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COUNCIL OF COMMISSIONERS

Highlights from the Council of Commissioners

The Council of Commissioners of the Kativik School Board held the last meeting of its current 3-year term in Umiujaq, from October 28 to 30, 2014. On November 19, elections of the School Board's commissioners will be held in all Nunavik communities, following which a new Council of Commissioners will be formed.

Amongst the many topics included on the agenda, we would like to bring the following three items to your attention.

Pilot project: a culturally responsive school calendar

Qiallak Qumaaluk, Assistant Director for First Language Curriculum responsible for culture curriculum, and her team (Sala Padlayat, Jobie Epoo and Jobie Kutchaka) presented an initial assessment of the one-week cultural and land-based instruction that was held in the communities of Quaqtqaq, Akulivik, Umiujaq and Kangiqsujuaq.

The team reported a number of positive outcomes.

Amongst these, they noted the involvement of elders, who were included in the planning of the week and were offered a leadership role in providing the cultural instruction. The team also noted that the hands-on approach of land-based instruction had eased the learning of students, in particular those who prove to be more difficult to manage in a formal classroom environment.

The team stressed that a careful review of the resources available in the four communities would be required ahead of time, in preparation for the second series of cultural instruction weeks. The need of clear guidelines for the evaluation of participating students was also mentioned as an issue that would require the team's immediate attention.

(continued...)

Positive outcomes reported following an initial assessment of the one-week land-based instruction held in Quaqtqaq, Akulivik, Umiujaq and Kangiqsujuaq.

Finally, the team emphasized that in the case of cultural instruction for topics such as traditional hunting tools fabrication or sewing, continuous weekly instruction over 45-minute periods could prove more suitable. Additional work will be required to carefully weave in these topics.

A comprehensive assessment report will be presented to the Council of Commissioners in December.

Approval of a 10-year construction plan

The Council of Commissioners approved a 10-year construction plan. The plan identifies the projects needed to meet KSB's needs with regard to the construction of schools, housing units for employees, adult education centres, student residences and KSB offices. The plan also includes the construction of heated complexes such as maintenance warehouses, school warehouses and heated bus shelters.

All the projects included in the plan are subject to the approval of MELS. The plan will be reviewed and adjusted on a yearly basis by the KSB. It will be communicated to MELS, in order to ease the budget negotiation process.

In the immediate future (2015-2016), the plan foresees the construction of a new school in Aupaluk, including a heated bus shelter, and a new high school in Inukjuak. It also foresees the construction of 17 housing units allocated to the communities of Inukjuak, Salluit, Kuujuaq and Umiujaq. The KSB is currently awaiting a response from MELS regarding the approval of these projects.

Research and training resolutions

Eliana Manrique, Assistant Director of the Training and Research Department, and Annie Tertiluk, Coordinator of the Training and Research Department provided a summary of academic research conducted in Nunavik up to now, on the topic of first language acquisition. To complement this overview, a summary of findings from international research on first language development and reinforcement was also presented. All these research findings support the school board's stance that the acquisition of a strong first language basis, Inuktitut in this case, must precede and be pursued after the introduction of instruction in a second language (French or English).

Based on this principle, the Council of Commissioners approved two research projects of the Training and Research Department.

- The first project aims to develop a questionnaire designed to identify pre-school children who are slow in their development of Inuktitut language skills, so that they can receive timely remediation.
- The second project focuses on resilience and school perseverance of Inuit children in Nunavik, looking at the case of Arsanik School between 2011 and 2014. The project's objective is to strengthen the research capacity of Nunavik students and teachers.

The 10-year construction and renovation plan prioritizes schools and housing construction, and much more...