

KEY MESSAGES

COUNCIL OF COMMISSIONERS – DECEMBER 04 - 07, 2023 | MONTREAL

The Council meeting began on December 4, with each Commissioner being sworn in for their 3-year mandate. From within their ranks, the Commissioners also elected their Executive Committee representatives. Newly elected Commissioners had the opportunity to get familiar with their role and mandate, and to discuss the legal framework within which the School Board operates.

The following Commissioners were elected on the Executive Committee:

- KI President and Executive Committee member: Sarah Aloupa (Quaqtaq)
- KI Vice-President and Executive Committee member: Patsy Cameron (Salluit)
- Executive Committee member: Eva Kauki Gordon (Kuujjuaq)
- Executive Committee member: Martin Scott (Aupaluk)
- Kativik Regional Government representative and Executive Committee member: Jennifer Hunter (Kuujjuaraapik)

Staff turnover remains very high. In this context, staff retention is the immediate priority of the Human Resources department. To ease transition into new positions (and to the Nunavik living and working environment) a comprehensive 3-day onboarding program is offered to new hires. Surveyed participants have confirmed their satisfaction with the program.

In practical terms, the high staff turnover means that between May 1, 2023 and December 1st, 2023, a total of 160 employees were offered new contracts. This represents 11% of the School Board's total workforce (1352 employees).

It's important to note that career advancement opportunities are also provided to employees, as 64% of new hires into management positions were current employees promoted to a management position.

The 3-day onboarding program for new hires was launched in June 2022. Since then, a total of 392 employees participated in this training (266 in 2022-2023, and 126 since July 1, 2023). The training includes information about Kativik Ilisarniliriniq as an organization, the Inuit culture, Nunavik history and culture shock management.

Offering equal working conditions and benefits to all unionized Kativik Ilisarniliriniq employees remains a top priority. Important progress was achieved with the signature of the 2015-2020 collective agreements for teachers, professionals, and support staff. However, the Commissioners expressed concerns with the fact that the Nunavik population seems unaware that enhanced working conditions and benefits are now offered to employees recruited within their community of residence. They asked for a communication campaign to be planned, to support local recruitment efforts.

The collective agreements of teachers, support staff and professionals provide a range of benefits. They include:

- A cashable food transportation allowance
- A retention premium

- Transportation benefits (outings)
- A housing allowance for locally hired staff

The Council approved the updated list of vocational training programs that may be offered in Nunavik during the 2023-2024 school year. These training programs were identified based on a needs assessment and consultation with Nunavik mayors to identify trades of interest.

The list of programs includes:

- 52 Diplomas of Vocational Studies (DVS)
- 15 Skills Training Certificates (STOC)
- 3 Attestations of Vocational Specialization (AVS)

The Commissioners approved major renovation projects, change orders for the construction of school bus garages, schools and housing units, and the purchase of loaders and school buses. They were also briefed on the updated Material Resources Investment Plan for Nunavik, which includes a 10-year forecast of infrastructure construction and maintenance needs. This plan is updated regularly to reflect the reality on the ground.

When updated, the Material Resources Investment Plan for Nunavik is presented to the Council. The plan is an evolving document, which is used to prepare all the funding requests submitted to the MEQ.

It reflects the needs arising from Nunavik demographics (growing student population), planned curriculum for subjects requiring specific types of teaching spaces (arts, drama, music, etc.), as well as unforeseen situations such as fires, discovery of mold during renovation work, etc.

In addition, major renovation projects are developed based on data tracked using Maximo software. Introduced 2 years ago, this computerized maintenance management system (CMMS) provides an up-to-date inventory of all required maintenance work on our buildings. All KI housing units are currently being assessed and entered into the Maximo software, which is the last phase of Kativik Iisarniliriniq's (KI) global infrastructure maintenance needs assessment.

It is also interesting to note that, according to the current 10-year forecast, the deficit in KI housing units could be resolved by 2029. In the meantime, continued lack of housing remains an obstacle to the recruitment of new employees and prevents KI from filling all its vacant positions.

The Council was updated on the progress of the data project, which aims to support data-driven decision making at all levels of the organization. After a 6-month pause due to staff turn-over, work has now resumed to finalize data dashboards on: student enrolment, student attendance taken by teachers, student school attendance, school closure report, graduation rate (7-year cohorts).

The project's objective remains to have a first set of youth sector data available in real-time. With delays due to staff turnover, it is now foreseen that this first data set

and accompanying dashboards would be finalized as of the start of the 2024-2025 school year.

The project's timeline was revised. Until June 2024, the immediate next steps of the project will include gathering and assessing data from additional sectors of the School Board.

Between August 2024 and December 2024, a final phase of the project will tailor data access to employees' needs and roles within the organization.

The Council approved KI's 2023-2024 budget with a 6-month delay. The approved budget includes a \$1.4 million deficit.

In June 2023, the KI budget rules expired. Between January and May 2023, the 2023-2024 budget preparations were kept on hold as the Director General and her team were awaiting new budget rules to guide the budget preparation exercise. However, since January 2023, budget rules negotiations have been at a stand-still.

Meanwhile, discussions have taken place with the MEQ, concerning the management of KI's \$26 million accumulated deficit and the need for a recovery budget. Between June and December 2023, a streamlined budget was developed for 2023-2024. This budget, as approved by the Council, will be submitted to the MEQ.

KI's position remains that the expired budget rules did not provide adequate funding, which explains our accumulated deficit. The deficit is the result of inadequate funding, which is particularly evident where material resources are concerned (building construction and maintenance of existing infrastructures), as well as human resources required to provide expert support for Nunavik students.

