



News Release – GNWT and YK1 to welcome students and staff to new École Itł'ò in Yellowknife

Yellowknife (August 23, 2022) – The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and Yellowknife District Education Authority No. 1 (YK1) are pleased to announce the completion of École Itł'ò (formerly J. H. Sissons School). The opening of the school means students and school staff will be in the new facility to kick off the 2022-2023 school year.

École Itł'ò – pronounced EE-k-lo – is the first new school in Yellowknife in 20 years. Itł'ò means cranberry in the Wìlìdeh language. It is significant because of its connection to the land. The site on which the school sits used to be a common berry picking area for Wìlìdeh Yellowknives families, who held a spiritual significance to cranberries.

The new facility features 18 Junior Kindergarten to Grade 5 classrooms with modern technology, state-of-the-art, energy-efficient appliances, interactive white boards, a foods room, music space, project studio, larger gym and a centrally located library at the heart of the school that features quiet spaces.

An Indigenous consultant provided insights on the design of the building, which resulted in incorporated elements such as circular spaces, wayfinding, and colour selections. Artwork by Chipewyan Dene artist John Rombough that was originally installed on the exterior of J. H. Sissons will feature on the interior east wall of the library.

The two-year École Itł'ò build was completed on time and on budget. The first day of the new school year will be August 29. A grand opening of École Itł'ò is being scheduled for later in the school year.

Quote(s)

“I’m so excited to welcome staff and students to École Itł'ò. From the furniture to the artwork to the architecture, École Itł'ò is a truly impressive facility. The new school will provide a stimulating and productive learning environment that will be a centre of community activity for years to come. I look forward to celebrating the opening of École Itł'ò in the near future.”

- **R. J. Simpson**, *Minister of Education, Culture and Employment*

"I am thrilled for the students and staff. They have the honour to be the first to learn and teach at École Itł'ò starting next week. École Itł'ò will mark an exciting new chapter for

education in Yellowknife and the Northwest Territories. I would like to thank everyone who made this brand new, state-of-the-art facility a reality for our community."

- **Terry Brookes**, *Chairperson of Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1)*

Quick facts

- École J. H. Sissons School was built in 1975 in Yellowknife. In 2018, after many studies, consultations and analyses, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) recommended that the school be demolished, due to significant wear and tear on the building and growth in the school population. The school closed in June 2020, and a two-year build began on the existing J. H. Sissons site.
- The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is responsible for the construction of new schools, colleges, community learning centres and libraries across the NWT. YK1 is responsible for ongoing maintenance and operation of schools within its district, and was responsible for accommodating J. H. Sissons students during construction of the new school.

Related links

- [ECE Website](#)
- [YK1 Website](#)

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