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Council of Commissioners

Key Resolutions from the Council of Commissioners

Meeting in Aupaluk from March 12 to 14, the Council of Commissioners worked its way through a lengthy agenda. Amongst the various points discussed, a selection of three key matters and resolutions are summarized here.

Election of the President of the Kativik School Board: Under the current law, each Nunavik community elects a commissioner to sit at the Council of Commissioners. Together, the elected Commissioners then decide whom, from amongst themselves, will be appointed to the position of President of the Kativik School Board. The individual who accepts the appointment of President effectively fulfills two functions: one as the representative of a given constituency and the other as representative of the School Board as a whole.

This double function can prove challenging to manage for a single individual. Thus, the Council of Commissioners has recommended that the functions of Commissioner and President be separated. The Council further resolved that this translate into a distinct, Nunavik-wide, election for the position of President.

This change will require an amendment to the Education Act for Cree, Inuit and Naskapi Native Persons (R.S.Q., c1-14). The resolution adopted by the Council of Commissioners requests the Quebec Ministry of Education to table this amendment at the National Assembly. It also requests support from Makivik.

Once the law is amended, Nunavimmiut will be casting two votes: one for their community's Commissioner and the other for the School Board's President.

The amendment of the law is likely not to be effective in time for the November 2014 election. It would however apply to the 2017 election.

Election of the President of the School Board, Inuktitut Language Authority and a new school calendar

Inuktitut Language Authority and the standardization of Inuktitut: Under the leadership of the Avataq Cultural Institute, the Ilirjavut language project highlighted the need to create a recognized Inuktitut Language Authority, to reinforce the Inuktitut language by setting official language standards throughout the region. At their meeting, the Commissioners expressed interest in receiving additional information on this initiative, in order to consider possible support from the School Board, in conjunction with other organizations of the region.

In a separate development, the Kativik School Board participated in a pre-summit meeting on the standardization of Inuktitut for the Inuit regions of Canada. The meeting was coordinated by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's task force, "Atausiq Inuktitut Titirausiq".

It consisted of preparatory discussions concerning the development of a standard writing system for the Inuktitut language across Canada. Over the upcoming months, consultations on this topic are to be held at the community level. The process will conclude with a national Inuit language summit in the fall of 2015.

In the area of education, standardization would allow institutions to share resources across the Canadian arctic region. This would greatly enhance the development of Inuit-specific curriculum materials.

New culturally relevant school calendar to be used in four schools next year: Consultations on options for a new school calendar have taken place during the autumn 2013 and in the first months of 2014. They included parents, teachers, education committees and unions.

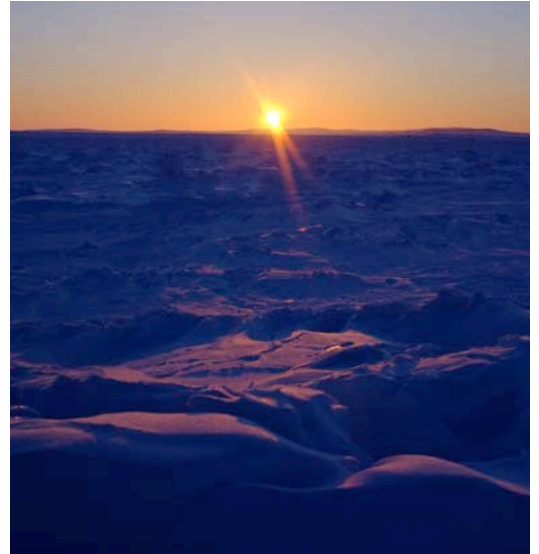
At its March 12-14 meeting, the Council of Commissioners adopted a resolution approving the introduction of the new school calendar, as a pilot project, in four Nunavik communities: Quaqtaq, Kangiqsujuaq, Akulivik and Umiujaq.

With the view of using the new calendar at the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year, the following steps will take place over the next months:

- Agreement on the new calendar with the Quebec Ministry of Education and the unions representing the School Board employees;
- Consultations and information meetings with the residents of communities selected to participate in this pilot project.

The new calendar totals 200 school days. It features three one-week blocks reserved for culture instruction. In addition to the blocks of time devoted to cultural instruction, there are a number of options that could be incorporated into the local school calendar (for example, additional cultural activities at the beginning and end of the school year, reduce the length of the school year by ten days, etc).

Through this initiative, the school Board hopes to provide more suitable periods of time during which the culture instruction could take place while also addressing the high student absenteeism rate at the end of the school year.



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A new school calendar in Quaqtaq, Umiujaq, Akulivik and Kangiqsujuaq