

## MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

### COUNCIL OF COMMISSIONERS DECEMBER 07-10, 2020 | KUUJJUAQ

**The Council of Commissioners was briefed on the initial findings of a two-year Education Research that examines the school board's curriculums, programs and pathways to enhance Nunavik student success. As part of Phase 1 of this research, the commissioners were informed about gaps identified in students' preparation for post-secondary education in the area of English as a second language, mathematics and science.**

On December 13, 2019, the Executive Committee mandated two researchers affiliated with the *Chaire-réseau de recherche sur la jeunesse du Québec* to conduct this research.

The research mandate was developed in the context of the Québec Ombudsman's report "[For quality educational services in Nunavik that respect Inuit culture](#)".

The research and its findings will guide the school board in providing quality educational services to all residents of the territory of Quebec north of the 55th parallel (excluding the Cree village of Whapmagoostui).

The Education Research will be conducted in two phases, due for completion in 2022.

The completion of Phase 1 is expected for June 2021 and will focus on:

- Reviewing the school board's formal curriculums, programs and pathways in comparison to the Quebec Education Program;
- Documenting the implementation of curriculums in various Nunavik communities and its comparison with Quebec;
- Documenting processes (accreditation, student tracking, certification process, etc.);
- Reviewing the methods for the evaluation of learning for certification and comparing them to existing practices in Quebec.

The Education Research is under the scientific direction of Professor Sylvain Bourdon from Université de Sherbrooke, seconded by Professor Frédéric Deschenaux from Université du Québec à Rimouski.

**In parallel to the Education Research conducted by the *Chaire-réseau de recherche sur la jeunesse du Québec*, the Education Services department is examining of how Kativik Ilisarniliriniq delivers bilingual education in Nunavik (Inuktitut as a first language, coupled with English or French as a second language). As part of the Bilingual Education Initiative, Nunavimmiut of all ages who have experienced the Nunavik education system as a student, parent, resident, teacher or elder are invited to complete a survey. Visit our website to complete the survey: [kativik.qc.ca](http://kativik.qc.ca)**

Survey results will be used for a wider research on how bilingual education is currently delivered in Nunavik, and alternative models that could be implemented.

The Bilingual Language Initiative stems from initial consultations on languages of instruction that took place in 2018, with the participation of Nunavik Education Committees at the biennial Education Council.

The Bilingual Language Initiative research is conducted by Professor Shelley Tulloch, Chair of the Anthropology Department at the University of Winnipeg. Professor Tulloch will be working closely with Inuit organizations and communities on research related to culturally-relevant education, Indigenous leadership, bilingualism and language revitalization.

**In the context of COVID-19 and as part of contingency planning in case of a pandemic-related school closure, Education Services and School Operations have ensured that resources are in place to allow students to learn from home over a consecutive 28-day period.**

The plan includes access to laptop computers for students and teachers, as well as textbooks and physical material for educational activities.

Within the constraints of available resources and taking into consideration graduation requirements, secondary 3, 4 and 5 students have been prioritized for the allocation of electronic material such as laptop computers.

Contingency plan material is making its way to Nunavik schools. Upon delivery, it will be stored and used in case of school closure.

Parents are encouraged to explore educational resources available on the [Nunavik-IcE website](#). Resources featured on this web portal are culturally relevant. They feature extensive material in Inuktitut for age groups ranging from Kindergarten to Secondary 5.

This initiative benefits from the financial support of the Mastercard Foundation.

**Adult Education and Vocational Training Services continues to broaden its service offering through partnership with Nunavik organizations, Northern Villages and Correctional Canada. Since the beginning of 2020, a total of 570 students have participated in trainings developed through services to businesses, vocational training and general education courses.**

The department has 6 education centres. Services to smaller communities are being developed through initiatives such as satellite classrooms in 3 villages (Tasiujaq, Umiujaq and Kangirsuk).

Adult education centres and satellite classes are being used as educational services hubs for students registered in distance education courses. These hubs have also been accessed by post-secondary students who returned to Nunavik to continue their studies at a distance due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Partnership and collaboration with the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services is expected to lead to the development of new certified programs in the health sector. Dental and pharmacy assistant programs are under discussion.

