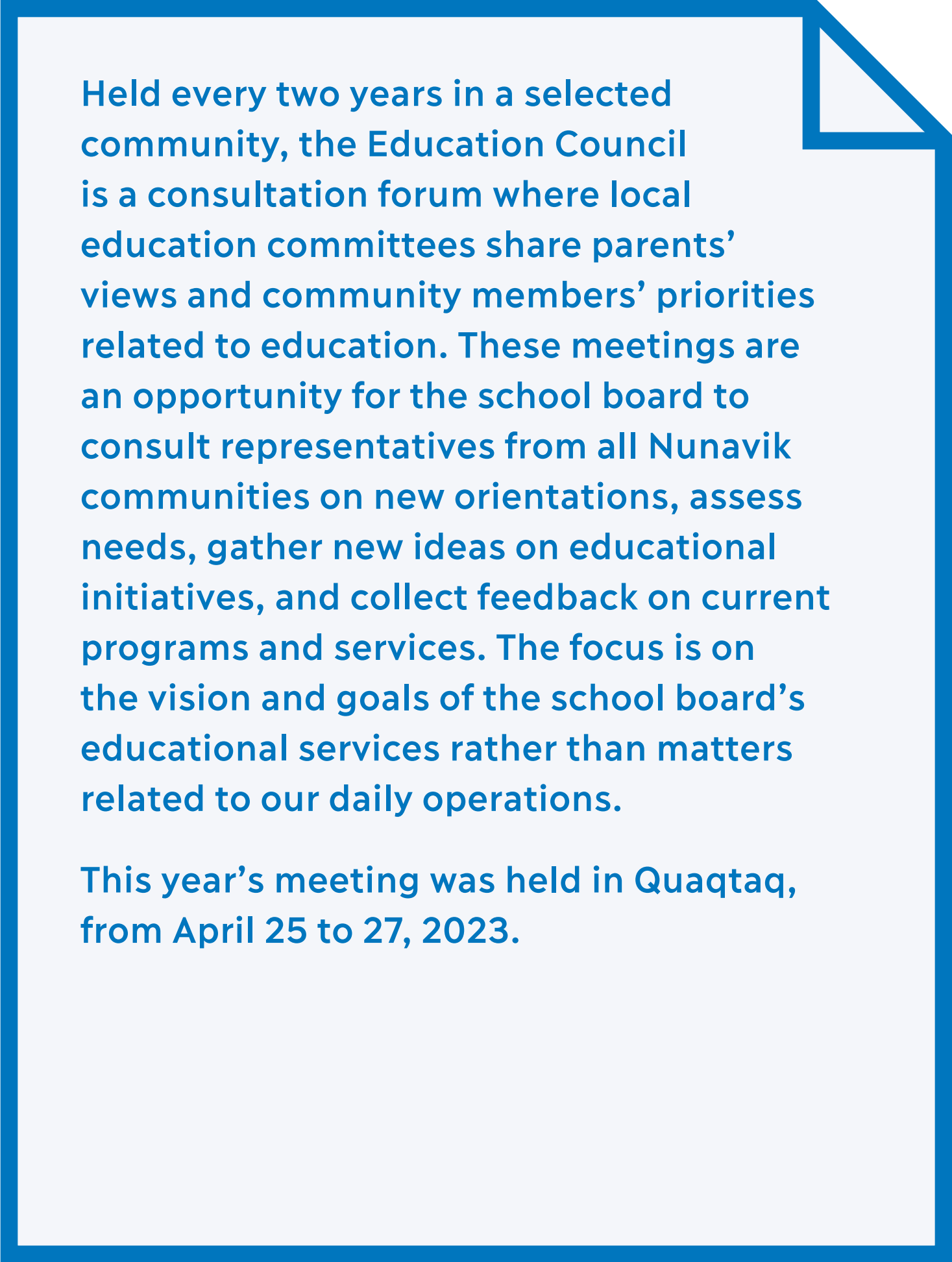


EDUCATION COUNCIL 2023





Held every two years in a selected community, the Education Council is a consultation forum where local education committees share parents' views and community members' priorities related to education. These meetings are an opportunity for the school board to consult representatives from all Nunavik communities on new orientations, assess needs, gather new ideas on educational initiatives, and collect feedback on current programs and services. The focus is on the vision and goals of the school board's educational services rather than matters related to our daily operations.

This year's meeting was held in Quaqtaq, from April 25 to 27, 2023.

