



**WESTERN AND NORTHERN CANADIAN PROTOCOL (WNCP) FOR
COLLABORATION IN (KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 12) EDUCATION**

This Protocol made as of the 26th day of May, 2011.

BETWEEN:

The Government of Alberta as represented by the Minister of Education (hereinafter referred to as "Alberta")

AND

The Government of Manitoba as represented by the Minister of Education (hereinafter referred to as "Manitoba")

AND

The Government of the Northwest Territories as represented by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (hereinafter referred to as "Northwest Territories")

AND

The Government of Nunavut as represented by the Minister of Education (hereinafter referred to as "Nunavut")

AND

The Government of Saskatchewan as represented by the Minister of Education (hereinafter referred to as "Saskatchewan")

AND

The Government of Yukon as represented by the Minister of Education (hereinafter referred to as "Yukon")

1. PREAMBLE

Canada's *Constitution Act* of 1867 provides a federal system, stating that "in and for each province the Legislature may exclusively make Laws in relation to Education" (Section 93). This provincial and territorial responsibility for education recognizes regional differences, the high value placed on developing and adapting policies to be responsive to local needs and conditions, and the need to administer programs at the local level.

However, western and northern Canadians have also shared expectations of education where a collaborative approach is both appropriate and desirable. They envision education systems based on shared expectations, values and beliefs about education that are rooted in western and northern Canadian experiences and perspectives including those of First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) peoples.

A well-educated society is the prerequisite to economic success, social cohesion and personal growth and our society is changing at a rapid pace in the 21st century. Parents, communities and researchers have identified the pressing need for learners to actively contribute to their local communities and successfully participate in a knowledge-based, globalized society and economy. There is also greater awareness of an approaching era of innovation where the ability to acquire and apply competencies are keys to future success. International research in learning informs us that if our children are to be well positioned for the future, we must take advantage of the unique potential of information and communication technologies to transform the student learning experience by enabling students to become engaged thinkers, global citizens, and active participants in collaborative and social learning environments.

The Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP) partner jurisdictions, by working together on projects of joint interest, can create opportunities for a viable market for curricular resources, significant cost savings and human resource efficiencies in providing high quality education to students. To that end, the WNCP will enhance student outcomes by meeting the needs of students through collaboration in areas of shared interest and mutually beneficial goals. It will take advantage of economies of scale, scope and speed in ensuring WNCP jurisdictions have access to customized and world class curricula that meet the diverse learning needs of all students.

In this regard, we, the Ministers of Education of the western provinces and territories, unanimously declare our renewed commitment to leadership in education to achieving broader shared strategic goals that together, the provinces and territories can achieve more effectively. We will collaborate in the broad area of Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum¹ while recognizing and maintaining jurisdictional autonomy on educational matters when deciding whether participation in a project or an activity is of strategic interest or relevance to a particular jurisdiction.

Our central objective is to provide high-quality education for all students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 based on the vision and mission described below.

In acknowledging our responsibility for leadership in basic education, we fully recognize that the WNCP jurisdictions, as partners, are committed to ensuring the success of all WNCP activities.

¹ Curriculum refers to curriculum frameworks, resources and assessments

2. VISION

Working together to provide high-quality K–12 education for all students.

3. MISSION

The WNCP provides strategic and collaborative leadership, based on common goals and principles in the broadly defined area of curriculum, which leverages expertise, fosters economies of scale, and is managed in an efficient and effective manner.

4. PROTOCOL

WHEREAS the Ministers of Education of Alberta, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Saskatchewan and the Yukon (hereinafter referred to as the “partners”) unanimously agree to collaborate on achieving shared strategic goals in the broad area of Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum (curriculum frameworks, resources, and assessment) while recognizing and maintaining jurisdictional autonomy on educational matters;

AND WHEREAS, the partners:

- share many common values and beliefs about education that are rooted in western and northern Canadian experiences and perspectives including FNMI;
- recognize the need for students to be prepared for a knowledge-based global economy, manage their lives wisely, contribute to their communities and relate well to others

share educational goals and acknowledge that the provision of education to all students is strengthened by WNCP jurisdictions working together on achieving mutually beneficial and shared strategic goals and objectives at inter-jurisdictional and pan-Canadian levels

AND WHEREAS, as a basic premise, it is understood that in recognizing provincial and territorial autonomy in education, the WNCP jurisdictions have the option to participate, or not, in projects and activities on the basis of a jurisdiction’s strategic interest or relevance, and use or implement the project’s deliverables at their own pace and according to their own methods of operation to meet the needs of their respective learners;

AND WHEREAS, it is important that FNMI students experience and feel a sense of pride in their own linguistic and cultural heritage to enhance their resiliency, improve their achievement and experience the relevance of education in their lives;

AND WHEREAS, it is understood that the primary goal of Francophone education is to allow students to strengthen Francophone language, culture and identity and sense of belonging while encouraging students to actively contribute to flourishing Francophone cultures, families and communities;

AND WHEREAS, jurisdictions share common challenges and opportunities to address inclusive education, it is recognized that each jurisdiction has different approaches, legislation and policy that requires jurisdiction flexibility and autonomy to address their respective needs relative to the growing diversity of students with physical, social, linguistic, behavioural and/or learning challenges, whose abilities, strengths and learning needs must be recognized;

AND WHEREAS, WNCP activities will use appropriate technologies, tools and approaches to foster student engagement and enhance student learning in a variety of learning environments, in preparing students to become successful lifelong learners, workers, contributing community members and global citizens.

