



# **YELLOWKNIFE EDUCATION FORUM**

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2019**

**ÉCOLE ST. PATRICK HIGH SCHOOL**

# QUESTIONS

**YELLOWKNIFE MLA CANDIDATES**

# **Election Forum Questions**

## **1. Trades as a path**

Trades are a critical part of the NWT industry, with many students developing an interest in this career path through the program offerings in our schools. Whether or not they receive a high school diploma, apprentices must pass an academic exam as part of their entrance to trades.

Trades in the NWT are affected by many factors, including Aurora College, the possibility of a polytechnic university, the safety and fair treatment of young apprentices, and incentives for employers to take on apprentices and tradespeople.

How do you plan to build on the foundations that we have, and remove barriers to our youth becoming part of the trades' workforce?

## **2. Education Reform**

In the closing days of the 18th Assembly the GNWT Minister of Education called for the need of a reform of our Educational System. A recent CBC article stated "In the 2016-17 school year, only eight per cent of students enrolled in Grade 9 in small communities achieved acceptable standards in standardized math tests. In regional centres, 41.2 per cent of students were at an acceptable level. In English language arts, 17.7 per cent of Grade 9 students in small communities were at an acceptable level, while in regional centres 53 per cent were."

What do you believe needs to be done so that this new Educational Reform actually produces the positive results we all want when previous Education Reforms failed to meaningfully produce positive results?

## **3. Universal Child Care**

ECE commissioned a report regarding the benefits of Universal Child Care. Do you support universal child care in the NWT? What actions will you take to ensure this initiative moves ahead?

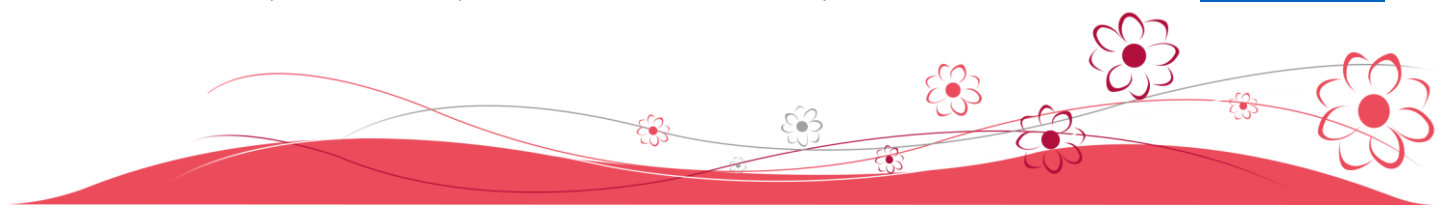
## **4. School Funding**

Currently funding for schools is determined on previous years enrolment, which does not take into consideration the needs of individual schools. What changes can be made to fully support schools based on actual student needs rather than simply on the enrolment numbers.



At the beginning of the 18th Legislative Assembly, the working relationship between the CSFTNO and the Department of Education was good. It has since deteriorated. In May, 2019, a Judicial Review hearing was held in Yellowknife regarding a request for the admission of a child who speaks French fluently to École Allain St-Cyr, but whose request for admission did not meet the strict criteria of the *New Immigrants* stream of the *Ministerial Directive on the Admission of Students to Francophone Schools (2016)*. July 2, 2019, Justice Rouleau rendered a positive decision in the case of W.B. stating that the minister had to apply the object of s.23 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Justice Rouleau cancelled the previous decisions of the minister and instructed her to reconsider the request. July 25, 2019, the Minister of Education advised the CSFTNO and said parent that it was appealing the court's decision, however, the Minister of Education told four families that she would allow them to present new documents to substantiate their requests and that she would uphold the order of the court and reconsider their requests for admissions. On August 30, 2019, the Friday prior to the commencement of the school year, the Minister of Education refused, once again, the four requests for admission, and a fifth new request, stating that the Department had to safeguard the quality of French first language programming in the Northwest Territories. The CSFTNO is disputing this claim. The Government of the Northwest Territories has also asked for intervener status in the Supreme Court case relevant to the *Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique, Fédération des parents francophones de la Colombie-Britannique, Annette Azar-Diehl, Stéphane Perron and Marie-Nicole Dubois vs the Province of British Columbia and the Minister of Education of British Columbia* that will be heard in Winnipeg on September 26, 2019 in Winnipeg. Although there are only five provincial jurisdictions that will intervene in this case, the GNWT took it upon themselves to be one of the interveners. This action demonstrates, yet again, the GNWT's lack of understanding of s. 23 of the *Charter* and its object, thus further alienating the CSFTNO.

Given that the growth of the francophone/francophile community is an important economic factor for the whole of the Northwest Territories, what will you do, if elected, so that the GNWT's Department of Education undertakes good faith negotiations with the CSFTNO to work collaboratively to reach a win-win solution where admissions to its French first language schools are concerned, and seek a better understanding of its obligations under s.23 of the *Charter*?





# **ANSWERS**

## **YELLOWKNIFE MLA CANDIDATES**

# **FRAME LAKE**

**RESPONSES FROM KEVIN O'REILLY**

## **Education Election Forum Questions**

### **Responses by Kevin O'Reilly, Candidate for MLA Frame Lake**

#### **1. Trades as a path**

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Trades in the NWT are affected by many factors, including Aurora College, the possibility of a polytechnic university, the safety and fair treatment of young apprentices, and incentives for employers to take on apprentices and tradespeople.

How do you plan to build on the foundations that we have, and remove barriers to our youth becoming part of the trades' workforce?

Response:

I believe the Skills4Success strategy and action plan are good. I also supported efforts to clarify secondary education pathways for students and parents. The additional resources and improved approach towards counselling and career development in our school system should also prove helpful.

However, trades entrance preparation courses or programs should also be considered for adult students or others interested in trades and apprenticeships. This means better supports through the Community Learning Centres that are currently part of the Aurora College network and will become an essential part of the NWT Polytechnic University. It could be useful to offer some components of trade programs online and in blocks of time, to make it easier for students from other communities or students who need to work while studying. Newfoundland and Labrador offer an apprentice wage subsidy that goes directly to employers who hire apprentices.

Another key method to support apprenticeships is for GNWT to build in northern benefit requirements in the larger capital projects. The Stanton Hospital renewal was just such an opportunity but was missed. I support a review of GNWT procurement services to find additional ways to support apprenticeship and trade development in the NWT.

## **2. Education Reform**

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What do you believe needs to be done so that this new Educational Reform actually produces the positive results we all want when previous Education Reforms failed to meaningfully produce positive results?

Response:

I continue to support the Education Renewal Initiative that was released in 2015. A lot of time and energy was diverted away from this work during the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly with Junior Kindergarten implementation and STIP. Quite simply, education needs to be a higher priority for the next government and will require a greater investment in all our education systems. We also need to develop a better evaluation and feedback system so the results of various indicators of success are tracked, reported and result in adjustments to improve our systems and outcomes.

There is a big difference between Yellowknife, regional centres and smaller communities in terms of student attendance, graduation rates and other indicators of success. The scores for NWT students on the Alberta Achievement Test do show that some progress is being made. The scores increased in both English Language Arts and Math between 2007 and 2018. However, the scores get lower as students get older. This is related to school attendance which drops as students get into high school. We need to develop more motivational programs for families and youth to attend school. Different approaches should be considered as well and Route 51 Learning Institute would be an example. The other major reason for low NWT scores is that it is very difficult for those students who are behind, to ever catch up. There is a need for special remedial measures or approaches to assist these students in particular.

## **3. Universal Child Care**

ECE commissioned a report regarding the benefits of Universal Child Care. Do you support universal child care in the NWT? What actions will you take to ensure this initiative moves ahead?

Response:

I am fully committed to universal childcare. The 2015 feasibility study provides a sound plan and basis for the necessary capital and operational funding and training and support for childcare workers. The study showed that universal childcare would cost around \$20 million per year (see [https://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/sites/default/files/td\\_276-175.pdf](https://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/sites/default/files/td_276-175.pdf)). Over time, the costs will diminish as more women and men enter the workforce and pay taxes. The net benefits for families and children are well established in many other jurisdictions including Quebec. This is really an investment in our children and their future. There are many ways to improve childcare including designs for new and renovated schools or other public buildings that includes space for childcare. Childcare and early childhood development should be part of the programming offered through the NWT Polytechnic University and its network of community learning centres.

We also need to better support families and find ways to help them develop their skills. I have been a strong advocate for midwifery and early childhood development. Our efforts towards poverty reduction and elimination also support healthy families and should be better evaluated and coordinated.

#### **4. School Funding**

Currently funding for schools is determined on previous years enrolment, which does not take into consideration the needs of individual schools. What changes can be made to fully support schools based on actual student needs rather than simply on the enrolment numbers.

Response:

The School Funding Framework is based on the premise that education bodies should receive funding for factors that are beyond their control. Funding is distributed based on a base level of funding, enrolment-based funding, a northern cost index (location factor), consumer price increases and targeted funding. There is an accountability framework that requires reporting to ECE. There is the ability to provide for increased funding if there are significant increases in enrollment (above 8% or 10 students).

However, there should be a more flexible approach that recognizes the actual needs that a school is facing. The possibility to apply for more funding based on

the presentation of increased need, especially with regard to implementation of inclusive schooling. A similar needs-based approach has been recommended for the funding of community governments. Changes to the accountability framework may also allow for more streamlined reporting and a stronger focus on continual improvement. Any changes to funding and accountability should be the result of a collaborative review that involves and engages all education bodies.

## **5. Ministerial Directive on Francophone**

Given that the growth of the francophone/francophile community is an important economic factor for the whole of the Northwest Territories, what will you do, if elected, so that the GNWT's Department of Education undertakes good faith negotiations with the CSFTNO to work collaboratively to reach a win-win solution where admissions to its French first language schools are concerned, and seek a better understanding of its obligations under s.23 of the Charter?

Response:

CSFTNO is best placed to know the needs and ability of their students and schools in meeting their educational needs. Assimilation remains quite high at around 50% and is in fact the biggest threat to the loss of the French language in the NWT. Many rights-holder children have not mastered the language when they start school but this can be changed.

CSFTNO is also best placed to decide which non-right holders should be admitted through its own strict criteria. The Yukon has a much more open process that allows their French school board more authority with appropriate reporting. The resources devoted to resolving French first language rights in the courts would be better directed at revising the Ministerial Directives on French first language education in a more collaborative fashion.

Kevin O'Reilly

Candidate for Frame Lake MLA

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# **FRAME LAKE**

**RESPONSES FROM DAVE RAMSAY**

# **Election Forum Questions**

## **1. Trades as a path**

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Trades in the NWT are affected by many factors, including Aurora College, the possibility of a polytechnic university, the safety and fair treatment of young apprentices, and incentives for employers to take on apprentices and tradespeople.

How do you plan to build on the foundations that we have, and remove barriers to our youth becoming part of the trades' workforce?

The one factor you miss in your question is that opportunities in the trades will be predicated on us having a strong robust economy.. The new pathways model being implemented with this year grade 7 classes will help young people and parents make choices earlier on in the process. I think this will help identify opportunities for young people to plan their way forward. It will provide yearly career and transition planning courses. Young people can get out of High school with a work entry certificate. Progressive changes like the new Pathways model will certainly help students. We should also continue to support the diverse offerings for children in grades 7-12.

## **2. Education Reform**

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What do you believe needs to be done so that this new Educational Reform actually produces the positive results we all want when previous Education Reforms failed to meaningfully produce positive results?

We must focus on keeping our children in school and our eye on graduation rates. Outside Yellowknife and the regional centres attracting and retaining teachers has been a recurring issue. Access to adequate housing is a big barrier that the GNWT must address. I believe that JK will eventually help with these numbers and the sooner we can get access to Universal Child Care, these numbers should improve. We also need to recognize that poverty plays a role in some children coming to school without the basic necessities. We



need wrap around supports and the leadership in place that ensures that any change that is necessary is implemented .

**3. Universal Child Care**

ECE commissioned a report regarding the benefits of Universal Child Care. Do you support universal child care in the NWT? What actions will you take to ensure this initiative moves ahead?

Yes I support UCC. As a parent of 4 school age children I certainly see the benefits of UCC. It gives children the best start they can. We all want that for our children. It helps with the high cost of living. It will help retain people and attract people here, a great recruitment tool when we are struggling as a Territory to keep our population from declining.

**4. School Funding**

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We could like at different funding models like a hybrid approach based partially on enrollment and takes in a schools needs. We certainly need to put more emphasis on extenuating circumstances like disabilities. We can't reduce something as important as the education of the next generation based solely on numbers alone.

- 5.** I do not believe it to be in anyone's interest to settle a matter like this in court. No one will win. I am not sure the GNWT understands what this does to relationships, families and its reputation. This should be in no way adversarial. If elected I would provide the necessary leadership to ensure these matters could be worked through. It is complex and complicated, but does not belong before a court.

# **GREAT SLAVE**

**RESPONSES FROM KATRINA NOKLEBY**

# KATRINA NOKLEBY

FOR **MLA GREAT SLAVE**



Thank you to the three Yellowknife school boards for the opportunity to speak at your forum and for giving me the opportunity to respond to these questions.

## 1. Trades as a path

Trades are a critical part of the NWT industry, with many students developing an interest in this career path through the program offerings in our schools. Whether or not they receive a high school diploma, apprentices must pass an academic exam as part of their entrance to trades.

Trades in the NWT are affected by many factors, including Aurora College, the possibility of a polytechnic university, the safety and fair treatment of young apprentices, and incentives for employers to take on apprentices and tradespeople.

**How do you plan to build on the foundations that we have, and remove barriers to our youth becoming part of the trades' workforce?**

We need to continue to promote the trades as a viable profession for youth in the NWT. We should create opportunities such as job shadowing and career fairs to expose children to trades at younger age. Since funding is available to help companies pay for apprentices while they are learning on the job, they are incentivised to have apprentices so hiring apprentices isn't an issue for them. Instead, we should explore incentives for the journeyman to train the apprentice. I have heard that it is considered a nuisance to be a mentor. Take for example someone on "performance pay" they are paid by the job, not by the hour. Stopping to teach or educate someone on the work being executed means it will take additional time to complete the task that the journeyman but with no additional pay. As a result, apprentices often don't get the attention they need to learn and be successful. We should look to create a program that in addition to incentivising the company also incentivises mentors to take on apprentices and teach them properly without it being a burden to themselves.

We also need to look at academic equivalences for students who may not be able to pass an academic exam but have comparable skills learned from cultural or community activities. We should provide tutoring and mentoring support to students wanting to study for the academic exam in order to enter a trade. Particularly students in the communities where the level of education does not appear to be the same as in Yellowknife.

