

Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut—2013

Education in Nunavut



Office of the Auditor General of Canada
Bureau du vérificateur général du Canada

OAG-BVG

Ce document est également publié en français et en Inuktitut.

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Auditor General of Canada
Vérificateur général du Canada

To the Honourable Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

I have the honour to transmit herewith my report on the audit of Education in Nunavut to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut in accordance with the provisions of section 48 of the *Nunavut Act*.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Ferguson".

Michael Ferguson, CPA, CA
FCA (New Brunswick)

OTTAWA, 19 November 2013

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Education in Nunavut

Main Points

What we examined

Nunavut's *Education Act* (2008) replaced the education system and structure that was in place when Nunavut was part of the Northwest Territories. The goal of the new Act is to ensure that the vision and beliefs about education held by Nunavummiut are embedded in schools and in the education that students receive in Nunavut. This includes bilingual education for all students by 2019–20. The Department of Education is responsible for implementing Nunavut's *Education Act* (2008), including ensuring that District Education Authorities and schools in Nunavut have the resources they need to carry out their responsibilities under the Act and related regulations. The Department received approximately \$17.5 million up until March 2012 to implement the Act.

We examined how the Department of Education has managed the implementation of the *Education Act*. Our work focused on six key elements of the Act: attendance, assessment, bilingual education, inclusive education, curriculum, and parental involvement. We did not audit the quality of education in Nunavut.

Audit work for this report was completed on 31 May 2013. More details on the conduct of the audit are in **About the Audit** at the end of this report.

Why it's important

Implementing the *Education Act*, especially bilingual education, is a major undertaking. Many of the related requirements require long-term effort, including recruiting and creating new resources and providing support to various stakeholders, such as District Education Authorities and school staff. Its success depends not only on the Department of Education but on the participation of students, parents, and communities. This is vital to ensuring that students in Nunavut receive the high-quality, bilingual education that is key to the future well-being of both individuals and society.

What we found

- The Department of Education has not adequately managed most aspects of the implementation of the *Education Act*. Although it has developed a plan to guide its implementation of the Act and is

making efforts to roll it out, progress in many areas, such as bilingual education, curriculum, and inclusive education, has been limited. Aspects of the implementation, monitoring, and reporting were not adequate, and need to improve moving forward.

- Despite efforts to increase the number of bilingual educators, the Department is not meeting the Act's bilingual education requirements. Of the eight schools we audited, five offered Kindergarten to Grade 3. During the 2011–12 school year, only one of these five schools met the requirement for bilingual education in those grades. Further, only one of five schools expects to be in a position to meet the Grade 4 bilingual requirements that come into effect in the fall of 2013. As bilingual education requirements increase over time—as the Act calls for—schools will be further challenged to meet them. The Department has not determined how many bilingual educators will be required over the next several years to meet the Act's 2019–20 requirements for bilingual education.
- Although the Department of Education has provided some tools, such as regulations, to meet the requirements of the Act, there are still many areas where tools and resources are required. This includes teaching resources, such as handbooks and manuals, to deliver the curriculum. Though resources are available to help teachers provide inclusive education to students with differing abilities in the same class, there is a lack of training to support the delivery of this kind of instruction and support.
- Some of the Department's efforts in implementing the Act are hampered by factors that it does not control. Low attendance is a serious problem in Nunavut. This is impacting students' ability to learn what is required to move to the next grade. Further, the fact that English is often spoken in the home affects the Inuit language skills of students entering school. Human resource capacity issues that the Government of Nunavut faces have also impacted implementation activities.

***The Department has responded.** The Department agrees with all of the recommendations. Its detailed responses follow the recommendations throughout the report.*

Introduction

1. The Government of Nunavut views education as critical to the future development of the territory and has identified education as one of its priorities. The government recognizes that improving educational results is crucial to the territory's social and economic development.

2. However, educational achievements and outcomes in Nunavut are lower than in other jurisdictions in Canada. Only about 36 percent of Nunavummiut students graduated from high school in 2011. A smaller percentage of the territory's high school graduates go on to post-secondary education. Without an education, Nunavummiut lack opportunities to hold key positions in their communities and the government.

3. School attendance rates are low. During the 2009–10 school year, students in Kindergarten to Grade 6 attended school an average of 80 percent of the time. Among middle school students (grades 7 to 9), the attendance rate was only 68 percent; among high school students (grades 10 to 12), it was 57 percent. For the 2010–11 school year, the average attendance rate was 71 percent for all grades. By the time students with this attendance rate graduate from high school, they will have missed the equivalent of more than three full academic years.

4. Delivering education in Nunavut is complicated by other factors, such as

- the housing shortage, which can result in overcrowded houses with limited space for study and sleep;
- household food insecurity;
- the health status of Nunavummiut, which is significantly below the national average; and
- social problems, such as higher rates of teenage pregnancy and substance abuse than the rest of Canada.

5. All these factors can affect attendance and student performance, complicating the Government of Nunavut's efforts to deliver education. The legacy of the residential school system continues to have a negative effect on support by Nunavummiut for formal education.

Evolution of Nunavut's education system

6. The way education is viewed and delivered in Nunavut has changed significantly over time. In the 1950s, most of the region's education services were provided by missionaries and the federal government through different types of schools, including residential and day schools. In 1969, the partnership between the churches and the Canadian government ended and the Government of the Northwest Territories took over responsibility for education. However, the federal government continued to operate some residential schools, with the last one in Canada closing in 1996.

7. Starting in the 1980s, the Eastern Arctic operated under the mandate of three Inuit school boards, which were equivalent to school boards in the provinces. According to the Department, the boards were responsible for funding, staffing, policies, and programs. They were independent of the Government of the Northwest Territories' Department of Education and of each other. Before the creation of Nunavut in 1999, the boards amalgamated their systems and resources. Once Nunavut was created, the new government's Department of Education continued to operate under the legislation inherited from the Northwest Territories. The Department dissolved the boards and replaced them with regional offices, which had to recreate the services of the former boards.

8. In 2002, a proposed made-in-Nunavut Education Act failed to receive the approval of the legislature. Another bill underwent territorial consultation and was passed into law in 2008. The Nunavut *Education Act* came into force in July 2009, replacing the Northwest Territories legislation.

9. Approximately 85 percent of Nunavummiut speak an Inuit language (either Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun) as their mother tongue. However, Nunavut has a history of formal education being delivered in English. In Inuinnaqtun-speaking communities, English was the language of instruction for each grade; in other communities, students were taught in Inuktitut from Kindergarten to Grade 3, with English introduced as the language of instruction around Grade 4. At this time, Inuktitut was taught as a subject area, like a second language. According to the 2006 *Conciliator's Final Report: The Nunavut Project*, by Justice Thomas R. Berger, this abrupt switch from Inuktitut to English limited students' comprehension of either language, contributing to Nunavut's high dropout rates.

