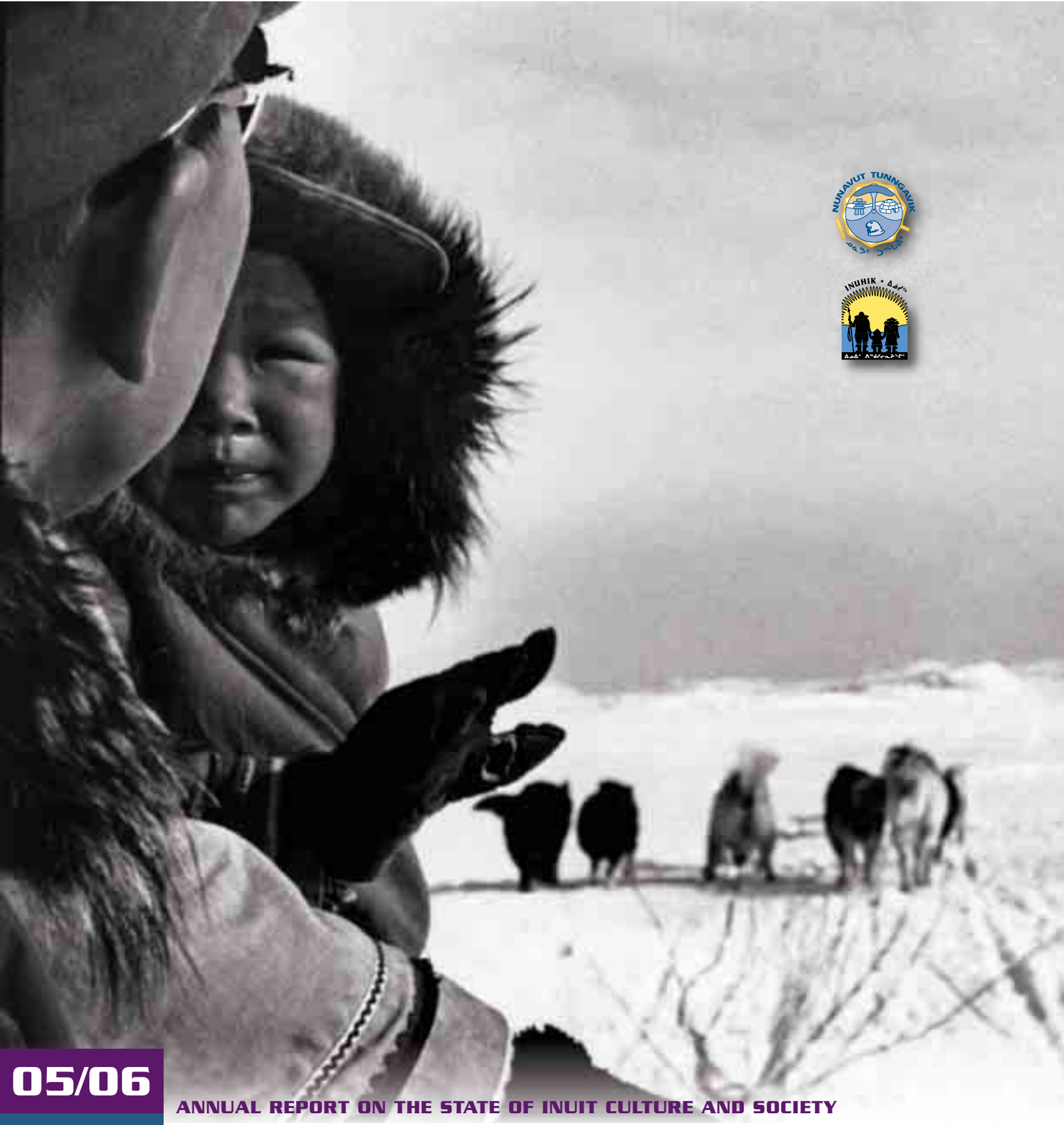

05/06

06/07

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE STATE OF INUIT CULTURE AND SOCIETY

KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 12 EDUCATION IN NUNAVUT

SAQQIQPUQ

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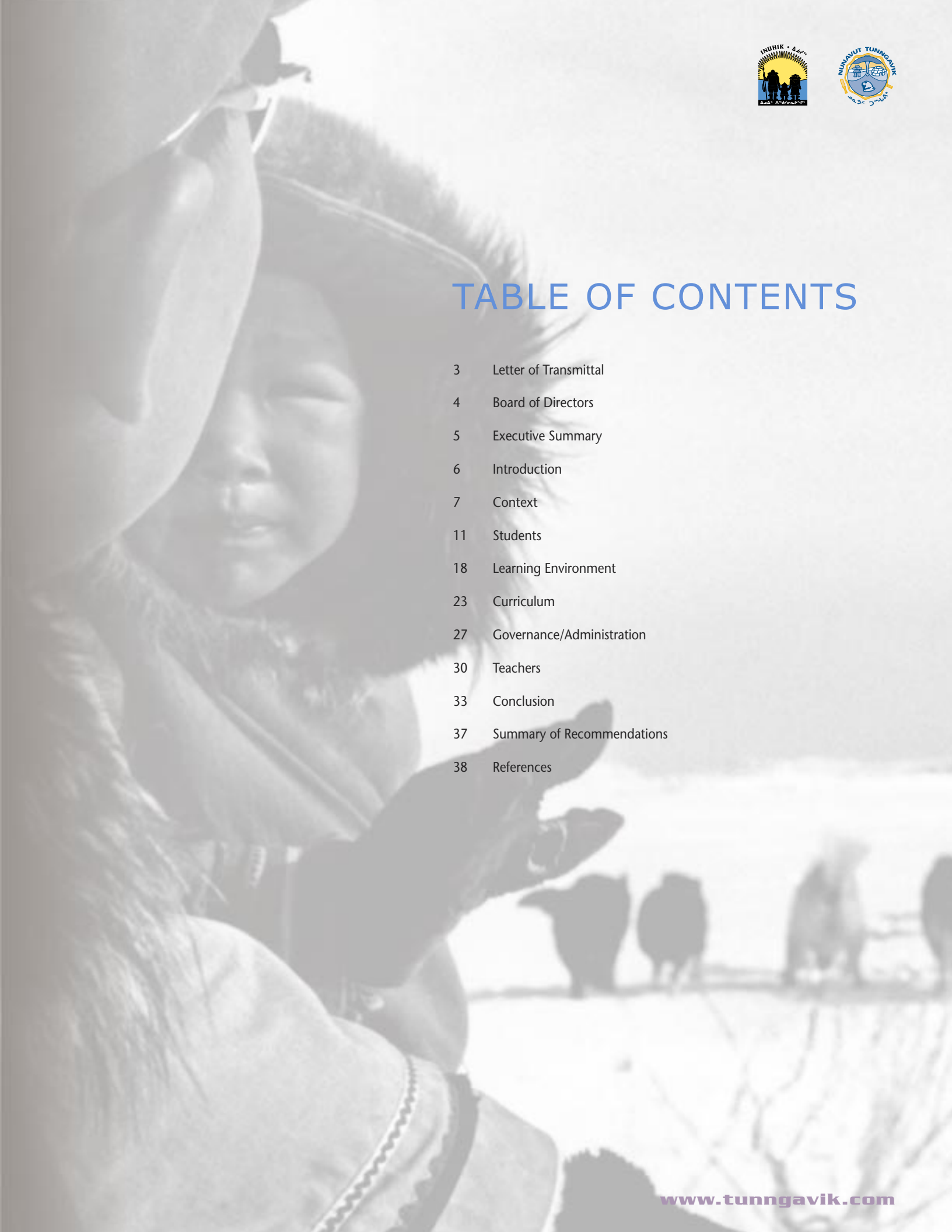

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ANNUAL REPORT ON THE STATE OF INUIT CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Peter Derek Ottokie of Cape Dorset caught his first walrus and learned to butcher his catch moments after this photo was taken.

Credit: Allashuwa Ottokie

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Hon. Paul Okalik,
Premier
Government of Nunavut

Hon. Chuck Strahl
Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
Government of Canada

Dear Premier Okalik and Minister Strahl:

Article 32 of the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* calls for the establishment of the Nunavut Social Development Council. Article 32.3.4 requires that Council to, "…prepare and submit an annual report on the state of Inuit culture and society in the Nunavut Settlement Area to the Leader of the Territorial Government for tabling in the Legislative Assembly, as well as to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for tabling in the House of Commons."

Pursuant to Article 32.3.4, we are pleased to submit this *Annual Report on the State of Inuit Culture and Society*, entitled *Saqqiqpuq: Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education in Nunavut*. This annual report covers the fiscal years of 2005/06 and 2006/07.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors
Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
Nunavut Social Development Council

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An aglu (seal breathing hole).

Credit: Alvin Sandy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The fact that most Inuit children in Nunavut drop out of school before graduating is a serious societal problem. Without renewed attention and investment to improve kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) education outcomes, Inuit will not be able to fully access the government's obligations under the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* (NLCA), access benefits of economic development, and fulfil desires to build a fully functioning Inuit society through a public government model. The education system does not currently fully entrench Inuit language, values, culture and society into its administration and delivery, thereby denying Inuit from fully utilizing one of the most powerful formal resources for empowerment.

While 72.4 per cent of the Inuit population in Nunavut stated that Inuktitut is their first language and 79.2 per cent of Inuit stated that Inuktitut was the only or main language spoken at home, only two schools offer Inuktitut instruction beyond Grade 3 and then only to Grade 6. A recent report by Thomas Berger asserted that one of the root problems in the education system and the cause of the failure of the Government of Nunavut (GN) to meet its land claims obligation under Article 23 is the lack of Inuit language instruction from K-12. In addition to Berger's arguments, this report further asserts that the Nunavut education system does not give its students either an Inuit-specific education or a fully transferable degree, thereby limiting the ability for its students to succeed in both Nunavut and Canadian society.

Boys climbed for the best seats to watch the action at a Nunavut Tunngavik public meeting in Arviat.

Credit: Franco Buscemi

Although much innovative work has been done in Canada, including Nunavut, on developing curricula that integrates Aboriginal and Inuit culture, Inuit culture in the Nunavut classroom still tends to be treated as décor and artefact rather than viewed as an integral foundation for all learning. In many classrooms, Inuit language and culture are considered add-ons by Nunavut educators from the south, instead of an informative pathway for curriculum and program planning. Even to Inuit educators, Inuit language and culture is only tentatively brought into the classroom, as they believe that they must first and foremost meet the largely British Columbia and Alberta-based curriculum standards inherited from the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT).

Parents and communities have the right to control K-12 education delivery, and have asked specifically for this right in Nunavut. Unfortunately, one of the first measures undertaken by the new GN in 2000 was to abolish the three autonomous regional boards of education. This unilateral action went against more than three decades of government, academic, and institutional studies that consistently assert that local control of education is essential in order to improve the achievement levels of Inuit students. It significantly limited the control Inuit parents have over the education of their children.

In order to bring about a transformative change to Nunavut's education system, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) makes several recommendations, four of which are fundamental:

1. Inuit society, language, and culture must be entrenched as the foundation of the K-12 education system in Nunavut.
2. Inuit language must be the principle language of instruction for Inuit students in Nunavut schools as an inherent right.
3. Local autonomy must be returned to the governance of the education system by adequately replacing the abolished regional boards of education with an equivalent structure.
4. Immediate and creative measures must be instituted to drastically increase the numbers of Inuit teachers in the schools.

INTRODUCTION

Participants at the National Inuit Elder and Youth summit in Baker Lake.

Credit: Jesse Mike

Article 32 of the NLCA requires that an annual report on the state of Inuit culture and society in the Nunavut Settlement Area be prepared by the Nunavut Social Development Council (NSDC) and tabled in Parliament and the Nunavut Legislative Assembly. In 2002, NTI assumed the obligations of NSDC.

The implementation of measures to achieve the objectives of the NLCA requires, under NLCA Article 32, the direct participation of Inuit in the development, design, and method of delivery of social policies.[1] The government* is also obliged to reflect Inuit goals and objectives in such social and cultural policies, programs and services in the Nunavut Settlement Area.[2] In all matters affecting the implementation of the NLCA, NTI represents Inuit in Nunavut.

One of the over-riding purposes of the NLCA is to involve Inuit in the governance of the Nunavut Territory, and to share the management of the land, water, wildlife, and resources of Nunavut. The ability to build the capacity in the Inuit population to take on these roles is absolutely dependent on the education system.

In 1999, the GN set out its vision for the new territory in a document called *Pinasuaqtavut* (formerly known as the *Bathurst Mandate).* Four priorities guided its development. One of these was Continuing Learning, which envisioned Nunavut becoming a society:

- Fully functional in Inuktitut and English, respectful and committed to the needs and rights of French speakers, with a growing ability to participate in French.
- With a representative workforce in all sectors.
- In which educational programs are offered on a strategic basis, based on community needs.
- In which a full range of interlocking educational programs allows individuals continued access to all programs.

These are daunting objectives for any jurisdiction, let alone one located in Canada's largest geographical area with stark social gaps between Inuit and non-Inuit. For example, the average individual income for Inuit in Nunavut is $13,090, and non-Inuit it is $50,128. This is an income gap of $37,038[3] and it can only be closed with improved educational outcomes.

Education and language are at the heart of the social and cultural lives of Nunavut's children, and the aspirations of all parents. Language and education are also the principal formative influences in maintaining and improving Inuit society. Since Nunavut's foundation, there has also been increasing official recognition of the connection between education and Nunavut's economic and social development. Accordingly, the focus of this year's *Annual Report on the State of Inuit Culture and Society,* entitled *Saqqiqpuq: Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education in Nunavut* is on K-12 education in Nunavut.

