



# NWTTA NEWS

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## Introducing Central Executive 2020-2022

Congratulations to incoming Central Executive 2020-2022 members! **Matthew Miller, Lorelea Wark, Kim Hagarty** and **Wendy Tulk** term of office will be July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2022.

The fifth member of Central Executive, the Regional Presidents' Representative will be selected in the fall by the nine 2020-2022 Regional Presidents. If you

are interested in serving on your region's Regional Executive for 2020-2022, please contact a member of your current Regional Executive or Central Office for more information. Each region is responsible for their own nomination and election process with election timelines running between March 1 and June 30. The [Regional Executive Nomination Form](#) is available on the Forms page of [nwtta.nt.ca](http://nwtta.nt.ca)



**President**  
**Matthew Miller**



**Vice-President**  
**Lorelea Wark**



**Secretary-Treasurer**  
**Kim Hagarty**



**Member-at-Large**  
**Wendy Tulk**



INSIDE:

Introducing Central Executive 2020-2022	1
Negotiations Are Underway	2
Making a Movie - Wiidza	3
Northern Light Marc Champagne	3
3 Tips to Support Those with Mental Health Issues	4
Summer PD Opportunity Indigenous Languages	5
Northern Light Leanne Jose	5
Married on the Mackenzie The Fairweathers	6
Thank You for Making A Difference	7
Northern Light Cora America	7
Northern Light Melanie Bourque	8
Educational Leadership Program	8
Northern Light Martine Gauvin	9
Working for Our Members A Glimpse of What We Do	10
Northern Light Deborah Reid	11
Whole School Language Approach at Chief T'Selehye School	12
Project Overseas 2020	13
Northern Light Jenny Reid	13
From the Archives Kids, computers and common sense	16
Senior High Inservice in Behchoko	17
Northern Light Heath Israel	17
CTF Advisory Meetings	18
Northern Light Terri Douglas	19
Newsletter Trivia	19
2018-2020 Central Executive	20
NWT Educators' Conference	20
Central Office Contact	20

Negotiations Are Underway

Fraser Oliver, President

I would like to congratulate President Elect, Matthew Miller on being elected by the membership on February 18th. I know when Matthew Miller takes over on July 1st the membership will be in excellent hands and will have the support from a strong Central Executive team, in Vice President Lorelea Wark, Secretary-Treasurer Kim Hagarty and Member-at-Large Wendy Tulk.

Negotiations have been one of our many priorities here at Central Office. All three collective agreements are up for negotiations this year, which are: Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1), Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YCS) and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) schools. The NWTTA will be using a labour lawyer from Edmonton, Gordon Nekolaichuk as our chief negotiator for all three negotiations. Approximately 70% of our membership completed the member surveys on negotiations in November 2019. Over the past couple of months each of the three negotiation teams have been working with Gordon and our Executive Director to put together a negotiation package to open collective bargaining. Some of the top priorities from the memberships were a wage increase, class composition, class size and teacher wellness. Negotiations are due to start with the GNWT contract towards the end of April.

The NWTTA is celebrating the eleven official languages of the NWT in our newsletter this month. These languages are spoken not only by our students and families but by many of our 814 teachers in the schools and local communities.

Regional Elections will be occurring in all nine NWTTA regions. I encourage members who are interested to put their name forward to serve the members in your region. These regional elections will take place throughout the months of April and May. For more information on these elections members can read their regional bylaws found on the NWTTA website or contact me at [fraser.oliver@nwtta.nt.ca](mailto:fraser.oliver@nwtta.nt.ca).

The NWTTA will be holding its Annual Meeting of Central Council (our AGM) on May 7 to 8th in Yellowknife. Members are encouraged to work with their regional Presidents and Executives if they would like to present new resolutions to make changes in the NWTTA bylaws or policies. Members can also contact me for assistance in this area.

It seems with these recent cold temperatures that spring will never arrive but it will soon be here. It is nice to leave the schools with the sun still in the sky. I would like to take this time to wish everyone a safe and restful Spring Break. If members have any questions or concerns on any topic, they are encouraged to contact me right away.

Fraser



Making a Movie Wiidza

Students and staff at Kaw Tay Whee School in Dettah have been making a movie called Wiidza. The film is based on a story from the Elders. It is an adventure story about medicine men and some of the powers they had. The project is being led by teacher Neil Penney.



Students have written the script, acted and filmed, recorded audio voice-overs, edited, recorded a soundtrack and marketed the film which premieres at the Dead North Film Festival in Yellowknife February 27-March 1, 2020. The film is entirely in the Wiilideh language. Indigenous Language Teacher Sally Drygeese worked with the students to properly pronounce the words and phrases. [Tickets to the premiere are available at deadnorth.ca](https://deadnorth.ca)



Teacher Neil Penney (facing camera) prepares the cast and crew to film on location in Dettah.



Northern Lights

Meet Marc Champagne from Tulita (Sahtu region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

I was born in Hamilton, Ontario, but moved to North Bay, Ontario when I was eight months old. So basically, I grew in North Bay.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

I decided to become a teacher after having worked as a Mental Health Counselor for two years, then as a Teacher's Assistant for three years.

Q. What do you teach?

Mainly, I teach Grade 10 math, experiential science and social studies. I also teach CTS courses including wildlife, carpentry and welding.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

I truly enjoy all my students. They all come as unique packages that have the potential to become great on their own terms.

Q. How do you engage your students?

I engage my students with wildlife and outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing. When successful, we enjoy sharing our catch and preparing a feast for the community and other students. Another engagement technique is to be always willing to help the students and the community fix and maintain their snowmobiles and four-wheelers. This is very hands on and a necessity here in the north.

Sharing Cultures

I enjoy meeting new people and learning new cultures and languages. Every culture has special features that should be shared and experienced.



*"I just treat my mental health like it's no big deal. Things will eventually get better, I just have to fight through it. If I'm open about my mental health, I'll be perceived as weak." - Starling Member*

As the school year draws to a close, it's normal for educators to feel more stress. Although feeling overly stressed from work is common, studies show that [38.6%](#) of employees do not disclose mental health challenges to their managers.

But why?

