

## MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

### COUNCIL OF COMMISSIONERS OCTOBER 21-22, 2020 | QUAQTAQ

**This Council meeting was the last one under the Commissioners' current 3-year mandate. On November 18, Nunavimmiut will be electing the members of a new Council of Commissioners.**

- Nomination day is November 10, 2020.
- Election day is November 18, 2020.

The President, Vice-President and members of the Executive Committee will be appointed by the newly elected members of the Council of Commissioners, at their first meeting in December 2020.

**Children placed under the care of Youth Protection Services outside the Nunavik territory will be registered by Youth Protection with southern school boards. They will continue their education in the second language that corresponds to their current schooling. They will also have access to Kativik Ilisarniliriniq Inuktitut tutoring services, which are available to Inuit beneficiaries residing outside the Nunavik territory. Kativik Ilisarniliriniq has no jurisdiction over educational services delivered outside its administrative territory.**

Since June 2020, Kativik Ilisarniliriniq has worked closely with the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) to clarify roles and create communication mechanisms with the goal of ensuring the continuity of educational services received by Inuit children who are under the care of Youth Protection Services, outside of the Nunavik territory.

These discussions took place in the context of an investigation initiated by the *Commission des droits de la personne et de la jeunesse* (CDPDJ) in August 2020.

The investigation focused primarily on the education services provided to Inuit children staying in rehabilitation centers run by Batshaw Child and Family Services (Montreal West Island region).

The investigation aimed at ensuring that action would be taken to close the gap in the educational services that these children had been receiving.

The case of Inuit students under the care of Youth Protection Services outside the Nunavik territory was the subject of testimonies presented before the *Commission d'enquête sur les relations entre les Autochtones et certains services publics au Québec* (Commission Viens 2017-2019) and before the *Commission spéciale sur les droits des enfants et la protection de la jeunesse* (Commission Laurent 2019-2020).

**Kativik Ilisarniliriniq negotiated and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the NRBHSS, the Ungava Tulattavik Health Centre and the Inuulitsivik Health Centre. This MOU represents a significant breakthrough in the establishment of sustainable coordination and information exchange mechanisms that will ensure the continuity, complementarity and consistency of the educational and support services offered to Nunavik children.**

Work surrounding the development of the MOU is the result of inter-organization discussions and information exchange. It was developed through a series of meetings led by Kativik Ilisarniliriniq's Complementary Services and the NRBHSS throughout 2020.

The agreement is based on an acknowledgement by the parties to the MOU, that the current practices surrounding the psychosocial and educational services transition experienced by children under the care of the Youth Protection department in Nunavik, often deepens the trauma they are already experiencing.

As such, the MOU's goal is to ensure that children are not re-traumatized by the education system, as they transition from one school to a school in another community.

To achieve this, clear procedures will be implemented, whereby each student will be met and welcomed upon their arrival in a new community, by both education and health professionals. Information exchanges between the health and education sectors will take place before the child's arrival and after the initial meeting. This will ensure that each child receives consistent services.

The MOU was developed around the shared objective of providing support services to children in a way that would maximize the complementarity and efficiency of services offered by all parties to the agreement.

In addition to clarifying the roles of the organization's parties to the MOU, this agreement also provides a roadmap for the creation of regional and local coordination structures. These mechanisms will be put in place in the coming months.

**Janitors play a key role in keeping schools safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the school board continues to face serious difficulties in recruiting for these positions. With the objective of addressing these challenges, the Council of Commissioners approved a COVID-19 premium that significantly improves the working conditions of janitors. This translates into a \$100 daily salary increase, effective the week of October 26, 2020.**

The salary increase is a temporary COVID-19 premium, that will apply until June 30, 2021, to all Nunavik-based janitors (new hires and current janitors).

The purpose of this new measure is to help schools recruit janitors. Since the start of the school year, the lack of janitors has affected Nunavik students negatively. Many schools have had to close temporarily.

In the absence of janitors, schools are unable to meet the mandatory COVID-19 health and safety standards.

**The commissioners expressed their satisfaction with a well-planned start of the school year, during which high health and safety standards were upheld by Kativik Ilisarniliriniq employees. They acknowledged the extraordinary work and planning efforts that went into the organization of a staggered re-opening of schools and the travel of over 500 employees and their dependents to Nunavik.**

In the adult sector, education centres reopened on August 31, 2020.

In the youth sectors, the reopening of schools was staggered throughout the month of September and October. As of October 21, the only school currently closed was Tukisiniarvik School in Akulivik. This school was struggling with serious staff shortages, which are currently being addressed.

- 6 schools re-opened during the 1st week of September (Tasiujaq, Kangirsuk, Puvirnituq—primary & secondary, Inukjuak and Umiujaq).
- 5 schools reopened during the 2nd week of September (Kuujjuaq—primary & secondary, Salluit—primary, Kuujjuaraapik and Ivujivik).

