





Mary Joanne Kauki lights the qullik at the beginning of her presentation on decolonization © Félicia Gagné

This year's Education Council was held in Kuujjuaraapik from January 30 to February 1, 2018. The meeting was attended by the education committees from most communities and the schools' centre directors.

Held every two years in a selected community, the Education Council is a consultation forum where local education committees share parents' views and community members' priorities related to education. These meetings are an opportunity for the school board to consult representatives from all Nunavik communities on new orientations, assess their needs, gather new ideas on educational initiatives, and collect feedback on current programs and services. The focus is on the vision and goals of the school board's educational services rather than matters related to the daily operations of schools or the maintenance of equipment and school infrastructures.

Under the theme "Learning Begins at Home," presentations and workshops on various topics, including language preservation, were on the agenda.

## **DECOLONIZATION**

Mary Joanne Kauki gave an insightful presentation on decolonization that focused on Inuit values. The presentation mapped how we Inuit have coped with the struggles of working with the provincial and federal governments, as well as with the different authority figures that rule our communities to this day. Participants were given an opportunity to reflect upon how, as Inuit, we relate to non-Inuit and their way of life in the north. Inuit have always been inviting to others and contact with non-Inuit has introduced many new things such as tobacco, tea, flour, sugar, alcohol, and, most of all, the western education system. Historically, it is through formal western education that Inuit were separated from their parents and from traditional knowledge. This gap is still very evident today between the new generation and our grandparents.





Elisapie Nirsiniq Yuliusie opens the meeting with a prayer © Kaudjak Padlayat

The education system has touched so many of our people. In the 1950s and 60s, children were sent away from their homes to go to school. The education system took away our people's pride. Forced to comply with something completely different and foreign, they were made to feel ashamed of their identity and culture. Not being allowed to speak their own language had a huge impact on children because they had never been separated from their families.

Mary Joanne's presentation demonstrated the importance of preserving Inuit history. It clearly illustrated how we have strived all these years to keep Inuit culture strong. Inuit history must be part of what is taught to our children in schools today; it is essential that our future generations see how we have always fought and struggled to preserve our language and identity. We must make sure our children know where they come from and value our language and culture.

## **CANNABIS LEGALIZATION**

The upcoming legalization of cannabis was discussed during a presentation given by Frederick Roussel, former associate secretary-general, and Sarah Aloupa, Kativik Ilisarniliriniq commissioner for the community of Quaqtq and executive committee member. This information was important for the members of the Education Council, as legalization will have repercussions on communities and on our schools. As is the case with the use of other legal substances, cannabis consumption will not be allowed on or around schools or school board premises. Moreover, employees will not be allowed to be intoxicated while performing their professional duties.





Kativik Ilisarniliriniq employees attending the meeting © Kaudjak Padlayat

## **CANNABIS USE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE BRAIN**

Mary Joanne Kauki gave a presentation on how cannabis affects the brain. Some of the education committee members expressed concern about how children are affected by cannabis in general. The presentation was very informative and encouraged parents to openly discuss these issues with their children so that they know if and what their children are using. Drug abuse has a negative impact on children’s well-being and their ability to learn.

## **ADULT EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING OFFERED IN NUNAVIK**

Dave McMullen gave a presentation on the courses offered by the Adult Education and Vocational Training department. These courses are available to all Nunavik residents. The department operates adult education centres in five communities: Kuujjuaq, Kuujjuaraapik, Puvirnituaq, Salluit, and Inukjuak. Several training sessions are also offered in communities that do not have an adult education centre. The current programs include accounting, auto mechanics, carpentry, northern building maintenance, professional cooking, heavy equipment mechanics, secretarial studies, recreational leadership in Nunavik, Inuktitut translation and interpretation, Nunavik arctic guide (AEC), welding (AEP), and operating northern heavy equipment. For Nunavimmiut who would like to obtain their secondary school diploma, general education is also offered at the five centres or through distance education.





Education committee members brainstorm ways to enhance parental involvement in schools © Kaudjak Padlayat

## **SCHOOL CALENDARS AND LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION**

Director of Education Services Etua Snowball and his team lead two workshops at the Education Council, one on cultural calendars and the other on the language of instruction. The purpose was to gain perspective and ideas from the education committees on how the school board might develop and implement changes in these two areas. Each of the 14 committees were given questions to discuss prior to the meeting so that they could represent their community. For each workshop, the council members divided into groups to discuss the changes they wanted to see. They then presented their conclusions to the entire group and the school board departments.

Working in smaller groups made the Education Council members realize that many of their thoughts and ideas were similar, and the direction was the same. Despite differences, there was a lot of respect and a readiness to enforce changes at their own pace.

