

*Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards  
& Committees  
(AYSCBC)*

EVALUATION  
REPORT

September 2006



# *Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards & Committees* (AYSCBC)

## **ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND**

The Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards & Committees, (AYSCBC) is a non-profit organization registered under the Yukon Societies Act. Membership is voluntary and is open to all Yukon School Councils, as well as the current Francophone School Board and Kluane School Committee.

### **Mission Statement:**

*'The purpose of the Association is to assist and provides support to school council and school boards in fulfilling their mission which is to enhance student learning through the cooperative efforts of parents, students, educators, government and other Members of the community. The Association will support its Members in fulfilling their mandate in accordance with the applicable requirements of the Education Act.'*

### **Mandate**

Through its activities, the Association provides services and supports to its Members. The focus is on working collaboratively for high quality public education and promoting the value of locally elected School Councils, Boards and Committees.

The objectives of the Association include:

- To undertake and / or coordinate project initiatives identified as being of a common priority by its Membership and disseminate any resulting information.
- To ensure access to training programs on behalf of its Members.
- To ensure effective communication between the Association, its Members and external contacts.
- To provide expert advice to its Members.

AYSCBC represents Membership, when given the direction and responsibility to do so by its Members, on matters affecting public education in the Yukon.

### **Workplan**

The Association's 2005-06 Workplan focuses on five areas of activity:

- ~Training and professional development;
- ~Communication
- ~Research
- ~Evaluation
- ~Recruitment and capacity building

The Member input process documented and reported herein was undertaken as a task under the Evaluation aspect of the Workplan, as approved by Membership. It will provide further direction for AYSCBC activities as well as substantiate the ongoing need for the services that this organization provides to its Membership.

## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

In order to assess the effectiveness of the operations and delivery of services to AYSCBC Members, an evaluation tool was developed based on a model of organizational evaluation created by the United Way. By April 2006, all School Councils who are Members of the Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards & Committees (AYSCBC), were sent copies of the Evaluation tool with an invitation to provide input to the Association's evaluation process.

School Councils were asked to provide responses to the 'Indicators' on the evaluation form. They were asked to mark the degree to which they agree or disagree with the statement in the *Indicator* column as it pertains to AYSCBC. If a Council/Board did not know, they were asked to note that accordingly. The form also provided room for comments.

Ten School Councils (of 15 Member Councils) completed and returned the form and a summary of their input is contained on the following pages.

NOTE: 2 of the Councils occasionally marked more than one response, indicating a variance of opinion or familiarity within that Council itself.

Councils who participated include:

Robert Service

JV Clark

Takhini Elementary

Del Van Gorder

FH Collins (2 completed forms submitted)

Watson Lake

Hidden Valley

Chief Zzeh Gittlit

Nelna Bessie John

Porter Creek Secondary

Members of the Executive also participated in the Evaluation process, providing ratings on a tool that incorporated many of the same questions as Members, but inclusive of additional indicators that only those involved at the internal management level could give comment on.

Appreciation is extended to those who engaged in this evaluation process and provided valuable input for current and future use.

And finally,

Grateful acknowledgement to the Greater Twin Cities United Way, for sharing documents from which evaluation tools used in this process were developed.

## ANALYSIS OF MEMBER SCHOOL COUNCILS' INPUT

This part of the report is an analysis of the raw input with the areas in which the organization is operating well according to its Membership outlined first. Following this is a section referencing those areas which need more attention in order to further strengthen the organization's operations.

### ~~Strengths & Attributes~~

#### **Section 1: THE EXECUTIVE**

More than 3/4 of the respondents agree that the current nominating process for the Executive Members (as outlined in the AYSCBC Bylaws) enables the Executive to remain appropriately diverse with respect to territorial residency (urban and rural), gender, cultural background.

#### **Section 2: REGARDING THE ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES**

Responses showed no disagreement with any of the statements, and at least 3/4 of the participants indicating they either 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with the remainder noting that they don't know.

This feedback demonstrates that, according to the vast majority of respondents:

- Activities carried out by AYSCBC are in line with the organization's Mission and workplan;
- The organization actively informs its Members and prospective Members about these activities and services;
- Members have the opportunity to participate in activities;
- Reports on activities are developed and reviewed annually;
- AYSCBC networks and/or collaborates with other organizations to produce the most comprehensive and effective services to its Members.