NTI recognizes that all aspects of formal and informal education are important and interconnected, and expects the learning environment in Nunavut to evolve into an all inclusive interlinking system from early childhood development through K-12 education, continuing on to post-secondary and adult learning. This report focuses specifically on the K-12 system as it is the largest formal educational structure in Nunavut and therefore can be the catalyst for transformative change.

For the purposes of this report, the Inuit language refers to all dialects in Nunavut, including Inuinnaqtun and Inuktitut.

* Government means the Government of Canada or the Government of Nunavut or both, as the context requires, depending on their jurisdiction and the subject matter referred to, or as determined pursuant to NLCA Article 1.7.6.

CONTEXT

History

Until the end of WWII, formal education in what is now Nunavut was provided mainly by church missions, with students usually housed in nearby residences in a few larger centres. In 1952, the federal government started an Eskimo Affairs Committee to encourage Inuit to maintain their traditional life.[4] The committee included representatives from the RCMP, Hudson's Bay company, church, and government. Of the 55 people at its first meeting, none were Inuit.

The Eskimo Affairs Sub-committee of 1954 recommended Inuit language instruction for the first few years of school and suggested teaching Inuktitut as a separate subject. It also suggested that teacher aides could teach the formal curriculum in Inuktitut. These plans were vetoed by educators on the grounds that Aboriginal language interfered with academic progress. In particular, they advised disallowing Inuktitut in the schools on the grounds that: Inuit language could not meet modern needs; There were not enough teachers of Aboriginal language; Inuktitut was disadvantageous to employment and advanced education; Instruction in English would help the students master the subject content. Forty years later, in a study on bilingual education in the Kitikmeot region in Nunavut, some of these negative opinions around bilingual education were found to be still alive and well.[5] No doubt these views persist today.

The first school opened in the part of the Arctic now called Nunavut in 1955. In the 1970s, control of the schools was transferred from the federal government to the GNWT.

In 1971, a Federal Standing Committee recommended shortening the school year to allow Inuit families more time on the land; nonetheless, today Nunavut has one of the longest school years in Canada.

In 1972, Inuit held their own conference on education organized by the Eskimo Brotherhood under President Tagak Curley. At that time, Inuit wanted an Inuit-run teacher certification system which reflected Inuit values, and also wanted an education system which passed on the Inuit way of life and emphasized the oral tradition of teaching. The Eskimo Brotherhood's recommendations were not implemented.[6]

In 1974, a group called Qinnuayuak in Frobisher Bay (Iqaluit) tried to put forward extended camp experience as an alternative to the regular school curriculum. This was not supported by the government at that time.[7]

In 1975, the Inuit Cultural Institute organized a conference on education in Eskimo Point (Arviat) where Inuit requested the education system recognize achievement in the Inuit way of life, in land skills, and Inuktitut speaking and writing. Their recommendations were ignored.[8]

In 1978, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) voted to set up a separate National Inuit Education Council to train and separately certify its own Inuit teachers in order to set up a separate system that meaningfully included the Inuit way of life in studies, and included time on the land. ITC also criticized the restrictive authority of the existing *Education Act* (Ordinance) which put too much power in the hands of the commissioner without accountability to Inuit. ITC said that education in the north was run by southern bureaucrats too culturally, psychologically, and physically removed from Inuit communities to be meaningfully responsive to Inuit concerns. ITC expressed concern about a centralized government bureaucracy which controlled the design of educational policy, goals, and curricula, and the recruitment of staff. ITC's concerns were not acted on.[9]

A shift to greater local control began in 1983 with the implementation of recommendations from the report of the GNWT's Special Committee on Education.

Regional boards of education were established throughout the Northwest Territories (NT) and education, up to Grade 10, was offered in every community and extended to Grade 12 by the end of the 1990s. The establishment of regional boards of education was intended to increase local control of education in the NT. In the Eastern Arctic, a Divisional Education Council (DEC) was established for each of the three regions. The DEC was responsible for delivering the education program in their region, setting priorities for

Inuit Residential School.

Credit: Douglas Wilkinson / National Film Board of Canada / Library and Archives Canada

education and providing advice to the education minister on new programs, initiatives, and the construction of schools. The members of the DECs were appointed by the elected District Education Authorities (DEA) in each region. In 2000, one of the first acts of the new GN was to abolish the DECs.

Despite dozens of reports and countless political interventions, Inuit have not been able to convince the GN's Department of Education or its predecessors to implement recommendations aimed at making the education system relevant and successful. In Nunavut, where 96 per cent of students are Inuit, only 25 per cent of students graduate from Grade 12.[10] This is the lowest level in Canada where the national graduation rate is 76 per cent.

It is also lower than the average graduation rate for all Aboriginal students in Canada. Even on a regional basis, Nunavut's performance is poor. The graduation rate for Aboriginal students in Manitoba, at 45 per cent, is the lowest in Western Canada. In British Columbia, it is 58 per cent.[11] Nationally, the average graduation rate for Aboriginal students living on reserve is 41 per cent, and off reserve, it is 56 per cent.[12]

The question, therefore, is how can the system be changed to make it more successful? Much thought and many studies have been devoted to the issue of Aboriginal education over the past 35 years. It is worth reviewing some of these ideas.

1. In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood tabled one of the foundation documents of Aboriginal education. *Indian Control of Indian Education*[13] was based on two principles: parental responsibility and local control. The following February, the Minister of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), Jean Chrétien, gave official approval to the policy.

   The policy is built around four key points:
   - Aboriginal parents must be partners with government in the education of their children.
   - Curriculum must be built on the child's cultural background. There should be no changes in curriculum, teaching methods, or pupil-teacher relationships unless the parents are convinced of their value.
   - Non-Aboriginal teachers and counsellors must receive additional training to enable them to make curriculum for Aboriginal children more meaningful.
   - Education facilities must meet the needs of the local population.

2. A four volume report, *Tradition and Education: Towards a Vision of Our Future,*[14] was published in 1988 with federal government money. A review of the report found several causes for the continuing failures of Aboriginal education. These included:
   - Lack of real Aboriginal control of education.
   - Insufficient support and funding.
   - The curriculum was not built on Aboriginal culture. It said that:

"Because education shapes the minds and values of First Nations' young people, it is vitally important that First Nations have jurisdiction over the education programs which have such a lasting impact."

3. In 1996, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples[15] reviewed the state of Aboriginal education and found that, in 22 reports and studies between 1966 and 1992, they all made the following recommendations:
   - There must be Aboriginal control of education.
   - The curriculum must teach Aboriginal studies, including history, language and culture.
   - Training and hiring of more Aboriginal teachers.
   - Aboriginal parents, Elders and educators must be involved in the education of Aboriginal children.
   - There must be Aboriginal language instruction from pre-school to post-secondary education.
   - Aboriginal adults must be trained for teaching, paraprofessional and administrative positions in education.
   - There must be more emphasis on pre-school and kindergarten education.

The Royal Commission heard the same concerns as had been articulated for the previous 30 years. They found that there were four underlying problems:
- Aboriginal people did not have full control of education.
- There was little involvement of parents in the schools.
- The curriculum did not transmit linguistic and cultural heritage to the next generation.
- Financial resources have been inadequate.

Overall, the Royal Commission found that:

"… Canadian society had not yet accomplished the necessary power sharing to enable Aboriginal people to be authors of their own education."

The Royal Commission recommended that federal, provincial and territorial governments must introduce legislation to enable Aboriginal nations and their communities to manage their children's education.

The opinions expressed by so many government, academic, and professional reports over the past 30 years are remarkably consistent. They are all built around local control of education delivered in Aboriginal language by curriculum developed explicitly for the society and culture in which the students live.

The Legal Environment

The legal environment created by the NLCA is quite different from that in the NT and every other jurisdiction in Canada. There are many requirements built into the NLCA which oblige government to consult with Inuit and to involve Inuit in various government functions, particularly social policy development. These requirements, if vigorously enforced, constitute a significant limitation on the power of the executive.

Doris Rogers (left) and Stacey Aglok MacDonald dance while Ester McLeod and other Elders drum during an evening at the National Inuit Elder and Youth summit in Baker Lake.

Credit: Jesse Mike

The GN has responded to the requirement to consult with Inuit by signing *Iqqanaijaqatigiit* with NTI. *Iqqanaijaqatigiit* recognizes NTI as the representative of Inuit in Nunavut for all consultative and participatory obligations arising out of the NLCA. It sets out the process that will be followed by the government to satisfy its obligations under the NLCA, and to enable it to integrate Inuit goals and objectives in the policy development process.

Article 32

The preamble to the NLCA sets out four over-riding objectives. The first three relate to the desirability of Inuit participation† in decision-making about the use and management of Nunavut's resources and economic opportunities. The fourth sets out the objective of self-reliance and the cultural and social well-being of Inuit. These objectives are incorporated in the body of NLCA Article 2.[16] It is implicit in NLCA Article 4 that Inuit wanted a government in order to promote their own culture and society.[17] Nunavut was established to achieve this Inuit objective of ensuring that government policy integrates Inuit goals and objectives by creating a legal obligation on the government in NLCA Article 32, which requires the direct participation of Inuit in the development, design and method of delivery of social policies.[18] The government is also obliged to integrate Inuit goals and objectives in such social and cultural policies, programs and services in the Nunavut Settlement Area.[19] Education is an issue which falls within social and cultural policy.

One significant aspect of Inuit culture is described by Inuit Qaujimaningit and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ). This is defined as: The Inuit way of doing things: the past, present and future knowledge, experience, and values of Inuit society.[20]

Article 23

In negotiating the NLCA, Inuit were also mindful that power lay in the bureaucracy as well as the Legislature. NLCA Article 23 is the counterpart of Article 4 in that its goal is to ensure that Inuit are represented in all areas of the public service in proportion to their presence in the population.

NLCA Article 23 requires that there be a representative public service in all occupational groups and at all grade levels, and this representative level must be maintained. Thirteen years after the NLCA was signed, the representative level of employment is far from being achieved. At the time of Nunavut's formation, the representative level was at 45 per cent. Today it is at 48 per cent.[21] The significance of this static and low level of Inuit employment was illustrated by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC)§ in their economic impact study of Article 23.[22] They found that the cost to Inuit (that is the loss of potential earnings) of the first ten years of failure to fully implement Article 23 was in excess of $123 million annually, which over ten years, was close to the amount of compensation received by Inuit when, by signing the NLCA, they surrendered their Aboriginal title.

† Participation is a higher level of involvement than consultation. See presentation to the Nunavut Implementation Contract Working Group by Doug Wallace, Director, Legal and Constitutional Law, Department of Justice, Government of Nunavut, Iqaluit (February, 2002).

§ PwC wrote their report when the Inuit employment level was 42 per cent.

The second significant point was that most Inuit accounted for in the Inuit employment level were in the lowest levels of government, a point evidenced by the fact that the average wage of an Inuk government employee was 78 per cent of the non-Inuk employee.

The third point made by PwC was that the primary cost to government to recruit and relocate a fly-in/fly-out public service from southern Canada and to support the highest unemployment rate in Canada was in excess of $70 million annually.

As most jobs in government require some form of post-secondary education and training, the primary cause for the failure to implement Article 23 was the shortage of high school graduates. Since the working language of the GN public service is English, most jobs do not require bilingual competency. This significantly diminishes the need for public servants to acquire bilingualism and, as many more Inuit than non-Inuit are bilingual, the predominance of English as the working language devalues the major intellectual asset that Inuit can bring to government employment.

In 2006, Thomas Berger[23] identified the lack of sufficient high school graduates as the principle cause of the government's inability to make progress in meeting its obligation under Article 23.[24] The low achievement levels have also delayed the federal government's readiness to negotiate a devolution agreement with Nunavut.[25]

Public Government

The GN is an outgrowth of NLCA Article 4, and this has created a legal environment that is different to that of any other province or territory. The GN is not Inuit self-government. It is a public government, and its legislation and policies must reflect the interests of all Nunavummiut, not merely those of the Inuit majority. Thus, the GN is solely responsible for the education of Inuit in Nunavut, but delivers its services in an all-inclusive manner due to its obligations as a public government.

First Nunavut Education Bill and Community Consultations

In 2000, the consultation and drafting process for Bill 1, the first proposed made-in-Nunavut *Education Act,* was initiated. In 2002, Bill 1 was withdrawn from consideration by the Nunavut Legislative Assembly because, among other reasons, broader consultations were deemed necessary and the Bill did not adequately address Inuit social and cultural issues. The failure of Bill 1 showed the importance Nunavummiut place on education, and reinforced the deep significance Inuit place on the text and spirit of education legislation. Beginning in September, 2005, as a prelude to drafting another Education Bill, the GN embarked on a round of consultations in every community in Nunavut to sample opinion on a range of educational issues. Two government documents were used in the consultation:

1. An issues paper – *Nunavut Education Act (K – 12).*

2. Bill 1 – the proposed Bill that had been rejected by the Legislative Assembly in 2002.

No other documents from any organizations, including NTI, were presented. Consequently, the range of topics that were discussed in the community consultations tended to cluster around the topics in the issues paper and Bill 1. A consolidation of the responses and an analysis was released by the Department of Education in July, 2006.[26]

According to the July, 2006, GN report on the consultation,‡ respondents overwhelmingly expected that education would have a high level of Inuit cultural programming, including IQ. The NLCA[24] also requires that when recruiting and selecting public servants, candidates should be sought who have: an understanding of the social and cultural milieu of the Nunavut Settlement Area, including but not limited to:

- Knowledge of Inuit culture, society and economy.
- Community awareness.
- Fluency in Inuktitut.
- Knowledge of environmental characteristics of the Nunavut Settlement Area.
- Northern experience.

