



September 29, 2022

JANE WEYALLON-ARMSTRONG  
MLA, MONFWI

**Oral Question 1120-19(2) – Funding for Small Communities**

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question you raised on May 31, 2021 regarding action for equitable access to education for students in small communities through supports for educators and principals, wherein you identified commitments made by ECE in response to the 2020 Office of the Auditor General's Report titled Early Childhood to Grade 12 Education in the Northwest Territories and specifically asked about work to support school employees to promote equitable access to quality education for all students.

As part of the Action Plan to Improve JK-12 Student Outcomes, ECE has proposed a pilot program with interested schools and educators to increase training, development, and support for school employees. To date, ECE has completed research on best practices to support small-school principals and for multi-age groups to inform training and supports for teachers of multi-grade classrooms. The ongoing renewal of the JK-12 school curriculum will have a significant impact on how small-school principals and teachers of multi-grade classrooms will be supported. The pilot program is scheduled to be developed in parallel with the phased-in implementation of curriculum renewal, as the GNWT works with partners to adopt and adapt British Columbia's curriculum and assessment tools.

Through partnerships with Education Bodies, ECE has increased both the number of small schools accessing the Northern Distance Learning program, as well as the number of available courses offered through the program. This has allowed students to have more equitable access to higher level academic courses not often available in their local communities which will enable them to pursue post-secondary opportunities.

To increase mental health and wellness counselling for children, youth and their families, ECE has partnered with the Department of Health and Social Services, Education Bodies, and Health Authorities to make changes to the Child and Youth Care Counselling initiative. This initiative aims to increase mental health and wellness services by placing counsellors into most schools and communities. The model re-design is intended to create an alternative model that best meets the needs of students.

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Lastly, to monitor and evaluate deliverables, ECE reports on education outcomes, including graduation rates using the new graduation rate methodology, as well as reviews and approves the operating plans and annual reports provided by Education Bodies under the Planning and Accountability Framework.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.J. Simpson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

R.J. Simpson  
Minister, Education, Culture  
and Employment

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly  
Deputy Minister, Education, Culture and Employment  
Legislative Coordinator, Executive and Indigenous Affairs