



Approved July 3, 2025

Northern Lights School of Dance

General Membership Meeting

May 24, 2025 10:00am

Northern Lights School of Dance

Attendees:

In person

- Karen Campbell
- David Eastland
- Natasha MacDonald
- Jen Kosmenko
- Betty Burns
- Crystal Woodman
- Amanda Taylor
- Steph Haines
- Duane Hanscom
- Greg Woodford
- Frank Anderson
- Jada Powell
- Glenda Koh
- Christine Murray
- Lisa Young
- Richard Stevens
- John Haselmayer
- Marcy Mills
- Ryan Lane



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- Kirsten August
- Heather Mah
- Justin Boucher
- Marilyn Marquis-Forster
- Leah Adam
- Ken Edwards
- Gary Whittle
- Julian
- Michelle Watson
- Helen Eddy
- Miranda Colbert
- Lindsay Hartland

Online attendance

- Alison
- Christina Snider
- Colleen
- Debi Wickham
- Denise McDiarmid
- Diana Nicholson
- Franklin Fu
- Genevieve Tremblay
- Jenny Gonzalo
- Kendra Couch
- Laila Mason
- Natalie Wing
- Sarah
- Ss



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- Stephanie
- 1 8*****59
- Hoyt/Anderson
- Ovigo Pierre

Welcome - provided by Karen Campbell, Treasurer NLSD Board

We acknowledge that you are attending this meeting today because you have a vested interest in your individual dancer(s) and the school at large. We also recognize that there have been communications that you may have received that you may be curious about or have concerns. The objective of this meeting today is to provide you all and the NLSD membership who are able to join us today, to hear about the work of the NLSD society to both maintain and grow NLSD and uphold its mandate through support to our dancer's growth, safety and opportunities through dance.

For today's meeting we note that NLSD has processes and procedures in place for our staff that support and protect their privacy. Out of respect to privacy we will not be speaking to any HR related concerns. We also ask that you present questions and/or concerns with respect to our working board and staff.

We are committed to supporting you all with questions you may have regarding our presentation and have scheduled time for these questions at the end of the presentation.

We also welcome ongoing questions that you can communicate to the board through the board email or requests to attend a board meeting.

Introduction of NLSD Board Members

Lindsay Hartland - President/Secretary
Natasha MacDonal - Vice President
Karen Campbell - Treasurer
Kristie-Anne Boucher - Director at Large
Betty Burns - Director at Large



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Mary Caldwell - Director at Large

Introduction of instructors and causal instructors in attendance:

Marcy Mills
Jenny Kosmenko
Jada Powell
Julian (last name)

Presentation minutes:

Objective of meeting:

To provide the membership an update before summer.

Slide One:

Opening title page

Slide Two:

Agenda:

1. 2024-2025 Year in Review
 - a. Society Work
 - b. Fundraising Review
 - c. Funding Review
 - d. Community Projects
 - e. Staffing Update
2. Policy and Bylaws
3. Survey
4. AGM Prep

Slide Three:

About the NLSD Board



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- Comprised of 10 volunteer members
- This year members were elected for the first time from what can be seen in records, never been an election since 2015, otherwise they are acclaimed
- 90% of the board members were brand new this year, 1 person returning
- Working board not a governance board with the difference being a working board, which is clearly documented in the history of the board, are very involved in the running of the society versus a governance board which deals with the high level stuff

Slide Four:

2024/2025 Areas of Focus

- 2024-2025 has met over 30 times, 150 hours in board meetings
- The Board had a 3 pronged approach for the 2024-2025 dance season including what was important for the membership, what was important to the contractors and what was important to the board
 - Membership:
 - What we heard through looking back at historical board communication as well as the open house that happened at the beginning of the year was:
 - Better communication
 - Volunteer training
 - Safety - parking lot, studio lights
 - Contractors:
 - All our staff are contractors with the exception of the Artistic Director
 - Contractors work on a year to year basis, they don't have benefits
 - We heard they want to be staff
 - Feel valued for the work they do
 - Improved communication
 - Board:
 - Return to a governance board if we can
 - Standardize practices and procedures
 - Ensure proper supports were in place for the studio



