

Learning and supporting change continues in Yukon despite freezing weather

It was -37 degrees Celsius in Whitehorse, too cold to walk three blocks to a restaurant—far colder than School District Liaison Judy Smith was used to feeling coming from Vancouver Island, BC. But that was what greeted her during a February trip to Yukon, along with a group of welcoming and dedicated educators, administrators, and support staff who gathered to learn about standards-based assessment and other tools in Aspen (Yukon’s name for MyEducation BC) that support student learning.

Yukon follows the BC curriculum and has been using the Aspen (MyEducation BC) service since its implementation. While they are staggering the implementing of the new K-9 curriculum, the territory remains focused on shifting the practice of assessment for its 5,400 students. Yukon already has an assessment committee who made recommendations to the territory’s leadership and developed a dynamic guidelines document to support communicating student learning. Judy’s trip was to share how Aspen can support making the shift to the new curriculum and new forms of assessment.

“People are excited about the direction of the new curriculum and are interested in the supporting tools within Aspen that will help us connect with students and parents in their learning journey,” said David McInnes, coordinator of Technology Assisted Learning with the Government of

Yukon. “We need a vehicle to help capture that and make the shift. The standards-based gradebook helps us bridge that gap.”

Judy spoke with teachers, school administrators, superintendents, learning branch consultants, and the Aspen technical support team over the course of five days. “I was impressed with the work Yukon schools are doing together to move forward with competency-based assessment,” said Judy. “Their commitment to improvement for their students is obvious.”

“The standards-based gradebook gives them the tool to tailor assignments and easily track progress and gaps.”

Moving forward, David says the emphasis will be on training teachers on the use of standards-based gradebook and working with schools that want to begin using teacher pages and student and family portals. “Teachers are excited about drawing the links between the curricular competencies and what they are doing in the classroom. The standards-based grade book gives them the tool to tailor assignments and easily track progress and gaps,” he said.

Looking back on her week in Yukon, Judy recalls not only the freezing cold days with five hours of sunlight, but the people she met and their commitment to using Aspen to support their students and making the shift a positive experience for everyone. “People were wonderfully warm, kind, and adventurous,” she said. “It’s easy to see how Yukon can steal one’s heart.”

School district liaisons are available to support all school districts using MyEducation BC. Email myedbc@gov.bc.ca for more information. ●



It got as low as -37 degrees Celcius, but that didn’t stop Yukon educators, administrators, and support staff from attending sessions to learn more about the standards-based gradebook and other Aspen functionality that supports students learning. Photo by Judy Smith

Register now for MyEducation BC Academy 2018

Registration is now open for the 2018 MyEducation BC Academy on May 7-8, 2018 at the Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel in Richmond, BC.

Registration is free and easy through the event's [Eventbrite ticket site](#). Once you have registered, you will be forwarded to the [event schedule page](#), where you can get more information about tracks and sign up for workshops once the full agenda is posted. Because these websites are based in the US, we recommend you register using your work email address.



Attendees will get lessons on using MyEducation BC, learn more about the transformation of education within British Columbia, and connect with Follett and Fujitsu and like-minded educators, administrators, users, and school staff from across the province. Breakfast and lunch are complimentary. A draft schedule will be available soon. Watch the event schedule for the latest agenda information.

Share your knowledge and innovations

School district-led workshops are always a key feature of MyEducation BC Academy. If you or your district is doing something new or innovative with MyEducation BC or MyEducation BC Analytics, or you have knowledge that other districts may find valuable, we encourage you to submit a session proposal by emailing myedbc@gov.bc.ca with the session topic and a short description.

If you have any questions regarding registration, accommodations, or the event, contact myedbc@gov.bc.ca. •

MyEducation BC class lists updated to support gender-inclusive education

On January 28, 2018, four class reports in MyEducation BC were updated to reflect Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI). The reports provide a printable view of class composition for class and homeroom teachers and school staff. Previously, they listed students' legal gender. The update removes all references to gender from the reports to ensure that all students and staff feel welcomed, included, and respected at schools.

The changes were made with the support of the Ministry of Education, the Service Management Council, and the Software Enhancement Committee.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) is an inclusive term that encompasses all individuals regardless of where they identify on the sexual orientation or gender identity spectrums. In July 2016, the BC Human Rights Code was amended to prohibit discrimination based on gender identity or expression. In September 2016, the

Minister of Education announced Boards of Education and Independent School Authorities were required to update their anti-bullying policies to specifically reference sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

For more information on SOGI, including resources for teachers and schools that align with BC's new curriculum, visit sogieducation.org. •



Speak with a district liaison at Digital Learning Symposium

MyEducation BC School District Liaisons Judy Smith and Iain Lancaster from the Ministry of Education will be at the 2018 Digital Learning Symposium to offer one-on-one support and demonstrations to attendees. Drop in on April 19 with your MyEducation BC questions or reserve an appointment in advance.