We went into our online Starling community to find out. According to [members](#), the top 3 reasons mental health is still a taboo at work is due to:

- Embarrassment and anxiety around their reputation
- Fear of jeopardizing their career
- Struggling with mental health is perceived as weak

So how can we support those around us with their mental health? [Starling Members share their top tips on how to talk about mental health issues:](#)

- Create a safe space and opportunity for sharing but do not compare their experience with yours
- Use language that show acknowledgment and validation
- Check-in, frequently

*"Tell them that their struggle does not change how you view or feel about them. Let them know that you are there to support them, and ask how you can do that."*  
– Starling Member

Let's promote a supportive space at work that encourages people to talk about their mental health!

Starling Minds is a tool that can help with this. [Invite your family and colleagues today](#) and help promote a space where mental health is no longer a taboo!

What do NWTTA members say about Starling Minds?

*"Going through the course helped me recharge my battery! I am learning about my stressors and how to manage them." - NWTTA Starling Member*

*"I like the goal setting in Starling Minds. Thinking about what recharges my battery and what depletes it has helped as well. I also try to do the breathing exercises from time to time." - NWTTA Starling Member*

What is Starling Minds?

The NWTTA together with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment through NWT Education Renewal and Innovation are proud to support NWT educators and their family members with Starling Minds.

Starling is an online mental health and wellness program that helps members manage their stress and prevent anxiety and depression. The Starling program was developed by Dr. Andrew Miki and is based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

Starling is a Canadian based company out of Vancouver. It is completely confidential and free for NWTTA members and their family members.

Register for Starling today to gain immediate support and inspiration from those on the same journey.

How can I register for Starling Minds?

In order to sign up, click on the link below. You just need your NWTTA Member ID number which you can find on your NWTTA Membership Card.

[Register for Starling Minds today!](#)  
(<http://bit.ly/starling-nwt>)

How can I refer family members or colleagues to the program?

To share the benefits of Starling with a friend or colleague for free, simply:

1. Log in to <https://app.starlingminds.com/>
2. Click on the dropdown menu on the top right hand side
3. Select "Referral"



Summer PD Opportunity  
Indigenous Languages

Adrien Amirault, Professional Development Coordinator


The University of Alberta offers CILLDI ([Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute](#)) programming each summer for teachers involved in teaching Indigenous Languages. This summer will be the 21st annual offering of the program. Learn an Indigenous language or gain expertise in the areas of linguistics, endangered language documentation and revitalization, language and literacy learning, second language teaching and curriculum development, and language policy and planning. There is money available through the Aboriginal Language Acquisition fund in article 16 to help GNWT teachers attend the CILLDI courses each summer. Many NWTTA members have attended CILLDI courses in the past, and have spoken highly of the program.

Funding to attend CILLDI is capped at a maximum of \$6000 per person and covers tuition, per diems, transportation, and accommodations. The deadline to apply for CILLDI funding is May 30, 2020 for the summer of 2020. [Click here for NWTTA 2020-21 Indigenous Language Acquisition Fund application form.](#)

For students who attended last summer or have taken University of Alberta courses more recently (between July 2019 and June 2020), you are considered an active student and will only need to contact the CILLDI office to be enrolled in your classes.

For new students or students returning who may have taken courses before June 2019, please [complete the application at this link](#) to be (re-)admitted in Open Studies. Please note that this form will need to be submitted online with credit card payment by Friday, May 29th to make sure you are admitted in time.

If you have any questions about this process, or about the program in general, please contact the CILLDI office by email ([cilldi@ualberta.ca](mailto:cilldi@ualberta.ca)) or phone at 780-248-1179. Their office hours are unfortunately only part-time, so they appreciate your patience as they try to get back to you as soon as possible.



Northwest Territories Teachers' Association

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2020-21 INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE ACQUISITION FUND  
Language Acquisition and Instruction Courses

GNWT NWTTA members are eligible for reimbursement to a maximum of \$6000 for expenses incurred to attend Language Acquisition and Instruction courses aimed at improving Indigenous language instruction as per Article 16.08 (2) of the GNWT NWTTA Collective Agreement.

**Eligible expenses include:**

- Course tuition
- Travel costs from the place of employment to the site of the course and return as per Article B4.03 of the GNWT NWTTA Collective Agreement
- Accommodation and per diem as per Article B4.04 and B4.05, respectively, of the GNWT NWTTA Collective Agreement.
- Substitute costs where applicable and warranted

**Deadlines:**

- Please submit your application to the PD Coordinator on or before **May 30, 2020.**
- The final date for submission of documentation for reimbursement of eligible costs is **September 30, 2020.**
- Members must be returning to a GNWT NWTTA position in the Fall in order to be reimbursed.

**Reimbursement Procedures:**

Upon successful completion of your course(s), please submit the reimbursement form with the following:

- Proof of course completion (transcript from institution) showing successful completion of the course(s)
- Invoice and receipt for tuition
- Receipts for hotels and/or other accommodation, airline tickets, taxis/shuttles, parking and day care if applicable

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you are planning to attend CILLDI at the U of A this summer, we have arranged an agreement whereby the NWTTA will pay them directly, the cost of tuition and on campus accommodation at Lister Centre.

Leadership with Integrity

Northern Lights

Meet  
Leanne Jose  
from Fort Simpson  
(Dehcho region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

I grew up in North Sydney, Nova Scotia.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

I decided to become a teacher because I wanted to inspire kids and to help kids realize that they can be whatever they want to be if they put their mind to it. Neither of my parents went to University and statistically I wasn't suppose to go either but I worked hard and achieved my goals.

Q. What do you teach?

I teach a grade 5/6 class.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

I enjoy the connections I make with the kids which in turn helps them to be successful. I love watching kids learn and achieve their goals.

Q. How do you engage your students?

I engage my students by sharing personal stories and connecting the curriculum to real life events and situations. I also include as much of the Dene culture into all subjects as much as I can.

It's all about connections

I had lots of wonderful teachers in my life. Being a teacher is all about connections and relationships which is a wonderful job to have. Students will remember you and you will remember them for years to come which makes teaching a very special profession.