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- Increase transparency

Slide Five:

Board Approach - Membership

- Communication:
 - In terms of communication, noting that there is always room for improvement, everyone from staff to the board really tried to increase communication this year and do it in a timely manner
 - Looking at returning to an in person admin at the studio
- Volunteer training/roles
 - Created 1 page documents for roles of volunteers at performances that were taped outside dressing rooms and hallways outlining roles and expectations
 - In-person and virtual training sessions before Nutcracker to provide training on roles (6-12 people took part)
 - Costume committee created visuals to support volunteers to know what costumes for stage should look like
- Safety:
 - This year all staff, board members and volunteers working in enclosed spaces were required to get criminal record checks
 - This was for both the safety of the dancers as well as the adults working with the dancers

Slide Six:

Board Approach - Instructors

- Staff
 - Started to look at making contractors staff, which includes looking at deductions from their pay for EI etc, which includes claiming remittance which is a cost to the studio. We are confident that this can be done but it will depend on your year end financials
 - Have talked with another organization about partnering on their benefit plan for NLSD
- Value to work done



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- First time that the Prince George lead was paid for all the hours they worked in PG
- Staff were paid their full wage for the time put in at year end shows
- We were able to get direct deposit for pay rather than cheques
- Communication
 - Opened pathway for staff to communicate with the board
 - Ensured that staff received Jack Rabbit communications that parents/dancers receive so they were knowledgeable of what parents/dancers were receiving as communication

Slide Seven and Eight:

Board Approach - Board

- Trying to get to a governance board
- Spent a lot of time reviewing records, policies, procedures and practices, looking at ways to make things more efficient
- Addressed some inefficiencies including by:
 - Modernizing internal operations
 - moved banks from CIBC to BMO
 - Setting up online payment through Jack Rabbit to be ready for June 1
 - Requesting a multi-year tenancy agreement with the guild which will support the lease coming up at the same time that a new board takes over in late August/early September
 - Looking at a three year lease for the downstairs studio
 - Moved email system to Microsoft Office 365 to ensure communication is being received and to deal with issues of not being able to access the email at times
 - Maximizing the use of the space at NLSD
 - Looking at maximizing the space we have and having the schedule reflect that and earn further income
 - Increased Transparency



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- Tried to increase transparency and timely and effective communications
- Holding this membership meeting
- Recently the minutes of board meetings have gone up on the NLSD website, bulk of this year and most of last year
- Building internal capacity
 - Streaming lining process
 - Trained two director positions this year
 - AD role is large and not manageable for one person
 - Tried a Stage Director Position and a RAD Director position
 - Overlap in all three positions (AD, Stage Dance Director and RAD Dance Director) to help support one another and build capacity
 - Staff job postings for substitute personnel, and to work through huge waitlists especially for the younger students

Slide Nine:

Challenges

- 90 % of board brand new without any historical knowledge
- Lack of internal policy and procedures (ie fire/evacuation procedure)
- No strategic plan - where are we going
 - Hard to figure this out through records
 - Still don't have one and would like to develop one over the summer and into the fall
- Record keeping
 - Missing records, maybe because of records being paper or records shared through personal emails in the past
 - This year as a board have only used the board email for communications within the studio as well as externally
 - Google drive in use so that future boards have access to records and information



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- Staff shortages was a complicating factor
- Technology
 - Not only was the email a challenge, many platforms related to the operations of the studio are tied to recovery emails of past board members, insurance policies naming past board members as the owners.
 - Trying to bring everything back in house and tied to the board email and instructor emails

Slide Ten:

Fundraising Update

- 2 streams of fundraising:
 - Studio Fundraising
 - Included:
 - Cookie Dough
 - Purdy's Chocolates
 - 50/50 Raffle
 - Show Flowers, Cupcakes and Video Sales
 - Nutcracker Sponsorships
 - Pop-Up Shop at Nutcracker
 - Gear Swap and Clothing Drive
 - Mable's Labels
 - Yukon Built Hoodies
 - Photo Sales
 - Travel Dancer Fundraising
 - Included:
 - Utility Bill Stuffing - City of Whitehorse
 - Wine Fest Coat Check
 - Bingo
 - Mitchell's Soup
 - Nutcracker Silent Auction
 - Travel fundraising depends on what is happening for travel (smaller events like Prince George - every year or bigger events like Dance and