The 2008 Education Act

10. The 2008 *Education Act* outlines education from Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K–12) in Nunavut, the persons entitled to receive it, and the way schools are required to carry it out. This new legislation includes changes to the education system and structure created by the previous Northwest Territories legislation. The goal of the new Act is to ensure that the vision and beliefs about education held by Nunavummiut are embedded in schools and in the education that students receive in Nunavut. Some parts of the Act give legal reinforcement to practices that were already established in Nunavut schools. Other parts of the Act introduce significant changes to address challenges facing the education system. Major changes include

- bilingual education for all students by 2019–20 school year (an Inuit language and either English or French);
- incorporation of Inuit culture into all aspects of the education system, including community consultation and involvement of elders;
- direct roles and responsibilities for elected District Education Authorities; and
- additional support to help students stay engaged and succeed in their education (including more teachers and other staff).

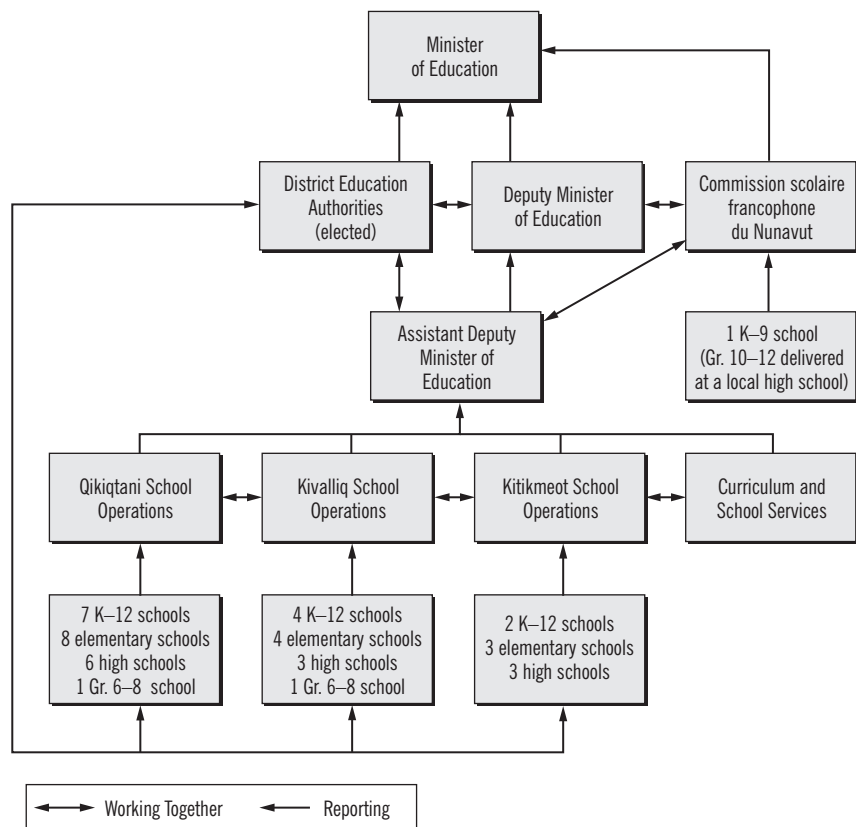
11. **A major undertaking.** It was recognized both within and outside the Department that implementing the Act would be a major undertaking and would take significant time, not only because of the task itself but because it was to be performed at a time when Nunavut's education system was not fully mature. Many of the requirements under the *Education Act* involve long-term effort, including recruiting and creating new resources, and providing support to the responsible parties (such as District Education Authorities and school staff). It was also recognized that implementing a key feature of the *Education Act*, bilingual education, would require efforts not only by the Department of Education but also by parents, students, and the community.

12. **The Department's roles and responsibilities.** The Department of Education's mission is to work collaboratively to build a seamless learning environment that is accessible to learners of all ages, inspires excellence among learners and educators, and promotes personal and community well-being. Education is one of the Government of Nunavut's largest departments. Its budget for K–12 School Operations and for Curriculum and School Services was approximately \$171 million in the 2012–13 fiscal year.

13. The Minister of Education is responsible for the overall administration of the *Education Act*, including ensuring that District Education Authorities and schools have the resources they need to carry out their responsibilities under the Act and its related regulations. The Department’s duties and responsibilities under the Act are carried out by officials in three Regional School Operations offices, the Commission scolaire francophone du Nunavut, three Curriculum and School Services offices, departmental headquarters, and 43 schools operating in Nunavut’s 25 communities (Exhibit 1).

14. The Curriculum and School Services division conducts research into *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*, an Inuktitut term meaning “that which has long been known by Inuit.” This concept is the foundation of Inuit knowledge and philosophy, and characterizes Inuit culture. Staff members use *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* as the basis for developing a curriculum, related teaching resources, and student assessment tools (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 1 Roles and responsibilities for Nunavut’s Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system are shared by many



Source: Government of Nunavut’s Department of Education, 2013

Exhibit 2 Guiding principles of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* apply under Nunavut's *Education Act*

| Principle | Meaning |
|---|---|
| <i>Inuuqatigiitsiarniq</i> | Respecting others, relationships, and caring for people |
| <i>Tunnganarniq</i> | Fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming, and inclusive |
| <i>Pijitsirniq</i> | Serving and providing for family or community, or both |
| <i>Ajiiqatigiinni</i> | Decision making through discussion and consensus |
| <i>Pilimmaksarniq / Pijariuqsarniq</i> | Development of skills through practice, effort, and action |
| <i>Piliriqatigiinni / Ikajuqatigiinni</i> | Working together for a common cause |
| <i>Qanuqtuurniq</i> | Being innovative and resourceful |
| <i>Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq</i> | Respect and care for the land, animals, and the environment |

Sources: *Education Act*, Nunavut, 2008

15. The Curriculum and School Services division also coordinates student records, teacher certification, and educator and leadership development programs. The Regional School Operations offices are responsible for the day-to-day operation of schools, supervising teaching staff, liaising with and supporting District Education Authorities, and overseeing the delivery of educational programs and services for students in Kindergarten through Grade 12. Regional School Operations staff members also provide pedagogical support and training within the schools. Principals are each responsible for managing their school, including its organization, administration, and operations.

16. **Responsibilities outside the Department.** Under the *Education Act*, parties outside the Department also have duties. The Act assigns significant responsibilities to the District Education Authorities. Each community has an elected authority, whose duties include setting school policies on student behaviour, attendance, and discipline, as well as promoting the value of education to students, parents, and the broader community. The authorities are also responsible for monitoring school plans and providing direction to principals on how to administer schools. School principals and Regional School Operations staff are expected to support the authorities in fulfilling these duties.

17. The Act recognizes the critical role of parents in education. They are responsible for ensuring that their children come to school ready to learn, supporting the students' learning, and attending meetings with their children's teachers or principals when asked to do so. Finally, the Act requires students to attend school regularly and punctually.

18. The Nunavut Legislative Assembly is responsible for reviewing the Act. A legislative review was to occur in the 2011–12 school year and every five years thereafter. According to the *Education Act*, a review shall include an examination of the administration and implementation of the Act, the effectiveness of its provisions, and the achievement of its objectives. A review may also include recommendations for changes to the Act. The Minister of Education has indicated that it would be preferable not to amend the Act before our audit was tabled.

