



June 4, 2020

To all staff, students, parents/guardians, and stakeholders:

Re: 2020-2021 School Year Planning Update

School boards across the Northwest Territories (NWT) - including Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1), Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YCS), Ndiło District Education Authority (NDEA) and Dettah District Education Authority (DDEA) - continue to plan for the 2020-2021 school year. School boards are working closely with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (NWTTA), and the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer on comprehensive and detailed plans so that schools can reopen safely.

In order for schools to reopen, students and staff will have to adhere to increased physical distancing measures, screening procedures, student-teacher ratios, engineering controls, administrative controls, infection prevention and control, and the use of personal protective equipment among other criteria. Any plans to reopen schools must provide great detail and be submitted to the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer for approval. Please know that this high-level planning is already well underway, and the goal is to submit proposals for approval as early as mid-June.

As educators, we are committed to providing the very best education to every student, regardless of individual circumstances. We understand that no student is the same and learning is not restricted to what happens in classrooms. We also understand that all programs and teachers are important, which is why we continue to advocate for the safe offering of specialty programs like music, drama, team sports, on the land programs and key cultural activities if possible. Many students thrive in these programs so we will continue to pursue safe alternatives. We have been told that school and program-specific proposals will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and are hopeful that some flexibility will be applied. Some guidelines - including student-teacher ratios for JK-9 students - have already been eased which demonstrates that the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer is willing to be flexible in some areas.

YK1, YCS, NDEA, and DDEA are constantly reviewing the latest public health guidelines issued by the chief public health officer, and are prepared to modify plans as necessary between now and the start of the 2020-2021 school year. District office staff and school administration continue to research a variety of scheduling options to accommodate the greatest number of students while adhering to the latest public health guidelines. Other important considerations being discussed include bussing, childcare, and daycare services among many others. All four school boards will continue to work on a standard approach to

reopening schools so that there is a level of consistency across Yellowknife, Ndilo and Dettah. Any updates will be clearly communicated to staff, students, parents/ guardians, and stakeholders over the next month and throughout the summer. We thank you for your continued cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

Yellowknife Education District No. 1
Yellowknife Catholic Schools
Ndilo District Education Authority
Dettah District Education Authority