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Child International (DaCi) - every three years). Fundraising for travel fluctuates depending on the year

- Appreciative of all the supports for fundraising from parents/guardians

Slide Eleven:

Fundraising

- Comparison
 - Blue on the bottom is the main studio fundraising
 - Green is Travel
 - Pink is sponsorship
- Last year travel fundraising was high - dancers went to Slovenia
 - Bingos and sponsorship were the major fundraisers
 - Approx. \$109,000 raised in total for the studio
- This year travel is a lot lower
- Roughly, taking in account that year end is not done yet, \$45,000 for main studio, \$28,700 for travel with the majority of that being bingo and \$7100 from sponsorships (Nutcracker sponsorships) - totally close to \$81,000 this year

Slide Twelve:

Funding Update

- We rely on funding
 - Arts Operating Fund (AOF) is the main funding for studio - we have heard that there are misconceptions that if NLSD fundraised too much we would lose the AOF
 - A board member met with AOF staff and looked over our applications and gave feedback that we incorporated their feedback into the AOF request this year
 - We receive an increase to the AOF this year based on the feedback
 - We have applied to the Lotteries Opportunity Grant
 - Initially applied late in the fall for funds for the year end ballet



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- Because the cost of the production is extensive the maximum the project can be is \$10,000
 - We pay more than that to rent the Arts Centre
 - Initially the project was rejected, the Board met with their advisor who provided guidance and we built a grant upon the costume catalog for dancers for travel, but the costumes can also be used the studio with the stipulation that they can't be borrowed from the studio by anyone but NLSD dancers
 - We receive \$7500 from this grant with NLSD paying in \$1000
- We received STEP student funding for 1 student for the summer 2025-26 and we have hired that position
- We received summer student funding
 - The difference is that STEP funding is for a person in post secondary and summer student is for someone in high school who has just graduated
 - Both positions will support summer camps and other studio jobs required for the summer
- Travel
 - We received travel assistance funding (TAP) for travel dancers
 - Eligible to apply to lotteries for every single dancer that travels and for a chaperone for every 10 dancers
 - Last year the funding was \$200/ dancer/chaperone, this year the amount was increased to \$400/dancer/chaperone
 - We were able to apply twice as each festival was in a different YG fiscal year
 - Can be used food, hotel, flights

Slide Thirteen:

Funding

- Arts Operating Fund and TAP funding



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- 2022/2023 - \$28,000
- 2023-2024 - \$28,000 with a market increase of 10% totalling 30,800.00 and \$2,600
- 2024-2025 - \$35,456.00 and \$16,000 for TAP funding

Slide Fourteen and Fifteen:

Costume Purchasing

- We purchased approx. \$20,000 in new costumes this year
 - Funding from 50/50 and Lotteries Opportunity funds paid for these costumes
- A costume catalog was created by last year's summer STEP student
 - Inventory was done to mark costumes as good, fair or poor - a lot of costumes were requiring replacement
 - NLSD has an extensive ballet costume inventory but not a lot for other genres like commercial and acro
- We have expanded the sizing to be inclusive of all of our dancers, which includes sizing from 6x-XL

Slide Sixteen:

NLSD Community Outreach and Opportunities

- We are a charity and a non-profit
 - Opportunity through invite to perform at the Velvet Antler Christmas show
 - Jr Can Can dancers performed at the Yukon Order of Pioneer's dinner
 - Chinese New Years - been a support for over 10 years
 - Special Olympics performance from some intensive 2 dancers
 - Youth Steering Committee
 - Bake Sale at the beginning of the dance season
 - Swan Haven Partnership - photo and crafts during the Easter weekend - have been invited back next year
 - Accessibility show at the Nutcracker - Saturday matinee, lights not as low music - less volume
 - Community Pay as You go Event for the Friday matinee - due to technical difficulties with our email school did not receive the invite for the school



