

# Creating Futures

A large, vibrant green brain is depicted as the canopy of a tree. The brain's gyri and sulci are clearly visible, giving it a textured, organic appearance. The brain-tree stands on a cracked, dry, brownish ground. A young boy in a light-colored t-shirt and shorts stands to the left of the tree's trunk, holding a red watering can and pouring water onto the base of the tree. The water is shown as a blue stream falling from the can. The background is a clear, light blue sky with several birds in flight. A white, flowing ribbon-like graphic element curves across the top of the page. In the upper right corner, there is a white rectangular box containing the text 'WINTER/SPRING 2022-23'. The overall scene is surreal and symbolic, representing the connection between nature, growth, and human cognition.

WINTER/SPRING 2022-23

## Time to TAP into Futures

The Trades Awareness Program prepares students for future careers

## Celebrate our Indigenous Cultural Richness

We work towards promoting cultural awareness and diversity in the South Slave, to highlight the cultural richness of the Indigenous people in our communities.

## Curb Toxic Masculinity

The effort to curb toxic masculinity before it takes root with Morris Green's Guys Work.

## JK-12 Curriculum Renewal

It's an exciting time for NWT schools with the introduction of a new adapted curriculum.

## Meeting the Mental Health Challenge

The South Slave Divisional Education Council makes a commitment to address mental health in our communities as part of a paradigm shift on how we can better support all of our schools in the South Slave.

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A SOUTH SLAVE DIVISIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL MAGAZINE



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## Meeting the Mental Health Challenge

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## Time to TAP into Futures

The Trades Awareness Program (TAP) brings high school students from the outlying communities of the South Slave Division for a hands-on introduction to the trades.



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## Curb Toxic Masculinity

The effort to curb toxic masculinity before it takes root with Morris Green's Guys Work - an open conversation about health and masculinity.



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## Celebrate our Indigenous Cultural Richness

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## Superintendent's Message

*"It does not require many words to speak the truth"*  
- Chief Joseph

There is an expression in science attributed to the famed physicist, Isaac Newton, that is quite appropriate for our current situation as a board. Newton is rumoured to have said in reference to his success that "If I have been able to see far, it's because I have stood on the shoulder of giants". The same could be said of the SSDEC.

The success the board has enjoyed in the last few months would not have been possible were it not for the work that was done by those who came before us. Their commitment to our communities built this organization. Their fingerprint is visible in many initiatives we continue to champion today; and most importantly, their ideals continue to be relevant and meaningful despite the fundamental changes in education recently.



In this spirit, the board continues to partner with several territorial, regional agencies, and First Nations to support literacy and numeracy initiatives that narrow the student achievement gap and support ever-increasing numbers of graduates each year. The implementation of the adopted BC Curriculum in the NWT reaffirms our commitment to these pillars and invites collaboration with our community partners to achieve even greater heights.

Our commitment to Indigenizing Education is evident in the fantastic work that our schools do, day in and day out, in providing indigenous values and teachings. Key in their directive is revitalizing indigenous languages where language thrives, as does culture.

In addition to the fundamentals of academic learning, social responsibility continues to be a key aspect of schooling across the region. In schools, our students learn and practice the fundamental skills that lead to citizenship. Through trial and error, they develop leadership skills and identities that honour the individual and the community. Learning is not an isolated pursuit that occurs in a vacuum, it's purposeful, complex, differentiated, and independent of timelines. Our job is to support the child and the teacher, to provide the resources to make this a reality and to celebrate their inevitable success.

As we launch the first edition of *Creating Futures*, the magazine of the SSDEC, we want to use this platform to celebrate our schools and programs, publicly chart a path forward and be open and transparent in our intentions. The articles within will highlight initiatives that enrich our communities and raise awareness about educational issues of territorial and regional importance.

Thank you to our School Communities and our many stakeholders who every day make a difference in the life of our students, creating their futures.

Dr. Souhail Soujah,  
SSDEC Superintendent



## Meeting the Mental Health Challenge

The South Slave Divisional Education Council (SSDEC) makes a commitment to address mental health in our communities as part of a paradigm shift in how we can better support our schools

Mental health has been a topic of conversation for as long as I have been an educator. It has enjoyed renewed interest given the high-profile athletes and celebrities openly discussing their own personal struggles. Take for example the struggles of Montreal Canadiens goalie, Carey Price. Price, a seasoned NHL player, took time off during last year's NHL season to tend to his wellbeing after years of struggle, and in his own words, "...neglecting my mental health."

Mental health issues are not exclusive to anyone population. Anxiety, psychological distress, social isolation, and disconnectedness are mental health consequences of everyday living. This was particularly aggravated during the COVID-19 Pandemic. During that time, our students, families, and communities were separated and often left to fend for themselves. At the end of COVID, upon their return to school, our students were no better off, as they return to "normal". Normal meant being good athletes, while remaining socially connected, academically proficient, and in some instances, work part time. As if the realities of living in the now were not hard enough after the pandemic, they were also expected to plan for an uncertain future that promised less and less. Environmental collapse, economic uncertainty, and an end to world peace for our students. Make no mistake, these are possibilities that are often identified as concerns for young people, and more likely than not, contribute to the fragility of their mental wellbeing.