THEREFORE, the partners agree as follows:

- 1.0 To cooperate on enhancing student outcomes by meeting the needs of all students through collaboration in areas of shared interest and goals while recognizing and respecting jurisdictional autonomy on educational matters when deciding whether participation in a project or an activity is of strategic interest or relevance to a particular jurisdiction.
 - 1.1 Curriculum (curriculum frameworks, resources and assessment) in French and in English.
 - 1.1.1 Develop common curriculum frameworks.
 - 1.1.2 Acquire and/or develop quality, customized learning resources and supports that align with the curriculum framework.
 - 1.1.3 Explore the development of common assessments.
 - 1.2 Achieving economies of scale through increased operational efficiencies and effectiveness.
 - 1.2.1 Achieve cost savings and human resource efficiencies in all WNCP activities while ensuring high-quality products that help improve student outcomes.
 - 1.2.2 Increase ability of smaller jurisdictions to obtain world-class curricula and other products.
 - 1.3 Leveraging expertise of partner jurisdictions.
 - 1.3.1 Common vision for 21st century learning
 - 1.3.2 Increase ability to share expertise, research and best practices.
- 2.0 To follow established project management guidelines and standards, and leverage appropriate technologies to achieve policy and procedural objectives.
 - 2.1 Leadership and management.
 - 2.1.1 Leadership should be willing to take a western/northern perspective and promote that in their jurisdictions.
 - 2.1.2 There will be clearly articulated priorities for the WNCP, agreed to by all partners.
 - 2.1.3 Each project will be reviewed to ensure that it aligns with partner priorities (or that partners align with the project).
 - 2.2 Project management.
 - 2.2.1 Each project will require a terms of reference and a charter that identifies major milestone deliverables to be approved by all partners participating in the project.
 - 2.2.2 Major projects, prior to commencement, will have completed cost-benefit and risk analyses, including cost-effective resource commitments; adequate and appropriate resources will be assigned and project work will be seen as part of the job.
 - 2.2.3 Partners participating in a project will contribute equitably to approved projects in accordance with the funding and cost sharing set out in section 6.4.
 - 2.2.4 Evaluation will be a part of every major project – both in terms of outcomes and processes.
- 3.0 To have project participation by partner jurisdiction(s).
 - 3.1 If a project or an activity is deemed to be of strategic interest or relevance to partner jurisdiction(s), the jurisdiction(s) shall state their intention to participate in a project. Jurisdictions participating in the project shall pay their share of costs as set out in section 6.4.

3.2 In the event that a partner participating in a project wishes to stop participating in a project, it will give 30 days written notice to the other partners participating in the project. The partner terminating its participation in the project shall pay its share of the costs as set out in section 6.4 up to and including the effective date of termination.

4.0 To harness the expertise in individual WNCP jurisdictions for the benefit of all jurisdictions.

5.0 Where desirable, to cooperate and jointly advocate for the mutual interests of WNCP jurisdictions in Kindergarten to Grade 12 education, nationally and internationally.

5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

WNCP activity and partner engagement are based on the following principles.

- **Student-focused** The success of all students is the highest priority of all WNCP partners and all students have the right to a high-quality education in fulfilling their potential; and that all students belong and are valued, welcomed and respected members of the education system and the society.
- **Innovative** In providing high quality K–12 education for all students, the WNCP leadership and management explores new opportunities for innovation that focuses on continuous improvement in fostering student learning, the attainment of strategic priorities and goals, and in creating solutions to opportunities and challenges, that yield new and/or improved curriculum, project management models and processes, and research.
- **Accountable** WNCP activities are cost-effective, efficient and based on quality management principles and processes. The outcomes are measured, communicated and used to plan and make decisions. All partners bear responsibility for outcomes and challenges.
- **Responsive** WNCP partners engage in activities that meet the goals of the WNCP and are conducted in a timely and efficient manner.
- **Collaborative** The WNCP jurisdictions recognize that more can be accomplished by jurisdictions working together than by one jurisdiction alone. WNCP partners work cooperatively to further the goals of the WNCP by developing and implementing common strategic priorities, through good working relationships, and gaining understanding through effective communication in decision-making.
- **Flexible** WNCP partners are responsible for being engaged in WNCP activities as appropriate and in a manner that recognizes jurisdiction capacity and autonomy in developing and adapting policy and programs that are responsive to local needs and conditions.
- **Respectful** The views and contributions of all WNCP partners are heard and valued and have equal responsibility in the planning and

management of WNCP.

6. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

6.1 DEPUTY MINISTER COMMITTEE

The Deputy Ministers shall keep their Ministers informed on Protocol projects and/or activities, meet once a year, as appropriate, to review the annual Accountability Statement prepared for the WNCP Ministers of Education, and approve the revised Three-Year Business Plan drafted by the Assistant Deputy Ministers' Steering Committee (ADMSC).

The Deputy Ministers may also meet to resolve any outstanding issues that may arise from the implementation of the Protocol.

6.2 ASSISTANT DEPUTY MINISTERS' STEERING COMMITTEE

The ADMSC is accountable for the overall implementation of the Protocol, and resolving issues arising from the implementation of the Protocol or any other matters that may affect the operation of the Protocol. The mandate of the ADMSC is to provide leadership and facilitate a comprehensive and coordinated approach to common strategic priorities and areas of interest as described in the Three-Year Business Plan (Appendix 1). The ADMSC will review and update the WNCP Three-Year Business Plan annually and will prepare an annual Accountability Statement (Appendix 2) for the WNCP ministers of education.

The WNCP ADMSC shall be composed of K–12 Assistant Deputy Ministers (or equivalents) named by Deputy Ministers of each provincial or territorial jurisdiction. The Terms of Reference (Appendix 3) describe roles and responsibilities as well as decision-making and issues resolution processes.

6.3 DIRECTOR COMMITTEES

Director committees, comprised of department officials, will be set up at the discretion of the ADMSC to assist, define and manage Protocol projects and/or activities.

6.4 FUNDING AND COST SHARING

To cover costs for projects and other activities requiring jurisdiction resource commitments, contributions will be based on the following percentages.

Alberta	30%
Manitoba	20%
Northwest Territories	10%
Nunavut	10%
Saskatchewan	20%
Yukon	10%

The above current by established percentages were developed on the population of WNCP jurisdictions. These populations were converted to the following ratio: 1:2:3, with one being equivalent to 10%, followed by ratio multiples of 2 (20%), and 3 (30%). The percentages were further rounded to add up to 100%.

100% funding and cost sharing will be reviewed every five years for alignment with Statistics Canada census information.

7. ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING

Evidence of success of the Protocol will be based on the accountability framework found in Appendix 2. The framework consists of goals, outcomes, measures and targets. Measures will be collected and reported in the annual Accountability Statement.

8. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE THREE-YEAR BUSINESS PLAN

The WNCP Three-Year Business Plan goals and strategies will be reviewed and updated annually within the context of emerging education opportunities and challenges and their impact on strategic priorities. The purpose of the annual review will be to ensure that:

- 8.1 strategies are refreshed as projects are completed
- 8.2 the business plan is responsive to emerging needs and issues in education.

9. TERM, AMENDMENT AND TERMINATION OF PROTOCOL

- 9.1 The term of the Protocol will be three years after its signing by all the respective ministers of the partners.
- 9.2 The Protocol may be amended with the consent of all the respective ministers of the partners in writing.
- 9.3 The partners agree that the ADMSC may, from time to time and in the interests of clarifying the application of the provisions of this Protocol, agree on clarifications that do not alter its spirit and substantive intent.
- 9.4 The partners may conduct a joint evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of implementing this Protocol prior to its termination and/or extension.
- 9.5 A partner may terminate its participation in this Protocol by giving three hundred and sixty-five (365) days written notice to the respective ministers of the partners, of its intention to do so.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the partners have executed this Protocol as of the day and year first above written.

THE GOVERNMENT OF **ALBERTA** as represented by the Minister of Education

Witness



Minister of Education

THE GOVERNMENT OF **MANITOBA** as represented by the Minister of Education

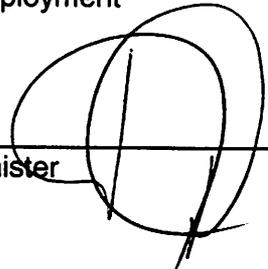
Witness



Minister

THE GOVERNMENT OF **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES** as represented by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment

Witness



Minister

THE GOVERNMENT OF **NUNAVUT** as represented by the Minister of Education

Witness



Minister

THE GOVERNMENT OF **SASKATCHEWAN** as represented by the Minister of Education

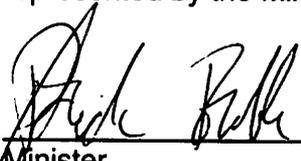
Witness



Minister

THE GOVERNMENT OF **YUKON** as represented by the Minister of Education

Witness



Minister