The Issues

- Social promotion versus retention/access.
- Complaints about registration/access.
- Attendance/fines.
- Hours of instruction.
- School counsellors.
- Discipline/suspensions.
- Language of instruction.
- The role of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit in education.
- Distinct Education Authorities – powers and duties.
- School program.
- Religion.
- Teachers.
- Principals.
- Miscellaneous.

Three issues dominated the community consultations discussion. Language and Inuit cultural issues together drew the greatest number of responses.[27] The second major area of concern was student discipline and suspension. The third largest area of concern expressed in the consultations dealt with the punitive aspect of the requirements to register children, and compulsory attendance.

‡ Summary of the Community Consultation on the Education Bill, (July 2006)

STUDENTS

In 2005/06, 8,926 students were enrolled in Nunavut's public schools.[28] While the government stopped releasing an ethnic breakdown in 2003, in 2002 96.3 per cent of the students were Inuit and less than four per cent were non-Inuit. Fifteen per cent of the total population of Nunavut is non-Inuit.

Student Outcomes

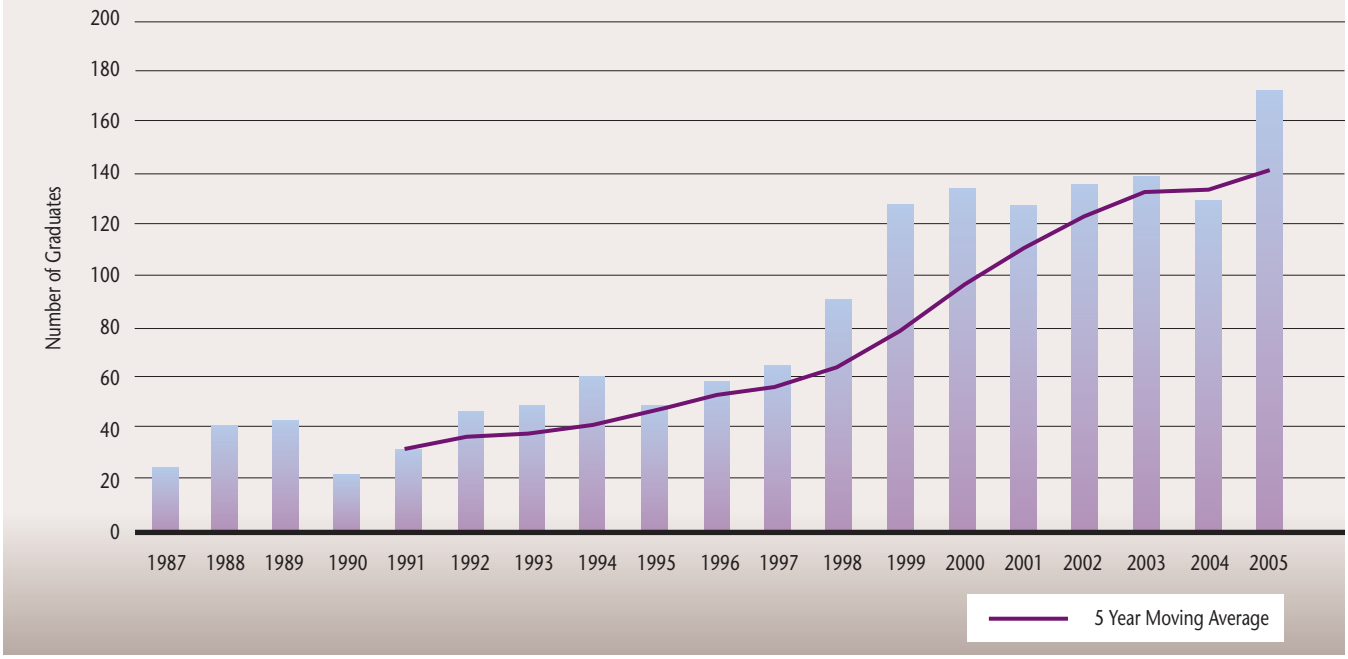
Nunavut faces many obstacles in delivering the K-12 program. The following are some of the major issues facing the Department of Education:

- Nunavut has a young and rapidly growing population.
- Education and skill levels of the population are below those needed to meet the cultural and practical needs of the people of Nunavut.
- Increased departmental competition for scarce financial resources.
- A graduation rate that is one third the national average, which points to widespread student alienation.

Approximately 80 per cent of the working age population in Nunavut does not have a high school diploma, and only 75 per cent of adults with at least a high school diploma are likely to be employed. The likelihood of obtaining employment decreases significantly for individuals who have attained a Grade 9 to 11 education level (46 per cent) or lower (39 per cent) and, thereby, profoundly affects all areas of social services for the lifetime of these individuals.

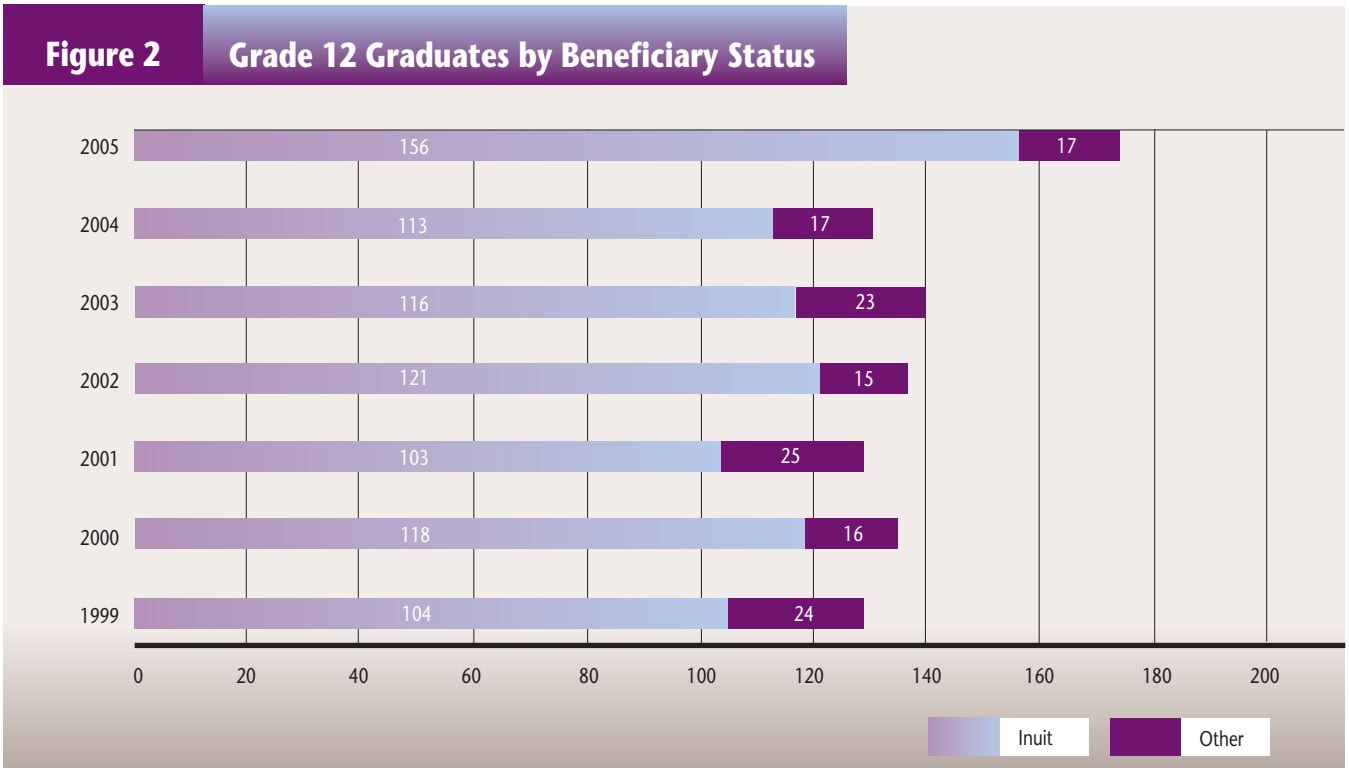
The number of high school graduates has, however, improved over the past five years.

Figure 1 Grade 12 Graduates by Year

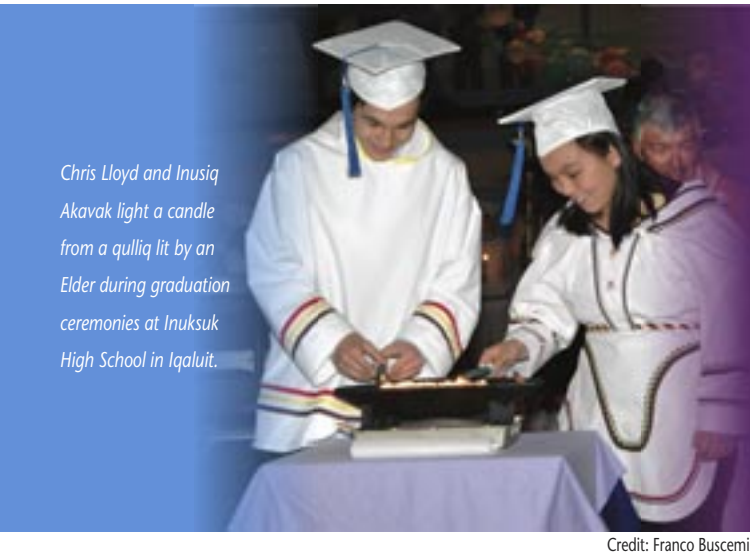


Source: GNWT 1987-1998 GN Department of Education, 1999-Present

Figure 2 Grade 12 Graduates by Beneficiary Status



Source: Government of Nunavut, Department of Education



Chris Lloyd and Inusiq Akavak light a candle from a qulliq lit by an Elder during graduation ceremonies at Inuksuk High School in Iqaluit.

Credit: Franco Buscemi

This growth increased primarily as a result of decentralization. Where high school was once available only in Frobisher Bay/Iqaluit (and outside Nunavut in Churchill, Yellowknife and Inuvik), all communities in Nunavut now have high school programs.

Although Nunavut's Grade 12 graduation rate is the lowest in Canada, the numbers of graduates are rising every year. This can be explained by the rising birth rate and does not necessarily indicate a significant change in the current ratio of graduates to the general population, or an overall improvement to the delivery of education. (See Fig.2)

Figure 3 Grade 12 Graduates by Gender

Source: Government of Nunavut, Department of Education

The ratio of female to male graduates was variable over the past six years, but on average, there are more females graduating than males and this ratio is becoming greater. Higher male drop-out rates correspond with lower male employment rates.[29]

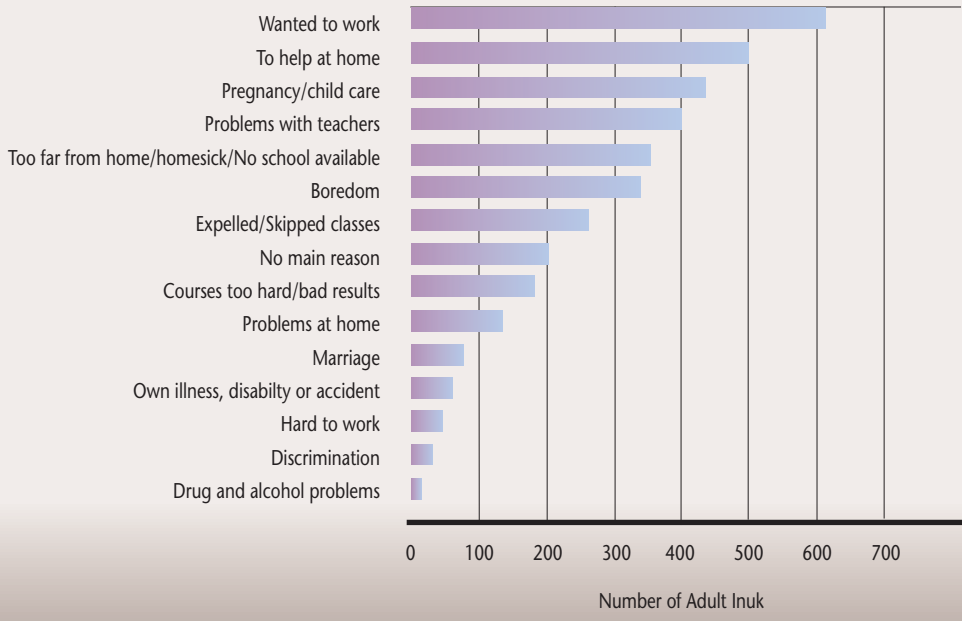
As to why students drop out, Figures 4 and 5 indicate that the most significant reasons cited for not continuing education were that Inuit wanted to work (16 per cent), to help out at home (14 per cent), or were pregnant or caring for children (12 per cent).

It is worthwhile noting that the percentage of Inuit citing the reason for not completing high school of too far from home/homesick/no school available/accessible has gradually disappeared as schools have been increasingly decentralized to the communities, as shown in Figure 5.

Deena Ootoovak studies in the Inuit Studies Program at Nunavut Arctic College.