Focus of the audit

19. We looked at whether the Government of Nunavut's Department of Education has adequately managed implementation of the *Education Act* since the Act was passed. For this purpose, we focused on six key elements of the Act:

- attendance,
- student assessment,
- bilingual education,
- **inclusive education**,
- curriculum, and
- parental involvement.

Inclusive education—The opportunity for all students, regardless of individual challenges or differences, to attend regular classes with children in the same age group, and to receive an education based on individual goals and achieved through the use of adequate support.

We did not audit the quality of education in Nunavut.

20. Although the *Education Act* came into force only in 2009, we decided to conduct an audit now to examine whether the Department is on the right track in implementing the Act. We hoped to highlight any areas needing attention or consideration of a revised approach as the Department continues with implementation. This information can also be used as part of the legislative review.

21. More details about the audit objectives, scope, approach, and criteria are in **About the Audit** at the end of this report.

Observations and Recommendations

Planning the implementation of the *Education Act*

22. Nunavut's *Education Act* calls for phased implementation. We examined whether the territory's Department of Education has adequately planned to implement the Act. More specifically, we examined the Department's planning activities since the Act was passed, with the aim of determining whether the Department has a documented, adequately resourced plan in place to implement the Act. We analyzed and reviewed documentation related to the planning of implementation of the Act, such as minutes of meetings of the Department's *Education Act* Working Group and related documentation. We also conducted interviews with departmental officials.

The Department of Education established a plan to guide implementation

23. We found that the Department put a structure in place to establish a plan for implementing the *Education Act*. A working group was formed in 2009, consisting of the Deputy Minister and managers from headquarters and the territory's three regions. The group was created as a forum for discussion, decision making, and oversight regarding all of the Department's implementation activities aimed at meeting the *Education Act* requirements. The group was responsible for guiding and approving the development and management of a multi-year *Education Act* implementation plan. The working group met regularly and was supported by an *Education Act* implementation coordinator.

24. The Department developed a plan that specified what was needed to implement the Act as of fall 2009. The plan included developing regulations, guidance, directives, and training material. It also included delivering training to schools and District Education Authorities, and planning for and conducting consultations. We found that the planning documentation identified priorities, as well as areas that required consultation and cooperation with stakeholders.

25. The Department of Education received funding of approximately \$17.5 million up until 31 March 2012 to help with implementation of the Act. This included funding for District Education Authorities and school staff. Senior officials informed us that they believed the financial resources were adequate for doing what was needed under the plan, but that filling positions was a challenge.

Progress on implementing the Act

26. Implementing the *Education Act* is critical if the Department of Education is to achieve the results the territory wants for Nunavut's education system. The Minister of Education has responsibility for implementing the Act, and this responsibility is delegated to the Department of Education. The Act and its regulations set staggered dates for implementation.

27. We looked at whether the Department provided the tools and resources to meet the requirements under the Act and its related regulations and guidance. Tools and resources need to be provided to enable all parties to fulfill their duties. For example, although teachers and principals deliver the required curriculum, the Department must develop it.

28. We also looked at whether the Department used the information it prepared and collected for implementing the Act to assess the impact of the legislation to date and to enhance its ongoing implementation. We did this for the six key elements of the Act that we audited. Considering this information would allow the Department to determine whether the Act is making a difference and to assess whether the Department needed to change its approach.

29. We audited eight schools (covering Kindergarten to Grade 12) within five communities, from all three regions of the territory. We also conducted interviews with Department of Education officials, including school administrators and teachers, at headquarters and within the three regions.

30. Overall, we found that the Department is making efforts to implement the Act but that there are still many areas in which progress has been limited. We found that while progress is being made in some areas, the Department is not meeting targets for implementing bilingual education. We found factors both within and outside the Department's control that have constrained progress on implementing the *Education Act*.

The Department underestimated the level of effort required to implement the Act

31. We found that the Department underestimated the magnitude, in terms of time and effort required to complete some aspects of its implementation plan. For example, staff members who were assigned implementation tasks had to carry out these duties in addition to their full-time responsibilities elsewhere in the Department. Regional School Operations staff, such as school superintendents and executive directors, were assigned the tasks of developing implementation tools

and delivering training; at the same time, often they were responsible for managing Regional School Operations offices, supervising schools, facilitating children's education, and assisting District Education Authorities. Further, although the Department was aware that District Education Authorities would need training on various aspects of the Act, it underestimated the amount of training required, specifically with regard to financial and administrative responsibilities. The incorrect estimation of the work involved, as well as the existence of vacant positions, contributed to the implementation being incomplete or delayed.

Progress has been good in developing regulations and providing training

32. Regulation development. Developing regulations is a priority for the Department of Education. In addition to completing the legislative framework that permits full implementation of certain topics in the Act, regulations give departmental staff and District Education Authorities more detailed information about how to perform their duties.

33. We found that the Department established a timeline for developing regulations; this timeline has been revised over time. The current plan is to complete the regulations by the middle of the 2014–15 school year. At the time of our audit, the Department was on track for meeting its revised schedule for developing regulations. For example, the government has issued regulations concerning language of instruction and inclusive education. The Language of Instruction Regulations outline the models of bilingual education from which a District Education Authority can select for its community.

34. Training. It is imperative that individuals responsible for implementation understand their duties under the *Education Act* and possess the skills needed for these duties. For instance, they must understand the legislation so they can ensure compliance with the Act and its regulations. We examined whether the Department developed and provided training to help responsible individuals perform their duties under the Act.

35. We found that the Department has provided training on many provisions of the new *Education Act* since it came into effect, such as training related to positive school environments. This has included conferences to train school principals and District Education Authority representatives. We also found that the Department sought feedback from participants about these sessions;

its analysis of this feedback indicated that, overall, participants were mostly satisfied with the training.

The Department is not meeting the Act’s bilingual education requirements

36. Bilingual education is a cornerstone of the Act. The purpose of bilingual education in Nunavut is to produce graduates who are able to use both an Inuit language and English or French competently. The Act states that every student shall be given a bilingual education and that, by the 2019–20 school year, the bilingual education requirement is to apply to all grades. The requirement is to be implemented gradually (Exhibit 3) according to one of the three bilingual education models selected by the District Education Authority.

Exhibit 3 The *Education Act* sets a schedule for phasing in bilingual education

| Grades | School year in which bilingual* education requirements come into force |
|-------------------|--|
| Kindergarten to 3 | 2009–10 |
| 4 | 2013–14 |
| 5 | 2014–15 |
| 6 | 2015–16 |
| 7 | 2016–17 |
| 8 | 2017–18 |
| 9 | 2018–19 |
| 10, 11, 12 | 2019–20 |

* Bilingual education: Instruction in one Inuit language, and either English or French.

Sources: Government of Nunavut, Language of Instruction Regulations

37. Implementing the *Education Act*’s bilingual education requirements is a major undertaking. It requires students to be taught by qualified bilingual teachers, using bilingual curriculum and materials. To implement the requirements successfully, the Department needs information about whether it has enough qualified bilingual teachers to meet the current bilingual education requirements for Kindergarten to Grade 3, as well as the number of bilingual teachers who will be needed in the future.

