

CHAPTER 4

DEA Roles and Responsibilities

Engaged Communities— Strengthening our Education System

District Education Authorities (DEAs) play an integral role in Nunavut's education system. The elected members of the DEAs have a significant number of responsibilities under the current legislation. Since 2008, it has been clear that many DEAs have struggled to meet the requirements expected of them in the legislation because of the depth and breadth of the responsibilities. This has been recognized by the DEAs themselves, the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities (CNDEA), the OAG and the Special Committee. In response to the need for a rebalancing of DEA roles and responsibilities, the proposed legislative changes attempt to ease the overburdening of DEA members, in order to improve their capacity to make significant, positive contributions to the schools in their communities.

Local Programming

The core of local control should come through DEA development and delivery of local programming. This programming should be student and community driven, to ensure that it is relevant to the interests and needs of students, and molded by the advice of parents and Elders. Local programming is the ideal way to preserve and promote local culture and especially local language interests, including dialect. DEA responsibility for local programming is already a part of the *Education Act*, however, to be truly impactful, DEA members need the time and capacity to effectively develop and consult on potential programs. Therefore the proposed changes are designed to alleviate administrative and accounting burdens, to allow for greater focus on local programming.

The following changes are proposed

Education and School Programs (Parts 3, 4, 5, 10)

The Education Program, including curriculum, will remain the responsibility of the Minister. Further to this, the Minister will be given the authority to make final decisions for student registration and the establishment of the school calendar, as well as the authority to set instructional minutes and language of instruction for each grade and subject.

The definitions for Education Program and School Program will be clarified with respect to their relationship to each other as concepts. The roles and responsibilities of the Minister and DEAs with respect to both programs will be clarified, and responsibility for the School Program will be defined as a partnership between the Minister and the DEAs.

The Minister will be required to ensure that curricular outcomes, as well as teaching and learning resources, whether they be Nunavut developed or adapted, must be reviewed and, if required, modified to suit the needs of local students and in particular Inuit students and Inuit culture.

Inclusive Education (Part 6)

The responsibility for implementation of Inclusive Education supports and services, including development and approval of Individual Student Support Plans (ISSPs), will be held by education specialists, and no longer by local DEAs. (See Chapter 3 for details.)

School Administration and DEA Oversight (Parts 3, 5, 7, 11, 12)

DEAs will remain in a position to be able to give directions to a principal with respect to the principal's duties under the Act. However, this will be limited to the aspects of the administration and operation of the schools that fall outside of the Education Program.

The department will be given the authority to mandate that a DEA incorporate a departmental *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq* (discipline) and Attendance and Registration Policy, however only when a DEA does not already have a policy in place. With respect to registration, DEAs will no longer have the discretion to register students who are not entitled to register under section 2 of the *Education Act*. Registration of a student from outside their jurisdiction will require a DEA's recommendation and Ministerial approval.

Panels responsible for hiring/reappointing of principals/vice-principals will be administered by the department instead of the DEAs. However, if a DEA so requests, the Minister will be required to allow the DEA to appoint at least one member of each hiring panel for staff and the appointment panels for principals and vice-principals. The department will be required to consult with DEAs before dismissing a principal or vice-principal, however DEAs will no longer have the designated authority to provide a recommendation to dismiss a principal or vice-principal.

DEA members will now be required to have a valid Criminal Record Check (CRC), including a vulnerable sector check, no older than three months before being able to enter school property (previously three years).

An IQ report will be required for the DEA's local programming, however, there will no longer be a requirement for DEAs to prepare and submit a report on the carrying out of IQ duties of the principals and other education staff members in the schools.

The responsibility for funding early childhood education will be shifted to the department. In cases where early childhood programs are located at a school, this use of space will still be permitted. This is in keeping with positions taken by DEAs with respect to lessening the burden of administering and reporting on these funds.

The overall rationales for the proposed amendments are as follows

- Improved public understanding of the roles and responsibilities assigned in the Act.
- The creation of efficiencies stemming from clarity of roles and responsibilities.
- Rebalancing of the capacity needs of DEAs and improvements to efficiency and programming impact, through a reduction of administrative burdens. The intention is to increase the focus on the DEA role as the voice of community on matters of education. DEA provision of programs and services will serve to connect the school with community and support the protection and promotion of the Inuit language.
- Simplified training requirements for DEA members, resulting from the refocusing of their work and the streamlining of their roles and responsibilities.
- A clearer understanding of the roles and responsibilities of principals and teaching staff. The amendments will provide a clear division between the tasks of school staff and DEAs, eliminating the consequences of the current legislation where DEA tasks fall to education staff to complete due to lack of capacity.
- A refocussed human resources system, where primary responsibility is clearly given to the department for hiring, supervising and assessing education staff.
- An improved bilingual education framework that will provide improvements to program delivery and student outcomes. This is further discussed in Chapter 2.
- Improvements to Inclusive Education and related assessments. Improved conditions for the development of ISSPs, by putting responsibilities for development and review in the hands of education specialists. This is further discussed in Chapter 3.

Moving forward together in partnership

DEAs, as advocates, represent the best interests of their communities, providing essential feedback during public consultations on education initiatives. The new legislative framework will prioritize this role, freeing up DEAs to act as the voice of local concerns and stories of success.

Local control works best when DEAs are better able to do the important work of representing their communities and students, as well as developing enhancements to the Education and School Programs. By relieving them of unnecessary administrative burden, these changes will enable them to have a greater impact on the education system and the learning and well-being of students in their communities.

The realignment of roles will require strong and continuing communication between the department and DEAs. The department is committed to working with DEAs to strengthen their capacity in their communities. Further work will still need to be completed through non-legislative supports such as policies, procedures, and resources for DEAs. By focusing efforts, an opportunity will be created to streamline and improve resources for DEAs; to better allow them to fulfil their roles successfully in their communities particularly with respect to policy governance and public engagement.