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Ilinniaqtuliqiyikkut
Department of Education
Ministère de l'Éducation

News Release

Minister Releases Bilingual Education Strategy

IQALUIT, Nunavut (November 30, 2004) – An ambitious plan for establishing a bilingual education system in Nunavut was tabled in the Legislative Assembly today by Education Minister Ed Picco.

“The *Bilingual Education Strategy for Nunavut: 2004-08* will help students better develop their abilities in their first language while providing more opportunities to learn a second language equally as well,” Picco said.

The strategy sets out what can be accomplished over the next four years, including:

- The essential elements of a bilingual school system, particularly a complete K-12 Inuktitut curriculum with resource material
- Key results, measures and strategies for each of those elements, and
- A discussion of the required support and assistance from organizations other than the Department of Education.

“Education is a key priority for this government,” Picco said. “I strongly believe that with the assistance of the people in Nunavut communities and the hard work of educators in schools, we will be able to graduate fluently bilingual students who have the skills necessary to succeed in post-secondary studies or the workplace.”

The strategy builds on the research undertaken in 1999 and 2000 into the *Language of Instruction* (LOI) for Nunavut schools. It will encourage schools to adopt one of three models for teaching first and second languages. It recognizes that bilingualism will only be achieved if language is enhanced and supported throughout the education system and community life.

Copies of the strategy can be downloaded from the Government of Nunavut web site (www.gov.nu.ca) using the link on the electronic version of this news release.

BACKGROUND ATTACHED

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Backgrounder:

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The strategy is expected to cost \$13 million to implement over the next four years. The Department is now arranging for funding to be put in place. Most of the work required by the strategy will be undertaken by Department staff in the Curriculum Services Division and the Teaching and Learning Centre.

The three models for Language of Instruction set out in the *Bilingual Education Strategy* are:

- **Early Immersion:** This model might best be used in communities such as Kugluktuk and Cambridge Bay, where Inuinnaqtun language fluency has eroded. This model would introduce children to Inuinnaqtun, in combination with teaching English, from K-12.
 - **Qulliq:** This model might best serve communities with strong Inuktitut First Language. It would teach students to read and write fluently in Inuktitut first, while gradually introducing English as a second language. Instruction in Inuktitut would be maintained through Grade 12 for some courses, with English used for others.
 - **Dual Language:** This model might be used in communities such as Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet. Programs would be organized so students receive instruction in language arts and core subjects in their first language. They would learn the other language as a second language, and receive non-core courses together in either language.
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Curriculum development involves hundreds of people beyond the Department of Education. Staff work with teams of Elders when researching curriculum content and skills to ensure IQ is fully addressed. Staff also work directly with Nunavut teachers to develop, pilot and field test the new resources in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun and English.

The *Bilingual Education Strategy* calls for curriculum, teaching materials and student learning resources to be developed for a number of areas, including:

- **Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun/English First and Second Language** teaching guidelines, handbooks, teaching units and learning resources for all grades.
- **Aulajaaqtut Curriculum (Health, Wellness, Safety, Career Planning)**, which includes developing and implementing high school handbooks, teaching modules and materials for grades 4-12.
- **Iqqaqqaukkiringniq Curriculum (Math, Technology, Innovation)**, which includes developing and implementing handbooks, teaching modules and materials for grades 1-6.
- **Nunavusiutit Curriculum (Environmental Studies, Geography, History)**, which will include developing and implementing handbooks, grade 7-9 teaching modules and learning materials, as well as grade 11 Oceans and grade 12 Sila teaching modules and learning materials.