

# Association of Yukon School Councils Boards and Committees

## 2014 Annual General Meeting

### Chair's Report

Education in Yukon and the issues affecting it continue to be the focus of our Association. I have been privileged to once again serve as the Chair of this dynamic group of dedicated people.

Currently the Executive consists of: Bob Laking (Chair), Neil Salvin (Vice Chair), Chris Bookless (Treasurer), Sandra Henderson (Director), Rick Halliday (Director), and Ted Baker (Director). Carol Coote is our Executive Director. This group has been together off and on for a number of years and works well together.

In the year since our last AGM some significant changes have occurred in the education landscape of Yukon.

For many years the two year election cycle and the election timing process had been identified as obstacles to the development of strong and effective councils. While the two year cycle remains we are now in the first year of holding elections in the spring. There has also been a mechanism established for some continuity from one elected council to the next. We look forward to hearing from members how these initiatives have worked out.

Professional development for council members remains a primary focus of Association activity. The semi-annual conferences have been one of the best ways to help members develop skills and we've been pleased to have played a role in planning and delivering them. We have some ideas regarding future School Council Conferences, and their planning, which we will be discussing at the 2014 AGM .We look forward to receiving feedback from our members regarding conference formats.

As a result of the Leadership Advisory Committee's work the "Educational Leadership Framework for Yukon Principals and Vice-Principals", the "Leadership Practices Framework for Yukon School Councils", and the "Educational Leadership Framework for Yukon Teachers" have been completed and introduced. Your Association was represented on the Advisory Committee by the Executive Director and Chair.

Content and other improvements to our website at [www.ayscbc.org](http://www.ayscbc.org) continue in response to feedback from our users. Please take a look and let us know what you think. We are happy to get your input and work hard on any suggestions you may have. If there are areas you wish us to include or feature just let us know.

Seats continue to be available for school council participants on several committees that deal with Education issues. Association Executives have worked on some and several other council representatives have also served. If you'd like to become involved please let us know. The time spent is well worth it and very much appreciated. Serving on these committees provides valuable input to policy and process development. It also provides opportunities to meet others and for your own continued professional development. We have seen a lot of progress in the last while. Sometimes it is hard to appreciate this when we wish so hard for student success. But bit by bit change is happening and it is largely because of the contributions made by School Council members. We thank all those that have been able to contribute.

We previously reported on upcoming personnel changes at the Department of Education. Those changes are now largely complete. We now have a new Minister of Education, Ms. Elaine Taylor; a new Deputy Minister, Ms. Val Royle; a new Assistant Deputy Minister, Mr. Albert Trask; a new Director of Learning, Ms. Nicole Morgan; a new Director of Student Achievement, Mr. Simon Blakesley; and a returning face as School Council Liaison, Mr. Bob Walker.

Yukon was very fortunate to have enjoyed the services of the previous incumbents – Mr. Scott Kent, Ms Hine, Ms. Whitley, Ms Arnold, and Ms. Choquette - in the Department of Education. It has been a pleasure to work with these dedicated individuals and we look forward to continuing those relationships with their successors.

As always we need to hear from you, our members. How can we assist you in doing your jobs? How should we represent you on committees? How would you like to participate? What initiatives would you like us to pursue? Please call us and let us know. You can contact us via email, phone or in person. Check out our website at [www.ayscbc.org](http://www.ayscbc.org) and you will find all the different ways to contact us. Feel free to call or email any of the Executive and we'll be happy to respond. Our goal is to enable members to participate in ensuring the best opportunities for students in Yukon.

Bob Laking

Chair

### **Report from the Executive Director AGM 2014**

A hearty warm welcome to new members of Yukon School Councils and to those who are back for yet another term of office. I have enjoyed getting to know many of you and look forward to spending some time with those who are new to this role.

