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# Reaching and Teaching All Students – A Model to Guide the Practice of Inclusive Education in Nunavut

Final Report of the External Review of Inclusive Education

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**Barbara Hall**

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## **Final Report of the External Review of Inclusive Education in Nunavut**

The *Final Report of the External Review of Inclusive Education* is the last of seven documents submitted to the Department of Education during the external review process. The other six documents, submitted between July and November 2014, are listed as attachments, but they are more than that. This final report is based on them and they contain a level of detail that has not been repeated. They accompany this report and should be referred to for more detail as necessary.

It has been an honour to work on this project with Nunavut educators, parents and other stakeholders.



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1. *Strengths, Gaps and Areas Needing Improvement*, July 2014
2. *Evaluation and Accountability*, July 2014
3. *School-Based, Multi-Tiered Interventions*, October 2014
4. *Parental Engagement and Informed Consent*, November 2014
5. *Staff Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes Necessary for Inclusive Education*, November 2014
6. *Comparative Analysis of Essential, Current Inclusive Education Policies in New Brunswick, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut*, August 2014

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## Abbreviations:

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>ADM</b>  | Assistant Deputy Minister  |
| <b>CSFN</b> | Commission scolaire francophone du Nunavut                                       |
| <b>DI</b>   | Differentiated Instruction   |
| <b>DM</b>   | Deputy Minister  |
| <b>ED</b>   | Executive Director   |
| <b>EDU</b>  | Department of Education  |
| <b>IAP</b>  | Individual Accommodation Plan  |
| <b>IBP</b>  | Individual Behaviour Plan  |
| <b>IEP</b>  | Individual Education Plan  |
| <b>II</b>   | Ilinniarvimmi Inuusiliriji   |
| <b>IQ</b>   | Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit  |
| <b>ISSP</b> | Individual Student Support Plan  |
| <b>KSO</b>  | Kitikmeot School Operations or Kivalliq School Operations (depending on context) |
| <b>NTEP</b> | Nunavut Teacher Education Program  |
| <b>QSO</b>  | Qikiqtani School Operations  |
| <b>SCC</b>  | School Community Counsellor  |
| <b>SIEP</b> | Secondary Individual Education Plan  |
| <b>SSA</b>  | Student Support Assistant  |
| <b>SSC</b>  | Student Support Consultant   |
| <b>SST</b>  | Student Support Teacher  |
| <b>TOR</b>  | Terms of Reference   |

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|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
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Barbara Hall

# Reaching and Teaching All Students – A Model to Guide the Practice of Inclusive Education in Nunavut

## Executive Summary

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### **Background:**

In 2013 the Auditor General for Canada presented a report to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut on how the Department of Education had managed the implementation of the 2008 *Education Act*. Part of the Department of Education's response was to contract an external review of inclusive education.

The Department developed a Terms of Reference and hired an external reviewer to answer one *central* question: "How do we need to change our model of inclusive education to ensure we are identifying and addressing the strengths and needs of all our students, keeping in mind Nunavut's unique cultural and historical context?" Additional questions complemented the central question by targeting specific areas of concern identified by the Auditor General.

The external reviewer gathered input from Nunavummit using a combination of interviews, written surveys and face-to-face focus group meetings. She also researched/compared legislation, policies and practices in Nunavut with those in other Canadian jurisdictions.

### **The Current Model of Inclusive Education:**

Recommending changes to Nunavut's model of inclusive education required an examination/understanding of the current model - which revealed that the current model is incomplete. A strong philosophical foundation based on *Inuit Qaujimaqatuqangit* has not been fully supported by legislation, resource materials, staff development, or funding. The level of inclusive education staffing at the school level is adequate, but the same cannot be said at the Department level. Nunavut-wide materials and procedures are limited. Health-related assessments and services for the school-age population are insufficient, and in some cases (depending on the region and area of specialization) non-existent.

### **The Proposed Model of Inclusion:**

The proposed model is designed to do three things with respect to the current model: build on its strengths, suggest revisions to some components, and add components that are missing. The proposed model is described as five tasks:

1. Lay the foundation through three complementary documents – Vision or Philosophy, Legislation and Policy.
2. Define common role expectations for all staff, as well as for parents, students, outside agencies, and others.
3. Allocate resources – in the form of funding and personnel at the school, region/CSFN and Department levels.
4. Develop tools and inservice staff on an ongoing basis regarding their use.
5. Develop and enhance knowledge and skills of various staff positions on an ongoing basis.

Taken together the five tasks (or components) represent a comprehensive model of inclusive education and they define a Nunavut *system* of inclusive education. None can be “left out” if the model is to be effective and create conditions necessary for both student and teacher success.

There are a number of implications of the proposed model including those related to changes to the *Education Act*, staffing, funding and an action plan or schedule for the development, implementation and ongoing support of the various components of the model of inclusion envisioned.

## A) Background

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In November 2013, the Auditor General for Canada presented his report on Education to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut. The report focused on how the Department of Education had managed the implementation of the 2008 *Education Act*, with a focus on six key areas including inclusive education.

The Auditor General's report defined Inclusive Education as, "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." The heading for findings related to inclusion stated, "Implementing inclusive education requires more support from the Department,"<sup>1</sup> and the report went on to itemize a number of issues or challenges, including:

- a) lack of training for teachers and student support assistants – differentiated instruction was specifically mentioned,
- b) student support teachers performing "other functions," limiting the time available to assist teachers and students,
- c) low attendance making assessment of student performance difficult, if not impossible, and requiring teachers to change their approach on a daily basis, and
- d) lack of documentation regarding whether or not students received needed adjustments or specialized services identified in individual student support plans (ISSPs), and lack of tracking on student progress or ISSP effectiveness.

As with other areas of the Auditor General's report the Department of Education agreed with all recommendations related to inclusive education, including mandatory training on differentiated instruction and related ongoing assessment. The Department also made a commitment to collaborate with the Departments of Health and Family Services regarding issues and services for students requiring additional support, and further indicated that, "An external review of inclusive education is being planned, and will identify gaps in aid or support to students on ISSPs."

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<sup>1</sup> Auditor General, 2013. p. 17.



## B) The External Review Process

The Department of Education developed a Terms of Reference (TOR) to guide the external review of inclusive education and answer eight questions prompted by the Auditor General's report. These are shown in Table 1.

| <b>Table 1:<br/>Questions to be Answered by the External Review of Inclusive Education</b>   |
|--|
| <b>Question 1:</b> How do we need to change our model of inclusive education to ensure we are identifying and addressing the strengths and needs of all our students, keeping in mind Nunavut's unique cultural and historical context?  |
| <b>Question 2i:</b> How do we build in evaluation and accountability to monitor the effectiveness of the model and to track student referrals and progress?<br><b>Question 2ii:</b> What tools and instruments do we need to collect and monitor data for continuous improvement purposes? |
| <b>Question 3:</b> What school-based multi-tiered interventions and services do we need?   |
| <b>Question 4:</b> What would a sustainable, collaborative and accountable model of multi-tiered interventions and services look like?   |
| <b>Question 5:</b> How do we integrate protocols for parental engagement and informed consent into the model?  |
| <b>Question 6i:</b> What staff knowledge, skills and attitudes are necessary for effective inclusive education?<br><b>Question 6ii:</b> How do we address the gap between required and current knowledge, skills and attitudes?  |
| <b>Question 7:</b> What resources are necessary and what is the plan for their provision?  |
| <b>Question 8:</b> What are the gaps in policy essential to inclusive education?   |

In reality, there is one overall question, Question 1, "How do we need to change our model of inclusive education...?" That overall question is supported by the more targeted questions, which focus on areas specifically identified by the Auditor General.

Barbara Hall is the external reviewer who was contracted to develop a practice guide for inclusive education that would provide research-based answers to the eight questions. Following a process outlined in the TOR, the external reviewer:

- interviewed 7 senior education leaders – DM, ADM, 5 Executive Directors (EDs),
- interviewed 6 members of the Student Support Working Group (SSWG) - the advisory committee for the review,
- interviewed one recently retired educator at the request of the DM,
- developed and sent written surveys to all 12 members of the SSWG, and 9 Inuit educators,<sup>2</sup>
- facilitated three face-to-face focus groups with:
  - the SSWG inclusive education review committee (6 people),
  - the DM and EDs (6 people),
  - Inuit parents, educators and DEA representatives (9 people), and the Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society (1 person),
- researched/compared policies, processes and methods in other Canadian jurisdictions, and compared the Nunavut review findings/recommendations with those in the review of inclusive education in New Brunswick.<sup>3</sup>

## C) Answering the Review Questions

Between July and December, 2014 six reports were submitted to the Department of Education that targeted specific questions identified in the Terms of Reference of the external review. All are included as attachments to this report.

1. *Strengths, Gaps and Areas Needing Improvement*, July 2014 – TOR #1
2. *Evaluation and Accountability*, July 2014 – TOR #2
3. *School-Based, Multi-Tiered Interventions*, October 2014 – TOR #s 3 and 4
4. *Parental Engagement and Informed Consent*, November 2014 – TOR #5
5. *Staff Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes Necessary for Inclusive Education*, November 2014 – TOR #6
6. *Comparative Analysis of Essential, Current Inclusive Education Policies in New Brunswick, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut*, August 2014 – TOR #8

The majority of components of the proposed model of inclusive education, described in Section E, come *directly* from the findings and recommendations in those six reports.

The one question of the TOR that has not been addressed is #7, “What are the resources necessary and what is the plan for their provision?” The external reviewer can only partially answer that question. The complete answer needs to come from the Department of Education/Government of Nunavut.

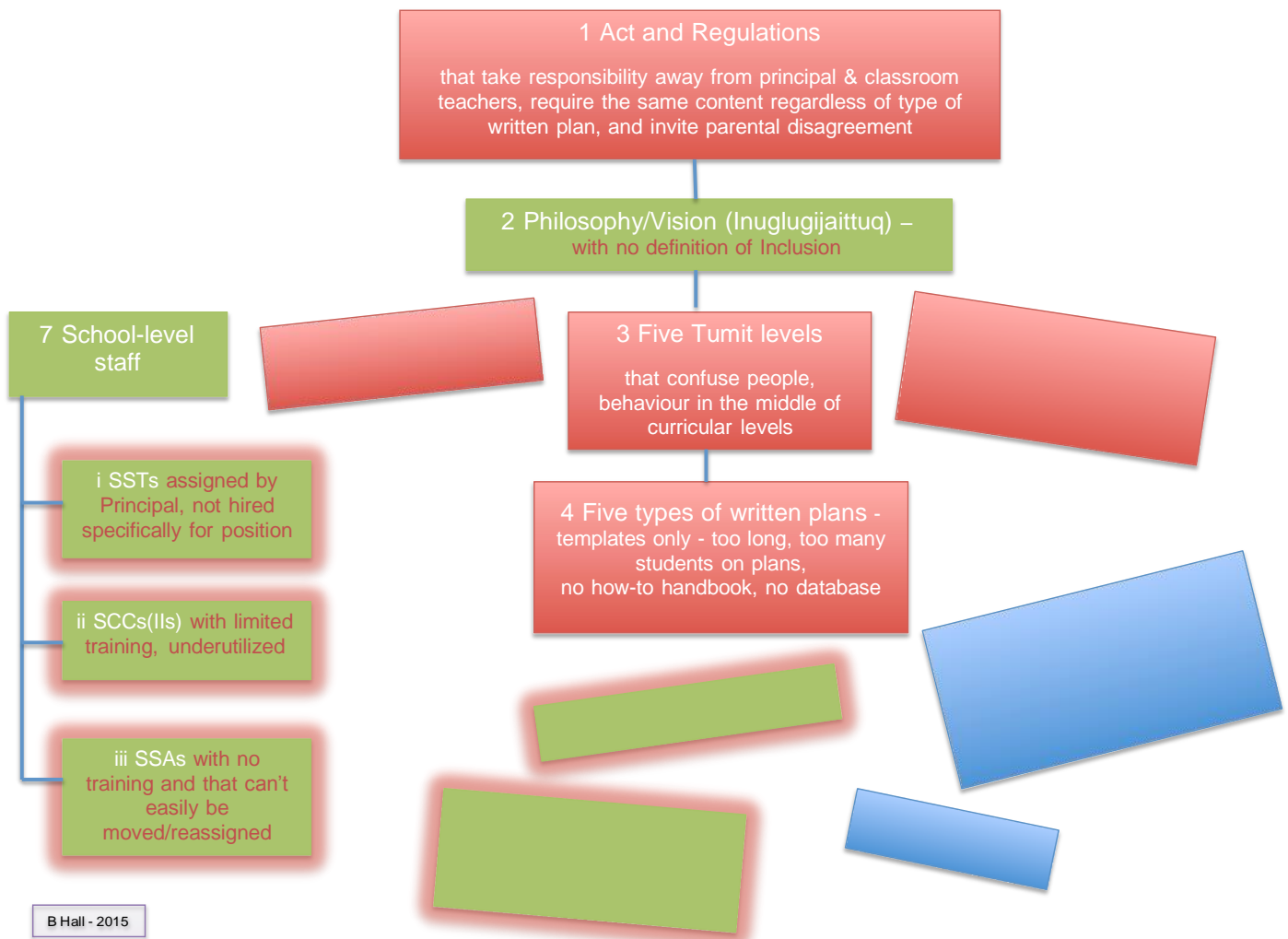
<sup>2</sup> Surveys were completed and returned by all SSWG members and 2 Inuit.

<sup>3</sup> Porter and AuCoin, 2012. *Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools*.

## D) The Model of Inclusion in Nunavut Now

Figure 1 depicts the components of Nunavut’s current model of inclusive education. Nunavut has “pieces” of a model, but it is not always clear how the pieces relate to each other, and some components, although well intended, are in fact counter-productive to an inclusive model of education – which at its core requires building capacity in classroom teachers to enable them to retain primary responsibility – with support – for all of their students.

**Figure 1: The Model of Inclusion in Nunavut Now**



Green = component is largely making a positive contribution to the model  
 Red = component is largely not making a positive contribution to the model  
 Green with red shading or ink = positive component, but something is “off”  
 Blue = not clear if the component is making a positive contribution

## **D 1 & 2: The Act, Regulations and Inuglugijaittuq**

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Appropriately, the current model of inclusion in Nunavut is based on sections of the *Education Act (2008)*, the *Inclusive Education Regulations (2011)* and on the foundation documents *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit: Education Framework for Nunavut Curriculum (2008)*, *Inuglugijaittuq: Foundation for Inclusive Education in Nunavut Schools (2008)*, and *Ilitaunnikuliriniq: Foundation for Dynamic Assessment as Learning in Nunavut Schools (2008)*.