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show that was planned for the Friday matinee - NLSD pivoted and opened the show to the public as a Pay as You Go Event and reached out to as many of their community partners as possible - sold over 250 tickets in 6 days

- Donated studio space for the FH grads to practice for their fashion show
- Donated in partnership with MacDonald and Company law firm tickets to the Child Development Centre for tickets to the accessibility show for the Nutcracker
- Donation of Ode to Swan tickets to a KDFN elder on her birthday
- Whitehorse Huskies spring league - coat check at the Ode to Swans
- Donation of roses to Kaushee's Place for Mother's Day with leftover roses from year end shows
- Received a invitation to the Peace River Dance Festival in Fort St. John
- Heart of Riverdale invitation to their Polar Nights performance - travel dancers performers

Slide Seventeen:

Performances

- Nutcracker
 - School show - Yukon Arts Centre changed their ticketing process so schools were able to purchase tickets through their Arts Centre - this was a huge savings in administrative duties
 - Over 400 tickets sold - all of Carcross school attended
 - 4 other shows including the accessible matinee, 1 regular matinee and 2 evening shows
- Year End
 - Switched the schedule of the ballet and the contemporary show
 - Typically the contemporary show is during the week and the ballet on the weekend
 - Typically the contemporary sells less tickets partially because its a select group and its during the the week
 - The ballet sells because of the name (ie. Nutcracker, Swan Lake)
 - Went well with the change



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- Incorporated the feedback about young dancer being at the Art Centre for long period of times was considered

Slide Eighteen:

Performance Ticket Sales

- No data from 2024 for year as the Yukon Arts Centre switched their ticketing systems
- 2025
 - Nutcracker sold 1983 tickets all shows
 - Year end ballet - preliminary numbers 800 tickets - Arts Centre capacity is just over 400
 - Year end contemporary- 1360
 - During the Nutcracker an original NLSD Board member commented that the Nutcracker was once of the best they have seen

Slide Nineteen:

Staffing Update

- Christine Buckle has parted ways after 14 years of providing dance instruction and leadership to the school
- NLSD wishes her the best
- NLSD has been without a permanent Artistic Director for most of the year
- Thankful that Jen and Marcy stepped up to act in this role and all the other instructors for their support
- STEP student and Summer student
- Bookkeeper is retiring after many years with the studio
- Staffing for the 25/26 dance year has been hired for the core programs
- Still need to put out posting for choreographers for travel
- Substitute teachers need to be hired
- Staffing structure and possibly moving to an Executive Director model who cares for the financial part of the studio and have a shared artistic director role that looks after the arts side of things



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Slide Twenty:

Policy and Procedure Update

- Registration, tuition and fees policy was updated in March to provide clarity on membership
- Flagged that membership was unclear, tightened up wording, to say the family pays one membership, regardless of how many dancers you may have, and as long as you have a dancer, your membership is valid.
 - If your dancers pull out of the studio your membership is void
- Refunds - language wasn't clear and a decent amount of refunds have been paid
- Added Updated language for payment plans
 - Updated language that updated from post-dated cheques to Jack Rabbit pay added that language
- Travel Policy updated and consent forms
 - Pieces that didn't align with the school policy so that was aligned
 - Feedback from Prince George 2025 - Survey - small changes made with the feedback given
- Next steps
 - Confidentiality agreement needed to align with the Societies Act
 - Language didn't so updates will be made
 - Emergency Policies need to be created
 - Volunteer Policy Commitment Policy
 - Looking to create
 - Most organizations like Gymnastics, Freestyle Skiing, Glacier Bears, here is an expectation to volunteer and looking into how to share the workload
 - Creating a strategic plan to guide the the society

Slide Twenty-One:

Survey

- There will be survey going out to membership early next week
 - We would like feedback, what worked and didn't work
 - We would like to know where you would like to be involved



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Slide Twenty-Two:

