

June 6/17



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Building Nunavut together
Nunavutluqatigiingniq
Bâtir le Nunavut ensemble

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Department of Education
Minnaqutliqiyiklut
Ministère de l'Éducation



Program Directive:

Student Placement, Promotion and Retention

Legislative Basis: *Education Act*. Section 8 (5) & Section 15

Effective Date: **September 2013**

Directive #: **CSS – 2013- #1**

Purpose:

The purpose of this Directive is to articulate clearly the appropriate process for determining student progression (i.e. grade level placement, promotion or retention) through the process of reviewing student achievement over the course of a school year) in Nunavut schools.

It defines the Department of Education's approach to Continuous Progress and the cooperative roles of parents, teachers, School Teams, principals, Regional School Operations (RSO's) and District Education Authorities (DEAs) in ensuring effective progression for their students.

Scope:

This Directive applies to all education staff responsible for the instruction of students at all grades in Nunavut schools and relies on information and processes laid out in other Nunavut Department of Education Directives and documents:

- Summative Assessment Directive,
- Formative Assessment Directive, *Ilitaunnikuliriniq*: Foundation for Dynamic Assessment document, and
- *Inuglugijaittuq*: Foundation for Inclusive Education.

This directive does not apply to the education staff of the Commission scolaire francophone du Nunavut (CSFN). Please refer to directive # CSS-2013-#2 for the CSFN specific directive on Student Achievement and Placement.

Legislative basis:

This Directive is authorized by Section 15 of the *Education Act*. Section 15 gives the Minister the right to issue directions to be followed by School Team responsible for determining "promotion decisions" (here referred to as 'student progression').

Section 8 (5) also allows the Minister to establish standards regarding the delivery of the education program of which student progression is a component.

Rationale:

The Department of Education believes in life-long learning and the practice of continuous learning, not social promotion.

The following statements of principle should be followed in carrying out this work, as stated in the *Education Act* and the three foundation documents:

- *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Education Framework for Nunavut Curriculum,*
- *Inuglugijaittuq: Foundation for Inclusive Education in Nunavut Schools and*
- *Ilitaunnikuliniriniq: Foundation for Dynamic Assessment as Learning in Nunavut Schools.*

1. Education needs to focus on students, their intellectual development and their physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual well-being;
2. High quality education is important for the development of confident, responsible and capable individuals;
3. Learning should be continuous and all parts of the system should work together to encourage and support life-long learning
4. All children can learn, learning is an individual process and diverse learning needs and abilities should be supported in an inclusive education system;
5. Student assessment must take into consideration the stage of learning the student has achieved for a particular task and subject under study.

Definitions:

- **Accommodations:** Accommodations (which refers to adjustment of programs and supports put in place) are made by teachers to address individual needs of students in their classroom, including those that relate to learning styles. Accommodations may include combining, changing or adding learning objectives, as long as they do not change the intent of the curriculum.
- **Adult Student:** a student who has reached the age of majority, under the *Age of Majority Act*.

- **Age-Appropriate:** Individuals develop emotionally, physically and academically at different rates. Age-Appropriate does not refer to a cohort within the same birth year.
- **Continuous Progress:** *Pivallianginnamiq-* or Continuous Progress is "the practice of providing a school program that meets the needs, developmental level and interests of each student" (*Ilitaunnikuliniriniq* pg. 25). Continuous progress assumes that every child will be engaged in a process of continuous improvement.
- **Differentiated Instruction:** (also known as **differentiated learning** or, **differentiation**) Effective teaching involves providing students with different ways to learn new content and to make sense of ideas, including development of teaching materials and assessments to allow students in a classroom learn effectively, regardless of differences in ability or the way they learn.
- **ISSP (Individual student support Plan):** is an outline of the supports required for a child to access his or her program. Some of the supports could be personnel, materials, adaptations, services, referrals for assessment, and training for the support personnel.
- **Parent:** the parent or guardian of the child as identified by the *Education Act*.
- **Placement:** is an extraordinary circumstance in which the School Team determines whether a student may move on to another grade level if they have not met, or exceeded, expected curriculum competencies, and what additional adjustments and supports they require to do so.
- **Promotion:** is the regular progression of students from grade to grade as they achieve curriculum expectations.
- **Progression:** for the purposes of this documents- refers to the decision which results in one of the following - placement, promotion or retention of a student.
- **Retention:** is an extraordinary circumstance in which the School Team decides to fail a student or 'keep them back a grade'. Research demonstrates that failing students and forcing them to repeat a grade (retention) does not result in positive learning or life outcomes for students. The Department of Education does not generally support retention of our students. However, the Department does recognize that there are unique situations in which it may be an appropriate choice of action.
- **School Team:** Under Section 90(1) of the *Education Act*, the School Team consists of a principal or vice-principal, a student support teacher, an *Ilinniavimmi Inuusiliriji*, a classroom teacher and such other education staff

as the principal considers appropriate. This is the group in the school that supports teachers to meet student learning needs. Group members share their experiences and knowledge to develop strategies and solutions to assist teachers to help students learn effectively. The School Team helps decide what to do to accommodate, or plan individual programs for students who are not challenged enough, or challenged too much, in the regular curriculum

- **Social Promotion:** is 'allowing a student to proceed from one grade to the next without achieving the required competencies and without a learning plan that supports remediation or growth.