*Inuglugijaittuq* articulates the philosophical underpinnings of inclusive education in Nunavut and needs to be supported by the *Act* and *Regulations* in order to lay an appropriate and solid foundation for inclusion. The current, fragmented model of inclusive education reflects the fact that the three documents do not in fact complement each other as they should.

The EDU submission to the Standing Committee on the Changes to the *Education Act* included:

- adding definitions for “Inclusive Education” and “Supports” – since neither term is defined in any of the *Act*, *Regulations* or *Inuglugijaittuq*, yet it is critical to ensure a common understanding of these terms,
- assigning responsibility for overseeing the implementation of inclusive education to the principal, rather than the DEA,
- assigning responsibility for the development of an ISSP to the classroom teacher, rather than the School Team,
- reviewing and revising ISSPs three times a year, rather than the current once, and
- more direction from the Minister with respect to the day-to-day implementation of inclusive education, the identification of student needs and the meaning of specialized services and assessments.

Consistent with the drum dance image on page 20 of *Inuglugijaittuq*, one of the fundamental tenets of an inclusive model of education is that a team, including educators and parents *comes together collaboratively* around a student and his or her needs. However, at present the most detailed parts of the *Act* that deal with inclusive education, as well as the *Inclusive Education Regulations*, are not only *not* written in a way that encourages positive communication with the school, the tone is almost adversarial. “Parents can accept or reject an ISSP,” Act 43(8), and Sections 49 through 52 detail mediation and review board procedures “if a parent is not satisfied...” with any number of things. Meanwhile 6 of the 11 pages of the *Inclusive Education Regulations* detail requirements related to review boards. As was suggested in the Student Support submission<sup>4</sup> to the EDU policy division and senior management regarding proposed changes to the Education Act, *all* of this ink (and tone) should be replaced with a much more general statement about parents’ right to appeal any decision that significantly affects their child, supported by Appeal Regulations (not specific to inclusion).

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<sup>4</sup> Borg, 2014.

The *Regulations* further limit the effectiveness of the current model by requiring all written plans, regardless of the type of plan (IAP, IEP, etc.) to use the same headings. The result is plans that are complex, labour-intensive, unrealistic for classroom teachers and therefore do not always meet student needs.

For its part *Inuglugijaittuq* is long on philosophy, beliefs and imagery but has not been supported with practical suggestions, tools and processes to move from the concept to the concrete.

### **D 3: Five Tunit Levels**

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One of the most frequently heard comments from educators was that the five Tunit levels are confusing and there is lack of criteria to help determine which level is appropriate for any given student. A student could be receiving Tunit 2 supports in one school, but the same student in another school could be receiving Tunit 4 supports. Combine this with the fact that the Tunit level in the middle deals with behaviour issues while levels 1, 2, 4 and 5 deal with learning needs. Finally the pyramid of interventions graphic, p.36 of *Inuglugijaittuq*, shows only three levels (universal or whole class, targeted or small group and individual) while trying to describe the five Tunit levels. No wonder people are confused.

### **D 4: Five Types of Written Plans**

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*Inuglugijaittuq* identifies five types of individual written support plans – IAP (Individual Accommodation Plan), IBP (Individual Behaviour Plan), IEP (Individual Education Plan), SIEP (Secondary Individual Education Plan), and collectively refers to all of them – as do the *Act* and *Regulations* – as ISSPs (Individual Student Support Plans). As indicated earlier the *Regulations* require all ISSPs to include the same headings resulting in some written plans that are unnecessarily complex.

The Department has created templates for each type of written plan, but has not fully supported educators in their use. Lacking, are Nunavut-wide guidelines to articulate roles and responsibilities, outline a process for planning, development, implementation, monitoring and revision of written plans, and a database on which to store the plans. (At present, plans are stored on individual computers.)

### **D 5: No Funding Dedicated to Inclusive Education**

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With one exception, no one suggested tying funding to individual students based on a Tunit Level or a specific label (e.g. “severe”). This is both positive and appropriate for an inclusive model. That said, because there is no funding specifically designated for inclusive education, one respondent summarized the situation this way. “When a need presents itself being told to fund from within means robbing Peter to pay Paul.”

At present most of the money spent in the name of inclusion is used to hire SSAs. Obviously SSAs are important, but so are specialized resources, equipment, and staff development related to specific conditions and student diversity.

## **D 6: Limited Specialized Assessments and Services, No Educational Psychology Services**

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Specialized assessments and services are typically accessed through the health system, and vary widely among the three regions – Kitikmeot generally receives services through the Stanton Territorial Health Authority in Yellowknife, Kivalliq through the J.A. Hildes Northern Medical Unit Therapy Services in Rankin Inlet, complemented by the KSO contracting some services from Manitoba Education, and Qikiqtani through itinerants hired by the QSO, the Health Centres and the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) in Ottawa. The feeling among educators was that services were limited by capacity (not willingness) and northern realities such as weather preventing scheduled visits from specialists. Regardless of the reasons, the school-age population is underserved. Wait times after a referral is made range from three to six months, or more. In some cases there are no services – the Kitikmeot has no mental health services for the school-age population, and the Qikiqtani had no speech services at the time of review. In some regions assessments/services, including educational psychology assessments are paid for by Nunavut Health, while in other regions School Operations, or even parents have to pay for this themselves. On the francophone side, the CSFN has to contract specialist assessments/services from southern Canada in order to provide these services to their students in French.

## **D 7: School-Level Staff**

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In general, schools are supported by sufficient inclusive education staff, specifically Student Support Teachers (SSTs), Student Support Assistants (SSAs) and School Community Counsellors (SCCs)/ Ilinniarvimmi Inuusilirijit (IIs). However, there are a number of issues that limit the effectiveness of these key staff<sup>5</sup>:

- SSTs are appointed by the principal, rather than being specifically hired for the position because they are master teachers, able to facilitate planning sessions and solution circles, able to co-teach and mentor other teachers, and support SSAs.
- SSAs:
  - are often untrained and have low academic skills themselves,
  - often become “the teacher,” instead of the teacher retaining primary responsibility for all students in the class, and
  - are difficult to reassign based on student, teacher and class need.
- Many teachers do not know how to work effectively with an SSA.
- “SCCs/IIs are untrained, undervalued, underutilized and disrespected,” were the words of one respondent.

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<sup>5</sup> See the attachment *Strengths, Gaps and Areas Needing Improvement*, p. 15-18.

## **D 8: One Staff Person at the Department**

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To develop, implement and support a coherent and effective education system where inclusion becomes more than a principle that's struggling in practice, more full-time student support staff are needed at the Department. This is already the case, but the need will become even more evident when one considers the scope of work described in E: Proposed Model of Inclusion.

## **D 9: One Student Support Consultant in Each Region**

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As with school-based inclusive education personnel, the Student Support Consultant in each region is key. However the three incumbents appear to have different roles and there is no formal relationship with Department Student Support Staff. The Auditor General reported that, "regions have draft inclusive education handbooks ..." The three regions and the CSFN need to be working together, and with the Department, to develop Nunavut-wide handbook(s), processes and other tools. Nunavut needs one system, not three or four.

## **D 10: One Week of Professional Development**

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While educators participate in one week of professional development each year, there is no "guarantee" that sessions relate to teaching diverse learners, or reflect the critical importance of *ongoing* staff development in key areas such as differentiated instruction and formative assessment.

## **D 11: Student Support Working Group (SSWG)**

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The SSWG is currently made up of 12 members guided by a Terms of Reference with an impressive list of deliverables. The size, composition and role of the SSWG needs to be reviewed and revised in response to a revised model of inclusive education.

## **D: Current Model Summary**

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While the current model of inclusive education in Nunavut includes positive components such as a strong cultural and philosophical base as articulated in *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* and *Inuglugijaittuq*, and sufficient personnel at the school and regional levels, some "well-intended" components, such as the *Education Act* and *Inclusive Education Regulations*, have missed the mark required for an effective inclusive model.

Beyond that, however, the biggest issue is that the current model is incomplete. It can't enable teachers to reach and teach all students because key components are missing. The task ahead requires adding missing components to the model, in addition to making changes to some of the existing components.

## **E) Proposed Model of Inclusion for Nunavut**

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The input of Nunavummiut, combined with lessons learned from current research and other Canadian jurisdictions shaped the recommendations and the practical model of inclusive education described in this report. Also taken into consideration were:

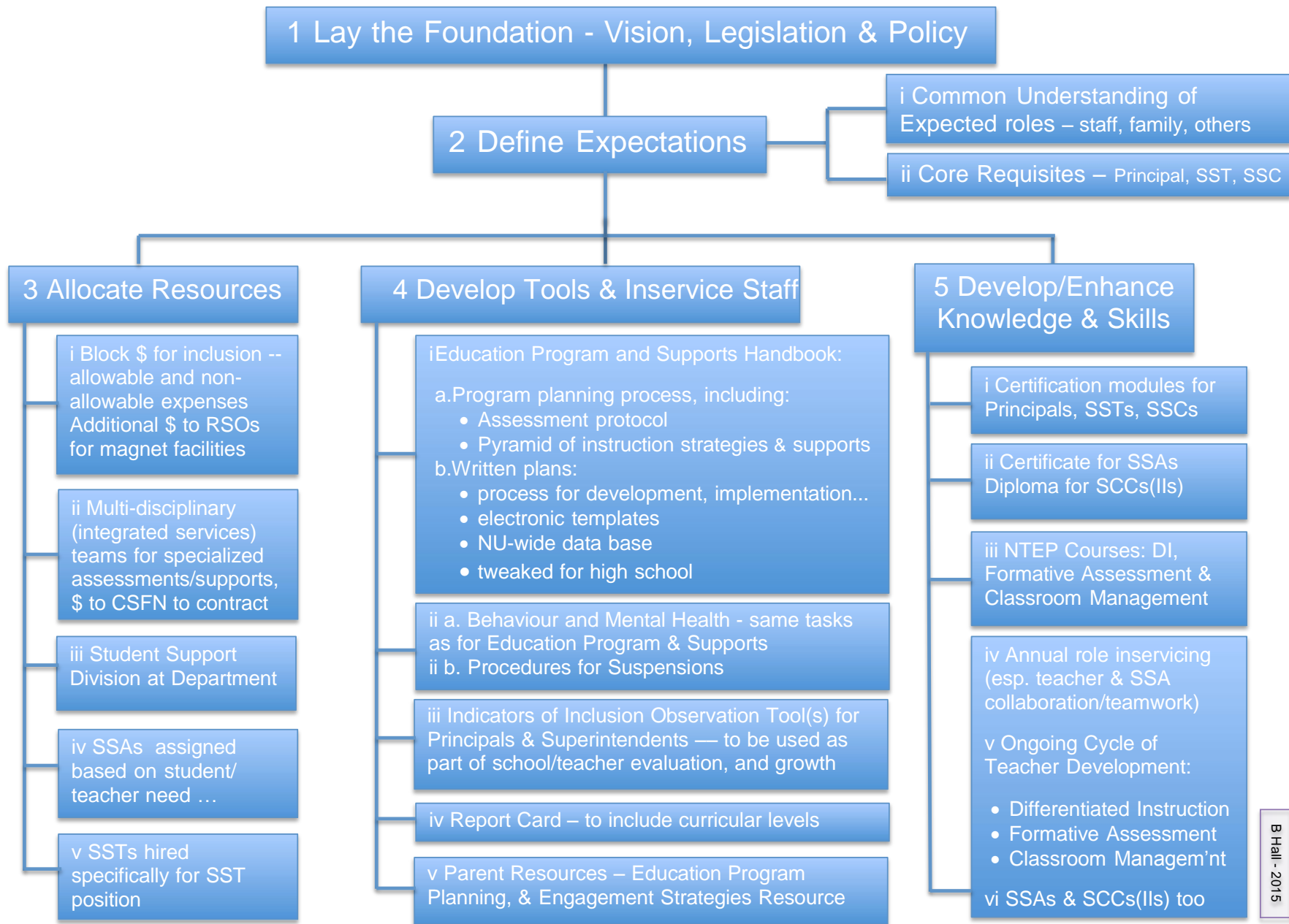
- traditional Inuit views and practices of teaching and learning and the implications of these for education in Nunavut schools today,
- current cultural, social, political, economic context and practices in Nunavut and their impact on inclusive education and related staff development,
- the attitudes, experiences, knowledge, skills and expertise that educators need to address the strengths and needs of all students within the unique bilingual, cross-cultural, predominantly Inuit context of Nunavut, and
- Department documents, as identified in Section I: References.

Figure 2 lays out the proposed model of inclusive education for Nunavut. While each box will be explained in detail, in a nutshell a comprehensive model requires five key tasks:

1. Lay the foundation through three complementary documents – Vision or Philosophy, Legislation and Policy.
2. Define common role expectations for all staff, as well as for parents, students, outside agencies, and others.
3. Allocate resources – in the form of funding and personnel at the school, region/CSFN and Department levels.
4. Develop tools and inservice staff on an ongoing basis regarding their use.
5. Develop and enhance knowledge and skills of various staff positions on an ongoing basis.



**Figure 2: Proposed Model of Inclusion for Nunavut**



## E 1: Lay the Foundation – Vision (or Philosophy), Legislation and Policy

*Inuglugijaittuq* is solidly based on the principles and concepts of *Inuit Qaujimaqatunqangit*. Lacking however, not only from *Inuglugijaittuq*, but also from the *Act* and *Regulations* is a concise, working definition of inclusive education and the related concept of supports or support services. The EDU submission to the Standing Committee on the Changes to the *Education Act* included the following:

The department suggests that a definition for “Inclusive Education” and “Student Support Services” be added to section 3. Such definitions could read as follows:

- **Inclusive Education:** Inclusive Education ensures access for all children to both the education program offered in the regular instructional settings with their peers, and supports required to meet their learning needs.
- **Student Support Services:** An additional service or device provided to a student to enhance learning, or help the student overcome barriers to learning. Supports are services above and beyond that provided to all students as part of the overall school program.