AGM - August 24, 2025

- a. Notice will be sent out in advance
 - AGM there will be requests for a bylaw change for the studio to acquire a credit card
 - Currently anything requiring a credit card purchase is done by a board member, instructor or volunteer
 - b. Bylaws state that the society is unable to go into debt
 - We would like to secure a credit card that would support purchases that don't involve personal credit cards
 - c. Finances are currently being reviewed by Crowe MacKay to support transparency and modernize the finances of NLSD Society - will review the last year and look at last year and what they recommend moving the society from an antiquated way of doing financials to how we best represent the past and the current financial content
 - d. Motion will be written up and sent out prior to the AGM regarding proposal change the bylaws
- Board Seats
 - a. 4 open board seats at this time
 - b. If anyone wants to spend the next two months on the board we are open to it
 - c. Most of the current board are looking to return for the 25/26 year
 - d. Let us know if you are interested

If there are any further questions please email the board

Minutes starting at 48:50 after the presentation



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Staffing for next year: Information regarding who will be teaching each class for the 2025-2026 dance season will be made available prior to registration.

For participation in travel/competition dance, the criteria is being established by the Stage Dance Director and will be made available to the membership. Once it is established it will be communicated and there will be a parent meeting.

It is important for the Board to communicate to families and reach out for support and to communicate the needs of the dance school to the membership.

It was communicated that some dancers felt stress this year, while others reported it being their favorite or a very successful year.

The board believes it is important to receive feedback from families so processes and operations can be improved. Most often feedback received from families is positive, it is also important for families to reach out if they have feedback or concerns. When feedback is received the Board will work to address it.

There are confidential matters the Board can not share with the membership; such as personal and confidential HR matters.

The NLSD Board is a working board. There are 10 board seats. This year is the first year that all 10 seats were filled. Over the course of the year, 4 board members moved on from the board, all at different times. This is often typical for boards of this size especially when they have a very heavy workload. Last year the board also lost 3 members.

The board was asked how concerns get addressed when individual dancers bring concerns forward. It was communicated that if individual dancers have concerns it is encouraged that those be brought to the instructor in a timely way. It was acknowledged that it can be difficult to deal with concerns retroactively. Oftentimes there will be a meeting to discuss the concern to understand concerns more fully.



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There was a lot of change this year, which may have contributed to some dancers not feeling well supported. It is important to reach out if a dancer is not feeling well-supported.

It was communicated by a member that everyone has a shared interest in creating a safe and supportive environment for children. Concerns were raised that perhaps this may not be happening well as per information being circulated in an email from a staff member. A suggestion from the member was made for a separate or additional meeting to help address these concerns.

Emails sent out to the membership by a staff member, were referenced by members. These emails were acknowledged by the board. It was noted that these emails were not sent directly to the board, nor were the staff member's concerns previously shared with the board.

A member communicated perhaps current issues being raised in the emails by the staff member, may stem from work from prior years. The board was asked by the member to consider ways to build community and belonging and to work to create a safe space for conversations and communication with the goal to hear and address concerns.

It was communicated that in a community there are professional ways of interacting, where conversations and concerns are brought forward in respectful ways. Speculation, partial facts or information about instructors or children should not be shared. In a community we all have a shared responsibility to model respectful behavior.

NLSD staff have shown tremendous amounts of leadership, the board expressed thanks and recognized the staff who have successfully taken on the leadership responsibilities of the school over the course of the year.

The board was thanked by a member for the amount of work being done to move from a working board to a governing board. It was acknowledged that it is a huge step for a non-profit society and a necessary step to ensure the organization is well looked after.

A member shared that the next step should be a survey. It was suggested that people often believe if it is happening in their home it is happening in everyone's home. They encouraged



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everyone to complete the survey so there was lots of participation. After a survey a report could be distributed to all of the members. It was suggested that this would be the best form for people to share their thoughts and to identify next steps.

A suggestion that a clear communication protocol be developed for dealing with staff, parents, dancers, and board was made. The member explained that with a governing board people do not go directly to the board concerns, they would go first to speak to the instructor.

A public forum may not be the best way forward as it is important that the society has a way to hear everyone's concerns to then move to identify solutions.