In anticipating these concerns and wanting to be prepared to support our schools, several SSDEC administrators attended the Pan Canadian Summit on K-12 Workplace Wellbeing in Edmonton. At this conference, many experts on the field weighed in



“ We are each other’s keeper, and as such have a responsibility to look after each other. Mental health are not shameful words that ought to be whispered. ”



on the perils of stress and anxiety and the toll it takes on Mental Health. They spoke of the cost of lost work hours, the burden on families, and the excruciating isolation of being labelled. The answers were not about Yoga or meditation. None of the speakers advocated for quick fixes or over the counter remedies. Instead, they spoke about a collective responsibility.

Mental health is not an individual pursuit in the comfort of your home, but a systemic expectation that ought to permeate every institution. To take ownership of our own wellbeing as a collective ideology requires a paradigm shift that sees every individual as part of a greater concept. We are each other's keeper, and as such have a responsibility to look after each other. Mental health are not shameful words that ought to be whispered.

To this end, the SSDEC makes a commitment to our communities to prioritize the mental health, and wellbeing of our students, teachers, and support staff. Moving forward we will explore a system wide approach to proactively address mental health. This will include policies, infrastructures and organizational changes that will better support our schools and communities in looking after each other. This is a long-term commitment, a systemic change that will reimagine what we, the SSDEC, stand for as an organization. 🌊



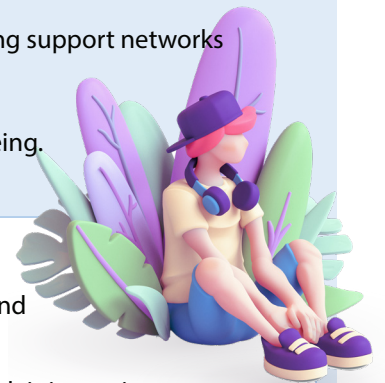


# The Importance of Mental Health Awareness

Mental health is crucial for overall well-being and involves how we feel, think, act, and interact with the world around us. It is about realizing our potential, coping with normal stresses, and making contributions to our communities. While each person's path to mental well-being is unique, good mental health is achievable for everyone.

- Building self-esteem, positive support networks, getting involved, building resiliency, recognizing emotions, and taking care of spiritual well-being are ways to improve mental health.
- Building self-esteem means accepting all of our abilities and weaknesses and using confidence to pursue goals and interests without comparing ourselves to others.
- Positive support networks, which can come from family, friends, or other important supporters, offer emotional, practical, and alternate points of view.
- Being involved in things that matter provides a sense of purpose and satisfaction, connects us with others who share similar interests, and helps us learn new skills and build confidence.
- Developing resiliency skills like problem-solving, assertiveness, and developing support networks helps us cope well with problems, stress, and difficult situations.

Recognizing emotions, expressing them in a way that respects everyone, and accepting all emotions, even difficult ones, is important for emotional well-being.



## MENTAL HEALTH TEEN TIPS

As a parent, it's important to talk to your teen about mental health. Many mental illnesses start during the teen years, and seeking help early can make a big difference.

To start the conversation, remind your teen that mental health is just as important as physical health, and that it's okay to have bad days or to ask for help.

Be aware of warning signs, and take your teen's concerns seriously. If they need additional support, offer alternatives like talking to a school counselor or seeking outside help from a doctor or mental health professional.

Remember, you don't need to have all the answers, just be open, curious, and compassionate.

## DON'T HESITATE TO SEEK HELP!

If you are experiencing a crisis or extreme distress, don't hesitate to seek help! There are crisis lines available 24/7 that can provide immediate support.

### Government of Canada's Mental Health Services

Youth Helpline at **1-888-668-6810** or text **WELLNESS** to **686868**

Adults Helpline at **1-866-585-0445** or text **WELLNESS** to **741741**

### Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority

Youth Helpline at **1-800-668-6868** or text the word **TALK** to **686868**

Adults Helpline at **1-800-661-0844**





# Trades Awareness Program

Introducing High School Students to Rewarding Careers in the Trades

The Trades Awareness Program (TAP) is a three-part initiative that brings together high school students for a week to explore the trades. The program is a joint venture and has partnerships with the South Slave Divisional Education Council (SSDEC), Aurora College, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), and Royal Bank of Canada (RBC).

TAP provides students with exposure to shops, equipment, and instructional expertise available at Aurora College and in the Fort Smith business community. Through TAP, students from across the South Slave region in the NWT can try out several trades to better understand the professions. The program is an excellent way for students to get a taste of several possible rewarding careers. The need for skilled trades professionals in the North and across Canada is high, making TAP an exceptional

way to support and encourage students to pursue additional career paths.

The program has three components: TAP Introductory, TAP Intensive and a TAP Trades Summer Camp. The Introductory program provides students from Fort Resolution, Fort Smith, Hay River, Lutsel K'e, and K'atloodeche First Nation Reserve with hands-on learning in several trades. Participating students earn Career & Technology Studies (CTS) credits toward their high school diplomas.

While at TAP, students also experience residence life at Aurora College's Thebacha Campus and fill their evenings with planned extracurricular activities.

The TAP Introductory program is well-planned and keeps students busy and authentically engaged. Each







day, they learn about basic skills in various trades, such as using a variety of saws, measuring tapes, and welders. It also includes workplace safety and career development sessions, and an extremely popular 'Trades Olympics' event where students compete against each other in a race that incorporates their newly acquired skills.

Students spend one full day in each of four different trades, carpentry, plumbing, cooking, electrical, welding, computer diagnosis and repair, heavy equipment technology, and environment and natural resources technology. In most years, local businesses have also partnered and generously provided more options for students in mechanics, aviation, and hairdressing.

