

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MARCH 2018 COUNCIL OF COMMISSIONERS

From March 20 to 22 the Council of Commissioners met in Kangiqsualujjuaq. They appointed Harriet Keleutak as the new Director General of Kativik Ilisarniliriniq.

The activity report presented by the Interim Director General Rita Novalinga provided an update on the creation a new Assistant Director General position, which was approved by the Council of Commissioners last year.

Recruitment for this position was kept on hold in order to allow for the new Director General's involvement in the process. As usual, the position will be advertised on the school board's website when recruitment starts.

On February 23, 2018, the President, Vice President, Interim Director General and Director of the Material Resources department met with officials of the Ministry of Education, at the Assistant Deputy Minister and directorate level.

The meeting focused on the approval of pending infrastructure projects. Currently, the school board is awaiting the approval of 12 infrastructure construction projects that have been submitted to the Ministry of Education over the past 3 years.

At that meeting, the school board advocated for the Ministry of Education to review its project approval cycle and adapt it to the constraints and timelines related to construction in the Arctic (usually, the ministerial project approvals are issued between February and June, which does not take into consideration that the second week of June is the "make or break" shipping deadline for northern construction projects; November approvals would be required). At the meeting, the school board received indications that construction of a new school in Inukjuak would be approved; the school board has yet to receive an official letter confirming this. In addition, the Assistant Deputy Minister called for the planning of three meetings a year with the school board's Director General and Director of Material Resources, to discuss construction and infrastructure issues.

Funds were approved and allocated to the creation of Guidance Counsellor positions in Nunavik schools. This is a positive development as these professionals will provide support to students in exploring their professional and personal interests, as well as career and studies options.

The negotiations of collective agreements for the support staff and the professionals were concluded in December. The negotiation at the teachers' table found a conclusion in January 2018. Many of KI original demands concerning the working conditions of Inuit employees were unfortunately rejected by the government. As such, they did not find a place of discussion

at these negotiation tables. KI will renew its efforts concerning the working conditions of Inuit employees as we will soon engage in the next round of the collective agreement negotiations.

The Ministry of Education issued Secondary School Diplomas (SSD) to students who had received Attestations of Equivalence of Secondary Studies (AESS) between June 2015 and June 2017. The diplomas were sent by mail to each student and the mailing was completed on March 23.

Nunavik students who completed their Secondary 5 studies between June 2015 and June 2017 received an AESS from the Ministry of Education. These students were taught the same Mathematics and Science programs as students who completed their secondary studies prior to June 2015. Nonetheless, instead of a Secondary Studies Diploma (SSD), they received an Attestation of Equivalence of Secondary Studies (AESS) from the Ministry of Education.

In terms of learning and program content, there is no objective reason to justify that an AESS and not an SSD would have been delivered to them by the Ministry of Education. Therefore, in August 2017, the school board approached the Quebec Ministry of Education, demanding that this situation be rectified, and that these students be issued an SSD in replacement of their AESS.

On October 23, 2017, the Minister of Education confirmed that SSDs would be issued by the Ministry of Education to all these students. In January 2018, the Ministry of Education updated the official, electronic academic record for each student to reflect that each now holds a Secondary School Diploma. This record is used by colleges, CEGEPs, universities and vocational training schools when examining admission requests for the programs they offer.

On March 23, 2018, SSDs were mailed to all students who received an AESS between 2015 and 2017. Last July, the Ministry of Education also confirmed the equivalency of the school board's Mathematics and Science and Technology program. These programs are fully accredited by the Ministry of Education.

A 3-year tutoring program is now implemented in most of our schools in order to support students in meeting the new programs' requirements. In October 2017, the Council of Commissioners approved the allocation of funds to support this program. This program is implemented in partnership with Frontier College and tutors are recruited, trained and supported directly by this organization. The tutors prioritize individual work in Mathematics with Secondary 3, 4 and 5 students.

Eight Tutors are currently working in the following 7 communities: Kuujjuaq, Quaqtaq, Kangiqsujaq, Kuujjuaraapik, Inukjuak (2 tutors), Ivujivik (tutor recently hired as a teacher) and Puvirnituaq.

For next year, the objective of the program remains to recruit tutors for all Nunavik communities. The main challenge encountered this year has been a lack of available housing for tutors, which the school board is hopeful to be able to resolve for the upcoming school year. Students, teachers and parents' feedback on this program has been excellent so far.

The Commissioners discussed how to improve information sharing with their community, ensure that their meeting agenda reflects community concerns and allows for time to discuss meaningful policy matters related to education.

The Commissioners expressed the need to access an online platform where they could easily message each other and exchange information on common issues their community faces. They stressed that not all local issues should make it to the Council of Commissioners' agenda—but assessing agenda items would require more communication prior to the meeting, which is not occurring at the moment.

One of the key concerns discussed concerned the fact that Commissioners spend a significant amount of time discussing technical and administrative matters. They expressed concern with the fact that they generally are unable to access relevant background information ahead of the meeting. All commissioners must have regular access to a computer and to an internet connection.

An updated version of the school board's 10-year plan will be presented to the Commissioners in June 2018. The update will touch on projects scheduled for the years 2020-2021 and beyond.

The Commissioners expressed their frustration with the current delays in ministerial approval of the school board's construction projects.

Currently, all planned projects have been submitted to the Ministry of Education up to the year 2018-2019. However, the backlog in approvals also means that the situation of communities is becoming more and more dire.

The Commissioners recommended that political advocacy avenues be explored by the staff in order to accelerate the project approval process.

The school board will be actively working to revive the Regional Partnership Committee.

After hearing a report on the implementation of the Compassionate Schools approach in our schools, the Council of Commissioners discussed the importance of continuous support for trauma-informed pedagogical and management practices.

The Commissioners expressed support for a review of the Compassionate Schools project, which would include an assessment of the cultural relevance and appropriateness of its core concepts, methods and approaches. The Commissioners also stressed the importance of raising public awareness on all the factors that have an impact on children's educational success.

The social issues affecting Nunavik communities remain a serious concern. These issues impact teachers' work attendance, students' well-being and their ability to learn and reach their full potential. The Commissioners stated that information exchange among organizations is necessary to better understand what other organizations are doing and ensure that we all complement each other's efforts.

The Commissioners adopted a resolution demanding that the Regional Partnership Committee be revived and mandating Kativik Iisarniliriniq to coordinating a first meeting.

All Kativik Iisarniliriniq schools will adopt a condensed school calendar as of September 2018.

Acting at the demand of the vast majority of the Nunavik communities as expressed through Education Committees resolutions, the Council of Commissioners adopted a resolution approving a condensed school calendar as of the upcoming school year

The new school calendar will feature longer school days, shaving off a total of 10 days of school at the end of the school year. The objective is to positively impact school attendance and student educational success while also allowing them to go out on the land with their family to enjoy the seasonal June activities.