

Frequently Asked Questions

A PATH TO ESTABLISHING A YUKON FIRST NATION SCHOOL BOARD

What Yukon First Nations are signatories to the First Nation School Board Framework Agreement (the “School Board Agreement”)?

Ten of the 14 Yukon First Nations and the Minister of Education signed the School Board Agreement. These First Nations are referred to as “the CCOE First Nations” in the School Board Agreement.

They are: Champagne & Aishihik First Nations, Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Na-Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation, Ross River Dena Council, Selkirk First Nation, Liard First Nation, Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation and White River First Nation.

Can a Yukon First Nation still become a party to the School Board Framework Agreement?

Yes. Other Yukon First Nations will still be able to become parties to the School Board Framework Agreement at a future date.

When will the First Nation School Board be established?

The School Board Framework Agreement sets out the process and framework for establishing a Yukon First Nation School Board within the Yukon education system.

Although the School Board Framework Agreement has been signed by Yukon First Nations and the Minister of Education, the School Board Framework Agreement itself does not establish the First Nation School Board.

The School Board Framework Agreement confirms that the Yukon First Nations and Government of Yukon support the establishment of the First Nation School Board and, consistent with the provisions of the *Education Act*, it sets out the structure, authorities and responsibilities of the proposed First Nation School Board.

What are the key points covered in the Agreement?

The School Board Framework Agreement is an agreement between the Minister of Education, on behalf of Government of Yukon, and the CCOE First Nations. It describes how, pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act, a First Nation School Board will be established and how it will operate. It also explains how, at the request of an existing school council, a school can come to be assigned to the First Nation School Board.

The School Board Framework Agreement describes how the First Nation School Board will not be an institution of the Government of Yukon, Yukon First Nations or the CCOE. The Agreement will allow Yukon First Nation communities to assume responsibility and authority with respect to the operation of a school and the delivery of education programs to their children, based on an agreement between the Yukon First Nation community and the First Nation School Board.

It details how future agreements will be negotiated for operational matters related to First Nation School Board-operated schools (like facilities for a Yukon First Nation school, admissions, transportation, facility management, etc.) as well as for the negotiation of a funding formula for the First Nation School Board's operations and maintenance budgets.

Can an existing public school transition to become a First Nation School Board school?

Yes. An existing Yukon public school can be designated as a Yukon First Nation School under an interim or long-term arrangement. All Yukon students are welcome at a First Nation School Board school, not just First Nations or Indigenous students.

A school council can be combined with the First Nation School Board if they pass separate resolutions but only after both have been in existence for one year.

Will First Nation School Board-run schools only allow Yukon First Nations students to enroll?

No. All students in the Yukon will be welcome at these schools. They will provide a vigorous education meeting a high-level of academic standards – taught through the cultural worldview and pedagogy of Yukon First Nations.

What kind of things will be different at a Yukon First Nation School Board school?

Each school will operate differently from the next, reflecting the needs of the particular community and student body, however, one can expect to see increased on-the-land and experiential learning, increased First Nation Language instruction, Elders in the classroom, and specialized teaching and assessment practices tailored to Indigenous pedagogy and ways of learning and doing. First Nations-run schools across Canada report significant improvements in academic outcomes and graduation rates for their students.

What communities are interested in transitioning their public school to the First Nation School Board?

Several Yukon First Nations in the communities are interested in First Nations Schools operated under the First Nation School Board. Some Nations are ready to expedite this process and other nations are in early discussions. More information will become available as this develops.

Will the School Board Agreement lead to the construction of a new First Nation School?

Under the School Board Agreement, the Government of Yukon agrees to have discussions with the First Nation School Board about the construction of a Yukon First Nation school or schools and/or designation of an existing school on an interim or long-term basis.

Who is on the First Nation School Board?

The membership of the Board will be **five trustees** elected by: 1) residents of the Yukon whose ancestral language is a Yukon First Nation language and/or 2) parents of the children who attend the schools operated by the First Nation School Board.

The trustee candidates must be residents of the Yukon whose ancestral language is a Yukon First Nations language or parents of the children who attend the schools operated by the First Nation School Board (e.g., non-First Nations parents of children at the school can run for election to the Board).

Both candidates and electors must be Canadian residents at least 18 years of age.

What authority and responsibilities will the Yukon First Nation School Board have?

It will have all the broad authorities and responsibilities of a school board under the *Education Act* including the following:

- Selecting staff including principals and teachers (hiring, dismissal, discipline, transfer, promotion, demotion) subject to the *Education Act*.
- Reviewing, modifying, approving the school plan prepared by the administration of each school.
- Selecting a director of education to be CEO of the First Nation School Board.
- Providing educational programs for its students in its school(s).
- Requesting that an education program be provided in an Indigenous language in its school(s).
- Establishing policies for administration, management and operation of its school(s).
- Establishing a parent-advisory group for its school(s), if requested by the parents.
- Directing the director of education or a principal to conduct evaluations of staff and provide reports.
- Approving allocation of school days for extra-curricular activities.
- Reallocating funds within operation and maintenance budgets when necessary.

Who is authorized for the local management of individual schools?

A key component of the School Board Framework Agreement is the ability of the First Nation School Board to provide for the local management of schools through “Community Committee Agreements.”

The First Nation School Board may enter into agreements with a Yukon First Nation to set up these committees and specify their power and duties. These committees can be established to make most decisions around the operation and management of the school.

These committees would exercise agreed-to aspects of the First Nation School Board’s authority under the Agreement for their respective schools. This could include ensuring that the school supports Indigenous students and meets their education needs and aspirations; implements culturally-relevant curriculum and the use of Yukon First Nation languages; and provides for local participation and decision-making.