# Married on the Mackenzie The Fairweathers

**Nicole Fairweather, Teacher, Fort Good Hope (Sшту region)**

On October, 4th, 2019, Morgan and I had the wonderful privilege of being married in the historic Our Lady of Good Hope Catholic Church, on the beautiful Mackenzie River. After 8 years of teaching in Fort Good Hope, being surrounded by our students, staff, our close family and the community seemed the only fitting way to celebrate our relationship. Over the years, the students have helped Morgan and I grow tremendously, not only as educators but together as a couple. It is difficult to imagine our relationship being as strong as it is without the influence of these students, this community and from living in the north. We both have passionately used our time here to develop both a dance and basketball program at Chief T'selehye School so it was extremely important for us to incorporate this into our big day. Therefore, our wedding party consisted of 19 students, Morgan had his seven senior players stand up beside him as groomsmen and I was honoured to have my 8 senior dancers by my side as bridesmaids as well as my younger dancers as junior bridesmaids and flower girls. The amazing CTS staff, worked so hard behind the scenes helping decorate, taking photos, making food, serving and many more jobs I am sure and for that we feel extremely fortunate. In the north, if you are lucky, your staff will become your family and right now our school exemplifies this in the best way. The highlight of the day was undoubtedly the drum dance held after the reception for the whole community. It featured the talented Fort Good Hope drummers, some of Morgan's young groomsmen alongside experienced drummers from the community. We cannot express the gratitude and honour we felt

from the heartfelt drumming of the Fort Good Hope drummers, it was truly an experience that we and our families will never forget. Thank you Fort Good Hope for all you continue to teach us, for always embracing us, but most of all thank you for making us feel at home here and allowing us to be married in your wonderful town.



Our Lady of Fort Good Hope Church



Drum dance at the school during the reception

The wedding party, full of our students



# Thank You For Making A Difference



School Winner - École Boréale  
Student Dayla & Teacher Isabelle Pineault-Chambers



School Winner - East Three Elementary School  
Student Debbie, Teacher Bradley Wade & LRO Christina Pierrot



School Winner - École Sir John Franklin High School  
Teacher Travis Stewart & Student Hillary

# Northern Lights

Meet

**Cora America**

from Fort Smith (Fort Smith region)



**Q. Where did you grow up?**

I spent most of my "growing up" years in Vancouver, BC and started my teacher education at Simon Fraser University. I moved to the north to finish my teacher training with Arctic College (now Aurora College), received my BEd from the University of Saskatchewan through ITEP and have been teaching in the NT for the last 21 years.

**Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?**

I come from a family of educators and so, the expectation was always present (though never spoken) to enter the profession. I loved being in the presence of kids, admire their positive, full energy and open, honest questions, their wide-eyed awe at being shown something unusual – I could not be "without" this in my life.

**Q. What do you teach?**

I have been a classroom teacher for 11 years – and a past administrator for 10 years. I appreciated learning alongside my Grade 6 students, the most!

**Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?**

I love building the personal connections with students and their families – not just being the "teacher" but the "learner" as well as being given the opportunity to witness the growth (mental, spiritual, physical and emotional) of a small human being. I also love celebrating and honouring the language and culture of the kids that I teach and incorporating this meaningfully in the classroom.

**Q. How do you engage your students?**

My students share with me what engages them: their interests, their questions, their thoughtful reflections and ideas. I take that and do my very best to connect learning to what grabs hold of their minds and therefore, student engagement is rooted in authenticity and purpose.

**Celebrating and Honouring the Languages of the North**

Over the many years as classroom teacher, and as school administrator I have learned the vitalness of recognizing, celebrating and honouring the languages of the north and specifically, in the community of Fort Smith. By making extra efforts as a teacher to incorporate the languages (and culture) in daily lessons, to support our Indigenous (and French) language teachers in our school, to speaking and writing simple key words in French, Chipewyan and Cree with students, supports the important work of keeping the languages vital and strong.



# Northern Lights

## Meet

### Melanie Bourque

from Yellowknife (YK1 region)

#### Q. Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Wedgeport, a small French Acadian village in Nova Scotia.

#### Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

As a child I always loved learning and I could often be found making work sheets for myself and friends as we would often play school. When I began thinking about what I wanted to pursue as a career, it was clear that education was the right choice for me.

#### Q. What do you teach?

I began my teaching career here in Yellowknife at École J.H. Sissons school. I currently have the privilege of spending my days with my grade one French immersion class.

#### Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

One of the things I enjoy the most about teaching is seeing students excited about learning something, especially when at first it may have been challenging for them. There is nothing like working with a student struggling with learning to read, or learning addition and being able to foster their perseverance and leading them to learn that they are capable of much more.

#### Q. How do you engage your students?

I believe that to truly be able to engage my students they must feel like they belong in the classroom. Having a good relationship with each student is essential. By getting to know them I am able to foster a positive classroom community which allows students to feel safe and comfortable to be their true selves and to feel comfortable to express themselves.

#### You're allowed to mix them up!

When we are learning to count to one hundred, I always take the time to share with my students that I will be teaching them to count with a certain French word, example: soixante-dix (seventy). I also explain to them that though I also went to school in French I was taught different words for the same numbers, example: septante (seventy). I want to ensure that they understand that there can be different words or a different way of saying something and that we should be proud in sharing our language and that it's okay that we may mix them up. Students then feel comfortable sharing words in other languages that they may speak at home. There is so much richness in sharing our languages!!



# Educational Leadership Program

Adrien Amirault, Professional Development Coordinator

The Educational Leadership Program (ELP) is a two-phase program that is designed to help participants develop their leadership skills for use in a northern educational setting. Each phase consists of 65 hours of class time plus a practicum. The program is based on the NWT School Leadership Profile and is organized around these key themes. All school principals in Northwest Territories schools must complete this program to be eligible for Principal Certification. The program is also open to all educators who are not currently school principals. (NWT School Handbook, Education Culture & Employment)

[Phase 1 of the ELP program](#) is being offered this year in Inuvik from July 1 – July 11, 2020. [Application packages](#) will be sent via mass email and available on the NWTTA website.

- **YCS** and **YK1** members can contact their District office to inquire about accessing funding for ELP.
- **GNWT** members are eligible to receive reimbursement of up to \$2500 for ELP expenses.

For further details, contact Adrien Amirault, Professional Development Coordinator with the NWTTA at [pd@nwtta.nt.ca](mailto:pd@nwtta.nt.ca).



