

August 24, 2016

Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.’s Comments on Chapter 1 – “Fundamental Principles” (Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit) of the GN Department of Education’s policy intentions document: “A Collective Vision”

Inuit Qaujimajatuqanit (IQ) and Inuit Societal Values (ISV) are fundamental to the language and environment within Nunavut schools. Making IQ and ISV the foundation for curriculum, instruction and everyday partnerships will ensure a positive school environment and contribute to a quality of education higher than most Canadian jurisdictions, given the rich history of Nunavut. IQ should not be an add-on to “enhance” the Minister’s directions. Rather, it must be at the core of the education system.

NTI Comments: NTI agrees with DOE that IQ references should be contained primarily in Part I of the *Education Act*, and in that regard, we also agree that the duty to ensure that the public education system in Nunavut incorporates and fosters IQ must remain the responsibility of all those who have a role within the education system.

NTI is also supportive of most of the “non-legislative” means that GN intends to use to infuse ISV in the education system (page 6), and **we request written confirmation of DOE’s intention to work with NTI and the DEAs on the development of these proposals.**

Where NTI disagrees is with the DOE’s proposed mechanism of implementing IQ in the education system. DOE appears to see the DEAs and IQ as separate and external pieces of the education system, and the DEAs’ role as an enhancement to Ministerial authority, whereas DEAs are more properly full partners in development of the curriculum and school program. IQ considerations are inherent in the role of DEAs, who are elected officials from the community. And IQ and ISV must be at the core of the education system rather than an enhancement to standardization.

NTI recommends that DOE work with the DEAs and NTI to make IQ a core curriculum subject taught throughout the school years, or, alternatively, that it be a core element of other subjects, such as Social Studies and/or Language Arts.

In addition, requiring the DEAs to report on IQ and ISV will not promote accountability in the absence of DEAs being allotted adequate time, training and resources to provide direction on matters affecting local programming.

Finally, NTI is concerned that the reference to “continuous improvement” in Chapter 1 may signal that DOE intends to maintain its directive on the much-touted continuous progress, or social promotion, which has been a major cause of disruption in the lives of students in Nunavut. **NTI also requests written clarification of DOE’s views of continuous improvement and how DOE intends to address the social promotion problem.**

On matter related to IQ and ISV, DOE concludes Chapter 6 of its policy intentions document by making a proposal on programs of moral and spiritual instruction. Prior to colonization, Inuit spirituality formed an important element of moral instruction. NTI wishes to ensure that DOE’s proposal will not restrict in any way the teaching and learning of ISV, including Inuit moral and spiritual instruction. **NTI requests written clarification from DOE on this point.**