



Response to report 001-4(2): Report on the Review
of the 2013 Reports of the Auditor General of
Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut on
Education in Nunavut and Safety of Schools and
Childcare Facilities in Nunavut

Tabled in the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut on October 21, 2014

by

Hon. Tom Sammurtok, Minister of Community and Government Services

Hon. Paul Quassa, Minister of Education

1. That the Government of Nunavut, as a whole and with the collaboration of its key departments and agencies, put a higher priority on developing strong and clear directives relating to the use of the Inuit language across Nunavut with specific focus on the writing system, terminology, and the role of dialects.

Response:

As outlined in *Sivumut Abluqta*, it is a priority of the Government of Nunavut to strengthen and enhance the use of the Inuit language. The department acknowledges the challenges associated with having multiple dialects, no common expectations for language proficiency and multiple writing systems. Each of these makes it difficult to develop standardized curriculum tools and resources, Nunavut-wide assessments and deliver consistent programming.

We agree that standardizing the use of dialects and the writing system may help prepare the education system (teachers, students, parents) for a higher likelihood of success than the status quo. We see value in using one writing system for example; it may be beneficial to have students in the early grades, who are trying to learn two language systems, limited to learning writing systems that are similar (i.e. roman orthography).

The Government of Nunavut is committed to working with the Inuit Uqausinginnik Taigusiliuqtiit (IUT) towards the standardization of the Inuit language, through terminology development and through standardizing orthography. A key goal of Nunavut departments and agencies through work with the IUT has been to hold terminology symposiums and through committees aimed at specific focus areas, such as Health and Education.

The department sees great value in the creation of one standard curriculum to be used across Nunavut, in order to create a greater level of consistency in programming as well as help to standardized benchmarking assessments. Nunavut-wide benchmark assessments would help to address the high degree of variability in language proficiency currently being witnessed. Standardizing the use of dialects and the writing system would make the development of Nunavut-wide Assessments much more manageable.

The department is making literacy a priority in its schools this year by implementing a Balanced Literacy initiative. This initiative will focus on levelled reading in both English and Inuktitut, the resources for which have just been purchased. The resources for Inuktitut instruction, while at a significant cost to the department,

will be available in both Syllabics and Roman Orthography. Having the resources in both writing systems will help ensure that students all across the territory have access to resources in which they are familiar and comfortable.

- 2. That the Department of Education, in response to the report and recommendations of the Auditor General, immediately establish its database to collect data on educators' training and language skill sets, analyze the data, and prepare a report on the current status of its educators' training and language skill sets.**

Response:

We agree. The Department of Education has been working with Core Solutions, a London Ontario based computer applications developer, on the creation of a database dedicated to our human resource (HR) record keeping needs. The database is an integration of the existing Teacher Certification database with an in house developed HR database. The result is a comprehensive database which will store staff information (including language proficiency and bilingual status) and relevant employment data.

The newly created database will host data for both the teaching (NTA) staff and our NEU staff. For example it will provide us with data on language usage with respect to bilingual bonus as well as bi-lingual proficiency, which was one of the items the OAG felt my department did not address adequately.

The HR database will be developed in three phases. Phase 1, which includes the modified user interface, the development of HR functions and the integration of data from the Teachers Certification database, has been completed and testing of these components is scheduled to start early October. Phases 2 and 3 will be in development simultaneously during the testing period and will produce a leave and attendance feature for NTA staff and updated functions for the Teacher Certification Registrar.

The final product is scheduled for delivery early 2015. Once the database is fully operational, the Department will commit to generating a summary report to be included in the next Department of Education Annual Report.

- 3. That the Government of Nunavut consider ways to ensure that graduates from Nunavut Arctic College's Nunavut Teacher Education Program remain committed to working as teachers in Nunavut following graduation.**

Response:

We agree that it is a priority for the Government of Nunavut, and specifically the Department of Education, to encourage all Nunavut Teacher Education Program (NTEP) graduates to seek and maintain employment as teachers in schools in Nunavut.

We are acutely aware that some NTEP graduates do not go on to assume teaching positions after graduation or cease teaching after only a short period of time. Unfortunately the department does not know the cause(s) of this phenomenon.

As a primary step, the department is considering how best to investigate this matter with a view to determining its root cause(s). Once the cause(s) are known, the department can then establish a strategy to address this issue.

An investigation could include interviewing teachers whom have recently graduated from the NTEP program to determine how prepared and supported they feel in their new role as teachers. Additionally, an investigation could include interviewing former teachers whom have graduated from NTEP but are no longer teaching. An investigation of this sort may provide useful insight, from which, the department could base its strategy.

- 4. That the Department of Education take immediate steps to determine the number of bilingual educators that will be need to be employed, in both the short term and the long term, in order to deliver bilingual education as required by the *Education Act*.**

Response:

Agreed. During the Office of Auditor General's (OAG) performance audit, it was noted that the department did not have an accurate record of how the Inuktitut language was used within our school system and which staff were capable of teaching in Inuktitut.

The department had developed a Teacher Certification database to capture employment data on teaching staff but the application was not used to its fullest. In early 2015, the department is expecting to roll out a new HR Database. This new system will allow the department to better capture the number of existing bilingual teacher, and track new bilingual teachers newly employed.

All schools in Nunavut are currently using the student Information System (SIS). SIS is used to produce report cards, attendance reports, enrolment reports and official transcripts. SIS ensures that student data is collected accurately, safely and consistently across Nunavut. SIS will also help ensure improved accountability by schools and the Department of Education as a whole.

By using the information gathered by SIS in conjunction with the new HR database the department will have the ability to cross reference student registration numbers and registration needs with the human resources available to fill those needs. The department will be able to then find areas of weakness and attempt to strengthen them.

