



February 07, 2023

RONALD BONNETROUGE
MLA, DEH CHO**Oral Question 1178-19(2)**
Grade Level Outcomes and Data for Northwest Territories Students

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question you raised on October 17, 2022 regarding grade level outcomes and data for Northwest Territories (NWT) students.

The education system in the NWT features decentralized governance in recognition of the need for communities to have local involvement in the delivery of education. In the *Education Act*, Superintendents, Principals, and Education Bodies have been delegated the authority for monitoring, evaluating, and directing the delivery of their school programs and plans. As such, Education Bodies (Divisional Education Councils and District Education Authorities) have a great deal of responsibility for the delivery of education in their regions and communities, and this includes choosing their methods for evaluating students and school programs to ensure they are meeting the education standards set by the Minister.

Education Bodies are also delegated the authority to manage their own information, and several are designated as public bodies under the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Education Bodies, whether those designated as public bodies or not, have ownership of their school program, student records and data, and can only provide information to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) where ECE is authorized to collect it by the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Where ECE has been provided information by Education Bodies, the use or disclosure of this information is similarly restricted.

One of the key responsibilities of an education body is to establish strategic plans and to monitor, evaluate and direct the delivery of school programs. The requirements for reporting on school programs come primarily from the *Education Act* and the *Planning and Accountability Framework*. Under the *Planning and Accountability Framework*, NWT Education Bodies are required to develop an annual Operating Plan and Budget and to report on their progress through an Annual Report. These two requirements are combined in the Education Accountability Framework, a template used by Education Bodies to annually plan for and report on their operations, their compliance with funded education directives, and on implementation of activities and initiatives. The Education Accountability Framework also includes performance indicators directly linked to the *Education Act*, Ministerial directives, departmental policies, and core educational programming to help streamline reporting requirements for Education Bodies.

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Education Bodies are responsible for the maintenance of student records and information related to students in their regions. Under the *Education Act*, Superintendents must provide a subset of the student record information to ECE. This includes information on annual enrolment, student attendance, results of system-wide assessments (i.e., Alberta Achievement Test and Diploma Exam results) and, for high school students, information on course enrolments, credits and marks earned.

Education Bodies provide this information to ECE with the understanding that it will be used to monitor and report on metrics, such as attendance rates, graduation rates, course completion rates, enrolment trends, and literacy and numeracy achievement. These metrics are reported annually through the publication of the Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 *Education System Performance Measures Technical Report*.

ECE does not collect or report on the grade level performance of students in the NWT. To do so would require administering common, standardized assessments to all students. This is not required of education bodies for a variety of reasons, including cost, the time it takes to administer, accessibility, and the suitability of norm-referenced and standardized tests for NWT students.

Though not required under the *Education Act*, some Education Bodies undertake additional steps to assess, monitor, and report on student achievement using standardized tests and common assessments, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy. Comprehensive student achievement data such as this is not required to be shared with the Department. Education bodies generally use this information to monitor and inform strategic plans at both the regional and school levels.

Thank you for your questions and interests in this matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.J. Simpson', with a stylized, cursive script.

R.J. Simpson
Minister, Education, Culture
and Employment

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Deputy Minister, Education, Culture and Employment
Legislative Coordinator, Executive and Indigenous Affairs