38. We examined whether the Department developed the tools and put resources in place to implement the bilingual requirements of the Act, and whether the schools we audited met or were on track toward meeting the bilingual requirements.

39. Of the eight schools we audited, five offered Kindergarten to Grade 3. We found that during the 2011–12 school year, the Department met the bilingual education requirement for those grades in only one of the five schools. Although the Department knows there are gaps in its ability to staff bilingual positions, we found that it does not have information on the extent to which Nunavut schools meet the current bilingual education requirements for Kindergarten to Grade 3. Further, we found that only one of the five schools we audited expects to be able to meet the Grade 4 bilingual requirements that came into effect in fall 2013. The schools will face greater challenges to meet bilingual education requirements as more and more grades need to become bilingual.

40. The lack of qualified bilingual teachers is hindering progress toward meeting the bilingual education requirement. We were told by officials that the 2019–20 bilingual education goal will not be met. The Department has not determined how many bilingual educators will be needed each year to meet the 2019–20 goal. However, the Department has recognized the need to train bilingual educators for the future. In 2006, it worked with the Nunavut Arctic College to develop a 10-year educator training strategy; this included recommendations for addressing the shortage of bilingual teachers, such as offering distance education.

41. Despite these efforts, the Department told us that the Nunavut Teacher Educator Program does not produce enough fully bilingual graduates to meet its needs. Therefore, the Department is not in a position to successfully achieve the 2019–20 bilingual education goal. The lack of bilingual teachers will affect the Department's capacity to produce bilingual graduates who could continue their education and qualify as bilingual teachers.

42. **Recommendation.** The Department of Education should

- determine the extent to which its schools meet the bilingual requirements for Kindergarten to Grade 3;
- determine the number of bilingual teachers needed in the short, medium, and long term to meet the bilingual education requirements, and compare these requirements with the current and expected supply of teachers, and identify any gaps; and
- determine the extent to which current strategies for addressing the shortage of bilingual teachers need to be adjusted, and decide whether additional measures are required.

The Department's response. *Agreed. The Department recognizes that our current bilingual education strategies do not fully address our mandate and that additional measures are required to move forward.*

Currently, the Department has data on the number of bilingual teachers and language specialists. We agree that more detailed information on the gaps in human resources to meet bilingual education requirements is needed.

The Department will develop a database to gather data on educators' bilingual capacities at all levels within the Kindergarten to Grade 12 school system. It will include existing educators' training and language skill sets, and where placements are needed to fulfill bilingual obligations. This information will help to determine how to meet the bilingual requirements in the short and medium term.

The Department will collaborate with the Nunavut Teacher Education Program to develop a Memorandum of Understanding to track the number of bilingual students who enter and successfully complete the program annually.

The Department is committed to participating in the upcoming review of the Education Act by the Legislative Assembly and is prepared to consider changes to the provisions concerning bilingual education if necessary.

The Department does not provide enough training to those hired to fill bilingual educator shortages

43. To address the insufficient number of qualified bilingual teachers, the Department has used letters of authority to hire individuals to meet bilingual education instruction needs. Letters of authority are special authorizations, permitted under the *Education Act*, that allow the Department to hire individuals without teaching certificates on a temporary basis to fill teacher vacancies. The Department hires these individuals to teach early grades in an Inuit language or else to teach these languages in high school. The Department also uses language specialists who are not responsible for a grade level but teach language or cultural skills.

44. These measures have helped the Department to compensate for some of the shortage of qualified bilingual teachers and to deliver Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun instruction to students. However, teachers and senior management have expressed concern that some individuals hired under a letter of authority lack formal training in areas such as teaching techniques and assessment, and that this practice has had an effect on the quality of education received by students.

45. Recommendation. The Department of Education should identify areas in which training is needed for language specialists and individuals hired under letters of authority to fill teaching positions.

The Department's response. Agreed. The Department is committed to reviewing expectations and training programs for language specialists and individuals on letters of authority (LOA). This will include a review of the certification process for language specialists, as well as a review of how LOAs are issued to educators, and how to track those in teaching positions on LOAs. Both reviews are planned for this coming school year (2013–14).

The Department will work with Nunavut Arctic College to revitalize the Language and Culture Instructor Diploma program to deliver basic instructional programs to language specialists and potential Inuit language instructors. This review will include collaboration with the Nunavut Teacher's Association to determine how to credit prior learning, and to link the program with teacher education courses.

This review will also include identifying the functions of language specialists in bilingual programs, and at what levels they are needed most within the school system.

The pace of developing teaching resources for the new curriculum has been slow

46. The *Education Act* recognizes the relationship between learning, language, and culture, and the importance of respecting that relationship in developing and delivering the Nunavut curriculum. Under the Act, the Minister must establish the curriculum for Kindergarten and grades 1 to 12. Further, the curriculum is to be based on the principles and concepts of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* (see Exhibit 2). The philosophy of how this would be done is outlined in a curriculum foundation document developed by the Department. The document stresses the importance of a made-in-Nunavut curriculum.

47. A curriculum is a set of subjects that make up a course of study in a school. To deliver the curriculum in schools, educators require teaching resources, such as handbooks and manuals, to guide their instruction. In Nunavut, teachers need bilingual resources to teach the curriculum in Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun. We examined whether the Department had provided educators with the made-in-Nunavut curriculum and the related teaching resources for implementing it, including those required in Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun. We reviewed documentation related to the development of curriculum and teaching resources, and interviewed departmental officials, including teachers.

48. For Kindergarten and grades 1 through 12, we found that the Department has developed curriculum reflecting the principles of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*. The Department has organized the curriculum around four integrated content areas, each of which applies throughout all grades. Every year, the Department produces a reference guide that clearly outlines the approved curriculum and teaching resources available for use by schools. The guide includes the teaching resources developed to date by the Department. It also includes teaching resources that have been borrowed from other jurisdictions to fill gaps where new resources have not yet been developed by the Department.

49. When the *Education Act* was passed in 2008, the Department had already been working for almost a decade to develop made-in-Nunavut teaching resources. We found that the Department has developed 50 percent of its sets of teaching resources to date. In our view, the Department will need to reassess its approach to developing the remainder of the teaching resources.

50. Several educators and departmental officials told us that progress has been particularly slow in producing teaching resources in the Inuit languages, with those in Inuinnaqtun falling the furthest behind. This situation has left a shortage of Inuit language materials for use in classrooms. To compensate, Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun teachers are developing their own teaching resources or translating material that is available only in English. Officials told us that various challenges have limited progress in developing made-in-Nunavut teaching resources. For example, it has been difficult for the Department to hire staff with the required expertise to develop the new resources, particularly in the Inuit languages. Consequently, the Department has had to take additional time to translate the teaching resources after development.

51. The lack of teaching resources is another barrier to meeting the bilingual education requirements of the Act. Without made-in-Nunavut teaching resources, the education system cannot fully reflect the *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* foundation on which the curriculum is based.

