and associated Handbook.

For example, the education body operating plans and annual reports outline the planned and actual allocation of Regional Indigenous Language Educators at the regional level, the creation and implementation of Indigenous Language Education teams at the school level, and the number of Indigenous language educators available at the school level.

In addition to monitoring staffing, ECE monitors student enrollment in Indigenous language courses annually through the JK-12 Performance Measures Report and reports this information for each grade and community type.

ECE also monitors increases in Indigenous language proficiency using the Oral Proficiency Assessment (OPA) tool for relevant Indigenous language programs including the Mentor Apprentice Program and the ILIEP. Schools may also use the OPA tool in their delivery of the Our Languages Curriculum.

At the population level, ECE monitors data collected by the NWT Bureau of Statistics on Indigenous language proficiency. This population-level data is collected every four years through the NWT Community Survey and provides the strategic context of Indigenous language use across the NWT.

In spring 2023, ECE also began planning for the evaluation of the 2018-2025 NWT Indigenous Languages Action Plan. This will inform ECE's efforts in the areas of language policy and planning moving forward.

**Audit Topic: Equitable access**

- **Action item: Integrating services for children and youth and expanding regional capacity**

7. **Given the challenges of expanding the Territorial-Based Support Team (TBST), what is being done in the meantime to provide more services to children in schools in small communities?**

Response: The current TBST continues to triage referrals based on capacity, urgency and equitable access among regions. The TBST continues to provide links, resources and connections for staff training in order to build capacity within schools in small communities and regions to augment their direct services.

- **Action item: Training and supports for small school principals & teachers of multi-grade classrooms**

- 8. What data will ECE use to measure whether the various pilot training programs are working?**

Response: Professional learning related to multi-age groupings has been included in the JK-12 Educator Professional Learning Plan for JK-12 Curriculum Renewal. ECE will monitor and collect data on the following indicators:

- Number of professional learning and trainings offered (virtually and in-person)
- Number of educators enrolled in professional learning networks.
- Percentage of educators actively participating in professional learning networks
- Number of online courses completed by educators.
- Level of perceived satisfaction regarding the professional learning opportunity

- 9. What will happen to the pilot programs after 2023-24?**

Response: Professional learning for small school principals and multi-age groupings will continue throughout the implementation of JK-12 curriculum renewal. New approaches to support small school principals and educators will be explored and revised in future school years in response to feedback and data collected during the implementation process.

**Audit Topic: Outcomes and data**

- **Action item: Planning and accountability framework**

- 10. How has ECE used data to calculate graduation rates in a way that gives a reflective picture?**

Response: There are many ways to calculate graduation rates. ECE's aims to answer: "What percentage of high school students graduate from high school in the NWT?"

ECE's Six-Year High School Graduation Rate was developed in 2021 to help estimate what percentage of students in the NWT achieve the requirements for a Senior Secondary School Diploma within six years of starting high school.

This new method starts by grouping students into a cohort. A student's cohort is the school year in which they first enrolled in Grade 10. The number of those students who graduate within six years is then divided by the total number of students in the cohort. The graduation rate counts all students who graduate within six years of starting high school. Six years ensures that all students, no matter their circumstances, have a chance to be counted as a graduate in the high school graduation rate. Furthermore, as most students are 15 years old when they start Grade 10, a six-year window captures all the students who graduate before they turn 21 years old. This method also reflects the reality that there are many pathways to completing high school and meeting graduation requirements, beyond the established three-year time frame.

This update to graduation rates is based on what ECE has learned from the Office of the Auditor General of Canada's report on Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 education in the NWT, as well as in consultation with the B.C. Government's Student Outcomes Reporting and Analytics team, which uses a similar method for their Six-Year Dogwood Completion Rate.

More information and detail on the new rate, including results, can be found at the following ECE webpage: <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/services/jk-12-school-curriculum/northwest-territories-graduation-rates>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.J. Simpson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

R.J. Simpson  
Minister, Education, Culture  
and Employment

- c. Principal Secretary
- Secretary to Cabinet/Deputy Minister, Executive and Indigenous Affairs
- Deputy Minister, Education, Culture and Employment
- Clerk, Standing Committee on Government Operations
- Advisor, Standing Committee on Government Operations
- Committee Members, Standing Committee on Government Operations