

Improving Education for all Nunavummiut

The 2008 *Education Act*, marked a significant step towards creating an education system that reflected the culture and values of Nunavut.

Over the next several years, areas of improvement were identified by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada and the Nunavut Legislative Assembly's Special Committee to Review the *Education Act*. In 2016, as a result of these reviews the Department of Education held consultations that lead to the introduction of Bill 37 – *An Act to Amend the Education Act and The Inuit Language Protection Act*. This bill was eventually rejected by Members of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly in fall 2017.

Since then, the Department of Education worked to actively improve the education system by significantly increasing the number of Inuktitut literacy resources, developing an Inuit Employment Plan, and, working with Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit, developing standardized terms for subjects like Math, Science and Health.

Further education reform is necessary, and Nunavummiut must be involved in its development. With this goal in mind, and guided by the education priorities outlined in *Turaaqtavut*, the Department of Education and the Department of Culture and Heritage developed a set of proposals as a starting point for discussion in our consultations with Nunavummiut. Following consultations, and informed by the public's feedback, the Department of Education will submit draft legislation to the Legislative Assembly in the spring of 2019.

An Effective Approach

Roles and Responsibilities of the District Education Authorities and the Department of Education

District Education Authorities (DEAs) play an essential role in our education system. They are elected volunteer boards who provide valuable services for the delivery of education at the local level and provide guidance to schools on how they should reflect the community's culture and principles.

Under the 2008 *Education Act*, DEAs have many responsibilities that require significant time and resources. This has been recognized by DEAs, the Coalition of Nunavut DEAs, the Office of the Auditor General and the Special Committee to Review the *Education Act*. We are proposing the following amendments to help address some of the administrative pressures on DEAs.

Our proposals:

1. Provide principals with the responsibility to implement Inclusive Education instead of DEAs. Principals have the expertise and specialized knowledge needed to deliver Inclusive Education.

2. Principals will be required to inform DEAs on the implementation of Inclusive Education, including the development of Individual Student Support Plans, trends in student needs and the number of Inclusive Education appeals requested. Requiring principals to report on the implementation of Inclusive Education, will better able DEAs to advocate to the Minister of Education for supports and services needed in their communities.
3. The Department of Education will have the responsibility to administer Inclusive Education appeals instead of DEAs. This purely administrative function does not provide DEAs with an opportunity for local input.
4. DEAs will have the ability to request specialized services and assessments, including Inclusive Education appeals on behalf of parents and adult students. This recognizes that DEAs should have a role to play in Inclusive Education if a parent directly approaches them.
5. The Department of Education will administer principal and vice-principal appointment-reappointment panels. Principals and vice-principals are government employees and members of the Nunavut public service. As such, the Minister of Education is ultimately responsible for meeting the appointment-reappointment obligations under the *Public Service Act* and the GN Human Resources Manual. DEAs will still be able to appoint one of their members to all appointment panels.
6. DEAs will provide direction to principals on matters related to the School Program and the Local Program, including school calendars, school rules, after-school programming, registration, attendance and discipline policies, and enhancements to ensure that the local language, culture and priorities are reflected in the curriculum. Directions related to the Education Program, including the delivery of the curriculum, inclusive education and student assessment will be the responsibility of the Department of Education. Principals need to receive clear direction from both the Department of Education and the local DEA to ensure fairness in school operations and good management practices,
7. Principals will provide DEAs with progress reports on the delivery of the Education Program to assist DEAs in their advocacy to the Minister of Education regarding local priorities.
8. DEAs will have first choice in providing Early Childhood Education (ECE) programming with the support of the Department of Education and the DEA Council.
9. DEAs that choose to provide ECE programming will deliver programming themselves and not use third-party ECE providers.
10. Should DEAs choose not to provide ECE programming, the Department of Education will provide it, ensuring that government funding for ECE programming is fully used.

11. Establish three school calendars, in consultation with the DEA Council, with different start and end dates, for local DEAs to choose from. This partial standardization of school calendars is being considered to improve the delivery of teacher orientation programming and to ensure that school calendars align with diploma exam schedules. The calendars will be based on existing trends in the calendars DEAs have chosen in recent years.
12. DEAs will be able to determine other aspects of the school calendar, based on local priorities, with the exception of professional development days.

This document does not address the roles and responsibilities that are particular to the Commission scolaire francophone du Nunavut (CSFN).

Language Proficiency

Bilingual Education and Language of Instruction

The GN is committed to preserving, promoting and revitalizing Inuktitut, and bilingual education plays an essential part in this. To achieve a proficient level of bilingualism, a coordinated approach, involving parents, students, teachers, Inuit organizations, government departments and the public is needed.

Today, DEAs choose between three models of bilingual education to best meet their local needs. However, this multiple model approach, combined with the current shortage of qualified Inuktitut-speaking teachers, has created significant inconsistencies between schools, negatively impacting the delivery of the education program and student assessment.

To improve instruction consistency and language proficiency, the Department of Education is proposing amendments to both the *Education Act* and the *Inuit Language Protection Act*.

