

Letter to partners:

- All Yukon school Administrators (via Superintendents and Executive Directors)
 - All Yukon School Councils
 - First Nations Education Commission (FNEC)
 - Yukon First Nation Education Directorate (YFNED)
 - Advisory Committee for Yukon Education (ACYE)
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Subject: Update on the School Wellness Specialist positions

Dear <insert partner name>

We are writing today to update you on the Department of Education's progress regarding the information shared with you by the Deputy Minister of Education on August 4, 2023.

We are very happy to share that the Department of Education has successfully created and started recruitment of the new School Wellness Specialist position. This position is part of the significant investment in student learning and wellbeing over the next three years to add 81 full time positions to enhance student supports across our schools.

Through collaboration with the superintendents, the school board executive directors, Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services, and Human Resources we finalized the job description for the School Wellness Specialist. Attached to this correspondence is a copy of the job description for your information. Below, we have provided what we hope is helpful information to questions you might have about this new position.

What is the school wellness specialist going to be doing? Will their work conflict with the roles and responsibilities of school counsellors?

School wellness specialists will work collaboratively to develop supportive strategies and determine appropriate supports for a school community, including providing specialized training to colleagues. They will work collaboratively with students, families, community service providers, and educators to identify student concerns and to provide supportive services. They may assist students in managing or resolving personal, emotional, mental, social and behavioural matters that may affect student's overall health, well-being, and their ability to learn effectively.

School counsellors are education professionals who hold a teacher certificate. They have two main roles in supporting students:

1. Personal development: school counsellors help students develop social-emotional skills, life skills and decision-making abilities. They also assist with self-regulation, conflict resolution, and personal growth; and
2. Academic support: school counsellors aid students in achieving their academic potential through academic planning and career exploration.

School wellness specialists may support a school counsellors work.

What are the qualifications for the school wellness specialist?

The job description outlines the requirements to apply as:

- a Bachelor's degree in social work or a related field;
- experience providing social work services including: assessments, consultation, case management, psycho-social counseling, crisis intervention, and referrals; and
- experience working with children or youth experiencing social and emotional difficulties.

How will school wellness specialists be allocated to schools? Full-time, drop-in, rotating schedule between schools?

We are working with the superintendents and school board executive directors on how the school wellness specialists will be allocated across schools, and how schools will be prioritized on an ongoing basis. We will keep you informed as these details become available.

Are there options to reallocate the school wellness specialist to other positions in schools if needed?

No. School wellness specialists are not educators, and they will not be directly supervised by a Principal, as such, they will not be able to be reallocated to other positions.

How many school wellness specialists are being hired?

Implementing school wellness specialists in Yukon schools will occur in a phased approach to expedite getting this position into schools as quickly as possible. This fiscal year, we hope to hire 12 school wellness specialists, and more in the following two years.

Where can you go to apply or share this job posting?

As of Monday, October 16, 2023, the job is posted on the Government of Yukon's e-recruitment platform at [Yukon.ca/jobs](https://yukon.ca/jobs). Additional job postings supporting Commission

Scolaire Francophone du Yukon and the First Nation School Board will be forthcoming in collaboration with the school boards.

We encourage you to share the job posting with your network of contacts and help us make a positive impact on students' lives. This is a unique opportunity for those with social work qualifications or experience and for those interested in working with youth or in a school setting.

In addition to work on the School Wellness Specialists, we continue to work on our commitment to cultural inclusivity. We will be using part of the additional \$1 million to enhance student supports across Yukon schools to collaborate with Yukon First Nations governments to hire Elders, Knowledge Keepers, or other community leaders. These positions will provide culturally appropriate supports to meet the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and academic needs of our students. As we progress work on this, we will continue to provide you with updates.

Although there is more work to be done, we are very proud of this key milestone and the support these positions will bring to overall student wellbeing and success. All this work is a significant step in our broader plan for providing wrap-around supports in all Yukon schools and is a key pillar of the Comprehensive Mental Health and Wellness Approach. Thank you for your continued dedication to the wellbeing and growth of our students. Your support and collaboration are instrumental in ensuring the successful implementation of these initiatives.

If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact Shanna Epp at shanna.epp@yukon.ca or 867-334-1251.

Warm regards,

Shanna Epp

Assistant Deputy Minister, Student Wellbeing, and Inclusion

Cassandra Kelly

Assistant Deputy Minister, Schools and Student Services

Attachments:

Job Description of School Wellness Specialist