**Katrina Nokleby for MLA Great Slave**

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# KATRINA NOKLEBY

FOR **MLA GREAT SLAVE**



## 2. Education Reform

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What do you believe needs to be done so that this new Educational Reform actually produces the positive results we all want when previous Education Reforms failed to meaningful produce positive results?

We need to ensure children and families are healthy so that children can learn. The first five years of a child’s life are critical, and we need to increase awareness on the importance of reading to a child and proper nutrition. We need to deal with the poverty and addictions faced by many families in the North and the impacts these issues have on their children. We should continue to improve mental health supports for families including workers in the schools. We should be soliciting feedback from teachers and staff throughout the territory for what they see as the steps forward to improving education for all.

## 3. Universal Child Care

ECE commissioned a report regarding the benefits of Universal Child Care. Do you support universal child care in the NWT? What actions will you take to ensure this initiative moves ahead?

I support accessible and affordable child care in the NWT. Universal daycare would be wonderful, but I don’t know that we could afford it given our limited budget. Actual daycare space is an issue in the North, and I’d like to see the GNWT work on reducing the barriers and red tape for NGOs and other organizations trying to have facilities licensed. I’d also like to see the staffing ratios changed for afterschool care to be more reflective of ratios in a classroom. We need to ask organizations providing childcare for their input on the situation and how we could be doing better to ensure we make informed decisions going forward.

**Katrina Nokleby for MLA Great Slave**

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FOR MLA GREAT SLAVE



#### 4. School Funding

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We should be assessing each specific community's needs in conjunction with community governments to determine the funding required to properly educate the children in those communities. We need to be better at predicting enrollment, which in a smaller community should not be difficult, and provide funding based on projected enrollment not past enrollment. Reviews should consider all the items that must be paid for out of those funds, including bussing and operations, and accommodate communities where higher costs of operations may be needed. If it costs more to operate a specific school, that additional money should not come out of the educational funding for the children attending that school.

Katrina Nokleby for MLA Great Slave

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# **GREAT SLAVE**

**RESPONSES FROM PATRICK SCOTT**

# **Election Forum Questions**

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Trades in the NWT are affected by many factors, including Aurora College, the possibility of a polytechnic university, the safety and fair treatment of young apprentices, and incentives for employers to take on apprentices and tradespeople.

How do you plan to build on the foundations that we have, and remove barriers to our youth becoming part of the trades' workforce?

According to GNWT by 2030 over 11,000 youth will be the school system and entering the workforce. In their labour market study, "Skills 4 Success the GNWT estimates 8% of opportunities will be in the trades, stating "by 2030 there will be 2312 trade related job openings". Trade salary range from \$116,081 for electricians to over \$90,00 for machine operators. Continuing and offering more digital technology courses will be important as we continue to provide meaningful futures for our youth. A Polytechnic University should not be a threat to the trades programs. They are the foundation of post secondary education in the North. The evolution of a Polytechnic University must create new opportunities in all areas of study but not at the expense of what currently exists. Ongoing trade fairs in all communities where trades are promoted will help growing youth discover the options accessible to them. GNWT could also work more closely with businesses and constructions companies, especially Community based Corporations to off and support apprenticeship opportunities in the field, so young people not only have employment but are progressing towards certification.

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What do you believe needs to be done so that this new Educational Reform actually produces the positive results we all want when previous Education Reforms failed to meaningful produce positive results? This is a huge challenge, as there are so many

factors at play. The problem is not just an educational one, it includes health issues such as speech therapy, mental health supports, and the management of inclusive education. Inclusive education must also be inclusive of cultural renewal. Students need on the land programs where they learn both traditional skills, sciences and languages and social sciences.

However, no matter what programs are developed, if parents aren't engaged and a part of the delivery of educational programs then little progress will be achieved. Regrettably many parents have more mistrust than trust in the system, in part due to the legacy of residential schools. We must develop tools of reconciliation as part of the system. Enabling learning using Dene values and systems may help in having more parental engagement and consequently a higher rate of consistent attendance of students.

### **3. Universal Child Care**

ECE commissioned a report regarding the benefits of Universal Child Care. Do you support universal child care in the NWT? What actions will you take to ensure this initiative moves ahead?

I completely support universal childcare and will make the implementation my priority. There are no down sides to universal daycare. It benefits families and boosts the economy, as research from Quebec shows.

### **4. School Funding**

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The funding of schools needs review. A needs based approach may be more appropriate. I think it is important to hear from educators to determine the best practices for funding education in both Yellowknife and in smaller communities.



5. At the beginning of the 18th Legislative Assembly, the working relationship between the CSFTNO and the Department of Education was good. It has since deteriorated. In May, 2019, a Judicial Review hearing was held in Yellowknife regarding a request for the admission of a child who speaks French fluently to École Allain St-Cyr, but whose request for admission did not meet the strict criteria of the *New Immigrants* stream of the *Ministerial Directive on the Admission of Students to Francophone Schools (2016)*. July 2, 2019, Justice Rouleau rendered a positive decision in the case of W.B. stating that the minister had to apply the object of s.23 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Justice Rouleau cancelled the previous decisions of the minister and instructed her to reconsider the request. July 25, 2019, the Minister of Education advised the CSFTNO and said parent that it was appealing the court's decision, however, the Minister of Education told four families that she would allow them to present new documents to substantiate their requests and that she would uphold the order of the court and reconsider their requests for admissions. On August 30, 2019, the Friday prior to the commencement of the school year, the Minister of Education refused, once again, the four requests for admission, and a fifth new request, stating that the Department had to safeguard the quality of French first language programming in the Northwest Territories. The CSFTNO is disputing this claim. The Government of the Northwest Territories has also asked for intervener status in the Supreme Court case relevant to the *Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique, Fédération des parents francophones de la Colombie-Britannique, Annette Azar-Diehl, Stéphane Perron and Marie-Nicole Dubois vs the Province of British Columbia and the Minister of Education of British Columbia* that will be heard in Winnipeg on September 26, 2019 in Winnipeg. Although there are only five provincial jurisdictions that will intervene in this case, the GNWT took it upon themselves to be one of the interveners. This action demonstrates, yet again, the GNWT's lack of understanding of s. 23 of the *Charter* and its object, thus further alienating the CSFTNO. Given that the growth of the francophone/francophile community is an important economic factor for the whole of the Northwest Territories, what will you do, if elected, so that the GNWT's Department of Education undertakes good faith negotiations with the CSFTNO to work collaboratively to reach a win-win solution where admissions to its French first language schools are concerned, and seek a better understanding of its obligations under s.23 of the *Charter*?

I will the government to drop its appeal on the court decision. Enrollment must be made by those involved, not political leaders. Secondly, all decisions must be made in the best interest of the child and family. Certainly in the case before the courts, the family expressed the importance of their child remaining in the francophone community and that should be respects.

# **KAM LAKE**

**RESPONSES FROM ABDULLAH AL-MAHAMUD**

# **Election Forum Questions**

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How do you plan to build on the foundations that we have, and remove barriers to our youth becoming part of the trades' workforce?

### **Answer**

barriers

- Youth Fears about Pursuing Careers in the Skilled Trades
- Lack of Confidence When Networking
- Finding an Employer Sponsor
- Limited Work Experience
- Costs of Equipment
- Reaction from Parents and Friends
- Safety Concerns
- Uncertainty
- about Trying Something New

•

Solutions

- create awareness about apprenticeship and careers in the skilled trades
- cultivate personal attributes for success in youth
- help youth develop a skilled trades résumé and practice their interview skills
- teach youth about networking, especially for immigrants who may be unfamiliar with Canadian workplace customs
- provide tools and equipment
- deliver safety training
- offer tutoring improving math and science skills
- educate youth about business and taking initiative
- facilitate connections between employers and youth
- provide accessible transportation

- offer mentoring
- support diverse youth

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## **3. Universal Child Care**

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### **Answer**

My universal day care

Universal day care

- Will allow each household to save at least \$10,000 or more.
- A significant amount of public funding will be allocated for day care centers and family day homes.
- Will provide spaces at reduced contribution fees of \$7.00/day up to \$15/day for infants through school-age children.
- Will allow both parents to back in the labor force and generate more income.
- Will reduce labor shortage in north.
- Will encourage entrepreneur to establish more facilities to support young parents by creating jobs.
- Will help boosting our populations to grow further and so the economy.

#### **4. School Funding**

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#### **Answer**

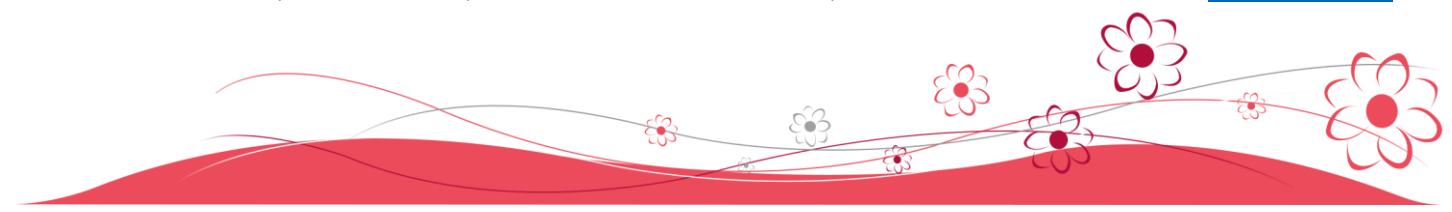
Funding should stay put and also must be adjusted due to inflation. Extra fund can be used for equipment, training, rewards for achievements etc.



At the beginning of the 18th Legislative Assembly, the working relationship between the CSFTNO and the Department of Education was good. It has since deteriorated. In May, 2019, a Judicial Review hearing was held in Yellowknife regarding a request for the admission of a child who speaks French fluently to École Allain St-Cyr, but whose request for admission did not meet the strict criteria of the *New Immigrants* stream of the *Ministerial Directive on the Admission of Students to Francophone Schools (2016)*. July 2, 2019, Justice Rouleau rendered a positive decision in the case of W.B. stating that the minister had to apply the object of s.23 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Justice Rouleau cancelled the previous decisions of the minister and instructed her to reconsider the request. July 25, 2019, the Minister of Education advised the CSFTNO and said parent that it was appealing the court's decision, however, the Minister of Education told four families that she would allow them to present new documents to substantiate their requests and that she would uphold the order of the court and reconsider their requests for admissions. On August 30, 2019, the Friday prior to the commencement of the school year, the Minister of Education refused, once again, the four requests for admission, and a fifth new request, stating that the Department had to safeguard the quality of French first language programming in the Northwest Territories. The CSFTNO is disputing this claim. The Government of the Northwest Territories has also asked for intervener status in the Supreme Court case relevant to the *Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique, Fédération des parents francophones de la Colombie-Britannique, Annette Azar-Diehl, Stéphane Perron and Marie-Nicole Dubois vs the Province of British Columbia and the Minister of Education of British Columbia* that will be heard in Winnipeg on September 26, 2019 in Winnipeg. Although there are only five provincial jurisdictions that will intervene in this case, the GNWT took it upon themselves to be one of the interveners. This action demonstrates, yet again, the GNWT's lack of understanding of s. 23 of the *Charter* and its object, thus further alienating the CSFTNO.

Given that the growth of the francophone/francophile community is an important economic factor for the whole of the Northwest Territories, what will you do, if elected, so that the GNWT's Department of Education undertakes good faith negotiations with the CSFTNO to work collaboratively to reach a win-win solution where admissions to its French first language schools are concerned, and seek a better understanding of its obligations under s.23 of the *Charter*?

My answer is yes. I am all for language.



# **KAM LAKE**

**RESPONSES FROM CAITLIN CLEVELAND**

## **1. Trades as a path**

Trades are a critical part of the NWT industry, with many students developing an interest in this career path through the program offerings in our schools. Whether or not they receive a high school diploma, apprentices must pass an academic exam as part of their entrance to trades.

Trades in the NWT are affected by many factors, including Aurora College, the possibility of a polytechnic university, the safety and fair treatment of young apprentices, and incentives for employers to take on apprentices and tradespeople.

**How do you plan to build on the foundations that we have, and remove barriers to our youth becoming part of the trades' workforce?**

### **Trades**

- Our own job projections show trades are an area of opportunity for future graduates.
- To ensure there are adequate numbers of qualified tradespeople we need to continue to change the narrative around trades work away from 'less than' post-secondary choice compared to university degrees.
- I would like to see our government work hand in hand with the NWT's economic industry to determine our required trades focus for our future economic focus and align Aurora College and the future Polytechnic to offer in-demand trades programs specific to these sectors so we are working together to fill our trades needs.
- Mentorship: We need skilled trades leaders working in schools to teach. Youth need opportunity to learn about and start investing in these types of career development and need opportunities to experience practical hands-on learning.
- Partnerships: We need to establish reliable partnerships with organizations like Skills Canada and local businesses so youth can gain exposure to trades creating opportunities for real world exposure and on-the-job training.
- Career Counsellors: We need to promote trades to our students within our school system based on their skills and interests. Yellowknife Catholic Schools used to have a previously funded successful Program called Bridges that provided this link between school/ education/ work experience for students.
- Apprenticeships: We need to expand apprenticeships opportunities in partnership with the private sector and need to increase our support of apprentices by connecting them with journeypersons working in the NWT.



## **2. Education Reform**

In the closing days of the 18th Assembly the GNWT Minister of Education called for the need of a reform of our Educational System. A recent CBC article stated “In the 2016-17 school year, only eight per cent of students enrolled in Grade 9 in small communities achieved acceptable standards in standardized math tests. In regional centres, 41.2 per cent of students were at an acceptable level. In English language arts, 17.7 per cent of Grade 9 students in small communities were at an acceptable level, while in regional centres 53 per cent were.”

**What do you believe needs to be done so that this new Educational Reform actually produces the positive results we all want when previous Education Reforms failed to meaningful produce positive results?**

- Our teachers are burnt out.
- In our schools we expect our teachers to be teachers, coaches, social workers, and mental health counsellors while at the same time often raising their own families.
- I believe Education Reform needs to start with a systemic reform of our own government.
- We need to change the protocols within our government and address how we are allowed to work with schools with the whole health and well-being of the child in mind.
- In addition to the new Child and Youth Care Coordinator positions, we need a program navigator who works with families in connection with the Child and Youth Care Coordinator to connect families to government programs with the purpose of keeping families connected- and parents need to be involved in and empowered through this process.
- We need to be able to work together to lift families up, building resiliency in our communities, rather than continuing to work in inefficient silos because of confidentiality. Our teachers and government workers are professionals bound by confidentiality and we need to expect the best from them while trusting their professional discretion.
- We cannot expect teachers to address the educational needs of students when the fundamental survival needs of our children are not being met.
- We need to cut away the red tape that prevents us from having meaningful conversations that bring about meaningful change. The success of our children depends on our ability to come together with respect and integrity.