ELP Photos – Department of Education, Culture and Employment



Department of Finance – Financial and Employee Shared Services

## First Pay Cheque of the New Year

Beginning January 1, 2020 Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Employment Insurance (EI) deductions will resume for those who paid the maximums in 2019. You will also note a change in the Government of Canada Pension Plan (Superannuation) contributions.

All earnings paid in January 2020 are subject to the new rates, which will be applied to your first pay cheque issued on January 10th and to all following pays in 2020. Due to these changes, you may notice a decrease in your first pay of the year, continuing until you have made the maximum contributions for CPP and EI.

### THE NEW RATES FOR 2020:

- CPP is 5.25% of earnings to a yearly maximum contribution in 2020 of \$2,898.00 (The 2019 rate was 5.10% to a maximum contribution of \$2,748.90)
- EI is 1.58% of insurable earnings to a yearly maximum contribution in 2020 of \$856.36 (The 2019 rate was 1.62% to a maximum contribution of \$860.22)
- Superannuation Pension Contributions: There is a change in pension contributions for all employees as per the rates below:

Employees enrolled in the plan PRIOR to January 1, 2013 (Group 1):

9.53% on earnings up to \$ 58,700.00 (2019 rate was 9.56% on earnings up to \$57,400.00)

11.72% on earning over \$58,700.00 (2019 rate was 11.78% on earnings over \$57,400.00)

Employees enrolled in the plan AFTER January 1, 2013 (Group 2):

8.69% on earnings up to \$ 58,700.00 (2019 rate was 8.68% on earnings up to \$57,400.00)

10.15% on earning over \$ 58,700.00 (2019 rate was 10.18% on earning \$57,400.00)

### RRSP PLANNING

For the benefit of future financial planning, you will be able to view your year-to-date totals on your last pay advice of the 2019 calendar year, even after your first January 2020 cheque has been generated.

# Northern Lights

## Rencontrer

### Martine

Gauvin  
de Yellowknife  
(région du CSFTNO)



#### Q. Où avez-vous grandi?

J'ai grandi dans un petit village nommé St-Clément au Québec, plus précisément dans la région des Basques.

#### Q. Qu'est-ce qui vous a décidé à devenir enseignant?

Je pense que je suis née avec l'étiquette ENSEIGNANTE dans le dos, car je ne me souviens pas avoir jamais pensé ou parlé de faire autre chose.

#### Q. Qu'est-ce que vous enseignez?

Cette année j'ai un groupe de pré-maternelle/maternelle.

#### Q. Qu'aimez-vous le plus dans votre enseignement?

Il n'y a jamais 2 journées pareilles, j'adore voir l'émerveillement dans les yeux des enfants lorsqu'ils découvrent, réussissent ou apprennent quelque chose de nouveau. Et bien sur tous les beaux sourires et petits gestes gentils que je reçois chaque jour!!

#### Q. Comment engagez-vous vos étudiants?

J'aime mettre de la variété dans mes journées: la littérature, les arts, la danse, les chansons, les jeux intérieurs et extérieurs, l'utilisation de manipulatifs, la cuisine et j'en passe!

#### L'école c'est ma place

Un petit mot de la fin? Un jour un collègue de travail m'a demandé: "Martine quel est ton secret pour toujours arriver de bonne humeur à l'école?" Je lui ai répondu: " Je n'en ai pas, mais le jour ou venir à l'école me fera perdre mon sourire, voudra dire que je n'y suis plus à ma place!"



# Working for Our Members A Glimpse of What We Do

David Murphy, Executive Director

There is lots going on at Central Office! Members have contacted us with many concerns for which they seek advice and support. Over the past couple of months, we have been asked to advise members with pay, pension, resigning mid-way in the school year, workload, notice to attend meetings that may or may not involve discipline, teacher qualifications and certification, bullying and harassment, school violence, teaching assignment, evaluations, grievances and arbitrations.

We meet regularly with employer representatives from the three bargaining units to discuss areas of concern specific to them. At the moment we are in discussions with the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) regarding a cameras in schools policy and updates to the Public Service Act, with Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YCS) regarding new teacher evaluation process, a teacher qualification concern and a grievance and with Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1), through the Teacher Board Advisory committee, regarding the new school to replace École J.H. Sissons School, review of the new harassment policy, new counsellors, staff evaluation and hiring practice.

As well, we meet with representatives of Education, Culture and Employment to discuss a variety of topics which affect teachers throughout the Northwest Territories regardless of which bargaining unit they belong. Recent meetings have included discussions regarding STIP, a new teacher evaluation model for use in all NWT schools, school calendar directions for next year, NWT Teachers' Qualifications Service and, an item that we hear about from many of our principals, principal workload.

Central Office staff are focused on the Central Executive election, updating the Legislation changes to be presented to Central Executive, preparing the negotiation Asking Packages to be presented to members prior to submitting to each employer, planning for the 2021 Territorial Educators' Conference and seeking applications to fill the position of Assistant Executive Director.

I wish to offer a sincere thank you to our members who volunteer to represent the NWTTA on regional and

territorial committees and at initiatives organized by the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF). Thank you to Catherine Son, Weledeh Catholic School, CTF Social Justice Project, Martin Deschesnes, École Allain St. Cyr, CTF Francophone Symposium, Gwen Young, École Sir John Franklin High School, CTF 2020 Women's Symposium. The participants will provide additional information to our member once the events have taken place.

## Negotiations for all Three Collective Agreements

At the end of this year the collective agreements for each of the three bargaining units expire. As a result, the Association has been busy preparing for negotiations with each employer. The process for collective bargaining in all three bargaining units is very similar. Negotiation teams were selected for each bargaining unit. These teams participated in a collective bargaining workshop delivered by the Association lawyer, Gordon Nikolaichuk. Each group was invited to prepare a survey in which each member was provided an opportunity to outline their ideas for change to their own negotiation team. Teams met to review the surveys and to capture the essence of the ideas that best met the wishes of the majority of the membership to be included in an "Asking Package" to be presented to members and then to the employer.

YCS members initially elected seven members, Kris Ballard, Janessa Kerr, Brent Simmons, Patricia Oliver, Lorelea Wark, Amy Wilkinson and Danielle Cuvelier, to prepare the negotiation package and once this was done the membership elected 4 members out of the seven, Patricia Oliver, Lorelea Wark, Amy Wilkinson and Danielle Cuvelier, to participate in actual negotiations. The "Asking Package" has been completed and has been presented to the Board as per the collective agreement February 15, 2020 deadline. We are now waiting a response from the YCS Board.