These suggestions are clearly on the right track, although the term Student Support Services would read better as Supports to match the wording in the proposed definition of inclusive education. The word student is unnecessary and not all supports are a service – an adapted keyboard, or sound amplification system in a classroom are examples of supports but they are not services.

A number of elements of the proposed model may necessitate revisions to the *Education Act*. Fortunately the *Act* is being revised at this time. **Rather than trying to enumerate every change to the *Act* that might be required by this report, a better approach would be to convene a group to identify necessary changes after the new model of inclusive education is adopted.**

Another key foundation document is the ***Inclusive Schooling Regulations*** which should be repealed and replaced with either a policy or directive issued by the Minister to set out definitions, expectations and standards related to inclusive education. Although this is the intent of regulations, the “legal language” required by regulations means that they are not user-friendly and have no room for explanation or fleshing out of concepts as could be done with policy or directive.

As for *Inuglugijaittuq*, the purpose and principles lay out a solid philosophical base, but it will become evident that **Section 3 needs to be rewritten to reflect the proposed model of inclusion.**

## E 2: Define Expectations

### E 2i: Common Understanding of Expected Roles – staff, family, others

As stated earlier, at the core of inclusive education classroom/subject area teachers – with support – are responsible for planning, delivering and evaluating an education program for all students in their class. The concept that all staff take ownership for the success of all students is fundamental to an inclusive model of education, but the majority of written survey respondents strongly disagreed, disagreed, or weren't sure that this was in fact the case.<sup>6</sup> The concept is certainly not supported by the *Education Act*, which refers only to the roles of the teacher and the school team and once a teacher has requested that the school team hold a review, the team (which may or may not include the teacher making the request, according to Section 90) appears to “take over” – conducting assessments and developing an ISSP if appropriate...

Meanwhile the concept of the teacher, with support, retaining primary responsibility for all students should look something like Figure 3: Circles of Support. Figure 3 shows **there are many individuals, services and organizations that have a role in supporting the teacher to teach all students. The square boxes suggest key elements of the role for any given source of support. These need to be fleshed out and established as expectations across Nunavut – keeping in mind that their roles should always be focused on enhancing the capacity of teachers to teach a diverse student population, not taking responsibility away from teachers.**

While the concept is similar to the drum dance image in *Inuglugijaittuq* p. 20, Circles of Support reflects the reality of the classroom – the student and teacher are in the classroom but the other sources of support have to be accessed by the teacher, SST or other. They are not already there, as they are in the drum dance.

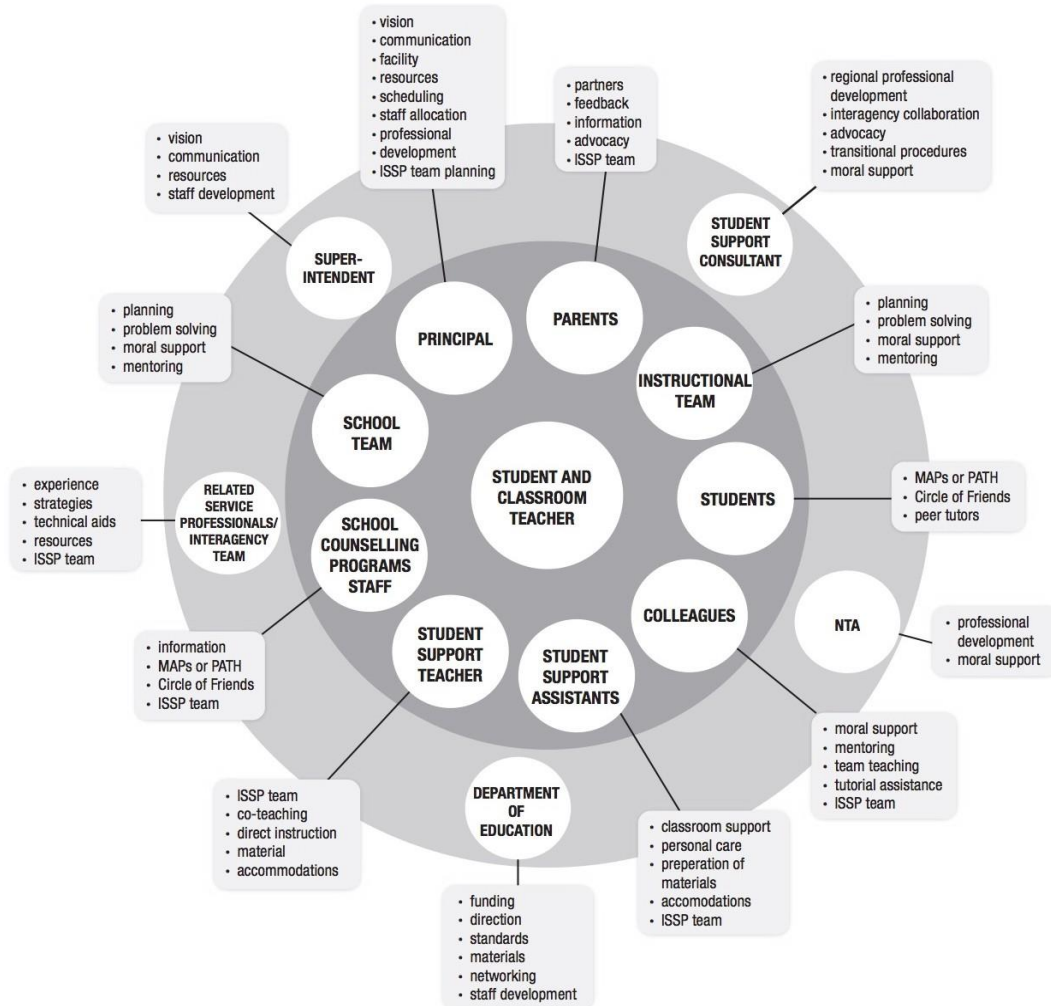
It is acknowledged that the Commission scolaire francophone du Nunavut (CSFN) and École des Trois-Soleils do not have all of the positions shown in Figure 3. The concept however would be the same – to identify the sources of support that *are* available and describe the role of each in supporting the classroom teacher.

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<sup>6</sup> See the attachment *Staff Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes Necessary for Inclusive Education*, p. 3, for detail on other current beliefs and practices.

Figure 3: Circles of Support

## CIRCLES OF SUPPORT



Graphic adapted from "Understanding the Principal's Role in Inclusion" by Haginal and Staniloff in *The Canadian School Executive*, Volume 16, Number 6, December 1996.

Without going into too much detail, the role of SSAs needs to be highlighted because of the number of comments and issues raised concerning them. The idea of an SSA being responsible for a student, rather than the teacher doing so (as was reported a number of times) is professionally unethical. Developing a common understanding of expected roles, would address this issue by defining the SSA role as one where the SSA works under the direction and supervision of a classroom teacher, does not replace the professional responsibilities of the teacher, and performs a number of roles depending on need – regular meetings with the teacher, organizational tasks, instructional support, behaviour support, participation in team meetings, personal care support, etc. Although the relationship between SSA and teacher is shared, teachers must take the lead in

scheduling regular meetings to discuss students, obtain feedback, and help SSAs understand their role, the role of the teacher and where the two overlap.<sup>7</sup>

The need for a common understanding of expected roles reflects a theme that has been stated and will be repeated – the importance of defining a *Nunavut system* of inclusive education, regardless of region or community. This should not be interpreted as dictatorial or implying that, “everyone should be doing things exactly the same way,” but rather as *basic* expectations – with plenty of room for individual, local and regional personalization. Laying out expected roles and responsibilities is the first step in both providing support and expecting accountability.

Defining expectations would be important in any jurisdiction but it is especially so in Nunavut. High teacher turnover and the fact that many educators are trained elsewhere mean that those teachers arrive with the terminology, knowledge and processes of their former jurisdiction. New arrivals to Nunavut need to be given a clear understanding of, “This is how we do business here.”

## **E 2ii: Core Requisites for Principal, SST and SSC**

Despite the many sources of support that teachers should have available to them none is more key than the principal and school team. The report of the recent review of inclusive education in New Brunswick put it this way: “In schools where the principal’s belief in the value of inclusion permeated the school’s vision and mission and where that belief was clearly reflected in the form of specific actions and expectations in the school improvement plan, there tended to be increased evidence of inclusive practices. Similarly, levels of inclusion were more apparent in schools in which the [School Team] had a clearly identified function that included regular meetings focused on problem-solving and action-oriented results, ongoing professional learning, and collaboration with, and meaningful supports to colleagues, as reported by classroom teachers.”<sup>8</sup>

As constant members of the school team, along with the Iliniarvimmi Inuusiliriji (II), Nunavut needs to establish core requisites for the positions of principal and student support teacher, as well as the regionally based position of student support consultant. (IIs are discussed in E 5 ii.)

**The principal should be an instructional leader**, not merely an administrator as described by Section 144 of the *Act*, and as a professional who is in the school all day, every day, should be **responsible for overseeing inclusive education, creating a welcoming school environment, supporting individuals and teams to carry out their roles, developing growth plans/staff development needs, identifying the need for specialized equipment/resources, and ensuring that established processes are followed.**

<sup>7</sup> More detail on issues related to SSAs can be found in the attachment *Strengths, Gaps and Areas Needing Improvement*, p. 16-18.

<sup>8</sup> Porter and AuCoin, 2012. *Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools*, p 17.

**SSTs should be hired specifically for the SST position and should be master teachers who are able to facilitate planning and solution circles, co-teach, coach/mentor other teachers and provide training for SSAs (in student-specific strategies, not pre-service training.) The passing mark for an interview should be at least 70%.** The role of the SST should be defined as building the capacity of classroom teachers to provide appropriate education programs and supports to their students. It should not be *only* to support students directly – as in small group/individual pullout.

New Brunswick has gone so far as to state the following guide to professional practice for [SSTs]:

- a minimum of 60% of time allocated to direct support to and collaboration with classroom teachers,
- a maximum of 25% for direct instruction with small groups and on select occasions individual students, but in all cases with specific entry and exit criteria and documentation of outcomes achieved,
- a maximum of 15% for role-related administrative duties directly associated with supporting teachers and students.<sup>9</sup>

Part of the New Brunswick time-use guide is intended to ensure that SSTs work primarily to support classroom teachers. Part is to ensure that SSTs are working as SSTs and not being assigned a variety of other responsibilities – a situation that the Auditor General noted in Nunavut as well. **The SST role should be full-time in all but the smallest of schools** – those with less than 120 students.

The SST position is one where a change in terminology would be appropriate. The role of this key person should be to support education programs, as in Program Support Teacher (PST).

Just as the SST coordinates many program support practices and procedures at the school level, **the student support consultant (SSC) holds the central coordination role at the regional level and should also be a master teacher.** The SSC coordinates district-wide initiatives, visits schools regularly, provides information and training, advocates for resources and assists in transitions. Ideally, SSCs have experience in Nunavut schools and they must thoroughly understand and support *Inuit Qaujimagajatuqangit* (IQ) and *Inuglugijaittuq*.

**Core requisites for the positions of principal, SST and SSC should include evidence of instructional leadership, several years successful teaching and completion of certification modules (explained in E 5 i) along with the attitudes, knowledge and skills required for inclusive practices – including the belief that all students can learn, and that with support teachers can teach all students.** These three professionals must also show commitment to their own ongoing professional growth, regardless of the number years of experience they already have. Anyone hired as principal, SST or SSC who does not possess the established core requisites should have a professional growth plan designed to bring them up to the level of the core requisites.

<sup>9</sup> Government of New Brunswick, 2013. *Policy 322, Inclusive Education*.

## E 3: Allocate Resources

### E 3 i: A Block of Funding for Inclusive Education

**There need to be funds allocated to RSOs/CSFN that are designated to support inclusion within the block funding model used in Nunavut.** This does not suggest more funding *necessarily*, but it might, and it certainly suggests that there should be an expectation that schools/RSOs/CSFN use a certain percentage of their allocated funding for expenditures that support inclusion such as the purchase of assistive technology, specialized equipment/resources/transportation, contracting of specialized services, and staff development to better address student diversity in general, or a student-specific need such as autism.

**A detailed list of allowable expenses would need to be developed and RSOs/CSFN would have to show that inclusive education funding was used for allowable expenses.** The current model is too subjective in terms of deciding how to respond to requests/the need for potential expenditures as described above.

**Specific, additional funding should be allocated to RSOs, not DEAs, for communities with magnet facilities** such as group homes and shelters. By definition, the residents of such facilities have higher needs than the general school population and of course they bring those needs with them when they come to school.

Looking at the model in another jurisdiction might help. In the Northwest Territories an *additional* 18.5% of overall school contributions is *added* to the school funding formula under the heading of Inclusive Schools, and the *Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling* provides direction regarding appropriate and inappropriate use of those funds. Inclusive Schooling funding is not to be used for expenses that generally benefit all students (such as new playground equipment.) It needs to be targeted at the needs of individuals or groups of students, or specific staff positions.

### E 3 ii: Multi-disciplinary (Integrated Services) Teams for Specialized Assessments and Supports

As described in D 6: Limited Specialized Assessments and Services, No Educational Psychology Services, health-related and educational psychology services are insufficient for the school-age population in Nunavut. Some services are totally lacking. Educators understand that the situation has more to do with the capacity of specialists to meet needs than it does a willingness to do so – demand simply outweighs supply. Addressing this reality requires a Government of Nunavut response, not simply a response from the Department of Education. This is not and should not be “Education’s problem” – although historically schools feel the weight of insufficient specialist services, every day.

**Assuming that resources must be added to adequately serve the school-age population the question becomes, “What should a model of service provision look like?”** Rather than adding more resources to the current fragmented model, an examination of models used in Edmonton and New Brunswick<sup>10</sup> reveal that **multi-disciplinary teams, where team members work for education (not for various departments or institutions), hold the most promise** for a number of reasons:

- They provide services to the school-age population, or in the case of Edmonton, the preschool/early years population.
- Services are coordinated – since they are often not distinct from each other in the first place. (They only “appear” to “become” distinct because of the current method of service provision.)
- Many formal/standardized assessments can be replaced with team-based problem solving, and where formal assessments are required the team can identify and influence the choice of assessments which are appropriate. (This is especially important where culturally biased assessments should *not* be used with Inuit.)
- The focus is on building capacity in schools and classrooms through coaching, mentoring, co-teaching, solution circles, etc. so that teachers are better equipped to support students – with whom they are working on an ongoing basis anyway.
- Collaboration is not dependent on good will or personalities; it’s part of the structure of the model.
- Schools receive information relevant to educational programming and supports.
- In the case of New Brunswick, district-based multi-disciplinary teams also connect with the Child and Youth Development Team, which coordinates support to at-risk children and youth who have multiple or complex needs.