52. **Recommendation.** The Department of Education should reassess its plans for developing the remainder of the required teaching resources, in the required languages, and should determine what adjustments are to be made and by when. It should also consider other options, such as adapting resources from other jurisdictions for use in the Nunavut education system.

The Department's response. Agreed. The Department will review the current plan for developing teaching resources and re-evaluate accordingly. The Department is committed to adapting existing teaching resources from other jurisdictions according to direction given by our Minister. However, Nunavut is a very distinct jurisdiction, with specific cultural and language needs in comparison to other jurisdictions. Our Education Act directs us to use Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit as the foundation for everything we do. Teaching resources from other jurisdictions will be adapted for Nunavut's cultural and linguistic priorities, based on Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit.

Implementing inclusive education requires more support from the Department

53. Nunavut supports an inclusive education system (Exhibit 4). Under the *Education Act*, students are entitled to have their educational program adjusted, and to receive adequate support to meet their learning needs and achieve curriculum outcomes. Inclusive education requires teachers to deliver a differentiated approach to the curriculum. To do this, teachers need to conduct continuous learning assessments that will show where each of their students stands. Teachers then adapt the lesson plans accordingly. Schools provide additional support to children who need extra assistance.

Exhibit 4 Concepts of inclusive education

Inclusive education—The opportunity for all students, regardless of individual challenges or differences, to attend regular classes with children in the same age group, and to receive an education based on individual goals and achieved through the use of adequate support.

Differentiated instruction—Instruction that ensures each individual student's learning style, strengths, and needs are met through adapting what is learned, how it is learned, or how learning is assessed. A differentiated classroom provides students with multiple opportunities and pathways to learn new information through the use of a variety of teaching strategies, assignments, materials, and assessment at all stages of learning.

Continuous progress—The advancement of students through the stages of learning, from early childhood through Grade 12, at their individual rate of learning. The Department assesses their progress against benchmarks. Students move from grade to grade with their peers but are assessed each year to see where they are on a continuum. This helps their next grade teacher to know each student's strengths and areas that need improvement.

Social promotion—The practice of allowing a student to proceed from one grade to the next without achieving the required competencies, and without a learning plan that supports remediation or growth.

Source: Government of Nunavut, Department of Education documentation

54. A differentiated approach facilitates the Department's commitment to continuous progress. This contrasts with social promotion, where students pass from grade to grade with their peers even though they have not mastered what they needed to learn and have not have received an individualized learning plan. In a more conventional class, students are generally at the same level. Under a differentiated approach, however, a teacher might be responsible for a group of students with widely varying capabilities, learning different things and using different materials. This requires more time and effort on the part of teachers.

55. We examined whether the Department has provided schools with the tools and resources they need to implement inclusive education. Among these are

- approved regulations, directives, and handbooks;
- training on how to deliver and facilitate inclusive education and assessment; and
- support for children who need extra assistance.

56. **Tools and resources.** We found that the government issued the *Inclusive Education Regulations* in September 2011, and that regions have draft inclusive education handbooks and consultants in place to assist teachers with implementing inclusive education. Schools have student support teachers, who lead the development and management of programs for students requiring program adjustments or special support.

57. Despite this, departmental officials, including teachers, informed us that implementing inclusive education is difficult for several reasons. One reason we were given is a lack of training for Nunavut teachers and student support assistants in differentiated instruction, which is a key component of inclusive education. Another reason is that, at times, student support teachers have to perform other functions in schools, limiting the time they have available to assist teachers and students.

58. **Challenges.** Low attendance adds to the challenge of implementing inclusive education. If students are not in class, it is difficult for teachers to assess them on an ongoing basis. At times, we found, teachers could not assess students' performance and assign them a mark because of their low attendance rates. Further, if teachers develop a differentiated approach for their class but student attendance varies, the teachers have to change their approach on a daily basis. We reviewed a sample of monthly attendance reports submitted by schools. Several

reports indicated that students attended class less than 50 percent of the time, with attendance dropping as low as 27 percent. In such a situation, a teacher's approach to delivering lessons is influenced not only by the students' learning abilities but also by their attendance rates.

59. Extra support. Individual student support plans outline the support, services, goals, and expected outcomes for students who need extra assistance. The plans are tools for addressing the specific educational needs of individual students and assisting in their inclusion in the classroom. The plans are to be established with input from parents and monitored thereafter. For the eight schools we audited, we reviewed individual student support plans for 35 students.

60. We found that documentation did not state whether the students received the needed services or adjustments about 75 percent of the time. Files did not always indicate whether the services were provided at the rate required, or whether the right services, such as mental health support, were made available. For some of the plans, we were told that students did not receive the services because specialists were unavailable in the community or parents had not signed consent forms allowing their children to receive the support. We were also informed that services may have been received or adjustments made but not documented. We also found that for 65 percent of the plans we examined, tracking of the student's progress or the plan's effectiveness was not documented.

61. If students for whom individual student support plans have been established do not receive the specified services and support, the implementation of inclusive education becomes a greater challenge. Not only are students' educational needs not being met, but teachers face increased difficulty accommodating all students.

62. Recommendation. The Department of Education should provide mandatory training on differentiated instruction and related ongoing assessment to all Nunavut teachers and student support assistants.

The Department's response. Agreed. As part of our approach to inclusion, the Department is committed to differentiated instruction and is undertaking a cost analysis for developing and offering differentiated instruction training workshops for educators. We are considering how to mandate differentiated instruction training for all educators. The Department will review best practices in differentiated instruction training in other jurisdictions. The Department will complete a three-year work plan to develop, implement, and evaluate differentiated instruction training. Student Support Assistant training will also include this topic.

63. Recommendation. The Department of Education should

- track progress on individual student support plans and the plans' effectiveness in ensuring that support required for students is provided at the rate required; and
- clearly communicate progress on individual student support plans to teachers and assistants who are working with each student, including whether support in the individual student support plans can be provided, and if not, why not.

The Department's response. Agreed. During the 2012–13 school year, the student support working group developed a streamlined and uniform approach to individual student support plans (ISSPs). This approach outlines expectations for ongoing monitoring and assessment of the plans. School teams will be expected to review ISSPs on an ongoing basis throughout the school year.

Furthermore, the Department is committed to tracking ISSPs through the newly developed Student Information System (SIS). The SIS will provide information regarding a student's progress on the goals set out in each ISSP. An external review of inclusive education is being planned, and will identify gaps in aid or support to students on ISSPs.

The Department will collaborate with the departments of Health and Family Services to create guidelines for addressing issues and services for students requiring additional support that the school system cannot provide. This process will be clearly communicated to educators and parents.

The Department is not analyzing and using key information

64. As mentioned in paragraph 28, we looked at whether the Department used the information collected and prepared for implementing the Act to identify the impact of the Act to date and to enhance ongoing implementation. We found that information on key elements of the Act, namely assessment and attendance, is not being used to identify the impact of the Act to date and to enhance its ongoing implementation.

