



***Tusaqsimajavut: What we have heard***  
**Report on Community Input**  
**Regarding Proposed Amendments to *Education Act* and**  
***Inuit Language Protection Act***

President's message

[Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated](#) (NTI) works to represent the interests of Nunavut Inuit, including work to ensure the implementation of the [Nunavut Agreement](#).

NTI recognizes the vital importance of a quality formal education program in all aspects of life for Nunavummiut.

NTI continues to advocate and work diligently to have Inuit views and opinions incorporated into all aspects of the formal education system, including but not limited to effective and relevant legislation.

Inuit have consistently communicated a desired path forward in the broad area of education. This path forward requires a greater investment in Inuit language and culture resources on the part of government.

Governments provide programs and services for the benefit of the people they serve. While some progress has been made, it is important for us as Inuit to continue to share our views, perspectives and direction with our government. Inuit have been clear on the desired path forward but it is clear that we must continue to point the way.

This report has been prepared to share what NTI heard from Inuit and other Nunavummiut in territory-wide consultations. We encourage you to get involved, ask questions, and share your perspectives. Contact your MLA.

Background

**Nunavut Legislation**

- The current Nunavut *Education Act* was legislated in 2008.
- The *Inuit Language Protection Act* (ILPA) was legislated in 2008.
- Each of these Acts include provisions which guide the approach to delivery of the formal education system in Nunavut, and establish Inuit language rights which impact the formal education system.

**Bill 37 - An Act to Amend the Education Act and the Inuit Language Protection Act**

- In 2016, the Government of Nunavut introduced Bill 37 in an effort to amend both the *Education Act* and the ILPA.



- NTI, District Education Authorities (DEAs) and Nunavummiut in general were strongly opposed to Bill 37.
- Due to overwhelming territory-wide opposition to Bill 37, this bill was rejected by MLAs and fell off the order table in May, 2017.
- In 2018, the Government of Nunavut prepared a new Legislative Proposal, with some minor modifications to the content originally proposed in Bill 37
- This Legislative Proposal was leaked in May, 2018, allowing stakeholders and other partners an opportunity to review the government’s proposed direction.
- NTI was disappointed to learn the changes being proposed were largely based on changes initially proposed in Bill 37.
- On March 12, 2019, the Government of Nunavut passed Bill 20, which delays the coming into force of certain sections of the *Education Act* and the *Inuit Language Protection Act*. This is only a temporary measure, which expires once a new *Education Act*/ILPA is passed, or following the end of the Spring, 2019 session of the Legislative Assembly.

### **Organization of Community Consultations**

- On September 11, 2018, NTI was invited to a “Stakeholders’ Meeting” by the Government of Nunavut (GN) Department of Education. NTI was informed of the GN’s intent to conduct a Nunavut-wide community consultation tour to hear community input on some of its proposed amendments to the *Education Act* and the ILPA.
- On September 14, 2018, the Department of Education publicly announced plans to visit Nunavut communities to explain some of its proposed changes and to receive input on a narrow set of its proposed amendments.
- Within a short timeframe, NTI and the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities (CNDEA) prepared for participation in the consultation exercise: they delegated staff to take part in the community consultation tour, prepared background and speaking materials, and observed the public and DEA members participating in the community consultations.

### **Participation in Community Consultations Tour**

- The consultations were coordinated by the Department of Education.
- The Department of Education met with members of DEAs in each community and organized public meetings to hear from interested members of the public in each of Nunavut’s 25 communities.
- NTI and CNDEA staff were given an opportunity to present and had the opportunity to hear, first-hand, feedback from community members.



## Summary of Proposed Amendments

The Department of Education provided a summary of some of its proposed amendments titled *Our Goals for Education* and based on its preliminary legislative proposal dated May 24, 2018. This summary was used as the basis to solicit input and feedback from the public, which focused on the following main themes:

- **DEA Authorities**  
Eight (8) proposed amendments relate to diminishing existing DEA Authorities, including limitations on choice of school calendars, transfer of authority on implementation of inclusive education, transfer of administration of inclusive education appeals, transfer of authority on administration of hiring panels of principals, and limitation of direction to principals on matters falling outside the education program.
- **DEA Council**  
Thirteen (13) proposed amendments relate to the creation a new Council of Nunavut DEAs (to replace existing CNDEA), which would serve as an independent office, provide new salary provisions for employees and appointees to support the Council, with new mandates to assist and support DEAs, as well as provisions for direct reporting to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut.
- **Bilingual Education**  
Six (6) proposed amendments relate to the provision of bilingual education and Inuktitut language of instruction, including two proposed amendments to the *Inuit Language Protection Act*, extending timelines to provide Inuktitut language of instruction for K-12 by 2019, providing authority to the Department of Education to set time allocations for language of instruction by program and by grade and to restrict the choice of language of instruction model, and allowing the Department to provide language of instruction based on its own reporting of capacity and resources.

## What We Heard

Territory-wide consultations were organized to focus only on a selection of proposed legislative changes.

A number of individuals and representatives expressed frustration that the Department of Education focused on the failed Bill 37 amendments as a starting point for the 2018 community consultations.



## **Key Themes from DEA and Community Consultations**

Provided below is an overview of key themes which emerged from impassioned community input at consultation sessions:

### **1. More Inuktut within schools (K-12) and early childhood education**

Most of the focus centred on the call for government to do more to support Inuktut within the early childhood education and formal school systems. This point was made clearly and repeatedly at every public consultation, every meeting with DEAs.