Credit: Franco Buscemi

Figure 4 Adult Inuit Reasons for Not Completing High School

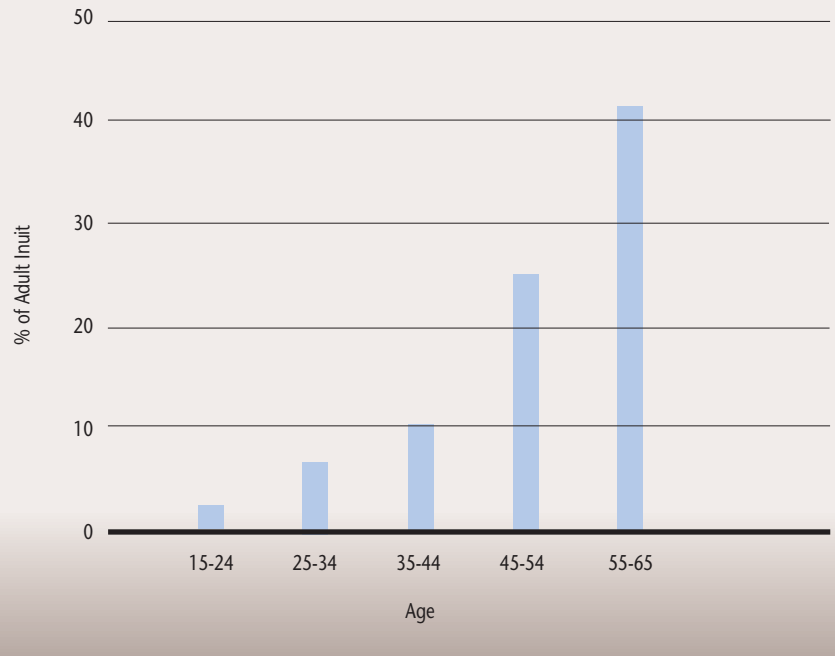


Source: Nunavummit Kiglisiniartiit, 2001 Nunavut Household Survey

Figure 5

% of Inuit who did not graduate from High School who selected:
- no school available
- too far from home
- homesick

as a reason for their not having graduated from High School



Source: Nunavummit Kiglisiniartiit, 2001 Nunavut Household Survey

Special Needs

The Department of Education has an inclusive schooling philosophy that directs schools to educate all students in the mainstream. The aim is that students attend regular classes whenever possible, and that mainstream programming is supplemented with appropriate educational programs geared to the capabilities and needs of students with special needs.

Approximately 20 per cent of students may have special needs.[30] About one per cent have high needs such as severe visual, hearing or developmental disabilities. About seven per cent have minor to moderate physical and social/emotional needs, and approximately 12 per cent require extra help to be able to keep up with mainstream programming. However, the data available on special needs is incomplete at this time.**

Counselling and Support Services

Currently, in the three regions there are:
- Four student support consultants.
- Thirty-eight student support teachers.
- Fifty-three student support assistants.

There are no special programs for gifted students.

Sustainability and Capacity Building

The youth of the Inuit population, as shown in Figure 6, presents several challenges and opportunities for Nunavut. It means that child care and alternative working arrangements are likely to be the key to enabling employment and to pursuing higher education. At the same time, a strong emphasis on education and investment and attendant support measures is essential if the majority Inuit population is to benefit from the implementation of the NLCA. Otherwise, the main beneficiaries of the NLCA will be the labour force imported from elsewhere in Canada.

Truancy and Suspension

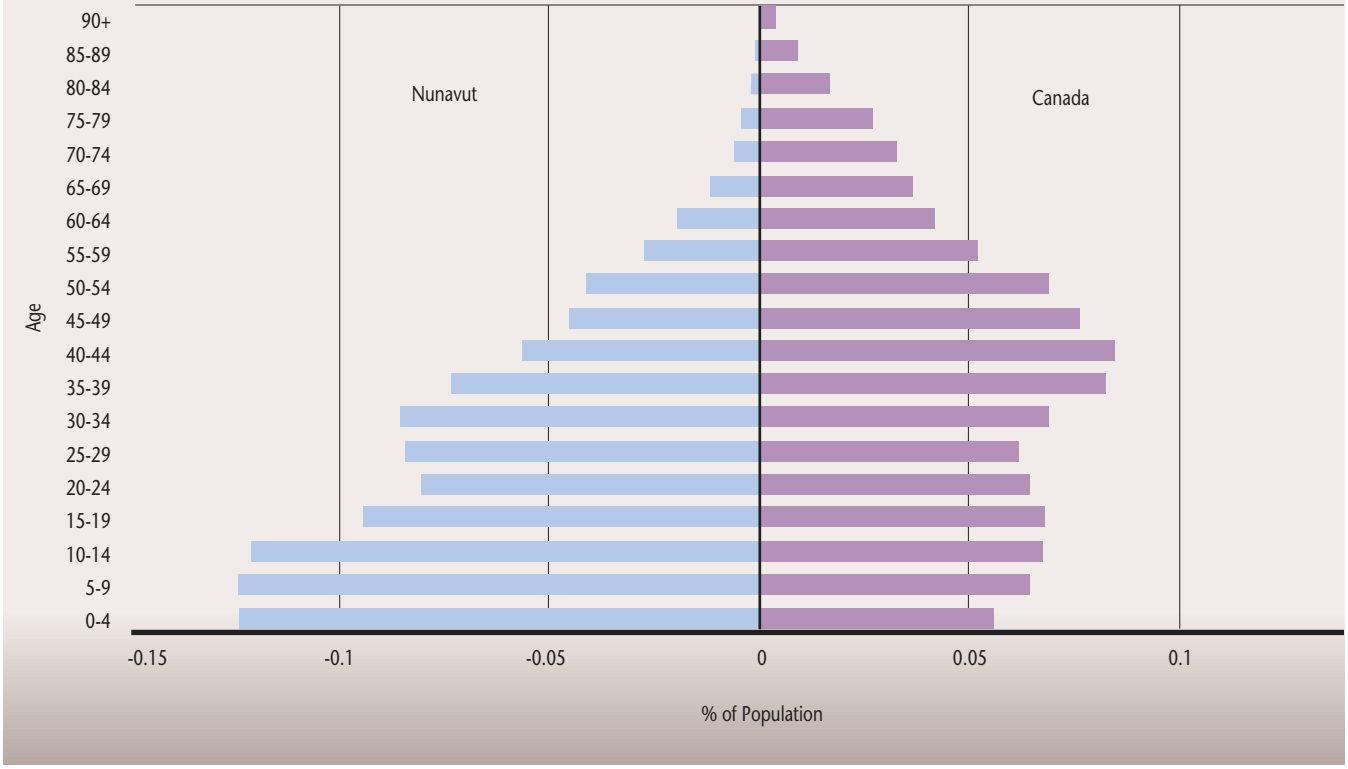
Two important indicators of whether there exists a malaise in the school system are the truancy rate and the suspension rate. Data on suspensions was unavailable while preparing this report, but truancy figures from 2001 to 2006 paint a dismal, but predictable picture of student disenchantment with school that increases with age. While the truancy rate in K - 6 is generally below 10 per cent (although some are between 10 and 20 per cent and one school has a truancy rate of more than 20 per cent), the high schools have truancy rates between 20 and 50 per cent. There are some outstanding exceptions. The elementary schools in Iqaluit have truancy rates that are consistently below three per cent, and the high school in Rankin Inlet has had a truancy rate consistently below 20 per cent.

** NTI requested data on special needs students from the Department of Education, but this had not been received at the date of printing.

Iqaluit student Maryanne Casey Stokes poses next to her science fair project on the caribou.

Credit: Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.

Figure 6 **Age Pyramid: Nunavut vs.Canada, 2001**



Source: Nunavummit Kiglisiniartiit, from 2001 Census data

During the community consultations, the punitive measures contained in the current Nunavut *Education Act,* which imposed fines on parents whose children were truant, were not only viewed as impractical, but also in conflict with Inuit cultural tradition. Many people wanted to see other methods used to improve attendance, such as counselling, flexible hours, greater involvement by the DEA and parents.

While there was a great deal of concern expressed during the community consultations about attendance, many parents felt helpless to control their children on this matter or saw their children's absenteeism as justifiable in that they were bored at school and not doing well. The Inuit way of raising children is non-authoritarian. Parents are inclined to trust children to know what they need.[31]

In the discussion on discipline and suspension, the respondents overwhelmingly believed that the parents and DEAs must have a greater role. Many comments focussed on the need for alternative methods, and many parents offered suggestions about the proper way to deal with children.

Respondents felt that suspension was incompatible with the punishment imposed on parents for failing to register their children and for truancy. By suspending students, the school was acting like a delinquent parent by putting the student in an unsupervised setting where they were likely to get into trouble. In the opinion of the respondents, suspension contributed to the likelihood of the student failing.

Many parents were concerned about truancy because it meant that the children were unsupervised and they would get into trouble. There did not appear to be a lot of understanding about the causes of truancy, but when parents' comments are read in the context of the comments on language, culture and IQ, one can see that, while they do not always make a direct connection, there is a perception that the absence of language and culture in the education program is viewed as a cause of the problem.

In a 2003 report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD),[32] *Student engagement at school - a sense of belonging and participation,* significant differences between different schools' ability to engage their students were revealed. Schools that are best at limiting student disaffection include those where students come from more advantaged homes, but also those with a

strong disciplinary climate, good student-teacher relations and high expectations, regardless of social composition. Schools where students feel a sense of belonging also tend to achieve lower absenteeism.

The report looks at ways in which students can become disaffected. One is through a low sense of belonging at school: for example, students may believe their school experience has little bearing on their future or they may feel rejected by their classmates or teachers.

Contrary to what might be expected, the findings reveal that disaffected students are not principally those who have the lowest literacy levels: they are drawn from the full range of abilities. Students who feel the lowest sense of belonging at school have, on average, literacy skills somewhat above the norm.

While there is no data from the GN's Department of Education on suspensions, there was much anecdotal evidence presented by respondents during the community consultations that the level of suspension of students is a matter of concern.

Suspension is one of the most commonly used disciplinary measures for dealing with problem behaviour. With the change in nature of behaviour problems in today's children and youth, and the changing structure of families and communities, out-of-school suspension as a disciplinary measure may not have the same effect as it once had. Rather than reducing the problem behaviours, it is now often suggested that suspension may in some situations have no effect or even increase the likelihood of the behaviour recurring.[33]

One of the goals of the education system is for all students to graduate from secondary school. Studies of students who have left school before completion show that absence from school, including days off school because of suspension, is one of the major contributors to academic failure.[34] Out-of-school suspension can, accordingly, contribute to a student's alienation from school and the likelihood of the student dropping out. Suspension also appears to be a factor in students getting involved in risky or anti-social behaviour.

Students who are suspended from school usually have needs which are not being met by the education programs currently available to them. Students who are unable or unwilling to abide by the statutory or other responsibilities may in fact be students with unmet psychological, emotional, cultural, or education needs.

Inuit students are in a unique position. While the responsibility to maintain a safe environment applies as much in Nunavut schools as anywhere else, it is clear from the responses to the community consultations that suspension is viewed as illogical in a system that is built on compulsory attendance. Further, parents are concerned that by suspending students, the school was, in the view of the parents, deliberately placing children in an unsupervised environment. Parents tended to view suspension as destructive of learning, not conducive to improving student behaviour, and likely to encourage students to drop out. The community consultations also included many comments about the lack of relevancy and interest in much of the school programming and a strong desire to build Inuit language and culture into the curriculum.

Of all the issues discussed in the community consultations, none generated as many comments as the topic of suspension. Generally, people disliked the punitive aspects, especially the fine, and they shared the same conclusions as the studies noted above, that in-school suspension was a better alternative and remediation measures such as counselling should be employed.

Students in Grise Fiord listen in as guest speaker Nunavut Tunngavik President Paul Kaludjak talks about NTI.

Credit: Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.

Student Rachelle Eetuk gets direction from instructor Suzanne Laliberte at the Arctic College hair dressing program.

Credit: Franco Buscemi

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Out of a total Inuit population of 22,560 in 2001, 85.6 per cent identified the Inuit language as their first language.[35]

For 72.4 per cent of the Inuit population, the Inuit language was the first language learned and still understood[36] and 79.2 per cent of Inuit stated that the Inuit language was the only or main language spoken at home.[37] But in Iqaluit, as few as 46.5 per cent of Inuit in Iqaluit speak Inuktitut at home and, most alarmingly, only 0.9 per cent of Inuit speak Inuinnaqtun at home.[38]

Although 73 per cent of schools in Nunavut offer Inuktitut instruction from K-3,[39] only two schools in Nunavut are able to provide Inuktitut fully from K-6. Most schools can only provide 45 minutes a day in Inuktitut after Grade 5.[40] There are simply not enough Inuktitut speaking teachers.

Inuktitut speaking children are obviously at a disadvantage due to a lack of early childhood development and K-12 education programs that build on their first language.[41]

As Berger has pointed out:[42]

"It is clear from the academic literature that loss of first language skills, while often not an apparent handicap, nevertheless can significantly retard academic progress."