65. Attendance. The *Education Act* requires principals to promote regular and punctual school attendance. It also requires that principals put in place programs and procedures to encourage parent and community involvement in the school. We examined how schools are promoting attendance and parental involvement and the impact of these initiatives. We found that all schools we examined have initiatives in place to promote parental involvement but that these initiatives are done mostly on an ad hoc basis. For example, schools

hold community feasts or invite parents to the school as part of a family literacy initiative. We found that attendance is being promoted in the schools through the use of incentives such as extracurricular activities and prizes for good attendees.

66. However, principals do not analyze or document whether these initiatives are making a difference in the involvement of parents or the attendance of students, and the Department does not require them to do so. Further, school initiatives are not consistently shared across regions so that schools can learn about best practices and implement these initiatives in their own school.

67. Assessment. The *Education Act* requires students to be assessed regularly. According to the Operations Manual for Nunavut Schools, the assessment includes standardized Grade 12 exams developed by the Government of Alberta. All students must take the standardized Grade 12 English exam to graduate from high school. A student's final course mark is a combination of the mark assigned by the teacher and the mark obtained on the exam. We examined whether the Department collects and analyzes information about student assessment related to these marks to assist in developing the Nunavut-wide assessments required to be implemented in 2014 under the *Education Act*.

68. We found that the Department collects data about the difference between the mark obtained by a student in the classroom and the mark obtained on the standardized Alberta exam. We analyzed this information for all Grade 12 students in Nunavut. On average, we found that for the three school years we tested, the classroom grade was 26 percent higher than the standardized test grade. For the 2010–11 school year, the difference was 30 percent. By comparison, schools in Whitehorse, Yukon, had class marks in various courses that averaged 4 percent higher than the related standardized exam mark that year.

69. We did not expect the classroom and exam marks to be identical. However, to ensure that improvements are continually sought in education quality, the Department should understand why such a large discrepancy exists. Departmental officials cited the contributing factors to be the language of the exam—the exam is written in a language other than the students' mother tongue—and the assessment methods used by Nunavut schools. We found that the Department has not conducted an analysis to understand these discrepancies. Without such an analysis, the Department does not know whether students are being properly prepared in the classroom for the exams, whether

teachers need additional support in providing classroom assessments, or whether different assessment tools and approaches are required.

70. Recommendation. The Department should analyze the information it has on the difference between the marks obtained by students in the classroom and on the Alberta exam, and should identify potential areas for improvement based on this analysis.

The Department's response. Agreed. This has been a departmental priority for several months and we have analyzed these differentials over the past three years. In an effort to address the gap between classroom marks and final examination marks, a working group in the Department has completed a directive on marks differentiation. The directive will be in-serviced at the upcoming regional principals' meetings early in the 2013–14 school year. We will provide support to school staff in the implementation of this directive.

Reporting on implementation of the Act is limited

71. The *Education Act* requires reporting within the Department and to the Legislative Assembly. Schools are required to submit reports to the Department of Education and District Education Authorities. Within 12 months after the end of each school year, the Minister of Education is required to report to the Legislative Assembly on the education system in Nunavut. We examined whether the Department met key reporting requirements.

72. Internal reporting. The Operations Manual for Nunavut Schools requires that principals report monthly to the Regional School Operations offices, on a variety of information. Under the Act, principals must also submit operational plans for their schools. The Department requests that these school plans include goals for the coming year and actions that will be taken to help achieve them. The reports communicate information on the schools' implementation of the *Education Act*, such as bilingual education, attendance statistics, and activities occurring in the school. Principals have indicated that they must devote considerable time and effort to completing the reports. We found that, with the other demands on their time, principals do not always prepare and submit these reports. Further, Regional School Operations staff members told us that the reports do not meet their needs and that staff do not use them to identify trends or best practices within the schools. Consequently, the reports involve considerable effort but have limited value for those who prepare or receive them.

73. External reporting. To comply with its reporting requirements, the Department of Education should have already submitted to the Legislative Assembly its annual reports for the 2009–10, 2010–11, and 2011–12 school years. We found that, as of June 2013, the Department had submitted only its 2009–10 report, which was more than a year late.

74. We found that the 2009–10 report contains limited information related to the implementation of the *Education Act*. For example, the report refers to mandatory bilingual education from Kindergarten to Grade 3 as an *Education Act* priority and accomplishment. While bilingual education for these grades is a priority, the report provides no details about how the Department is achieving this goal or the extent to which the education system can realistically meet the resulting demand for bilingual teachers.

75. As the Legislative Assembly carries out its review of the *Education Act*, it will be important for the Department to be able to provide information on the status of implementation, the effectiveness of the Act's provisions, and the achievement of its objectives. This will ensure that the review is based on up-to-date, complete information, which could also be used in the Department's annual reports.

76. Recommendation. The Department of Education should decide on

- the key information it needs to receive from principals so that it can monitor implementation of the *Education Act* in schools, and
- the report format and timing that will provide the best value.

The Department's response. *Agreed. The Department is committed to streamlining principals' monthly reports and reviewing the reporting procedures to better identify reporting requirements. The Planning and Reporting Committee will revise the current template as needed. The Department will review components of the report, such as template, purpose, frequency of reporting, and information captured to establish more effective reports and monitor the implementation of the Education Act. As part of this review, the Department will survey principals during the upcoming District Education Authority (DEA) and principal in-service this fall 2013.*

In addition, as the Student Information System is implemented, certain components of the principals' monthly reports will be tracked through the database, reducing the reporting requirements on principals. The database will provide a more systematic way of reporting. The Department is also

committed to providing feedback to principals on the reports, sharing the information collected from these reports with principals and using this data effectively for planning purposes.

77. Recommendation. The Department of Education should provide information on the progress of implementing the *Education Act* to the Legislative Assembly for its review of the Act. It should include the following information:

- what has been accomplished and what remains to be done in the area of teaching resources related to curriculum and inclusive education, along with realistic estimates of the human resources and time necessary to complete and provide the resources to schools;
- the impact of external challenges on the Department's ability to implement the Act, including those identified in paragraphs 79 to 83;
- areas in which the Department should prioritize its efforts to improve student success; and
- current and future needs for bilingual educators, and the Department's capacity to meet the 2013 to 2020 bilingual education requirements of the Act.

The Department's response. *Agreed. Letters dated 27 March 2012 and 20 November 2012 were sent to the Legislative Assembly outlining the Department's willingness to provide information during the Assembly's review of the Education Act.*

The Department has identified many of the same challenges as the Office of the Auditor General in implementing the Education Act and has taken steps to

- *launch a parental engagement campaign in 2013,*
- *provide funding to District Education Authorities (DEAs) to support an early childhood education program which promotes Inuit language and culture, and*
- *develop a DEA Administration manual to help clarify roles and responsibilities.*

We will provide regular updates on Education Act implementation through the Department's annual report.

There will be a renewed focus on data sources and collection to enhance the quality of reliable, relevant information concerning the education system.