The composition of multi-disciplinary (or integrated services) teams varies somewhat depending on need and context but typically includes a manager to coordinate/supervise the team, a hearing specialist, speech-language therapist, vision specialist, occupational and physical therapists, an emotional/behaviour specialist and educational psychologist. Professionals have specific roles but function as a team with a shared vision, a focus on collaboration, peer support, joint problem-solving and providing strategies/practices that result in both teacher and student success. Their primary function is to *build capacity* in classroom teachers (as well as SSTs, principals and others) through coaching, co-teaching, co-planning instructional and intervention methodologies, and consultation.

**In Nunavut, the organizational structure might look like Figure 4.** Suggested numbers of various specialists reflect the incidence of need among Nunavut students. Inuit specialists are included to help other professionals ensure that their assessments and supports are culturally appropriate.

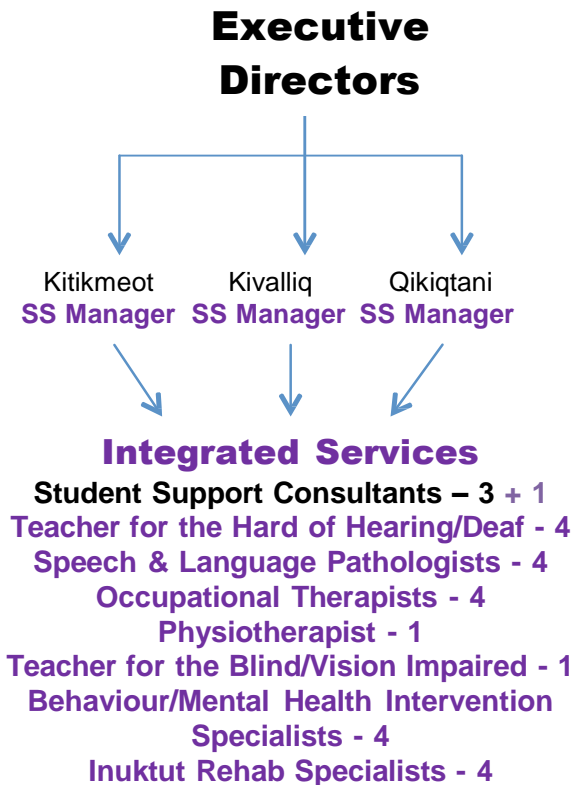
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<sup>10</sup> For more detail on the models used in Edmonton and New Brunswick see the attachment *School-Based, Multi-Tiered Interventions*, p. 4-6.



**Figure 4: Multi-disciplinary (Integrated Services) Teams Proposed Organizational Structure**

Black = positions already exist  
 Purple = New/Proposed  
 (SS = Student Support)



The CSFN should be provided with a block of funds to contract such specialist services for its students – following the assessment protocol described in E 4 i a: Program Planning Process – Assessment Protocol, p. 29.

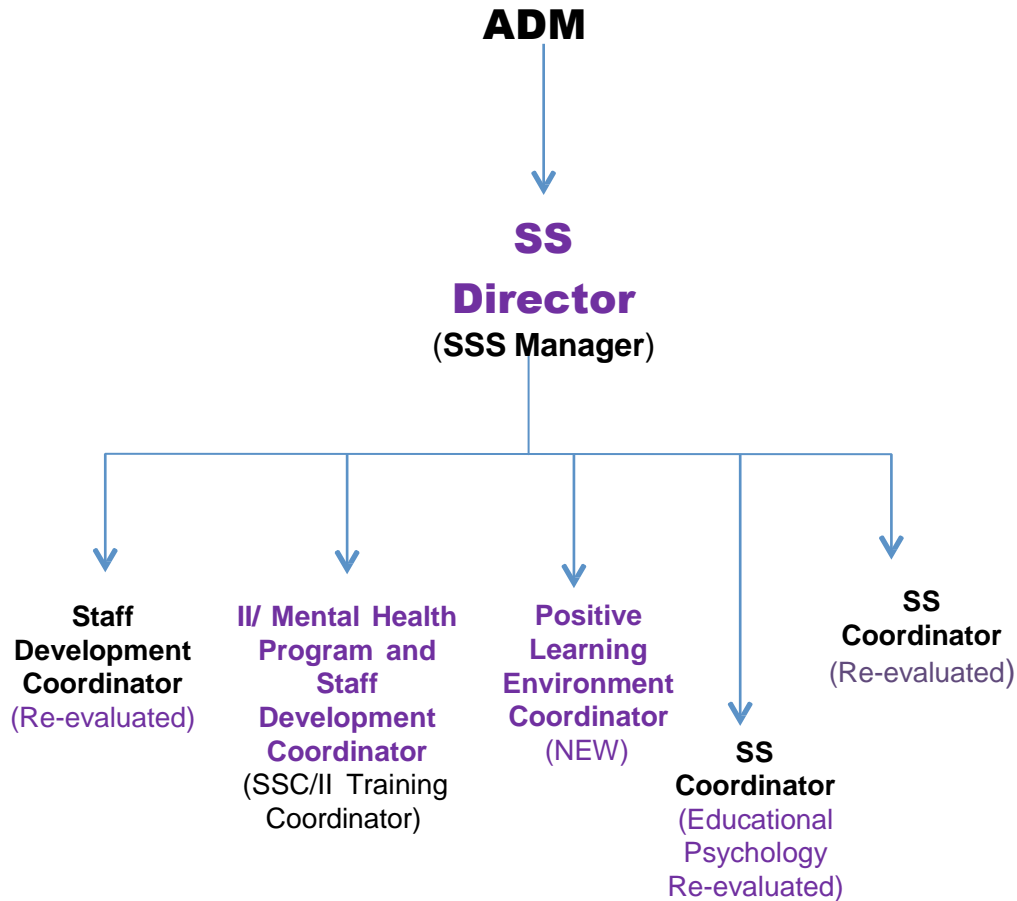
**E 3 iii: Student Support Division at the Department**

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Some tasks have already been identified such as revising *Inuglugijaittuq*, writing policy and developing a common understanding of the roles expected of various “players” in an inclusive system. Other tasks have yet to be described – the development of tools (E 4) and initiatives to ensure the *ongoing* development and enhancement of knowledge and skills (E 5). Simply put, **there is a lot of work to do to build and support an effective system of inclusive education in Nunavut. Staff are needed to do this.** Fortunately, Department staff have indicated that it would be possible to create the Student Support Division with as few as one new staff position, by reevaluating/reassigning existing positions so that **the Student Support Division could look like Figure 5.**

**Figure 5: Student Support Division Proposed Organizational Structure**

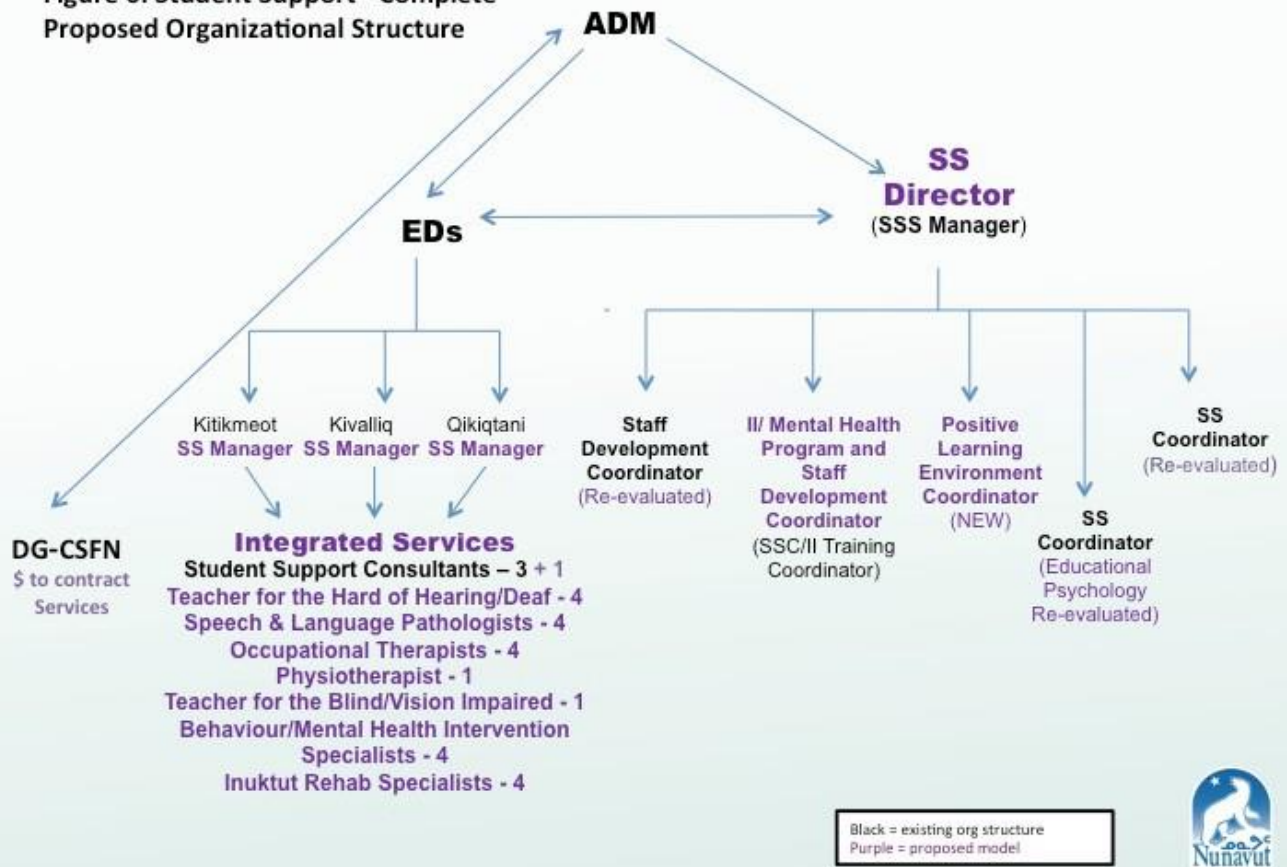
Black = the positions in the current organizational structure  
 Purple = proposed



At the Department level there should be the same level of integration, collegiality and collaboration as was described in E 3 ii, Multi-disciplinary (Integrated Services) Teams. Professionals would have specific roles but function as a team with a shared vision, a focus on collaboration, etc.

**Although they have been discussed separately, regionally based staff and Department staff need to function in concert, as shown by Figure 6.**

Figure 6: Student Support - Complete Proposed Organizational Structure



### E3 iv: SSAs Assigned Based on Student/Teacher Need ...

If the Government of Nunavut is serious about inclusion specifically and quality education generally **SSA positions must be allocated in response to student/class/school need**. This does not mean that positions should not be indeterminate but it does mean that an SSA should be assigned to any school/class in a community as needs warrant, and in some cases it could mean that a position is eliminated if it is no longer needed.

### E 3 v: SSTs Hired Specifically for the SST Position

This has already been explained and discussed in E 2 ii and will not be repeated here other than to say that **SSTs should be master teachers who meet the criteria established for this position** (as per E 2 ii, Core Requisites.)

## **E 4: Develop Tools and Inservice Staff**

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Effective implementation of inclusive education in Nunavut has been limited by the lack of tools to help educators plan, deliver and evaluate education programs for all students, as well as to identify, provide and evaluate the effectiveness of supports required for learning.

There is no doubt that this is where the bulk of work is – work that the Student Support Division will have to tackle. **All tools developed to support inclusive education should be Nunavut-wide and available in official languages as necessary. In addition, it cannot be stated strongly enough that staff need ongoing inservice in how to use the tools.**

### **E 4 i: Education Program and Supports Handbook: to Articulate (a) the Program Planning Process and (b) the Process(es) for Developing Written Plans**

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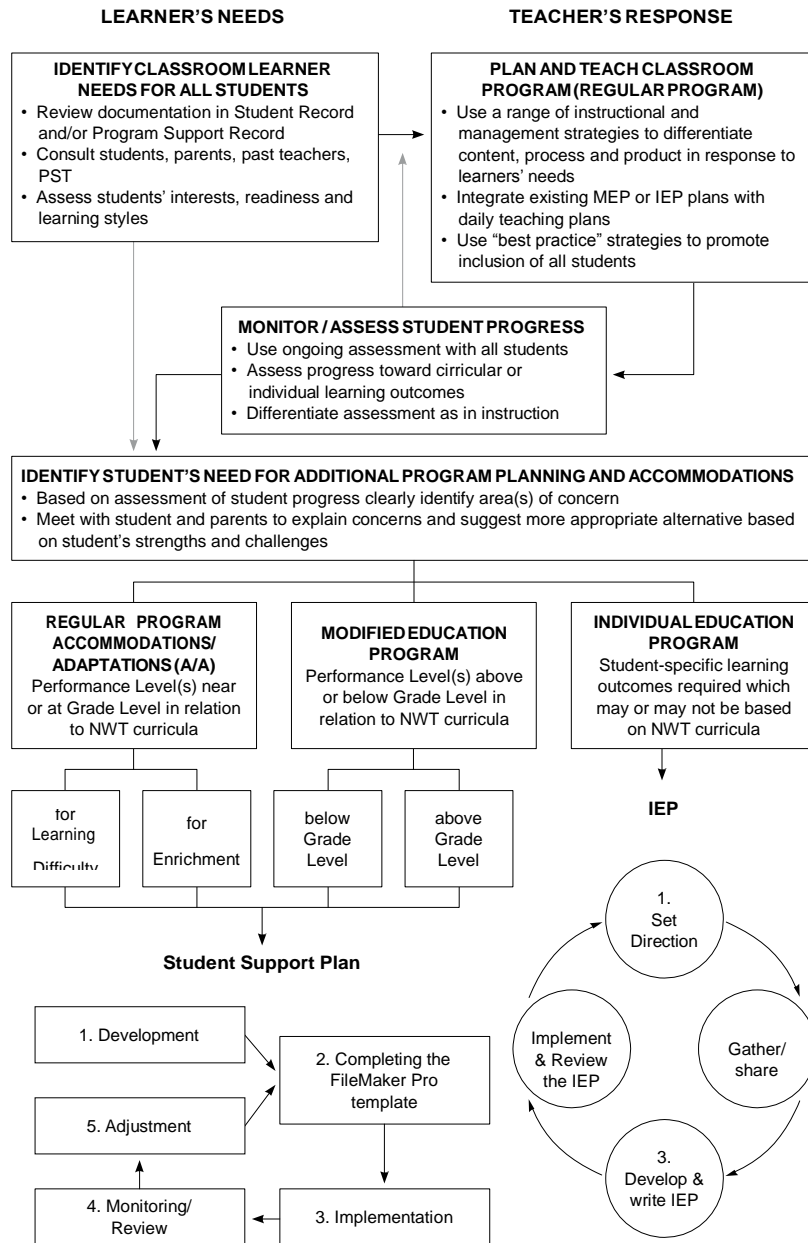
#### **E 4 i a: Program Planning Process**

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As stated in D 3: Five Tunit Levels and D 4: Five Types of Written Plans, the Tunit levels are confusing and there are too many students with written plans. The five Tunit levels should be eliminated and the focus should shift to helping teachers determine the type of education program that is most appropriate for each student and the supports needed.