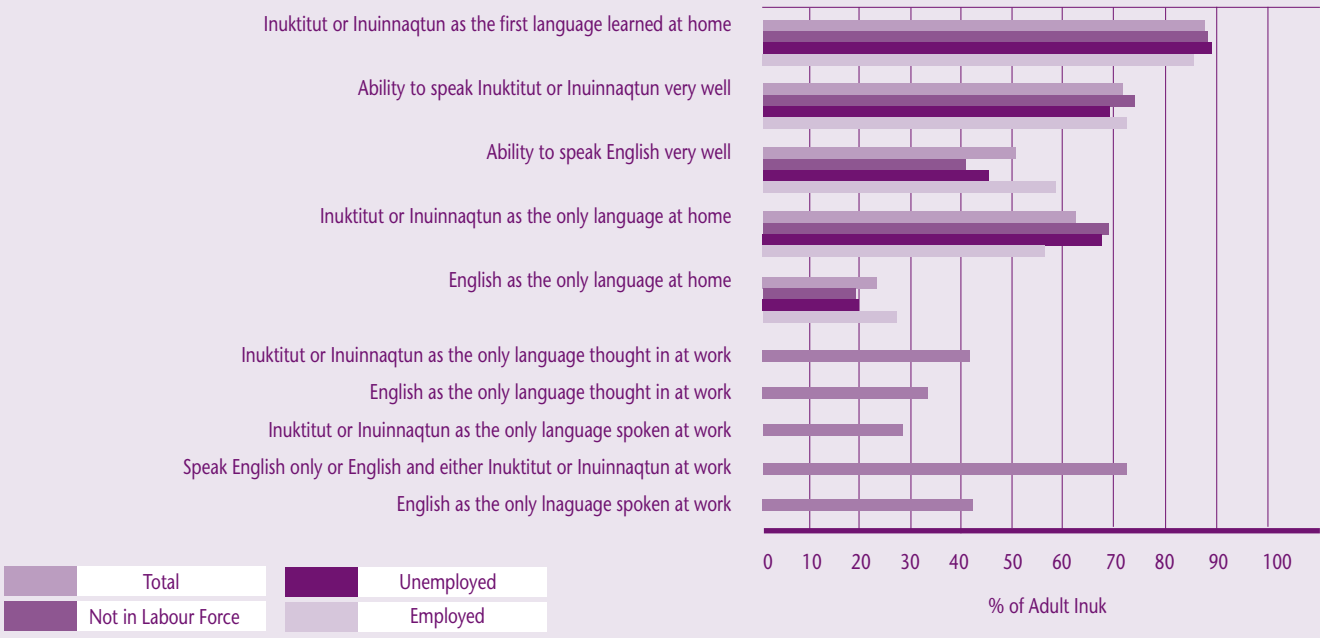
Berger quotes Francis and Reyhner:[43]

"However, aside from the erosion of the indigenous language itself, the issue that concerns teachers and parents is the possible effect of language loss on the student's ability to perform in academic situations, to be able to use language for the higher-order, literacy-related school tasks that with each grade become more and more challenging. For many bilingual children who undergo subtractive language loss, this very process may affect their ability to fully develop these kinds of literacy-related language skills, the broad category of discourse competencies that Cummins and Swain (1987) have termed Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency."

From Left: Jerry Arreak, Jayko Lyall, Jutanie Pillatuaq and Steven Ishuluta read over the program at the Nunavut Day festivities in Iqaluit.

Credit: Kerry McCluskey

Figure 7 Language at Home and in the Workplace



Source: Nunavummit Kiglisiniartiit 2001 Nunavut Household Survey

From Grade 4 onward, English is the language of instruction. Inuktitut is available as a second language in certain schools and in a few high schools. This sends a clear message to young Inuit that the Inuit language and culture is of secondary importance to the society in which they live.

Another equally pointed message comes from the Government of Canada. The federal government provides funding to provincial and territorial governments to support official language minorities across Canada. Thus, in Nunavut, English is a second language and only five per cent speak French. Even so, the federal government annually funds the French language to the tune of $3,400 per francophone, while Inuktitut receives only $48.50 per Inuk. Additional federal programs that fund the Inuit language are largely preservation-based instead of designed to entrench the Inuit language as a viable language of society and education.

As the GN's Department of Education does not want to preside over the collapse of one of the last remaining viable Aboriginal languages and cultures in Canada, the challenge confronting it is to rapidly increase the number of Inuit language speaking teachers and, in the interim, come up with creative ways to do its part in stemming the erosion of the language and culture. One such potential solution is to integrate Inuit Elders into the schools. With this objective in mind, the GN has established a one year Elders' Teachers' Certification Program. But, it will need to do more than that. To offer Inuit language instruction from K-12, Nunavut will require more than 400 teachers. This is more Inuit language speaking teachers than the Nunavut Teacher Education Program (NTEP) has produced in the past 30 years. This number does not cover new teachers required because of population growth, or the anticipated decrease of Inuit teachers as they reach retirement. Clearly, it is a situation that demands brilliant ideas, radical measures, and decisive action.

Participants at a meeting in Clyde River for the Piggusiliqvik cultural school.

Credit: Jesse Mike

Inuit Traditional Skills

The responses received in the community consultations overwhelmingly asserted that there must be more time and resources for the Inuit language, and there must be much greater cultural content in the school program in general. Almost all of the comments

Students helped set up a Nunavut Tunngavik public meeting in Grise Fiord.

Credit: Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.

expressed concerns about the quality or lack of cultural programming in the schools. Concerns were also expressed about the quality of the language instructors. Many people recognized the importance of parents playing a supportive role by speaking the Inuit language in the home. There was a view that the existing cultural programs lacked excitement and if properly done, the cultural content in the education program would be an important motivator.

The concerns about language expressed by the communities during the consultations are borne out by Statistics Canada. Ninety-seven per cent of Inuit believe it is important to teach children Inuktitut in school. Ninety-six per cent of Inuit think it is important to speak Inuktitut, and 91 per cent believed it was important to speak English, though it was not considered as essential as speaking Inuktitut.[44] In short, full bilingualism in the Inuit language and English is the desired outcome for Inuit students who participate in the Nunavut education system.

Elders are the exponents of the purest forms of the Inuit language and its dialects. As a language resource Elders are Nunavut's most valuable asset. Elders are also the repository of knowledge and values that make up Inuit culture. Elders possess the traditional skills that give meaning to language and culture. These traditional skills and the depth of understanding of the connection between living on the land and the language are the attributes which make Inuit unique, and they should be at the centre of what Inuit children learn. The loss of these traditional skills would deny future generations the ability to live in the Inuit homeland except by way of adopting the Western/European way of living. Even if the language survives the loss of traditional skills, it would deny future generations an appreciation of the origin of language and culture.

Currently, Inuit traditional skills are still a viable force. The 1999 Nunavut Community Labour Force Survey found that more than three quarters (78 per cent) of Inuit men aged 15 to 54 take part in harvesting activity, at least occasionally. The Conference Board of Canada estimated that the traditional, land-based economy was worth between $40 and $60 million annually.[45] Many Inuit youth aspire to continue Inuit traditional lifestyles, skills and culture, but over the past 20 years, the change that Inuit society has undergone has made passing these skills on to the next generation a significant challenge. Young people traditionally learned land survival and hunting skills from their Elders while living on the land. Today, when young Inuit live in communities and attend school, this cultural learning process is far less automatic and certain. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples said:

"Many Aboriginal economies continue to rely on traditional pursuits, such as hunting, fishing and trapping, largely for subsistence. Public policy has often ignored traditional economies or, at worst, undermined their viability—yet these activities remain a vital component in the mixed economies of northern communities, a preferred way of life for their participants, and an important wellspring of Aboriginal culture and identity." [46]

The fundamental need for culture and identity must be fostered by the education system and, given that the culture and life force of the Inuit language comes from pursuing the traditional life on the land, it is not likely that schools can carry out this function entirely in the formal classroom.[47] Indeed, many Inuit now see education as a direct and conscious assault on their culture.[48] While residential schools have been condemned and former students are being compensated, concern has now spread to the whole philosophy of education and the operation of day schools.[49]

Inuit may agree with the authorities on the importance of education, but the routines and authority of the school are still alien.[50] Education for many Aboriginal people has been a means of enforcing the things that Europeans believed in and getting rid of things they did not.

Academic and Traditional Knowledge

Historically, federal education policy, beginning in the 1870s and continuing for a century, emphasized assimilation as the goal of Aboriginal education. Many observers described effects of assimilation policies, which separated Aboriginal students from their communities and forced them to attend residential schools, ultimately weakening Aboriginal languages and cultures.

The exclusion of Inuit language and culture in Western schooling has driven many Inuit students toward a marginalized identity. In these cases, the very act of learning required a student to deny his or her personal, cultural, and linguistic heritage.[51] Some students, faced with pressure to deny their heritage and embrace the values and goals of Western schooling, have chosen instead to resist schooling which, inevitably, led to poor educational achievement and low graduation rates.[52]

For those students who completed their education, the societal or cultural benefits have often been low. The exclusion of local knowledge and language from schooling resulted in subtractive bilingualism; that is, many students failed to attain academic competence in English, while at the same time they lost the knowledge of their Aboriginal languages and cultures.[53]

In the decades following World War II, Aboriginal leaders fought to protect their rights to self-determination. The past three decades have seen a variety of efforts to restore and revitalize Aboriginal languages and cultures through schools across Canada. Through such efforts, a growing number of Aboriginal students now have the opportunity to use Aboriginal knowledge and language to meet both local and Western education goals.

Side by side with the movement to connect Aboriginal and Western culture has been a re-evaluation of what is considered appropriate academic knowledge. The connection of local knowledge to schooling is not an easy process, however. The challenge is to adapt local culture and knowledge to Western schooling without trivializing and stereotyping.

Innovative Programs to Restore Traditional Knowledge

Today, many Aboriginal communities across Canada and in the United States are employing both a local and Western approach in their school systems. The following is a sample of programs which involve locally controlled schools, use Aboriginal culture and language in the instructional program, and produced gains of academic achievement which are significant and measurable.

A study of several Navajo schools in Rock Point in the United States looked at schools in which all the classes were taught in the local language—Navajo. School administrators, teachers, and community members designed K-12 instruction in Navajo to reinforce the cultural and linguistic resources of the students who, at that point, had the lowest test scores in the Navajo Nation. These Navajo students now consistently score higher than other comparable reservation children on tests of reading, language, and math in English.[54] Another study of the same reported that, "Students have considerably more confidence and pride [than comparable students at nearby schools]."[55]

A separate experiment at another group of Navajo schools in Fort Defiance in the United States also offered the option of being taught with Navajo as the language of instruction. Before the program was instituted, only 10 per cent of Navajo five-year-olds were competent in Navajo; and the majority of the students, who only spoke English, were not academically competent in English. After the school established a voluntary Navajo Immersion (NI) program, "NI students did considerably better on tests of Navajo language ability [than those in the English-only program]."[56] Meanwhile, NI students tested as well in English proficiency as the English-only students, while the majority of the Grade 4 English-only students tested lower in Navajo than they had in kindergarten.

It was clear that the Navajo immersion students were gaining control of their own language at no loss to their knowledge of English,

Rosie Simonie reads during her Inuit Studies class at Nunavut Arctic College in Iqaluit.

Credit: Franco Buscemi

Youth took part in a violin and fiddle workshop hosted by the Kitikmeot Inuit Association in Cambridge Bay.

Credit: Jason Tologanak

while the English-only students were barely maintaining competence in English with great loss to their Navajo tongue. Further, the NI students greatly outscored the English-only students in math.

In an experiment conducted in Hawaii, called the Kamehameha Early Education Project, teachers studied how Aboriginal Hawaiian children developed mathematical knowledge in everyday life (e.g., shopping and interacting with their families). They used this information as a foundation for an experimental math curriculum. The experiment also supported the use of the pidgin language in the classroom. The conclusion of the study was that, "The children in the experimental class scored much higher on the standardized math test. The control class averaged at the 54th percentile, while the experimental class averaged at the 82nd percentile." The researchers were able to isolate the change in instructional strategy as the variable most strongly associated with the increased scores.[57] In Nunavik, a long-term research and development project of the Kativik School Board found that Inuit students involved in an Inuktitut language program did better on tests of Inuktitut than those enrolled in the English classes or French classes. More importantly, they also showed steady improvement in English.[58]

While students in all three language programs in the Kativik schools tested at the same level for conversational Inuktitut, the students in the Inuktitut program did considerably better than the others on the more difficult academic language proficiency tests. What this indicates is that Inuit children in the Inuktitut program are developing a level of language skill that will allow them to use the Inuktitut language to solve complex mental problems.

". . . [Further,] Inuit children in all three programs began kindergarten with positive self-esteem (most children see themselves as smart, nice, happy, etc.) ...However ...students in the Inuktitut program showed an increase in self-esteem." [59]

In a 2001 study of isolated schools,[60] schools in Labrador, Nunavut, Saskatchewan and northern and interior British Columbia were compared. Most of the students in these schools were Aboriginal and few of the schools were accessible by road. The study found a significant difference between the five Inuit schools in Labrador that were part of the study and the schools in the other four regions. The Inuit schools were the most academically successful of all the schools in the study. All five Inuit schools had strong links to their communities, and they received strong support and advocacy from the Inuit political leadership.

One of the Inuit schools in the study had a strong academic orientation. Its graduation rate was 99 per cent with a post-secondary graduate rate of 50 per cent.[61] The study attributed this success to strong links between the school and its community and a stable staff. In common with all the other isolated schools, the older students usually joined their Elders for the spring caribou hunt. The school was a centre for community life and the facilities were readily made available for community use. Another important element common to all the Labrador Inuit schools was the strong support provided to them by the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA). The culture of the schools and their communities was marked by a spirit of co-operation, and the influence and support of the LIA helped lessen the impact of social and geographical isolation.[62]

Inuit have informed the government many times of their "wrong headed" approaches regarding the place of Inuit language and culture in Arctic schools, and the government has consistently ignored the Inuit view. Inuit teacher Elizabeth Quaki of Payne Bay, Quebec, stated at an ITC meeting in Pangnirtung in 1972, "As long as southern teachers and southern courses dominate schools, the Eskimo culture and heritage will continue to erode." In addition, at this time, both ITC and the Inuit Cultural Institute (ICI) advised the Department of Education that the basic foundation of education in the NT was faulty as it was wrong to assume that Inuit traditional education was second to southern education. Most recently, Thomas Berger stated that, unless Inuit language and culture are fully integrated into schools, Nunavut will lose a further generation of its young people.

CURRICULUM

When a mainstream, standardized curriculum, such as the Alberta high school curriculum, is used in Nunavut's schools, it results in diverting Inuit students' focus to southern-based contextual learning aids instead of the curriculum itself. Inuit students learn math, science, or other academic disciplines in their second language within the context of Alberta society. Use of foreign curriculum is at the very least subtractive cultural curriculum disrespectful to Nunavut students, and at worst a significant barrier to educational success.

