

Early Childhood Education Programs

Most Nunavummiut, including education partners and DEAs, support the proposals concerning Early Childhood Education (ECE) programming.

School Calendars

Nunavummiut, including DEAs and education partners, expressed concerns about the proposal to establish between 3-4 school calendars. All communities want school calendars to reflect their local seasons and hunting patterns and believe DEAs should maintain the ability to set their school calendars.

Bilingual Education and Language of Instruction

The Inuit Language Protection Act

It is widely acknowledged that the EDU will not meet the implementation deadlines for bilingual education as currently set out in ILPA. Nunavummiut, particularly education partners, oppose proposals to amend any of ILPA's provisions, seeing these changes as a diminishment of Inuit language rights.

Furthermore, Nunavummiut wish to see a detailed timeline and plan for developing Inuit educators and Inuktitut resources before they can support the proposed plan. The consensus is action must quickly, decisively and holistically be taken to prevent further Inuktitut language loss.

The Education Act

Nunavummiut across the territory expressed concern over the loss of Inuktitut among the youth. Increasingly, youth are using English over Inuktitut to communicate with each other, making them unable to communicate with unilingual elders.

When discussing the language of instruction models, Nunavummiut stated the current models need to be reviewed because they believe students are graduating without proficiency in either Inuktitut or English. A wide range of perspectives was given on how much emphasis should be placed on language in the classroom. Some expressed a desire for schools to focus only on academics, leaving parents to teach Inuktitut at home. Meanwhile, others want Inuktitut to be a mandatory course required by all students for high school graduation.

District Education Authority Council

There were varying perspectives on the proposal to establish a DEA Council, which would replace the existing Coalition of Nunavut DEAs (CNDEA). Some Nunavummiut expressed confusion about why a new DEA Council was proposed to take on the duties of the CNDEA. However, other DEAs supported the proposal for the new Council because they feel this new body will offer them better support and represent their interests.

Transition Regulations

There was little discussion by Nunavummiut on the proposal to provide the Minister of Education with the authority to make transitional regulations. However, some acknowledge that shifting this authority will not address the issue of developing the Nunavut specific regulations needed to support the *Education Act*.

Beyond the Proposals

During the consultations, many Nunavummiut expressed concerns and ideas that went beyond the proposed amendments made by the GN. These comments will inform future policy, planning and programs for the EDU.

Retaining and Revitalizing Language and Culture

Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit

Overwhelmingly Nunavummiut stated the education system needs to reflect and incorporate the principles of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit so students can successfully learn to navigate the world with a strong sense of their Inuit heritage and culture.

Nunavut Specific Curriculum

Many Nunavummiut feel the curriculum should be taught from an Inuit perspective, including subjects such as math, science, biology and social studies. They indicated the curriculum currently being used is not culturally relevant to Inuit, prioritizing non-Canadian, non-Inuit social and cultural topics over Nunavut specific ones.

Inuktit Education Resources

In every community, Nunavummiut, particularly Inuktit-speaking teachers and residents, expressed continued concern with the slow pace of Inuktit resource development. More significantly, they feel Inuktit-speaking educators are not adequately supported as the quantity and quality of available Inuktit resources and materials are far below that available to English-speaking educators.

Elders and Traditional Knowledge

Nunavummiut expressed a clear desire for more elders in schools and for them to have an enhanced role in teaching students in Inuktit, particularly the local dialects, and traditional knowledge.

Strengthening School Capacity

Inuit Educator Retention and Recruitment

Nunavummiut stated the Nunavut Teacher Education Program (NTEP) needs to be redesigned to address the needs of the Inuit students. Many indicated that NTEP courses are delivered in English, not Inuktut, and that its offerings are limited to a very few communities.

Preparing for Post-Secondary Studies

Nunavummiut want to see their children succeed academically and pursue post-secondary studies. However, several of them have concerns about social promotion because they feel many students are graduating without the required academic courses and are concerned that the quality of education students are receiving does not sufficiently prepare them for programs at the Nunavut Arctic College.

Improving Attendance

Nunavummiut stated that one of the biggest hindrances to education is the often low attendance rates of students. They indicated that regardless of attempts by the EDU to strengthen legislation, improve educator retention and recruitment and develop Inuktut resources, none of these efforts will benefit students who do not attend school on a regular basis.

Effective Collaboration

The transformative change Nunavummiut desire for the education system requires the combined and concerted efforts of everyone in the territory, including the EDU, education partners, community groups, parents, and students.

Charting a New Course Together

Nunavummiut will have further opportunities to give feedback once a bill is tabled in spring sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

If you would like more information on proposed amendments to the *Education Act* and the *Inuit Language Protection Act*, visit www.ourgoalsforeducation.ca.