The Department will be providing the following information to the Legislative Assembly:

- *an assessment of current and needed learning resources for curriculum and inclusive education, and an action plan to move forward;*
- *the impact of external factors on the implementation of the Education Act;*
- *identified areas to improve student success (attendance, numeracy, literacy, and bilingualism); and*
- *the number of bilingual educators needed in the short and medium term.*

Other important factors affect the implementation of the *Education Act*

78. Based on our audit findings and our discussions with senior managers and departmental officials, including in the five communities we visited, we identified several obstacles to the Department's implementation of the Act.

79. Attendance and parental involvement. Low attendance is a serious problem in Nunavut. Parents play a critical role in ensuring that their children go to school. The *Education Act* specifies what is expected of parents. For example, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children come to school ready to learn, and parents should promote regular and punctual school attendance. The Act requires principals to inform parents about activities at school and work with District Education Authorities to implement programs to promote parental involvement. District Education Authorities are also responsible for developing a policy to encourage students to attend school, as well as assist parents in promoting attendance.

80. In our view, programs and policies alone—even when fully in force and effective—will not be enough to address low attendance or other crucial issues. Parental involvement is paramount to the success of any attempt by the Department to improve the quality of education in Nunavut. Teachers cannot deliver even the best-designed curriculum, taught in a fully bilingual environment, if students do not attend school. Absence will affect a student's ability to learn what is required to advance to the next grade. Similarly, teachers' ability to teach will be affected if they are constantly required to adapt their lessons for students who do not attend school regularly.

81. Capacity. In its previous reports to the Legislative Assembly, the Office of the Auditor General noted that insufficient human resources have hampered the government's ability to develop and deliver some programs and perform some tasks. This issue applies to the implementation of the *Education Act*. Management informed us that several activities, such as curriculum development and reporting, were affected by capacity issues. Unfilled positions, the housing shortage, high turnover, and overburdened staff contribute to the capacity problem.

82. Fluency in Inuit Languages. Some staff in the schools we visited told us that English is often spoken in the home and that fluency in Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun is affected. This is in line with the findings of the 2006 Census of Canada, which reported that only about 65 percent of Nunavut respondents spoke Inuktitut at home. If students enter school with varying levels of understanding of Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun, teachers will face pressure to deliver the curriculum and at the same time teach the language.

83. District Education Authorities. The *Education Act* has given District Education Authorities many responsibilities. The Authorities have repeatedly raised concerns that they are unable to perform assigned duties, or that they need more clarity and training about their responsibilities. We were told by departmental officials that the District Education Authorities' need for additional training or their inability to carry out assigned responsibilities created additional work for the school and for Regional School Operations staff. This problem contributes to capacity issues within schools.

Conclusion

84. We concluded that the Government of Nunavut's Department of Education has not adequately managed most aspects of implementation of the *Education Act*.

85. The Department has a documented plan in place to implement the *Education Act*. However, it underestimated the level of effort required to implement the legislation. Further, the Department is not meeting the Act's bilingual education requirements and has not determined how many bilingual educators are needed to meet the requirements of the Act.

86. The Department has provided some tools to meet the requirements of the Act, such as regulations. However, there are still many areas requiring tools and resources—for example, teaching resources to deliver the curriculum and training to facilitate inclusive education.

87. The Department has not monitored implementation of the *Education Act*. As a result, the Department has not used information for the purposes of identifying the impact that the Act has had to date or enhancing ongoing implementation. In addition, the Department has not reported to the Legislative Assembly on implementation of the Act, as required.

88. We audited the early stages of implementation of the Act. The coming legislative review of the *Education Act* provides an opportunity to look at the progress made on implementation to date, as well as the internal and external challenges to implementation.

About the Audit

All of the audit work in this report was conducted in accordance with the standards for assurance engagements set out in The Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants Handbook—Assurance. While the Office adopts these standards as the minimum requirement for our audits, we also draw upon the standards and practices of other disciplines.

As part of our regular audit process, we obtained management’s confirmation that the findings reported in this report are factually based.

Objective

The objective of this audit was to determine whether the Government of Nunavut’s Department of Education has adequately managed the implementation of the *Education Act*.

Scope and approach

We examined the Government of Nunavut’s Department of Education because it is the department responsible for education from Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K–12) in Nunavut.

We focused on the implementation of six key elements of the *Education Act*:

- attendance,
- student assessment,
- bilingual education,
- inclusive education,
- curriculum, and
- parental involvement.

The audit included all three regions of Nunavut. We visited eight schools in five communities and reviewed files from all of these schools covering the 2009–10, 2010–11, and 2011–12 school years. We audited the individual student support plans for 35 students and 48 student assessment files chosen randomly from student lists. We did not audit Nunavut’s adult education system or programs that the federal government funds. We did not audit the District Education Authorities.

We reviewed the Government of Nunavut’s laws, regulations, policies, and guidance on the education system. We also interviewed officials from the Department of Education as well as school staff, representatives of District Education Authorities, and stakeholder groups.

Criteria

| To determine whether the Government of Nunavut's Department of Education has adequately managed the implementation of the <i>Education Act</i> , we used the following criteria: | |
|--|---|
| Criteria | Sources |
| The Department of Education has a documented, adequately resourced plan in place to implement the <i>Education Act</i> , including a process to track, measure, and report progress. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Education Act</i>, sections 120, 126(1) and 126(2) |
| The Department has <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitored the implementation of the <i>Education Act</i>, and • reported to the Legislative Assembly on the implementation of the Act. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Education Act</i>, sections 120, 126(1) and 126(2) |
| For the key elements of the Act, the Department has <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided the tools and resources to meet the requirements under the Act and its related regulations/guidance, and • used the information collected and prepared for implementing the Act to identify the impact of the Act to date and to enhance its ongoing implementation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Education Act</i>, sections 120, 126(1) and 126(2) |

Management reviewed and accepted the suitability of the criteria used in the audit.

Period covered by the audit

The audit covered the period between 1 July 2009 and 31 May 2013. Audit work for this report was completed on 31 May 2013.

Audit team

Assistant Auditor General: Ronnie Campbell

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Appendix List of recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations found in the report. The number in front of the recommendation indicates the paragraph where it appears in the report. The numbers in parentheses indicate the paragraphs where the topic is discussed.

| Recommendation | Response |
|--|--|
| <p>Progress on implementing the Act</p> <p>42. The Department of Education should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determine the extent to which its schools meet the bilingual requirements for Kindergarten to Grade 3; • determine the number of bilingual teachers needed in the short, medium, and long term to meet the bilingual education requirements; compare these requirements with the current and expected supply of teachers and identify any gaps; and • determine the extent to which current strategies for addressing the shortage of bilingual teachers need to be adjusted, and decide whether additional measures are required. (26–41) | <p>The Department’s response. Agreed. The Department recognizes that our current bilingual education strategies do not fully address our mandate and that additional measures are required to move forward.</p> <p>Currently, the Department has data on the number of bilingual teachers and language specialists. We agree that more detailed information on the gaps in human resources to meet bilingual education requirements is needed.</p> <p>The Department will develop a database to gather data on educators’ bilingual capacities at all levels within the Kindergarten to Grade 12 school system. It will include existing educators’ training and language skill sets, and where placements are needed to fulfill bilingual obligations. This information will help to determine how to meet the bilingual requirements in the short and medium term.</p> <p>The Department will collaborate with the Nunavut Teacher Education Program to develop a Memorandum of Understanding to track the number of bilingual students who enter and successfully complete the program annually.</p> <p>The Department is committed to participating in the upcoming review of the <i>Education Act</i> by the Legislative Assembly and is prepared to consider changes to the provisions concerning bilingual education if necessary.</p> |