**In the context of the pandemic, 55% of Kativik Iisarniliriniq employees have made the choice to stay in Nunavik over the holidays. The commissioners were briefed on public health measures that will apply to those who will travel outside of Nunavik during the holidays, the plan in place for reopening schools in January 2021 and the educational support organized for students' whose teachers will be in quarantine upon returning to Nunavik.**

Kativik Ilisarniliriniq's plan for the return of its employees after the holiday period was developed in full compliance with public health measures that currently apply to Nunavik.

This plan was approved by the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) and by the Kativik Ilisarniliriniq Executive Committee.

**IMPORTANT:** On December 15, after the Council of Commissioners met in Kuujjuaq, the Quebec government announced a series of new measures related to the education sector. Taking this into consideration, Kativik Ilisarniliriniq announced on December 18 that Nunavik **schools and adult education centres will reopen on January 11, 2021**. It is important to note that there are no changes to the plan for the return of staff to Nunavik.

**Based on the results of a needs assessment that surveyed potential students, work is currently progressing in order to offer Nunavik Sivunitsavut college-credited courses in the French language. The target date for the launch of this initiative is September 2022.**

Launched in August 2017, Nunavik Sivunitsavut now benefits from a funding agreement entered into with the Quebec Ministry of Education in 2018-2019, which covers operations expenses.

Nunavik Sivunitsavut stems from an idea born in 2006, following a visit to Nunavut Sivuniksavut by the Nunavik youth group Saputiit.

The 2013 Parnasimautik consultations contributed to creating the right momentum and an Advisory Committee was born in 2015, to steer the development of this initiative.

Members of the Advisory Committee are the Kativik Regional Government, the Makivik Corporation, Kativik Ilisarniliriniq, the Avataq Cultural Institute and the John Abbott College (college accreditation partner).

Since 2017, Nunavik Sivunitsavut has graduated three cohorts of students (43 graduates in total). After graduating, many of these students have continued their education at the post-secondary level, moved back to Nunavik to take on roles in various organizations or pursued their professional and personal goals through other pathways.

**Over the past semester, data analysis has shown an overall student retention of 77.5% at the post-secondary level. Enhanced student support resources within the sector have significantly contributed to this positive development.**

The department has maximized its use of the Employee Assistance Program, while also putting in place follow-up services for students completing or interrupting their post-secondary studies and returning to Nunavik communities. For example, follow-up services may include liaison with social or mental health services in Nunavik.

These services are also available to students while studying outside Nunavik, either from in-house resources or directly through post-secondary institutions where the students are enrolled.

This support network, as well as resources accessible through the sponsorship program or private practices when needed, have greatly contributed to improving student retention.

**In each of our schools, specialized services are available to support children who are experiencing learning difficulties, hearing or behavioral and developmental challenges. Parents are encouraged to reach out to their local school if they feel their child needs support.**

Many students may have special needs, related for example to their hearing, sight, speech, emotions or behaviour.

In Quebec, approximately one student out of five is identified as having special needs. This represents 20% of the overall student population (MEES, 2019).

The school board estimates that in Nunavik the proportion of students with special needs is similar to the provincial reality.

A regional team of professionals provides support services to students in Nunavik. They work closely with their counterparts in each school. These regional professionals specialize in two areas:

Psychosocial support: Services for students who may be affected by social and community challenges. These students can receive support from our specialized team at the school: student support professionals, local student counselors, behaviour technicians.

Special education support: Services for students experiencing learning challenges such as dyslexia, hearing difficulties, etc. To support students, regional specialists such as psychologists, speech or language pathologists work directly with the schools' special education teachers and special education technicians.

**The commissioners adopted a resolution calling on all Nunavik organizations to actively advocate to the provincial and federal governments for the immediate improvement of telecommunication infrastructures and internet access in Nunavik.**

The resolution was adopted with the goal of reiterating the urgent need for governmental support in order to enable the effective delivery of education services to the Nunavik population.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, this need has become even more urgent. In fact, educational resources, remote student support and distance education cannot be offered without adequate telecommunication infrastructures.

Although contingency plans have been created and online educational resources have been developed, the Nunavik education sector is held hostage with poor infrastructure that prevents users from accessing these resources.