



**Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee  
Report 10-18(2): Report on the Review of Bill 16: An Act to Amend the Education Act**

Background

The Standing Committee on Social Development (SCOSD) presented their Committee Report "Report on Bill 16: An Act to Amend the Education Act" on May 30, 2017. This report contains one recommendation and three recommended actions for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) which address the Territorial School Funding Formula, evaluating the Strengthening Teacher Instruction Practices pilot project and the Junior Kindergarten (JK) Program and child care outside of school hours.

On May 31, 2017 Committee Report 10-18(2) was considered in Committee of the Whole where it was adopted with the recommendation to that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to the report within 120 days.

Recommended Action 1

That the Department of Education, Culture and Employment review and adjust its school funding formulae to ensure that additional funding accounts for new JK students in Inclusive Schooling, Aboriginal Language and Culture-based Education and transportation funding from the 2017-2018 school year on.

*GNWT Response*

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment, in consultation with Education Authorities, has recently completed a review of the School Funding Formula in 2016 to ensure that it meets the needs of the Education Authorities. A number of changes were made to the formula that provided increased funding to Education Authorities and the flexibility to meet the demands of providing educational services in their regions.

Under the Education Act, ECE is obligated to fund Inclusive Schooling at 15 percent of the overall contributions provided to Education Authorities. Inclusive Schooling is currently funded at 17.1 percent. This amounts to \$3.8 million beyond the current funding requirement for the 2017-18 school year. Regardless of how the funding formula allocates funding, all students from JK to Grade 12 will have access to school based supports.

Education bodies currently receive \$9 million dollars for Aboriginal Language and Culture Based Education in schools across the NWT, along with \$400,000 for Elders in Schools Programming, \$300,000 for Teacher Cultural Orientation Days, \$1.4 million for Teaching and Learning Centres and \$700,000 for community support. A new funding model is being developed to better allocate all funding related to Indigenous language development and culture programming and this will include Junior Kindergarten students.

The Department is undertaking a review of student transportation that will include a review of the current state of student transportation in the North and the associated costs; the need for student transportation across all Education authorities; a jurisdictional analysis of how student transportation is delivered; provision of recommendations on how student transportation should be delivered in the NWT; and the review and recommendation on an appropriate funding model for student transportation that must include an examination of all funding such as the School Funding Framework, own source revenues, user fees and municipal tax revenue. This work will be completed by the end of the 2017 calendar year.

#### Recommended Action 2

That the Department of Education, Culture and Employment report annually on the implementation of the Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practices pilot project and the Junior Kindergarten Program, including an account of collaboration and engagement with existing childcare and early childhood development service providers, and that these reports be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

#### *GNWT Response*

The STIP Evaluation Plan was shared with Standing Committee in July 2017 and will be published on ECE's website by the end of September 2017. The plan was developed collaboratively and includes a description of the key activities and outcomes that will be monitored to show how the changes in instructional hours are anticipated to contribute to student outcomes, recognizing that any student outcome changes cannot be linked directly with STIP success. The Evaluation Plan also includes a reporting schedule outlining two evaluation stages; one mid-way through implementation and a second after the pilot is completed, as required by legislation. The evaluation results will be carefully examined by ECE to identify areas of success and where adjustments are necessary.

Additionally, after the recent passing of Bill 16, JK is now a part of regular school programming in the public education system and will be monitored by Education Authorities similar to how they monitor other K-12 curriculum. Long-term student outcomes related to JK implementation will be monitored through a variety of instruments and data sets including, but not limited to, the Early Development Instrument (EDI), the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI), and NWT graduation rates. The successful implementation of JK remains a priority for ECE and Department staff will continue to work with Education Authorities to ensure that programming, funding, bussing and renovation needs are met.

### **Recommended Action 3**

That the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, in its ongoing work toward an action plan for universal daycare by March 2018, account for community-by-community needs for after-school care, including care needed on an irregular basis, e.g. on professional development days.

### ***GNWT Response***

Direct engagement with communities will guide how programs and services are implemented with regards to how the Department of Education, Culture and Employment will work in supporting access to childcare. Ensuring the sustainability of the NWT childcare programming will require the GNWT to provide options that communities can choose from, rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach.