

YCS Questions posed to Candidates:

1. As northerners, we have all heard a lot of discussion and promotion of the remediation economy. We have not seen or heard about the GNWT's commitment to how they intend to seize this economic opportunity. Labour demand, particularly for tradespeople, is already high in the NWT. Yellowknife Education Bodies are examining how we can help our students and increase the number of trades apprentices. Were you elected MLA, what would you be doing, regarding programs and appropriating resources, to direct the GNWT administration to expand and support early trades education in our schools?
2. Mental Health Supports: Within Education, one of our most significant issues is the continuing issue of student and staff mental health and wellness. We need healthy teachers to support healthy students. As an MLA, how would you use the resources and funding of the GNWT to address the stressors facing our staff and students?
3. Housing: The cost of living is an economic driver affecting us all. However, more particularly, the lack of available housing (and the cost of what is available) affects every aspect of our schools and education bodies. On the staff side, we have teachers who are unable to find suitable accommodations, making it hard to recruit and retain skilled staff. Our students' families are devoting an unreasonable portion of their household income to pay for shelter, affecting outcomes and placing challenges that are more significant on families. This issue has existed for years and is only getting worse. What can MLAs and the GNWT do to begin to reverse this trend?

FRAME LAKE

Julian Morse

A1. I agree this is an opportunity GNWT is not currently showing a lot of focus on, and needs to. I think one of the keys will be focusing programming on remediation specifically, particularly ensuring that procurement and contract awarding is done in such a way that incentivizes northern hiring and skill-building. In high schools, additional funding could be applied to the existing SNAP program, with a specific focus on trades which will be required for remediation. GNWT has been funding and encouraging establishment of makerspaces in Yellowknife and other communities – these NGOs can create excitement about trades and also provide a space for youth to learn – encouraging schools to partner and work with these organizations, and providing funding to facilitate that, would help to stabilize funding for the NGOs and provide another pathway for students to develop trades-related skills.

Additional funding to the Trades and Occupation Wage Subsidy program could be directed specifically towards the remediation economy, targeting contractors and incentivizing them to hire northern students through wage subsidies. I also am interested in exploring the possibility of increasing income tax on outside workers, and using the money to supplement wages of workers who live in the NWT, both discouraging flyover work, and helping to offset cost of living for locals. I have not had the opportunity to investigate this idea or its viability in detail, but this is the kind of thing we need to be looking into.

A2. I have included evolution and investment in the primary care system in my platform, which would include mental health services, because I was advised that this is one of the key places we could increase services where it could make substantive impacts on health outcomes in the NWT. Access to doctors and mental health services is an issue here. Some changes have been made recently to increase availability of mental health services in Yellowknife – I have accessed them myself and have found them to be much easier to access than they were a few years ago.

We need to continue focusing on increasing resources in this field and ensuring access is increased, which at the political level, primarily means funding allocated towards that goal. I am committed to advocating for that if elected.

A3. Housing is the top priority in my platform, and would be the top priority I bring to the table during the priority setting process for the 20th assembly if I were elected. The territorial budget for public housing has been too low for many years, with the need for housing far outweighing the available supply. We are in a housing crisis, and MLAs need to increase the territorial budget for housing if they want to get serious about addressing this crisis.

Developing a long term plan for housing in collaboration with Indigenous Governments also needs to be a priority. Currently, most Federal housing funding is project-based and tied to timelines. This leads to inconsistent work in the communities and much of the work going to outside contractors. I will advocate for creating a long-term plan for housing that considers the need for skill and capacity building. I believe this will help to spur skill development and job creation in the NWT, while also directly addressing the need for affordable housing.

In tax-based communities, particularly Yellowknife, land availability is constricted by the application process required by GNWT for municipalities to develop lands within their boundaries. It is an inefficient and unnecessary doubling of administration of an area for which governance is already devolved to the municipality. Freeing up territorial lands within municipal boundaries could help to alleviate land

availability issues and help reduce the costs of private development.

John Stanley

A1. I am a strong supporter of any program that encourages students to enter the trades. I believe for many students' school is just something they think they have to do, and early introduction to the trades will in my opinion show these students a path to a future. A great addition to creating a graduation culture. I would encourage funding and development for this type of program.

A2. I believe with teachers, we need to provide support programs. Establishing mentorship for new teachers to foster their professional growth. Offer workshop and training opportunities to assist teachers in developing effective stress management techniques and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Students support programs that develop initiatives to focus on their well being and promote a healthy lifestyle. We should also encourage mental health education in the curriculum to help students develop coping skills.

A3. This is a complexed issue that is in the mind of every MLA candidate. CMHC considers affordable housing to be 30 per cent of income. I believe the following is the best way to address housing affordability.

Collaborate with stakeholders: Engage with local governments, housing organizations, indigenous communities, and private developers to create a collaborative approach towards affordable housing development in the NWT.

Funding and incentives: Seek funding from various sources, such as government grants, private investors, and non-profit organizations, to support affordable housing initiatives. Establish tax incentives, subsidies, or grants to incentivize developers to invest in affordable housing projects.

Land allocation: Identify suitable lands for affordable housing development and work with landowners, including the government, to allocate or acquire these lands at an affordable price. This can involve repurposing underutilized lands or encouraging infill development.

Regulatory reforms: Review and update existing housing regulations and policies to remove barriers and streamline the development process for affordable housing projects. This can involve reducing red tape, expediting approvals, and providing zoning waivers to expedite the construction of affordable housing.

Public-private partnerships: Foster partnerships between the public and private sectors to leverage resources and expertise. This can involve collaborating on joint ventures or utilizing public land and assets to create affordable housing developments.

GREAT SLAVE

Kate Reid

A1. This is a great question, because what I've heard from the NWT/NU Chamber of Mines and both NWT and Yellowknife Chambers of Commerce, is that they want to see a similar approach for our northern students. I am thrilled that everyone is on the same page to make sure we are allowing our youth to have these crucial opportunities to learn about and pursue a career in trades. I will be strongly advocating to the Minister of ECE to work with all school boards and authorities and their staff to integrate skilled trades into curriculum and supplementary workshops as soon as middle school - or what may be appropriate for the capacity for schools in Yellowknife, our regional centres, and small communities. It would also be useful to have discussions around how to build youth interest in trades, as well as mapping a seamless track to seeking a ticket and finding employment/apprenticeship. I would be thrilled to discuss this further with all Yellowknife school boards when I am MLA.

A2. Mental health services in the territory need to be accessible and responsive to the needs of residents, especially children and youth. I want to see the GNWT make careers in mental health accessible and attractive to community members, to help ensure children and youth are able to receive culturally safe mental health care in their own communities. This also means ensuring that mental health providers are supported, compensated, and not overburdened with impossible caseloads and bureaucratic barriers.

I noticed, and I am sure all of the school boards noticed, that right before the election period, ECE and HSS announced changes are coming to the Child and Youth Counselling (CYC) services. I would of course like to engage with you as MLA to understand what these program changes will actually mean for your students, and what the counsellor to student ratio will look like -- and most importantly, how your schools can effectively support your students with the resources provided. It's important to make sure services are adequate for all students in the territory - which will mean adapting as necessary for all communities, which I am glad HSS and ECE have alluded to. I will look forward to seeing how the GNWT will ensure positive outcomes for both individual and school board/education authorities.

With regards to access for your staff: I do not take the lack of mental health resources in the territory lightly. I will be seeking better recruitment and retention initiatives for all health care workers so that your educators have the best possible chance for being able to see a mental health worker in a timely fashion, in the method they desire (virtual or in person). I will also reach out to the NWTTA to ensure I'm doing my level best to address what their membership wants, specifically.

A3. Housing should be the key priority of the 20th Assembly to address as it has knock-on effects for so many other issues -- including education as you've noted here. In my platform, I note that the NWT needs new housing of all types to bring down mortgage and rent costs for residents. And, there needs to be better programs for looking after existing stock -- including climate change adaptations -- so we can make the most of our past investments well into the future.

The GNWT needs to be working with all levels of government - community and Indigenous - in a cohesive, strategic way to secure all federal dollars for housing through every possible initiative. And specifically, as a government, working with developers and construction/trades to ensure adequate initiatives are available to get both materials and labour here and working on a consistent basis.

Underpinning that, the GNWT should be transferring all public land to the City of Yellowknife that is not excluded from land claims negotiations immediately.

Katrina Nokleby

A1. First, I think we need to be cautious when discussing the remediation economy. To me, the remediation economy is the environmental/contaminated sites economy and we've already been doing this for a long while in the north. Remediation technologists are environmental technologists and we already have those programs. In the modern era, progressive reclamation is a major part in all mine planning and as such the post-operation activities required for remediation are minimal compared to historic sites we've seen in the past such as Giant Mine.

I agree that we should be focused on trades programs. These are the types of jobs that are needed, they pay well, and are required everywhere allowing flexibility to northern workers. If re-elected I would continue to support the creation of trades schools in the NWT, such as the one being proposed in the Sahtu by the Indigenous Governments for which I provided an MLA support letter.

The Departments of ECE and ITI should be working with the Mine Training Society and Aurora College to develop a workforce plan that includes the analysis of employment trends in the NWT. This plan would incorporate the proper training and educational programs required to ensure NWT residents are qualified for employment at places like Giant Mine or any other resource sector or construction job in the NWT. This workforce plan could inform programming at the future polytechnic as it develops. We also need to ensure the JK-12 curriculum that we are providing gives children the correct math skills required to enter these trades programs. Maybe this means the NWT looks at another stream of math taught at the secondary level to achieve this.

We should support and expand Skills Canada NWT, and other trades educational programs, to offer more educational opportunities to students interested in the trades and to expose younger children to the professions such that they may have an interest in pursuing them. It's proven "you can't be, what you can't see", I learned this as a woman in Engineering and I think it's key that we expose young people to the trades as early as possible in order to spark their interest at a young age.

A2. As part of the Standing Committee on Social Development in the 19th Assembly we made it a committee priority to meet with youth and engage with them in a meaningful manner with respect to mental health and suicide prevention. I would take the following actions to immediately improve mental health for youth:

- Host annual territorial youth-led mental health and wellness conferences;
- Provide consistent aftercare supports from health professionals and community members following any suicidal ideation or attempts, including a youth treatment centre;
- Provide individual and family-oriented addictions and healing supports in places where youth already are such as school and youth centres;

- Increase access and funding for youth sports, recreation, culture, language, and on the land programming;
- Increase funding to Foster Families as well as to family members caring for relatives' children;
- Rebuild and replace aging school infrastructure so that children have safe, healthy spaces in which to learn; and
- Fund and construct safe and stable youth housing to address the gap between children in care and those aging out.

As for teachers, my Mom was a teacher and I have the utmost respect for the work they do. I know that teachers are chronically overworked and undervalued in Canadian society. Not only are they tasked with the education of young minds, they have so much more to deal with nowadays with the rising mental health crisis among youth. Often it is the teacher that feeds the undernourished kid or pays for the extra supplies out of pocket, to hold the hand of the crying child trying to get them through to see another day. It has been falling on our teachers to try and fill the gap created by a poorly funded system, not only from an educational perspective but also from a mental health perspective, and that is not fair. To improve teacher mental health, I would propose properly funding the education system in the NWT. Get rid of the per student funding model and address the Infrastructure issues as many NWT schools are in a horrible state of disrepair which impacts the mental health of all who attend.

I'd increase funding to mental health supports in the north and hire more counsellors, ideally some with experience in teacher burnout. Teachers experience a lot of vicarious trauma in their role, particularly in the north where there are many children living below the poverty line and a huge legacy of trauma due to colonization and the residential schools. The number of special needs students is on the rise and simply put teachers can't do it all. They need to be supported and have access to wellness tools in order to cope with the daily pressure.

We need to ensure we have a teaching program in our new University so that we can have teachers in the north that come from the north. This will lead to a better understanding of the situation and lives of their students but will also put some stability into the employment pool. These teachers would be invested in our communities and more likely to stay creating stability for students.

Finally, I think a mentorship type program could be created that pairs teachers new to the north with a mentor teacher who has lived here a while. This could help to ease the transition of new teachers from southern institutions and reduce the turnover in staff which impacts students and morale in the school. If you've not lived in the north, it's impossible to learn about the complex legacy of the residential schools and having someone safe to navigate this learning experience with could go a long way in improving teacher mental wellbeing.

A3. First, we need more land to be made available for development, particularly within the City of Yellowknife, but also throughout the territory. This means the GNWT needs to settle land claims with Indigenous people. Making more land available will not only allow more market housing to be built

through the private sector but will also allow for NGOs and other non-profits to build social housing. Many have plans and funding in place to build and operate but are unable to finance the purchase of the land to begin with without assets.

The GNWT should be providing guarantee of leases to developers that want to build market housing. In other words, if a developer was ensured so many years of leases to house teachers, healthcare staff, or other GNWT employees this would allow for developers to secure the financing they need to start the build. We also need to build capacity and facilitate Indigenous and municipal governments and NGOs in writing grant applications to directly access federal funding and to project manage the subsequent builds. Further to this, the GNWT should be lobbying the federal government for 100% funding for new builds by really impressing on them how our infrastructure deficit and housing crisis are crippling us. Often federal funding requires the proponent to put a certain amount of their own money into the project, money NGOs don't have. Until we get 100% funding, we should help NGOs and others access federal dollars by supplying their portion through the creation of a funding pot to be accessed by those looking to leverage federal dollars.

I would also support the construction of trades centres in each region such as the one currently being pursued in the Sahtu. We need to ensure that the Polytechnic/Aurora college continues to offer trades programs such that schooling for all housing trades can be completed in the NWT. The GNWT needs to support the NWT manufacturing sector by ensuring government contracts are favourable to those working and operating in the north. These are the companies that will take on our youth as apprentices to ensure we have a healthy skilled trades workforce. Furthermore, we should beef up our homeowner repairs and retrofits programs that would also keep tradespeople employed in maintenance and upkeep work, not just on new builds, allowing for employment during the non-construction season.

Stacie Smith

A1. Our Yellowknife education system has come a long way since I graduated from Sir John Franklin in 2003. The opportunities to be a trades person was limited. Recognizing that we want our youth to have a broad range of opportunities I would like to see ECE funnel more resources into our elective programming in both middle school and high school.

Too often are our youth told they have to go to University, but I think it is time they have the opportunity to research Trade School vs University. Creating a program that encourages youth towards trades by investigating everything they need to know from wage to how long the program takes to complete, the type of job opportunities they will have, thus they can make an informed decision for their future.

As our graduation rate is decreasing for a multitude of reasons, the option to offer grade 11 students to transition to a full time, skilled trades apprenticeship could be another alternative. Once they have completed their apprenticeship, they can then apply for their secondary school diploma as a mature student. Many youth in the North are eager to get to work due to home life situations beyond their control, this can provide them with hope for the future.

A2. As a single mother who has also had to navigate the Healthcare system for their child's mental health, I know what is out there for support and I know the barriers. Lack of funding in the Healthcare system has been made abundantly clear and the reality of mental health has been downplayed. I would allocate funding towards creating a more compelling hiring package for prospective healthcare professionals, as well as ensure their contract fulfills a certain amount of time. Mental health requires dedication and trust.

There needs to be more counsellors within the school, working with the teachers, to provide a support plan. Access to more funding for EA's, these individuals act as a buffer for students and teachers, they should be offered training in a multitude of areas of de-escalation.

A3. For housing to become more readily available and affordable the GNWT needs to commit to changing how it aids in funding opportunities. Creating compelling packages for Federal funding is costly, the GNWT should be financially supporting this process so that NGO's can have an opportunity to the funding pot.

Further the cost of building has increased making the feasibility of building in the north daunting. Partnerships between the GNWT, Indigenous government and local manufacturers can be established, providing less costly alternatives. This can be positive on three levels, economic growth where the investment is in a local business, increase in employment as it will require more laborers to make, ship and install these units, and finally, training for skilled laborers such as northerners.

Within Yellowknife the land transfer needs to be completed in order for the City to offer more land for developers.

RANGE LAKE

Aaron Reid

A1. I do support expanding early trades education and other vocational studies opportunities as much as possible. As to what specifically this would look like, it is well understood that there are many businesses in town in need of skilled workers with a labor shortage. The first thing I would want to do is advocate for honest and open collaborative discussions between representatives from the business community and YCS and other education bodies to see what practical options could be explored. One thing that we can't ignore is the tremendous potential of various non-profits such as Makerspace to see where they may be able to help move these discussions along, especially in helping to connect the right people for said discussions.

A2. Mental health of staff and students is paramount for multiple reasons. As to specific supports and funding that could be targeted to help with this, I believe the first thing I would need to do is hear from front line staff as to what the situation on the ground is and what particular area(s) have the most pressing needs (example- do we need more funding for on-premises counselling?) As to the mental health of teachers, it is common public knowledge that a tremendous burden is placed on their shoulders both in and out of the classroom, with ever increasing demands for their time outside of

school hours to prepare things like lesson plans and grade assignments. One thing that I would like to explore which I believe has the potential of helping teachers with work/life balance and gain more of their time back is exploring the use of AI virtual assistants that can help with completing more onerous tasks. AI applications are already being heavily used by students on their assignments, so why can't educators use these very powerful tools as well? One example could be using AI to assist the teacher with grading assignments or composing lesson plans- while the educator is still doing the overall work, these tools could help reduce the time and effort required to complete them by a significant percentage, and it would be trackable. For example, if normally an educator is spending 12 hours a week out of class on grading assignments, with the proper usage of AI this should be able to be reduced significantly to say 8 or 6 hours, giving them more of their life back and lowering the overall burden.

A3. Housing is a critical topic spanning all sectors of the North. Whether someone is employed in the private or public sector, healthcare or education there is an acute shortage of housing and what is available is generally too expensive, presenting a very real barrier for many people to remain in the NWT long term. While this is a very complicated and multilayered topic, it will not be solved without the creation of sizeable new subdivisions (piecemeal projects here or there will not address the need) In order to get to this point, the first thing that needs to happen is for the GNWT to work with Indigenous Governments to settle land claims and the City of Yellowknife to transfer land to be available to be turned into those new subdivisions. The private sector obviously will play an important role and a comprehensive plan will be required to get all of the various players at the table to collaboratively tackle this very serious problem.

Nicole Sok

A1. As someone who attended a vocational school in high school, and saw how beneficial high school apprenticeships were to some students, and as someone who is married to a tradesman who finished his apprenticeship here in the territory, and as someone who helped start a small business that hires apprentices, I am fully committed to assisting schoolboards and ECE to grow and foster SNAP into an accessible and well utilized apprenticeship pathway to graduation from high school. I would love to see more funding for the SNAP program and see more students become aware of its offerings. It's become apparent to me that many students and parents (and teachers) do not know of the existence of the SNAP program through ECE, so if we are looking at how to increase graduation rates, and how to make learning more accessible, there appears to be a gap that can be remedied in the form of helping students who are looking to go into trades, get into them sooner. I would also like to see students have the opportunity to be exposed to shop and home economics classes in elementary school. This was part of my grade 7/8 education and those were crucial skills I learned that I still use to this day. It also allows for the possibility of cross-cultural hands on education. Many trades are recession proof, offer solid wages, yet according to NWT Statistics, less than 70 apprentices become certified (across all trades) every year since 2019.

A2. Unfortunately, the Child & Youth Counsellor Program report is not yet public, so it's hard to feel like I can adequately, and fully, answer this question. Ideally, the program would be a success that could be expanded on for students. As a child, I spent many hours talking with my guidance counsellor and I

appreciate and understand the value those positions can offer to students. As well, I am sure the stressors for teachers and staff have changed since the pandemic and the nuance to how they have changed is important to answer how to address them. I will say if you can address some of the challenges in the classroom, the impacts should be positive on staff. So with that, I would like to see more funding set aside for Psych Ed evaluations, inclusive learning training for support staff, and more staff to support students.

A3. Housing is the root of many issues in the territory. The affects of inadequate housing, or merely a lack thereof, is placing a massive strain on the Northwest Territories, our finances, and our ability to grow and for residents to thrive. The GNWT needs to capitalize on its position to help NPOs fund transitional and affordable housing projects. We need to finish land claims and consider land transfers of Commissioner's land to municipalities as well as confer with them to find out the barriers to development beyond the obvious lack of labour, ie. Utility infrastructure, lack of funding. We also need to consider incorporating new ways of building homes such as Mass Timber Construction (cross-laminated timber/ glue laminated timber), and insulated composite envelope systems. These forms of construction fit into rapid housing models and require smaller crews.

Kieron Testart

A1. Education and skills training are essential drivers of economic growth, individual empowerment, and community health. I want to see the government build a new comprehensive policy framework that ensures equal access to quality education for all students, enriches student financial support, and invests in teachers. I want to see Northerners prepared for the future job market by investing in the promotion of apprenticeships and internships for practical work experience, alongside an increased promotion of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics education in our schools.

A2. Children in the Northwest Territories are some of our most vulnerable to mental health challenges, and our schools need adequate and accessible support to ensure that they can succeed. I want to prioritize student and teacher well-being by ensuring increased access to mental health services and counselors in schools, with a focus on improving the accessibility of counseling services in our High Schools through direct funding and professional services agreements.

A3. I believe we need to not only expand on housing opportunities but make housing more affordable to all. We can do this by investing in the development of affordable housing units, tenant protections and rent stabilization, and homeownership support programs for low and middle-income families through grants, subsidies, and low-interest loans. Additionally, I want to see the legislation that governs rental units updated to establish a ceiling for annual rent increases, and make it easier to resolve disputes to ensure available rental units are not held up in lengthy proceedings. I also want to see the government help create more childcare spaces to support families, enhance child development, and ease the burden of working families in the Territory. This starts by creating more dayhome spaces and by supporting dayhome operators who play a vital role in providing flexible and family-oriented childcare options, and providing training and professional opportunities to enhance early childhood education in the North. Finally, we need to pay teachers more for the work they do educating our kids. Wages in the NWT haven't kept up with the rest of Canada and are no longer a competitive advantage to recruit and retain

workers. It's time to change that in both the private and public sectors to ensure Northerners have the means to support themselves and their families.

YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

Robert Hawkins

A1. The role an MLA directly plays is, directing the Department of Education to make the necessary investments, (time-resources-policy) that foster's growth in this area but that's not effective enough. I would also commit to setting targets for accountability, which are published for progressive transparency.

A2. Again, the role an MLA directly plays is, directing the Department of Education to make this a key to healthy schools & communities. In doing this, this will foster an environment of early & supportive relationships, intervention and general strengthening of well-being, as well as support the key partners, be it teachers, staff, students and even parents, which in the end will ensure we have everyone working towards healthier and more positive relationships.

A3. The NWT government needs to play a supporting role in the critical housing shortage need, and in this case, supporting school boards that need a housing stock that is focused on their housing needs. There is no real reason that this cannot mean a teacher's complex or row housing, which was a standard many years ago. I would support the return to that model, which responds to the needs of the system. Without housing for teachers, students are suffering.

YELLOWKNIFE SOUTH

Caroline Wawzonek

A1. I understand that that Schools Northern Apprentice Program (SNAP) is very popular and is delivering successful outcomes for participants. I would like to investigate whether more capacity needs to be added to maximize the availability of this stream before delivering attention and resources to create new programs.

I would also like to look at the career and post secondary training supports available to students. Ideally, there should be well known and easily followed pathways from high school through to either apprenticeship programs or other post secondary programs and then on to internships or journeyperson designations, etc. Similarly, there should be no delay in accessing post secondary academic credits for trades or other certifications; these programs should align to the timing of their associated industry's high needs for staff so that students can maximize their work opportunities and industry can reduce their labor needs. It is my understanding that while linkages exist, further and better collaboration could improve the experience for students and industry.

A2. This requires attention both from the perspective of the health care system as well as within the educational system.

We must resolve the authority and accountability structure of the Child and Youth Care Counselling program. Anecdotally, the results are very positive for students. However, to keep the program

sustainable both from an organizational standpoint and to ensure adequate funding, the hierarchy of responsibility must be clear as between the Departments of Health and ECE.

We also need to complete the process of the Government Renewal Initiative and look at what programs and services need more resources because they are delivering results or are in high demand and which ones are not delivering value for inputs and can therefore provide the resources for those in need. When the Renewal process began three years ago, the GNWT could not have answered what the total programs and services “on the books” even were, let alone their effectiveness. That cannot continue. Fortunately, the CYCC program is slated to be among the first programs going through the evaluation phase of GRI.

A3. Available and affordable housing across the spectrum of housing needs from homelessness to market housing is a challenge being faced across Canada. We need to tackle this at all points along this spectrum and will need the involvement of all levels of government and as well as the private sector.

Besides funding available either from private investors or via public government funds, a key factor is the availability of land for development. We need to settle outstanding land and self government claims. This fact has been said repeatedly for years. Some progress has been made on the GNWT side for example in publishing the mandates and reviewing the core principles and objectives. That progress needs to be capitalised upon urgently to see withdrawn lands be resolved in favor of certainty and availability whether to the GNWT or Indigenous governments.

Land that is available to the GNWT within municipal boundaries should be transferred to municipalities in order to be available for zoning and then development. The GNWT has initiated a process for these transfers to occur and in Yellowknife that requires the signing of an MOU between governments. One of my first actions as MLA will be to follow up on the status of that MOU.

Once available, land will require zoning and developers will require permits. Much of this work falls to municipalities but might be made more efficient by financial or system support from the GNWT towards efforts automation of application processes, providing pre-approved building plans and commitments to fast tracked processes for buildings designated as medium and high density.