In an effort to make education more reflective of Aboriginal culture and values, in the 1980s, the GNWT appointed a special committee to make recommendations on the reform of the curriculum. The special committee hired a staff of 20 educators, whose research produced the document *Learning: Traditions and change in the Northwest Territories* in 1982.[63]

There were many changes to education governance recommended, and the report summarized the main concerns about the school systems in the NT. These concerns included language of instruction; culturally inappropriate curriculum; disciplinary problems; attendance problems; drop-out problems; parental apathy; lack of motivation; conflicts of will between different cultures; southern teachers with no cross-cultural education; and the need for adult education. The document stated:

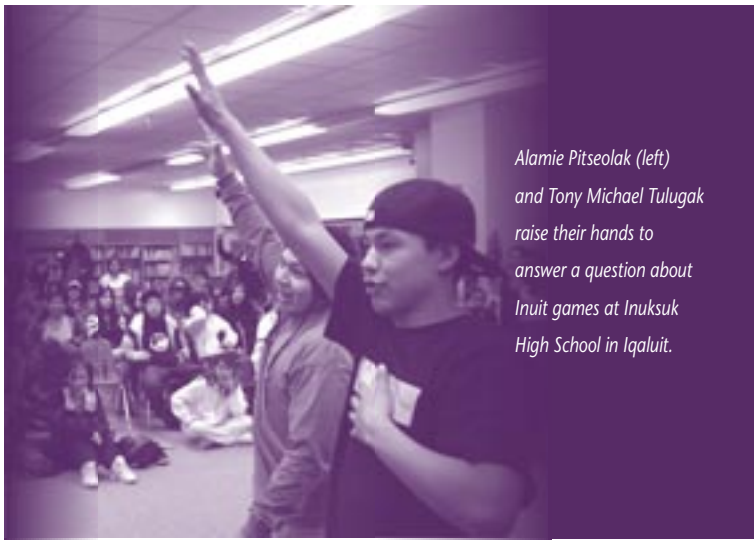
"In our opinion, one of the most serious [problems] that faces innovative responses is the [belief] held by some persons that, to have equal access to education, the programs in the north must be the same as those in the south." [64]

These sentiments were still being expressed in the 1980s by many Nunavut educators as they put across their concerns about Nunavut Grade 12 meeting Canadian national education standards.[65]

One significant project integral to Nunavut education today is the *Inuuqatigiit: The Curriculum from the Inuit Perspective,* created in 1996.[66] Regarded at the time of its creation as merely the delivery of cultural content, the curriculum went beyond the intended outcome of the advisory committee's mandate from the government.

The Inuit students in the teacher education program were instructed to use *Inuuqatigiit: The Curriculum from the Inuit Perspective* as the foundation for their lesson planning. In addition, the students were encouraged to include a role for community members and Elders in their program. Unfortunately, although Inuit cultural events and knowledge were readily welcomed in schools as celebrations or special events, they were rarely accepted as official knowledge. Many non-Inuit teachers felt uncomfortable with extensive use of the *Inuuqatigiit* curriculum, and experienced Inuit educators were rarely consulted as a resource. When NTEP students tried to use the *Inuuqatigiit* curriculum as the foundation for planning, some practicum teachers became apprehensive that what they perceived to be the real curriculum would not be covered.[67]

Inuit culture was tolerated as décor and artefact rather than viewed as a living entity. In many classrooms, Inuit language and culture were considered add-ons by Nunavut educators from the south instead of an informative pathway for curriculum and program planning. Even to Inuit educators, Inuit language and culture is only tentatively brought into their classrooms, understanding that they must also meet the curriculum standards inherited from the GNWT.[66]



Alamie Pitseolak (left) and Tony Michael Tulugak raise their hands to answer a question about Inuit games at Inuksuk High School in Iqaluit.

Credit: Franco Buscemi

A New Approach to Curriculum Development

In a unique approach to education that has lessons for Nunavut, the University of Victoria, working with interested Aboriginal communities, employed an approach to curriculum design, delivery, and application which, as it evolved over the course of several years, successfully combined the culture and values of the community with the technical aspects of the program. The curriculum was a two-year diploma program in child care with 20 university-accredited courses. The University of Victoria designed a skeleton curriculum containing the technical requirements for child care, and the community input and community involvement throughout the teaching and learning process added the substance to the course. Instructors and Elders who taught the program talked with community members about their own contemporary and historical child care practices and about European-heritage theories, research, and practice models for early childhood education. This information is built into the skeleton curriculum. This approach is called the generative curriculum.

The generative curriculum, jointly developed by the university and the community, encourages and accommodates variations from one community to another with regard for the assumptions, goals, ideas, and circumstances that shape child care. The open-ended curriculum allowed the communities to remodel the technical content set out in the skeleton curriculum developed by the university to be culturally specific.

Elders' involvement in developing the curriculum blends the southern attitudes and skills acquired through the training program with the specific goals and circumstances of the children and families in the particular cultural communities represented by students in the program.

A participant in the program, explained, "In order to ensure that our culture would be reflected in the structure of children's services, we had to bring the training program to the community and bring the community into the training program. It was like a big circle."

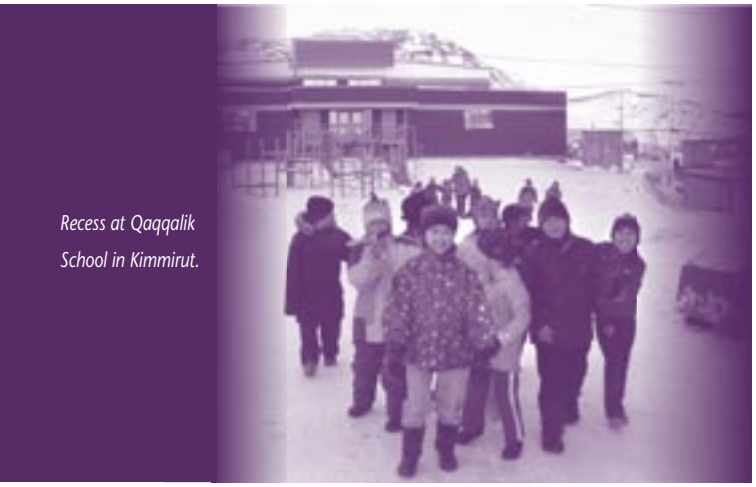
The generative curriculum involves an open curriculum that sits in the space between two cultures – the culture of the partnering university and its non-Aboriginal based theory, research, and practice, and the culture or cultures of the partnering Aboriginal communities. The University of Victoria brought to the training program a sampling of concepts and practices from a largely middle-class, non-Aboriginal American context. The community contributes the core content to the curriculum of every course, largely through the teachings of Elders who play an active role as part of the teaching and learning community that embodies the program. Elders speak to various topics pertaining to the development, care, problems, and needs of children and youth, both historically and currently in their community.

This joint development of curriculum through community participation is a repetitive process that evolves over the years. In no two-partnership programs has the curriculum been the same, but the variations evolved out of the skeleton curriculum developed by the University of Victoria. It is this skeleton curriculum which ensures that the students' qualifications will find acceptance elsewhere in Canada.

Each partnership program yielded a unique, community-specific curriculum that was conceived through interactions among community members about their own culture and about the ideas presented in the university-based course materials. Many participants in the partnership programs observed that the process of constructing the curriculum had more impact and value for the community and for the university-based team than the finished curriculum product. As one community-based instructor remarked, "It was a lived curriculum."

From left: Pauloosie "Pau Pau" Tikivik, Naiomi Itulu and Alexie Ballargeon in the computer lab at Qaqqalik School in Kimmirut.

Credit: Billy Akavak



Recess at Qaqqalik School in Kimmirut.

Credit: Billy Akavak

From left: Iqaluit residents Christa Kunuk, Qilipali Ishuti and Paul Ipeelie

Credit: Qajaaq Ellsworth

A Nunavut Innovation

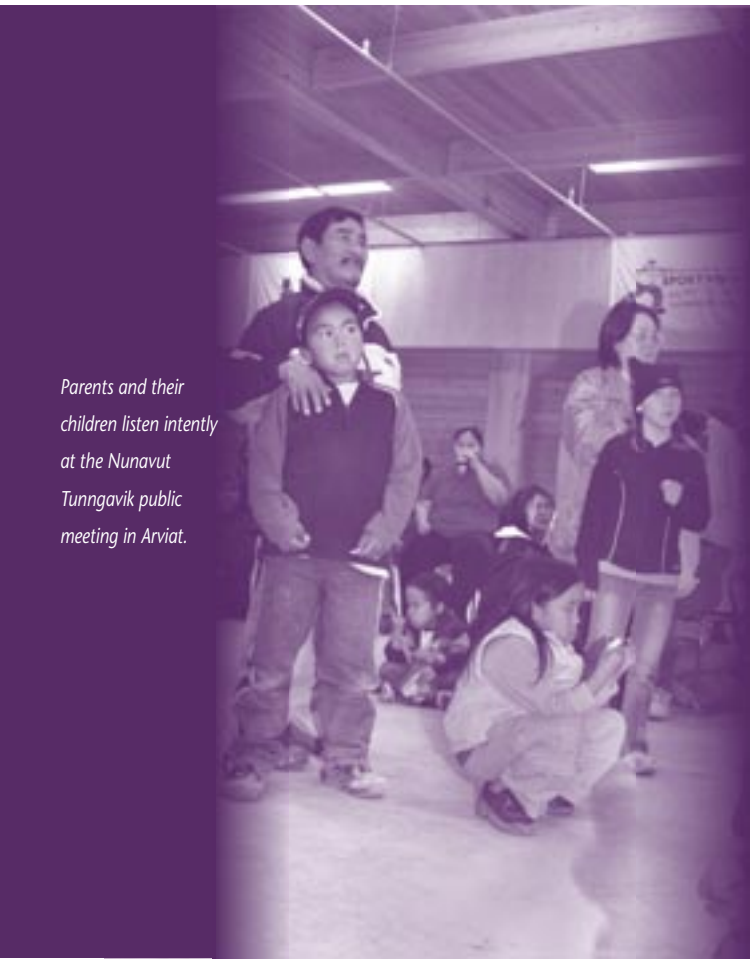
It is not easy to take traditional knowledge and teach it in a formal school setting. The knowledge is usually a technique for living on the land that has been passed on from generation to generation by living on the land, and the land is where it has always been learned. The Inuit language has evolved from this experience of living on the land and one must be able to speak it in order to understand the details and subtleties of the traditional way of life.

In Igloolik, two teachers developed a brilliant teaching unit designed to bring this Inuit knowledge into the classroom.[68] *Anijaarniq: Introducing Inuit Landskills and Wayfinding* was designed as an interactive resource for Inuit language and culture curriculum areas for youth in Nunavut high schools. The unit was developed for the Nunavut Research Institute with a financial contribution from the Department of Education to facilitate the production of 3,000 copies of the CD-ROM.

The CD-ROM includes interviews with Elders who are still actively engaged in hunting. They describe how they navigate. The introduction to the unit emphasizes the importance of also inviting Elders and Inuit who are experienced on the land into the classroom for discussions and training, and that every opportunity must be taken to follow Elders outside to find snow and ice features, landforms, horizons and weather, and to go on trips and walks to experience, learn, and practice being constant and keen observers of the surroundings. Each section has the learning outcomes, major understandings, and competencies outlined followed by a quick overview of a suggested plan of daily activities that are the basis of all formal curricula. A multiple intelligences/Blooms taxonomy grid provides ideas for 48 projects of varying interests and complexity to meet the range of interests, learning styles and abilities found in classes.

The Department of Education has not approved the unit for use as the Curriculum Division feels that some parts of the curriculum should be changed. Nevertheless, copies have been distributed to all schools, principals, and Adult Learning Centres. More have been offered, but there has been no reaction to date. The unit is an excellent example of what can be done with the oral history archives, and the difficulties of winning acceptance of Inuit cultural units by the education establishment.

The Curriculum Division of the Department of Education has completed a foundation document on the philosophy and approach to culturally based curriculum for K-12. It was first presented for approval in 2002. Five years later, and eight years after the foundation of Nunavut, it is still waiting for approval.



Parents and their children listen intently at the Nunavut Tunngavik public meeting in Arviat.

Credit: Franco Buscemi

What it Means to Have Inuit-focused Nunavut Education System

While practical cultural or on-the-land programming is very important, it is only one aspect of an Inuit-oriented education system. All subjects must be taught from an Inuit world-view and philosophy. Curriculum for subjects including but not limited to math, social studies, history, biology, and geography must be redesigned to adopt an Inuit perspective. The education system must build pride and reinforce Inuit identity, and this can be accomplished by having students learn within an Inuit societal context.

The educational content must include the following topics:

- *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.*
- Inuit and public governance in Nunavut and other Inuit regional, national, and international organizations.
- Aboriginal land claims in Canada.
- Inuit as a founding people of Canada.
- The evolution of Inuit culture and society.
- Inuit health practices.
- Traditional belief systems including Christianity.
- Survival skills on the land and sea.
- Navigation on the land and sea.
- Tool and equipment making.
- Sewing.
- Hunting on the land and sea.
- Proper food preparation for different seasons.
- Study of non-Inuit culture from the Inuit perspective.
- Differences between Inuit and non-Inuit societies in regards to governance, leadership, ethics, conflict and co-operation.

GOVERNANCE/ADMINISTRATION

The school system in Nunavut has not served the students, the parents or the communities well. The evidence suggests that the heart of the problem is the failure of the system to integrate into the education program the language and culture of 96 per cent of its students. To determine why this has happened, it is necessary to examine the governance of the system.

