

Iqaluit District Education Authority

BULLETIN

The BULLETIN is your source for information and updates on current issues facing the IDEA

FALL 2005

WHY THE NEW NUNAVUT EDUCATION ACT AFFECTS YOUR CHILDREN

This fall, Nunavut's Department of Education will begin public consultations on a proposed new Education Act for Nunavut. Why should we pay attention? Quite simply, this legislation will set the tone for how important public education will be in the building of Nunavut over the next 20 years. It will set the standard for the education you want your children to receive in our schools. And it is essential to getting better results in our schools.

PRELIMINARY COMMENTS

In the last two years the IDEA has had a good opportunity to see what is working in our Iqaluit schools and what is not. Earlier this year we received a copy of Bill 1, the Education legislation previously introduced in 2001, and which forms the basis of the current public consultations. The IDEA reviewed this Bill and we have submitted a preliminary set of comments on how it should be strengthened to adequately address some of the pressing needs in our schools.

IDEA RECOMMENDATIONS

We have provided recommendations to the Department of Education on eight specific areas, including:

- ☞ The need to set clear standards for adopting Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit in our schools
- ☞ The need to recognize the rights of special needs and 'at risk' students to receive education appropriate to their needs as guaranteed by the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

- ☞ The need to recognize minority language rights in the legislation as guaranteed by the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

- ☞ The need to define specific goals for education in Nunavut, such as what constitutes a 'basic education', what should be included in the core curriculum and how it should be taught

- ☞ The need to clearly define the role of the Minister, education officials, teachers, principals, parents and students in the legislation. For example, we believe that principals are the single most important leaders in implementing the vision of the education system into the schools and this role must be clearly defined in legislation.

- ☞ The need to give locally elected DEAs a stronger role in the educational system. Since it is widely recognized that community control of schools is fundamental to the success of public education, a stronger role is necessary to assist DEAs to make and effectively implement policies and decisions.

- ☞ The need to update disciplinary procedures to reflect both restorative practices in discipline and to allow for suspensions and expulsion measures in extreme cases

- ☞ The need for parents and other Nunavummiut to know how their education system is doing through an annual report from the Minister, setting out statistics and other information intended to illustrate the progress being made in our schools.

ATTENTION PARENTS!

On October 26, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. the GN Department of Education will be holding consultations in Iqaluit on their proposed new Education Act. The meeting is scheduled to take place at the Parish Hall

Your voice in public education matters!

Come out to the meeting and get to know what is planned for the new Education Act and add your concerns to how we can improve the quality of education in our schools, through Nunavut's most important piece of legislation!

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

The IDEA is looking for Inuktitut-speaking substitute teachers for our schools. As there are few certified teachers available to substitute for teachers who are absent from classes due to illness or a leave of absence, the IDEA accepts applications from people who are looking for part-time employment. We are particularly concerned about establishing a roster of Inuktitut speaking substitute teachers as this is where there is greatest shortage of help.

If you enjoy working with children and youth, can read and speak Inuktitut, and would like to earn a part-time income, call our administrator at 979-5314 and have your name put on the substitute teacher list.

2006 IS ELECTION YEAR FOR THE IDEA!

The Iqaluit District Education Authority is entering its third and final year before Iqaluit citizens go to the polls in October 2006 to elect a new IDEA. The IDEA oversees the administration of Iqaluit's four schools and our 1,374 student body. Iqaluit's four schools are made up of Joamie and Nakasuk Elementary Schools (ages 5-11), Aqsarniit Middle School (Gr. 6-7, ages 12-14), and Inuksuk High School (Gr. 8-12, ages 14-18).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE IDEA

The IDEA relies upon a seven-member volunteer board of directors, a small staff, and parent volunteers to carry out our work. We meet twice a month, and the sub-committees meet when necessary. There are sub-committees for each school, a policy committee, and a finance committee. As defined under the Nunavut *Education Act* we are responsible for ensuring that our schools meet the basic educational needs of our children through high educational standards. We are responsible for identifying what is and is not working in our schools and directing our energy to action that will improve the quality of public education in our community.

COMMITMENT

The IDEA needs committed community volunteers who are concerned about the quality of public education in our community. Please think about serving your community through the IDEA by running for office next year. If you want to get a better understanding of the work we do, please join us on one of our sub-committees or attend one of our meetings. ***If you are interested in becoming more involved with your schools, please contact our administrator, Alice Ladner at***

979-5314.

PARENTS! HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO OUR SCHOOLS

We know that parents vary in the degree to which they want to be involved in their children's schools. But your participation in your child's schooling can make a big difference in how they perform in school.

Parents who involve themselves in their child's school can contribute to better attendance, higher academic achievement and more positive relationships between parents and teachers.

Parents, in the coming school year, please set aside some of your time to support your children's education.

PLEASE:

- ☺ Follow your child's progress at school by helping with homework and projects.
- ☺ Attend school events including parent-teacher interviews.
- ☺ Ask your child's teacher how you could volunteer some of your time to support the class.

CONTACT US! If you have any questions or comments.



CHRISTA KUNUK
Chairperson
979-4093



ANDREW TAGAK SR.
Vice Chairperson
975-5732



SEAN MALONEY



KATHERINE TRUMPER



KARLIIN AARIAQ



MIKE COURTNEY

ALICE LADNER
General Manager
979-5314



Parents, you can help your children achieve their goals by making sure they go to school every day.

THE BREAKFAST PROGRAM IS BACK!