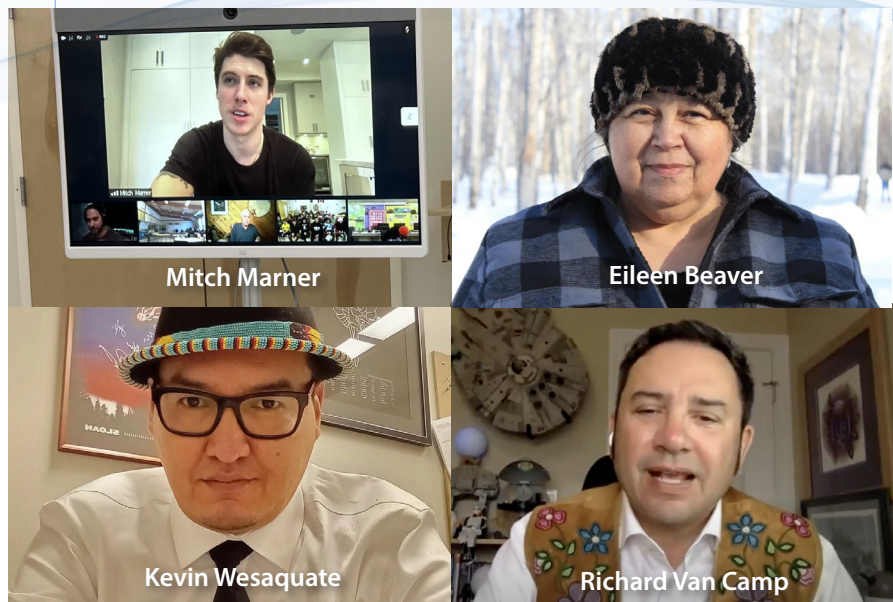
Completion of the TAP Introductory program is a prerequisite for students who are interested in returning to attend one or more TAP Intensive sessions. In the Intensive program, students complete a week in one trade of their choice, providing students with

more in-depth exposure to that trade. Some students have returned for a third and fourth Intensive session, when space is available, to gain further exposure in a different trade than they did in previous years.

Students are required to participate in all activities and behave respectfully at all times. They are informed that they are ambassadors for their schools and their communities and reminded that their conduct and effort should make their respective families and communities proud.

TAP has been a smashing success since its inception in 2005. The program has quickly expanded from a one-week pilot into a three-part program. The program is an exemplary way to introduce high school students to trades and encourage them to pursue rewarding careers. The TAP program is a valuable asset to the South Slave region in the NWT, providing students with skills that can benefit their communities and the broader region. 🦋





## ConnectedNorth

### Fostering Engagement and Enhancing Education Outcomes in Remote Indigenous Communities

For many remote Indigenous communities across Canada, access to quality education can be challenging. Often, these communities are located in isolated regions with limited resources, far from major cities and urban centres. Students in these communities face unique educational challenges, such as limited access to educational resources, isolation, and lack of exposure to diverse perspectives and experiences. To address these challenges, TakingIT-Global, a Canadian-based non-profit organization, developed the ConnectedNorth program.

ConnectedNorth is a live, interactive virtual learning experience that connects students and teachers with a range of educational resources and opportunities, in remote Indigenous communities. The program aims to increase students' sense of empowerment and improve personal and school life with ConnectedNorth.

ConnectedNorth is currently used by two schools in the South Slave region, Paul William Kaeser (PWK) in Fort Smith and Diamond Jenness school (DJSS) in Hay River, with additional schools set to join the program in the next two years. The implementation is guided by a set of principles that ensure that it is culturally appropriate, responsive, and respectful of the unique needs and strengths of each participating school. Students are supported

in their learning to think beyond the classroom.

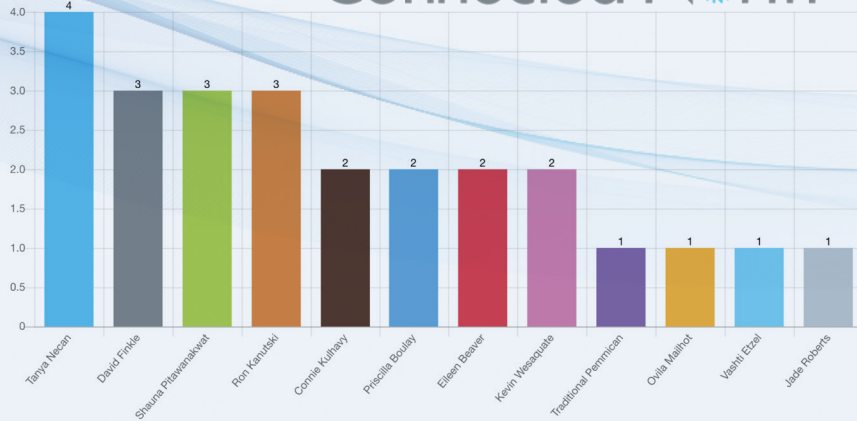
Content can be customized and adapted to meet school expectations. The program offers four categories of session delivery, including virtual field trips, cultural exchanges, teacher capacity building, and role models/future pathways. Sessions are needs-based and responsive, driven by students, teachers, and the community. Indigenous perspectives in content and collaborative processes ensure that the program is culturally appropriate and relevant to the unique cultures, local contexts, and priorities of each school. The program also incorporates relationship building through celebrating a diversity of voices and transforming lives through technology.

ConnectedNorth has already made a significant impact, despite its short tenure in our schools. Teachers report that ConnectedNorth sessions have helped engage students, contributing to their increased attendance in class and motivation for learning.

