

Yellowknife Education District No. 1

Strategic Priorities 2021-2024



What are strategic priorities?

All organizations benefit from structures that frame the direction and work planned over a period of time. As an education body, Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1) recognizes the importance of having a vision and plan for developing lifelong learners.

How were YK1's Strategic Priorities determined?

In early 2021, YK1's Board of Trustees undertook the work of reviewing their vision and Strategic Priorities. Over a series of facilitator-guided working sessions, Trustees, Educational Services, and school administration met to examine the qualities of learners we want to cultivate, and the important skills and competencies that are needed now and in the future. They include: reflective, innovative/creative, collaborative, globally-aware, compassionate, digitally-fluent, effective communicators and critical thinkers. Over time - with research and collaboration - four important Strategic Priorities emerged that would be further developed as an action plan to guide YK1 in its initiatives and work. This is ongoing work that will respond to changing times and needs.

A significant shift in thinking around learning has been to view it as developing competency as a person - or developing a capable person. All of us have capacity. We all have skills and knowledge to show and share. Ensuring a strength-based approach to learning envelops many of the important directions YK1 has pursued over time. We recognize that learning is a social endeavour. We know that the social, emotional and mental health of all our learners is a critical part of how successful they will be. We honour the place where we are learning. We also acknowledge the need to be able to live in the current world where technology and the ability to innovate and create are essential. We can no longer categorize learning into isolated "silos" that are compartmentalized and separate. Finally, we know that we are stewards of Earth and our community. These newly developed Strategic Priorities provide the District with directions in which to focus its energy.

What are YK1's Strategic Priorities?

Yellowknife Education District No. 1 "Educating For Life"

We believe in and respect the diversity, identity and growth of all learners

WELLNESS

Cultivate a culture of holistic wellness

- Recognize the importance of relationships in learning
- Foster and promote personal wellness
- Create healthy, safe and caring learning environments

LEARNING

Ensure inclusive, equitable and authentic learning experiences

- Engage learners through meaningful and innovative teaching and learning practices
- Strive for excellence
- Celebrate diversity of all learners

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION

Honour and celebrate Indigenous Language and Culture for all learners

- Create a welcoming environment for all learners
- Integrate an Indigenous approach to education
- Strengthen Indigenous Language instruction

COMMUNITY

Foster critical understanding of local, national and global issues

- Inspire and pursue critical thinking through innovative and sustainable practices
- Embrace diversity and encourage empathy to promote global citizenship
- Model and encourage ethical leadership and engage in opportunities for service learning

What do YK1's Strategic Priorities mean?

When developing its four Strategic Priorities, YK1 considered the themes that arose from what we want learners to be able to do and the qualities and characteristics of a capable person we want them to develop into.

The areas are described on the following pages, separately, but we know they all work in tandem. As we were developing these directions, we realized that when we use the word 'learner' we include children and adults alike. We are all learners.

The four Strategic Priorities will be presented both linearly and as a flower. Recognizing that all four are integral and overlap, and are recursive, this can be captured in the visual of a flower. For other purposes, they will be displayed in a recognizable chart form. It is important to consider all of them as very much interconnected, much like learning. All four Strategic Priorities are also listed with a key statement to help make sense of the direction the District is taking.



WELLNESS

Build relationships and cultivate a culture of holistic wellness

Educators have always known that in order to help learners bloom, there must be a strong relationship between learners and educators. Now, more than ever, our learners are finding it difficult to connect and engage for many reasons. If we expect and want learners to take risks and try new things, they must feel safe and know they possess their own valuable gifts. The development of self must be respected and encouraged. Physical and mental wellness education promotes and develops all aspects of well-being.



INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION

Honour and celebrate Indigenous Language and Culture for all learners

We are incredibly fortunate to be living and learning on this land. It is our responsibility to honour those who were here before us, and learn the lessons we can learn from the land and people. These are an essential part of learning in our context. Exploring and instilling an appreciation of Indigenous ways of knowing speaks to the holistic development of our learners. A capable person is someone who is able to thrive and contribute in different contexts. Appreciating and honouring the language and culture, particularly of our area, allows everyone to participate by respecting and learning from different perspectives.

LEARNING

Ensure inclusive, equitable and authentic learning experiences

The primary goal of education is learning. Learning, once thought of as imparting facts and knowledge, is now realized to be a complex, many-faceted experience. Educational researchers agree that learning is much deeper than memorization and information recall. Deep and long-lasting learning involves understanding, relating ideas and making connections between prior and new knowledge. It requires independent and critical thinking and the ability to transfer knowledge to new and different contexts through authentic learning experiences. It also means ensuring we assume competence in all learners. Teaching is focused on the processes of learning as competencies that support the 21st century learner.



COMMUNITY

Foster critical understanding of local, national and global issues

Communities exist as mechanisms of mutual interest, support and necessity. As part of a global community, we want our learners to recognize their place and their responsibilities as members.

National and local challenges impact us and also provide opportunities to demonstrate innovation and creativity. As learners in this time and in the future, what we come to know about and understand will strengthen our ability to contribute to our immediate and further reaching communities.

Implementing YK1's Strategic Priorities

Every year, the District and schools reflect on the successes and challenges of the past year. They review goals and set new ones that apply to their unique context and align with the Board's Strategic Priorities. Through collaboration with staff, administration identifies goals within each of the priorities. These school improvement plans provide the structure that moves the goals forward. The goals directly connect to teaching and learning in the District, the classroom, and with all learners.

Part of the work involved in developing Strategic Priorities also includes planning for staff development, professional development and building in a review process. With our priorities in sight, we know that this will be an ongoing process and much like learning, it will be dynamic and responsive. Moving forward, YK1 will review its priorities and school improvement plans regularly to ensure they are in alignment and that we continue to move forward on our journey of lifelong learning.



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Indigenous



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Wellness

Educating for Life

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Learning

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Community

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