

# INTRODUCTION

## A Collective Vision

The 2008 *Education Act* marked the first time that Nunavummiut were able to establish education legislation that was rooted in the principles, values and goals of the territory.

Since 2008, a great deal has been learned through significant review of the administration and implementation of the *Education Act*. The reviews have examined how effective the legislation is at ensuring high-quality, bilingual education for students and whether the government and stakeholders in the territory are sufficiently meeting their roles and responsibilities under the legislation.

The first major review of the *Education Act* took place in 2013 and was conducted by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada (OAG). The resulting report gave the government significant guidance on the issues of attendance, assessment, curriculum and teacher resource development, inclusive education, language of instruction and parental/family engagement.

The second major review, carried out from 2014-2015, was a statutorily-required review, conducted by the Special Committee to Review the *Education Act*, a special committee of the Legislative Assembly, that made 23 recommendations for updates to the *Education Act* and the operations of the department.

The Department of Education has continually reviewed its own operations and the effectiveness of the delivery of the Education Program, and contributed significant written submissions to both the OAG and Special Committee reviews.

As a result of these reviews, there are clear opportunities for moving forward and making the necessary changes to establish the best education system possible for students, teaching professionals and communities.

Some of the necessary progress can be made through changes to existing policies and procedures, something that the government has been doing on an ongoing basis. However, it is clear that changes to the legislation are necessary, to achieve the positive impact envisioned by the OAG, the Special Committee, the department and stakeholders.

Both the OAG and Special Committee identified a need to increase standardization and consistency in the Education Program. Currently in Nunavut, students in different communities receive educations that are so varied that it is difficult to monitor their progress and to deliver a high-quality Education

Program. This creates both a system that is unfair to students, but also one that is more costly and less effective. Standardization of the Education Program will allow the department to improve resources, develop effective assessments and better manage teaching resources. Standardization does not mean losing community control, which will be explained further in the chapter on the roles and responsibilities of district education authorities.

The following document explains the reasons and rationales for the proposed changes to the *Education Act*. The purpose of amending the *Education Act* is to ensure that we have a strong, forward-looking legislative framework. The legislation is being amended so that there are clear roles and responsibilities for everyone working in education.

These legislative changes are significant. Each of the following six chapters explains what the proposed change is in the *Education Act* and the reasons why these changes are necessary. The chapters include:

- 1. Fundamental Principles: Fostering Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit-grounded schools across the territory, honouring traditional knowledge, honouring the land and each other**
- 2. Bilingual Education and Language of Instruction: Establishing an improved framework for program delivery and resource development**
- 3. Inclusive Education: Ensuring that all students are provided opportunities to participate, engage, grow and learn**
- 4. DEA Roles and Responsibilities: Engaged Communities—Strengthening our Education System**
- 5. Bolstering French First Language Programming: Tous ensemble!**
- 6. Strengthening the Legislation: Clarity, accountability and filling in the gaps**

There are also many non-legislative tools that ensure an effective education system—the development of policies, procedures, curriculum, teaching resources and programming, for example. The department continues to make related improvements. However, these actions are not changed through legislative amendments, and so it is important to note that while legislative amendments might impact on those actions, they are not the focus of the changes.

The ideas in this document are proposals. Public consultation will help the department understand the opinions of individuals, organizations and communities about these proposed changes, which will in turn assist in the development of the legislation that will be studied, debated, amended and voted on by Members of the Legislative Assembly.

The goal of these public consultations and the amendments to the *Education Act* is to establish a collective vision for education and student development in Nunavut.