YK1 members elected five members with four participating in actual negotiations and one acting as an alternate in the event a team member is unable to serve. YK1 chooses their team with representation from High School, Middle School, Elementary School, Educational Assistants and an Alternate. The YK1 negotiation team is Gwen Young (High School), Elizabeth Brace (Middle School), Randy Caines (Elementary School), Stephen Offredi (Educational

Assistants) and Jackie Hawthorne (Alternate). The "Asking Package" has been completed by the negotiation team, reviewed by the membership and presented to the Board. We are now waiting a response from the YK1 Board.

The GNWT bargaining team was selected by seeking applications from members of the GNWT bargaining unit. Members were asked submit an application outlining their qualifications and experience, in a similar way as applying for a job. GNWT members from Central Executive and Regional Presidents reviewed the applications and choose applicants to serve on the GNWT negotiation team. This year's GNWT negotiation team members are Matthew Miller, Val Gendron, Tyson Ruston and Todd Sturgeon. The team has completed the "Asking Package" and prior to March 1 members will have an opportunity to review the package through regional teleconference or in person depending on the schedule.

The GNWT bargaining team has traditionally begun bargaining first and it appears that will be the case this time as well. The GNWT and the NWTTA have scheduled dates for the first round of bargaining to commence during the weeks of April 27-30 and May 19-22. Other dates will be selected if negotiations are not completed within these dates.

Although YCS and YK1 bargaining dates have not been set as yet, we anticipate bargaining to commence for these bargaining units after the April 2020 dates set with the GNWT.

We will keep you informed of other important news regarding negotiations. If there is anything you would like to know or have an idea to share or a concern you would like addressed, please let us know. We always look forward to hearing from you as hearing our "Members' Voices" is what makes us strong!

# Northern Lights

Meet  
Deborah Reid  
from Hay River (South Slave region)



**Q. Where did you grow up?**  
I grew up in southern Ontario. Elora is a small town and I grew up in the country beside many farms. In the summers, I didn't see any of my school friends so school became more than a place of learning, it was a place of friendship and connection.

**Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?**  
I remember always wanting to be a teacher. One of my first memories was standing in front of all my stuffed animals, holding a ruler and teaching them the alphabet. I am an oldest child so my siblings endured many hours of play school with me bossing them around.

**Q. What do you teach?**  
I wear three hats in my current role. I am an assistant principal, program support teacher, and instructional coach. Prior to this, I was a principal and board coordinator. When I taught, I did so in Nunavut for 11 years and was providing music and ELA instruction mainly at the Grade 7 - 12 level.

**Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?**  
It's the kids. I really like working with students at all levels. I love their sense of humour and enjoy seeing them figuring things out. I come to school because I get a lot of my personal energy from their enthusiasm and willingness to learn new things.

**Q. How do you engage your students?**  
I use a lot of strategies to get student engaged in learning because every student is different and every student will be interested in different things. For the most part, my students really connect when I am able to use Indigenous stories, examples, and real life lessons. Because I see myself as a funny person, I try to engage students with humour and novelty. I believe that if I am passionate about a topic, then that will encourage others to join in and be interested in it to o.

**How I fit into the big picture**  
One never forgets their first class of students and my Grade 4-6 Inuit student taught me what teaching was really about. There were many times when I wondered why I came north but after learning that 4 of those same Taloyoak students chose to become teachers themselves, I can see how I fit into the big picture. I can see how I made a difference and that makes my heart full.



# Whole School Language Approach at Chief T'Selehye School

*Morgan Fairweather, Principal, Fort Good Hope (Sahtu region)*

Chief T'Selehye has long endeavoured to create a whole school approach to language and culture. Some of the barriers that existed were a lack of resources, familiarity of the Dene Kede curriculum among southern staff and high staff turnover. On May 17, 2019 the staff decided they would use a professional development day to come up with an action plan and tackle these issues head on.

Chief T'Selehye was fortunate to have an all-star trio of NWTTA staff who were able to provide direction and the necessary support to move forward. Regina Lennie has served as language coordinator and teacher for 21 years. Betty Barnaby has served 28 years as a teacher and Language Coordinator and Bonnie Kakfwi, a dedicated SSA, has admirably stepped up as leader in her new role as the Language Teacher this year.

Chief T'Selehye's first order of business was to collaborate and come up with a concrete plan that would be achievable and realistic throughout the whole school. The staff decided to break the school year up into seasons and focus on material that would be relevant during those times. In addition, each season would have a large culminating event to celebrate the work and success of the students. The plan would be evaluated 3 times a year, during a collaborative STIP day with our entire staff. We would use the time to review what successes and challenges we faced and how to move forward. This reflection piece was a critical part of the plan, not everything worked the way we thought it would and there were always ideas for how we could make it better the next time. These meetings prevented feelings of discouragement and ensured we would continue to stay on track despite minor setbacks.

Highlights of the fall season included setting nets for fish, traditional food preparation, berry picking and a cookout prepared by the staff and students for the community. Highlights of the

winter season thus far are an in-school hand-games tournament, beading, building a fire in the teepee on Wednesdays to hear elder stories and an in-school traditional games tournament to come.

Along with the land and culture Chief T'Selehye has also emphasized the integration of language in the school. Our language staff worked very hard preparing a schedule of monthly phrases for classroom teachers to focus on with their students, this also included phonetically spelled phrases that made it easier to grasp the pronunciation. Every month commonly used phrases are taught to the students during the morning assembly. Teachers also encourage students to use these phrases in the classroom. Each month new phrases are introduced while past phrases continue to be reviewed and practiced. Examples of some phrases used already are Mahsi naratseyeda (Welcome back), Sudule soko rahda (Can I go to the washroom), Nila karanisi (Wash your hands) and Sudule tu hedo (Can I have a drink?). The most impactful part of our language plan was the infusion of language into school life beyond the Dene Kede classroom. A common challenge most schools face is that southern teachers don't always feel confident in teaching a language that they are unfamiliar with, however in this environment students and staff learn together and it is understood that it is okay to make mistakes. The students enjoy hearing their teachers try out new phrases and can often be heard correcting and helping their teachers practice pronunciation. This has shown students their language is valued while also promoting self-confidence as they take on the role of the teacher. These are just the first steps in supporting a foundation where Dene Kede isn't just a subject in the school but a philosophy that is intertwined throughout all programming in the school and supported by staff

both local and southern. I am really proud of our entire team for meeting this action plan with such dedication and energy and look forward to building upon it together during the upcoming school year.