Planning should consider the location and prospective needs of residents. Housing needs to be relevant to the communities it is in. The Housing Forum established by the Council of Leaders is an opportunity to help monitor the development of Community Housing Plans and ensure that federal dollars are being actively sought and effectively distributed and employed. Housing also plays a critical role in ensuring that people are able to live in their own homes and care for themselves to the maximum extent possible

whether as a person with a disability or as an Elder wishing to age in place. New construction should also therefore include consideration of adequate accessibility. Incentives, such as low interest loans for example, should be considered to encourage private developers to include medium and high density units as well as accessible units.

Indigenous government and Municipalities across the NWT should be accessing the Federal Accelerator Fund. The GNWT needs to support these applications and help remove any structural or procedural barriers that may exist for these other levels of government to be at the front of the line for this major federal initiative.

Increasing the total housing stock across the spectrum of housing needs should ultimately result in less cost pressures for sheltering. However, other drivers of a high cost of living should simultaneously be addressed such as electricity and heat.

YELLOWKNIFE NORTH

John Howe

A1. I don't have anything new or different to offer.

This assumes that GNWT already supports early trades education

A2. I like the idea of in-school counsellors,

I thought that this was already being done.

A3. I don't have a magic bullet.

This will take time,

and it's not just an issue for teachers.

I'm not trying to play a reverse blame game here,

and I realize that it's not a school board's job to be a landlord,

but YK1 didn't have to sell Nordic Arms if it didn't want to.

Shauna Morgan

A1. We first need to examine what is already being done to support trades apprenticeships, and to what extent it is effective. The Schools North Apprenticeship Program (SNAP) has been around since 1995 - it is a work experience program for high school students, 16 years and older, in the skilled trades. The final report on the results of the GNWT's 2017-2022 Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupational Certification Strategy indicates that from 2016-2019, zero NWT schools were participating in SNAP. In 2019, Career and Education Advisors were introduced, which led to 22 students from 3 schools participating by 2022. This seems to show that apprenticeships are much more successful when there is ongoing coaching and support—this should be expanded and enhanced. It also links to the broader need for more mental health counselling in schools – see response #2 below. I would be very interested to learn from Yellowknife Education Bodies what you feel is working well and not so well regarding SNAP.

I would also direct more GNWT resources towards on-the-land education programs, which not only bolster children's sense of cultural identity, curiosity, confidence, and connection to Land and community, but also offer opportunities for even small children to learn how to use tools safely, such as saws, axes, knives, hand drills and ropes. Indigenous knowledge holders and tradespeople should be incorporated into such programs as co-educators and role models.

A2. Despite many rave reviews about the GNWT's recently implemented Child and Youth Counselling Services program, I am very concerned that this year the program was gutted—mental health counsellors were taken back out of schools, apparently due to challenges with staffing and difficulties in coordination between the Departments of Health and Social Services (HSS) and Education, Culture and Employment (ECE). The program has now been handed over to ECE; each school will be responsible for

offering its own mental health awareness-type services without health care professionals on site. As MLA, I would reinstate mental health counsellors in schools, and address the root problem of silos within the mandates of different GNWT departments, so that all Ministers are accountable for tangible progress on mental health indicators.

If we want to make breakthroughs in improving access to mental and physical healthcare for both youth and teachers, we should implement a “Health in All Policies” approach, which has been successful in other parts of Canada and the world. The idea is that health care and health promotion should not just be offered at hospitals and clinics; it should be accessible in lots of contexts and places where people go regularly. It can lead to earlier interventions, more consistent care, and it makes health care delivery more efficient too. It is consistent with the World Health Organization’s “Health promoting schools” movement.

Such an approach could, for example, lead to primary health care, counselling, and mental health support services being available to youth at schools and youth centres, taking away the onus on families to make appointments and navigate bureaucratic and logistical hurdles.

A3. The City of Yellowknife has made some progress in changing rules to encourage more secondary suites to be created on existing properties and allowing for more density in housing units across much of the City. We still need significantly more affordable market housing built in Yellowknife – this is currently being held up partly due to the GNWT not transferring land to the City in a timely or efficient way, and also due to the Akaitcho Land Claim not yet being settled. All levels of government need to align their incentive structures to encourage more affordable market housing to be built.