Directions for Teachers:

In order to put these principles in practice, teachers must:

1. Complete assessments provided by the Nunavut Department of Education, in addition to those they themselves develop.
 - Teachers must document/record the results for reporting purposes and for future use by teachers and administrators planning subsequent instruction in compliance with the school's ***Student Assessment Strategy*** and any/all departmental directives related to student assessment.
2. Place importance on evaluating student performance, strengths, and needs in order to identify issues early on and provide appropriate supports. Records of student performance from previous years and examples of their work should be consulted. As per the Student Records and Information Management Directive and the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP) Act*, these records and examples should be stored at the school and made available to subsequent teachers. Where possible, students' previous teachers should be consulted;
3. Review and follow the three foundation documents and supporting resources (i.e. handbooks or procedural manuals) that outline strategies to meet the student's strengths and needs;
4. Use these strategies to provide differentiated instruction to students as per their needs;
5. Communicate with parents and students about the students' progress and achievement, highlighting both successes and areas in need of improvement on a regular basis; and
6. Consult/collaborate with other instructional colleagues.

Directions for the School Team and Regional School Operations (RSO):

RSOs shall ensure that each school has developed a **School Assessment Strategy** and that principals share with and discuss this strategy with all staff as part of regular planning.

The responsibility for making decisions on the promotion/placement/retention of a student will involve:

- Generally – the teacher(s) responsible for the instruction of that class/course and for overall placement decisions through recommendation to the principal
- Any/all teachers involved in the instruction of that individual student through consultation and collaboration
- The school administration staff
- Consultation by the School Team and parent/guardian of the student

These decisions regarding student placement shall be informed by consultations with the parent and/or student as well as the RSO.

School Team involvement can begin before the first reporting period (covered below in the 'Reporting Periods and Provisions') but it is necessary at all subsequent periods of the process.

The RSO shall ensure that all documentation required of a student placement decision has been submitted by the School Team and that said documentation complies with the requirements laid out in the 'Consultation and Documentation' section below.

It is the RSOs obligation to evaluate the required documentation for congruency with the information (including supporting documents) in the 'Rationale' section above.

Reporting Periods & Provisions:

For Non-Semester Schools:

In the first reporting period:

If a teacher identifies a student is not reaching, or is exceeding the expected curriculum competencies, they shall:

- Attempt to meet the student's strengths and needs as mentioned above;
- Notify parents prior to the first report card, and describe what types of accommodations he/she is making in the classroom. The teacher should discuss with parents ideas for home supports that could be provided to the student and provide the parents with information regarding the concept of Continuous Progress from the Dynamic Assessment foundation document, *Ilitaunnikuliriniq* (p. 27). Teachers should also provide parents with this Directive and the accompanying Q&A document. More information should be made available if requested, including the relevant sections of the *Inuit Qaujimaqatuqangit Education Framework foundation* document and *Inuglugijaittuq Inclusive Education Handbook*;
- Consult with the School Team and possibly arrange a solution circle with his/her peers – and this may include the parent and student, if possible/appropriate;
- Indicate on the report card in some manner if a student is having difficulty achieving curriculum competencies or is exceeding them;
- Notify the parent, if the situation persists, that accommodations are not fully addressing the student's strengths and needs, and the School Team should be asked to determine whether an Individual Student Support Plan (ISSP) may be needed; and
- Notify the School Team that supports beyond what can be provided in the classroom may be required.

In the second reporting period:

If a teacher identifies a student to the School Team who is not reaching the expected curriculum competencies or is exceeding them early, the School Team shall begin developing an ISSP and follow the procedures defined through Part 6 Inclusive Education in the *Education Act* and *Inuglugijaittuq*; Inclusive Education Handbook.