### 3. Universal Child Care

ECE commissioned a report regarding the benefits of Universal Child Care. Do you support universal childcare in the NWT? What actions will you take to ensure this initiative moves ahead?

- I don't feel that Universal Childcare is a realistic solution for the NWT as a whole. It is expensive and may not meet our needs in every single NWT community. We may actually in some cases fulfill our childcare needs in less expensive ways.
- I would like us to look at building wellness indicators individually with each community and indigenous government where we can take direction from each community and create programs and services based on their needs and design specific solutions for those challenges.
- For example some small communities may prefer for extended families to care for children so operating a licensed program for one or two children may not make the most sense.
- In places where the demand is smaller I would like to work to support the creation of pre-school and afterschool programs as well as subsidized Family Day Homes to meet the relatively small demand.
- In larger centres like Yellowknife where we have a high need of affordable childcare but no space, I would like to work to have government infrastructure or renovate existing space ideally co-located within a school.
- I would also look at ensuring that childcare space is incorporated into new capital projects like new schools and within Aurora College and the Polytechnic so that as we build we factor in the need for childcare as it is so important to early childhood development and the employment and education possibilities of our northern parents, especially mothers.
- I would also continue to invest in training, supports and incentives for early childhood educators because quality care is important. Incentivizing people to take this training and paying these educators appropriately both in Yellowknife and our communities, will lead to better and safer care for our children.

#### **4. School Funding**

Currently funding for schools is determined on previous years enrolment, which does not take into consideration the needs of individual schools. What changes can be made to fully support schools based on actual student needs rather than simply on the enrolment numbers.

- Linking school funding to student enrolment is common practice across Canada.
- The current approach takes a snapshot of enrolment at the end of September and then uses that data to inform its request for resources from the government for the following year.
- Education bodies are given funding and flexibility within what is provided to make decisions about how to shift funding from one school to another or within their own programming.
- The introduction of the Child and Youth Care Coordinators are a huge win for our schools, but I think the government needs to take a more holistic approach to funding and sit down with unique school boards to have conversations to find out if it is specifically investments in supports like Education Assistants or other specialized services to meet the needs for our students and teachers rather than the government creating a blanket solution that does not meet the needs of every district.
- I think this is a good time to also talk about school supplies.
- Families should not be covering the cost of school supplies.
- If we have 8,000 students and an expectation that every student spends an average of \$150 on school supplies, that is \$1.2 MIL. This is a drop in the bucket for the GNWT.
- We all know that not every family can afford this and this creates a very uncomfortable start to the school year for some students, and creates a feeling of divide.
- The government needs to start funding school supplies. This creates an opportunity for schools to buy bulk in only what they need and use the remaining funds for wishlist supplies the entire school can use.

**CSFTNO:**

- Merci pour la question.
- Relationships are incredibly important and I am committed to building meaningful relationships with our stakeholders.
- Both parties need to come back to the table on this one.
- There has to be a win-win alternative for both parties. Court cases are expensive and ultimately they take our focus away from what's really important.
- The GNWT needs to respect and support the territorial Francophone community while fulfilling its legal obligation to ensure sufficient French first language students are enrolled in French first language schools.
- At the same time the government must balance with that supports for other groups and communities across the territory and the enrolment directive agreed upon by the government and CSFTNO seeks to ensure this balance is maintained by restricting the number of non-rights holders that can enrol in French first language schools.
- The GNWT also has an obligation to other language requirements. The NWT is home to 11 official languages and while the GNWT must uphold section 23 of the Canadian Charter it must also uphold Article 13 of the UN Declaration of Indigenous Rights and Freedoms.
- I think going forward to GNWT needs to sit down with boards and levels of government and have the conversation about language preservation, celebration and also language revival and create an action plan that speaks to how we are going to support language in each of our schools.
- Renewing the relationship with the CSFTNO needs to be a priority. We need to better understand one another with the success of all our children in mind.

# **KAM LAKE**

**RESPONSES FROM ROBERT HAWKINS**

## **ELECTION FORUM QUESTIONS**

### **Question 01 - Trades as a path**

- The education system needs to develop an alternative stream to ensure students and their interest are not lost and they decide to leave school.
- Some European countries try to identify this in a more practical side of education to link interest early.
- The education system needs to encourage apprentice programs alongside college and universities
- Schools need to graduate apprentices who have adequate work-related reading and communication skills.
- Connect employers with the apprentice learners
- Marketing through word of mouth
- Consider grants for apprentices– programs can be costly

### **Question 02 - Education Reform**

- Attendance issues need to be directly addressed.
- Schooling has to be community and culturally appropriate.
- ECE curriculum development needs to be relevant
- Supporting social issues that may help.
- Innovation and understanding may be required, ie: what are their concerns and how can they be addressed.
- I have always been a believer in meal programs for kids to start their days, including lunches.
- Concentrate on one-on-one learning – a vastly improved tutorial program in small community schools.
- Consideration of an increase in student-teacher ratio in smaller community schools.
- Double the number of teachers in smaller community schools

### **Question 03 – Universal Childcare**

Many people equate “universal” day care as GNWT run daycare services. What we really mean is affordable access by everyone to all early childhood programs from Aboriginal head start to family resources programs to private daycares. A healthy child going into the school system will mean more graduates out of that school system. The roots need to be strong! Access to affordable child care services also means increasing the chances that some families will stay in the NWT because the access to services are there and affordable. Affordable for everyone: Income should be NO barrier to adequate daycare services. So in the end, yes, I support universal child care in the NWT. If elected, I would begin the process of asking ECE to cost out the program and develop an implementation plan.

#### **Question 04 – School Funding**

I support an evidence-based approach to funding educational systems with avenues that would allow schools to respond to changing and unexpected needs, such as a top up fund that they could apply for. If a school is funded based on an estimate, and if there are changes whereas a school was overfunded based on the agreed upon formula, this could put a school in a deficit the following year, which then would further make it difficult for the school or board to address. Ultimately I believe the question is rooted towards, what ensures schools are properly funded to operate. That said, I am aware the funding formula does not include all positions in a school and through the PTR, the schools and boards must make decisions which make the operations very challenging. In other cases of which I'm aware of, because of the PTR, there are always positions that are not fully funded and that then becomes another problem the school must wrestle with. This would ensure that all schools had their base positions covered first, over and above the PTR and the day to day operations of a school are not compromised. This in my view could be a position worked out with all DEA's in a joint proposal to the Educational Minister. Affordable for everyone: Income should be NO barrier to adequate daycare services. So in the end, yes, I support universal child care in the NWT. If elected, I would begin the process of asking ECE to cost out the program and develop an implementation plan.

#### **CSFTNO RESPONSE**

I don't believe litigation is always the right answer. I would rather than use the courts to find a solution, by suggesting that the Education Minister be encouraged to sit down with you and work through the policy. I have read the policy and there is no reason it couldn't be updated to reflect CSFTNO concerns in good faith. That said, I am unable to speak to the Sec. 23 details frankly because, I'm not a lawyer. Furthermore, this is an important area of law whereas people have made their careers interpreting and understanding significant caselaw and decisions. As a politician, I would much rather see people sit down together and work matters out and that would be my position and as noted in the beginning, litigation isn't always in everyone's best interest.

# **KAM LAKE**

**RESPONSES FROM ROMMEL SILVERIO**



CANDIDATES FORUM-ST PATTRICK HIGH SCHOOL  
25-SEPTEMBER-2019

## **Election Forum Questions**

### **1. Trades as a path**

Trades are a critical part of the NWT industry, with many students developing an interest in this Career path through the program offerings in our schools. Whether or not they receive a high school diploma, apprentices must pass an academic exam as part of their entrance to trades.

Trades in the NWT are affected by many factors, including Aurora College, the possibility of a Polytechnic university, the safety and fair treatment of young apprentices, and incentives for employers to take on apprentices and tradespeople.

How do you plan to build on the foundations that we have, and remove barriers to our youth becoming part of the trades' workforce?

- Investing in our youth is very important to me because the youth are the next generation to take over for us. Providing them with solid foundation is not just a gain for them but a gain for us. Therefore, I will support the creation of the Polytechnic University, develop more mentorship program and expand school program in high school to build interest in the youth to pursue trade.

## **2. Education Reform**

In the closing days of the 18th Assembly the GNWT Minister of Education called for the need of a reform of our Educational System. A recent CBC article stated “In the 2016-17 school year, only eight per cent of students enrolled in Grade 9 in small communities achieved acceptable standards in standardized math tests. In regional centres, 41.2 per cent of students were at an acceptable level. In English language arts, 17.7 per cent of Grade 9 students in small communities were at an acceptable level, while in regional centres 53 per cent were.”

What do you believe needs to be done so that this new Educational Reform actually produces the positive results we all want when previous Education Reforms failed to meaningfully produce positive results?

- Collaborative effort is needed to have a positive result. We have to start listening to our teachers because they are the one interacting with the students and also the one witnessing the day to day struggles of students.
- I will continue to support educators' Professional Development Incentives and like nurses we have shortages of teachers I would advocate a forward-looking strategy on recruitment and retention of staff instead of “Band-Aid solutions to prevent staff burnt-out and fatigue.

## **3. Universal Child Care**

ECE commissioned a report regarding the benefits of Universal Child Care. Do you support universal child care in the NWT? What actions will you take to ensure this initiative moves ahead?

- I absolutely support universal child care, however there is always a cost associated to it, so again this will entail collaborative approach This is costly, and the Territories needs federal help in supplying it. If we want to maintain our communities, we need to assist young working families meet their child care needs. These should be focused on working families' costs and government sponsored child care and food programs for all till school age and means tested based on income so large double income families can afford to both work and have their children care for while at work. I will definitely in support of funding to offer scholarship to interested post-

secondary students who wants to pursue early childhood development program because universal child care will not be effective without trained people to provide the service.

#### 4. School Funding

Currently funding for schools is determined on previous year's enrolment, which does not take into consideration the needs of individual schools. What changes can be made to fully support schools based on actual student needs rather than simply on the enrolment numbers.

- I recommend a full review of the funding system and what was done, and review historical information to check if the funds based on this formula is sufficient in meeting the needs of the schools. We need to evaluate if the number of previous enrollees as basis to funding is appropriate. Does this mean some schools may be underfunded or overfunded? The funding should include individual needs of the school especially some school facilities have higher fixed costs and operations costs.

5. At the beginning of the 18th Legislative Assembly, the working relationship between the CSFTNO and the Department of Education was good. It has since deteriorated. In May, 2019, a Judicial Review hearing was held in Yellowknife regarding a request for the admission of a child who speaks French fluently to École Allain St-Cyr, but whose request for admission did not meet the strict criteria of the *New Immigrants* stream of the *Ministerial Directive on the Admission of Students to Francophone Schools (2016)*. July 2, 2019, Justice Rouleau rendered a positive decision in the case of W.B. stating that the minister had to apply the object of s.23 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Justice Rouleau cancelled the previous decisions of the minister and instructed her to reconsider the request. July 25, 2019, the Minister of Education advised the CSFTNO and said parent that it was appealing the court's decision, however, the Minister of Education told four families that she would allow them to present new documents to substantiate their requests and that she would uphold the order of the court and reconsider their requests for admissions. On August 30, 2019, the Friday prior to the commencement of the school year, the Minister of Education refused, once again, the four requests for admission, and a fifth new request, stating that the Department had to safeguard the quality of French first language programming in the Northwest Territories. The CSFTNO is disputing this claim. The Government of the Northwest Territories has also asked for intervener status in the Supreme Court case relevant to the *Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique, Fédération des parents francophones de la Colombie-Britannique, Annette Azar-Diehl, Stéphane Perron and Marie-Nicole Dubois vs the Province of British Columbia and the Minister of Education of British Columbia* that will be heard in Winnipeg on September 26, 2019 in Winnipeg. Although there are only five provincial jurisdictions that will intervene in this case,

the GNWT took it upon themselves to be one of the interveners. This action demonstrates, yet again, the GNWT's lack of understanding of s. 23 of the *Charter* and its object, thus further alienating the CSFTNO.

Given that the growth of the francophone/francophile community is an important economic factor for the whole of the Northwest Territories, what will you do, if elected, so that the GNWT's Department of Education undertakes good faith negotiations with the CSFTNO to work collaboratively to reach a win-win solution where admissions to its French first language schools are concerned, and seek a better understanding of its obligations under s.23 of the *Charter*?

- I know that the Minister of Education takes very seriously Sec 23 of the Constitution. The GNWT has sought clarification from time to time on what that means as it is implied here in the North. I am not clear on what the disagreement is about. I am sure the Deputy Minister who has been handling the case will inform the incoming Minister of education about the intervenor status. Since it is before the courts, has been addressed several times by the GNWT, in recent court decisions this too will be addressed in due course. But as a parent I practice language and cultural retention in my family, my children speak Filipino, English and French.
- Many minorities retain vibrant cultural and language traditions while being immersed in multicultural Canada. They do so in the home, cultural and religious schooling. Governance is allocation of scarce resources and the GNWT has to abide by the Canadian Constitution, since this is before the courts and being tested there, as a Candidate and Canadian I have to trust that process and support your right to ask that question which is now at the courts.

**KAM LAKE**

**RESPONSES FROM KIERON TESTART**

### **1. Trades as a path**

Trades and skilled labour are constantly in demand and it is of the utmost importance to ensure students see the path to skilled labour as being equal and just as important as university studies. Not enough people are entering apprenticeships, and this will have an impact on future economic activity in the Northwest Territories. We must find a way to provide an incentive to skilled labourers and journeymen to take on apprenticeships and co-op placements, and give students a better idea of what possible paths lay before them after they finish school and enter the job market. This will help ensure that the curriculum for our children is in line with the demands of the future economy of the NWT.

### **2. Education Reform**

The test scores of these fundamental subjects are a significant indicator of whether students will succeed in their endeavours regardless of their future career choice. There is a huge challenge getting students to attend class, and see themselves through to graduation which is reflected in the test scores in the north that demonstrate that the language, and math skills, as well as knowledge from other subjects is simply not being learned. The north faces unique challenges in a lot of areas, and education is no different. A northern problem needs a northern solution, and we need to look at a curriculum that speaks to northern children, keeps them engaged while in school, and ensures they are life-long learners.

### **3. Universal Child Care**

My platform affirmed my support for Universal Child Care. Since the creation of the JK program in the 18th Assembly we have made it difficult for Child Care providers to maintain standards of service and financial viability over the long term. If elected I will work with my colleagues in the 19th Assembly to incorporate best practices and lessons learnt from the recent roll out of Universal Child Care in Quebec.