MAIN TAKEAWAYS

01

THE 2019-2021 EDUCATION RESEARCH (AUDIT)

This research was commissioned by the Council of Commissioners to examine and compare our English and French language curriculum to the Québec Education Program (QEP). The research documented gaps in **competency expectations** in some areas. Many of the documented gaps are directly and indirectly related to the acquisition of second language competencies. We are actively working to close these gaps by improving the 2nd language curriculum (French and English). This work must be done in conjunction with the ongoing Inuktitut curriculum enhancement. Curriculum coherence across languages is essential, as the research on language acquisition is clear: the knowledge of one language supports the learning of a second.



Looking at the Physical Education and Health curriculum, the research found that most elements covered in the Québec Education Program (QEP) are mastered in the same year at Kativik Ilisarniliriniq (KI) (326 elements out of 334). Compared to the QEP, KI evaluations showed similar competency expectations for Mathematics and Social Sciences overall. Specifically, the research found that the elementary Social Sciences curriculum at KI is richer and more diverse than the QEP, as it also includes elements relevant to Nunavik and the circumpolar environment.

For English as a Second Language and Science, some KI evaluations showed partial differences in competency expectations compared to the QEP. The review of the KI French curriculum found that the required competency level at the end of secondary school is below what is necessary for successful post-secondary education in French. While narrower, a similar gap was identified in the English curriculum.

The researchers noted that the clarification of pathways to school success for students could help enhance KI's success rate in general and address weaknesses identified in the French and English curricula. They recommended looking at ways to reduce the abrupt transition to learning in a second language, which happens in Grades 3 and 4. Student and teacher absenteeism were also identified as significant issues to resolve.

Finally, the research pointed out the need to implement initiatives that take into consideration high staff turnover, as well as the limited number of available qualified Inuit educators. It should be noted that the nationwide shortage of teachers in Canada has severely affected the qualification of French and English teachers hired to work in Nunavik. In August 2023, only 44% of our teachers were legally qualified to teach in Quebec (27% in the Inuktitut sector, 42% in the English as a second language sector, and 65% in the French as a second language sector).

02

BALANCING SELF-GOVERNANCE IN EDUCATION AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FROM THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

To obtain a Secondary School Diploma, students must take specific subjects to obtain compulsory credits. This requirement applies to all students in Quebec. KI's basic school regulations, which give us the leeway to exercise our self-governance rights under the Northern Quebec and James Bay Agreement, must fit within these guidelines. As a result, there is little flexibility (and space) to incorporate content rooted in the Inuit worldview and heritage. Not much time is left for elective courses, and the diverse needs of students are not always met. Clear pathways to graduation and certification will help students reach academic success by building on their specific needs and interests.



HIGHLIGHT FROM THE PARTICIPANTS' DISCUSSIONS

The shortage of teachers, student absenteeism and teacher absenteeism were all issues central to many of the participants' comments. These issues were identified as having an impact on student perseverance, graduation rates, as well as the promotion of students to the next grade level when, in some cases, they lack the required competencies.



03

PATHWAYS TO SCHOOL SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS

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 in place.

The first pathway (**Regular Program**) leads to a Secondary School Diploma issued by the Ministry of Education (MEQ). Upon completion of this program, students can pursue their education with vocational training institutions (in Nunavik, or outside Nunavik with the KI post-secondary sponsorship program) or colleges (outside Nunavik with the KI post-secondary sponsorship program).