- Two schools reopened during the 3rd week of September (Kangiqsualujuaq and Kangiqsujuaq).
- Two schools reopened during the last week of September (Aupaluk and Salluit—secondary at different locations pending the finalization of construction work due in February 2021).
- One school reopened during the first week of October (Quaqtaq).
- In Akulivik, the school will reopen as soon as the staff shortage has been resolved (on-going recruitment for multiple teaching and support staff positions).

Regionally, the school board is in a much better position this year than last year with regards to teacher recruitment. As of October 21, throughout Nunavik, there were only 15 teaching positions still vacant for first language teachers, and 11 for second language teachers.

**On October 8, 2020, the Quebec Education Minister announced changes to the evaluation of students in the youth sector. After careful consideration, Kativik Iisarniliriniq has determined that these changes are also in the best interest of Nunavik students. These changes will be implemented and will include: fewer report cards (two instead of three), different modalities for parents-teacher meetings and a new value for the end-of-cycle assessments at the elementary and secondary Cycle 1 (decreased from 20% to 10%).**

Parents will be informed of these changes in a letter from Kativik Iisarniliriniq, which will be distributed by the schools, during the week of October 26, 2020.

Since October 26, 2020, this information is available to the public on the Kativik Iisarniliriniq website.

A first communication will be issued to parents, by teachers, no later than November 20, 2020. This communication will provide information about the child's learning progress, their behaviour and, where applicable, support measures that have been put in place to support them.

Parents wishing to meet their child's teachers will have the opportunity to do so. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, each school will adapt the meeting format to their local reality.

Each school is responsible for informing parents about the parent-teacher meeting arrangements in place in their community.

**A clear procedure is in place for cases where COVID-19 would require the closure of schools or adult education centres. Distance education is now available for students of the adult sector enrolled in general education courses. Solutions are also being developed for students in the youth sector, and students in the adult sector enrolled in vocational training programs.**

COVID-19 school closure: Following the COVID-19 infection case reported in Kangirsuk at the beginning of the school year, a clear coordination procedure was developed by Kativik Iisarniliriniq and the NRBHSS. A COVID-19 related school closure can **only** be approved by the **director general** of the school board. School closures in Nunavik will only occur if recommended by the Nunavik Public Health authorities.

On September 30, Adult Education and Vocational Training released Moodle, an online learning environment that students can also access offline. This tool will allow students enrolled in general education courses to continue their courses if adult education

centres were to close due to COVID-19. The department is also working on expanding its program offering via the Moodle platform. It is expected that some vocational training will soon be available on Moodle (Secretarial Studies, Starting a Business, etc.).

In the youth sector, Education Services is actively exploring tools and solutions that would allow distance education for students, in case of a school closure due to COVID-19. While assessed as being feasible, this project is currently in the early development stage. Commitment to an implementation timeline would be premature at this point.

**The Council of Commissioners approved that a one-year contract be awarded to Frontier College, for the delivery of a Math and Literacy Tutoring Program. The program aims at providing academic and literacy support to 300 students across the 14 Nunavik communities.**

In 2017, a 3-year Math Tutor Program was implemented in Nunavik schools by Frontier College to support students.

From 2017 to 2020, an average of 8 tutors worked in Nunavik communities, including: Kuujuaq, Quaqtaq, Kangiqsujaq, Kuujuaapik, Inukjuak, Ivujivik and Puvirnituk.

Tutors were recruited, trained and supported directly by Frontier College. They prioritized individual work in mathematics with secondary 3, 4 and 5 students. Feedback on this program from students, teachers and parents has been excellent.

The Math and Literacy Tutoring Program approved by the Commissioners for the 2020-2021 school year was developed based on the successes of the 3-year Math Tutor Program.

Frontier College prioritizes sustainable community-based approaches rooted in training, coaching and the development of local expertise.

**Post-Secondary Student Services has successfully developed and started implementing a sponsorship policy that includes both active and non-active Inuit beneficiaries. This is in line with the school board's Strategic Plan, and with national policies that have restructured access to post-secondary funding for Inuit in Canada over the past year.**

Federal funding channeled to Nunavik through the Makivik Corporation is currently managed by Kativik Ilisarniliriniq as per an MOU signed at the beginning of October.

New funding has resulted in increased financial support for post-secondary students who were also supplied with laptop computers, and broadened access to the sponsorship program with the removal of the active beneficiary requirement.

The Kativik Ilisarniliriniq Sponsorship Program currently supports an average of 120 Nunavik students yearly, who are pursuing their post-secondary education in over 30 institutions across Canada.

**The Council of Commissioners approved the 2019-2020 Financial Audit Report. This report confirms that sound financial management practices are being followed.**

The financial auditor noted that based on the verification conducted, there were no financial management practices that needed to be corrected or improved.

**Due to COVID-19 event and public gathering restrictions, graduation ceremonies were cancelled this year in the youth, adult and post-secondary sectors. The school board**

**will celebrate students' achievements through the release of a short video on social media, this fall.**

Each sector (youth, adult and post-secondary) have made their own internal arrangements concerning additional measures related to the celebration of their students' graduation.