# Project Overseas 2020

Congratulations to **Julie Donohue-Kpolugbo** from the Beaufort-Delta District Education Council office (Beaufort-Delta region) who will be travelling to **Ghana** in July 2020 as part of two teams of four volunteers from Canada for Project Overseas 2020! In total this summer, 60 teachers on 16 teams will be providing Professional Development assistance in 13 countries in Africa and the Caribbean.

[Project Overseas](#) is a joint endeavor of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) and its member organizations to support overseas partners in developing countries as they deliver professional services to teachers. Since 1962, Project Overseas has assisted teacher organizations in over fifty countries in Africa, Asia, the Pacific and the Caribbean. Project Overseas places over fifty volunteers in approximately ten countries every July.

NWTTA members have participated in Project Overseas since 1969. Below are some recent NWTTA participants:

- 2010 - Kirstin Prescott  
Location: St. Vincent
- 2011 - Deborah Reid  
Location: St. Vincent
- 2012 - Karan Spoelder  
Location: Granada
- 2013 - Deborah Reid  
Location: St. Lucia
- 2015 - Obed Duru  
Location: Ghana
- 2017 - Nashra Kamal  
Location: Dominica
- 2019 - Cora America  
Location: Uganda

# Northern Lights

Meet **Jenny Reid**  
from Yellowknife (YCS region)



**Q. Where did you grow up?**  
I was born in Tuktoyaktuk, but moved to Yellowknife when I was 7, so for the most part, I consider myself a "Lifer Knifer" though I will always say nothing beats Delta Whitefish.

**Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?**  
The money and the fame. Just kidding. Initially it was more the fact that I didn't really know what else was out there, but I think what has made me stay a teacher was the satisfaction that I get from working with kids and the unpredictability of each day. I really enjoy constant challenges and trying to solve problems in creative ways. There are so many opportunities in our job to push yourself to try new things and really connect and build relationships with others.

**Q. What do you teach?**  
I am the principal of the best school in the NWT - Weledah Catholic School where I get to interact with about 350 kids, 45 staff and some pretty amazing families each day. And today I got to teach beading, which was great.

**Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?**  
I enjoy the enthusiasm of kids when they figure something out, seeing growth and development in each person I work with, and the satisfaction from knowing that what I do matters and never having a dull moment.

**Q. How do you engage your students?**  
I engage students by building relationship. I learned early on that I could not teach a child or, in my role as an administrator, discipline a child unless they cared about me and I cared about them. The only way this happens is by listening to kids; sharing a laugh with them, finding out about what they like, what is important to them and what they need.

**It's important to model the risk taking that trying new things requires**  
I think languages are critical to keeping our northern culture alive and something we must all take an active part in when trying to support our kids to be proud of themselves and their heritage. Not being an Indigenous language speaker, I make lots of mistakes, but really believe it's important to model the risk taking that trying new things requires. To that end, I was leading a session the other day at our family literacy night on beading. I was trying to teach the kids the wiliideh yati word for "bead" but my pronunciation wasn't that great. A language speaking parent came and tried to help me out and explained that if I missed the tonal sound then I was not saying "bead" but was actually saying "poop". We had a good laugh.



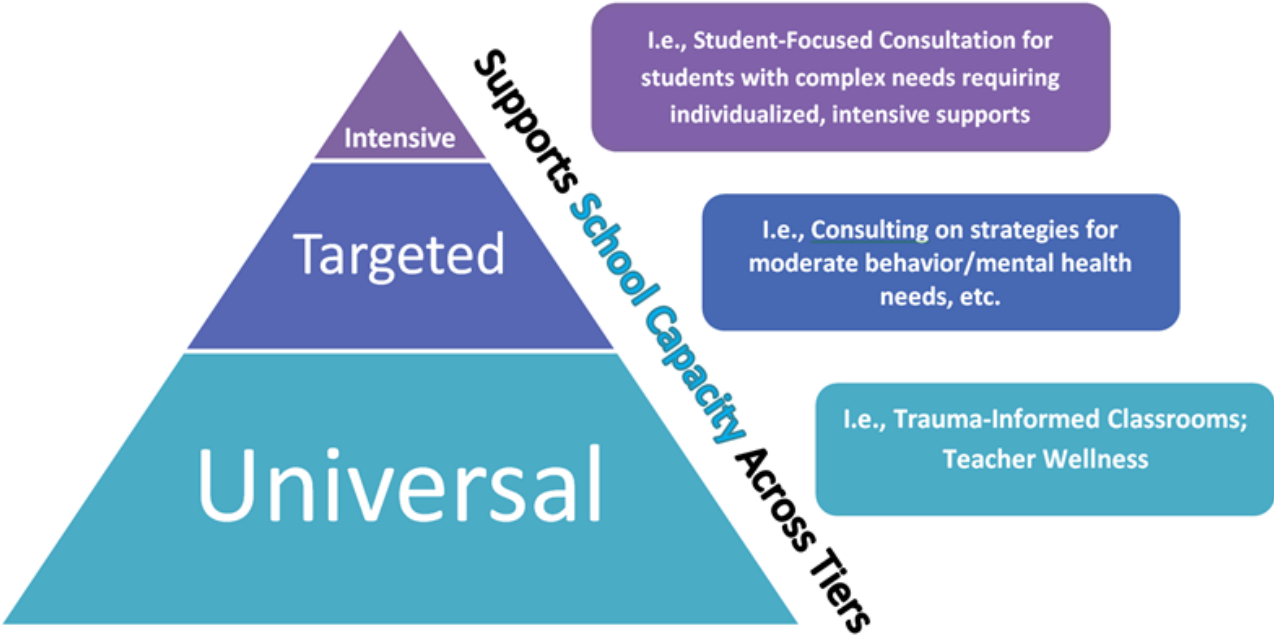
# Territorial Based Support Team

Photo: Bill Braden

The **Territorial-based Support Team (TBST)** is a team of inter-disciplinary professionals within the Health, Wellness, and Student Support Division of the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment. The TBST augments the clinical work provided by Health and Social Services clinicians and aims to build the capacity of regional and school staff for supporting students with complex needs.