The Inuit Language Protection Act

The *Inuit Language Protection Act* guarantees the right of parents to have their children receive Inuit Language instruction in schools. The Government of Nunavut firmly believes that Inuit parents should be able to exercise their right to high quality Inuktitut education for their children. In Bill 37, the Department of Education initially proposed to change the right of parents to have their children receive the *majority* of their instruction in the Inuit Language. **Based on public feedback, we are no longer proposing to amend this fundamental parental right.**

We are proposing to amend section 8(2) of the *Inuit Language Protection Act*, related to the duties of government in delivering bilingual education, to:

1. Include the term “bilingual education” to help clarify the original intent of the *Inuit Language Protection Act*, which was to establish a bilingual education system capable of producing graduates fluent in both Inuktitut and either English or French.

2. Include provisions that will allow the Government of Nunavut to deliver Inuktitut instruction as capacity and resources expand. Delivery would be tied to goals and timelines outlined in the Department of Education updated Inuit Employment Plan.
3. Develop a clear plan of action to support the extension of bilingual education deadlines. This plan needs to be based on the Department of Education Inuit Employment Plan timelines for Inuit educator training and Inuktitut resource development, including:
 - Develop language arts curriculum, with implementation between 2018 and 2020.
 - Develop standardized terms for specialized subjects, like Science, Social Studies and Math.
 - Implement an updated Inuit Employment Plan to increase the number of Inuit working in education by:
 - intensifying recruitment efforts;
 - designing new orientation and mentorship programs for new educators;
 - funding teacher language development, administered by the Professional Development Council;
 - devising new professional development frameworks focused on educator competencies;
 - promoting education leave program to provide training for Inuit administrative, professional and paraprofessional positions;
 - developing certificate and diploma credentials that lead to a Bachelor's of Education degree.
4. Extend bilingual education implementation deadlines to allow the Government of Nunavut time to build the capacity needed to deliver bilingual education. Timelines for implementation would be tied to targets outlined in the Department of Education's Inuit Employment Plan.

The Education Act

Our proposals:

5. Establish new transitional bilingual education models to maximize Inuktitut language instruction. These transitional models are needed in the short-term to address the shortage of Inuktitut-speaking teachers and to ensure that students do not experience sudden changes in language of instruction as they move through grades. The new models will be developed in consultation with education partners.
6. Provide the Department of Education with the ability to assign a language of instruction and time allocation to each subject by grade level. This will help increase consistency in the delivery of bilingual education and to ensure that existing Inuktitut-teaching capacity is used in a way that allows all students access to Inuit Language instruction.

7. Allow DEAs to choose only a bilingual education model that can be supported by local teaching capacity.
8. Teaching capacity for bilingual education will be determined by the Department of Education, as the department possesses the expertise necessary to calculate the local teach capacity.
9. DEAs will be able to request the Department of Education explain its decisions on local teaching capacity.
10. The Department of Education will report annually on the implementation of bilingual education by community, including Inuktitut language teaching capacity and the needed capacity for each bilingual education model.
11. Extend bilingual education implementation deadlines to allow the Department of Education time to build the capacity needed to deliver bilingual education.

Strengthening Capacity and Advocacy

The New DEA Council

DEAs are currently represented by the Coalition of Nunavut DEAs (CNDEA), a registered society under the *Societies Act* that has legislative roles assigned to it within the *Education Act*. During the 2016 consultations, the DEAs sent a clear message regarding the need for more control over operational support in their day to day work and a stronger voice in the Legislative Assembly. To that end, we propose:

1. To create a DEA Council independent of the Department of Education. The DEA Council (DEAC) will have greater autonomy, legal, financial, and operational responsibilities than the current Coalition of Nunavut DEAs (CNDEA). DEAC will:
 - elect its members from amongst the DEA elected representatives;
 - continue to carry out the current responsibilities of the Coalition of Nunavut DEAs with additional responsibilities, including training DEAs, supporting DEAs in developing teacher-orientation programming, producing program materials, and reporting on annual operations and their local educational situation;
 - assign an *Innuqatigiitsiarniq* and a Registration and Attendance policy to DEAs when no policy is in place. DEAs may modify these policies to suit local needs.
2. The Department of Education and DEAC will regularly consult on aspects of the education system such as teacher orientations, curriculum development, inclusive education, and school calendars.

3. DEAC will provide reports to the Department of Education when requested.
4. Once the DEAC is established under the *Education Act*, the CNDEA will no longer receive funding from the government.

The CSFN will still have a seat on the DEA Council.

Nunavut Tailored Transition Regulations

Transition Regulations

Since the passing of the 2008 *Education Act*, the Department has been in the process of developing the necessary set of regulations to support the *Act*. To date, the Department has yet to develop regulations related to student records, staff certification, planning and reporting and home schooling and have been relying on regulations carried over from the Northwest Territories, using Transition Regulations. Because the Transition Regulations are temporary, they must be amended every two years. Currently, the Commissioner of Nunavut has the authority to make transitional regulations under the *Act*. We propose to:

1. Provide the Minister of Education with the regulatory authority to make transitional regulations while permanent ones are being developed by the Department of Education.

Join in the discussion: Share your views

We encourage you to make your voice heard. Nunavummiut can share their ideas and provide input directly to the Department of Education in different ways:

Online: ourgoalsforeducation.ca

By email: info.edu@gov.nu.ca

By mail: Education Act Consultations, Government of Nunavut, PO Box 1000, Stn 900, Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0.

By comment card: Nunavummiut can pick up and drop off comment cards at their local Government Liaison Office and DEA office.

Thank you for your feedback.

info.edu@gov.nu.ca