## **CULTURAL CALENDAR AND HARVESTING SEASONS**

It was suggested that the school calendar be changed to better reflect the way of life in the north. The following ideas came up at the Education Council:

- Spread the 180 days across the entire year
- Create different calendars that respect each community's seasonal hunts
- Start and finish the calendars at different times of the year
- Ensure parental involvement and support so that culturally appropriate instructions can be added to the curriculum
- Introduce equal benefits for Inuit and non-Inuit teachers to ensure qualified teachers to teach culturally appropriate curriculum





A mural created by Jaanimmarik School students in Kuujuaq © Jade Duchesneau-Bernier

Based on feedback, Education Services, School Operations, and schools will work together to create a calendar that better serves the students and communities.

## **LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION**

This presentation explored the language curriculum currently offered by the board, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the current model of bilingual curriculum. Shelley Tulloch, associate professor and chair of the Anthropology Department at the University of Winnipeg, came to share research and best practices on language of instruction. Shelley works closely with Inuit organizations and communities on research related to culturally relevant education; Indigenous leadership; Indigenous boys' and men's experiences of learning and work; youth; bilingualism; language; and identity.

The consensus at the Education Council was that Inuktitut language needs to take precedence and be strengthened, especially when resources are available. The council members all agreed that students should also master a second language to be successful in a global society, which is consistent with Kativik Ilisarniliriniq's language policy. However, the workshop participants made it clear that it would be worthwhile to consider a new model. Under the current policy, all kindergarten to grade 2 students are taught in Inuktitut, along with 90 minutes of instruction of a second language in grades 1 and 2; in grade 3, 50 percent of instruction is given in their mother tongue and the other 50 percent in a second language (English or French). The vision proposed by the Education Council aims to have a stronger model once the materials and qualified teachers are in place.

The Education Council hopes to see more parents and community members involved at the schools to ensure that students get the best cultural, traditional, and second language instruction. The board plans to improve its bilingual programs based on the council's input and their interest in two models of language instruction: the heritage model and the dual language enrichment model. The programs currently offered by the school board are aligned with both models but require strengthening.



## ANNEX 1 – BILINGUAL EDUCATION MODELS

During workshops on the language of instruction, Education Council members had the opportunity to examine different bilingual education models that can be used to develop programs. They expressed a preference for the heritage and the dual language enrichment models for bilingual education and asked that these models be used by the school board when developing programs.

As described by researcher Anna Hurajová, heritage models are used “where language minority children use their native, ethnic, home or heritage language in the school as a medium of instruction and the goal is full bilingualism (Baker, 2000). [...] [T]he bilingual education aiming to protect indigenous languages in heritage language programmes is referred to as maintenance bilingual education. Generally, heritage or maintenance language education represents the education of language minority children through their minority or indigenous language in a majority language society.”<sup>1</sup>

Dual language enrichment models are characterised by programs where “two languages are used approximately equally in the curriculum with the aim of children becoming bilingual and biliterate (Baker, 2000). Each class contains an equal number of language majority and language minority children. A language balance close to 50%:50% is the aim; however, it is not always achieved – the amount of time spent learning through each language varies from school to school. Only one language is used in each period of instruction, which is similar to content-based teaching where students are taught parts of the curriculum through English and not just English as a mere language (Baker, 2011). A central idea in Dual Language [models] is language separation and compartmentalization. In practice, it means that in each period of instruction, only one language is used, with language boundaries being established in terms of time, curriculum content and teaching (Baker, 2000). It is important to decide when to teach through each language – the most frequent preferences are to use the two languages on alternate days or to use different languages in different lessons with regular alternations to ensure both languages are used in the curriculum. Although language boundaries are established so that different parts of the curriculum are taught in different languages, a dangerous situation may occur when the majority language becomes associated with more prestigious and ‘modern’ subjects while the minority language is used to teach less prestigious

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<sup>1</sup> Anna Hurajová, “[An Overview of Models of Bilingual Education](#),” *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 6, No. 6 (S1), November 2015, p. 189.



subjects. Such division may affect the status of the languages in the eyes of the pupils, their parents and society (Baker, 2000),”<sup>2</sup>

Both the heritage and the dual language models may aim to foster “the minority language in the child, with the strengthening cultural identity, e.g. by preserving heritage languages in heritage language programmes. This type of bilingual education is referred to as maintenance bilingual education (Baker, 2011). An enrichment model of bilingual education has many characteristics in common with [the] maintenance model but it takes the latter one a step further by aiming not only [at] maintaining the first language but [by] also [seeking to develop] and extend [...] it (de Mejía, 2002). This leads to cultural pluralism and linguistic diversity (Baker, 2011).”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem.*