The highlights of comments made in this section referred to the great research that AYSCBC does; that the Department of Education should provide separate funding to support the production and circulation of the AYSCBC newsletter; and appreciation for the organization's commitment to the process of addressing the lack of vision screening for children in Whitehorse schools.

#### **Section 3: REGARDING THE TOTAL ORGANIZATION**

Eighty percent of respondents agreed that AYSCBC's purpose and activities meet the Membership's needs while ten percent did not know.

On the matter of whether AYSCBC assesses if its mission and activities provide benefit to the Membership by soliciting Member input, 92% agreed with some indicating strong agreement.

When asked if the organization has guiding principles that are not only included in its Constitution but are also reflected in its activities and communicated to the Membership, 91% agreed.

The same high degree of agreement was indicated when asked if "*The organization has a clear, meaningful written mission statement that reflects its purpose, values and people served.*"

When asked whether participation in the organization's planning processes was open to the Executive, staff and the Membership at large, 66% agreed while 27% indicated they did not know.

Over eighty percent agreed (75% 'strongly agreed') that the workplan responds to Member needs and acknowledges AYSCBC's strengths and limitations. The remainder indicated that they 'don't know'.

The survey asked if '*The planning process incorporates the critical issues facing the organization.*' and respondents in general agreed.

Three additional statements regarding the workplan received the following ratings:

- '*The workplan integrates all the organization's activities around a focused mission.*'—63% agreed, 37% don't know(DK)
- '*The workplan prioritizes the organization's goals and develops timelines for their accomplishments.*'--74% agreed, 26% DK
- '*The workplan is communicated to all Members of the organization.*'—82% agreed

#### **Section 4: PLANNING REGARDING THE ORGANIZATION'S FINANCES AND EVALUATIONS**

Responses to the indicators about AYSCBC's financial reporting and evaluation processes were very positive with an average of 70% of the participants indicating they either 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with the statements. There was no disagreement, the remainder indicated that they 'don't know'.

#### **~~Areas For Further Focus & Attention~~**

##### **Section 1: THE EXECUTIVE**

The fact that candidates for seats on the Executive do not have to be sitting as Members of a School Council/Board to be nominated has been an issue for a few people since the AYSCBC Bylaws were first reviewed. Discussion of the matter has taken place several times and the Membership has continued to uphold the current wording. An explanation of the rationale behind the criteria for eligibility will continue to be undertaken until such time as the majority of the Membership support any amendment to same.

As one respondent wrote: *"That 'nominees need not be a Member of a School Council, Board or Committee' is a bit unorthodox but does address the reality of needing a big enough pool of candidates to ensure good (or enough) candidates to fill positions."*

##### **Section 2: REGARDING THE ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES**

One quarter of the respondents indicated that they did not know whether or not AYSCBC networks and collaborates with other similar organizations. While there is information shared with Members about such undertakings via the AYSCBC newsletter and Annual and Interim Reports, efforts to communicate these activities may need to be increased. One respondent made a suggestion that there be a regular newsletter, perhaps not being aware that there is one or suggesting that a bi-monthly edition is not enough. In this instance, some follow-up needs to be done with this Council.

##### **Section 3: REGARDING THE TOTAL ORGANIZATION**

One respondent remarked that *"the organization's purposes and activities do not always meet our needs."*

While there is no comments added about the types of activities might better meet their needs, this indicates that an opportunity to learn more from this respondent would be in order.

The same respondent noted they felt that planning for the organization was not as inclusive as it could be, the Members needed to be more involved.

In this some section, one respondent indicated that they did not think that the planning process incorporates the critical issues facing the organization. Again there was no further comments made to elaborate on this point and it could be valuable to investigate further into the reasons for their answer.

And finally, only one Council who completed the survey indicated that they did not agree that the workplan is distributed to the full AYSCBC Membership.

All these areas need to be further explored with the Councils in particular, and with any who indicated they don't know'

#### **Section 4: PLANNING REGARDING THE ORGANIZATION'S FINANCES AND EVALUATIONS**

As noted above, there were no respondents noting their disagreement with any of the indicators under this section on finance and evaluation. There were some who were unfamiliar with some of the processes for revision and reporting and this will be flagged as an area for further communication and awareness raising.

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## ANALYSIS OF EVALUATION INPUT FROM EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

In order to ensure that there was input from an internal management point of view on the operations of AYSCBC, the Members of the Executive were asked to respond to sets of Indicators for non-profit organizations. Their task was to check off either 'Met', 'Needs work' or 'Not applicable' relative to each Indicator.