The Council was briefed on the progress made to establish Atannuivik as an organization. It is expected that the Executive Committee of this new organization would hold its first meeting in the spring of 2024, with a first general annual meeting to be held within the following 12 to 18 months, and begin reviewing research proposals in 2025.

In June 2022, the Council adopted a resolution supporting the creation of Atannuivik, a new Nunavik organization, mandated to centralize the systematic review of all research projects taking place in the region.

The Council was briefed on the trauma-informed approach, and on the psychosocial and special education services available to students in each Nunavik school. At the regional level, a team of professionals is also available to coordinate additional expertise and support for the school teams and the students they are working with.

In each school in Nunavik, the Compassionate and Complementary Services (CCS) team consists of: Student Support Professionals, Local student counselors, Behaviour technicians, Special Education Technicians, Nurture Group Teachers and Special Education Teachers.

At the regional level, the CCS team consists of: Assistant Directors, Coordinators, Pedagogical Counselors, (Contract) Psychologists, Speech and Language

Pathologists, Regional Student Counsellors, Regional Special Education Technicians and Anti-Bullying Pedagogical Counsellor.

As part of the activity report presented by the Education Services' School Operations team, the Council was briefed on projects that support student perseverance and school success. Implemented by partner organizations in various schools throughout Nunavik, these projects represent additional options that complement extra-curricular activities led by teachers.

An agreement with **United for Literacy** (formerly Frontier College) allows high school students to benefit from the support of mathematics tutors. Currently, tutors are present in 7 Nunavik communities (Inukjuak, Umiujaq, Kuujjuarapik, Kangirsuk, Kangiqsujaq, Aupaluk, and Kuujjuaq). As usual, the full deployment of these professional resources depends on available local KI housing, as well as the ability of our implementing partner to recruit suitable candidates.

Youth Fusion is currently implementing 6 projects in 4 different Nunavik communities. The projects focus on creating links between the school and the community, while allowing participating youth to explore their interests.

Nurrait – Jeunes Karibus also has a strong presence in schools, with youth from 12 of the 14 Nunavik communities participating in activities related to expeditions planned for the 2023-2024 school year. Last year, 53 youth from 5 Nunavik villages participated in activities offered by this organization.

Other partner organizations include **ESUMA** (school perseverance), Leadership Committee for English Education in Quebec (**LCEEQ**), and **Réseau Biblio** (schools and community access to public library resources).

The roll-out of Emergency Childcare Services continues in Nunavik schools and adult education centres. As of December 1st, a total of 11 Emergency Childcare Services in 8 Nunavik communities are receiving funding from Child First Initiative for a 2-year period. In participating communities, Emergency Childcare Services have already helped to reduce staff absenteeism and class closures when local daycare centres are not opened.

This initiative represents an emergency response to the service disruptions that currently characterize the Nunavik daycare system across the region.

The Emergency Childcare Services are implemented in schools where workforce, housing and space are available. The services can only be used by Kativik Ilisarniliriniq employees and students who are parents, for children up to 4 years old. They operate strictly during school opening hours (and therefore cannot be used as before or after school childcare).

KI has worked closely with the unions representing its employees to obtain an informal approval of the job descriptions for the Emergency Childcare Services educators and coordinator. These positions are funded by the Child First Initiative, for a 2-year period.

The Child First Initiative is funded by the Canadian Government under Jordan's Principle. It aims to ensure that Inuit children can access the products, services and

support they need when they need them, while the Canadian Government works with Inuit partners, as well as the provinces and territories, to develop long-term approaches to help better address the unique needs of Inuit children.

Work to clarify pathways to school success for students was undertaken in 2022, in response to the conclusions of the 2019-2021 Education Research (Audit). As of the 2023-2024 school year, two pathways are now in place: the Regular Program and the Work-Oriented Training Programs – WOTP.

Communication material is currently being developed to present where each pathway leads to, and which academic requirements will allow students to further pursue their interests at school or enter the work force in specialized trades.

With clear pathways in place, students and their parents will have a better understanding of what academic education leads to. Furthermore, once a student completes a pathway, the various entry points they can access to continue their education will be easy to identify.

The Work-Oriented Training Program (WOTP) broadens the options for accreditation available to students in their schooling before they leave high school, undertake vocational training or pursue post-secondary studies.

Education Services is developing a Digital Action Plan to help address teacher shortages, support access to new professional development options for educators and introduce digital citizenship concepts to students.

With increased access to large bandwidth and high-speed Internet, Nunavik is facing issues related to cybersecurity, cyberbullying and more.

In this context, digital literacy and digital citizenship are essential for a responsible use of technology by anyone (teachers, and students alike) who uses computers, the Internet, and digital devices to engage with society on any level.

A first phase of the Digital Action Plan will focus on providing professionals with the skills and competencies they need to support teachers and students in their use of technologies in the classroom.

During the following implementation phases of the Digital Action Plan, having benefited from adequate professional support, teachers will be able to foster a safe online learning environment for students.

The First Language is continuing its curriculum development work, while also supporting teachers in all Nunavik schools. With few expert resources available, it remains challenging to address all needs. In this context, the Education Services department is happy to welcome back a number of pedagogical experts into pedagogical consultant roles. In addition, discussions on resource sharing with IPUIT (the Ivujivik and Puvirnituk school committees working with the UQAT) are progressing well.

There are currently 7 vacant curriculum developer positions for first language specialists at the Education Services department.