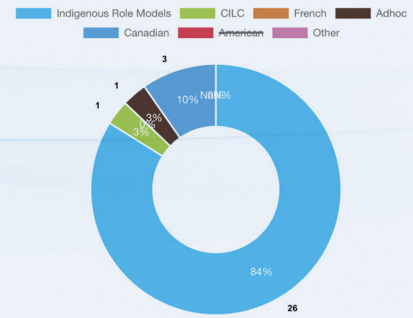
At PWK, students have participated in several sessions on a variety of subjects, including Social Studies, and Soapstone Carving. They have also engaged in unique cultural experiences, including making traditional pemmican and creating a watercolour painting of a buffalo with artist Kevin Wesaquate.

# Connected North

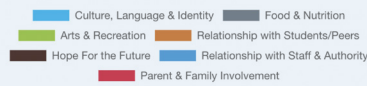
Sessions By Indigenous Provider



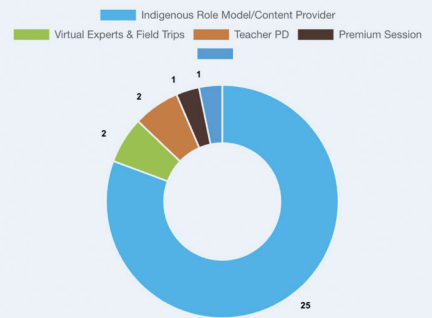
Sessions By Source



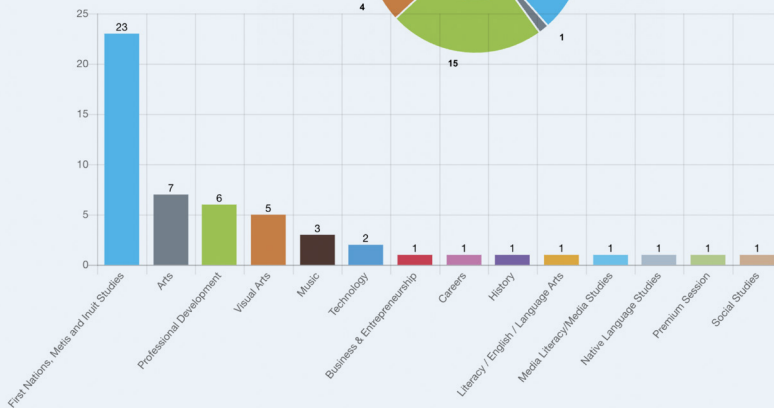
Sessions By Well-Being Indicator



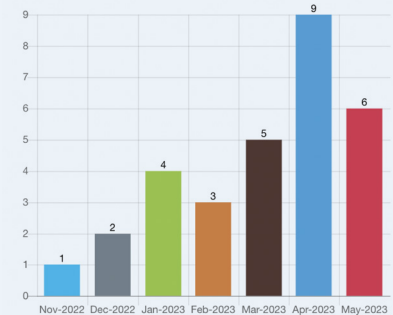
Type Of Session



Sessions By Subject



Sessions By Month



PWK also used ConnectedNorth to engage with local Elder Eileen Beaver, who is currently living in Edmonton with her family. The students loved seeing Eileen and reconnecting with her. She spoke to the junior high students about living in a good and respectful way. PWK has also participated in a school program with Mitch Marner (Toronto Maple Leaf's NHL player), and the South Slave Divisional Education Council's (SSDEC) board has used ConnectedNorth for the professional development of senior leadership.

Meanwhile at DJSS, ConnectedNorth has been used to provide traditional teachings with a focus on the history of the South Slave communities,

highlighting the traditional lifestyle of the Dene/Métis and the use of medicinal plants available in the area. Students have also engaged in a Birch Bark Painting session, where they learned about Métis people's history.

Other schools in the South Slave region are very excited to join the program in the next two years, as they have seen the positive impact ConnectedNorth has had at DJSS and PWK. With its culturally responsive and respectful approach to education, ConnectedNorth has the potential to transform the lives of students in remote Indigenous communities and create a brighter future for all.

# Curb Toxic Masculinity

## The effort to curb toxic masculinity before it takes root with Morris 'Moe' Green

Efforts to curb toxic masculinity have become increasingly prevalent in recent years, as the damaging effects of gender-based violence have become more widely acknowledged. One educator who is leading the way to change this narrative of masculinity and gender equity before it takes root is Morris "Moe" Green, whose program Guys Work is aimed at teaching boys in grades 6 to 9 what it usually means to be masculine in today's society.

One of Green's core mandates is to normalize seeking help, as many boys are conditioned to believe that they should keep their problems to themselves. The program covers many topics such as sexual coercion, power dynamics in intimate-partner relationships, gender-based violence, and much more. Through information sharing, discussion, and group exercises, Green encourages self-reflection and vulnerability, aiming to help boys deconstruct the social gender expectations and pressures placed upon them.

The more people learn about toxic masculinity and the more people get help for it, the more likely we are to see changes on a bigger scale as society may put less pressure on men and boys to act a

certain way. Toxic masculinity is characterized by the extreme pressure males feel to conform to traditional gender roles, which emphasize toughness, emotional repression, and a drive for power and status. These cultural pressures can have detrimental effects on the mental health of men and can contribute to harmful behaviours such as aggression, sexism, and misogyny.

The goal of the program is to help boys navigate the intense pressures and expectations around masculinity, resulting in better mental and physical health, and ultimately in healthier relationships with those around them.