### **4. School Funding**

There are problems facing our education system that go beyond enrollment and the funding a successful education system requires understanding the scope of the problem and identifying the specific shortcomings. We need to have a foundational review of our education system from JK all the way up to grade 12. Through this process we need to consult with stakeholders and get their advice and feedback to ensure that we are setting up future generations of students for success.

**KAM LAKE**

**RESPONSES FROM CHERISH WINSOR**



**VOTE**  
**CHERISH**  
**WINSOR**  
**FOR MLA KAM LAKE**

## **1. Trades as a path**

**Trades are a critical part of the NWT industry, with many students developing an interest in this career path through the program offerings in our schools. Whether or not they receive a high school diploma, apprentices must pass an academic exam as part of their entrance to trades.**

**Trades in the NWT are affected by many factors, including Aurora College, the possibility of a polytechnic university, the safety and fair treatment of young apprentices, and incentives for employers to take on apprentices and tradespeople.**

**How do you plan to build on the foundations that we have, and remove barriers to our youth becoming part of the trades' workforce?**

Part of my job over the past two years has been to develop a plan to help address this issue. We know that jobs in the trades are essential and will be in demand for years. We also know that many youth who are interested in the trades are not able to complete an apprenticeship without moving from their home communities because relevant journeypersons are not available to mentor them.

So what can be done?

First, the perception of a career in the trades needs to change so that young people see it as a first-class possibility, rather than an alternative path. We also need to provide better and earlier supports to students in high school who want to pursue this path so that they are prepared for the realities of this kind of education.

We can also better support apprentices by providing a better learning environment when they do go to school. We can do this by being more predictable in when and where courses are offered and providing a better student experience when they are at school.

Finally, we have to find ways- through partnerships and collaboration with businesses and community governments- to make jobs in the trades more accessible for our youth.

## **2. Education Reform**

**In the closing days of the 18th Assembly the GNWT Minister of Education called for the need of a reform of our Educational System. A recent CBC article stated "In the 2016-17 school year, only eight per cent of students enrolled in Grade 9 in small communities achieved acceptable standards in standardized math tests. In regional centres, 41.2 per cent of students were at an acceptable level. In English language arts, 17.7 per cent of Grade 9 students in small communities were at an acceptable level, while in regional centres 53 per cent were."**

Cherish Winsor for MLA Kam Lake

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VOTE  
**CHERISH  
WINSOR**  
FOR MLA KAM LAKE

**What do you believe needs to be done so that this new Educational Reform actually produces the positive results we all want when previous Education Reforms failed to meaningfully produce positive results?**

I actually think we are on the right track. There have been a number of really great initiatives started in the last couple of years like:

- Northern Distance Learning, which provides post-secondary minded students with the opportunity to take courses required for their advancement; or
- Junior kindergarten, or other early childhood programs. We know that by providing positive learning environments early on, we can increase the success rates in later years.

But the issues facing our education system are significant and change of this magnitude takes years. One program or initiative is not going to “solve” the problem. It will take a sustained and explicit effort over a number of years to see a real difference. We are on the right track and through continued attention and increased support, we will likely see improved results in time.

### **3. Universal Child Care**

**ECE commissioned a report regarding the benefits of Universal Child Care. Do you support universal child care in the NWT? What actions will you take to ensure this initiative moves ahead?**

I support affordable and accessible childcare in the NWT. I believe the cost of childcare must be reduced, but a universal rate will also reduce the number of childcare spaces available because operators would be restricted in what they can charge for their services. Instead, we must find ways to reduce the cost of childcare, perhaps on a scale that reflects the parents’ income and the type of care provided – day home or centre based.

Our focus right now has to be to increase the number of childcare spots available to parents in all communities. There are currently 11 communities without licenced care spaces and many others that don’t have enough. To do this we need to train more early childhood educators, work with communities to provide licenced care, and adjust regulations to allow more afterschool spaces and reduce lengthy waitlists.

Cherish Winsor for MLA Kam Lake

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VOTE  
**CHERISH  
WINSOR**  
FOR MLA KAM LAKE

#### **4. School Funding**

**Currently funding for schools is determined on previous years enrolment, which does not take into consideration the needs of individual schools. What changes can be made to fully support schools based on actual student needs rather than simply on the enrolment numbers.**

Funding formulas are tricky to talk about in less than two minutes because they are so complex.

Currently education bodies – so the district authorities or councils, not the schools themselves – are provided a base amount, enrolment funding, funding specific to their region, and additional funding for specific programs. Between all of our education bodies, this amounted to \$155 Million last year, not including early childhood programs or post-secondary programs.

With such a high cost both financially and for our children, we have to make sure we get it right.

Some authorities also receive funding through a tax levy – like the two Yellowknife authorities, or from other bodies like Canadian Heritage for French.

So to answer the question, I believe it is still important to provide enrollment based funding, along with the other funding that is currently in place. In addition to that, we could also look at adding specific needs-based funding, like what is given for specific programs now.

I think we can understand that different schools and different regions have different needs, beyond just costs. So looking at needs-based funding, for example for a school that may need more support teachers than what is in the funding formula, could be a way to provide that.

**5. Given that the growth of the francophone/francophile community is an important economic factor for the whole of the Northwest Territories, what will you do, if elected, so that the GNWT's Department of Education undertakes good faith negotiations with the CSFTNO to work collaboratively to reach a win-win solution where admissions to its French first language schools are concerned, and seek a better understanding of its obligations under s.23 of the Charter?**

The ministerial directive was revised in 2016 but remains unclear. There are too many circumstances that have not been formally accounted for in policy and a number of cases have been referred to the Minister as a result. Paternalistic policies that ignore the leadership roles of other stakeholders are not working.



VOTE  
**CHERISH  
WINSOR**  
FOR MLA KAM LAKE

The GNWT has the ability to delegate the authority to admit non-rights holders to minority language schools and more flexibility should be included in policy to allow for this. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the GNWT to ensure the availability of minority language instruction but limiting enrollment to only those who have a charter right does nothing to celebrate and encourage francophone culture and language.

I would like to see the ministerial directive revised to allow for a committee review for cases that fall outside of those identified in the policy. The committee would be made up of members from the francophone community, CSFTNO and GNWT.

Cherish Winsor for MLA Kam Lake

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# **RANGE LAKE**

**RESPONSES FROM CAROLINE COCHRANE**

## **1. Trades as a path**

**How do you plan to build on the foundations that we have, and remove barriers to our youth becoming part of the trades' workforce?**

A large part of my platform is making education a priority in the next assembly. I have shown this by announcing we will become a polytechnic University which has a strong trades focus, and speaking in the house for the desperate need for more resources (meaning funding and supports) in education to help our students, employees, and employers.

I have ideas such as mentorship programs, carrying forward with/expanding on the pathways program to help high school students identify career options, increased promotion on the NWT's 53 designated trades in, and increasing the number of post-secondary trade opportunities in the NWT.

However, I am one voice and have throughout my term attempted to work as closely as possible with stakeholders in decision making. So additional funding and the collection of the voices of all stakeholders will be critical as we move forward with perhaps one of the best opportunities our communities have seen in a long time.

## **2. Education Reform**

**What do you believe needs to be done so that this new Educational Reform actually produces the positive results we all want when previous Education Reforms failed to meaningful produce positive results?**

I truly believe education is the key to many issues such as the economy, social issues to poverty, finding solutions for international concerns e.g. climate change, and building a strong northern workforce with people who have the skills to succeed.

So for me, educational reform starts with an increase in funding and focus on education for NWT students.

It means not assuming the GNWT has all the answers, but collecting and defining our solutions from students, parents, educational bodies, employers, aboriginal organizations, community leaders (Govt and NGO's), and all employees working directly in the system. I believe we need to assess the reasons behind the success of the regional centres compared to the small communities and research international models that are succeeding in addressing the concerns we face in the north.

The critical difference to ensure that educational reform/support produces positive results is to ensure everyone has the same goals, is part of the defined solutions and truly involved in defining the path forward remembering the need to be flexible as one solution does not meet all needs. Every community member/organization has a role in ensuring our youth succeed and we must all work together to actualize this goal.

## **3. Universal Child Care**

**ECE commissioned a report regarding the benefits of Universal Child Care. Do you**

**support universal child care in the NWT? What actions will you take to ensure this initiative moves ahead.**

The GNWT report I brought forward in the last assembly affirmed that there are definite benefits for universal childcare such as boosting the economy, increasing tax revenues, providing options so more women are able to access the workforce and addressing the cost of living for families. We definitely need an increase in funding for childcare to just meet the Canadian average. The costs for universal daycare however would be between \$20m to \$45m annually, depending on which model was implemented.

I believe that every decision however need to be strategic and examine all variables. We currently have capacity issues in regards to space and qualified workers, caring for children with complex needs, part time childcare options, and having no licensed options in some communities. Teachers, childcare givers and support workers are already feeling the burden of providing the limited support we currently have, and we also have huge concerns with children being ready for school with 38% being vulnerable in terms of developmental delays which means we also need additional funding for parent and family support especially in the early years.

We also need to learn from Quebec's challenges, and be strategic to meet the goal of best practice solutions for our critical early years.

The GNWT is currently trying to address these needs by increasing the scholarships available for early childhood development(ECD) students, expanding the programming from 1 yr to a 2 yr program at Aurora College, and implementing a series of dual credit ECD courses in high school. I believe we need to continue this work but focus on international best practices working closer with all stakeholders to develop a shared goal, measurable actions based on the needs of all populations, and a strategic plan to move forward. The critical piece is being as transparent as possible and working together in the true spirit of partnerships and consensus.

#### **4. School Funding**

**Currently funding for schools is determined on previous years enrolment, which does not take into consideration the needs of individual schools. What changes can be made to fully support schools based on actual student needs rather than simply on the enrolment numbers.**

The current funding model in itself needs a comprehensive review. During the last assembly I had directed ECE to start an international review of educational funding models, seeking a more equitable model, and I hope that the next assembly continues this work.

We need to change our thinking from number of children equals number of supports needed (so funding) to one that says every school has basic needs and after that is met, each school needs to be assessed individually to meet their specific needs within an equitable lens.

I continue to state education needs to be our focus and therefore needs more funding and we need to all sit together to define the needs of all students, our priorities, and the actions/expenditures to move us forward together as a strong unit that recognizes our unique differences.

**5. Given that the growth of the francophone/francophile community is an important economic factor for the whole of the Northwest Territories, what will you do, if elected, so that the GNWT's Department of Education undertakes good faith negotiations with the CSFTNO to work collaboratively to reach a win-win solution where admissions to its French first language schools are concerned, and seek a better understanding of its obligations under s.23 of the Charter?**

The dept of justice with the govt of Canada defines the general purpose of Section 23 as “ seeks to preserve and promote the minority, by granting minority language educational rights to minority language parents throughout Canada. The guarantee cannot be separated from a concern for the culture associated with the language. Language is more than a mere means of communication, it is part and parcel of the identity and culture of the people speaking it (*Mahe* at paragraph 31)

So, this question should not be answered lightly. The first thought is any child should be able to go to any school, but on the other side how do you say no to any child, once you start saying yes to non-rights holders? Across Canada this question is being asked with numbers of non-rights holders in French first schools increasing significantly and Ontario quoting over 45% of students being non-francophone. They are seeing an impact in conversations in playgrounds and some are parents/teachers are worried.

As a Metis women whose whole family lost their language due to assimilation and now struggle to find glimmers of words, I know the importance of preserving language and it's critical link to cultural practices, beliefs and sustainability of positive identity.

So, I don't believe this should be a Ministerial decision or a school board decision alone. This has the potential to change the intent of the French first schools and every francophone family should have a say as to who is admitted to a French first language school and who should attend French immersion schools.

A survey should be conducted early in the 19<sup>th</sup> assembly and once the francophone community has a chance to have a say, the Minister should do everything within their power to adhere to the people's wishes.

# **RANGE LAKE**

**RESPONSES FROM HUGHIE GRAHAM**



# Election Forum Questions

## **1. Trades as a path**

Trades are a critical part of the NWT industry, with many students developing an interest in this career path through the program offerings in our schools. Whether or not they receive a high school diploma, apprentices must pass an academic exam as part of their entrance to trades.

Trades in the NWT are affected by many factors, including Aurora College, the possibility of a polytechnic university, the safety and fair treatment of young apprentices, and incentives for employers to take on apprentices and tradespeople.

How do you plan to build on the foundations that we have, and remove barriers to our youth becoming part of the trades' workforce?

Trades are in high demand across Canada and a critical part of a region like the NWT. One of the best ways to further the work already done is to make sure it's solidly in the education system. Getting youth involved early on is important. This can be done with industry partnering with education such as Skills NWT & Skills Canada events that connect students with tradespeople and giving students hands on experience. The Conference Board report a few years ago and the Jobs in Demand show that people entering trades will be in a good position for well-paying jobs. Building on the work done with strategies like Skills for Success and Apprenticeship and Trades, or Aurora College's Centre for Mine and Industry Training, opened last year in Fort Smith, will make sure we're on the right path.

The transformation of Aurora College should include offering programs that will train people to take the jobs available in the North.

## **2. Education Reform**

In the closing days of the 18th Assembly the GNWT Minister of Education called for the need of a reform of our Educational System. A recent CBC article stated "In the 2016-17 school year, only eight per cent of students enrolled in Grade 9 in small communities achieved acceptable standards in standardized math tests. In regional centres, 41.2 per cent of students were at an acceptable level. In English language arts, 17.7 per cent of Grade 9 students in small communities were at an acceptable level, while in regional centres 53 per cent were."

What do you believe needs to be done so that this new Educational Reform actually produces the positive results we all want when previous Education Reforms failed to meaningful produce positive results?

As far as I understand, there has been an education renewal initiative going on for a few years now, planned for 10 years, with all kinds of ways to help students, teachers and the communities. It talks about the reasons for change, like building relationships, the need to improve attendance, student results, connecting students with opportunities, making sure they're building on their skills and interests, diversity, culture and the legacy of residential schools.

They've put programs like northern distance learning in place, to help students stay in their own communities but still getting academic courses. They're looking at the well being of both students and educators, they're partnering with other government departments, like Health, to have mental health counsellors available in schools. They're connecting the junior kindergarten to grade 12 system with post secondary opportunities.

I think reforming a whole education system isn't going to take 4 years – this has to be done methodically over many years, where you celebrate your successes, make sure core programs are working, and tweaking or improving the things that need work.

I believe the education system is NOT failing our kids. The education boards are doing a tremendous job against some tough circumstances. Kids need to come to school, the need to come ready to learn, well rested and fed. There are a whole host of social problems that need to be addressed and there isn't one organization that can shoulder that responsibility. We need other departments to participate and partner to ensure kids are healthy and ready to learn.