At the beginning of each school year teachers are faced with a new group of students. The idea of a “**program planning process**” refers to **guiding teachers through a process that results in an appropriate education program and necessary supports for each student**. A number of graphics were located to show what the process might look like, but the majority begin when the teacher and/or parent already have concerns about a student’s learning. The NWT Program Planning Process, Figure 7, shows the teacher’s response – starting on day one with the whole class – to various learners’ needs and the process followed when specific accommodations are required. (NWT terminology does not always match Nunavut terminology – the term accommodations for example – but that should not detract from the overall concept of a *process* for education program planning).

**Figure 7: Education Program Planning Process, NWT<sup>11</sup>**



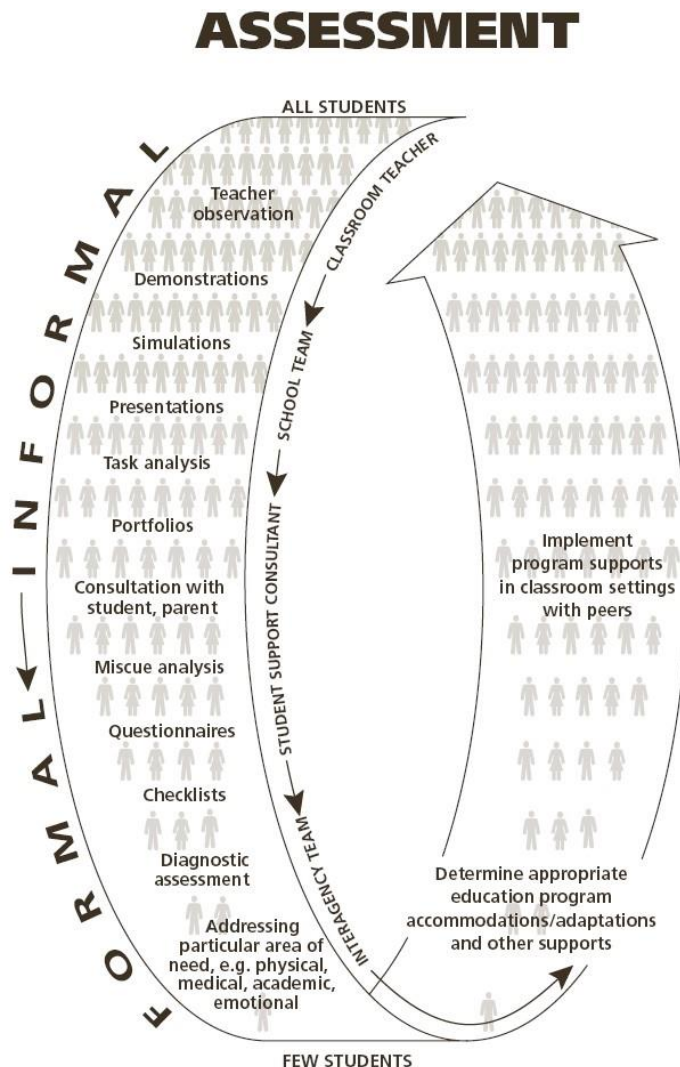
**E 4 i a: Program Planning Process – Assessment Protocol**

Figure 7 makes a number of references to “assessments.” It is important to understand that in the context of education program planning the purpose of any assessment is to enlighten/help understand a learner’s needs, and there is a range of assessments than can be used to determine those needs. “Range” is the key word. Input during the review indicated that too often a teacher’s response was, “I don’t know what to do. The student ‘needs to go somewhere’ for

<sup>11</sup> Government of the Northwest Territories, 2008. *Program Support Guide*, p. 37.

an assessment.” Figure 8 shows the dual concepts of diminishing number of students and increasing formality of process, with very few students needing formal assessments – *if* the teacher has availed themselves of more informal possibilities and the support of parents, colleagues and others, as is the concept portrayed in Figure 3: Circles of Support.

Figure 8: Assessment<sup>12</sup>



Specialized assessments – those towards the bottom of Figure 8 – need to be highlighted here because of the number of comments made about them: whether they were “allowed” in Nunavut, whether they were appropriate for Inuit, and who pays for them. Several respondents expressed frustration that the ideal of inclusion has translated into placement with peers without providing the assessments, identification and interventions that *some* students need. That said, there is very clearly a place for specialized assessments (including educational psychology) for a small number of students. **A clear, detailed protocol needs to**

<sup>12</sup> Government of the Northwest Territories, 2008. *Program Support Guide*, p. 40.

**be developed for assessments generally and for referral for specialized assessments specifically.** Specialized assessments should occur *only if* a test can provide information not available from other sources, *and* lead to programming suggestions and interventions not already in place. In general this means referrals for specialized assessments should occur only *after*:

- all attempts at the classroom, SST/School Team and Regional/CSFN levels to develop an effective education program and required supports have been exhausted, *and*
- there are documented processes/meetings leading to an ISSP, *and*
- assessments/ interventions have been completed through an Occupational Therapist or Pediatrician.

**There will need to be separate or somewhat different criteria for Inuit when assessments not normed on Inuit are invalid.** The diagnostic assessments that Dave Philpotts has been developing normed on Inuit in Labrador should be investigated to determine their appropriateness in Nunavut. Alternatively, Nunavut should develop its own Inuit-normed assessments.

An example of a fully developed assessment protocol can be found in the attachment *Evaluation and Accountability*, starting on p. 9.

#### **E 4 i a: Program Planning Process – Pyramid of Instruction Strategies and Supports**

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Figure 7: Program Planning Process also makes reference to the teacher using “best practice strategies,” such as differentiated instruction, as well as identifying a “student’s need for additional program planning and accommodations” based on assessment of progress and identified area(s) of concern.

**Nunavummiut agreed with the concept of a “pyramid” of strategies portrayed as a triangle with 3 levels:**

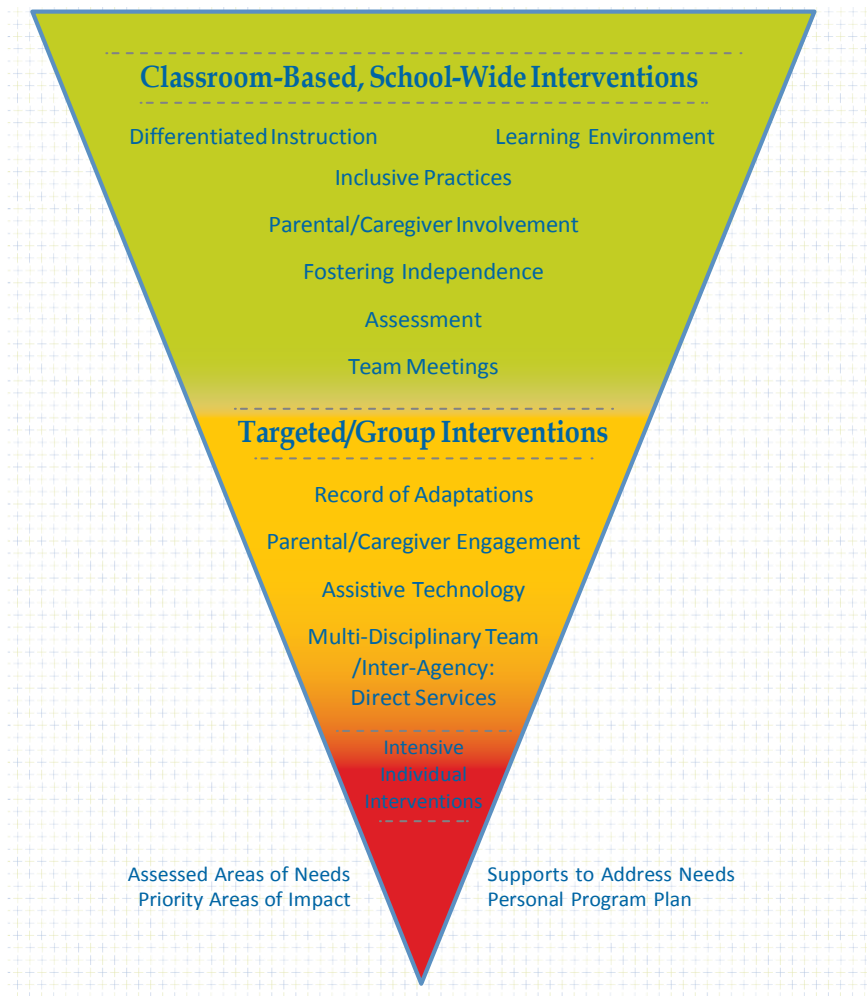
- **Universal (whole class) interventions** – research-based instruction, formative assessment, research-based classroom management, working with other teachers to find solutions...
- **Targeted interventions for clearly identified areas of concern** – meeting with other teachers/school team, parents, identifying strategies based on student strengths, short term duration to get the student back on track, monitoring and revision as necessary...
- **Individual interventions for long term, significant challenges** – meeting with school team, parents, referring for assessment(s), setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-related) goals, monitoring and revision as necessary...

The concept, as it relates to education program planning, is that teachers start at the universal level, using research-based strategies, and move to the more targeted and individual levels if/as necessary for a given student’s needs. The

key to this model is building teacher capacity at the universal level so that fewer students need additional interventions, including written plans. The three-level pyramid is included in *Inuglugijaittuq* but is currently used to pair the three levels of intervention with the five Tunit levels. If the Tunit levels are eliminated, as proposed, the pyramid of strategies can be better explained because the focus would be on determining the instruction strategies and supports that a student needs, not on identifying a Tunit level.

Saskatchewan has a unique version of the pyramid of interventions which Nunavut might want to consider. The pyramid is flipped and includes examples of interventions at each level. Figure 9 is taken from *Actualizing a Needs-Based Model to Support Student Achievement: A Journey of Transformation* (2011) in which that province describes its shift from using a medical model (which is specialist directed, focuses on labels and problems, relies on norm-referenced assessments and determining services based on categories of disabilities) to a needs-based model (which is directed by collaboration, focuses on student strengths and supports needed to overcome barriers, uses authentic assessment approaches and flexible/differentiated services tailored to a student’s unique needs.)

**Figure 9: Pyramid of Interventions, Saskatchewan**





## **E 4 i a: Program Planning Process – Summary**

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**The fundamental message in this section is that Nunavut needs to articulate territory-wide processes for helping teachers determine, deliver, and assess an appropriate education program and necessary supports for all students. And then it needs to support, and expect teachers to follow those processes.** Illustrative examples have been used from other jurisdictions to show a program planning process, the range of assessments that could be employed, and the range of interventions that are possible to build teacher capacity to teach students with diverse learning needs.

**Using examples from other jurisdictions does not suggest that Nunavut should adopt anyone else’s model, criteria or terminology but it does imply that Nunavut has two choices: adapt the work of another jurisdiction(s) or start from scratch. Given Nunavut’s small population, the quality of work that has been done elsewhere, and the enormity of the tasks, Nunavummiut should be able to put their own stamp on an existing model(s) without always beginning at square one.**

## **E 4 i b: Written Plans**

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Templates were developed for the various types of ISSPs (which are themselves problematic, as explained in D 4: Five Types of Written Plans), but without a “how-to” manual. **Needed, are fewer types of written plans, and guidance as to how to complete them.**

Most educational jurisdictions have one type of written plan – typically more along the lines of an IEP which is neither quick nor easy if the whole IEP process – planning, writing, implementation, monitoring/adjustment, review of progress and evaluation – is done well.

The Department of Education has expressed interest in *Programming for Student Success*, the Northwest Territories handbook that lays out the expected program planning process (as per E 4 i a), expected roles, (as per E 2 i) and explains how to plan, develop, implement, monitor/adjust and assess written individual plans.

One of the contextual similarities between Nunavut and the NWT is low achievement levels meaning there could easily be significant numbers of students with individual plans – too many to be manageable. The NWT has two types of written plans:

- Student Support Plan (SSP) which is a one or two page document:
  - that lists specific strategies to address an identified need or area of difficulty – for example memory or math word problems, or
  - that lists enrichment strategies.

Student Support Plans also indicate if a student is working on curricular outcomes at a grade other than the assigned grade – for example a student is in grade 6 but working on grade 3 curricular outcomes in

Mathematics. Strategies included in a Student Support Plan are chosen by a combination of teacher, parent and student.

- Individual Education Plan (IEP) which is a comprehensive written education plan with goals and objectives determined through a collaborative process (that involves parents). Development of an IEP is driven by the strengths and needs of the student and may or may not include learning outcomes in approved curricula.

Nunavut is not alone in struggling with plans that are too long. The report of the recent review of inclusive education in New Brunswick noted that, “special education plans were excessively complex, labour-intensive and unrealistic for classroom teachers,” and went on to state that, “critical strategies for the student’s success should be well-articulated and detailed in a short (one-two page) instructional plan followed by the child’s teachers.”<sup>13</sup>

**A shorter IAP template needs to be developed or adapted for Nunavut so that teachers have an efficient way of documenting strategies necessary for student success without always have to generate a multi-page plan as required by the *Inclusive Education Regulations*. IEP and SIEP should be combined. (IBP is discussed in the next section.)**

**Regardless of the written plan templates, a handbook on how to complete them is absolutely necessary and should include the following headings:**

1. What is a name of plan? (for example Individual Education Plan)
2. Who needs a name of plan?
3. Roles and responsibilities
4. Name of plan process:
  - a. planning
  - b. developing or writing the plan
  - c. implementation
  - d. monitoring and revising
  - e. evaluation

The process should address issues raised by the Auditor General. Specifically the process for written plans should:

- ensure that teachers are actually writing the plans (with support as needed),
- clearly indicate where schools are required to involve or consult with parents (at a minimum), and
- assign responsibility for following up on referrals and tracking student progress/the plan’s effectiveness.