Toxic masculinity is not limited to men, nor is it an inherent quality of masculinity itself. Rather, it is a societal construct that has been perpetuated over generations and reinforced through media, education, and social norms. While some degree of traditional gender roles may be natural, toxic masculinity takes it to an extreme, placing unrealistic expectations on men to conform to a narrow set of behaviours and traits.

The question now is not simply if we can stop

One of Green's Male Toxic Masculinity workshops at Paul William Kaeser High School (PWK) in Fort Smith, NT



“ Toxic masculinity is a cultural phenomenon that places unrealistic and harmful expectations on boys to behave a certain way. ”



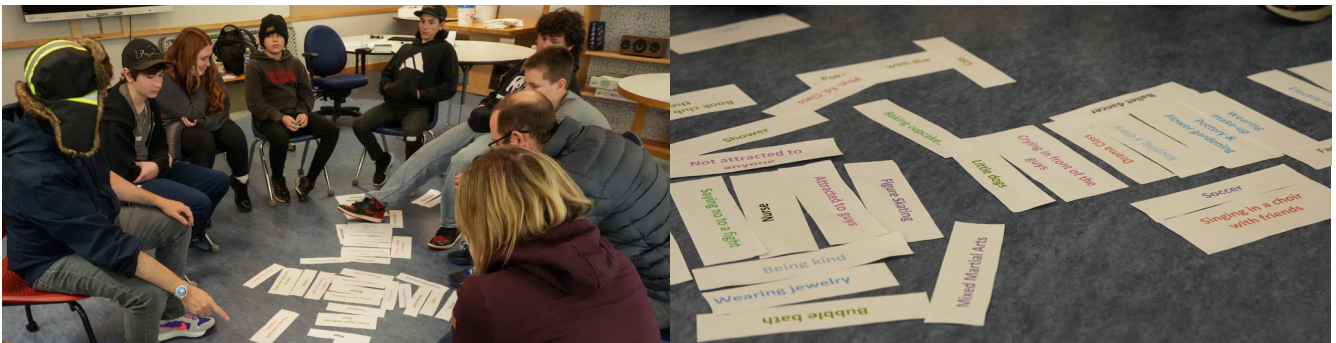


domestic violence but if we can reimagine what it means to be a man. Experts agree that interventions for adults who perpetuate violence come too late, after the harm has been done. As boys learn to be comfortable with vulnerability and seeking help, they become better equipped to become true partners in the fight for gender equity.

As more people learn about toxic masculinity and seek help to overcome it, we are more likely to see changes on a broader societal level. By promoting healthier and more realistic ideas about masculinity, we can create a world where everyone is free to express themselves authentically and live happy, healthy lives.

Programs like Guys Work are instrumental in breaking down harmful social gender expectations and pressures and creating safe spaces for boys to talk about their feelings. By addressing these issues early on, we can help create a brighter, more equitable future for all.

Green's workshops on Male Toxicity were facilitated in several schools in the South Slave, including Fort Resolution, Hay River, and Fort Smith. His presentations were well received by the schools, and the program will serve as the basis for an ongoing relationship with Morris Green and his social program. 🌊





“ Toxic masculinity is a cultural phenomenon that places unrealistic and harmful expectations on boys to behave a certain way. ”

If you feel like you're experiencing the negative effects of toxic masculinity, reach out to someone. A mental health professional can help you recognize how it's affecting your life and help you break free from the unhealthy patterns that may be keeping you stuck.

**Government of Canada's Mental Health Services**  
 Youth Helpline at **1-888-668-6810** or text **WELLNESS** to **686868**

**Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority**  
 Youth Helpline at **1-888-668-6868** or text **TALK** to **686868**





## JK-12 NWT Curriculum Renewal

It's an exciting time for NWT schools with the introduction of a new adapted curriculum

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) in the Northwest Territories (NWT) has partnered with the British Columbia (BC) Ministry of Education to transition to a new curriculum adapted to fit the NWT. Every subject will be reviewed and adapted to ensure relevance to NWT communities, people, cultures, languages, and history. The BC curriculum is modernized to meet the needs of students in an ever-changing world, incorporates financial literacy, provides career education in early grades, and focuses on competency-driven learning. Indigenous worldviews, knowledge, and perspectives are reflected in all BC curricula and in mandatory learning for all students.

As the NWT works toward transitioning to BC's competency-driven model of learning, the new graduation requirements will be similar to BC's. The curriculum is flexible, so educators can blend in local cultural, geographical, and historical knowledge and resources at the classroom and school level. NWT-created curriculum, such as Our Languages, Northern Studies, Health and Wellness, Hunter Education, and Junior Kindergarten/Kindergarten, will also remain in schools.

In BC's curriculum, "competency" is a learning expectation that connects a student's skills, knowledge, and values. It's the ability to do something successfully. The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT)

chose BC's curriculum as their preferred partner for the new curriculum as it closely aligns with the 34 well-established NWT education priorities.

ECE is working on five key areas to effectively implement the new curriculum in NWT schools. These include finalizing the timeline and sequence for adapting the curriculum, implementing it in NWT schools, determining the minimum Grade 12 graduation requirements for students using BC courses, and developing a schedule and structure for training teachers on the new curriculum. ECE is currently in the process of tailoring BC's curriculum to address the specific requirements of NWT students and communities. Moreover, they are incorporating BC's large-scale assessment tools into student evaluation programs, with numerous benchmarks already underway.

The NWT education renewal process embraces and upholds that learners will grow and become NWT capable persons shaped by key competencies. The adapted curriculum supports students to be competent thinkers and communicators who are personally and socially competent in all areas of their lives.