### **3. Universal Child Care**

ECE commissioned a report regarding the benefits of Universal Child Care. Do you support universal child care in the NWT? What actions will you take to ensure this initiative moves ahead?

I think analyzing what communities actually need is a strong approach – you work with community and Indigenous leadership to see what their community can support, and what it wants. There are likely residents that have large families that can help with child care, and others that may need some guidance, but not necessarily a full day care program – they have to be designed for community needs.

There are opportunities for family day homes, or running programs for parents. In smaller communities, invest in after school programs or programs for parents. In larger communities, connect facilities with schools – all of the learning they do in the child care programs runs seamlessly into junior kindergarten. And make it easy for young mothers to further their education with child care available at Aurora College or the new polytechnic.

The feasibility study talks about the increase in mothers entering the workforce, but the NWT has unique needs, and not every community has the same opportunities.

I know that ECE has invested a lot in funding for daycares and day homes, and offers support for them, like incentives for students in early childhood education, and grants for staff working in daycares.

I think we can have a good, workable system that supports the operators, and makes sure there are the right programs in place, with options for parents, while remaining responsible with public money

#### **4. School Funding**

Currently funding for schools is determined on previous years enrolment, which does not take into consideration the needs of individual schools. What changes can be made to fully support schools based on actual student needs rather than simply on the enrolment numbers.

I think this is a standard approach across Canada, and while the NWT has some unique circumstances, there has to be a foundation that's proven to work – looking at other jurisdictions' practices is a responsible approach.

I know that there is protected funding, like Inclusive Schooling and Indigenous Languages and Education Funding, but the remainder allows education bodies to be flexible in their allocations to schools and programs. Investing in classroom supports and resources is a worthwhile approach.

I also think looking at the Education Act from 1996 to find efficiencies and update to reflect the needs of the current education and social systems will be a good and overdue exercise.

As far as supporting actual student needs, the education renewal underway is a good tool to identify what is working and where there needs to be adjustments or changes. Focusing on how students learn now in this highly electronic world, how teachers need to teach, and how communities can be a part of their school is critical.

Collaboration is one of my lynchpins, and this is a critical issue for all partners in education. Government needs to keep lines open for discussion with its education leaders, who in turn have to communicate and work with their schools and communities.

While I understand they do have good working relationships and together they have made great strides in improvements, figuring out the issues together will net some good returns

CSFTNO

Given that the growth of the francophone/francophile community is an important economic factor for the whole of the Northwest Territories, what will you do, if elected, so that the GNWT's Department of Education undertakes good faith negotiations with the CSFTNO to work collaboratively to reach a win-win solution where admissions to its French first language schools are concerned, and seek a better understanding of its obligations under s.23 of the Charter?

I think the key in this question is the term "good faith".

The French community is vibrant and growing, and is a strong contributor to the economy. I know there have been some challenges in the past, and they have had to fight for their rights and equity. They were successful, and in Yellowknife, have a beautiful showcase school serving not only their students, but their community. I understand that in this instance, the government went beyond the requirements of the courts, and worked closely with the CSFTNO to build the addition to the school

I also understand that the government consulted quite broadly on the directive a few years ago, and wrote it based on the feedback they received. I also understand that the education minister has approved many more submissions than denied them.

I believe that the government should be working in partnership with CSFTNO and allow due diligence to occur on each non-rights holder under Section 23 of the Charter. However, it always has to take into consideration the larger picture. Projected enrolments and the growth of the French first community. What were to happen if a number of rights holder families come to the territory and there is no room for them in a school dedicated to rights holders, what are their options?

Government doesn't have the luxury of supporting only one organization, and ECE is working with numerous schools across the territory who have varying challenges and needs, from aging infrastructure to schools with more children than they can accommodate.

Striking a balance is a government's responsibility, and managing public funds with the unique needs of a region like NWT is difficult, but I believe that collaboration and understanding from both sides goes a long way.

# **YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE**

**RESPONSES FROM JULIE GREEN**

# Election Forum Questions

## 1. Trades as a path

*Trades are a critical part of the NWT industry, with many students developing an interest in this career path through the program offerings in our schools. Whether or not they receive a high school diploma, apprentices must pass an academic exam as part of their entrance to trades.*

*Trades in the NWT are affected by many factors, including Aurora College, the possibility of a polytechnic university, the safety and fair treatment of young apprentices, and incentives for employers to take on apprentices and tradespeople.*

*How do you plan to build on the foundations that we have, and remove barriers to our youth becoming part of the trades' workforce?*

It makes sense to focus on trades training because of the shortage of skilled labour in NWT. Having a trade can provide a good living. For my economic diversification idea to ramp up retrofits and install clean energy appliances, the NWT is going to need a much bigger trades workforce. My research shows that ECE already has a number of programs in place to bring students into the trades, such as the Schools North Apprenticeship program that begins in high school and the skills clubs and Skills Canada competition that brings profile and training opportunities to students. Aurora College offers training in trades so why don't we have all the trades people we need? I think part of the problem is a lack of trades promotion. The two videos promoting the SNAP program have only been viewed a handful of times in the two years they have been posted, for example. I've heard that passing the trades entrance exam may be a barrier for some. Then there's the question of where to get an apprenticeship. Perhaps incentives for small businesses to hire apprentices could be reviewed. Perhaps the government itself could be a bigger employer of trades on capital projects such as long term care facilities, health centres and roads. This is an area in which better outcome monitoring may also be helpful to understand why people don't qualify for trades training or why they don't complete apprenticeships.

## 2. Education Reform

*In the closing days of the 18th Assembly the GNWT Minister of Education called for the need of a reform of our Educational System. A recent CBC article stated "In the 2016-17 school year, only eight per cent of students enrolled in Grade 9 in small communities achieved acceptable standards in standardized math tests. In regional centres, 41.2 per cent of students were at an acceptable level. In English language arts, 17.7 per cent of Grade 9 students in small communities were at an acceptable level, while in regional centres 53 per cent were."*

*What do you believe needs to be done so that this new Educational Reform actually produces the positive results we all want when previous Education Reforms failed to meaningfully produce positive results?*

Education reform has to be a grassroots initiative. Many students and parents haven't bought into the education that the government is offering. This is reflected in poor attendance by students as well as poor results from kindergarten through to graduation. There's no question that the legacy of the residential school experience is part of the problem. Some parents didn't/don't trust schools. There's also a lack of clarity about what education is for. In some low-income families here in Yellowknife who have few opportunities and high unemployment, the question is why does education matter? Any attempt at education reform has to engage these families not committed to education and find out what would help them buy in. That's the big picture. The small picture has to do with school capacity to meet student needs. I remember attending a meeting with the YCS trustees and they presented a sample of learning needs in one of their schools. The number and scope of needs was overwhelming. Even with the money for Indigenous children provided because of Jordan's Principle, teachers struggle to meet students' needs and struggle to keep parents engaged. Students may fall further behind and become frustrated with themselves. They drop out and this cycle continues. Audits of Nunavut and Yukon education showed significant problems with training and support for teachers delivering inclusive schooling and little insight into why students don't graduate. It's my understanding there is an OAG audit of education here as well. I'm looking forward to it. The next Assembly has to disrupt this cycle.

### **3. Universal Child Care**

*ECE commissioned a report regarding the benefits of Universal Child Care. Do you support universal child care in the NWT? What actions will you take to ensure this initiative moves ahead?*

I support universal child care in the NWT and have made statements in the House during my first term advocating for implementation of the 2014 report. There are many benefits, including allowing parents to return to the workforce by placing their children in accessible and affordable child care, and creating jobs throughout the NWT. But the most important beneficiaries are children. There is no question that children benefit from licensed child care. ECE knows from the Early Development Instrument testing that young children enter school unprepared. The consequences of not being prepared often ripple through the child's school life, with negative consequences. The provision of JK is a good start, but licensed child care would fill in the gaps for children up to 4 years old. Three issues need immediate attention. The first is creating more child care spaces in Yellowknife where waiting lists are long, and offering child care services in all 33 communities (11 currently don't have licensed child care options). The second is providing a means-tested, sliding scale subsidy to parents to make child care more affordable. Currently child care costs are the second largest segment of the family budget, depending on family size. The third

is having GNWT either make the construction or renovation of child care spaces less onerous OR government invests in building child care spaces that meet their standards. The best option for the latter is to include child care spaces in new school construction or renovation projects such as JH Sissons.

#### **4. School Funding**

*Currently funding for schools is determined on previous years enrolment, which does not take into consideration the needs of individual schools. What changes can be made to fully support schools based on actual student needs rather than simply on the enrolment numbers.*

Short-changing schools short changes all of us, our kids and grandkids. I would like to see school funding calculated on projected rather than past enrolments so that administration isn't scrambling to fill teacher, teacher assistant and support staff positions when the year begins. I would like to see ECE review the funding formula for schools. That includes funding for operations and maintenance as well as bussing. I'm told it has been years since the last review and much has changed since, especially with an extra grade of school and an increasing number of high needs students who need more support. And that funding needs to be secured on an on-going basis rather than year to year. When we talk about the need for education reform and student success rates, we have to take school funding into account to ensure it's adequate for today's students.

#### **5. CFSTNO and Section 23 rights**

I want to see the CSFTNO work with the same independence as Yellowknife Catholic Schools and YK1. Government does not dictate who can attend those schools. I think CFSTNO is in the best position to assess whether students have the support at home to thrive in a French-language (vs. French immersion) environment. This approach works in all other provincial and territorial jurisdictions. CFSTNO needs this independence. School boards and District Education Authorities produce reports for Education, Culture and Employment on budgeting, enrolments and the like so there is still accountability to the GNWT. In Yukon, the CSFY controls admission with a committee comprised of administration. This is the model that should be adopted in the NWT. I believe that the court cases waste time, money and goodwill. The GNWT also took the court challenge approach to granting equality rights to the LGBTQ community and lost every case.



# **YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE**

**RESPONSES FROM ARLENE HACHE**

# **Election Forum Questions**

## **1. Trades as a path**

Trades are a critical part of the NWT industry, with many students developing an interest in this career path through the program offerings in our schools. Whether or not they receive a high school diploma, apprentices must pass an academic exam as part of their entrance to trades.

Trades in the NWT are affected by many factors, including Aurora College, the possibility of a polytechnic university, the safety and fair treatment of young apprentices, and incentives for employers to take on apprentices and tradespeople.

How do you plan to build on the foundations that we have, and remove barriers to our youth becoming part of the trades' workforce?

I have been involved in the development and delivery of a pre-employment mine training program specific to Indigenous women and youth for the past seven years. The training program is directly linked to jobs through partnerships with the industry itself. The new Skills for 4 Success strategy and NWT Small Communities Employment Strategy 2018 to 2024 Skills is on the right track to ensure that skills development and training programs address education and employment gaps across the North and strengthen our relationships with business and industry. The establishment of a polytechnic University involving all stakeholders including students and potential students, industry partners and the corporate sector and Indigenous governments is essential.

Expanding the Pathways program to assist high school students in identifying career options and increasing post-secondary trade opportunities in the NWT is necessary. I would argue that any training model should include both a personal development and a professional development component is essential to addressing learning barriers linked to high rates of trauma and addictions among Northern residents. As well, efforts must focus on employment outcomes for residents with key actions planned for the creation of jobs, whether this is through infrastructure and economic development projects, partnerships with infrastructure and economic development projects, partnerships or through support for business development.

## **2. Education Reform**

In the closing days of the 18th Assembly the GNWT Minister of Education called for the need of a reform of our Educational System. A recent CBC article stated "In the 2016-17

school year, only eight per cent of students enrolled in Grade 9 in small communities achieved acceptable standards in standardized math tests. In regional centres, 41.2 per cent of students were at an acceptable level. In English language arts, 17.7 per cent of Grade 9 students in small communities were at an acceptable level, while in regional centres 53 per cent were.”

What do you believe needs to be done so that this new Educational Reform actually produces the positive results we all want when previous Education Reforms failed to meaningfully produce positive results?

The GNWT has developed strategies for educating Northerners from early childhood through to entering the workforce. The Early Childhood Framework and Action Plan, *Right from the Start*, is committed to making sure every child gets the right start towards a bright future; the *Education Renewal and Innovation Framework: Directions for Change* is focused on system-wide improvements to Kindergarten to Grade 12 education in the NWT to better serve students and ensure it keeps pace with changing needs; and the Skills for Success strategy aims to ensure that NWT residents are positioned for success in filling jobs.

These strategies have the potential to make a significant difference. However, the GNWT has a particularly bad track record of making visionary thinking a reality. From my perspective, the gap relates to a perception that as the lead they are the dictator rather than the facilitator of change. I would switch that up with a broad community-based coalition on which the GNWT sits as one among many partners that include students and parents and educational staff across the board.

### **3. Universal Child Care**

ECE commissioned a report regarding the benefits of Universal Child Care. Do you support universal child care in the NWT? What actions will you take to ensure this initiative moves ahead?

I support parent choice and access to quality childcare – that means language and culture representative of the context of the children and parents is a necessary overlay to program design and delivery. The report published by the GNWT demonstrates that universal childcare produces hold benefits for children and families, for greater inclusion of women in the workforce and for the economy. It would increase tax revenues and address the cost of living for families who are currently living in poverty.

The GNWT has not made an investment in our children a priority. We know that because funding for childcare in the NWT falls far below the Canadian average. The report on universal access to childcare sets a pathway forward. The report points to the need for a trained workforce of Early Childhood Educators and more childcare spaces. As well, childcare programs in the NWT lack some of the basic infrastructure supports such as a

common curriculum guide and programming materials, public quality assurance systems and regulatory control over parent fees and staff salaries. Those need to be addressed.

Three of the four jurisdictions in the study are building on their school systems to provide universal preschool for children starting at age 3 or 4 years. Full-day Kindergarten for 4 year olds is one of the stepping stones toward universal child care in the NWT's Action Plan. NWT schools also hold considerable surplus space. This space is a public asset that could be repurposed to meet the education and care needs of younger children.

#### **4. School Funding**

Currently funding for schools is determined on previous years enrolment, which does not take into consideration the needs of individual schools. What changes can be made to fully support schools based on actual student needs rather than simply on the enrolment numbers.

It isn't rocket science really, it takes political will and a focus that extends beyond bean counting. Funding should be allocated according to need rather than an arbitrary marker that fails to take into consideration a constantly changing learner demand and expectation. The GNWT needs to institute a review of alternative, equity producing funding models so that the educational system is best positioned to support our children.

#### **5. French First Language Schools**

Given that the growth of the francophone/francophile community is an important economic factor for the whole of the Northwest Territories, what will you do, if elected, so that the GNWT's Department of Education undertakes good faith negotiations with the CSFTNO to work collaboratively to reach a win-win solution where admissions to its French first language schools are concerned, and seek a better understanding of its obligations under s.23 of the *Charter*?