Rather than reducing expectations and diminishing existing legal rights and obligations, Nunavummiut want MORE INUKTUT in schools, and call for government action to meet this longstanding, well-known requirement, including:

- Accelerated efforts to increase numbers of Inuktut-speaking educators and teachers across all Nunavut schools;
- More dedicated guidance and support to Inuktut educators (principals, teachers, language specialists) with adequate benefits, housing and professional development support;
- A sustained increase in development, production, adoption, use and sharing of Inuktut learning and teaching resources;
- Increased and improved curriculum development, curriculum resources and curriculum standards for Inuktut teachers, and proper development of an Inuktut education framework and implementation plan.

### **2. More focus of teaching of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit**

Nunavut Inuit are opposed to removing reference to Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit from the *Education Act* and call for more teaching of Inuit cultural skills (harvesting and clothing-making skills), Inuit history and Inuit games. Nunavummiut also call for curriculum that is culturally-relevant and reflective of the Nunavut context. Nunavut Inuit expect higher pay and support for Elders and the removal of barriers which inhibit community and Elder participation.

### **3. No reduction in DEA authorities**

Almost all proposed changes would impact DEA authorities; and would transfer authorities from the local level (DEAs) to the Minister of Education. DEAs and Nunavut Inuit expressed opposition to proposals which seek to concentrate authority with the Minister. Nunavummiut want to retain local control over aspects of the education system, including authority with respect to the establishment of school calendars, principal hiring panels, and school or education programs.



Territory-wide community input has reinforced NTI's long-standing positions, communicated consistently to the Government of Nunavut, in relation to other aspects of the education system in Nunavut. Such valuable input includes the following:

#### **4. Better Support for DEAs**

Nunavut Inuit expressed the need for DEAs to be better supported through orientation and training, as well as with mobilized support through the re-introduction of divisional school boards.

#### **5. Re-introduction of Divisional school boards**

Nunavut Inuit call for divisional school boards to be re-introduced with full authority on curriculum, hiring authority and financial resources to support DEAs in the exercise of their authority, including authority over teaching standards and professional development, and over a responsive forum that allows parents and communities the opportunity to participate and engage in the development of education for their children.

#### **6. Improved Process between DEAs, Dept. of Education & Regional School Operations**

The process between DEAs, the Department of Education and Regional School Operations (RSO) must be improved because currently, the disjointed system between the Department of Education and DEAs is not working. DEAs feel RSOs are not responsive to their students' education needs, which makes it difficult to mobilize action intended to produce better attendance rates or other improvements in student outcomes.

While Nunavummiut agree that improvements can and should be made within its internal operating structures, community feedback points to the need for more support and capacity development to foster community leadership.

#### **7. End to the Practice of Social Promotion**

Community members and DEA directors spoke of the need to end the practice of social promotion (allowing a student to "pass" to the next grade level, despite not having learned or mastered basic concepts or benchmarks expected of that grade level), saying that "social promotion" is affecting students' ability to succeed in life.

The practice of social promotion negatively affects many students who struggle at high school or post-secondary levels. Of note, the Department of Education does not have an official policy on social promotion.



## 8. Inclusive Education & Student Supports

Another area where the input at the community level reinforces NTI's stated positions relate to **inclusive education** and other **proactive wrap-around supports for students**. Nunavummiut called for more resources to support all students in schools, including the provision of inclusive education measures as well as academic and mental health supports. They also called for the provision of guidance counselors to assist students with career development and workforce entry as well as for more classroom assistants and student support assistants.

These common concerns reflect the key themes of NTI's formal submissions to the Department of Education in 2016 and 2018.

### What Happens Now

- The Government of Nunavut is expected to table a proposed bill to make amendments to the current *Education Act* and the *Inuit Language Protection Act* during their Spring sitting (May 28-June 6, 2019).
- The public consultations have concluded but you can still share your views and opinions by contacting your MLA.
- It is important that formal input be provided at each stage of the process.
- Once the bill has received first reading, there is an opportunity to provide input.
- Once the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation, there is an opportunity to provide input.
- **Contact your MLA to share your views and opinions.**

### Notes/References

Additional, related information can be obtained at:

- 2008 Education Act  
<https://www.nunavutlegislation.ca/en/download/file/fid/10994>
- Inuit Language Protection Act  
<https://www.nunavutlegislation.ca/en/download/file/fid/11690>
- Bill 20 – Interim Language of Instruction Act  
<https://www.nunavutlegislation.ca/en/download/file/fid/11825>



- GN Website with information related to community consultations [www.ourgoalsforeducation.ca](http://www.ourgoalsforeducation.ca)
- NTI submission to Bill 37, 2016 [http://www.tunngavik.com/wp-content/uploads//home/tunngavi/public\\_html/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2019/05/2017-04-21-NTI-Submission-Bill-37-FINAL-ENG.pdf](http://www.tunngavik.com/wp-content/uploads//home/tunngavi/public_html/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2019/05/2017-04-21-NTI-Submission-Bill-37-FINAL-ENG.pdf)
- NTI submission December, 2018 [http://www.tunngavik.com/wp-content/uploads//home/tunngavi/public\\_html/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2019/05/2018-12-14-NTI-submission-to-GN-on-Education-Act-amendments-LP.pdf](http://www.tunngavik.com/wp-content/uploads//home/tunngavi/public_html/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2019/05/2018-12-14-NTI-submission-to-GN-on-Education-Act-amendments-LP.pdf)
- Contact information for Nunavut MLAs: <https://assembly.nu.ca/members/mla>