### Section 1: REGARDING THE EXECUTIVE

There was unanimous agreement on the Indicators all having been 'Met' with one area needing continued work. Indicators were:

1. *The nominating process for the Executive enables the Executive to remain appropriately diverse with respect to territorial residency (urban and rural), gender, cultural background.*
2. *The roles of the Executive and the Executive Director are defined and respected, with the Executive Director delegated as the manager of the organization's operations and the Executive focused on policy and planning.*
3. *The Executive Director is recruited, selected, and contracted by the Executive. The Executive provides clearly written expectations for the position, as well as reasonable compensation.*
4. *New Executive members are oriented to the organization, including the organization's mission, bylaws, policies, and work-plan, as well as their roles and responsibilities as Executive members. Manuals are provided as reference materials.*
5. *The organization's bylaws conform to Yukon Societies Act & regulations.*
6. *The bylaws should include: a) how and when notices for Executive meetings are made; b) how members are elected/appointed by the Executive; c) what the terms of office are for officers/members; d) how Executive members are rotated; e) how ineffective Executive members are removed from the Executive; f) a stated number of Executive members to make up a quorum which is required for all policy decisions.*
7. *The Executive reviews the bylaws.*
8. *The Executive has a process for handling urgent matters between meetings.*
9. *Executive members serve without payment unless the agency has a policy identifying reimbursable out-of-pocket expenses.*
10. *The organization maintains a conflict-of-interest policy and all Executive members and executive staff review and/or sign to acknowledge and comply with the policy.*
11. *The Executive has an attendance policy such that a quorum of the organization's Executive meets at least quarterly.*
12. *Meetings have written agendas and materials relating to significant decisions are given to the Executive in advance of the meeting.*
13. *The Executive acts as a governing trustee of the organization on behalf of its membership while carrying out the organization's mission and goals. To fully meet this goal, the Executive must actively participate in the planning process as outlined in planning sections of this checklist.*

Relative to Indicator #3, a review of the Executive Director's position is in order re: expectations and compensation.

## **Section 2: GENERAL HUMAN RESOURCES**

There was unanimous agreement on the Indicators all having been 'Met'.

Indicators were:

- 1. The organization follows non-discriminatory hiring practices.*
- 2. The organization has a job description for the Executive Director position which includes qualifications, duties, and reporting relationships.*
- 3. The organization's Executive conducts an annual review/evaluation of its Executive Director in relationship to a previously determined set of expectations.*
- 4. The Executive Director's salary is set by the Executive in a reasonable process.*
- 5. The organization provides opportunities for employees' professional development and training with their job skill area and also in such areas as cultural sensitivity and personal development.*

## **Section 3: PLANNING REGARDING THE TOTAL ORGANIZATION**

Overall, the Executive noted these Indicators are being 'Met' with the added comments that this current evaluation exercise will assist in determining a clearer answer to #1.

Re: #5—While some members choose to participate in the planning process, others do not.

Re: #13—this evaluation process is a new undertaking but will be an ongoing practice.

Items 1 through 10 were also on the Member Councils evaluation tool and the responses they gave generally indicated agreement on the items being 'Met'. There are a few areas where further efforts at raising awareness of Councils are needed.

Indicators were:

- 1. The organization's purpose and activities meet the membership's needs.*
- 2. The organization evaluates whether its mission and activities provide benefit to the membership, by soliciting members' input. (Workplan)*
- 3. The organization has guiding principles that are included in its Constitution, are reflected in its activities and communicated to the membership.*
- 4. The organization has a clear, meaningful written mission statement that reflects its purpose, values and people served.*
- 5. The Executive, staff, and the membership participate in the planning process.*
- 6. The workplan responds to member needs and acknowledges the organization's strengths and limitations.*
- 7. The planning process incorporates the critical issues facing the organization.*
- 8. The workplan integrates all the organization's activities around a focused mission.*
- 9. The workplan prioritizes the organization's goals and develops timelines for their accomplishments.*
- 10. The workplan is communicated to all members of the organization.*
- 11. The board and staff periodically review the mission statement and modify it to reflect changes in the environment.*
- 12. The board and staff developed and adopted a written work-plan to achieve its mission.*
- 13. The work-plan includes an evaluation process to assess the progress in carrying out activities.*
- 14. Through work plans, human and financial resources are allocated to insure the implementation of activities in a timely fashion.*

#### **Section 4: PLANNING REGARDING THE ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES**

Indicators #1 through #5 were asked of both the Executive Members and the Member Councils.