**Plans need to be written on user-friendly electronic templates, kept in a Nunavut-wide database (not individual, or school-level computers), for easy transfer when a student changes schools.**

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<sup>13</sup> Porter and AuCoin, 2012. *Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools*, p. 161.

With one exception the needs of high school students with Individual Education Plans were not raised. One respondent reported that a student who was not academically strong, but who excelled in fine arts would not be able to go to Nunavut Arctic College to develop his talent because, “He is on a SIEP Tunit 4.” Further, during discussion at one of the focus group meetings, it was revealed that in one region a grade 12 student who has never had an IEP, “is put on an IEP so that s/he can graduate.” In another region this practice is not permitted.

Clearly then there are issues at the high school level even if they weren’t often raised, and once again Nunavut is not alone in this. Porter and AuCoin (2012) devoted a specific section of recommendations in *Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools* to high schools, and called on the Minister to convene a summit on high school education. Issues included the attitudes, knowledge and skills of high school teachers required to meet diverse student needs, the perception that [SSTs] are there solely to serve the needs of students with special needs, and insufficient support for transition from school to life in the community – which should begin in grade 9. **Nunavut education leaders need to identify issues related specifically to high schools and agree on how they will be addressed Nunavut-wide.**

#### **E 4 ii a: Behaviour and Mental Health**

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Concerns related to behaviour are as great if not greater than concerns related to academic achievement.<sup>14</sup> The joint (Education and Health) initiative to develop a Framework for School-Based Positive Mental Health reflects this reality and indicates a strong understanding that inclusive education is first and foremost about meeting student needs. For some students this means that needs related to behaviour/mental health have to take preference over learning needs.

It is anticipated that the mental health framework will include a pyramid of interventions with a focus on school-wide prevention initiatives such as anti-bullying and suicide prevention, supported by targeted, individual, and crisis interventions.

Not all inappropriate behaviours are rooted in mental health issues. For those students there are some things that schools can and should do to positively impact behaviour, and that are consistent with the Inuuqatigiitsiarniq policy required by the *Education Act*. As with learning, **the majority of students will “do fine” if there are school-wide (universal) behaviour expectations that are clear, consistent, taught and positively reinforced. A smaller (targeted) number will need additional support in order to meet the behaviour expectations** through strategies such as daily check-in, pre-correction, refocusing and redirecting, solution circles and office referrals. **A few students will need individual interventions for chronic, severe behaviours.**

**As with learning plans, the number of students with written behaviour plans has to be manageable.** The current IBP template appropriately requires a

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<sup>14</sup> See the attachment *Strengths, Gaps and Areas Needing Improvement*, p. 12.

Functional Behaviour Assessment, which by definition is labour intensive and requires staff to be trained in conducting such an assessment. **Written guidelines need to be developed to lay out the expected IBP process under the same headings suggested in E 4 i b for other written plans.**

#### **E 4 ii b: Procedures for Suspensions**

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A number of concerns were raised about strategies employed in the name of behaviour. **All strategies that target behaviour should be validated by research. Current practices, such as behaviour contracts and pullout, should be reviewed for effectiveness/appropriateness.**

The biggest area of concern is the use of “soft suspensions” – sending a student home for the rest of the day, or in some cases the rest of the week without the documentation required by the *Education Act*. Undocumented suspensions are known to be happening in all three regions and as a result the student does not get flagged as troubled and/or troubling and does not get referred for support and/or services. Meanwhile, according to the *Act* an assistance plan shall be developed for any student who is suspended (section 66), and counselling made available (section 67).

**There should be no undocumented suspensions. Whether this is addressed through enforcement of the *Education Act*, development of a generic Inuuqatigiitsiarniq policy if a DEA does not develop its own (as suggested in the EDU submission to the Standing Committee on the Changes to the *Education Act*), or a protocol with more detail than appropriate in the *Act*, it is an area that should no longer be ignored.**

One recommendation put forward by the Manager of Student Support Services<sup>15</sup> to the EDU policy division and senior management, but not included in the EDU submission to the Standing Committee, was to remove section 64 which states that suspensions shall be served in the school unless the principal decides, in accordance with ... the Inuuqatigiitsiarniq policy that it is not practical... **Serving suspensions in the school may be appropriate in some cases, but should not be the default practice.**

#### **E 4 iii: Indicators of Inclusion Observation Tool(s)**

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**A tool should be developed for superintendents to use when visiting schools, that identifies indicators that show if the school is meeting expected standards required for inclusive education.** This would include checking for documentation that referrals are being tracked, required supports are in fact in place and evidence that they are being monitored for effectiveness and revised as necessary. **The same or a similar tool should be used for principals to support them in their role of overseeing inclusion, and responsibility for staff supervision, appraisals and professional growth plans.**

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<sup>15</sup> Borg, 2014.

Other jurisdictions have identified indicators and their resources could be used as a starting point for Nunavut. These include Alberta’s *Indicators of Inclusive Schools: Continuing the Conversation* (2013) and a publication from the United Kingdom, *Index for Inclusion: Developing Learning and Participation in Schools* (2011). Figure 10 shows *part* of the observation tool used in New Brunswick during the review of inclusive education there. Figure 10 is not complete but shows the concept and intent of the tool.

**Figure 10: Part of the Observation Tool Used in the Review of Inclusive Education in New Brunswick** <sup>16</sup>

| Domain                                | Indicator  | Look for   |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Vision                                | VMG 1: School has a clear vision and mission focused on meeting the needs of 21 <sup>st</sup> century learners   | All staff are aware of the definition of inclusion document<br>The value of inclusive schools is noticeable in school documents / broadcasting (website, signage, logos, community correspondence)   |
| Leadership                            | EL4: School leaders are committed to bringing about an inclusive school culture  | Administration is able to speak to provincial context of inclusive schools initiative<br>School improvement plan embeds inclusivity<br>Financial decisions respond to inclusive practice<br>Celebration of all students<br>Routine policies and procedures reflect inclusivity   |
|                                       | EL2: School leaders work with teachers in gathering and interpreting learning criteria data on student performance to inform decisions including setting targets to close achievement gaps | Protocols set to support teams creating shared learning targets<br>Multi-disciplinary team leading school improvement initiatives<br>Of MD team, identified shared goals, clarified roles, data driven improvement system model  |
|                                       | EL17: Principal monitors the effectiveness of teaching practices and their impact on student learning through classroom observations   | Administration can identify employed walk through model<br>Staff are able to speak to walk through supervision and purpose   |
| Instructional practice and curriculum | IPC0: Teachers lesson plans show evidence of differentiated instruction to meet the diversity of learners’ needs.  | Identified universal and specific, justifiable accommodations<br>Personalized learning goals<br>Lesson plans and individual plans reflect identified system standards and competencies<br>Resources are universal to support all students (reading materials, manipulatives, etc.)<br>Classroom management systems reflect skills in supporting common learning environments |
|                                       | IPC13: Flexible instructional groupings are varied, inclusive and appropriate for learning   | Groupings intentional to support each student in the acquisition of a specific goal  |
|                                       | IPC 9: Educational plans for students with exceptionalities are developed and used for lesson planning   | Plans are close at hand and teachers are familiar with them<br>Justification of special education plans is explicit and supported with evidence<br>Plans employ strength-based language<br>Plans include statements regarding use of exclusive settings<br>Plans accurately identify modified and accommodated supports  |

<sup>16</sup> Porter and AuCoin, 2012. *Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools*, p. 200. The Domain “Instructional practice and curriculum” continued on the next page, followed by Progress Monitoring, Learning Environment, Professional Learning, and Relationships.

Development of indicators of inclusion is suggested here because it is essential to ensure that practices are monitored, certain standards expected, and that the observations are used as the basis for improvement/growth plans. An additional benefit of using indicators is that they can be used to help educators reflect on their own practices and generate discussion about how to improve practices.

#### **E 4 iv: Report Card to Include Curricular Levels**

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Teachers need to be clear about the curricular level at which a student is functioning. **Report cards/reporting to parents should identify the specific grade level of curricular outcomes that a student is working on in Inuktitut, English and Français (as applicable) and Mathematics.** This requires that teachers know the curricula. To assist with this, particularly with curricular outcomes at a grade level other than the assigned grade, **one-page summaries should be developed showing an overview of learning outcomes for a given grade level.**

#### **E 4 v: Parent Resources – Education Program Planning, and Engagement Strategies**

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Parental engagement in schools is a priority in Nunavut. However, because of concerns about the current the level of engagement, one of the eight questions to be answered by the inclusive education review focused on how to incorporate protocols for parental engagement and informed consent into the model of inclusion.

A significant issue related to parents has already been identified in D 1: Act and Regulations, that being that one of the fundamental tenets of an inclusive model of education is that a team, including educators and parents *comes together collaboratively* around a student and his or her needs. Current wording in both the *Act* and *Regulations* is problematic in this regard and suggestions were made for revisions, particularly to the tone.

The Department, and any resources that it develops, cannot control what parents do, but it can and should be very clear about what schools are expected to do to reach out to parents and invite them to become engaged.

**E 4 i: Education Program and Supports Handbook, discussed the need for a program planning process and a “how-to” handbook for the development of written plans. These resources need to:**

- **be written in a way (and tone) that invites and encourages parents to engage in a positive, collaborative relationship with the school as they work together to determine and meet a student’s learning and support needs,**
- **clearly identify steps in the process where schools are required to involve, consult with and report to parents including, but not limited to:**

- **school team meetings that include parents, and an advocate if they so choose,**
- **learning outcomes in written plans developed with input from the parent,**
- **strategies to achieve those learning outcomes developed with input from the parent, and**
- **regular review, and adjustment as necessary, of strategies and progress toward learning outcomes, with the parent involved.**

**All of the above should also include the student, as appropriate to their age and development level.**

A focus group on parental engagement and informed consent, where 9 of the 10 participants were Inuit, provided suggestions on the dual questions of:

- What can schools do to help parents be more engaged in their child's education?
- What things do parents need to do to help their child in school?

Details of what the group had to say are reported in the attachment *Parental Engagement and Informed Consent*, p. 5-6. Appropriately their suggestions focused at the school level (rather than the system level) – and included regular communication beyond parent teacher interviews, the need for teachers to learn skills to help engage parents in meaningful ways, and activities specifically for parents. Their suggestions about what parents can do were “no-nonsense” – including, “Parenting is a tough job but that’s no excuse not to do it;” “Have EXPECTATIONS;” and “Never give up on your kid. They are your kid all of their life.”

**Largely, improving the relationship between home and school hinges on the leadership of the principal and his or her willingness and ability to work with staff to:**

- **communicate with parents frequently, using a variety of methods,**
- **create a warm, respectful, and welcoming school environment,**
- **be flexible in accommodating parents and families,**
- **provide a variety of resources for parents, and**
- **support parents in helping their children at home.<sup>17</sup>**

**There is no shortage of published resources with dozens of tips and strategies designed to do those exact things. Nunavut should either identify and use an existing resource(s), or develop its own.**

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<sup>17</sup> The expected role of the principal, as per E 2 i: Common Understanding of Expected Roles, should include these expectations.

## E 5: Develop and Enhance Knowledge and Skills

The success of any educational initiative is largely dependent on the capacity – attitudes, knowledge and skills – of the professionals responsible for implementing the initiative.<sup>18</sup> The concept of “inservicing” in E 4: Develop Tools and Inservice Staff, refers to teaching people how to use the specific tools developed to support inclusion. The concept in this section – developing and enhancing knowledge and skills – refers to building capacity through basic and ongoing professional growth. The New Brunswick inclusive education review noted that, “inclusive practices were more evident in those schools in which staff reported that they experienced direct and indirect support for inclusion in the form of training, professional development and resources from the school and district leadership.”<sup>19</sup>

### E 5 i: Certification Modules for Principals, SSTs and SSCs

The key roles played by the principal, SST and SSC, and the idea of core requisites for these positions, were discussed in E 2 i: Common Understanding of Expected Roles, and E 2 ii: Core Requisites for Principal, SST and SSC.

If it doesn’t already, **principal certification should include a module on the principal’s role in inclusion.** In fact, Figure 3, Circles of Support is based on an article titled, “Understanding the Principal’s Role in Inclusion,” which essentially defines the role of the principal as providing the leadership to help all of the other school-based individuals and teams to understand and carry out their role in enhancing the capacity of the classroom teacher – who has primary responsibility for the education of all students in the class.

**The Department should develop a mandatory orientation, training and certification process for teachers who wish to become SSTs or SSCs.** The purpose would be to ensure that these individuals fully understand the Nunavut model of inclusive education and their role in its implementation – especially important since many will have originally come from other jurisdictions.

**Incumbents or new hires who have not completed the certification requirements for their position should be hired in term positions until training is complete and given a window in which to complete the certification.**

Once again, Nunavut can look to New Brunswick which has implemented mandatory certification requirements for principals (including their role in inclusive education) and has just completed a series of four on-line modules required for [SSTs].<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Current beliefs and practices, as well as the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for various positions are detailed in the attachment *Staff Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes Necessary for Inclusive Education*.

<sup>19</sup> Porter and AuCoin, 2012. *Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools*, p. 17.

<sup>20</sup> G. L. Porter. Personal communication, January 26, 2015.



## **E 5 ii: Certificate for SSAs and Diploma for SCCs(IIs)**

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SSAs and SCCs(IIs) are key positions for schools in general and for IQ and inclusive education in particular. Most, if not all, are Inuit, they know their communities and most will remain there. Why then were so many issues raised about their effectiveness? Two answers: lack of basic training for their positions, and lack of clarity about what their roles actually are.

