

Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards and Committees

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Pam Hine, Deputy Minister
Yukon Education
P.O. Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 2C6

December 16, 2010

Dear Ms. Hine,

We wish to express our appreciation for your participation at the *'Building Leadership in our School Communities'* Fall 2010 School Councils' Conference delegates on November 26th and 27th.

The 2 ½ day event was well attended by a good balance of those who are new to the role of School Councils as well as those who are 'seasoned' members. This blend of experience and perspectives resulted in great discussion, some mentoring and considerable networking opportunities. The feedback received on the evaluation forms was very positive and the planning committee is pleased with the success of the conference.

Delegates noted that they appreciated learning how other Councils handle different situations and concerns, hearing different options and learning about what works. Others noted that the conference gave them some great tools to take back to other members of their Councils.

Several sessions were built around panel presentations with question and answer periods that followed. Panel members consisted of School Administrators, School Council members, Superintendents, Yukon Education staff, and students. They were invited to share their knowledge and experience on the topics of:

- Experiential Education;
- the Process and Outcome of School Reviews;
- Leadership and the Importance of working together for all students;
- Dealing with Difficult Issues and Resolving Disputes

The workshops on Thursday evening focused on enhancing the understanding of School Council members about their roles and responsibilities as well as the importance of respecting confidentiality and avoiding any conflict of interest.

We sincerely appreciate the time and attention that ADM Christie Whitley and several of the senior management team dedicated to being present during a considerable portion of the proceedings. Their presence demonstrated support for the work of School Councils and an interest in working together for our students and school communities.

The standing Conference Roundtable session allowed Councils to speak about their successes as well as their difficulties. A number of issues raised included:

**High student demand exceeds space available in experiential programs within schools. As many of our students seem to learn best by doing, how can we incorporate more of this type of learning experience opportunity in our schools?*

**It is a considerable challenge for teachers in small schools to teach the curriculum and meet the needs of students when there is a wide range of grades.*

**Ongoing concern about some rural students who move to Whitehorse who do not have the prerequisite learning to move on to grade 10 and beyond, so consequently fall behind and too frequently drop out.*

**Concern that some children who could benefit from attending a K4-5 program are not doing so because their parents might not understand the value.*

There were two Recommendations discussed and approved during the Fall 2010 School Councils' Conference and we are passing these on to you for your consideration:

2010B01 School Council Eligibility

Recognizing that rural areas experience greater difficulty recruiting candidates; we recommend that methods be investigated to change the criteria that disqualify substitute teachers from serving as a trustee of a School Board or a member of a Council in rural education areas.

2010B02 Managing Critical Transitions

We recommend that the Department of Education and individual Schools implement strategies to monitor and support children as they move through critical transition points: home to school; grade 3 to 4; grade 7 to 8; and grade 10 to 11.

In closing, we would also like to express our appreciation for your attendance at the 2010 Long Service Celebration and Awards event on Friday evening. Your recognition of the value that School Council members add to our school communities and Yukon Education, in general, is greatly appreciated.

We look forward to further discussions with you on matters of importance in education and we are grateful for the opportunity to continue our work of providing support services to our Membership.

Sincerely,

Bob Laking, Chair

cc. Christie Whitley, ADM Public Schools Branch