Overall, there was strong agreement between both groups on these items being 'Met'. There were a very few Member Councils who marked 'did not know' but 10 times out of 12, Councils marked 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'.

Indicators were:

- 1. Activities are congruent with the organization's mission and workplan.*
- 2. The organization actively informs its members and prospective members about its activities and services.*
- 3. Members have the opportunity to participate in activities.*
- 4. Reports on activities are reviewed annually.*
- 5. The organization networks and/or collaborates with other organizations to produce the most comprehensive and effective services to its members.*
- 6. Activities within the organization are integrated to provide more complete services to members.*

#### **Section 5: PLANNING REGARDING THE ORGANIZATION'S EVALUATIONS**

As this formalized evaluation process is a new practice, Executive Members and Member Councils both noted that in some cases, they did not always know, or it was premature to respond to some of the items. In spite of this, the ratings that were given were clearly showing that respondents felt the Indicators were 'Met'.

Indicators were:

- 1. Every year, the organization evaluates its activities to determine progress toward accomplishment of the tasks set out in the work-plan.*
- 2. Members are involved in the evaluation process.*
- 3. The evaluation includes a review of organization's activities to insure that they comply with the organization's mission, values and goals.*
- 4. The results of the evaluation are reflected in the revised work-plan.*

#### **Section 6: PLANNING REGARDING THE ORGANIZATION'S FINANCES**

While the Executive marked several of these Indicators as being 'Met' (#1-3, #7 & 8), it was noted that there are some difficulties in successfully meeting the other Indicators due to unstable funding. Indicators were:

- 1. The audit, or an annual report prepared by the organization which includes financial statements, is made available to members and other parties as appropriate.*
- 2. The organization follows accounting practices which conform to accepted standards.*
- 3. The organization prepares timely financial statements including the Balance Sheet [or statement of financial position) and Statement of Revenue and Expenses [or statement of financial activities] which are clearly stated and useful for the board and staff.*
- 4. The organization prepares financial statements on a budget versus actual and/or comparative basis to achieve a better understanding of their finances.*
- 5. The organization prepares cash flow projections.*
- 6. If the organization has billable contracts or other service income, procedures are established for the periodic billing, follow-up and collection of all accounts, and has the documentation that substantiates all billings.*
- 7. The organization has a policy identifying authorized check signers and the number of signatures required on checks in excess of specified dollar amounts.*
- 8. All expenses of the organization are approved by a designated person before payment is made.*
- 9. The organization has established, or is actively trying to develop, a reserve of funds to cover at least three months of operating expenses.*
- 10. The Board of Directors ,or an appropriate committee, is responsible for soliciting bids, interviewing auditors and hiring an auditor for the organization.*

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## OVERALL

*"AYSCBC has good intentions, works hard, is responsive and/or proactive in research and dissemination of information. On one hand, it provides an invaluable, non department resource and voice in support of individual and collective Councils. On the other hand it is an underused resource."*—School Council respondent

On the completed evaluation documents from Councils, most of the indicators marked 'Don't know' were from four School Councils, and most specifically to two in particular.

AYSCBC needs to increase its efforts to provide additional information and offers to meet with these Councils to assist them in developing a clearer understanding of the organization's operations.

Also, as there is an election of School Councilors scheduled for this fall, there will no doubt be a need to increase awareness of the role and services that AYSCBC provides throughout the territory. There will be a need to place renewed emphasis on reaching those who are filling seats on a School Council for the first time and who may be unfamiliar with the organization and the benefits it provides to Members.

It is important to bear in mind that AYSCBC operates according to its Constitution & Bylaws as well as all policies adopted and approved by the Membership. These are 'living documents' which provide the guiding principles for all activities undertaken by the organization. There is a provision for amendments to be proposed to these documents (Bylaws, Part 14) and changes will be incorporated into them if supported by the majority of the Membership in attendance at the General Meeting.

Further to this, an annual Workplan is presented to the Membership for their review, comment (including recommendations) and acceptance at the General Meeting.

Finally, when the Association is able to rely on stable funding, some of the areas needing more work will be more easily attainable.

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