The critical labour shortage in the NWT, combined with the GNWT’s history of weak procurement policies which allowed the northern construction industry to be hollowed out, means that housing developers bring up most of their workers from down south. These temporary workers take up scarce local housing units and pay premium rates, thus further driving up rents and perpetuating the cycle. The GNWT needs to invest in training more northerners to work in housing repair and construction, and prioritize higher quality local construction that is built for northern climates and energy efficient.

It is rare to find an issue like housing that resonates so much across all NWT communities. So you’d think we’d have made more progress on it by now. There are huge waiting lists for public housing and supported housing for those with addictions and mental health challenges – but the GNWT will not let Housing NWT take on any new public housing because it refuses to commit the ongoing operational costs, and the federal government has been gradually decreasing its contributions to public housing. There is lots of federal funding for housing overall, but when the GNWT has gone to the federal government with our list of infrastructure priorities, housing has been way down below megaprojects costing billions of dollars – so housing never gets the attention or funds it deserves. It’s not impossible to make progress on affordable housing – it will just take collaboration across all levels of government and focusing on this as a clear priority.

Bruce Valpy

A1. What can a government do? Produce apprentices. Aurora College has a range of trades training but are we getting any results? Tradespeople are the backbone of our economy. The most apprentices we

have produced in the last 10 years is 90 in 2018. The average is 54 across 14 industry categories. Automotive repair leads the pack, averaging 13 a year. Electricians (average 9) and heavy-duty equipment mechanics (average 8) come in second and third. Considering the need for tradespeople and the potential for making a good living, we have to raise the profile of the trades as a desirable profession. We can only do that if we recognize most of us are not tradespeople. That's why it's essential our schools teach how critical the trades are to a functioning society. It's awesome really. Instead of offering trades as an option, some aspects should be core. We have to move into a recruiting, grooming, mentoring strategy. That will pay off for both parents, students and Yellowknife. I will work with school boards and the GNWT on this.

A2. I have put five children through school in Yellowknife along with my parenting partners. When I do the arithmetic, well I can't do it, but it's a couple of hundred teachers I have dealt with over the past 40 years in both districts. It sounds next to impossible, but I cannot recollect one teacher who was not committed to my child's success. Not one. I worked with them and the results we achieved were a credit to those teachers. But as I learned more about the workings of the Department of Education of the NWT, I began to perceive a disconnect between departmental policy and frontline experience. I realised the teaching profession was no longer only about delivering curriculum, it was also about identifying individual student capacity, supporting the deficits, and recognizing external influences at home or on the school ground that can stand in the way of student success. I don't think one teacher can carry that load without affecting their own mental health. Support services are needed to properly manage the role, from classroom assistants to in-school counsellors. Our Dene, Metis, Inuit and Inuvialuit populations in Yellowknife add a layer of cultural complexity that places a further demand upon teachers. They know they need to be educated about these cultures themselves. The bottomline is I know education is the foundation of families and cities and we want the best for our children. Understanding the needs and fighting for the funding, and yes protecting present funding, will be part of my mandate in the Legislative Assembly of the NWT if elected.

A3. Housing has never been affordable in Yellowknife. The only way to make it affordable is to pay higher than average salaries and benefits, an amount above the differential already paid over the cost of living in Edmonton if need be. As an MLA, I will be taking a firm stance on recruiting and retaining teaching staff, whatever it takes. We simply have to pay our teaching staff at a level that ensures a comfortable lifestyle. The private sector development industry must be courted and supported. As an experienced business person who was long a part of the business community, I will be creating opportunities for matching private capital dollars to stable public revenue streams (such as the education community). That means working with landlords and developers who need long term lease commitments to access bank loans. Such arrangements can offer school boards a stable supply of housing options. I know the school boards in the past have been landlords. This was done for a reason - a tight housing market unfriendly to teachers. I am suggesting a different model, letting the private sector do the heavy lifting. Having lease commitments in place means teachers and their families may stay for a number of years and when they go, there will be housing in place for their replacements. Other longer term teachers may want to move into a house of their choosing. That's fine, then another unit comes open. Low risk for the landlord when the vacancy rate is below 3 percent. For the general population, land presently held by the GNWT is holding back development in the city. This is land not affected by land claims or land selection, it is commissioner's land. It's stalled in the civil service and I will be pushing to have the land transfer completed. On the role of NWT Housing in public housing, the main problem is underfunding. It

is the kind of underfunding that increases costs in other areas. We have to house people in proper housing, the same way we provide staff with proper working space. Why would the homes of housing clients be any different? So housing will be a focus for me if elected.