Support is provided on a referral basis, and responds to individualized needs of school teams. Services include provision of professional development for staff, case conferencing and consultation for school and classroom support/strategies, and support for the development of policies and procedures.

Currently this team has coordinators in the areas of mental health, occupational therapy, and educational psychology.



# TBST Across the North

Photo: Tessa Macintosh

When a need arises, it is important to first contact the School-based Support Team to utilize resources available within the school. If additional services are needed, the Regional Inclusive Schooling Coordinator (RISC) is the next level of support, and supports available through Health and Social Services clinicians should be considered.



In collaboration with the RISC, principal, and superintendent, a referral can be made to the TBST.



If you would like to learn more about how this team can support your school or classroom, or to access the referral form, please email [tbst@gov.nt.ca](mailto:tbst@gov.nt.ca).



# From the Archives

What were our members talking about in the past? Below is an article re-printed from a February 1985 NWTTA newsletter, then titled "Communicate".

## Kids, computers and common sense

Bill Belsey, Teacher - Kreterklerk School, Eskimo Point

**Who gets to use the computers in your school?** You wish to give each student equal time and schedule time slots accordingly. As interest will be high, this might be the most fair method. Some teachers may decide to use the computer as a reward for good behaviour, excellent attendance or for completing work quickly.

Although this technique may provide strong motivation, it may mean certain students never get to use the computer. Another alternative is to have your school's computer committee develop a list of priorities for computer usage. For example, what does the school view as having highest priority; junior high, intermediate, or primary students? What about special education and administrative uses? Remember that your best answer will probably be found in the spirit of cooperation and compromise.

**How many persons may work on the computer at one time?** Students may be scheduled onto the computer by themselves or in pairs or in small groups. If an individual student is at the computer, you can be assured that he/she is getting his/her full opportunity to operate it. Sometimes, with pairs or groups one student dominates the computer and others don't get their fair share of time.

On the other hand, an individual student may experience difficulties and waste time getting help. Also, with individual use, the amount of computer time is limited. With pairs or small groups, students must work on group problem-solving techniques; thus, interaction between students and the computer is enhanced. In addition, you can schedule students onto the computer more often if small groups are used.

**When should the computer be used?** As mentioned earlier, the computer should be used from early morning until well after school including recesses and noon hours. This, of course, is restricted by the availability of supervisors. Older children might at as monitors for younger students. Don't let the computer sit idly in your classroom. Let others know when your students will be finished so that other students or teachers may use it. During non-class hours (recesses, noon, after school) the computer might be used for a computer club, enrichment or remediation.

**Do teachers and office staff get to it?** Teacher use should be encouraged. Some time during the day or after school could be scheduled for staff use only. The office staff may find the microcomputer a valuable asset in doing word processing, inventory lists, filing of students records, time tabling, etc. and time might also be allocated for this use.

**Where should the computer(s) be located within a room?** The computer should be placed in a location where it will be the least disruptive for students who are not using it. It should also be placed in a location away from cold, heat, dirt, dust, smoke, traffic, water, food or magnets. Three of the most common causes of computer breakdown are spillage of liquids (coffee, soft drinks) onto the keyboard, dust (this includes smoke particles as well as ashes...therefore no smoking should be permitted in a healthy computer environment!) and static electricity. This last cause is a big problem in the north. On your next school budget include the following: a static bar that fits directly in front of and under the keyboard, this will permit computer users to ground themselves out before touching either the hardware or software; a humidifier for the computer room if you have set one up; disk drive cleaning kits - these often include a can or pressurized air, a cleaning disk with cleaning fluid so that the read and writer heads of the disk drive may be cleaned as you would clean the magnetic heads of a cassette recorder or video machine. Peter Stuempel, Teacher Consultant ad Baffin "Computer Guru" has this excellent suggestion; you might also ask your school custodian(s) to spray a solution of fabric softener and water with a plastic spray bottle on the carpet near the computers to help reduce the static charges. If your computers are already on a tiled or wooden floor you have little static to worry about anyway. Be sure to take necessary precautions against theft as well.

As far as furniture goes, it is important that the computer be set up on an adjustable cart which will allow students to sit comfortably and have easy access to all the component parts. A cart suitable for Intermediate students may not be suitable for Kindergarten children. Various designs are available. If you have a shop program and your shop is suitably equipped, you may want to consider having your school's older students make a mobile computer station for the school during their shop time. After such carts have been constructed or received after ordering you might wish to secure the various computer components to the surface of the cart.



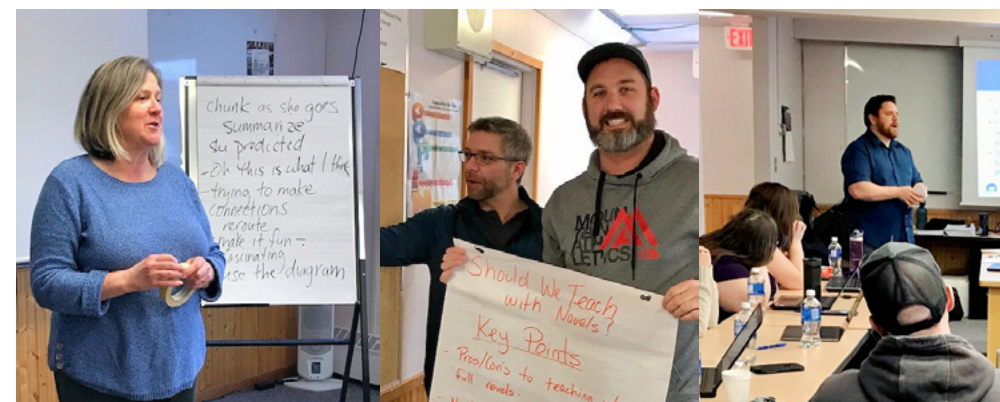
# Senior High Inservice in Behchoko

Mike Pickles, Curriculum Coordinator, Tlicho region

On January 27-28, 2020, a Senior High In-service was held in Behchoko at Chief Jimmy Bruneau School with 18 teachers on behalf of the Tlicho Community Services Agency.