The NWT is excited for this transition and hopes for community support and patience as the renewed curriculum is trialed and slowly implemented. 🌿



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR UPDATES, PLEASE VISIT -

[www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/curriculumrenewal](http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/curriculumrenewal)  
or direct any questions, concerns, or feedback to  
[nwtcurriculum\\_renewal@gov.nt.ca](mailto:nwtcurriculum_renewal@gov.nt.ca)





## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Diamond Jenness Secondary School

**A remarkable institution that has been shaping young minds for over 50 years**

Diamond Jenness Secondary School (DJSS) in Hay River is marking an important milestone in 2023 as it celebrates 50 years of providing quality education to northern students. The school is named after Diamond Jenness, a renowned Canadian anthropologist who studied Inuit cultures in the Arctic region. The DJSS building boasts a unique flowing architecture with smooth curvilinear forms designed by Métis/Blackfoot architect Douglas Cardinal, one of Canada's most influential contemporary Indigenous architects.

DJSS has become an icon in the town of Hay River since its establishment in 1972, replacing the old Federal School on Vale Island. The building has undergone renovations and upgrades to maintain the integrity of the original Douglas Cardinal design. The building reflects Cardinal's love for unconventional forms and his appreciation of nature and landscape. The school's purple colour was chosen by the students in a vote by the first graduating class.

As part of the 50th-anniversary celebrations, DJSS is planning a grand celebration in August 2023, when Douglas Cardinal is tentatively scheduled to give a

presentation about the school's design philosophy. The presentation will be a great opportunity for the school community to learn more about the school's design and to recognize the contributions of Cardinal in creating a unique and inspiring learning environment.

The celebrations will also include the unveiling of the 50th anniversary mural in the concourse for the graduating class of 2023. The project is being created in collaboration with Global Roots and is being designed with a theme of bringing the beauty of Hay River's outdoors inside. The mural project aims to evoke feelings of inclusion, belonging, and community by using tiles painted by past and present students and staff. The mural project was launched in September 2022 and will be unveiled during the graduation ceremony in June 2023.

The unveiling of the 50th-anniversary mural is a testament to DJSS's commitment to inclusion, belonging, and unity in the community. It is a fitting tribute to the students, staff, parents, and stakeholders who have helped make the Diamond Jenness Secondary School a true gem of Hay River. 🌊

*Community Paint Night (mural tiles) and the 50th Anniversary Assembly*



*"Without any preconceptions,  
I evolve a design from the inside  
out, open to all possibilities"*

- Douglas Cardinal

## DOUGLAS CARDINAL

Douglas Cardinal is a Canadian architect known for his flowing architecture marked with smooth curvilinear forms, influenced by his Indigenous heritage as well as European Expressionist architecture. Born in Calgary, Alberta in 1934, Cardinal's studies took him to the University of British Columbia and the University of Texas, where he developed his design philosophy of bringing people into balance with the natural environment.

Cardinal is considered one of Canada's most influential contemporary Indigenous architects, and his work has left a lasting impact on the architectural world. Cardinal's innovative curvilinear forms and design philosophy have inspired countless other architects around the world. His use of natural forms and his appreciation of nature and landscape reflect his Indigenous heritage, and he remains active in completing master plans for Indigenous communities.

In recognition of his work, Cardinal has received many national and international awards, including the Gold Medal of Architecture in Canada and Russia, and an award from the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural organization (UNESCO) for the best sustainable village. He was also titled an Officer of the Order of Canada and awarded the declaration of being "World Master of Contemporary Architecture" by the International Association of Architects.

In addition to his architectural achievements, Cardinal is an influential voice for the dignity of Indigenous Peoples. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Governor General's Award for Visual and Media Arts, the Gold Medal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, and a National Aboriginal Achievement Award.

Douglas Cardinal is one of the visionaries of a new world, a world where beauty, balance, and harmony thrive, and where client, architect, and stakeholder build together with a common vision.

For more information about Douglas J. Cardinal, please visit his website at [www.djcarchitect.com](http://www.djcarchitect.com).

Photograph by Yousuf Karsh



## Celebrate our Indigenous Cultural Richness

**Recognizing our collective responsibility to acknowledge our history and to honour those who came before us.**

The schools in the South Slave Divisional Education Council (SSDEC) region are making significant efforts to promote cultural awareness and diversity by educating students about the cultural richness of the Indigenous people in the communities. These efforts are not just about learning and preserving Indigenous culture, but also acknowledging and appreciating the contributions of Indigenous people to the development of our society. They are making deliberate efforts to celebrate and honour Indigenous cultures and traditions in their programming.

### LOOKING FOR TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF

Looking for a career that's both rewarding and meaningful? Join the South Slave Divisional Education Council!

As an employee with the SSDEC, you'll have the opportunity to work in some of the most beautiful communities in the north, make teaching with us an experience like no other.

But that's not all – we also offer exceptional pay and benefits, job security, and a good work-life balance. You'll have the chance to make a real difference in the lives of your students and their communities, and to be part of a supportive team that feels like family.

So, if you're ready to make a difference and be part of a community that values your contributions, apply to join the SSDEC team and contact us today!