I would push for good faith negotiations. I am opposed to instituting lawsuits intended to strip citizens of their rights, in this case language rights. My children are rights-holders who didn't have the opportunity to attend school in a French language and cultural environment. These matters should not be determined by any Minister but be left to the CSFTNO and the parents who fall under that School Board.

# **YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE**

**RESPONSES FROM THOM JARVIS**

# Election Forum Questions

## 1. Trades as a path

Trades are a critical part of the NWT industry, with many students developing an interest in this career path through the program offerings in our schools. Whether or not they receive a high school diploma, apprentices must pass an academic exam as part of their entrance to trades.

Trades in the NWT are affected by many factors, including Aurora College, the possibility of a polytechnic university, the safety and fair treatment of young apprentices, and incentives for employers to take on apprentices and tradespeople.

How do you plan to build on the foundations that we have, and remove barriers to our youth becoming part of the trades' workforce?

**Skilled trades are an absolute necessity to a high performing economy. Our capacity is limited by the numbers of skilled trades persons available. Far too often we have had to access and rely on people being brought up from the south to work on vital projects and within our mining sector to fill the need.**

**One of the first barriers to entry into the trades is lack of awareness. For many years the trades have been downplayed in favour of a more academic approach. This is not just a northern issue, it has been Canada wide for over a generation, often requiring skilled trades people from overseas to fill the gaps. This is very common in industry where a very large percentage of tool and die makers are from the UK, Germany and Poland.**

**At the local level more vigorous and thorough shop programs need to be in place. Many young people first discover their interest and natural aptitudes at this stage. Back home in Oshawa for instance we had two high schools that leaned heavily on their shop programs. Students who were interested would attend these schools specifically for this reason.**

**Business and industry absolutely need to be brought into the process. Apprenticeships require placement. Programs designed to help business offset some of the wage costs for apprentices work well and should be enhanced. This sort of initiative is not without precedent in the NWT, especially for first- and second-year apprentices. Generally, by the third year, the level and quality of work capable by an apprentice is as such that the company is realizing real benefit, and they are more than covering their costs.**

In the closing days of the 18th Assembly the GNWT Minister of Education called for the need of a reform of our Educational System. A recent CBC article stated “In the 2016-17 school year, only eight per cent of students enrolled in Grade 9 in small communities achieved acceptable standards in standardized math tests. In regional centres, 41.2 per cent of students were at an acceptable level. In English language arts, 17.7 per cent of Grade 9 students in small communities were at an acceptable level, while in regional centres 53 per cent were.”

*What do you believe needs to be done so that this new Educational Reform actually produces the positive results we all want when previous Education Reforms failed to meaningfully produce positive results?*

The system needs a transformational repositioning and refocussing.

Step away from a Yellowknife centric model.

- 1- **Invert the pyramid!** Instead of the DM and ADMs & their bureaucrats telling schools what they need, get the DM and ADMs in a room with each schoolboard so school administrators can say what their school and community's specific needs are. Arguably, local school administrators and their staff are the best placed to know what the needs are and how to fix low attendance and under performance. Inverting the pyramid will help bridge the performance divide between small communities and regional centres through a better fit between needs and allocated resources.
- 2- **Repositioning and refocussing means getting back to the basics, taking into account the input from local schools and communities:**
  - a. Improve Student Ratios and classroom time for basic subjects
    - i. Reduce the Teacher Student Ratio to a maximum of 25 students per teacher.
    - ii. Increase the school year by 5 days to allow a greater number of classroom hours for teaching math, science and language;
    - iii. **Offer Summer 4 week upgrading high school level classes in Inuvik, Fort Smith, Hay River and Yellowknife and retesting to allow students who fall behind to catch up.**
  - b. **Act early to identify special needs so no child is left behind**
    - i. **Implement an early screening program to identify special needs or learning disabilities;**
    - ii. **Add systemic eye tests for grades 2 and 6 to identify needs for visual aids;**
  - c. **Increase the relevance of schools in the community and bridge the culture gap.**
  - d. **The need for local indigenous teachers cannot be overstated.**
    - i. **Adjust the school calendar and school hours to better integrate the school into the fabric of each community;**

- ii. **Promote elder volunteer involvement into school extra curricular activities;**
- iii. **Bring some classroom teaching into the bush, on the land.**
- iv. **Include traditional knowledge**

**3- Involve the community and parents:**

- a. Promote the school as a community hub.
- b. Work with community leaders and elders to make school attendance a community priority.
- c. Get students, as part of their classes and learning curricula involved in community projects.
- d. Promote the school as a cultural hub where traditional knowledge is passed from one generation to another.
- e. With parents and community leaders, develop an afterschool sport, arts or other community activity programs for students.

**4- Develop better incentives to perform, recruit and retain**

- a. Develop a pilot project to provide incentive pay for teachers based on standardized test
- b. Implement a Hiring and retainment bonus to attract and retain more teachers.
- c. Open a dialog between school boards and DM/ADMs on how to improve attendance and performance.
- d. In Regional Centers, at the high school level, facilitate open enrollment between English only schools, French immersion schools and French only schools on a space available basis once the needs of a specific school's primary clientele are met. An admission quota for open enrollment should be set by local school administrators with the input of their school board. Example: If Alain St-Cyr School has 10 places available in grade 11 once the needs of its primary clientele are met, it would offer these places for open enrollment basis. If there are more students than places available, a selection would be made based on academic excellence. Promoting friendly competition between schools to enroll students is an incentive for schools to better perform as a whole.

**3 Universal Child Care**

ECE commissioned a report regarding the benefits of Universal Child Care. Do you support universal childcare in the NWT? What actions will you take to ensure this initiative moves ahead?



**Most of us are aware of the many studies demonstrating the positive outcomes of access to daycare and early childhood education. Most families across the north and here in Yellowknife specifically don't need to be told about the difficulty in securing spaces for the children and the high costs involved.**

**Do I support the concept of universal access to childcare? Yes I do. The devil however as always is the details. We require programs that are within the means and resources of the territorial government.**

**Our path forward will be continuing to work within the parameters of the Canada-Northwest Territories Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, signed in 2017.**

**The required GNWT action plan is in place.**

**His will see approximately \$2.5 million dollars directed to the NWT per annum.**

**This will be in addition to ECE's current overall spending of \$8.9 million.**

**These monies are primarily focused on human resource capacity building, equipment costs and program infrastructure.**

**The next crucial stage must be focused on affordability. Work on this needs to be accelerated. Sourcing the revenues required is the challenge.**

**Revisiting the devolution agreement with the Federal government in order to have section 10.2 which sets our royalty sharing rates at 50% needs to be changed or removed. A negotiated deal to afford the NWT with the same arrangement as the provinces (who retain 100% of mineral royalties) is required. A percentage of this new stream could be permanently earmarked for childcare subsidies and education in general.**

## **School Funding**

*Currently funding for schools is determined on previous years enrolment, which does not take into consideration the needs of individual schools. What changes can be made to fully support schools based on actual student needs rather than simply on the enrolment numbers.*

**Schools and local school boards are best placed to identify and document specific needs of individual school in terms of infrastructure maintenance or improvement. A headcount-based funding system is unfair for smaller communities who must face the same fixed base infrastructure costs. (Building and maintaining 10,000 book library costs the same for a school enrolling 100 students as it does in a school enrolling 150 students, yet the second school gets 50% more funding based on headcount alone). A special school infrastructure fund should be created to address specific needs of schools that are not being addressed with the current**

headcount-count funding scheme. This should also be part of a new dialog between school boards and the DM/ADMs.

CSFTNO Question

*It has been suggested to me that commenting on an issue that is still before the courts may be deemed inappropriate, however, at this point of time I am a private citizen and not an elected official.*

**MY OPINION** is that this should be strictly a matter between parents and the schools themselves. Equal access to education is a fundamental right. The courts have already ruled against the government. A government that spent more on legal action to oppose this fair and sensible measure than it would have cost to place the students in the first place.

It is regrettable that this issue has gone to the courts. Rather, the door for a dialog should be opened between all stakeholders. I expect all governments to uphold the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms including section 23 with regards to Minority Language Educational Rights. If elected I will pursue this.

# **YELLOWKNIFE NORTH**

**RESPONSES FROM RYLUND JOHNSON**

## **1. Trades as a path**

Trades are a critical part of the NWT industry, with many students developing an interest in this career path through the program offerings in our schools. Whether or not they receive a high school diploma, apprentices must pass an academic exam as part of their entrance to trades.

Trades in the NWT are affected by many factors, including Aurora College, the possibility of a polytechnic university, the safety and fair treatment of young apprentices, and incentives for employers to take on apprentices and tradespeople.

How do you plan to build on the foundations that we have, and remove barriers to our youth becoming part of the trades' workforce?

As a founder of Makerspace YK we have had workshops on a variety of trade skills including drafting, welding and carpentry. The trades offer immediate employment and fulfilling work and we must encourage our youth to pursue a career in the trades. As a culture we must work to recognize the importance of tradespeople, we love asking our Masters students to give presentations in communities but fail to ask master builders to do the same. I believe we need to build our trades programs to specialize in northern building with a focus on green building technology to ensure we create graduates who are immediately employable. There are many unique aspects to trades work in the North and we need to build an industry that specializes in that knowledge. This is where the polytechnic university, working with industry, will be fundamental. We also need to encourage a culture of mentorship and apprenticeship such that tradespeople continue to take on apprentices and pass on their knowledge.

## **2. Education Reform**

In the closing days of the 18th Assembly the GNWT Minister of Education called for the need of a reform of our Educational System. A recent CBC article stated "In the 2016-17 school year, only eight per cent of students enrolled in Grade 9 in small communities achieved acceptable standards in standardized math tests. In regional centres, 41.2 per cent of students were at an acceptable level. In English language arts, 17.7 per cent of Grade 9 students in small communities were at an acceptable level, while in regional centres 53 per cent were."

What do you believe needs to be done so that this new Educational Reform actually produces the positive results we all want when previous Education Reforms failed to meaningfully produce positive results?

I believe we must break down the silos which currently exist in education and ensure we are working with all stakeholders together. We must realize that the education system is dealing with the symptoms from a variety of social issues. I believe some of the best things we can do to improve education will be to address the root causes of many of the social issues facing students. As an example, Universal Daycare will build early childhood development and ensure children are prepared before entering the education system. This must be paired with increased funding for wrap around supports for high needs and vulnerable students. Additionally we will need community buy-in to ensure that our schools have the trust and participation of all community members. We must realize that education is the most important investment we can make for the future, but we have to start now.

### **3. Universal Child Care**

ECE commissioned a report regarding the benefits of Universal Child Care. Do you support universal child care in the NWT? What actions will you take to ensure this initiative moves ahead?

Yes, this is a key plank of my platform and I will advocate for implementation of Universal Child Care in the next assembly. Please see [www.rylundjohnson.com](http://www.rylundjohnson.com) for more information.

### **4. School Funding**

Currently funding for schools is determined on previous years enrolment, which does not take into consideration the needs of individual schools. What changes can be made to fully support schools based on actual student needs rather than simply on the enrolment numbers.

Enrolment numbers must always play a role in the funding formula for schools. Yet to ignore the increased needs, and therefore increased costs, of certain students leaves school without the proper resources for our high needs students. Education must be a priority in the next assembly and review of funding with it.

**5. Given that the growth of the francophone/francophile community is an important economic factor for the whole of the Northwest Territories, what will you do, if elected, so that the GNWT's Department of Education undertakes good faith negotiations with the CSFTNO to work collaboratively to reach a win-win solution where admissions to its French first language schools are concerned, and seek a better understanding of its obligations under s.23 of the *Charter*?**

Yes, absolutely. This a losing case for the GNWT and the current costs we are spending fighting this in court is a waste of taxpayer money. Additionally s.23 is a floor, not a ceiling, we should be aiming to expand french language education and always limiting such services to the bare minimum required under the Charter shows bad faith on the part of the GNWT.

# **YELLOWKNIFE NORTH**

**RESPONSES FROM JAN VALLILLEE**

# Election Forum Questions

## Trades as a path

Trades are a critical part of the NWT industry, with many students developing an interest in this career path through the program offerings in our schools. Whether or not they receive a high school diploma, apprentices must pass an academic exam as part of their entrance to trades.

Trades in the NWT are affected by many factors, including Aurora College, the possibility of a polytechnic university, the safety and fair treatment of young apprentices, and incentives for employers to take on apprentices and tradespeople.

How do you plan to build on the foundations that we have, and remove barriers to our youth becoming part of the trades' workforce?

Currently students who receive a high school diploma and have passed the required math and science requirements are able to sign up with an employer who is willing to take them on as an apprentice.

I believe it is crucial that we invest more in the trades ..for over 10 years we have been hearing there is a shortage of skilled workers.. this is not just a territorial problem but a global one. I think the key to improving this workforce is by education.

First we need to shift the bad rap trades get. Educate parents / teachers/ society to encourage their children to look at a trade as a viable post secondary equivalent. Society as a whole have encouraged their children to get a degree in whatever they like. We have many people with degrees who are unable to find employment in their chosen field.

To improve or build on the system, we could provide a tax break for employers who hire apprentices. This would allow all employers an equal opportunity to access the funding.

The GNWT currently has a wage subsidy available to employers who hire new apprentices to help with the cost of training new and inexperienced trades people. Maybe to encourage employers to hire more women they could receive a higher wage subsidy.

We also need to encourage women to explore trades as a career. 50% of the population are women and for far too long trades have been looked at as good option for males. It is proven women make excellent trades people.

I happen to know a few who have helped and encouraged me to try carpentry and not shy away from learning more about how things work in my home and the mechanics of my vehicle and boat. More and more I see women who enjoy working with their hands and are very good at it.

The polytechnic could bring a new place for women specific trades training. Many provinces are hosting women in trades specific training so women can ease into this Male dominated world which sometimes can be intimidating. These women only courses could give women the opportunity to learn and not have the pressure of competing with men who have been groomed since birth to follow in their fathers footsteps.

## Education Reform

In the closing days of the 18th Assembly the GNWT Minister of Education called for the need of a reform of our Educational System. A recent CBC article stated “In the 2016-17 school year, only eight per cent of students enrolled in Grade 9 in small communities achieved acceptable standards in standardized math tests. In regional centres, 41.2 per cent of students were at an acceptable level. In English language arts, 17.7 per cent of Grade 9 students in small communities were at an acceptable level, while in regional centres 53 per cent were.”

What do you believe needs to be done so that this new Educational Reform actually produces the positive results we all want when previous Education Reforms failed to meaningfully produce positive results?

First I would like to acknowledge the work of all of the teachers in the NWT. The teachers work diligently to deliver the curriculum as required by the department. The department faces extremely daunting challenges to improve the results for all subjects specifically English and Math.

