

Thank you Mr. Chair and I thank the committee for allowing myself and my witnesses to participate in and be present throughout these hearings.

I am encouraged by the open dialogue between the members and the witnesses that has happened this week.

As a Department, we, like the Standing Committee, want to ensure we propose the best possible amendments to the *Education Act* and the *Inuit Language Protection Act*.

As the members know, my Department had the pleasure of travelling to all 25 communities and engaging directly with Nunavummiut in every community.

Over the last three days, the Standing Committee on Legislation has had the opportunity to hear directly from some of the people we met with as we travelled across the territory.

The diversity of views and opinions expressed by the witnesses present this week in Iqaluit represent just some of the feedback we received on the proposed amendments.

As a Department, our challenge was to propose amendments to the Acts that best balanced the interests of all Nunavummiut.

It is a challenge that is now before the members of the Standing Committee.

Mr. Chair, in Bill 25 my Department is proposing to take a phased implementation approach to the delivery of Inuit Language Arts instruction for grades 4 to 12, up to 2039.

It is a proposal that has sparked much debate in the House over the past three days and one that I would like to explain more fully to the members and to Nunavummiut.

Mr. Chair, in the context of the document that members have in front of them, language of instruction is used to identify the percentage of instruction a student may receive in a certain language over the length of an academic year.

The *Education Act's* Language of Instruction Regulations outline 3 models of education under which a DEA may choose to operate;

- The Qulliq Model, intended for communities where Inuktut is the first language;
- The Immersion Model, intended for communities that have experienced language loss; and
- The Dual Model, for communities that have both strong Inuktut first language speakers, and English first language speakers.

Despite the existence of these 3 models, Mr. Chair, as members know, many factors have limited the ability of schools to implement

their chosen model, and in many schools Inuktitut language instruction is well below the required percentage.

Mr. Chair, my department is committed to delivering bilingual education for all Nunavummiut, and has developed plans for Inuktitut language instruction implementation that align with the timelines set out in Bill 25.

First, Mr. Chair, I would like to clarify the categories of curriculum that the department is developing, as well as how they align with the three language of instruction models.

The Uqausiliriniq Strand focuses on language development, expression and critical thinking, and consists of:

- ILA1 – Inuktitut Language Arts as a first language for the Qulliq Model

- ILI – Inuktitut Language Immersion – for language revitalization in the Immersion Model
- IL2 – Inuktitut Second Language - for students in the non-Inuktitut stream of the Dual Model.
- ELA1 – English Language Arts – for students strong in English and in the non-Inuktitut stream of the Dual Model
- ELA2 – English Language Arts – for students learning English as a second language, found in all 4 streams.
- A Fine Arts course is also identified in the Uqausiliriniq Strand

Three more core curriculum strands also exist, with core course curriculum for all 3 models.

- Nunavusiutit Strand, focusing on Social Studies
- Aulajaaqtut Strand, focusing on Health and Physical Education; and
- Iqqaqqaukkaringniq Strand, focusing on Math and Science.

Before I go on to discuss the stages for development of made-in-Nunavut curriculum, Mr. Chair, I would like to discuss the courses identified in the curriculum strands, and how their implementation is set out in Bill 25.

It came up several times, throughout this week's hearings, that Bill 25 only sets timelines for the implementation of the Inuit Language Arts courses. While this is true, these timelines were intended, just like the Inuit Language Arts courses themselves, to lay the foundation for the implementation of Inuktitut language of Instruction in all areas.

The timelines in the Bill do not include further courses because at the time of drafting, the timelines for other core curriculum development had not yet been established.

Also, Mr. Chair, the resources required for high level courses, such as math and science, can be quite extensive, and less predictable considering the level of terminology development required.

While the timelines for all core courses are not set out in the Bill, the department is committed to delivering these Inuktitut curricula as they are presented to standing committee this week. And the package you have in front of you represents the department's implementation plan going forward.

As I stated yesterday, development and implementation of made-in-Nunavut Curriculum involves 4 main stages;

1. Curriculum development
2. Creation of assessment, evaluation, and reporting that aligns with curriculum expectations
3. Creation of resources that align with curriculum expectations

4. Creation and delivery of training for teachers implementing the new curriculum.

An explanation of the phases within each development stage can be found on pages 6 to 10 of the document.

In developing the implementation timelines outlined on pages 13-14, the department considered the time required for each stage of development.

The staggered development of each stage is based on the pace at which each specific grade and curriculum can achieve the most efficient outcomes for students.

Staggering the timelines also ensures that schools are properly supported to implement curriculum one at a time and are not under immense pressure to implement too much at once.



The school years listed represent the estimated implementation year for each stage of curriculum development, per grade level, up to 2038-39 for some courses and grades.

Please keep in mind, Mr. Chair, this does not mean that the Department will delay Inuit Language instruction until 2039. It also does not mean the Department will stop the Inuit Language instruction that is currently being delivered in Nunavut classrooms. Mr. Chair, my Department is and will continue to deliver Inuit Language instruction in schools just not yet at levels required by the current bilingual education models.

In fact, within section 4 of the Bill's schedule, we are required to produce the curricula and all its associated resources as soon as possible, not just by the end of the deadlines listed.

The curriculum, assessments and resources we are developing as part of our implementation plans will help support all the bilingual education models to ensure that Inuit Language instruction can be delivered at the levels required by the models.