The Supreme Court of Canada stated the essential powers of a local school authority:[69]

"The minority language representatives should have exclusive authority to make decisions relating to the minority language instruction and facilities, including:

(a) Expenditures of funds provided for such instruction and facilities;
(b) Appointment and direction of those responsible for the administration of such instruction and facilities;
(c) Establishment of programs of instruction;
(d) Recruitment and assignment of teachers and other personnel; and
(e) Making of agreements for education and services for minority language pupils."

More precisely, these local school authorities would have full control over:
- Budgets.
- Staff (including teachers).
- Priorities.
- Resources and programs.

Be accountable to:
- Parents: elected board.
- Department: strategic planning, annual reporting, audited financial reports.

Historically, schools in Canada have been governed by locally elected school boards and education has traditionally been a local matter. It is the community, not the territory or the nation, which is the central unit in society outside of the family, and control of education ought to remain at that level. Nevertheless, there are national and territorial aspects to education. The success of the territorial and Canadian economies and the viability of the territory and the nation, as governable jurisdictions, are tied to the outcomes of the education system. Nowhere is this truer than in Nunavut where the GN has an obligation under the NLCA[70] to rely on the local Inuit population to meet its public service staffing needs. Accordingly, more than any other province or territory, the GN has a vested interest in ensuring that the education system will deliver the educated labour pool that it needs to meet its obligation.

Grise Fiord resident Daniel Flaherty holds up the Plain Language Guide to the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement *that he received after a presentation about Nunavut Tunngavik.*

Credit: Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.

Although local boards in Canada could levy taxes, hire and fire teachers, and exercise significant power over the schools, they were never completely independent. From the beginning of the public school system, the boards operated under the authority of provincial and territorial governments. The government sets guidelines for the curriculum, regulates teacher qualifications and training, sets a wide range of policies for such issues as special education, languages of instruction, and school attendance, and exercises an oversight authority over the boards. Furthermore, the government always supervises the conduct of the school boards.

At the same time, the school boards have autonomy over areas which directly impact on the nature of their school system, such as the employment of professional and support staff, setting spending priorities, developing curriculum, providing professional development, promoting teaching methods, and managing discipline.

Inevitably, the role of the boards as political bodies independent of government is being squeezed. They are not universally appreciated by government. Many jurisdictions are beginning to question the value of them and have portrayed the boards as being another layer of government of questionable value. Nunavut is no exception to this trend.

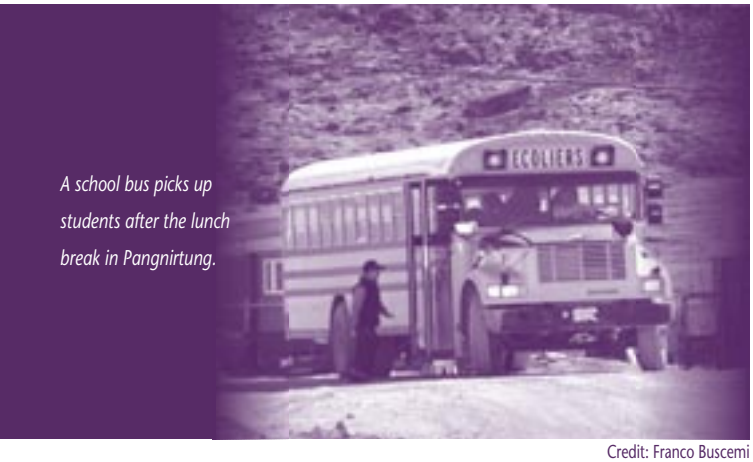
After control of education was transferred from the federal to the territorial government in the 1970s, the territorial government, in line with the trend in Aboriginal education in every part of Canada, began to shift to greater local control in 1983. The GNWT recognized, along with other jurisdictions in Canada, that one of the key solutions to the failures of Aboriginal education was local control. DIAND was also turning power for the running of federal schools over to band councils. The Royal Commission reinforced the process with the publication of its report.

At the heart of this policy of local control was the self-evident proposition that Aboriginal parents must enjoy the same fundamental decision-making rights about their children's education as other parents in Canada. Otherwise, why should the parents support the school and instil in their children the importance of attending?

The policy of local control did not immediately work because often, only administrative control was devolved and, where real control was actually available, there was still the Aboriginal peoples' own insecurity in taking control and failing to design an education that would be based on Aboriginal cultures.[71] In spite of the difficulties, the view that the best way to deliver education is by devolving control to the parents and communities has not changed.

In 2000, the GN stopped the move toward local control by eliminating the DECs (successors to the regional education boards).

This decision was based on a 1999 report by Consulting and Audit Canada[72] which recommended the abolition of all the boards of education, primarily on the grounds of promoting the idea of one unified territory, simplifying and clarifying accountability, greater involvement of the Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) in regional activities, and reduction of costs. The report claimed that eliminating the boards would potentially save $1 million annually.[73] However, the cost of staffing and operations in the regional superintendents' offices, which replaced the DECs, quickly outstripped the cost of the DECs.[74] NTI did not support centralizing control in the government and it recommended that, "Steps be taken, in consultation with the three regional boards to create a single Nunavut Board of Education.[75] At no stage did Consulting and Audit Canada evaluate the effect of local control on Inuit achievement levels.



A school bus picks up students after the lunch break in Pangnirtung.

Credit: Franco Buscemi

Abolishing the boards cut off an effective method by which parents and the community exercised influence over the schools, and the decision created problems which are unique to Nunavut. Firstly, Nunavut is a new jurisdiction trying to mould the school system into one that will reflect the values and aspirations of Nunavummiut. In that sense, it is not unlike the early provincial systems, which all started with strong community education structures.

Secondly, Nunavut has to deal with the requirements of the NLCA, particularly Article 32, and the obligation to build Inuit societal values into social policy and program development. The importance of this requirement has been clearly expressed by the communities during the consultations,[76] and in the Legislative Assembly when the first education Bill was rejected. Both stated that the education system must reflect Inuit values, society, and culture and be built on the principles of IQ. It is difficult to imagine how this can be done in any other way than through strong community participation in the design and operation of the education system. Generally, one does not think of imposition by a government minister or bureaucracy as the most appropriate or effective way of instilling values and culture into an alien system. Instead, while government participation and support can be invaluable, the infusion of societal values tends to flow upwards from the community.

While abolishing boards may make administrative and economic sense to a bureaucrat, the boards represented a political point of view that was independent of government, and they could have been relied on to be advocates for parental and community concerns about education.

Why Government Should Not Run Education

While locally elected boards are recognized as essential to preserve language and culture,[77] there are specific reasons why the control of education should not be exercised by government.

The German sociologist Robert Michels (1876-1936)[78] and others coined the "iron law of oligarchy," which states that with the increasing complexity and size of organizations, all power is concentrated at the top in the hands of the senior bureaucrats. This is so even if the organization runs against the ideals and intentions of both the political leaders and the voters.

In fact, the increasing size of modern organizations and the increasing complexity of the problems with which they have to deal makes the participation of ordinary people in the making of decisions technically impossible. Moreover, given the apathy of the general

public and the increasing concentration of the means of communication at the top, the power position of the senior management, in the GN's case the deputy minister and the senior managers, becomes very difficult to challenge. Not only can the senior managers twist information and use the government communications system against any potential rivals for influence, but also, by the nature of their job, they acquire specialized knowledge and political skills that make the political leadership dependent on them.

Once in control, according to Michels, the senior management always has, as its primary aim, the strengthening of its own power position. Whenever this aim clashes with the more general aims of the public, the senior management will sacrifice the latter rather than jeopardize its own privileges.

The senior managers in an organization have a common interest in opposing any demand for change coming from the public. As Alan Keyes, an ex-US diplomat said:

"Bureaucracies are inherently antidemocratic. Bureaucrats derive their power from their position in the structure, not from their relations with the people they are supposed to serve. The people are not masters of the bureaucracy, but its clients." [79]

People who work in bureaucracies have learned, usually without being taught, that their individual fortune depends on the approval of their supervisors. This has always been true of bureaucracies. What is new is the way that approval is won. Today, approval from the supervisor is gained by providing them with what is considered good advice. There are three criteria for what constitutes good advice. Does the subordinate's work contribute to the function of the organization (running the schools)? Does it contribute to the welfare of the organization (bigger budgets)? Does it contribute to the welfare of the supervisor (making the supervisor look good to their supervisor)? At every bureaucratic layer, the approval of the supervisor is more real, more important and more rewarding than concern for the institutional function or welfare.[80]

Career officials in Canada are expected to provide to the government of the day, loyalty, impartiality, discretion, and professionalism. In return, the public servant gets anonymity, freedom from blame, and job security.[81]

Civil servants must channel advice upwards, in confidence. Accordingly, the shroud of secrecy that covers cabinet discussions also applies to the civil service. Since the minister is responsible for departmental policies and actions, this secrecy enables the minister, through the senior officials, to control the facts of the situation and all public comment. With the co-operation of the deputy, the minister can manage public controversy or a new policy initiative.[82]

In Nunavut, the education system has failed. Tweaking the system will not correct it. As one Aboriginal academic, in talking about Aboriginal education in general said, "The greatest challenge is to be radical."[83]

David Anivilok (left), from Gjoa Haven and John Aglukark from Arviat present a plan on drug and alcohol prevention at the National Inuit Youth Summit in Nain, Labrador.

Credit: David Joanasie, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

Elders and youth at a drop in run by the Kitikmeot Inuit Association in Cambridge Bay.

Credit: Jason Tologanak

The bureaucracy may be appropriate for maintaining a system that is generally working to the satisfaction of the public, but the concentration of power in the hands of a few senior managers, the self-interest of the bureaucrat, and the secrecy with which they make their decisions, all make government ineffective as the agent of radical change, which Nunavut needs.

An academic who made a lifetime study of bureaucracies said:

"Forcing bureaucracy to accept change requires constant attention, mastery of detail, constancy of will, and clarity of purpose. It does not allow for distraction, fatigue, a short attention span, or either conflicting or ambiguous instructions. Bureaucrats will always exploit such lapses in their own interests. It is a fundamental rule of all bureaucracies that nothing should ever be done for the first time."[84]

TEACHERS

It is well established that one of the key problems of Nunavut's education system and an absolute barrier to the implementation of bilingual education is the lack of Inuit teachers. It is also well documented that, in spite of their best intentions, NTEP cannot produce a sufficient number of Inuit teachers.

Nunavut Teacher Education Program

Teachers are the foundation and core of any school system and in Nunavut, where the goal is to build a system that is responsive to Inuit culture, Inuit teachers are vital. NTEP, in partnership with McGill University, has for the past 30 years offered a campus and community-based program, which prepares Inuit to become classroom teachers in Nunavut schools. Virtually all NTEP students train to become primary and elementary teachers, but students may choose to practice at the junior high and high school levels. The program has a strong focus on practice and theory, learned in courses, and is applied in classroom situations through observation and teaching.

Although this program has enjoyed consistent success, it is small and in the 30 years of its existence, NTEP has only produced 224 teachers. Not all of these teachers actually went to work in schools and many subsequently left teaching to work in government when Nunavut was formed. Currently, 259 of the 696 teachers in Nunavut are Inuit, and NTEP only graduates enough teachers to support Inuit language instruction up to Grade 3. English is the primary language of instruction for Grades 5-12 and the majority of high school teachers do not speak the Inuit language fluently or even partially. To offer Inuit language instruction from K-12, Nunavut will require more than 400 Inuit language speaking teachers, almost twice as many as NTEP has produced in the past 30 years. This number does not however, cover new teachers required because of population growth, or the anticipated decrease of Inuit teachers as they reach retirement. Obviously, tweaking the NTEP will not resolve the problem.

Obed Anoee and daughter Seepa examine stones on the shores of Arviat.

Credit: Franco Buscemi

In 2004/05, 86 students in total were enrolled in NTEP. Of these, 42 students were in the Iqaluit campus-based program, and 44 students were in the four Community-based Teacher Education Programs (CTEP). Female students made up 83 to 88 per cent of the student population between 2001 and 2005. Drop-out rates average at 9 per cent.

Community-based Teacher Education Programs

CTEP does not receive base funding and leads, accordingly, an uncertain existence. Each year, the amount that CTEP receives from the GN's Department of Education varies and this makes it difficult to plan any long-term strategy. CTEP is also a program that is on offer, meaning a community must show an interest and demonstrate that there are enough students to warrant giving the program. Since 1998, there have been slightly more CTEP registrations than main campus registrations, and students are fairly evenly distributed between learning in the communities and learning in Iqaluit. However, each CTEP is isolated, both geographically and in time. CTEP instructors are usually hired on contract. They are brought to Iqaluit to gather resources for the year, sent out to the community to teach, and brought back home at the end. It is expensive to run. A community may go for a long time without hosting a CTEP. For example, Arviat hosted a two-year program from 1991 to 1993. It did not host another one until 2003, ten years later. Cambridge Bay has been the most successful community in that it has hosted CTEP on three different occasions.[85]

There is a concern about the quality of education offered in CTEPs. Often because the funding is so temporary and short-term, instructors are hired last minute. Communities receive their instructors in a

rush and there is a long period of waiting while course material arrives from Iqaluit.[86] The lack of long-term, permanent funding leads to high staff turnover and educational inconsistency.

The solution to the teacher shortage is complex. Not only must large numbers of Inuit be encouraged to enter the teaching profession, the NTEP program must expand its infrastructure to accommodate the increase and this requires student housing, classroom space, materials and instructors – who also need housing. When the requisite numbers of teachers are trained, they will need curricula to support Inuit language instruction in all subjects up to Grade 12 that will give Nunavummiut graduates the assurance that their education is comparable to that offered to Canadians elsewhere in Canada and that it is generally recognized as such. Naturally, this will be an incremental process, but it is well beyond the resources currently available to Nunavut.

