

Statement

GN committed to implementation of Inuit language in education system

March 17, 2017 Iqaluit, NU

Paul Quassa, Minister of Education today released the following statement:

"I welcome input and dialogue about education and how to improve our education system. Bill 37 is now before the Standing Committee on Legislation and will be reviewed and discussed by members of the Legislative Assembly, as part of our legislative process.

The Government of Nunavut is supportive of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Department of Education takes its obligations to revitalize and teach Inuit language very seriously.

The department has consistently communicated its concerns with its current lack of capacity to support Inuktut as a language of instruction. This is the very reason that the proposed amendments to the *Education Act* allow for a realistic assessment of current instructional capacity, as well as the re-direction of resources to have the most impact in supporting high quality Inuktut language instruction. The department has also taken significant steps to ensure that consultation feedback has been incorporated into the plans for the updated *Education Act*.

The Government of Nunavut is committed to a fully bilingual education system, and I am confident we will create a solid, long-term framework to increase and improve Inuktut for generations to come."

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Backgrounder

Bill 37 recognizes the current lack of capacity to fully implement Inuktut as the language of instruction from kindergarten to Grade 12. The intent of the proposed changes is to build capacity, while ensuring that where capacity exists, students will continue to receive a majority of instruction in Inuktut.

The Department of Education plans on supporting language in a variety of ways including:

- Developing new language models in consultation with stakeholders;
- Completing and implementing a revised Inuit Employment Plan to focus on education occupations;
- Training and developing human resource capacity to support Inuktut language instruction within schools;
- Completing a comprehensive review of the Nunavut Teacher Education Program with Nunavut Arctic College to refocus and support the ability to deliver the Department's mandate;
- Developing new curriculum to guide Inuktut instruction within schools; and
- Continuing to develop teaching and learning resources like the Uqalimaariuqsaniq Inuktut Guided Reading program.

These changes are essential to the establishment of a sustainable language of instruction model that is realistic, practical and will effectively support Inuktut instruction.