



NEWS RELEASE

QUEBEC HISTORY PROGRAM: KATIVIK ILISARNILIRINIQ CALLS FOR A RENEWED COMMITMENT TO INCLUDE INDIGENOUS CONTENT AND PERSPECTIVE IN PEDAGOGICAL MATERIAL DEVELOPED BY THE QUEBEC MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Montreal, Qc (November 29, 2018) – Last week, media coverage portrayed the changes made to Quebec history textbooks as an unnecessary waste of public funds, for which the province’s Indigenous people were blamed. In the context of this damaging public conversation that targeted First Nations, Kativik Ilisarniliriniq would like to express its support for the statement issued by the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL) and the First Nations Education Council (FNEC) on November 22, 2018.

“It is very regretful that journalists and historians interviewed by the media over the past week chose to ignore facts, preferring to blame Indigenous experts for what should be understood as a first step towards an improved history program,” deplored Robert Watt, President of Kativik Ilisarniliriniq.

As was the case for First Nations, the Inuit provided expertise on the Quebec history program in response to an invitation from the Quebec Ministry of Education. In May 2017, Kativik Ilisarniliriniq released a statement in which it deplored the fact that consultations on the history program and textbooks had been held at the last hour, at a time when the history curriculum had effectively been finalized and while a first edition of the accompanying textbooks was already under press. “We were put in a position where it became very difficult not to perceive the Ministry of Education as being more interested in getting us to endorse the history program as it was, rather than genuinely seeking our collaboration to improve it,” recalled Mr. Watt.

Ensuring the success and well-being of Nunavik students is a priority for Kativik Ilisarniliriniq. As an organization, the school board has a vested interest in ensuring that the non-Inuit employees it recruits have been exposed to more Indigenous content as part of the education they receive at school. “The more you understand a context, the most effective you are at providing your professional expertise. It should be clear that our students benefit directly from a history program that incorporates Indigenous worldview, heritage and contributions into a shared history,” noted Robert Watt.

In order to fill the gap left by the current Quebec history program and textbooks, the school board is currently developing its own history textbook, anchored in the circumpolar reality, within the broader Quebec, Canadian and modern world context. “More than 90% of our student population is either Inuit or Cree; these students deserve a history program and textbooks in which they are represented,” concluded Watt.

About us:

Kativik Ilisarniliriniq, the school board of Nunavik, was created in 1975 under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA). Since 1978, it has been the exclusive provider of educational services to all Nunavik residents. Under the JBNQA, the school board also acts as an institution with unique powers and jurisdiction geared towards the protection and development of the Inuit language, culture, and way of life, through the delivery of tailored educational services and programs. The education programs developed by the school board are offered in all schools of the 14 Nunavik communities, in Inuktitut as first language and in French and English as second languages. The school board operates 17 primary and secondary schools as well as 5 adult education centres and a pre-college facility. More information can be found at www.kativik.qc.ca



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For information, please contact: Jade Duchesneau-Bernier, Communications Coordinator at
514-482-8220 ext. 309 | publicrelations@kativik.qc.ca