School: **Chief Sunrise Education Centre**  
Community: **K'at'l'odeche First Nation, NT**  
Grades: **JK - Grade 12**  
Languages: **South Slavey and English**

Chief Sunrise Education Centre (CSEC) recognizes the importance of celebrating and honoring the Indigenous cultures and traditions of the community. They have implemented various initiatives to achieve this goal. CSEC's approach to cultural education is unique in that it places a strong emphasis on on-the-land experiences. Students and families participate in weekly cultural camps at the school's Sandy Creek cabin, where they learn various traditional skills from elders and community members. This provides an authentic, safe, and trauma-free space for students to connect with their culture and traditions.

In addition to on-the-land experiences, CSEC infuses cultural stories and teachings into classroom lessons. The use of the Dene language and local knowledge create a sense of community and belonging. Elders and respected local leaders are frequently present in the school, further reinforcing the importance of community connections.

CSEC's holistic approach to cultural programming is not only enriching for students, but also contributes to the healing of intergenerational trauma. By respecting the value of the relationship with the land and providing opportunities for cultural education, CSEC is promoting cultural awareness and diversity in the South Slave region.





School: **Deninu School**

Community: **Fort Resolution, NT**

Grades: **JK - Grade 12**

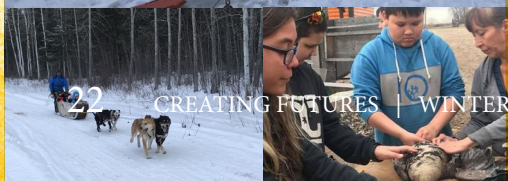
Languages: **Chipewyan (Dëne Dédliné Yatíé) & English**

Deninu School (DNS) has made significant efforts to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of the Dene and Métis people. A strong focus on cultural initiatives permeates every aspect of their programming. The school's new culture center is a recent addition that provides a dedicated space for cultural activities and events. This facility was built with support from the community and the First Nation.

At the cultural center, there is a tipi, fireplace, smoke house and main cabin that serve as a hub for the school's cultural initiatives. The center has been instrumental in strengthening the school's commitment to promoting and preserving Dene and Métis culture. Students are encouraged to learn about their cultural heritage and language, share stories, and participate in traditional activities.

A center piece of Deninu's cultural identity is the annual Kate Powell Handgames Tournament. Named after a former principal of the school who was instrumental in promoting Dene and Métis culture and language in the school, the tournament attracts participants from all over the South Slave and provides an opportunity for students to showcase their skills in traditional handgames. It is a highly anticipated event that is enjoyed by both students, teachers, and community members.

The incorporation of the Chipewyan language in classrooms, the on-the-land experiences, and the adoption of the Dene laws as classroom and school expectations are additional practices that reinforce the school's commitment to promoting and preserving the cultural richness of the Indigenous people in our communities. DNS serves as a model for other schools in the South Slave and is helping to ensure that the cultural heritage of the Dene and Métis people is recognized, celebrated, and passed on to future generations.





School: **Diamond Jenness Secondary School**

Community: **Hay River, NT**

Grades: **Grades 8 - 12**

Languages: **South Slavey, Chipewyan (Dëne Dédliné Yatié), and English**

At Diamond Jenness Secondary School (DJSS), cultural programming is integrated into the curriculum, providing students with a well-rounded education that includes a strong focus on Indigenous culture. The school offers a culture camp that is utilized for staff orientation, trapping, and northern studies classes. Elders are welcomed into the school to participate in feeding the fire ceremonies to open and close the school year, as well as for special events celebrating traditions. DJSS drummers also add to the cultural experience, performing at school events and celebrations.

In addition to these initiatives, DJSS provides each grade with a key cultural experience each year, such as dry meat camp, beaver mitts making, fish and trapping camps. These experiences allow students to learn about and participate in Indigenous culture in a practical and meaningful way. Indigenous culture at DJSS is evident in every grade. Closer to graduation, grade 12 students have an evening of oral storytelling and sharing as they prepare to move on after high school.

DJSS's commitment to cultural programming is a testament to the school's dedication to ensuring that its students have the opportunity to learn about and participate in Indigenous culture. By providing practical experiences that reinforce cultural teachings, DJSS is making great strides in promoting cultural awareness and diversity in the South Slave region. The success of this programming is evident in the school's strong sense of community and pride in Indigenous culture.





School: **Harry Camsell / Princess Alexandra Schools**  
Community: **Hay River, NT**  
Grades: **JK - Grade 3 (HC) / Grades 4 – 7 (PA)**  
Languages: **South Slavey, Chipewyan (Dëne Dédliné Yatié), and English**

Harry Camsell School (HCS) and Princess Alexandra School (PAS) are sister schools that have made great strides in educating our youngest about the cultural richness of the Indigenous people in Hay River. One of the key features of the programming is the provision of timetabled instruction in local language and culture for all students, including those who have chosen French as their second language. Students are exposed to traditional events, Dene Yatie language instruction, and on the land learning from Junior Kindergarten through to Grade 7.

The schools provide a variety of learning experiences, which are taught by local Dene residents who are fluent in local language, culture, and indigenous values. The culture camp, located on the school campus, allows students to practice speaking Dene Yatie in a traditional environment while learning practical skills such as preparing fish, cooking over an open fire, and building outside shelters.

In addition to language and cultural instruction, the schools also incorporate local Dene culture in a holistic way. They hire local experts to organize special events where students share traditional recipes and cook and serve local delights such as duck soup, moose stew, and bannock. The schools also display local art that honors their northern Indigenous history and teach the principles of kindness and respect through the Dene Laws.