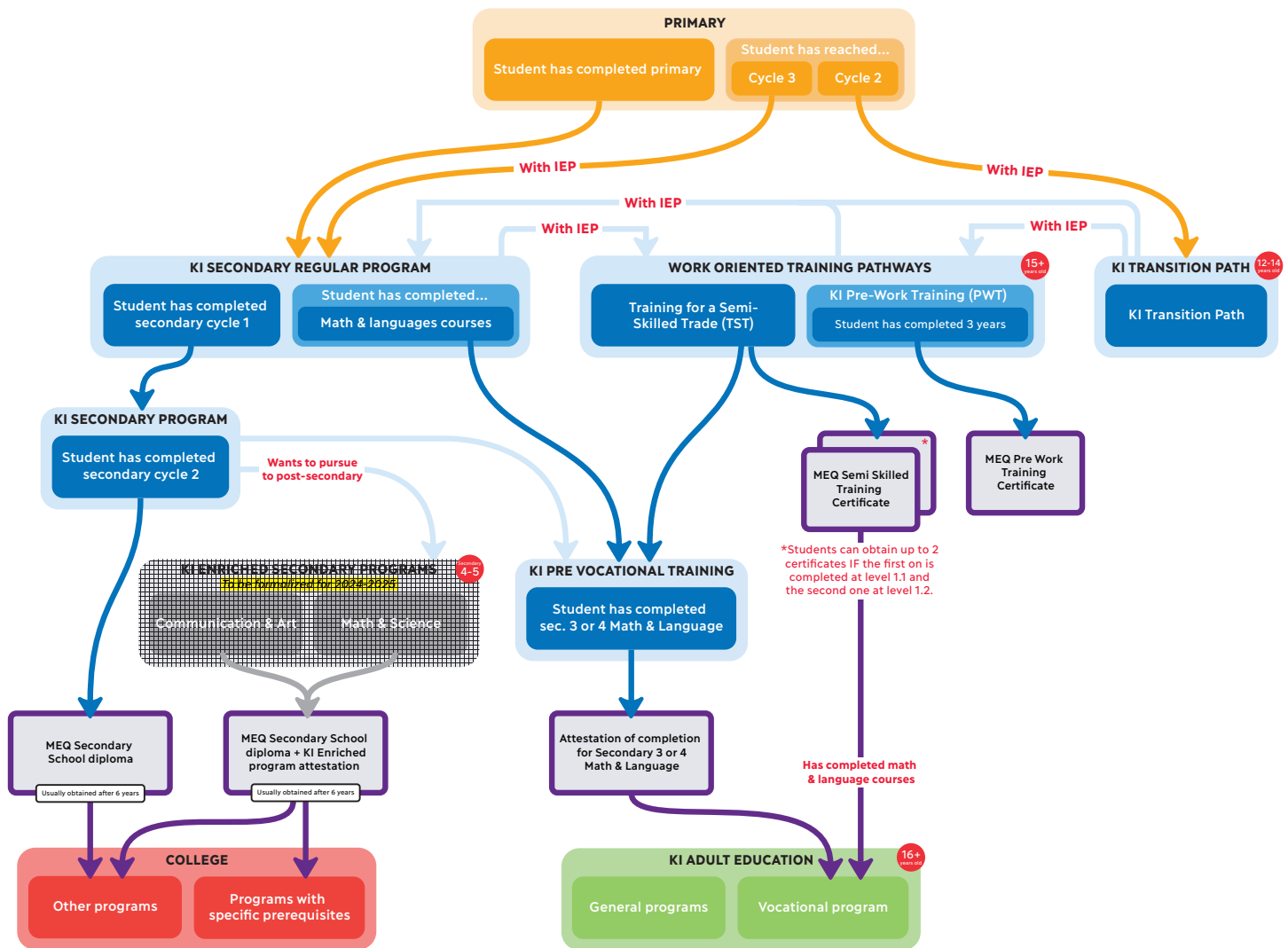
The second pathway (**Work-Oriented Training Programs – WOTP**) leads to certifications issued by the MEQ. It offers opportunities for hands-on learning and can include learning in a real work environment. Upon completion of these programs, students may enter the job market, or pursue their education in the youth or adult sectors.

The development of a third pathway (**Enriched Program**) is in progress. It will offer courses that are pre-requisites for specialized college programs (STEM programs, for example)¹, and lead to a Secondary School Diploma issued by the Ministry of Education (MEQ). In addition, students will receive a Kativik Ilisarniliriniq attestation of completion. Upon completion of this program, students can pursue college education (outside Nunavik with the KI post-secondary sponsorship program) or enter vocational training programs (in Nunavik, or outside Nunavik with the KI post-secondary sponsorship program).

With clear pathways, 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 are easy to identify.

¹ Note, some students are already taking enriched Math courses. However, without a clear pathway the course offerings are not consistent from one school to another, and the teaching context is not optimal either.

PATHWAYS TO SCHOOL SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS (VERSION DATED APRIL 2023)



04

PLURILINGUAL TEACHING

Inuktitut is and will remain the language of instruction in Nunavik. In addition to Inuktitut, French and English are also taught. This makes the Nunavik education system a plurilingual one.

In 2018, the Education Council demanded that KI review its current plurilingual education model in order to improve student success. This work was undertaken in parallel with the 2019-2021 Education Research (Audit). It led to the production of the report [Language Teaching and Program at Kativik Ilisarniliriniq: A State of the Debate](#). This comprehensive report was tabled at the Council of Commissioners in December 2022, before being presented to the Education Council in April 2023.