In addition, content generated by these two systems will provide additional information for the school programme planning process. Additional information will aide the school in creating more effective school program plans for students while ensuring that they have the staff necessary to deliver the agreed upon programming.

- 5. That the Department of Education re-evaluate the policy of inclusive education, complete its cost analysis for developing and offering differentiated instruction training workshops for educators, and be prepared to present its findings during the Legislative Assembly's review of the *Education Act*.**

Response:

While the Department of Education will not have results available by the October 31, 2014 deadline for written submissions for the Legislative Assembly's review of the *Education Act*, the review of inclusive education being conducted by an external consultant will be complete in January 2015.

This review will include recommendations for next steps on training, standardization of models, program plans and reporting being used in the territory. The department will make the findings of this report available to the Special Committee overseeing the review of the *Education Act* once it is complete.

The department agrees that training opportunities on differentiated instruction are important and needed. Since the OAG Report was tabled, the department has provided training on differentiated instruction in literacy (balanced literacy, benchmark assessment, and leveled literacy intervention) to all Principals, Superintendents and Executive Directors in Iqaluit on Sept 16-18, 2014.

In addition, further training will be provided to all Student Support Teachers (SSTs), learning coaches and regional consultants, plus some Vice-Principals and classroom teachers in the coming months. Each region's staff will receive 3 days of in-service in their region on balanced literacy, benchmark assessment, and leveled literacy intervention. The Qikiqtani School Operation in-service for staff will be held in Iqaluit on Sept 23-26; Kivalliq School Operations, in Baker Lake on Sept 30-Oct 2; and Kitikmeot School Operation in Cambridge Bay on Oct 7-9.

- 6. That the Department of Education ensure that its annual reports, as required under section 126 of the *Education Act*, are tabled in a timely manner and, further, that the Department of Education's annual reports specifically address progress on the implementation of the *Education Act*.**

Response:

We agree with the recommendation that the Department of Education annual reports be tabled in a timely fashion. We agree that it is important to report *Education Act* implementation progress in our annual reports. We will report on *Education Act* implementation progress in our future annual reports.

We are currently making every effort to complete the 2012-2013 Annual Report by the end of the fall session of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut. We will soon be hiring a new Statistics and Information Coordinator to aide us in this endeavor, as the Statistics

and Information Coordinator who was previously responsible for this report has recently left the department. Once hired, the Statistics and Information Coordinator will focus their efforts on completing the 2013-2014 as soon as possible.

- 7. That the departments of Education and Community and Government Services continue to work together to establish a monitoring system to ensure that inspections and procedures necessary for the safety and security of schools and child care facilities are conducted on a regular basis and that identified deficiencies are addressed in a timely manner.**

Response:

We agree. Currently the Department of Education holds two positions, the Manager of Capital Planning and Director of Corporate Services, whom serve as a conduit between the Workers Safety & Compensation Commission, the Department of Environment, the Department of Health and the Department of Community and Government Services (CGS). It is agreed by the department that these lines of communication are imperative to responding to the needs of schools and child care facilities and strives to continue to maintain these strong lines.

Currently, all work orders from Schools get escalated to the Manager of Capital Planning to coordinate resources from Workers Safety & Compensation Commission, the Department of Environment, the Department of Health and CGS, where they may be required. This allows education staff to be more actively involved in work orders to provide assistance where they may.

CGS and education staff have worked together to develop a Fire Safety Manual for Principals for distribution to schools. While the Principal of the school is ultimately responsible for the safety of children in his/her school, this manual includes recommendations for Principals on the roles and responsibilities of every person(s) within the school. These recommendations will help ensure that all school staff are aware of their roles when it comes to fire safety.

This Fire Safety Manual has been developed to provide clearly defined roles, responsibilities, requirements, and tools for measurement / verification. It is designed to be used as a work plan that can be updated annually. The manual includes a Fire Log Book with forms for daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual fire safety tasks and inspections, including those mentioned in the OAG's report

The Fire Safety Manual has already been piloted in some schools as well as in-serviced to all Principals at the Principal's conference in early September in Iqaluit. All Principals received a working copy of the Fire Safety Manual during the Principal's conference, with translations to be provided in the near future. CGS has also provided the Fire Safety Manual to some of its key staff.

- 8. That the Department of Community and Government Services, through its Protection Services and Facilities Management divisions, and in conjunction**

with the Office of the Fire Marshal, work to strengthen systems and procedures, such as clearly establishing the necessary frequency of inspections, to ensure the safety and security of school and child care facilities and to provide regular updates on efforts in this area.

Response: The Department of Community and Services (CGS) has hired a consultant to undertake a comprehensive review of Protections Services to develop a regulatory framework to clarify and strengthen the enforcement of safety issues identified in schools and daycares. The comprehensive review and recommendations will be finalized on or before January 31, 2015. The *Fire Prevention Act* will be amended to provide clarity on the frequency on inspections. The department has implemented a revised inspection reporting system to provide clarity on the responsibilities of the client department and CGS with respect to correcting findings identified in inspection reports and a follow-up system to ensure action is taken to address findings identified in the inspection report.

In consultation with the Department of Education, CGS has implemented a principal guide for fire safety plan for Schools effective September 2014.

The departments of CGS and Education have identified key contact persons in their departments to receive, coordinate, and respond to inspection requests and reports. CGS implemented in April 2013 new facility management guidelines to streamline the process for preventative and regular maintenance work orders from client departments. The new guidelines, emergency contact information, work order forms, and work order escalation procedures have been communicated with the Department of Education and are available to all Government of Nunavut staff on the CGS website.