Thanks to generous contributions from the Canadian Auto Workers and Brighter Futures, we are able to continue with the school breakfast program at all four of our schools this year. Our application to the CAW Social Justice Fund was approved earlier this year and ensures that the breakfast program will be partially funded for the next three years. We still need sponsors, so if you or your organization wants to contribute to a worthy cause our Breakfast can use cash donations, food donations or volunteers. Please contact our office manager, Alice Ladner at 979-5314 if you can help out.

HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE BREAKFAST PROGRAM AT YOUR SCHOOL

Nakasuk: A nutritious breakfast is prepared for any student attending Nakasuk School. The breakfast consists of cereal, milk, juice, fruit, and granola bars.

Joamie: Every child at Joamie School receives an apple or an orange every Wednesday morning. They also have nutritious breakfast and lunch foods on hand for any child who may feel hungry.

Aqsarniit: Any student wanting to eat can attend the program first period in the morning or afternoon. At these ages even students who eat at home may need a little extra nourishment during school hours.

Inuksuk: Every morning a cooked breakfast is prepared for all students at Inuksuk High School. Lunch is also free for any students who need it. Snacks are also offered throughout the day.

SCHOOL BUSING IN IQALUIT

As we begin another school year, we remind parents to help your child have a positive experience taking the school bus. Please

☞ Ensure your children are waiting for the bus 5 minutes before the expected arrival time. With traffic and weather conditions, we cannot give an exact arrival time, but each route takes approximately 8-12 minutes to complete.

☞ Make sure your children know exactly what to do if they miss the bus: return home or go to a neighbour's house, or at school, report to a teacher right away.

☞ During the dark, cold winter months, make sure your children are dressed warmly and have reflective tape on their coats.

This year the IDEA has contracted Nunavut Performance to provide the bus service. Under the terms of the contract, bus drivers are required to submit incident reports for serious problems on the bus. The school principal can suspend students from using the bus if there are persistent behaviour problems. If you have a concern about bus transportation please advise the principal of your child's school.

UPDATE ON SCHOOL RENOVATIONS

AQSARNIIT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Parents of Aqsarniit students will have noticed that work has begun on the expansion of the school. The gym is being enlarged and additional rooms are being added to meet the increased enrollment when the Grade 8 students move to Aqsarniit. It is expected that the expansion will be completed by September of next year. The construction site will be strictly off limits for all students this year.

PARENTS

PLEASE REMIND YOUR CHILDREN TO AVOID WALKING OR PLAYING NEAR THE CONSTRUCTION SITE AT ALL TIMES.

INUKSUK HIGH SCHOOL

In June, the IDEA met with Department of Education officials to discuss the plans for a new high school. After months of researching options and costs, we decided the most feasible approach is to renovate the existing high school to take advantage of the site and existing structure of the building. The Department is now proceeding with a call for proposals for architectural and engineering services, with the design to be completed during this school year. The renovation is to take place over three school years with a completion date of September 2009.

We are very excited about the prospect of working on a new high school design in the coming year. Any parents wishing to be involved in the sub-committee that is overseeing this process should contact Alice Ladner at 979-5314.

NEW IDEA OFFICE!

Speaking of renovations, the IDEA has just moved into a newly renovated office in Nakasuk School. If you are looking for us we are just to the right at the top of the main stairs at Nakasuk. We would like to extend our thanks to the Nakasuk school staff for accommodating us.

ARE YOU MOVING?

If you are moving out of Iqaluit in the coming months, and don't want to move all those books your children have outgrown, the IDEA will take them for you! The IDEA will re-distribute them to students who need more books at home. Please call our IDEA Administrator, Alice Ladner if you want to donate books. Even if you are not moving, the IDEA will gladly take unwanted children's books off your hands!

IDEA CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

Under the existing *Education Act* the local District Education Authority is responsible for developing a policy on code of conduct and discipline procedure in schools. The IDEA 'Code of Conduct and Discipline Procedures for Iqaluit Schools was developed over five years ago and is in need of review and revision. Thanks to funding provided under the National Crime Prevention Strategy we have begun gathering information on the nature and scope of discipline issues in our schools, and researching what other schools are doing with their discipline policies and programs to help those students who are experiencing problems in school.

Earlier this spring the IDEA surveyed Iqaluit teachers concerning the behaviour issues they were facing in the classroom and what aspects of the Discipline Policy they

felt needed to be changed or strengthened. We heard from a number of teachers that they are concerned about the number of students who are frequently absent from school, or who are being abusive in school, by bullying, using bad language, assaulting other students and teachers or not doing the school work assigned to them.

Please fill in the questions listed below and drop it off at the IDEA office at Nakasuk school (or fax us at 979-0330) or e-mail your thoughts to: aladner@qikiqtani.edu.nu.ca.

Any comments will be consolidated with all the others we receive and not be attributed to individuals. If you would like to review a copy of the existing policy please contact our administrator, Alice Ladner at 979-5314.

ParentsWhat do you think?

Do you think our Iqaluit schools are safe? _____

What do you think can be done to improve safety in our schools? _____

What do you need from your school to assist your children in learning? _____

What guidelines do you think should be included in your child's school discipline policy? _____

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS BY OCTOBER 25, 2005.

PROBLEMS ON THE SCHOOL BUS?

In response to a number of incidents and concerns on our schools, the IDEA has taken steps to improve safety on our buses. Rules of conduct on the bus will be prominently posted in each bus. Incident report forms will be available from bus drivers and principals if your child has experienced a problem on the bus. All these incidents will be reviewed. A bus monitor will be hired to ride on some of our buses to ensure that there are no behaviour problems. Please remind your child that they may be suspended from riding the bus if they don't follow the rules.