A member communicated it was evident that a lot of impressive work went into this year by the board and the instructors. Moving forward, it is important for families to understand the best way for parents to communicate to instructors and the board.

Everyone is encouraged to complete the survey that will be created. Results will be analyzed and priority areas identified. A comprehensive report with actions will be shared. A member agreed to help the Board support this work.

A parent spoke about seeing this time as a moment of change. It was suggested that the school could prioritize strategic planning and that the survey that will be developed can feed into a strategic plan. It was suggested that these processes can be hard but also very invigorating.

NLSD looks into Safe Sport Training for athletes, dancers and coaches, there are resources that are already developed that NLSD can tap into. The universal code of conduct for athletes is applicable to NLSD.

As part of the Royal Academy of Dance all certified instructors must take 20 hours of professional development per year which includes Safeguarding of the Child to ensure that instructors are providing a safe and healthy environment for children. The RAD Ballet director completes this professional development each year. That is part of the training that happens here at NLSD.



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NLSD is a member of Sport Yukon and is a resource that can be used and Safe Sport Training definitely something that will be looked into.

Admin support is required for the school. In the past it has been a high turnover position. The Board committed to advertise an admin position that also works in the studio to support families and staff and to answer questions and take payments. Since Covid the admin position has been a virtual position. It was acknowledged that this is a very important position for the school.

Building a new studio had been a focus of past boards, questions were asked if that is still a focus of the current board. The board has recognized that the current space has not been fully maximized and is actively working to maximize the use of current space. It is the ultimate goal to have a new studio, but finding affordable space is the challenge and the funding options to us are limited. It is still on the radar but the current focus of this Board is stable staffing and maximizing current space.

This dance year, more classes were created and registration was opened in January to maximize Sunday and Saturday space that was not being utilized. The board hopes to continue to work to maximize the current space, to serve more dancers, generate more revenue and build capacity. All of these things will help when moving forward to apply for funding programs in the future.

Another key factor for being able to move forward a large project, such as securing a new space, is the ability to work together as a community. It will take a very large community and collaborative effort. It would also take a committee of dedicated parents.

Since January, staff has worked to move more than 50 of over 100 children who are on wait lists for dance classes by opening 5 new classes in January. Staff sent out a survey to see if people would be interested in Saturday afternoon classes and families responded with great interest. Some of these classes filled within an hour of posting. This is an example of work being completed to maximize the current space.

RAD program is a focus in the school in the intensive programming. Discussions took place around ballet exams and the RAD program and the value it brings to Northern Lights School of



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Dance. RAD is a system of providing progressive dance training that is the most recognized world wide. It is taught in more than 80 countries. RAD outlines the important skills learned each year and it is designed so that children do not miss important and essential skills. RAD exams were discussed and questions around if they are optional or mandatory and it was acknowledged that some students find the exams stressful. The RAD Ballet director explained that moving forward, it is important to understand that exams are not mandatory. It is the process and work over the year that is important. RAD is a curriculum that builds on skills and sets a valued standard in the studio. The RAD Ballet Director spent time explaining the different components and importance of the RAD Ballet program.

Discussion continued around the ballet exams with various members sharing. It was shared that exams allow a result for Yukon Dancers to share technique across Canada and the world. Exams are a strong idea which also need to be supported with classes in strength and versatility. It was also shared by a parent that RAD exams can be used to receive high school credits so the children are recognized for their achievements. They are also valuable for students who are interested in dancing after high school or teaching dance. RAD exams are recognized by the BC and Yukon Education for Fine Arts credits and are recognized toward high school graduation. It was communicated that a balanced approach to learning is valued. It was suggested that part of the survey should have questions around RAD Ballet Exams so that the needs of the children who are dancing recreationally and those that are dancing to move on to be part of the dance world can be considered.

It was pointed out that the number of children dancing in different age groups declines as children get older. It was suggested we look at this trend to understand what is happening. Further discussion took place on this topic including financial considerations and as children get older they tend to specialize. The trend for this was discussed across all sports. A commitment was made to build this into the survey.

The membership was thanked for coming. Everyone was reminded to fill out the survey when it goes out and reach out to our staff or the board if needed.