Monday, January 27, Tom Aikman, Student Assessment Coordinator from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) joined us to discuss the importance of assessment and evaluation in our schools, and the different types of assessments teachers could utilize.

Tuesday, January 28, Susan Catlin, English Language and Literacy Coordinator from ECE joined us to discuss reading for literacy, and the ability to read, write speak and listen in order to communicate effectively, and to apply these skills to connect, interpret and navigate through the world we live in.



# Northern Lights

Meet  
Heath  
Israel  
from Inuvik  
(Beaufort-Delta  
region)



**Q. Where did you grow up?**

I am from a military family. I spent my younger years moving all around Canada. My family was posted to Inuvik on three separate occasions. When my parents were transferred again, my three older brothers and I decided to make Inuvik our permanent home.

**Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?**

My hockey coach told me to get as much ice time as I could while I was at home for Christmas holidays. I volunteered to help coach some Minor Hockey players and really felt a sense of fulfillment when I watched them master a skill that I had taught them.

**Q. What do you teach?**

My current teaching assignments are Grade 9 Math and Grade 9 Science.

**Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?**

Helping my students find their success.

**Q. How do you engage your students?**

With such a wide range of prior knowledge in my classes, I find it helps to ask the students to share what they bring to class, and I try to present the information in a variety of learning styles.



# CTF Advisory Meetings

**Gwen Young, Chair, Status of Women Committee**

On Monday, February 10, the Advisory Committees of the Canadian Teachers Federation (CTF) met in Ottawa. Of the eight Advisory Committees, the Status of Women, Diversity and Human Rights, Indigenous Education, and the Teaching Profession meet for a one-day face-to-face meeting.

I had been selected in May 2019 to a two-year term on the Status of Women Advisory Committee. This committee provides advice on long-term directions, strategies, policies and regulations that relate to the status of women in education. This meeting in Ottawa, offered members the opportunity to meet and discuss current priorities for the committee.

FemLeadFem is a resource created by CTF to offer members the opportunity to connect and gather current information on issues around gender and female education. This resource has come on line and the committee had the opportunity to learn and plan for changes. Upcoming events for members of the Status of Women Committee include the planning for the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York in March 2020. As a member, I will be attending with a group of women from

different unions and education groups. The focus of this event is gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.

CTF/FCE 2020 Women Symposium is happening in Toronto in April 2020. The theme of this year's symposium is *100+years – Struggle to Strength*. This three-day symposium will give women members from across Canada the opportunity to come together and discuss issues around women, leadership and gender equality. The NWTTA is sponsoring four women from the NWT to attend this event. They include:

Gwen Young – Committee Chair/YK1 Region

Wendy Tulk – Tlicho Region

Val Gendron – Dehcho Region

Lisa Schachtschneider – Beaufort-Delta Region

I look forward to continuing this important work with the CTF Advisory Committee on the Status of Women and hope to bring forward ideas and information for the NWT Status of Women Symposium 2021 in Yellowknife with the NWT Educators' Conference.

*Photo below: CTF Advisory Committee on the Status of Women. Gwen Young is fourth from right*



# Northern Lights

**Meet**

**Terri Douglas**  
from Behchoko (Tlicho region)



**Q. Where did you grow up?**

In the NWT, born in Aklavik, lived in Fort MacPherson, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife, Fort Norman, Fort Smith and went to school in Inuvik and lived at Grollier Hall.

**Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?**

When we were living in Fort Norman I had the most awesome teacher named Jerry Masor. He opened my eyes to reading and the knowledge that we can learn through books. Also, through music and how singing can help with language.

**Q. What do you teach?**

Presently I am not in the classroom but the Vice-Principal at Elizabeth Mackenzie Elementary School. I love the work I am doing. I am still able to interact with the students but I also work with parents. I also help support our Tlicho Yati Immersion classes.

**Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?**

That my role is to help make a difference in any students' learning. When a student's eyes light up when you ask a question and the arm is waving in the air to answer the question, I call that "the million dollar smile of knowledge". Something no one can take away.

**Q. How do you engage your students?**

By building on the knowledge that they have. Lots of hands on activities and laughter. I always tried to teach something that was of interest to a student so we can all learn together.

**Our language grounds us**

I was always proud of my Indigenous heritage and our language. When spoken it is so beautiful that I want all of our children and students to want to speak their language fluently. Our language grounds us and it ensures that we know our ancestors. The late Elizabeth Mackenzie said, "If we want to know what may be in our future we need to be able to look back and see where we come from. If we can do that then we can be "Strong Like Two People" in today's society.

# Newsletter Trivia

Send your answers to the trivia questions below to news@nwtta.nt.ca with subject *Trivia*.

Trivia answers are contained within this edition of the newsletter. Newsletter Trivia contests are open to active NWTTA members.

Deadline for entries: **April 15, 2020**



**Win a \$50 Starbucks Gift Card!**

1. What is CILLDI an acronym for?
2. What are two ways to say the number seventy in French?
3. Since what year have NWTTA members participated in Project Overseas?
4. Name three members of the 2021 NWT Educators' Conference organizing committee.

**Amy Wilkinson** from École St. Patrick High School in Yellowknife (YCS region) won the December 2019 Newsletter Trivia!





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Regional Presidents' Representative

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Our Students | Our North | Our Success

## NWT EDUCATORS' CONFERENCE



February 24-26, 2021 | YELLOWKNIFE, NT

The next NWT Educators' Conference will take place February 24 to February 26, 2021 in Yellowknife. All NWTTA members will be together for this exciting professional development event.

Your conference organizing committee is:

Allie McDonald (South Slave/Fort Smith)

Andrée Amirault (YK1)

Caroline Roux (French Language)

Chelsea Upton (YK1)

Colin Pybus (Beaufort-Delta)

Diana George (Dehcho)

Janice Beland (YCS)

Jessica Appleton (Tlichon)

Loralea Wark (Status of Women)

Michael Duclos (Sahtu)

Adrien Amirault (NWTTA PD Coordinator)

Colleen Eckert (GNWT Department of Education)

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