NTEP presently has a full-time staff of seven, all working at the main campus in Iqaluit. These include a principal, a community coordinator (presently working for the Department of Education), and five instructors (one Inuk and four non-Inuit). In 2003/04, all NTEP programs received a total of approximately $2,263,000 in funding. Roughly $686,000 of this came in the form of base funding from the Nunavut Arctic College budget, specifically for the campus-based program. However, there is no base funding for CTEP. Since 2003/04, approximately $1,879,000 of the total NTEP budget has come directly from the GN's Department of Education, specifically for CTEP.

NTEP must be at the heart of any solution to the problem of finding sufficient Inuit teachers, but their program is not the only way to train teachers. There is no magic in a four or five-year degree. Teaching is a skill primarily learned on the job. Teacher qualifications are one of several filters used to control entry into the profession and in other jurisdictions they occasionally vary with the supply of applicants. Accordingly, it is worth looking at how other jurisdictions are dealing with their problem of finding sufficient Aboriginal teachers.

Other Aboriginal Teacher Education Programs

The Kativik model in Nunavik is noteworthy because it recognizes that teaching is primarily learned on the job. Their program is a fully community-based program offered in a region facing very similar conditions to Nunavut. The Kativik program is delivered by Inuit educators and is classroom-based. All the student teachers continue to work while in the program.

The Kativik model addresses some of the barriers facing Nunavut students. Although it takes longer for a teacher to go through the program there than it does in NTEP, the individual stays in his/her home community, stays employed throughout the study, and the schools gain the benefit of the student's language skills. Students

Paul Ingaut demonstrates how to build an igloo at a workshop in Iqaluit.

Credit: Franco Buscemi

are well supported by pedagogical counsellors and become well networked with other Inuit teachers across the region.[87]

The University of Alaska has a well developed teacher education program which provides a full-time internship in the final year of the studies. The program also has integrated its content well with research initiatives at the university, and built an extensive rural component.

The Sámi University College in Norway uses the Sami language as the principal language of instruction and all staff are Sámi. In New Zealand, two programs, Te W nanga-o- Raukawa and Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi, are unique educational institutions with administration, structure and content all controlled by Mäori and based on the Mäori language and culture. The Sámi and Mäori examples have extensive Internet-based delivery systems that allow for distance education to be fully integrated within their programs. Also interesting is the fact that all international examples offer accreditation that is recognized nationally.

The GN's Department of Education has, so far, responded to its shortage of Inuit teachers with the Qalattuq Educator Training Strategy.

Qalattuq: 10 Year Educator Training Strategy

In November, 2006, the GN's Department of Education introduced Qalattuq: 10 Year Educator Training Strategy. The department misleadingly promotes this strategy as "… in effect, the Inuit Employment Plan for the Department of Education."[88] However, it has

Sandy Oolayou and son Kyle patiently wait for the lowest tide of the year to expose clams near Iqaluit.

Credit: Franco Buscemi

not been presented to NTI or the GN's Department of Human Resources as is required for Inuit Employment Plans (IEP) and, as such, it is not an IEP and does not meet the requirements for an IEP under NLCA Article 23.

The strategy aims to train and place 304 more Inuit as educators into schools by 2011/12. However, the accompanying work plans are vague and they are built around two ideas that are more likely to erect fresh barriers to entry rather than make teaching more accessible. These are: placing a greater emphasis on degree certification, and non-community-based campus programming. This last idea is particularly odd because the majority of Inuit going into teaching are women, a group with the least interest in moving out of their home communities. Until the department comes up with a credible and viable strategy for significantly increasing the numbers of Inuit teachers, their claims to be implementing a bilingual education are misleading. There are currently no human resources to support the Inuit language as language of instruction, nor is there any prospect of the necessary human resources.

The strategy also included a review and evaluation of NTEP. Among the recommendations made in the evaluation of NTEP were:

- NTEP should be expanded to allow for access to the program by greater numbers of communities and students. Accessibility could be improved by the hiring of full-time community-instructors and education co-ordinators to act as support for students and co-operating teachers and allowing for campus-based instructors to teach in the communities as well. Distance learning technologies should also be used to reduce the effects of barriers such as a lack of available housing and challenges associated with relocating to a new community. This increase in accessibility would rely on a significant infusion of new base funding to the program and restructuring of present funding allocations.[89]
- NTEP program content, delivery structure and pedagogy should be redesigned to be more fully based on Inuit culture and language.[90]

CONCLUSION

The fact that most Inuit children are dropping out of school is a serious problem for Nunavut.

Over the past four decades, many prominent Inuit have recommended measures to integrate Inuit culture and values into Nunavut's schools, not only to ensure that the uniqueness of Inuit culture and language endures, but to build an education system that Inuit parents believe in and children value and enjoy.

The constitutionally-protected NLCA mandates the formation of a separate territory precisely to ensure the social and cultural well-being and empowerment of Inuit. Subsequently, many studies have been conducted to assess the progress of the Inuit desire to build an Inuit jurisdiction. Most recently, Thomas Berger pointed to the education system as the critical element in Nunavut's success or failure as a society.

Fourteen years after the NLCA was signed and eight years after the formation of Nunavut, the education system has hardly evolved from that which the GNWT built. It could be argued that it has regressed, in that the GN abolished the mechanisms set up by the GNWT to bring in local control of schools. Currently, 75 per cent of teachers are non-Inuit. Perhaps more significant, the key senior and middle management in the Department of Education, who have the power to bring about change, as Figure 8[91] illustrates, is overwhelmingly non-Inuit.

Figure 8 Employment Summary, by Category

	Total Positions				Beneficiaries	
	Total Positions	Vacancies	Filled	% Capacity	Hired	% IEP
Executive	3	0	3	100%	2	67%
Senior Management	15	3	15	83%	3	20%
Middle Management	115	11	104	90%	29	28%
Professional	526	23	503	96%	126	25%
Paraprofessional	350	52	298	85%	263	88%
Admistrative Support	158	28	130	82%	125	96%
Total Department	1170	117	1053	90%	548	52%

Source: Department of Human Resources Inuit Employment Planning Division 2007.
March 31, Towards a representative planning division, Department of Human Resources, Government of Nunavut, Iqaluit.

This heavy reliance on a southern bureaucracy ensures that the dominant educational philosophy within the department will favour the familiar southern curriculum model as the line of least resistance. There is certainly no evidence of a readiness to implement transformative change. Even the bilingualism policy is nothing more than a faint hope unless the department can embrace radical new measures in teacher training and certification.

Three issues lie at the heart of the problems with the education system and the high drop-out rate, in particular. The principal issue, and one that has dominated discussions about education in Nunavut, at least since the 1970s, is the importance of integrating Inuit culture, values, and ways of learning and teaching into the instructional program. As Berger recently suggested in his report, this cannot be done unless instruction is in the Inuit language from K-12.

The truth of Berger's assertion cannot be doubted. Canada is a state which has formally recognized the vital role of language in building a successful society. Not only has Canada established French as an official language to integrate the francophone population, but it has funded the learning of heritage languages to better integrate its new immigrant population. As Berger made clear, Nunavut is unique in being the only jurisdiction where the children of the majority of the population do not have the right to instruction at every grade level in their first language.

1. NTI recommends that instruction in the Inuit language at every grade level is an inherent right that is not limited by the ability of the GN to train sufficient teachers and acquire sufficient resources.

2. NTI recommends that the GN seek the co-operation and assistance of the Government of Canada to obtain the expertise and resources to immediately implement a program of change to integrate Inuit culture and societal values into the school system.

Amaullaaq Alariaq watches as Timmun Alariaq fishes two hours outside Cape Dorset in an area known as Iqalugarjuk.

Credit: Hellin Alariaq

The second issue is the system of governance. There are risks attached to the creation of an education system that is infused with Inuit culture in all its complexity, and in which the Inuit language is the language of instruction. Changes in education usually take years, sometimes decades, before the impact is measurable and not all changes work as intended. Considerable expertise is required to properly assess the probable outcomes of change and taking the risk requires intellectual confidence and courage.

Bureaucracies are not equipped to take the risks associated with radical change in education. Only parents, Elders, and students can properly know what elements of Inuit culture and learning must be part of the instructional program in order for the students to feel that their schools matter to them, and the education offered contributes to, instead of diminishes, their culture and society. Only parents, Elders and students can appreciate the risk involved in a radical change in the education system.

Canada is a state that has been built on the principle that, while the state has an interest in the education of its people, it is through the communities and parents that the governance of education is delivered. For more than three decades, reports have been produced that have stressed the necessity of local control to create the foundation for Aboriginal student achievement. The latest of these reports comes from the Canada West Foundation, which has identified four strategies for improving Aboriginal achievement. The first is to enable Aboriginal people within a community to create autonomous school authorities.[92]

3. NTI recommends that local control must be restored to Nunavut by the establishment of an elected board or boards of education.

4. NTI recommends that the Department of Education's role should be restricted to teachers' accreditation, setting of curriculum guidelines to establish territorial standards, and to arms length oversight of the board(s).

The third over-riding issue at the heart of education is the shortage of Inuit teachers. Nothing can be accomplished toward building an Inuit school system without Inuit teachers. NTEP, as currently structured, cannot produce enough. One of the barriers is the four-year degree program. When a jurisdiction is confronted by a drastic shortage of professionals, radical measures are necessary. Other provinces and territories will import the professionals from elsewhere, but the GN is obliged by NLCA Article 23 to look to its own people for its employment needs.

When other provinces have been unable to import sufficient professions, they have changed the criteria for entering the professions. Thus, when Manitoba and Ontario (and other provinces) experienced a shortfall of nurses in the early 1980s, the government reduced the entry qualifications for a three-year diploma to a two-year diploma. As more people entered the profession and the shortage ended, the government reinstated the four-year degree entry requirement and provided mechanisms and support for the two-year diploma graduates to upgrade.

Alamie Pitseolak (left) and Johnny Issaluk demonstrate the head pull at Qikitani Inuit Association's cultural week activities in Iqaluit.

Credit: Franco Buscemi

There is no magic in a four or five-year teaching degree. Teaching is a skill primarily learned on the job. Teacher qualifications are one of several filters used to control entry into the profession and they vary with the supply of applicants. As the supply of candidates for the professions increases, entry criteria are raised.

The real issue for government is to provide on-going learning and professional development opportunities for teachers. Inuit must be hired to work in classrooms and provided the training and education to upgrade qualifications over time. Such has been the practice in providing French language instruction since the passage of the federal *Official Languages Act.* It is also in keeping with the NLCA requirement under Article 23.4.2(d)(1) to remove artificially inflated requirements from government positions.

Nunavut Inuit have an advantage that no other Aboriginal group in Canada has – Inuit are 85 per cent majority constituents within a public government, have constitutionally-protected rights in the development and delivery of the education system, and control the entry requirements for the teaching profession. The barrier to the use of this power has been the fear that Nunavut teachers will be seen as being below national standards and the students will not get credit for their education elsewhere in Canada. That may well be true in the short run, but with a 25 per cent graduation rate, radical measures are required and they come at a price. It should also be remembered that under Article 23, Nunavut should have no interest in enabling the emigration of its educated people.

5. NTI recommends that the government take immediate measures to significantly increase the number of Inuit teachers graduating from NTEP by providing a range of options for qualifying Inuit to be teachers including:

   - One-year or less program for unilingual Inuit teachers.
   - One-year program for Inuit to be teaching assistants for Inuit language teaching or the teaching of other subjects in the Inuit language.
   - Inuit teaching assistants should have the option of working toward a teaching diploma.
   - An NTEP in every community (using the schools themselves as the training ground).

Virginia Lloyd (left) and Teresa Hughes unveil the sign at the opening of the first all Inuktitut daycare in Iqaluit.

Credit: Karliin Aariak

From left: Aqsarniit Middle School students David Oqaituk Korgak leads while Patrick Montpetit-Joannie and Andrew Alainga follow closely behind on a skiing expedition from Iqaluit to Kimmirut.

Credit: SKIqaluit Active Youth Expedition 2007

6. NTI recommends that the GN institute extensive academic and personal support measures, such as daycare and counselling, to provide on-going upgrading opportunities for Inuit teachers and to remove the personal barriers which discourage Inuit from entering the teaching profession.

7. NTI recommends that measures must be immediately taken to ensure that all new Inuit teachers are guaranteed a position within communities upon completion of training/education.

8. NTI recommends an immediate and aggressive recruitment effort for Inuit teachers. This should include strong and frequent public encouragement of young Inuit to enter the teaching profession by Inuit political leadership.

9. NTI recommends that cross-cultural in-service training, with a strong emphasis on community integration and curriculum development, should be mandatory for all non-Inuit teachers. This would enable the GN to comply with NLCA Article 23.4.2(d)(iii) and 23.4.2(d)(10) which require employees to have an understanding of the social and cultural milieu, including knowledge of Inuit culture, society and economy, community awareness, fluency in the Inuit language, and knowledge of environmental characteristics of the territory.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. NTI recommends that instruction in the Inuit language at every grade level is an inherent right that is not limited by the ability of the GN to train sufficient teachers and acquire sufficient resources.

2. NTI recommends that the GN seek the co-operation and assistance of the Government of Canada to obtain the expertise and resources to immediately implement a program of change to integrate Inuit culture and societal values into the school system.

3. NTI recommends that local control must be restored to Nunavut by the establishment of an elected board or boards of education.

4. NTI recommends that the Department of Education's role should be restricted to teachers' accreditation, setting of curriculum guidelines to establish territorial standards, and to arms length oversight of the board(s).

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Royden Aggark takes a break to hug his daughter after organizing a feast in Arviat.

Credit: Franco Buscemi

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