I would also like to see an extension of the cultural orientation for new teachers arriving in the North. They also need to recognize the actions of the Truth and reconciliation calls to action. Our cultures are inherently different and must be recognized as such. No one culture is better than another.

I believe the Foundational Statements (see below) as developed by the department are a positive direction but we must be realistic as to the complexity of the issue. Students need to see the benefit of an education and we need to provide incentives and motivation to ensure both students and parents have the tools they need.

These Foundational Statements summarily reiterated are:

Relationships: Meaningful relationships with self, others, ideas and the land are the foundation for all learning.

Ecological Understanding: Education in the NWT is a living system of connections, each affecting an individual's relationships and well-being.

Identity: A positive sense of identity is actively supported

Development of Self: Each person has multiple needs that must be met in order to grow and become a capable contributing person.

Learning Together: People construct knowledge and learn individually and together.

Diversity: Diversity is recognized and valued in the education system.

Strength and Growth: The ongoing growth of learners is nurtured.



## **Universal Child Care**

ECE commissioned a report regarding the benefits of Universal Child Care. Do you support universal child care in the NWT? What actions will you take to ensure this initiative moves ahead?

Universal Child Care is important and I will support the concept that all can participate in education. It is important that all eligible residents are given the advantage of schooling. I will work in the legislature to support the program so that those in need have access.

We need to ensure there is sufficient space for all children, otherwise this will be an unfair benefit for those who have child care arranged. It might also see an increase of unlicensed day homes, which is a health and safety concern. Until the waiting list is sitting at 2-3 months, this will not be equitable and the competition to get your kids into child care will likely see some very unscrupulous patterns arise.

I recommend building much needed facilities, within proximation of schools, wherever possible, so we might be able to leverage after school care programs. I see this as more of a priority. We should also ensure there are certified programs to train child care workers and they must recognize the significance of the indigenous culture of each region. Having a distant learning option will help properly educate and train residents from all communities.

## **School Funding**

Currently funding for schools is determined on previous years enrolment, which does not take into consideration the needs of individual schools. What changes can be made to fully support schools based on actual student needs rather than simply on the enrolment numbers.

Education needs in the schools are great and varied. Every educator, and I am sure most parents, believe schools need more resources. The schools face challenges with the diverse needs of the students. A direct student funding model has historically been used but needs to be reviewed and supplemented to get more resources to areas of need.

I believe the existing format of basing funding levels on previous years enrolment is an inadequate measure. There are years with influxes of families being transferred to the North with the RCMP and DND, for example, so the actual numbers fluctuate.

The funding levels do not take into consideration the number of students who require some extra attention due to their special needs. If one school has a much higher proportion of these students, that is not reflected in the funding levels. These schools need additional resources to hire additional EA's. These are critical positions that assist our teachers to ensure all kids receive the guaranteed level of education they deserve and are entitled to. The reality is, there are more and more children requiring extra assistance in classrooms.

The whole funding structure needs to be overhauled and reviewed to reflect the realities of each of the school boards needs. Right now we have school boards competing for the funds, rather than working collectively. It's become a competitive 'market', if you will.

We need to actively engage the Education Leaders Group to ensure they are part of the solution.

Look, we need to invest in our future, which is our community's children. If we fail them, we fail our Territory, end of sentence.

### Commission scolaire francophone Territoires du Nord-Ouest

Given that the growth of the francophone/francophile community is an important economic factor for the whole of the Northwest Territories, what will you do, if elected, so that the GNWT's Department of Education undertakes good faith negotiations with the CSFTNO to work collaboratively to reach a win-win solution where admissions to its French first language schools are concerned, and seek a better understanding of its obligations under s.23 of the *Charter*?

Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms spells it out very clearly, in my opinion (see below). The fact this is in the courts, wasting tax payers' dollars doesn't make sense. To me, it's a no brainer, but there may be some underlying factors the public is not being made aware of that cannot be shared due to current litigation.

If the existing GNWT team is not working in a collaborative manner, perhaps an independent mediator should be brought in to help move discussions along so they are productive and fair.

#### 23.(1) Citizens of Canada

(a) whose first language learned and still understood is that of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province in which they reside, or

(b) who have received their primary school instruction in Canada in English or French and reside in a province where the language in which they received that instruction is the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province,

have the right to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in that language in that province.

(2) Citizens of Canada of whom any child has received or is receiving primary or secondary school instruction in English or French in Canada, have the right to have all their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the same language.

(3) The right of citizens of Canada under subsections (1) and (2) to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of a province

(a) applies wherever in the province the number of children of citizens who have such a right is sufficient to warrant the provision to them out of public funds of minority language instruction; and

(b) includes, where the number of those children so warrants, the right to have them receive that instruction in minority language educational facilities provided out of public funds.

# **YELLOWKNIFE NORTH**

**RESPONSES FROM CORY VANTHUYNE**

## Education Public Forum

### 1. Trades as a path

Trades are a critical part of the NWT industry, with many students developing an interest in this career path through the program offerings in our schools. Whether or not they receive a high school diploma, apprentices must pass an academic exam as part of their entrance to trades.

Trades in the NWT are affected by many factors, including Aurora College, the possibility of a polytechnic university, the safety and fair treatment of young apprentices, and incentives for employers to take on apprentices and tradespeople.

How do you plan to build on the foundations that we have, and remove barriers to our youth becoming part of the trades' workforce?

### Trades Answers

- The trades are near and dear to me. I apprenticed in carpentry and cabinet making and I was on the Board for Skills Canada-NWT some time ago.
- There continues to be a demand for Trades in Canada and in the NWT specifically. Our own projections for jobs in the future show this is an area of significant opportunity for youth.
- I like what I see at here with the Kiberlite Centre and at Sir John with the great vocational programs. We need journey certified tradespeople working in schools to teach practical skills and courses. Getting youth interested early in these types of careers and providing them with opportunities to experience practical hands on learning is necessary. Exposure to trades through partnerships with groups such as Skills Canada-NWT and creating opportunities for job site visits and on-the-job training need to be increased within our schools. Bring back the Work Experience Program.
- I would like to see active promotion of trades and technology fields through career counselling needs to be emphasized in our school system.

- Aurora College needs to be able to offer in-demand trades programs and pre-trades programs to support industry when apprentices are needed. If not we suffer the same fate of Industry hiring southerners to fill northern jobs.

## **2. Education Reform**

In the closing days of the 18th Assembly the GNWT Minister of Education called for the need of a reform of our Educational System. A recent CBC article stated “In the 2016-17 school year, only eight per cent of students enrolled in Grade 9 in small communities achieved acceptable standards in standardized math tests. In regional centres, 41.2 per cent of students were at an acceptable level. In English language arts, 17.7 per cent of Grade 9 students in small communities were at an acceptable level, while in regional centres 53 per cent were.”

What do you believe needs to be done so that this new Educational Reform actually produces the positive results we all want when previous Education Reforms failed to meaningful produce positive results?

### **Education Reform Answers**

- Reform of our education system could happen in a number of ways. We need to consider all of our options.
- One thing that must be considered is how our system is structured. We have a number of districts and now also Indigenous Governments seeking to have a voice and potentially draw down jurisdiction for education. This means that our system is becoming de-centralized and complex. We’re a territory of 44 thousand people and a system serving about 8 thousand students.
- Our system needs to be better at recruiting and retaining staff such as teachers and other specialized roles. In Yellowknife and the regions we’re doing Ok but in the communities staff recruitment and retention is challenging. We need improvements in this area for certain.
- Our system also needs to be able to work more seamlessly with other sectors especially Health but also Justice to provide support to students, and in many cases their families.

- Most importantly to me, we need to see schools as service hubs with child care, health screening and counselling services which would allow for students needs to be met in the place where they spend the most time and where they are likely to be within their communities.

## **Universal Child Care**

ECE commissioned a report regarding the benefits of Universal Child Care. Do you support universal child care in the NWT? What actions will you take to ensure this initiative moves ahead?

## **Universal Child Care Answers**

- Universal Child Care is an interesting concept and I'm open to the discussion, but we need to think carefully about whether we need to invest that much money into something when the needs may be better met in other less expensive and possibly more effective ways.
- Not every community has the same child care needs. For example some small communities may prefer for extended families to care for children so operating a licensed program for one or two children may not make the most sense. In other words a one size fits all approach may not make the most sense.
- Exploring the specific demands or needs in each of our communities, and in the case of Yellowknife, in different parts of the city, is important to get a better picture of the challenges so that we can design specific solutions for those challenges.
- In communities where there is larger demand but no space I would work to have government build space or renovate existing space ideally co-located with a school. I would also look at ensuring that child care space is incorporated into new capital projects such as new schools or a new Polytechnic.
- I would also continue to invest in training, supports and incentives for early childhood educators because quality care is important. Incentivizing people to take this training and paying these educators appropriately will lead to better and safer care for our children.

### 3. School Funding

Currently funding for schools is determined on previous years enrolment, which does not take into consideration the needs of individual schools. What changes can be made to fully support schools based on actual student needs rather than simply on the enrolment numbers.

#### School Funding Answers

- Admittedly, I'm not that familiar with the funding aspects between the ECE and the schools. My understanding is that linking school funding to student enrolment is not unique and is a common practice across the country.
- For me it's a case of making sure education bodies are sufficiently funded and given flexibility within that funding to make decisions about how to shift resources from one school to another or within their own programming to meet students needs.
- And we need to make sure that investments in supports to students such as Education Assistants, counselling or other specialized services receive necessary increases over time in order to meet the needs of our students that require extra attention or support to move forward in learning.
- As it relates to teachers, I keep hearing stories of teachers paying out of their own pocket to fund different projects.
- If we have to re-evaluate the funding model then I am open to that idea. Because I believe we need to make sure that we are meeting the needs of the students and we also need to make sure the Department of ECE is able to identify its resources for each school year and properly make its case to the GNWT Financial Management Secretariat so that those resources and funds get appropriated each year.

#### CSFTNO/Relations with GNWT

**Question:** At the beginning of the 18th Legislative Assembly, the working relationship between the CSFTNO and the Department of Education was good. It has since deteriorated. In May, 2019, a Judicial Review hearing was held in Yellowknife regarding a request for the admission of a child who speaks French fluently to École Allain St-Cyr, but whose request for admission did not meet the strict criteria of the *New Immigrants* stream of the *Ministerial Directive on the*

*Admission of Students to Francophone Schools (2016)*. July 2, 2019, Justice Rouleau rendered a positive decision in the case of W.B. stating that the minister had to apply the object of s.23 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Justice Rouleau cancelled the previous decisions of the minister and instructed her to reconsider the request. July 25, 2019, the Minister of Education advised the CSFTNO and said parent that it was appealing the court's decision, however, the Minister of Education told four families that she would allow them to present new documents to substantiate their requests and that she would uphold the order of the court and reconsider their requests for admissions. On August 30, 2019, the Friday prior to the commencement of the school year, the Minister of Education refused, once again, the four requests for admission, and a fifth new request, stating that the Department had to safeguard the quality of French first language programming in the Northwest Territories. The CSFTNO is disputing this claim. The Government of the Northwest Territories has also asked for intervener status in the Supreme Court case relevant to the *Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique, Fédération des parents francophones de la Colombie-Britannique, Annette Azar-Diehl, Stéphane Perron and Marie-Nicole Dubois vs the Province of British Columbia and the Minister of Education of British Columbia* that will be heard in Winnipeg on September 26, 2019 in Winnipeg. Although there are only five provincial jurisdictions that will intervene in this case, the GNWT took it upon themselves to be one of the interveners. This action demonstrates, yet again, the GNWT's lack of understanding of s. 23 of the *Charter* and its object, thus further alienating the CSFTNO.

Given that the growth of the francophone/francophile community is an important economic factor for the whole of the Northwest Territories, what will you do, if elected, so that the GNWT's Department of Education undertakes good faith negotiations with the CSFTNO to work collaboratively to reach a win-win solution where admissions to its French first language schools are concerned, and seek a better understanding of its obligations under s.23 of the *Charter*?

**ANSWER:** We have to remember there is a legal obligation for the GNWT, and the Minister of Education specifically, to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of French first language students enrolled in French first language schools and also to ensure that the language taught and spoken in those schools is truly French first language.

What we need to do is stop going to court and get back to having that positive relationship you noted at the beginning of the question.

I fully respect the CSFTNO and I have had a very positive and supportive working relationship with them. If re-elected I commit to continue building on those positive relations and I want to see the GNWT and the CSFTNO come together and start an important conversation about devolving more responsibilities to the Board so that they can have the autonomy and authority to make the key decisions that will affect their schools and their children's futures. I believe the Board is doing great things and has shown already that they have the ability to make good policy decisions. So, let's work toward giving them more decision-making authority so they can best serve the Francophone community!



# **YELLOWKNIFE SOUTH**

**RESPONSES FROM GAELEEN MACPHERSON**

**Yellowknife Education Forum Questions**  
**Gaeleen MacPherson – MLA Candidate, Yellowknife South**

**1. Trades as a Path**

Trades are a critical part of the NWT industry, with many students developing an interest in this career path through the program offerings in our schools. Whether or not they receive a high school diploma, apprentices must pass an academic exam as part of their entrance to trades.

Trades in the NWT are affected by many factors, including Aurora College, the possibility of a polytechnic university, the safety and fair treatment of young apprentices, and incentives for employers to take on apprentices and tradespeople.

How do you plan to build on the foundations that we have, and remove barriers to our youth becoming part of the trades' workforce?

Trades are a critical part of the Northern economy. They are in high demand and too few Northerners are entering into the trades resulting in more of these positions being filled by people residing in the south.

So, what's the issue? Part of this could be because of the fact that there is still a stigma associated with the trades as opposed to an education in fields that are perceived as 'professional' in nature. So, firstly, in addition to offering trades options in our schools, we also need to promote the opportunities trades provide students to build careers in a field that plays just as important a role in our economy as a teacher, accountant or engineer.

Secondly, we need to look at the graduation requirements to ensure that they are not unintentionally disadvantaging students who intend on entering the trades rather than attend other post-secondary options. In addition to this, once a student makes a determination on the trades stream, we need to ensure that we ramp up support for students in the core maths and sciences – subjects that students entering the trades need in order to even enter a trades program. Direct support in the maths and sciences need to align with the type of trade that the student is interested in obtaining as level of maths and sciences knowledge is different for a welding trade as compared to an instrumentation technician, for example.

Finally, we need to ensure that when we develop the Polytechnic University that it retains the successful programming that Aurora College currently provides, including trades training. We must ensure that the Polytechnic University is focused on offering programs that build much-needed skills here in the North so that we are educating students here and truly building ourselves a sustainable Northern workforce.

