

Our Languages Curriculum

Mr. Speaker, today the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is celebrating the official launch of the Our Languages curriculum. This launch marks an important milestone for Indigenous languages in the Northwest Territories.

Our Languages is a competency-based curriculum that provides Indigenous language instructors with curricular outcomes, instructional strategies, and assessment tools to foster language growth in classrooms. It promotes a whole-school approach to language learning to ensure that Indigenous languages are heard and spoken throughout schools, at assemblies, and during routines and in all Northwest Territories classrooms. Our Languages was made in the Northwest Territories in collaboration with Indigenous Elders, teachers, language champions, neurolinguistic experts, curriculum coordinators and community advocates, and was informed by national and international curricular documents. Our Northern language experts helped to ensure that Our Languages aligns with the two foundational curricula of the Northwest Territories' education system, *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit*, that ground teaching and learning in Indigenous traditions, culture and place.

In order to achieve this long-awaited milestone, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment worked with Regional Indigenous Language Coordinators from the participating regional Indigenous governments to ensure that promising community practices and cultural connections were included in the Our Languages curriculum.

The Department also worked with education bodies to advise and support Indigenous language instructors through each of their unique situations during COVID-19, including offering online and video-based professional development. All Indigenous language instructors have been trained and continue to have follow-up in-servicing in the Our Languages curriculum and associated supporting resources.

Additionally, a revised version of the Indigenous Languages and Education Handbook was recently released to support schools in using the curriculum effectively. This Handbook outlines actions and promising practices that principals, teachers, Indigenous language instructors, and educational assistants can undertake to deliver quality education that promotes and enhances Indigenous languages and culture based education in our schools, homes and communities.

As of the current school year, 42 out of 49 schools now offer Indigenous language programming as a second language. In addition, four schools now offer Indigenous immersion programming in the primary grades.

Mr. Speaker, it has been an incredible year for Indigenous language revitalization initiatives in the Northwest Territories, and there is more excitement to come. The new Our Languages curriculum, supplemented by the Indigenous Languages and Education Handbook, provides an opportunity to carry on the legacy of our Indigenous languages and traditions. This ground-breaking initiative, made in collaboration with our Indigenous language revitalization partners across the territory, is something that we should all be very proud of.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.