

## CHAPTER 1

# Fundamental Principles

## **Fostering Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit-grounded schools across the territory, honouring traditional knowledge, honouring the land and each other**

Inuit Societal Values and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit are the base and the building blocks of our education system. They guide the Department of Education, teachers, students and district education authorities (DEA) in everything they do. Creating Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit schools—schools that operate within the principles of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and celebrate Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit—is a priority of the government and there are a variety of ways to do this. It is important to note that policy-level direction, rather than high-level legislative provision, is often better suited for assuring specific and concrete application of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit to programming in schools.

Currently Inuit Societal Values and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit serve as the foundational principles of the legislative framework, and they will continue to do so in Part 1 of the amended *Education Act*. In addition to this powerful statement at the beginning of the legislation there will be new language establishing that the graduation of self-reliant and well-educated Nunavummiut is a central goal of our education system. The idea of 'well-educated' and 'self-reliant' includes the requirement that students understand and live the principles and concepts of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit. These ideas are not separate, but closely connected. Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit can be and is already a part of academic study. However, understanding and applying Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit has unique features, and can be a different process than some academic studies. It involves making a human being, not just developing students.

Part 1 of the *Education Act* will continue to include the duty held by the Minister, district education authorities, and education staff, to ensure that the public education system incorporates and fosters Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit. This duty establishes accountability with respect to Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, for the entire public education system.

Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit considerations will be a required aspect of DEA local programming, as it is a necessary part of ensuring the best interests and cultures of communities are represented. Further, DEAs will be required to report on Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Societal Values as it relates to Local Programs.

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However, to address the concern of the Special Committee regarding the challenges of incorporating highly-variable and personal interpretations of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit into strictly-interpreted administrative decisions, the proposal is to edit references to Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit to be more concise within the text of the legislation and to consolidate the related duties held by the Minister, education staff and DEAs within Part 1: Fundamental Principles, of the Act. This means there will be no references to Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit outside of Part 1 of the Act, with the exception of the section related to DEA Local Programming. This is to avoid inconsistencies in implementation, but also to avoid the appearance that Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit only pertains to some decisions, which is not the case: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Societal Values are the foundation of everything we do in education.

With respect to the *Inuit Language Protection Act*, the government will continue to be required to fulfil the provisions of section 8(2), as they relate to the education program, in a manner that is consistent with Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit. However, this duty will be clarified. The government will also need to fulfill these provisions in a manner that is consistent with the effective delivery of the Education Program.

### **Infusing Inuit Societal Values in our Education System**

Inuit Societal Values will continue to be infused throughout the education system as a priority in policy and procedure development, as well as planning. In addition to recognizing it as a foundational principle in the legislation, there are many non-legislative ways that we can incorporate Inuit Societal Values in schools, including, but not limited to:

- Taking a holistic approach to Inuit Societal Values: communication, consultation, and integration—promoting accountability, consistency and openness.
- Including Inuit Societal Values in curricular outcomes; self-reliance and continuous improvement.
- Providing orientation kits that promote holistic, value-based approaches to Inuit Societal Values, as well as Inuit Societal Values education programs for school staff, DEAs and departmental staff.
- Including Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Societal Values in teacher-training at the Nunavut Teacher Education Program (NTEP).
- Ensuring that all program planning and resource development is guided by Inuit Societal Values.
- Creating student, parent and community engagement programs.
- Incorporating traditional Inuit songs, music and storytelling in schools.
- Ensuring that all schools have engaged Elders passing on traditional knowledge to students, and making the necessary time and space in the school calendar for the transfer of traditional knowledge.
- Building relationships and working with partners.
- Using the knowledge of the Elder Advisory Committee.

These actions will help the integration and awareness of Inuit Societal Values and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit in our schools. The right policies will ensure that everyone working within the education system understands and meets the duty set out in Part 1 of the *Education Act* to incorporate and foster Inuit Societal Values. This duty in Part 1 holds the Minister, education staff and DEAs accountable for ensuring Inuit Societal Values and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is an integral and driving force in our education system.

### **DEA Local Programming, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Societal Values**

DEAs play an important role in promoting Inuit Societal Values, local culture and language, as well as preserving Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit. This includes developing local programming that is community and student driven. This programming is an essential tool for ensuring that students learn and live the principles of Inuit Societal Values, and serves as an enhancement of the standardized ministerial curriculum. DEAs share the responsibility with education staff of creating schools based on Inuit Societal Values. They can do this by modelling Inuit Societal Values, through community engagement and inviting the participation of students, parents and Elders in the schools and DEA meetings.

### **Bilingual Education, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Societal Values**

Bilingual education ensures the incorporation and fostering of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Societal Values in our schools. Language and culture are closely linked. A deeper understanding of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Societal Values is supported by an understanding of the Inuit language, therefore we must have robust bilingual programming to help students understand, develop and celebrate Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit Societal Values, so that they can live this at school, at home and in their communities. The ways that the department will strengthen the delivery of bilingual education through the *Education Act* are explained in Chapter 2 of this document.