In my 13<sup>th</sup> year of working with and for this organization, it is clear that there is no lack of work to be done, questions to answer, information to gather and share, relationships to build and maintain. In addition to producing monthly newsletters and regularly updating the AYSCBC website, some of the other activities I've initiated or engaged in this past year include:

- attending School Council meetings in Whitehorse and the rural areas whenever possible but especially in the fall and spring. I find it most valuable to be able to sit at your Council meeting tables and hear the discussions. If I can answer a question or find further information about an issue, idea or topic, I gladly do so.
- In March and April of this year, I was able to visit all communities except Old Crow, to deliver posters and other information about the School Council elections that were held in May. Posters were taken to all schools, post offices, First Nation offices and some stores so the community would be aware of Councils and the role they play in public education. (Thanks to Bonnee in Old Crow for ensuring their distribution there after we mailed them!)
- In October 2013, we were very involved with the planning and execution of the School Councils' conference. AYSCBC engaged John Abbott, Director of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Initiative to be our guest speaker at the event.

--We continued to participate in an advisory role on several Yukon Education committees, such as:

- Policy
- Anti-Bullying Behaviours
- Student Transportation
- Attendance Initiative
- School Growth Planning
- Rural Education
- Student Support Services
- Innovation Grant

--We have been team members on some School Reviews that were done last year.

--We have promoted the important role of School Councils and this association at the Summer Institutes held in 2013 and 2014.

--In February, AYSCBC hosted a workshop with Whitehorse Elementary School Council about 'Online Safety' which was informative and interesting. We look forward to doing more sessions in consort with our member School Councils on a variety of topics.

--In September 2013, I was able to attend the Rural Experiential Model (REM) week in Dawson and also the one in Carmacks in May of this year, both of which were great opportunities to see how motivated students can be when they find a subject that they are excited about.

--In April, the Yukon Teachers' Association brought up Barry MacDonald to do a workshop on '*BoySmarts—Making Sense of Gender and Learning*' and AYSCBC was able to support 4 School Council members to attend, kudos to YTA for working with us on this PD opportunity!

--In February, I attended the CYFN Student Success workshops and then the Rural Education Congress in Saskatoon in March.

One of the keynote speakers at the congress was Ian Hanomansing, the CBC News Anchor. He shared his story of growing up in a small town in New Brunswick and going to a small school. The words he left us with were that ***"All kids need backstage passes to opportunities"***. He wanted us to know that we all have a role to play in advocating for and ensuring that our students have access to a variety of learning situations.

Another speaker at the Rural Education Congress was Dr. Tom Thompson, President Olds College in Alberta. He spoke about the 7 skills of good governance and I've included a page of notes I took from his session (below). Of the skills he refers to, I think we need to continue to shine a special spotlight on the one called 'stewardship'. ***"Stewardship.... is moving forward, giving it back in better shape than when you got it. Seeking improvement and any needed changes."***

In closing this report, I'd like to express my appreciation to all of you for your ongoing support of this Association and most importantly, the time and energy that you have and will continue to put into your role as a School Council member.

**Together we can and do make a difference.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Coote  
September 26, 2014

Notes from session on  
*'The Importance of Governance in a Time of Changing Realities'*  
at the Rural Education Congress  
Saskatoon Mar 30-Apr 1, 2014

Dr. H.J. (Tom) Thompson, President Olds College

(While he was focussed on Boards rather than School Councils, a good portion of what he spoke about is useful and can be modified to be relevant to the role of SCs.)

The 7 Skills of Good Governance:

1. Stewardship
2. Empower
3. Leadership
4. Delegate
5. Direct
6. Accountable
7. Informed

It is important to ask good questions, better questions like: "Where does that idea come from?"  
Look at the bigger picture, use imagination and creativity.

It is important to look beyond the obvious, (Look 'around the corner') for the betterment of the students.

Stewardship role is moving forward, giving it back in better shape than when you got it. Seeking improvement and any needed changes.

Roles include monitoring, policy development and community connection.

Re: Informed role--The Board informs itself with expert external opinion from key publics, future perspectives and other background information to enhance the quality of its deliberations.

On the Stewardship Pyramid (below), the base is the most important—the rest relies on it. Aim to build and maintain a good base first and foremost.