Steps to be taken:

- The School Team shall invite the parent, or where appropriate, the student, to be a participant in the process. Any support materials or context that enables parents to fulfill their responsibilities to be proactive in their child's education should be provided;
- At or before the beginning of a consultation with a parent remind all participants of the concept of Continuous Progress from the Dynamic Assessment foundation document, *Ilitaunnikuliriniq* (p. 27), this Directive and the accompanying Q&A document. More information should be made available if requested, including the relevant sections of the *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Education Framework* foundation document and *Inuglugijaittuq Inclusive Education Handbook*.
- The School Team shall assess the strengths and needs of the student and try to determine reasons for the achievement level the student is demonstrating;
- If a specialized assessment is recommended by the School Team it shall be determined with the agreement of the Minister (see *Education Act*, Part 6 Inclusive Education and the *Inclusive Education Regulations*);
- If the School Team determines that there is a strong possibility that the student will not complete the curriculum competencies during the current school year, or is substantially exceeding them and requires additional enrichment, the RSO office and the parent(s) shall be formally (in writing/at a meeting) notified. Evidence of this notification should be kept in the student record;
- Teachers must always keep written records of efforts to address the student's strengths and needs;
- Teachers must seek advice from peers, the student support teacher, or the School Team, when necessary, to provide accommodation to address student strengths and needs.

In the third reporting period:

Final promotion decisions will be conducted through discussions involving the primary teacher for the student and any/all colleagues also involved with the instruction of that student through collaborative discussions organized by the school administration.

In cases of retention in the current grade or advancement to a grade higher than normal promotion, the School Team will meet to determine student placement for the following year. Continued placement in the student's current grade or placement in a higher grade level shall only be considered or assigned to the student by the School Team, if:

- All of the procedures from the previous reporting periods have been followed;
- The student has been provided with supports and accommodations, and has not achieved or continues to exceed the curriculum competencies;
- An ISSP has been created under subsection 43 (5) of the *Education Act*, and it is a comprehensive and detailed plan outlining how the student's strengths and needs will be addressed differently to meet the curriculum competencies that have not yet been achieved or have been exceeded (without repeating material that has been met or skipping over competencies) and the school has the ability to provide the required accommodations and supports described therein; and
- Parent and RSO approval is received.

Factors influencing the decision may include:

- The Parent or Adult Student requests the student continue to be placed in the current grade/or be placed in a higher grade than usual in the next school year, and has legitimate and practical reasons that are supported through consensus by the School Team and RSO;
- A substantial amount of schooling has been missed by the student, and circumstances have not allowed for the provision of a learning plan during their absence, and the student requires additional time spent at the current curriculum competencies,
- The child is young in age (his or her birthday is very close to the minimum age of registration) and due to their developmental level, along with other factors such as medical conditions, it is felt that these multiple contributing

factors can be better met through greater time spent at the student's current grade;

- A student has exceeded the expected curriculum competencies and requires substantial enrichment; they have demonstrated the social and emotional development that allows for appropriate placement at a higher grade.

For Semester Schools

Before the first reporting period (midterm): If a teacher identifies a student that is not reaching the expected curriculum competencies or is exceeding them, they shall:

- Attempt to meet the student's strengths and needs as mentioned above;
- Notify parents prior to the first report card, and describe what types of accommodations he/she is making in the classroom. The teacher should discuss with parents ideas for home supports that could be provided to the student and provide the parents with information regarding the concept of Continuous Progress from the Dynamic Assessment foundation document, *Ilitaunnikuliriniq* (p. 27). Teachers should also provide parents with this Directive and the accompanying Q&A document. More information should be made available if requested, including the relevant sections of the *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit Education Framework* foundation document and *Inuglugijaittuq Inclusive Education Handbook*;
- Consult with the School Team and possibly arrange a solution circle with his/her peers – and this may include the parent and student, if possible/appropriate;
- Indicate on the report card in some manner if a student is having difficulty achieving curriculum competencies or is exceeding them;
- Notify the parent, if the situation persists, that accommodations are not fully addressing the student's strengths and needs, and the School Team should be asked to determine whether an ISSP may be needed; and
- Notify the School Team that supports beyond what can be provided in the classroom may be required.

At the first reporting period (midterm):

If a teacher identifies a student to the School Team, who is not reaching the expected curriculum competencies or is exceeding them early, the School Team shall begin developing an ISSP and follow the procedures defined through the *Education Act* Part 6 Inclusive Education, the *Inclusive Education Regulations* and *Inuglugijaittuq; Inclusive Education Handbook*.