The conference runs April 18-20, 2018 at the Westin Wall Centre Vancouver Airport in Richmond, BC. Visit the [symposium website](#) for more information. ●

Meet Your SMC: Kamloops/Thompson's Surinder Brar

Surinder Brar likes to explore and find solutions. "I enjoy playing with software and problem solving, testing things—to me that's fun," he explained. With that outlook, it's easy to see why he's leading innovative projects and providing leadership on the Software Enhancement Committee (SEC) and Service Management Council (SMC) Executive Committee.

A district principal of information management and DL, Surinder began his career in education teaching in Mackenzie, BC. After moving to the University of British Columbia and then Hayne's Junction, Yukon, he finally settled in Kamloops, first as a teacher and basketball coach, then as an administrator. In his current role, he oversees the educational aspects of IT implementations (including MyEducation BC), year-end and Ministry reporting, the district's school completion program, and Kamloops Open Online Learning, a DL school. He works out of two offices, travelling where he is needed each day, and also leads a team who supports MyEducation BC in SD73.

Looking to support his districts' focus on student presentations of learning and K-12 e-portfolios, Surinder and his team began exploring the use of pages in MyEducation BC for student e-portfolios.

"We already had portals open for parents and students, so it seemed natural if we could get portfolios in there as well. We've always tried to have single login [for parents] so it's simpler," Surinder explained, adding that another benefit of using MyEducation BC for portfolios is the persistence of information. "Unlike other software, the information in MyEducation BC stays with a student... so we can look at the growth of the child rather than just a snapshot for one year."

One third of Kamloops's 15,000 students now have e-portfolios in MyEducation BC.

Surinder also helps to innovate and improve MyEducation BC for all school districts through his participation on the SMC Executive Committee and as chair of the SEC, which provides recommendations regarding software enhancements and changes to the system. "I like the fact that enhancements to [MyEducation BC] are driven by districts," said Surinder. "Ultimately, it's the end users that are identifying the needs with the software."

Long-term, Surinder would like to see MyEducation BC used as the central software for student information in the province. "Again, I think it's that philosophy of everything being in one place. I would like to push to expand its current functionality. There's a lot of things MyEducation BC does well right now, but I'd like to see it get even better," said Surinder.

When he's not exploring and solving systems problems, he's playing sports or enjoying the outdoors. He plays soccer, basketball, and tennis, and enjoys biking, hiking, and camping with his wife. "Our kids are all older now, so we're off exploring. We do an annual trip into the Rockies. Last summer we traveled all down the west coast to southern Oregon." At March break, he and his wife plan to "point the trailer south with no destination in mind." This summer will include a trip to the Yukon in the trailer. ●



Surinder Brar is a district principal of information management and DL at SD73 Kamloops/Thompson, a member of the SMC Executive Committee, and the chair of the Software Enhancement Committee.

SMC Committee Corner

The Service Management Council (SMC) is comprised of representatives from each school district appointed by each superintendent. The SMC has four standing committees: Operations and Standards Committee, Student Learning Committee, Software Enhancement Committee, and Data Integration Committee. These committees provide

guidance and input on the evolution of MyEducation BC. Brief updates from the SMC's committees are below. For more information, contact your district's SMC representative, which is listed under "MyED BC Contact" on the [School Districts - Basic Information page](#).

Group	What We're Up To	Contact(s)
Data Integration Committee (DIC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full day working session March 1 with Fujitsu and Ministry to learn about opportunities for accessing student data and identifying possible future projects 	Sean Cameron
Operations & Standards Committee (OSC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four updates to Standards Manual made in January: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Maintenance updated with new standards for Pre-Transition Field Set Updated Cross-Enrollment section to clarify that the primary school is the school where the most courses are taken Designation standard updated to clarify not to end-date designations Clarified requirement to add inclusion record when updating existing student information Conducting a survey of SMC members as part of review of access and use of Documents side tab 	Phil Luporini
Software Enhancement Committee (SEC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented changes to remove gender from the four BC Class List reports in January 2018 Six 2017/18 enhancements will be implemented in April 2018, and another during summer EOYR testing Three 2017/18 enhancements requiring core code changes will be a part of a future Follett release Currently undertaking analysis of the benefits, requirements, risks, and options for supporting student e-portfolios First meeting scheduled to review ~80 enhancements submitted for development in 2018/19 	Surinder Brar
Student Learning Committee (SLC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updating and refining clerical resources to support standards-based gradebook and family portal Completed Simplified IEP project Reviewing and revising traditional gradebook teacher training materials to create a more concise resource Will be working closely with Follett throughout the spring to coordinate teacher feedback sessions for the redesign of an updated version of the standards-based gradebook 	Dave Sands and David Vandergugten



Contact

Have a great story related to MyEducation BC? Have a comment about something you've read? Email myedbc@gov.bc.ca with your ideas and feedback.