The success of the programming can be seen in the enthusiasm of the students who look forward to Dene Yatie and Culture classes. Learning in these classes occur in a social setting where speaking the language is encouraged. In addition to holding awards assemblies for outstanding student achievement, and jigging performances. The school have days set aside in their calendar for families to attend school cultural events. PA and HC continue to lead the way in cultural programming, proving that it's never too soon to start teaching indigenous values and language.







School: **Joseph Burr Tyrrell Elementary School**

Community: **Fort Smith, NT**

Grades: **JK - Grade 6**

Languages: **Cree (nehiyawewin), Chipewyan (Dēnésuḷiné), and English**

Joseph Burr Tyrrell Elementary School's (JBT) focus on cultural education is the teaching of indigenous languages. JBT prioritizes teaching the language and culture of Cree and Chipewyan (Dene) of Fort Smith.

With guidance from Indigenous Language Educators, JBT has made inroads in creating young proficient speakers. Elders and Knowledge Keepers from the community are invited to share their stories and teachings about living and trapping on the land. The school provides hands-on experiential learning opportunities for students to actively participate in traditional activities, such as making bannock, cooking outdoors, tanning hides, plucking ducks, skinning animals including muskrat and beaver, and setting traps when on the land. These experiences would not be possible without the school's community partners and knowledge keepers who pass on their knowledge and skills to the next generation.

By engaging students in these cultural activities, JBT is cultivating an environment of respect and appreciation for the traditions and knowledge of the Indigenous peoples in our community. The programming not only teaches students about Indigenous cultures and traditions but also helps them understand the historical and ongoing impact of colonialism on Indigenous communities. Ultimately, this programming plays an important role in promoting cultural awareness and diversity, encouraging empathy, and understanding, and ensuring that Indigenous cultures and traditions are celebrated and honored in our schools.





School: Łutsel K'e Dene School

Community: Łutsel K'e, NT

Grades: JK - Grade 12

Languages: Chipewyan (Dëne Sǫłíné Yatíé) & English

Łutsel K'e Dene School (LKDS) is big on teaching the Chipewyan language. In addition to labeling everything in Chipewyan throughout the school and holding mini challenges such as a Chipewyan word or phrase of the day, LKDS also hosts Indigenous Language fun Fridays, where students rotate through different stations throughout the school to participate in various activities such as jigging, Dene games, and traditional storytelling. The school also offers camps that encourage staff and students to stay in the language as much as possible, providing hands-on experiences in rabbit, fish, muskrat, and duck hunting.

One of the highlights of the school's programming is the annual Hide Tanning Camp, which is attended by the entire community and visitors from all over the world. Students learn the steps in preparing a hide by practicing on one of their own for the entire week. The small school has overcome a lot of challenges to preserve and continue to offer an indigenous curriculum.

Funding for these events can be a significant obstacle, and finding community members to assist in teachings can also be difficult. Nevertheless, the school continues to build on its programming, expanding its culture camp at Snowdrift River with permanent structures to make it easier for students, staff, and community to access year-round.

The Łutsel K'e Dene School is an excellent example of how schools can honour Indigenous cultures and traditions by offering various programs and activities that provide hands-on experiences and language immersion opportunities. By continuing to build on their programming this school is creating a brighter future for their students and community.



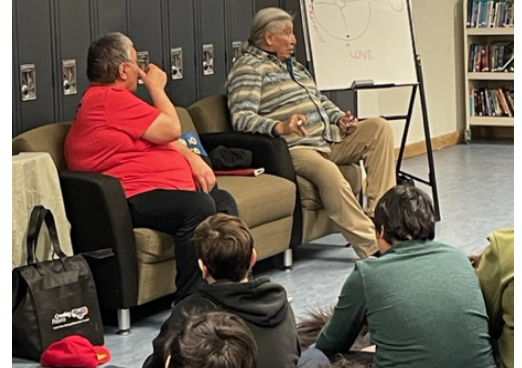


School: **Paul William Kaeser High School**  
Community: **Fort Smith, NT**  
Grades: **Grades 7 - 12**  
Languages: **Cree (nehiyawewin), Chipewyan (Dēnésulīné), and English**

Paul William Kaeser High School (PWK) strongly believes that it is essential to acknowledge and celebrate the Indigenous cultures and traditions of our communities. Among the many opportunities for authentic engagement, the school offers a platform for students to engage with Elders, who provide valuable insights into living in a good and respectful way. For example, students had the opportunity to meet with local Elder Eileen Beaver, and Francois Paulette, to talk about teepee teachings earlier in the year. This experience enriched and cemented their understanding of Indigenous culture.

PWK students also had the chance to participate in various cultural activities, such as learning traditional crafts, like creating watercolor paintings of buffalos with artist Kevin Wesaquate and making traditional pemmican. The school's Chipewyan, Cree, and Northern studies classes offer language, culture, and northern programming to provide students with a personal and meaningful education.

PWK High School's cultural programming aims to give students the opportunity to understand, participate in, and engage with various Indigenous traditions and worldviews. By attending events like the Peace River Powwow and Aboriginal Gathering, students can participate in powwow ceremonies, dances, songs, Métis jigging, hand drum contests, hand games, and even try Indigenous crafts and foods. PWK High School is committed to honoring and celebrating Indigenous cultures and traditions. Its success can be seen in the enriching experiences it provides for all its students.





## SOUTH SLAVE DIVISIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL

### Mission

The South Slave Divisional Education Council strives to prepare students to create their futures by ensuring high levels of learning for ALL.

### Vision

All individuals reach their educational potential.

### Values

Respect, Integrity, Loyalty, Commitment to Growth, Advocacy.