For Clarity:

- The School Team shall invite the parent, or where appropriate, the student, to be a participant in the process. Any support materials or context that enables parents to fulfill their responsibilities to be pro-active in their child's education should be provided;
- At the initial review meeting, remind all participants of the concept of Continuous Progress from the Dynamic Assessment foundation document, *Ilitaunnikuliniriniq* (p. 27), this Directive and the accompanying Q&A document. More information should be made available if requested, including the relevant sections of the *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit Education Framework* foundation document and *Inuglugijaittuq Inclusive Education Handbook*.
- The School Team shall assess the strengths and needs of the student and try to determine reasons for the achievement level the student is demonstrating;
- If a specialized assessment is recommended by the School Team it shall be determined with the agreement of the Minister (see *Education Act*, Part 6 Inclusive Education);
- If the School Team determines that there is a strong possibility that the student will not complete the curriculum competencies during that semester, or is substantially exceeding them and requires additional enrichment, the RSO office and the parent(s) shall be formally (in writing/at a meeting) notified. Evidence of this notification must be kept in the student's record;
- Teachers must always keep written records of efforts to address the student's strengths and needs;
- Teachers must seek advice from peers, the student support teacher, or the School Team, when necessary, to provide accommodations to address student strengths and needs.

For Semester Schools

In the final reporting period:

Final promotion decisions will be conducted through discussions involving the primary teacher for the student and any/all colleagues also involved with the instruction of that student through collaborative discussions organized by the school administration.

In cases of retention in the current grade or advancement to a grade higher than normal promotion, the School Team will meet to determine student placement for the following year. Continued placement in the student's current grade or placement in a higher grade level shall only be considered or assigned to the student by the School Team, if:

- All of the procedures from the previous reporting period has been followed;
- The student has been provided with supports and accommodations, and has not achieved or continues to exceed the curriculum competencies;
- An ISSP has been created under subsection 43 (5) of the *Education Act*, and it is a comprehensive and detailed plan outlining how the student's strengths and needs will be addressed differently to meet the curriculum competencies that have not yet been achieved or have been exceeded (without repeating material that has been met or skipping over competencies) and the school has the ability to provide the required accommodations and supports described therein; and
- Parent and RSO approval is received.

Factors influencing the decision may include:

- The Parent or Adult Student requests the student continue to be placed in the current grade/or be placed in a higher grade than usual in the next school year, and has legitimate and practical reasons that are supported through consensus by the School Team and RSO;
- A substantial amount of schooling has been missed by the student, and circumstances have not allowed for the provision of a learning plan during their absence, and the student requires additional time spent at the current curriculum competencies,
- The child is young in age (his or her birthday is very close to the minimum age of registration) and due to their developmental level, along with other factors such as medical conditions, it is felt that these multiple contributing factors can be better met through greater time spent at the student's current grade;

- A student has exceeded the expected curriculum competencies and requires substantial enrichment; they have demonstrated the social and emotional development that allows for appropriate placement at a higher grade.

Consultation, Documentation and Approval Requirements:

In addition to the consultation the School Team conducts with the classroom teacher, parents and/or student, substantial consultation with the RSO must occur prior to a decision to retain or move forward a student who has not met or has exceeded the expected curriculum competencies.

Documentation that must accompany a decision to assign a student additional time spent with current curriculum competencies in the next school year, move a student forward, who has exceeded the curriculum competencies, will be created by the School Team and must include:

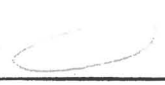
- Development by the School Team of a comprehensive, detailed and revised ISSP for the next school year in providing accommodations and supports;
- Evidence that the education staff has the ability to provide the required accommodations and supports described therein;
- Evidence of previous approaches to support the student and facilitate their learning and achievement;
- Assessments indicating reasons for specific accommodations and instructional delivery;
- Agreement by the School Team and RSO that this decision is in the best interests of the student;
- Approval of the ISSP by the parent or adult student.
- Submission of a 'Retained/Accelerated Form' listing all students affected for that year/term, and signed off on by the Superintendent, the Executive Director, and then forwarded electronically to Program Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, the Department of Education, Assessment and Evaluation Office, Pangnirtung, NU.

OR,

- Where there is disagreement, the School Team may proceed with implementation of the ISSP and the parties (principal and the parent(s) of the student or adult student) must be made aware of the right to request mediation by the District Education Authority under Section 49 of the *Education Act*.

Sunset:

This Directive is in force effective September 1st, 2013 and will remain in force until such time as revoked or replaced by the Minister.



Minister Eva Aariak,
Department of Education



Date

Related Documents:

- FAQ on Student Promotion, Placement and Retention
- *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Education Framework for Nunavut Curriculum,*
- *Inuglugijaittuq: Foundation for Inclusive Education in Nunavut Schools* and
- *Ilitaunnikuliriniq: Foundation for Dynamic Assessment as Learning in Nunavut Schools.*

Contacts:

For further information
Program Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator
Department of Education
Government of Nunavut
Phone: (867) 473-2636 Fax: (867) 473-2695