| Recommendation | Response |
|---|--|
| <p>45. The Department of Education should identify areas in which training is needed for language specialists and individuals hired under letters of authority to fill teaching positions. (43–44)</p> | <p>The Department’s response. Agreed. The Department is committed to reviewing expectations and training programs for language specialists and individuals on letters of authority (LOA). This will include a review of the certification process for language specialists, as well as a review of how LOAs are issued to educators, and how to track those in teaching positions on LOAs. Both reviews are planned for this coming school year (2013–14).</p> <p>The Department will work with Nunavut Arctic College to revitalize the Language and Culture Instructor Diploma program to deliver basic instructional programs to language specialists and potential Inuit language instructors. This review will include collaboration with the Nunavut Teacher’s Association to determine how to credit prior learning, and to link the program with teacher education courses.</p> <p>This review will also include identifying the functions of language specialists in bilingual programs, and at what levels they are needed most within the school system.</p> |
| <p>52. The Department of Education should reassess its plans for developing the remainder of the required teaching resources, in the required languages, and should determine what adjustments are to be made and by when. It should also consider other options, such as adapting resources from other jurisdictions for use in the Nunavut education system. (46–51)</p> | <p>The Department’s response. Agreed. The Department will review the current plan for developing teaching resources and re-evaluate accordingly. The Department is committed to adapting existing teaching resources from other jurisdictions according to direction given by our Minister. However, Nunavut is a very distinct jurisdiction, with specific cultural and language needs in comparison to other jurisdictions. Our <i>Education Act</i> directs us to use <i>Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit</i> as the foundation for everything we do. Teaching resources from other jurisdictions will be adapted for Nunavut’s cultural and linguistic priorities, based on <i>Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit</i>.</p> |
| <p>62. The Department of Education should provide mandatory training on differentiated instruction and related ongoing assessment to all Nunavut teachers and student support assistants. (53–61)</p> | <p>The Department’s response. Agreed. As part of our approach to inclusion, the Department is committed to differentiated instruction and is undertaking a cost analysis for developing and offering differentiated instruction training workshops for educators. We are considering how to mandate differentiated instruction training for all educators. The Department will review best practices in differentiated instruction training in other jurisdictions. The Department will complete a three-year work plan to develop, implement, and evaluate differentiated instruction training. Student Support Assistant training will also include this topic.</p> |

| Recommendation | Response |
|---|---|
| <p>63. The Department of Education should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • track progress on individual student support plans and the plans’ effectiveness in ensuring that support required for students is provided at the rate required; and • clearly communicate progress on individual student support plans to teachers and assistants who are working with each student, including whether support in the individual student support plans can be provided, and if not, why not. (53–61) | <p>The Department’s response. Agreed. During the 2012–13 school year, the student support working group developed a streamlined and uniform approach to individual student support plans (ISSPs). This approach outlines expectations for ongoing monitoring and assessment of the plans. School teams will be expected to review ISSPs on an ongoing basis throughout the school year.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Department is committed to tracking ISSPs through the newly developed Student Information System (SIS). The SIS will provide information regarding a student’s progress on the goals set out in each ISSP. An external review of inclusive education is being planned, and will identify gaps in aid or support to students on ISSPs.</p> <p>The Department will collaborate with the departments of Health and Family Services to create guidelines for addressing issues and services for students requiring additional support that the school system cannot provide. This process will be clearly communicated to educators and parents.</p> |
| <p>70. The Department should analyze the information it has on the difference between the marks obtained by students in the classroom and on the Alberta exam, and should identify potential areas for improvement based on this analysis. (64–69)</p> | <p>The Department’s response. Agreed. This has been a departmental priority for several months and we have analyzed these differentials over the past three years. In an effort to address the gap between classroom marks and final examination marks, a working group in the Department has completed a directive on marks differentiation. The directive will be in-serviced at the upcoming regional principals’ meetings early in the 2013–14 school year. We will provide support to school staff in the implementation of this directive.</p> |

| Recommendation | Response |
|--|--|
| <p>76. The Department of Education should decide on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the key information it needs to receive from principals so that it can monitor implementation of the <i>Education Act</i> in schools; and • the report format and timing that will provide the best value. (71–75) | <p>The Department’s response. Agreed. The Department is committed to streamlining principals’ monthly reports and reviewing the reporting procedures to better identify reporting requirements. The Planning and Reporting Committee will revise the current template as needed. The Department will review components of the report, such as template, purpose, frequency of reporting, and information captured to establish more effective reports and monitor the implementation of the <i>Education Act</i>. As part of this review, the Department will survey principals during the upcoming District Education Authority (DEA) and principal in-service this fall 2013.</p> <p>In addition, as the Student Information System is implemented, certain components of the principals’ monthly reports will be tracked through the database, reducing the reporting requirements on principals. The database will provide a more systematic way of reporting. The Department is also committed to providing feedback to principals on the reports, sharing the information collected from these reports with principals and using this data effectively for planning purposes.</p> |

| Recommendation | Response |
|--|--|
| <p>77. The Department of Education should provide information on the progress of implementing the <i>Education Act</i> to the Legislative Assembly for its review of the Act. It should include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what has been accomplished and what remains to be done in the area of teaching resources related to curriculum and inclusive education, along with realistic estimates of the human resources and time necessary to complete and provide the resources to schools; • the impact of external challenges on the Department’s ability to implement the Act, including those identified in paragraphs 79 to 83; • areas in which the Department should prioritize its efforts to improve student success; and • current and future needs for bilingual educators, and the Department’s capacity to meet the 2013 to 2020 bilingual education requirements of the Act. (71–75) | <p>The Department’s response. Agreed. Letters dated 27 March 2012 and 20 November 2012 were sent to the Legislative Assembly outlining the Department’s willingness to provide information during the Assembly’s review of the <i>Education Act</i>.</p> <p>The Department has identified many of the same challenges as the Office of the Auditor General in implementing the <i>Education Act</i> and has taken steps to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • launch a parental engagement campaign in 2013, • provide funding to District Education Authorities (DEAs) to support an early childhood education program which promotes Inuit language and culture, and • develop a DEA Administration manual to help clarify roles and responsibilities. <p>We will provide regular updates on <i>Education Act</i> implementation through the Department’s annual report.</p> <p>There will be a renewed focus on data sources and collection to enhance the quality of reliable, relevant information concerning the education system.</p> <p>The Department will be providing the following information to the Legislative Assembly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an assessment of current and needed learning resources for curriculum and inclusive education, and an action plan to move forward; • the impact of external factors on the implementation of the <i>Education Act</i>; • identified areas to improve student success (attendance, numeracy, literacy, and bilingualism); and • the number of bilingual educators needed in the short and medium term. |

