



Communique: Education bodies planning for safe reopening of schools in fall of 2020

YELLOWKNIFE (June 4, 2020) – Northwest Territories (NWT) Education Leaders met via teleconference with Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) Minister R.J. Simpson and the NWT Teachers' Association (NWTTA) on June 3, 2020 to discuss priorities and planning for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year.

Planning for re-entry into schools in the fall is ongoing, with ECE and education bodies actively working together on a coordinated, system-wide approach for the upcoming school year. This planning follows the detailed criteria provided by the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer (OCPHO) on how to safely reopen schools.

How education is delivered will be different for each school and community, based on factors such as school size and layout, access to technology, and the number and ages of students and staff. It is likely that individual schools will be adjusting student transportation, food programs and even scheduling, depending on their ability to accommodate the public health recommendations.

Education leaders have agreed on the following priorities for the 2020-2021 school year:

- Maintaining the health and safety of students, staff and communities
- Starting the school year on time
- Maximizing in-person learning, to the extent possible
- Seeking equity across regions
- Maintaining financial supports to schools

Education bodies will be taking a flexible approach in their planning to account for a potential second wave of COVID-19 in the fall of 2020, which could require a return to increased public health restrictions.

All schools are working to have their detailed risk assessment plans for reopening submitted to the OCPHO in June 2020. A more formal outline of the 2020-21 school year will be available once these plans are approved.

Quotes:

“The upcoming 2020-2021 school year will not be a return to normal for education staff and students in the NWT. In order to ensure the health and safety of our students and educational staff, schools will be taking strong action to meet the recommendations of the Chief Public



Health Officer, while providing a blended learning approach that will prioritize in-person learning wherever possible, and support at-home distance learning where required.”

-**R.J. Simpson**, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment

“With guidance from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Northwest Territories Teachers’ Association, all NWT Education Bodies are presently evaluating their capacity to deliver a quality education program while meeting the public health recommendations. It’s a daunting task, but I am confident that by continuing to work together and keeping our sights set on the priorities we agreed upon, we will be ready to welcome students back for the upcoming school year.”

- **Simon Cloutier**, Chair of Commission scolaire francophone des Territoires du Nord-Ouest, on behalf of NWT Education Leaders

Related Link:

- [Emerging Wisely – Path to Eased Public Health Restrictions](#)

Media inquiries:

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