The current training situation – limited, no, or optional training – is unprofessional. **There needs to be a one year certificate program – up from the current 4 courses – developed for SSAs and a two year diploma program, minimum, for SCCs(IIs). Obtaining the certificate or diploma should be *mandatory*. Incumbents or new hires who have not completed the program should be hired in term positions until training is complete and given a window – for example three years – in which to complete the program.**

The importance of articulating a common understanding of expected roles was discussed in E 2 i, and issues related to the SSA role were highlighted because of the number of concerns raised about them.<sup>21</sup> Turning now to SCCs(IIs), even though the *Education Act* requires every school team to have an II, and Section 100 assigns specific duties to IIs, concerns that their role is not clear were raised a number of times during the review, meaning that **the role of the SCC(II) needs to be better defined.**

**Is their main role to liaise between home and school and promote regular attendance, as the name School Community Counsellor suggests? (This was very definitely the initial intent of the SCC position when it was introduced in the 1980s.) Or is their main role to provide counselling services – as the name Ilinniarvimmi Inuusiliriji suggests? The two would necessitate a very different set of knowledge and skills that would, in turn, shape the educational requirements for the position.**

## **E 5 iii: NTEP Courses: Differentiated Instruction, Formative Assessment and Classroom Management**

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The importance of the Nunavut Teacher Education Program (NTEP) cannot be overstated. NTEP supports the development of a homegrown workforce – one which understands Inuit language and culture and is able to infuse it into the school system. However, during the review one Inuit educator commented, “I was not taught differentiated instruction. I was not taught how to do formative and summative assessment. I had to learn that on the job.” The same person went on to question why NTEP did not include these topics, suggesting that the Minister of Education could or should require them to be part of NTEP. **If they are not already, differentiated instruction, formative assessment and classroom management strategies need to be included in NTEP.** (In fact, any strategies identified in E 5 v: Ongoing Cycle of Teacher Development, need to be included in NTEP courses.)

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<sup>21</sup> See the attachment *Strengths, Gaps and Areas Needing Improvement*, p. 16-18.

## **E 5 iv: Annual Inservicing of Roles**

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Figure 3: Circles of Support, has been mentioned numerous times because of the importance of understanding that if inclusive education is going “to work” the classroom teacher needs and should have the support of many other individuals and teams – not all of them, all of the time, but as necessary for the needs of a given student, and the current capacity of the teacher to understand and respond to those needs.

**Annual inservicing of expected roles related to inclusive education is important for all roles but none is more important than helping SSAs and teachers understand their roles, how they complement each other and where they overlap.**

## **E 5 v: Ongoing Cycle of Teacher Development**

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Regardless of the amount of support a teacher has from the principal, SST, school team and others, the teacher is responsible for all students in the class. As detailed in the attachment *Staff Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes...* in order to successfully reach and teach all students teachers need to be:

- competent in a variety of instructional, assessment and behaviour/classroom management strategies,
- able to choose and use a range of assistive technologies appropriate for a student’s needs, and
- able to work in a variety of team situations including problem-solving teams, the school team and teacher-support assistant team.

**There needs to be an *ongoing* cycle of staff development in strategies that are supportive of diversity including differentiated instruction, and formative assessment. There need to be a limited number of such initiatives established by the Department both for the strategic use of resources and to ensure teacher buy-in.**

A key reason teachers need training in differentiation is to help students manage the transition from instruction in Inuktitut to English. For example, a student may be in grade 6 but not working on grade 6 outcomes in English. The solution is not to develop an Individual Accommodation Plan but to use differentiation.

**Ongoing staff development can and should take many forms** and not be limited to workshops, conferences and courses. Mentoring, co-operative teaching and bi-weekly sessions at the school level, either as a whole staff or by instructional teams (e.g. primary staff), all would allow teachers to learn from each other.

The Department’s response to the Auditor General’s report indicates a review of differentiated instruction training best practices in other jurisdictions and a three-year plan to develop, implement and evaluate differentiated instruction. This should be seen only as the first step – staff development needs to be ongoing even for returning and experienced staff.

## **E 5 vi: Ongoing Staff Development for SSAs and IIs**

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Once SSAs and IIs have completed the programs required for their positions, as described in E 5 ii: Certificate for SSAs, Diploma for SCCs(IIs), they have not “finished their education.” Like teachers they need to continue to refresh and grow in their roles through ongoing staff development opportunities – courses, workshops, mentoring each other, reading... **During the annual PD week for teachers, SSAs and IIs should have staff development opportunities as well.**

## **E: Proposed Model Summary**

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Section E has explained a complete, or comprehensive, model of inclusive education under five main headings:

1. Lay the foundation through three complementary documents – Vision or Philosophy, Legislation and Policy.
2. Define common role expectations for all staff, as well as for parents, students, outside agencies, and others.
3. Allocate resources – in the form of funding and personnel at the school, region/CSFN and Department levels.
4. Develop tools and inservice staff on an ongoing basis regarding their use.
5. Develop and enhance knowledge and skills of various staff positions on an ongoing basis.

The frequent cross-references to other sections, or subsections, when any given topic was being discussed show how interdependent the various components are, and how all are necessary for the success of the model. A simple analogy is to think of inclusion as bannock. Until you have all of the ingredients, have measured and mixed them properly, and cooked the dough at the right temperature for the right amount of time, you don't have bannock. You can't leave out any of the ingredients or steps. The same concept applies to a comprehensive model of inclusive education.

## **F) Implications of the Proposed Model**

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What are the implications if every recommendation and component of the proposed model was adopted? The rationale for each component was described in Section E: Proposed Model of Inclusion for Nunavut, and an argument put forward to explain what the component is and why it is necessary. This section will look simply at the implications and resist the temptation to repeat the rationale that has already been put forward.

The implications listed here are the obvious ones. No doubt others will come to light through discussion between and among Nunavummiut as they move towards developing, implementing and supporting a comprehensive model of inclusive education. There also may be additional implications for DEAs and the Commission scolaire francophone du Nunavut that have not been identified here – no oversight intended.

## **a) Staffing**

E 3 ii: Multi-disciplinary teams for Specialized Assessments and Supports, is the only component of the proposed model with significant staffing implications – 25 new positions. Funding allocation to the CSFN to contract these services.

E 3 iii: Student Support Division at the Department requires one new position. All others exist but most need to be re-evaluated or reassigned.

E 3 iv: SSAs Assigned Based on Student/Teacher Need... will require consultation/negotiation with the Nunavut Employees Union.

E 5 i Certification Modules for Principal, SST and SSC must be driven by and support E 2 i: Common Understanding of Expected Roles, and E 2 ii: Core Requisites for Principal, SST and SSC, not the other way around.

## **b) Staff Development**

E 5 ii and iii, and possibly E 5 i require collaboration with Nunavut Arctic College and/or other post-secondary institutions.

## **c) Funding to RSOs/CSFN**

E 3 i: A Block of Funding Designated for Inclusion. The Department will need to examine whether this requires additional funding, or the reallocation of some existing funding under the heading of inclusion. Because the NWT allocates an additional 18.5% for inclusion, this does not mean that schools are receiving 18.5% more than Nunavut schools. It really boils down to determining the total amount of funding per pupil and ensuring that a percentage of the funding is flagged to support inclusive education.

## **d) Commitment to Defining One Nunavut-wide Model**

Most or all of E2 and E4 require the three regions and the CSFN to work together, and with staff at the Department, to define common expectations and processes, and develop tools – or adapt the work of other jurisdictions.

## **e) Performance Appraisals**

There would be little point in defining Nunavut-wide expectations and processes if staff are not expected to follow them. Performance appraisals for all positions need to include looking for evidence of expected roles, demonstration of strategies/practices that support diversity, and lead to professional growth plans.

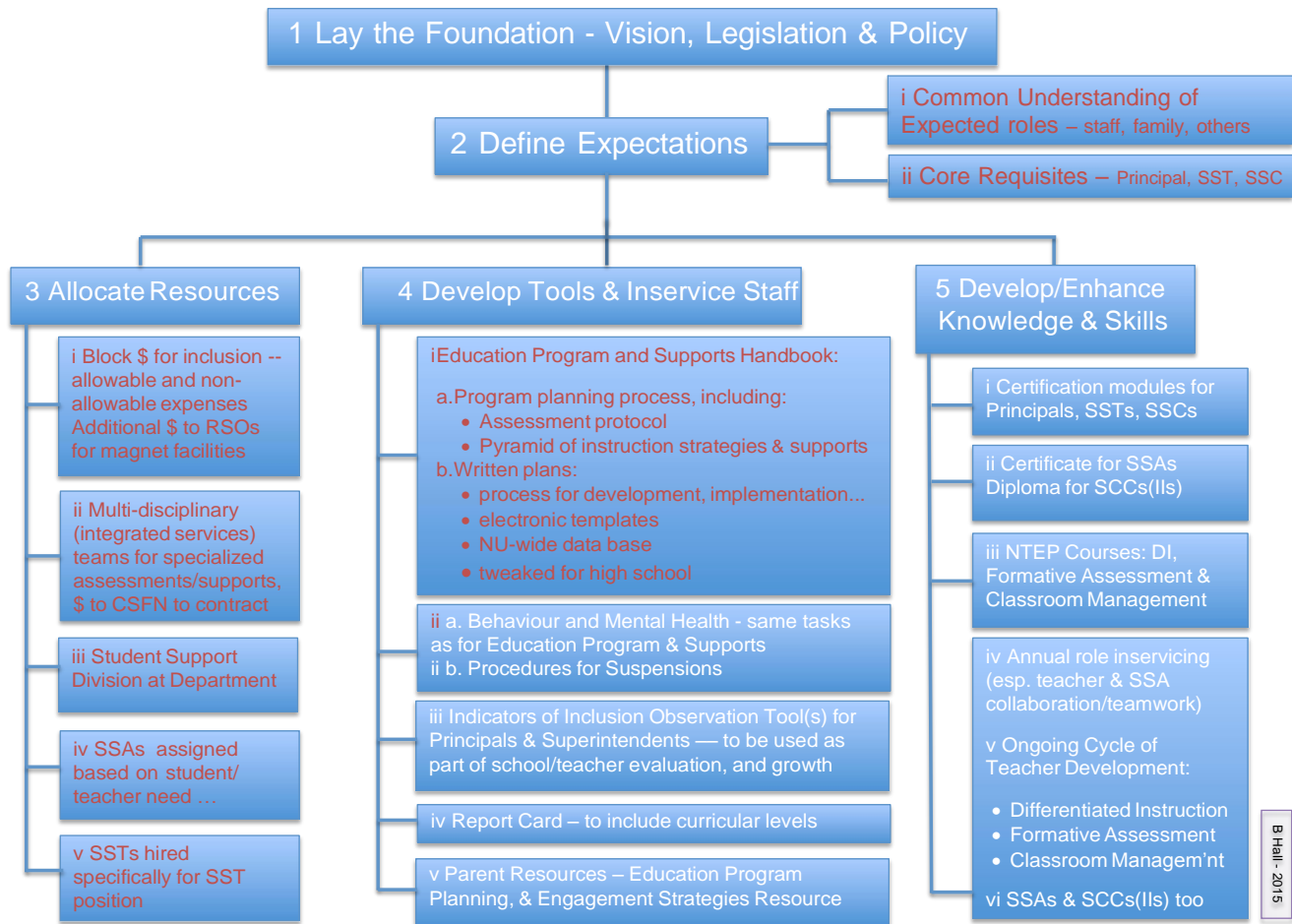
## **f) Revisions to the *Education Act* (and other documents)**

E 1: Lay the Foundation, referred to the need to rewrite part of *Inuglugijaittuq* and convene a group to identify necessary changes to legislation after the new model of inclusive education is adopted. The attachment *Comparative Analysis of Essential, Current Inclusive Education Policies in New Brunswick, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut* will be a useful resource for helping identify changes to the *Education Act* and the content of inclusive education policy.

## g) Scheduling or What to do First?

Without a doubt this is the most challenging implication. As described earlier, until you have all of the ingredients for bannock, put them together and cook the dough, you don't have bannock. At the same time, "Rome wasn't built in a day," so where do you start? Figure 11: Proposed Model of Inclusion for Nunavut – First Things First, suggests that the components in red could be the starting point.

Figure 2: Proposed Model of Inclusion for Nunavut – First Things First



The fact that the tasks in 1: Lay the Foundation, are not in red might raise questions about why the foundation would not be one of the starting points. There are a few reasons – the vision is already there, the Legislation is currently being revised, and a policy would be premature until some of the other components are addressed, particularly 2: Define Expectations, and 4 i: Development of an Education Program and Supports Handbook.

## h) Advisory Committee or Working Group and Reporting Progress

A committee or group is needed to develop an action plan and monitor its implementation. This could be the "reinvented" SSWG. The group should report progress to the Minister on a semi-annual basis.

## **G) Planning for Successful Implementation**

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A management consultant once said, “You’ve got to do the right thing. Then you’ve got to do the thing right.” Section E: Proposed Model of Inclusion for Nunavut, focused on the first part of the quote – “the right thing” – by laying out the components of a comprehensive model for inclusive education. The idea of what it means “to do the thing right,” is about planning and developing the components of the model “properly” as well as about implementation of the new model once/as components are developed.

Implementation is outside the scope of the external review but is mentioned because so many educational innovations “fail” when in fact they were never implemented as planned or designed. Inclusive education in Nunavut has already had one false start because the model was not fully developed. Assuming a revised model *is* fully developed education leaders will need to put equal effort into implementation.

There are any number of publications regarding implementation but one will be mentioned because of its practical “workbook” style including planning tools. *A Guide to Support Implementation: Essential Conditions* is the product of a number of education partners in Alberta. The essential conditions – which can be applied to the implementation of policy, curriculum, a priority or initiative... are:

- shared vision
- leadership
- research and evidence
- resources
- teacher professional growth
- time
- community engagement

The document can be found online at [education.alberta.ca](http://education.alberta.ca) > *A guide to support implementation: Essential conditions*.

## **H) Final Comment**

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As the Auditor General noted, “Implementing inclusive education requires more support from the Department.”<sup>22</sup> Indeed there is much to be done to develop, implement and support the model of inclusion envisioned. Nunavummiut have always depended one another for survival and success. Working together they can develop an effective model of inclusive education and create the conditions necessary for both student and teacher success.

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<sup>22</sup> Auditor General, 2013. p 17.