THE REPORT INCLUDES A REVIEW OF:

- Our legal context (JBNQA Chapter 17, Bill 101 and the Education Act for Cree, Inuit and Naskapis)
- Recommendations from past public consultations held in Nunavik (the Nunavik Symposium on Education (1985), the Nunavik Education Task Force (1989 to 1992), the Inuktituurniup Saturtaugasuarninga Project and its Illirijavut report (2012), the Plan Nunavik Report (2010), and the Parnasimautik report (2015))
- Findings from recent research on plurilingual instruction



In addition, this report also identifies seven pedagogical keys that will inform all options developed to strengthen the Inuktitut language, while also ensuring Nunavik students are equipped to pursue post-secondary education in their language of choice.

THESE PEDAGOGICAL KEYS ARE:

1. Each language needs to be taught for a minimum of 6 to 7 years or more, with specific attention to the minoritized language (which requires additional teaching resources in Inuktitut).
2. Strong academic skills in the mother tongue predict success in learning other languages.
3. Language arts courses need to be provided for each language (academic, grammar).
4. Each language needs to be used as a means of teaching other subjects.
5. Curriculum, programs and the school organization need to support meaningful (real-life) learning situations for every student.
6. Students are provided ample opportunities for authentic (real-life) language exposure and use.
7. The program needs to be developed with consistency. Alignment between the 3 language programs will support skills and knowledge transfer.

HIGHLIGHT FROM THE PARTICIPANTS' DISCUSSIONS

Discussions on plurilingual teaching emphasized the importance of language in a context of colonial history, and the complex links that connect a politically charged language and identity.

Adopting approaches based on assets (what students know) and teaching in authentic settings emerged as recommendations. In addition, participants stressed the importance of ensuring that a new generation of teachers would be forthcoming. Many barriers would be removed if second languages were to be taught by Inuktitut speakers.

05

ESUMA: SCHOOL PERSEVERANCE RESEARCH PROJECT

Education Council participants engaged in a focus group discussion on parental involvement in education. The results will inform ESUMA'S research on school perseverance, which aims to gain a new understanding of how Nunavik youth define success, what school represents to them, and parents' expectations for their child's future and what school should deliver. The final research report is due by the end of the 2023 summer.

In addition, ESUMA is also conducting a Literacy needs assessment across Nunavik. This project includes the assessment of existing resources and programs. A final report will be released in June 2023.

Unikkausiit Uummatut may also be back with a new and improved 2023-2024 edition. The trilingual books produced and distributed last year received very positive feedback.



06

COMPLEMENTARY AND COMPASSIONATE SERVICES

Accessing the right support is key to student success. At the regional level, and in each Nunavik school, there is a wide range of resources and expertise that parents should not hesitate to use.

At school, psychosocial support is provided by Student Support Professionals, Student Counsellors, and Behaviour Technicians. Regionally, our psychologist can also work with students and ensure referrals and follow-up with the health sector.

Similarly, at the school level, special education teachers and special education technicians can provide direct support to students. In addition, services for students with learning difficulties who require a screening and diagnostic assessment can be provided by our regional team, which includes the following experts: Pedagogical Counsellors and Speech and Language Pathologists.



07

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS: HOW DOES IT WORK?

Much of the Nunavik education system depends on attracting, recruiting and then retaining employees. Many participants raised this point during the first two days of discussions, expressing their hopes for better working conditions in the education sector.

This presentation aimed to clarify what is (and what isn't) controlled directly by Kativik Ilisarniliriniq as part of the collective agreement negotiation process. It explained that KI is not part of direct negotiations related to salary, retirement, pension, premiums, etc. KI only takes part in negotiating sectoral measures that apply strictly to our region. For example, during the negotiation of the 2020-2023 collective agreements, these included: disciplinary measures, professional development, parental rights, etc.

The presentation also clarified that although KI's demands for negotiation mandates often align with those of its unionized employees, we, as the employer, can only apply the mandates that are approved by the Québec Treasury Board. These mandates also follow the budget constraints identified by the Treasury Board. Thus, KI's hands are tied without approval from the Treasury Board.

For example, during the negotiation of the 2020-2023 collective agreements, KI had no approved mandate to discuss benefits for locally recruited employees at the negotiation table. Funding for benefits such as a retention premium, transportation benefits (outings) and housing allowance was negotiated separately, and these were rolled out through administrative measures outside of the collective agreements.

08

LOCAL HISTORY PROGRAM (THE QUAQTAQ EXAMPLE)

Participants were familiarized with Isummasaqvik School's local history program. Developed by Pasha Putayuk, a teacher from Quaqtak, the program was presented as a tool for using Inuktitut to teach other subjects. The program was praised for its engaging content rooted in community heritage and the fact that it introduced inspiring local role models to whom students can relate.





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Kativik Ilisarniliriniq