Bottom line is we need to ensure when our students graduate from secondary school, they generally meet the entrance requirements for programming at the Polytechnic University.

## **2. Education Reform**

In the closing days of the 18th Assembly the GNWT Minister of Education called for the need of a reform of our Educational System. A recent CBC article stated “In the 2016-17 school year, only eight per cent of students enrolled in Grade 9 in small communities achieved acceptable standards in standardized math tests. In regional centres, 41.2 per cent of students were at an acceptable level. In English language arts, 17.7 per cent of Grade 9 students in small communities were at an acceptable level, while in regional centres 53 per cent were.”

What do you believe needs to be done so that this new Educational Reform actually produces the positive results we all want when previous Education Reforms failed to meaningful produce positive results?

For true Education Reform, we need all key stakeholders at the table, n particular Indigenous and community representation. How can we truly try to understand what is happening that is leading to these low performance difficulties without the critical feedback from the communities? The old adage “It takes a village to raise a child” includes their education – we need all service providers and support staff to work together.

We have huge social issues both in our city and across the North and if we believe that these are not getting into homes and impacting our youth, we are sorely mistaken. What happens at home, impacts a child’s ability to learn. So, we also need an approach to support services whereby students coming from broken homes or difficult home lives are receiving support from a network that doesn’t just include health and social services, but includes education as well. Students spend most of their time at school; they build relationships with teachers, often confiding in teachers. This network of support is important to providing holistic services that are stronger in impact together.

We also need more resources at the early education level to ensure students entering school already behind their peers receive the necessary supports to correct the course sooner, thereby improving performance in later years of school.

## **3. Universal Child Care**

ECE commissioned a report regarding the benefits of Universal Child Care. Do you support universal child care in the NWT? What actions will you take to ensure this initiative moves ahead?

Universal childcare is a necessity. It not only ensures that children have adequate childcare while parents are at work, it benefits our entire economy. By allowing both parents to work, they are earning more money, and yes paying more taxes, but they are also spending more locally, allowing growth to occur across many sectors of our economy. And those additional taxes that are being received because there are more people in the workforce can help to offset the additional costs of this initiative.

Universal childcare doesn't necessarily mean free, but it certainly means that it should be affordable. The constituents in Yellowknife South that I have chatted with on this topic have acknowledged that they would be willing to pay; they just need the availability to be there. So, our focus needs to be on removing the current obstacles, whether that is out-dated legislation or legislation that is unnecessarily too restricting, so that availability is where it needs to be and costs are affordable.

#### **4. School Funding**

Currently funding for schools is determined on previous years enrolment, which does not take into consideration the needs of individual schools. What changes can be made to fully support schools based on actual student needs rather than simply on the enrolment numbers.

Perhaps a first change to the approach to education funding could be to ensure that funding is based not on a FTE calculation, but on actual heads registered, with quarterly updates on these actuals to reflect changes in registration throughout the year.

Why I am not a fan of calculating funding on a FTE basis is because even a student that is a half-time student, for example, could be using the same support services, such as school counselling, as a full-time student. By using a FTE we are already underfunding a school.

The other change that I would support is funding based not just on enrolment, but also on need. Annual assessments of students who require additional supports within each school, for example, should be completed to determine whether all supports planned for are required, or more supports are required.

I think we also need to reverse the trend of having more PYs at the higher grades in our education system as compared to the lower grades, in particular JK and K. Early education builds the basis for education and for understanding the needs of students, and for those students in particular who are low-income or who come from homes with difficulties, it is likely that they are entering JK and K below students fortunate enough not to be in this situation. If we are not offering more supports in these formative years, then we are not getting these students to parity in terms of performance with their fellow students early enough for there not to be issues in later grades. More resources in the early years of education reduces the likelihood for more resources when students are mature and don't need as much direct support.

5. Given that the growth of the francophone/francophile community is an important economic factor for the whole of the Northwest Territories, what will you do, if elected, so that the GNWT's Department of Education undertakes good faith negotiations with the CSFTNO to work collaboratively to reach a win-win solution where admissions to its French first language schools are concerned, and seek a better understanding of its obligations under s.23 of the Charter?

My personal belief is that parents and students should have free choice about which school they attend, so whether that is attending the local Catholic school in a French immersion program or attending school through the local French school board, I don't believe that should be something decided by the GNWT. Once this change is made, funding can truly be made based on enrolment. If elected, I would encourage other MLAs, and in particular the new Minister of ECE, to make changes necessary so this choice is fair to all.

# **YELLOWKNIFE SOUTH**

**RESPONSES FROM CAROLINE WAWZONEK**

# CAROLINE WAWZONEK – CANDIDATE FOR YELLOWKNIFE SOUTH

## Election Forum Questions

### 1. *Trades as a path*

*Trades are a critical part of the NWT industry, with many students developing an interest in this career path through the program offerings in our schools. Whether or not they receive a high school diploma, apprentices must pass an academic exam as part of their entrance to trades.*

*Trades in the NWT are affected by many factors, including Aurora College, the possibility of a polytechnic university, the safety and fair treatment of young apprentices, and incentives for employers to take on apprentices and tradespeople.*

*How do you plan to build on the foundations that we have, and remove barriers to our youth becoming part of the trades' workforce?*

I would like to see ongoing support for trades that:

1. Encourages students; and
2. Supports the availability of northern apprenticeships and employment.

Ways to encourage students to enter and complete trades programs includes:

- Ensure that schools have modern equipment, appropriate workshop spaces and qualified teachers;
- Provide pathways to school completion that highlight and compliment trades opportunities as contemplated by the Education Renewal Initiative;
- Continue to promote equal esteem for trades programs as positive pathways for school completion including through public perception influencing and rewarding success such as at skills competitions;
- Actively seek opportunities for partnerships and investment from industry such as access to internships and mentorships; and
- Encourage collaboration amongst existing adult learning institutions to ensure that our community, and students, have access to the best possible variety of complementary, not competing, courses and programs.

Support for apprenticeships and, ultimately, northern-based skilled employment can be encouraged through:

- A review of the Student Financial Aid system to ensure students have access to funding and flexible options for repayment or forgiveness on return to the NWT;
- A task force to deliver procurement policy revisions that will better incentivize ways to keep wage dollars in the north, particularly in industries that rely on skilled trades, and encourage the growth of small and medium sized businesses;
- Encouraging the growth of a "knowledge economy" that values entrepreneurship and innovation in a way that promotes skilled trades as key players in this kind of economic

development such as: supporting communal workshop spaces and funding programs to develop early stage prototypes.

### **3. Education Reform**

*In the closing days of the 18th Assembly the GNWT Minister of Education called for the need of a reform of our Educational System. A recent CBC article stated “In the 2016-17 school year, only eight per cent of students enrolled in Grade 9 in small communities achieved acceptable standards in standardized math tests. In regional centres, 41.2 per cent of students were at an acceptable level. In English language arts, 17.7 per cent of Grade 9 students in small communities were at an acceptable level, while in regional centres 53 per cent were.”*

*What do you believe needs to be done so that this new Educational Reform actually produces the positive results we all want when previous Education Reforms failed to meaningful produce positive results?*

The NWT has dedicated teachers and is doing ground breaking work in curriculum development. What I believe we need is political leadership that: 1) has long term vision and is accountable for performance indicators along the way to achieving that vision; and 2) is prepared to create the necessary links between healthy children, healthy families and learning success. Finally, I want to better integrate a long term approach to economic growth that inspires entrepreneurship and innovation starting in schools.

#### **1. Long term vision and accountability**

When the Auditor General reviewed the NWT's education system in 2010, the recommendations highlighted the lack of accountability for continuous improvement in student achievement. In response, ECE engaged in research of best practices in curriculum across Canada and began a shift in the way we understand education towards being a larger part of a student's relationships and community.

The model for change is based on research and experience. It addresses the challenges of student and family engagement within schools, recruitment and retention of teachers across the NWT, the impacts of health on a student's ability to learn, the need to prioritize different paths for education completion and infrastructure challenges from internet access to physical buildings. It also focuses on the importance of ensuring each student's individual capacities are encouraged and supported.

The renewal framework is visionary and sweeping – far beyond the capacity of schools or teachers to accomplish without significant political leadership and investment. This is why we need leadership to take up the vision and press forward in a way that drives results.

Seeing results from changes in educational approaches and programming will not occur all in a single year. If we make significant impacts on the cohort of children entering junior kindergarten, we might not see the full impacts of those changes until those children are in later grades. However, I believe we can identify ways to measure the impacts of changes in the short term so



that we can maintain a vision for the long term and know that positive impacts are occurring without unnecessarily rebuilding or restructuring.

## 2. Healthy students able to attend and ready to learn

I have talked to professionals involved in both health care and education. People from both sectors are saying that we need to do a better job integrating health and education services. The health sector sees social impacts such as education having a significant influence on a person's overall health, which in turn impacts a person's ability to earn a living and maintain housing. Meanwhile educators know that children have better success as learners when they are healthy, well nourished and have a sense of safety and security in their lives.

Calls to break through departmental silos and increase inter-department collaboration are not new. As a starting point, our political leadership should lead by example and demonstrate a consistent commitment to collaborate and communicate with one another. Also, inter-departmental collaboration needs to happen before and during the creation of budgets so there is no disincentive against cooperate arising from fear that budgets will be reduced, overtaken or amalgamated.

I also believe that cross-sector collaboration needs to include voices from the front lines of service delivery including both medical professionals, particularly from pediatrics, as well as teachers. My vision would be two-fold:

- a professional working group composed of people providing health and education services who can troubleshoot specific challenges and provide best-practices and simple program “tweaks” up to management; and
- a senior management working group that uses the information flowing the from the professional working group, identifies program and budget areas where there are overlaps or gaps in order to make the best use of all resources and advocate for investment where it is needed most.

We cannot expect teachers to fill gaps in mental health services or supports for children who require adaptive learning supports. Work that is underway to establish in-school mental health counselling and school-based teams to deliver a suite of specialized supports including occupational therapy and language needs to be supported.

Finally, one key way I believe we can diversify our economy is by shifting focus to a “knowledge economy.” This is far more than support for a polytechnical institution. It is an early stage vision begun within the GNWT to think differently about our economy towards one that values and rewards the growth of entrepreneurship, innovation and opportunities to build on unique or particular NWT strengths. It is an approach to diversity and growth that can impact across industries and sectors. For example, funding and organizational supports could be directed towards research corridors along side new or developing transportation infrastructure, cold weather research and testing, land-based learning, remediation technology, rare earth minerals and other geology, arctic climate science and Traditional Knowledge from health to biodiversity. I believe we should be encouraging children to be aware of the NWT's strengths and uniqueness

at a young age. I also believe that with leadership and investment, the educational renewal can be an opportunity to create this kind of dynamic understanding of our future economy.

#### **4. Universal Child Care**

*ECE commissioned a report regarding the benefits of Universal Child Care. Do you support universal child care in the NWT? What actions will you take to ensure this initiative moves ahead?*

Investment in early childhood educational programming has one of the best returns on investment: it supports the long-term health and potential for learning in children and helps parents, particularly women, return to the workforce. In the NWT, it also has the potential to lower the cost of living and make the NWT a more desirable place to live.

The 2015 Feasibility Study into universal affordable daycare described the state of the childcare system in the Northwest Territories as “immature” and observed that total government spending per child was low compared to the rest of Canada, which is already low compared internationally. The introduction of funded Junior Kindergarten has no doubt improved that landscape in some ways but has also left many families struggling to manage school after care.

I support the goal of universal affordable and available child care. This was already a goal of the 18th Legislative Assembly and was in the 2019-2022 action plan but without investment or political leadership behind it. I believe we can again make this a goal and should start to work effectively towards achieving it.

There are many ways that more affordable and available childcare could be rolled out. The feasibility study looked at the models in Sweden and Quebec but also mentioned the existence of a system in PEI that, although more expensive than the Quebec model, took significant steps to provide greater availability. We might also decide to have a model more heavily scaled to income keeping in mind the importance of ensuring standards in programming and childcare ratios.

I also believe that there are shorter term regulatory changes that could help improve childcare in the NWT. First, regulations impacting after care for children in schools should be streamlined to the reality that these are children who are in school-age programming. They should not be subject to daycare rules. Second, we should consider whether people living in public housing should be allowed to operate licenced daycare facilities in their homes which could potentially provide significant availability.

Last, I note that the lack of a national child care strategy or action plan continues to come up at the Federal level. If the NWT is able to take steps towards setting up a system of that moves meaningfully towards universally available child care, we will be better placed to advocate on the national stage for Federal involvement and funding.

## **5. School Funding**

Currently funding for schools is determined on previous years enrolment, which does not take into consideration the needs of individual schools. What changes can be made to fully support schools based on actual student needs rather than simply on the enrolment numbers.

Students are so much more than people at desks! The simple number of students at a school during a single point in time survey might be a starting point but does not paint the full picture of a particular school's funding needs.

I believe we need to find a funding solution that more accurately reflects the supports and programs that are individualized to the needs of the students. This will not only help the individual student achieve their full potential but also helps the teacher in the class and supports the needs of all of the students to have their teacher's attention.

I believe that a task force made up from ECE together with the school districts and school boards should be mandated to come up with a funding evaluation method that is more reflective of actual needs over the course of a school year. I believe the timeline on this should be immediate with a view to implementing it hopefully in time to create budgets for the 2020-21 school year or, at the latest, for 2021-22.

CAROLINE WAWZONEK – MLA CANDIDATE FOR YELLOWKNIFE SOUTH  
CSFTNO – EDUCATION FORUM QUESTION

Given that the growth of the francophone/francophile community is an important economic factor for the whole of the Northwest Territories, what will you do, if elected, so that the GNWT's Department of Education undertakes good faith negotiations with the CSFTNO to work collaboratively to reach a win-win solution where admissions to its French first language schools are concerned, and seek a better understanding of its obligations under s.23 of the *Charter*?

I want to see a return to the positive working relationship between CSFTNO and the Department of Education. I also want to see the continued growth of the francophone/Francophile community in Yellowknife. That said, my children attend a French immersion school and I am fully aware that it is not the same experience as a francophone school. I believe a diversity of cultures and languages strengthens Yellowknife as a whole both in terms of our quality of life as well as for economic growth therefore I want to help take steps to encourage that diversity.

In order to achieve these goals, I would support resuming good faith negotiations with CSFTNO about admissions and an understanding of s.23 rights. In those discussions, I believe the government should be prepared to collaborate to establish principles and objectives within the directive to govern ministerial discretion for admissions in order to better define how a minister can exercise discretion for admission. I also note that the current directive allows the Minister to issue an approval based on "any other relevant considerations" which may be creating a discretion that is simply too broad. If feasible, I would like to consider whether or how the CSFTNO can be a closer partner at the stage of final decision making.