

Junior Kindergarten - Grade 12 Updates

Mr. Speaker, as we prepare to wrap up another school year, I would like to highlight a number of exciting initiatives that reflect our government's commitment to improve student outcomes in the Northwest Territories.

This semester, three high schools in the territory piloted the new Northern Studies 30 course. This made-in-the-NWT high school course is the first in the territory to follow British Columbia's curricular framework.

Topics range from oral history and traditions, to historical land use, colonization, language reclamation, NWT treaties and land claim agreements, consensus government and Arctic sovereignty. It also delves into the role of social media, mental health and addictions, and cultural appropriation.

Mr. Speaker, we are already seeing meaningful discussions and learning taking place as part of this curriculum. At Ulukhaktok's school, Elders advised and guided students to build an igloo village. This led to conversations about past, present and future housing challenges in the North. Now, equipped with a deeper understanding, the class is working with Elders and planning to build a permanent, accessible outdoor meeting space.

Mr. Speaker, this example highlights the benefits of hands-on, practical instruction based on competencies. This is core to the new, adapted Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum we will begin trialing in several grades this fall.

The British Columbia curriculum is modern, flexible, and emphasizes Indigenous perspectives and knowledge. It focuses on literacy and numeracy; not just reading, writing and math, but also communicating and problem solving.

Rather than students memorizing definitions and dates, this curriculum encourages interaction and engagement. Students are empowered to get involved in their own education.

Curriculum committees made up of educators from across the NWT are working to adapt this modern curriculum to the NWT context. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment has finalized several major steps toward implementing the curriculum, including the timeline for each school year, new graduation requirements, and the schedule for educator training.

Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to talk about an excellent online education tool we have renewed this year, the NWT Historical Timeline. From origin stories to present day events, the Timeline depicts the history, cultures and people that make up this territory. It features photos and documents from the NWT Archives, as well as objects from the museum's collection, including artwork, tools, clothing and more.

This valuable resource makes these stories, photos, pivotal events and ways of life accessible to not just students and educators, but to everyone in the territory and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, an update on education would not be complete without recognition for those at the forefront of this work. In every community and in every school, our educators and school staff play a vital role in student success. It was my privilege earlier today to recognize the inductees of the 2023 Northwest Territories Education

Hall of Fame. I would like to extend my congratulations once again to this year's inductees. These remarkable individuals are truly making a difference in the lives of children, students, educators and communities, and I thank them for their dedication and passion.

Masi, Mr. Speaker.