We will report annually on the implementation of Inuit Language instruction to ensure that we remain accountable to Nunavummiut.

While some external factors may cause these timelines to vary in the future, they are based on careful consideration of the department and its capacity.

The next step in achieving the language of instruction timelines is related to staffing of bilingual educators in schools, and, as you can imagine, Mr. Chair, is more difficult to accurately predict.

As I mentioned earlier this week, the department is working in a number of ways to ensure there are enough Inuktitut speaking educators to implement curriculum and resources that are developed.

These efforts include the development of a 10 year Retention and Recruitment Plan, as referenced in section 5(1) of the Bill's schedule, and which will align with our department-wide Inuit Employment Plan.

As part of these efforts, my department is working to develop accurate predictions of how many bilingual teachers are and will be needed in each community to implement our Inuktitut Language of Instruction timelines. This includes timelines related to expected vacancies caused by retiring teachers.

We are working closely with Nunavut Artic College to use this information to prioritize the communities in which the NTEP program will be delivered over the coming years.

We will be using our timelines to inform conversations with the college around the expansion needs of the NTEP program including a potential middle school and high school stream, as well as exploring options for existing teachers to further their education and acquire specialized skills in high school subject areas.

Through the 10 Year Educator Retention and Recruitment Strategy, we will outline the department's role in supporting potential teachers, connecting them with training through NTEP, and ensuring that graduates can successfully transition into our schools.

Preliminary estimates of NTEP graduates, based on the planned expanded roll out of the program, are approximately 15-28 per year, in the first four years, with varying graduation rates going forward. If roll-out continues as planned, the number of trained Inuktitut speaking teachers produced by the program over the next 20 years, would likely be well over 500.

We are excited about NTEP's new focus on Inuktitut, and are confident that it will lead to our goal of a fully bilingual education for Nunavummiut.

Mr. Chair, with regards to the Inuit *Language Protection Act*, I want to inform the members that our proposed amendments to the Act have historical context. The ILPA and the current *Education Act* received assent on the same day in 2008, and are intended to work together. While the *Education Act* uses the term “bilingual education”, the ILPA does not. These amendments are

simply intended to align the language of the documents to allow for more seamless implementation.

Mr. Chair, I would like to take this opportunity to respond to some of the claims that have been made over the last three days.

I have heard from a number of witnesses that they were not properly consulted with throughout the development of the Bill.

My department offered many opportunities for our partners and members of the public to provide feedback and input on the proposed amendments.

As a department, it was our expectation that our partners would openly tell us what they wanted to see in the Bill when we consulted with them.

Instead, we received many requests to either delay consultations or to participate in the drafting of the Bill.

During our process, we also received submissions that differ dramatically from the submissions provided to the Standing Committee on Legislation.

As a result, my Department did not have an opportunity to fully consider these proposals or to have them reflected in the Bill.

Mr. Chair, I would also like to clarify the reporting structure of the Coalition of Nunavut DEAs.

I have heard it said that the additional positions being proposed for the Coalition will report to the Minister of Education.

As an organization formed under the Societies Act, the Coalition is and will remain independent from the Department of Education. The new positions being proposed will report to the Executive Director of the Coalition.

Mr. Chair, a number of concerns have been raised with respect to discretionary authority of DEAs to register students over the age of 21.

I want to make it clear to the members that discretionary registration is an authority DEAs currently have under the 2008 Education Act. It is not a new authority we are proposing to provide DEAs.

During the 2016 consultation, the department proposed to limit DEAs' discretionary powers to register individuals over the age of 21. However, based on the feedback of DEA members and Nunavummiut, the proposal was dropped.



In Bill 25, we are simply proposing to add clarity around who DEAs can register in schools using their existing discretionary authority.

Mr. Chair, a number of witnesses have also raised concerns about the availability of Early Childhood programs in schools across Nunavut.

Under the current Education Act, the DEAs, not the Department of Education, have the responsibility of providing ECE programs that promote Inuit Language and Culture.

DEAs can provide such programs by either creating and operating their own programs or by contracting a third party provider to deliver it.

Throughout the course of the consultations, some DEAs identified the financial management and reporting requirements of

contribution agreements as a barrier to providing these ECE programs. As a result, the available funding allocated to those DEAs for early childhood programs goes unused, and access to these programs is unavailable to children in some communities.

To address this identified barrier and to ensure that all available funds are used, we are proposing to allow the Minister to fund third party providers and directly manage the contribution agreements only when DEAs elect not to deliver this programming themselves.

However, third party child care providers fall under the scope of the Child Day Care Act, and we are currently limited under this Act to licensing child day care programs.

Mr. Chair, I have heard the concerns of the members and of the invited witnesses of the importance of ensuring that all children have access to early childhood programs and we will consider this issue in our review of the Child Day Care Act.

I have also heard the call for DEAs to have absolute control over their school calendars during these proceedings. It is a call my Department heard throughout our community consultations.

I want to make it clear to the members that the proposal to establish 9 school calendars only includes start and end dates and a professional development week.

DEAs will keep their authority to decide school closure days, including spring break, and other non-instructional days such as orientation and in-servicing of its education staff.

Finally, Mr. Chair, I have heard many witnesses make legal claims with specific reference to sections 23 and 35 of the Constitution. If the committee will allow, I would like to have Thomas Ahlfors, my legislative counsel, close by providing some clarifications on the concerns that been raised with regards to this issue.