

COUNCIL OF COMMISSIONERS OCTOBER 22-24, 2019 | INUKJUAK

From October 22 to 24, 2019 the Council of Commissioners met in Inukjuak. You will find below an overview of the key points discussed.

The Commissioners were briefed on program development options proposed by the two partner universities currently involved in the delivery of teacher training programs in Nunavik (McGill and UQAT). Consultations will continue to ensure these programs meet the needs of Inuit teachers.

The school board currently works with two partner universities, to offer teacher training programs in Nunavik: McGill University and Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT).

McGill University presented a number of models to redesign its program. The goal would be to ensure Inuit teachers graduate over a shorter period of time. The program offered by McGill University has been in place since 1978. As of June 2019, this program resulted in a total of 189 graduations (one graduate per community every 2.5 years). The program is mainly accessed by teachers from 12 of the 14 Nunavik communities.

UQAT presented the program it currently offers. On-going development includes a request to the Ministry of Education for approval of a Bachelor of Education, which would be obtained through cumulated certificates. The program offered by UQAT has been in place since 1984. As of June 2019, this program resulted in a total of 39 graduations (one graduate per community every 1.8 years). The program is accessed by teachers from 2 of the 14 Nunavik communities (Ivujivik and Puvirnituk).

Currently, the school board estimates that 22% of the Inuit teachers it employs have completed a teacher training program with either UQAT or McGill.

The Commissioners approved amendments to the school board's Post-Secondary Education Sponsorship Policy. These changes will enhance available support, broaden access to post-secondary education and streamline the application process.

The changes approved by the Commissioners are the result of consultations with students, staff of the Post-Secondary Student Services Department and senior management.

Streamlined application process: The deadlines for sponsorship application now match those of colleges and universities (March 1st and November 1st).

Broader access to post-secondary education: Students that do not hold a Secondary School Diploma (SSD) can access sponsorship as a mature student if they are 21 years or older. Like all other sponsored students, mature students require admission to the program of their choice to be confirmed by the institution offering it (vocational, college or university level).

Enhanced support: Financial support has been improved in a number of areas to reflect the current cost of living and the needs of students with dependents (public transport, babysitting, pocket money, allowance for students opting out of housing managed by the school board, financial support to participate in out-of-class activities related to their program of study, applicable rates and furniture allowance for students opting out of KI housing, etc.).

To alleviate student financial stress, the department will also provide allowances rather than reimbursing expenses. This will, for example, apply to furniture, moving expenses, etc. More flexible rules will also allow students to:

- Fly once a year to a Nunavik community that is not their community of origin, as long as expenses are the same.
- Have more say in the area where they choose to live during their first year of study.

The Commissioners reviewed and approved major renovation projects planned for 2019-2020 (9 communities) and 2020-2021 (5 communities). An update of the 2019-2024 Investment Plan was also presented for initial discussion.

The 5-year Investment Plan reviewed by the Commissioners takes into consideration a forecasted student population increase, housing needs and the impact on staff retention, ensuring that schools are equipped with adequate facilities to offer the curriculum (science laboratories, libraries, safe and practical spaces dedicated to culture and land survival).

Needs assessments will continue in consultation with all communities and a final version of the plan will be submitted to the Commissioners for review and approval.

This year, all buildings managed by the school board will be equipped with carbon monoxide detectors.

The Commissioners reviewed and approved the Financial Auditor's Report for 2018-2019, and a summary of the school board's financial statements.

The financial auditor confirmed that sound financial management practices are in place at the school board.

The Commissioners were briefed on Nunavik Sivunitsavut and how it contributes to student perseverance at the post-secondary level. They also discussed the recommendations brought forward by Stephanie Kasudluak, a graduate of the program, who talked about the importance of a smoother transition from Nunavik high schools to the southern Quebec education system.

The Nunavik Sivunitsavut program was launched in September 2017 and has been running for 2 years.

In total, 32 students graduated from the program. 50% of these graduates made the decision to study full-time at various post-secondary education institutions in the province. As of October 2019, 75% of them were still full-time students.

Nunavik Sivunitsavut graduate Stephanie Kasudluak talked about the importance of strengthening the youth sector curriculum to familiarize students with oral presentations, essay writing and research methodology.

Responding to questions from the commissioners on the Montreal location of Nunavik Sivunitsavut, Stephanie Kasudluak said that despite the downside of being far from family, she (and other students) appreciated being removed from usual professional work and family obligations. She said it helped them focus on their studies.

The Commissioners continue to reserve time on the agenda for presentations about each of the youth sector schools. This information sharing is positive, and results in increased awareness of common best practices. It has also encouraged discussion on possible solutions to challenges that are either specific to one community, or shared by many.

The Commissioners of Tasiujaq and Kuujjuaraapik gave presentations about the school in their respective community.