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July | 2014

# Nunavut Inclusive Education Review

Strengths, Gaps and Areas Needing Improvement

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Barbara Hall

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# Nunavut Inclusive Education Review

## Strengths, Gaps and Areas Needing Improvement

### The Question and the Methodology

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This phase of the review of inclusive education in Nunavut was intended to answer the following question:

How do we [Nunavut] need to change our model of inclusive education to ensure that we are identifying and addressing the strengths and needs of all our students, keeping in mind Nunavut's unique cultural and historical context?\*

To shed light on that question a number of educators were identified by the Department of Education and asked to:

Identify the strengths, gaps and areas for improvement in the current model of inclusive education in Nunavut.

Fourteen educators were interviewed including all senior education leaders – i.e. executive directors and senior staff at the Department - all Student Support Consultants and a core group of members of the Student Support Working Group (SSWG). Thirteen people completed a written survey which was sent to all 12 members of the SSWG and 9 Inuit educators.

Because the methodology for this particular question – question #1 of 8 - involved asking educators what they thought were the strengths, gaps and needed improvements, the task of the external reviewer was to capture their opinions. Their opinions however actually spoke to many of the other questions to be addressed by the review. So in speaking to Question #1, How do we need to change our model of inclusive education to ensure we are identifying and addressing the strengths and needs of all..., respondents also provided opinions that shed light:

Question 2i: How do we build in evaluation and accountability to monitor the effectiveness of the model and to track student referrals and progress?

Question 3: What school-based multi-tiered interventions and services do we need?

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\* Quote from Terms of Reference for the Inclusive Education Review

Question 4: What would a sustainable, collaborative and accountable model of multi-tiered interventions and services look like?

Question 6i: What staff knowledge, skills and attitudes are necessary for effective inclusive education?

Question 6ii: How do we address the gap between required and current knowledge, skills and attitudes?

This fact that respondents addressed more than the specific question at hand is both positive and logical since the eight questions speak to various aspects of inclusion but in fact are quite interdependent.

## Limitations

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This review is limited to Inclusive Education and does not focus on larger, systemic issues that impact education generally – such as social issues, attendance, and the number of Inuit educators. These issues were addressed in the Auditor General’s Report and impact all aspects of the education system in Nunavut, including inclusion. However, they are either outside the scope of this review, or outside the scope of this particular question. Parental engagement for example is addressed in another question of the review.

More than one interviewee questioned the timing and rationale for a review of Inclusive Education.

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*Why did we not review what we have now instead of looking at a different model?\**

*It’s difficult to ascertain changes when you haven’t done a good job of keeping tabs on what you’re doing now. I don’t think it’s totally wrong; it’s not well enough defined.*

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Indeed there were a number of common themes that did speak to the need to better define and flesh out the model/concept that’s already there. Others however spoke to the need for changes and/or improvements.

Due to extenuating circumstances the educator surveys and interviews took place very close to the end of the school year. The result was that 11 members of the SSWG and only 2 Inuit completed surveys – the latter being seen as a serious limitation. Even if it means revisiting this question after schools reopen it is important to have more input from Inuit educators.

\*\* This font and format indicates a quote from an interview or survey.

## Strengths of the current model

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The philosophy of Inclusive Education is well accepted among Nunavut educators surveyed or interviewed. There is no question or debate that students should be educated with their age peers, and receive both an appropriate education program and any supports necessary to help overcome barriers to their learning.

Inclusive Education in Nunavut is well founded in and supported by:

- The Education Act (2008)
- Inclusive Education Regulations (2011)
- Inuglugijaittuq: Foundation for Inclusive Education in Nunavut Schools (2008)

Inuglugijaittuq lays out a vision that each individual is valuable and both belongs and contributes to the group, and articulates seven inclusion principles based on Inuit values. The foundation document also explains the Tumit model - which is based on the premise that all students need support at some time in their schooling but the duration, intensity and complexity of support(s) will vary from student to student, and over time. The Tumit model consists of five levels of support for learning and identifies implications for the school environment, classroom, the education program, school team and staff development.

The Education Act and Inclusive Education Regulations provide considerable detail around duties of teachers and other school staff and set out standards for school team meetings, contents of Individual Student Support Plans (ISSPs), qualifications to do assessments, and appeals, among other things. In many other jurisdictions, the NWT and AB for example, this kind of detail appears in policy, standards or directives documents, but not in legislation/regulations.

## Gaps

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What the above-mentioned documents do not do is provide a lot structure, support, procedures and best practices to move from the concept to the concrete or articulate practices that support the philosophy and the standards. Specifically:

1. Inclusive education requires a team approach if the vision is to become a reality. **There need to be defined and expected roles and responsibilities articulated for the following:** principal, SST, classroom teacher, parents, SSC, instructional teams, the school team, SSAs, SCCs, outside agencies, superintendents, executive directors, staff at the Department, and the NTA. **These roles need to Nunavut-wide**, not by region, **and need to be in-serviced annually** with all staff, not just new staff. Laying out expected roles and responsibilities is the first step in both providing support and expecting accountability.

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*In a nutshell, education staff need to understand that inclusive education is not an add-on, but a change in their approach to teaching students and working with fellow staff in support of all their students.*

*We need a strong school team that works, including principal, SST, teacher, etc. We have that on paper but in practice that has not been my experience.*

*We expect schools to work as a team but we don't teach personnel how to do it.*

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This recommendation would be important in any jurisdiction but it is especially so in Nunavut. High teacher turnover and the fact that many educators are trained elsewhere mean that teachers arrive with the terminology, knowledge and processes of their former jurisdiction. New arrivals to Nunavut need to be given a clear understanding of, "This is how we do business here."

Further, Nunavut is simply too small a jurisdiction to have separate policies, procedures or handbooks for each region.

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*When NU was created they so wanted something new, something not NWT... The school boards were dissolved but the three regions continued to see themselves as independent, with separate policies, handbooks, etc.*

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- 2. There needs to be a clearly articulated process for teachers to follow to help them determine an appropriate education program and necessary supports for any given student.** The Tumit pyramid acknowledges that there is instruction and supports that there are universal, small group/targeted, and individual but it does not lay out a process that indicates where/how to start and what the response should be to the various learners' needs, when specific accommodations or modifications are required and so on.

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*How do teachers figure out strengths and needs - because that's the starting point?*

*You can have wonderful plans but if they aren't based on strengths not much is accomplished.*

*The focus is only on students with learning disabilities. We need to include the gifted and talented as well.*

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3. Nunavut classrooms are characterized by diversity and Differentiated Instruction is seen as critical. However only two survey respondents agreed that, “Differentiated instruction is an integral part of classroom practice,” with one adding “in the English stream.” The other survey respondents either weren’t sure, disagreed or strongly disagreed.

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*My #1 request for help is with differentiated instruction.*

*Some teachers are not doing enough to differentiate...and essentially spend the day teaching to one group while two other groups..are left behind. I don't believe that teachers don't care about meeting the needs. I believe that it is simply that they don't have the training and expectations to help them get there.*

*I was not taught differentiated instruction. I was not taught how to do formative and summative assessment. I had to learn that on the job.*

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**There needs to be ongoing staff development in strategies that are supportive of diversity** including Differentiated Instruction, and others such as Balanced Literacy, and Formative Assessment. **There need to be a limited number of such initiatives established by the Department** both for the strategic use of resources and to ensure teacher buy-in.

**Ongoing staff development can and should take many forms** and not be limited to workshops, conferences and courses. Mentoring, co-operative teaching and bi-weekly sessions at the school level, either as a whole staff or by instructional teams (e.g. primary staff), all would allow teachers to learn from each other.

The Department’s response to the Auditor General’s report indicates a review of differentiated instruction training best practices in other jurisdictions and a three-year plan to develop, implement and evaluate differentiated instruction. This should be seen only as the first step – staff development needs to be ongoing even for returning staff.

4. Interagency co-operation is an area where many jurisdictions struggle, and Nunavut is no exception. The reality is that education can only control what education can control and effective interagency cooperation at the local level is frequently personality dependent – depending on the principal, the nurse, the social worker, the RCMP, etc. That said, **the Department of Education should attempt to establish a protocol for the sharing of information, particularly with Health.**

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*What we need in Nunavut is a memorandum of understanding between health and education that allows sharing of medical information automatically when it is important for educators to know or crucial to support planning in schools. Right now there is one relating to suicide prevention, but not overall health issues.*

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At the very least **this should include the timely sharing of pre-kindergarten screening information.** While health practitioners are unlikely to agree to the sharing of information without parental consent if they would agree to ask parents for this permission when it is important for schools this would be a huge step.

Assessments and services – such as OT, PT, Audiology, Speech – are limited by capacity and northern realities such as weather preventing scheduled visits, parents not giving consent or students being absent when a specialist visits. That said, **the roles and responsibilities described in Recommendation #1 should assign accountability for following up on referrals.** Depending on the referral this accountability could rest at the school level (SST or principal), or it could rest at the regional/CSFN level (SSC or Superintendent/Executive Director.)

Two related areas need special mention - the number of students who need or are receiving audiology services, and speech language services. In one region alone there are over 300 school age children receiving audiology services.

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*If kids can't hear, they can't learn. Money spent on initiatives such as Balanced Literacy will be wasted.*

*Nearly every school is off the chart when it comes to speech language needs.*

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A memorandum of understanding for the sharing of information between Health and Education would help schools to better meet the needs of these students. As well **the Department of Education should attempt to work with the Department of Health to jointly provide FM systems in all classrooms.**

5. The topic of educational psychology assessments is one where most respondents held strong views, with some seeing these assessments as necessary, but lacking or costly, and others arguing that assessments normed on non-Inuit are invalid for that group so any information or recommendations would be equally invalid. What to do? **The following quote is a recommendation,** and should be supported through the roles, responsibilities and in-servicing described in Recommendation #1.



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*One issue that arises in schools is that staff believe that the child needs to go somewhere for a professional educational assessment, not realizing that if they worked together and spoke more about the child they have in common, what works, what doesn't, what the child's strengths and weaknesses are, etc., they have already conducted quite a good educational assessment themselves, one that is very authentic as well, and not a candid shot at the child in an unnatural surrounding. Teachers often underestimate their capacities.*

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That said, there is a place for ed psych (and other specialized) assessments for a small number of students. **A clear, detailed protocol needs to be developed for referral for specialized assessments** which should occur only *after* all attempts at the classroom, SST/School Team and Regional/CSFN levels to develop an effective education program and required supports have been exhausted, *and* there are documented processes/meetings leading to an ISSP, *and* assessments/ interventions have been completed through an Occupational Therapist or Pediatrician.

**There will need to be separate or somewhat different criteria for Inuit when assessments not normed on Inuit are invalid.** "It's better than nothing," is akin to saying the only tool I have is a hammer so I'll treat every situation as if it were a nail. "The students speak English anyway," implies that this somehow makes contextually inappropriate test items valid. **The diagnostic assessments that Dave Philpotts has been developing normed on Inuit in Labrador should be investigated to determine their appropriateness in Nunavut. Alternatively, Nunavut should develop its own Inuit-normed assessments.**

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*There is a very thin argument for not having done anything about appropriate assessments. We have Inuit teachers with Masters degrees who could say this is normal, this isn't. There's lots [of assessments] there that can be used or adapted. We need to hire experts that have experience writing culturally fair tests.*

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## Areas Needing Improvement

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1. **Overseeing the implementation of Inclusive Education in a school should be the responsibility and duty of the principal, not the DEA.** (Education Act, Section 42.) Properly implemented, inclusion requires that *everyone* at the school level play a role and that the respective roles are interdependent. **The principal should be an instructional leader**, not merely an administrator as described by Section 144 of the Act, and as a person that is in the school all day, every day, should be responsible for supporting individuals and teams to carry out their roles, developing growth plans/staff development needs, identifying the need for specialized equipment/resources, and ensuring that established processes are followed, including those relating to referrals for specialized assessments/services.
2. Related to #1 above a **protocol should be developed for superintendents when visiting schools that identifies indicators that show if the school is meeting expected standards required for inclusive education.** This would include checking for documentation that referrals are being tracked, required supports are in fact in place and evidence that they are being monitored for effectiveness and revised as necessary.
3. **The Terms of Reference and composition of the Student Support Working Group (SSWG) should be reviewed to determine whether or not they are realistic. Does the SSWG have the capacity to accomplish all the deliverables that are articulated in the TOR? If not then what do they have the capacity to do and what are the priorities? As for the composition of the SSWG serious consideration should be given to reducing the size. All members should be both knowledgeable and passionate about inclusion.**
4. **Referring to the Tunit Model** with 5 levels of support the majority of respondents mentioned and agreed on the following:
  - a. **There should be fewer levels and clarity about how to determine which level is appropriate.**

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*I have been asking for a set of criteria to aid in the decision-making process for putting a student on an ISSP since I started this position in 2009.*

*We could be putting everyone on a plan depending on the criteria. Because a child in grade 4 can't read it does not automatically mean a Tunit level. There could be other factors such as attendance or instructional practices...*

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- b. **The number of students with written plans has to be manageable – by the teacher, the principal, the SST, the school team, everyone.** Right now there are too many students with written plans, which also impacts parental involvement.

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*In some schools any student that needs support has an IAP. This makes it difficult to collect data [to monitor effectiveness.]*

*If we did a better job of supporting instruction then maybe those numbers [of students with written plans] would decrease; we wouldn't have as many students "needing IEPs."*

*In Nunavut every time you do something different [with a student] the tendency has been to have a written plan.*

*The time factor for use of the tool properly with parents and school team can be an issue.*

*Parents, unfortunately, are called at the end of the process of developing the ISSP. Not always... One of the reasons...has to do with...the simple fact that schools have too many ISSPs...and it is easier for them to write them and then have the parents sign.*

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Most respondents felt that three levels of support for learning should be sufficient. In fact three levels are already reflected in the Tunit pyramid, those being:

- Universal interventions – research-based instruction, formative assessment, research-based classroom management, working with other teachers to find solutions...
- Targeted interventions for clearly identified areas of concern – meeting with other teachers/school team, parents, identifying strategies based on student strengths, short term duration to get the student back on track, monitoring and revision as necessary...
- Individual interventions for long term, significant challenges – meeting with school team, parents, referring for assessment(s), setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-related) goals, monitoring and revision as necessary...

Although the three tiers are consistent with the Response to Intervention model, **adopting the term Response to Intervention (RTI) is not recommended. It will sound like something new**

**when in fact the three basics of RTI – a variety of assessments, a continuum of research-based classroom instruction from universal to individual, and a problem-solving team - are already incorporated in the philosophy of inclusive education in Nunavut generally, and the Tunit pyramid specifically.**

Regardless of what they're called, three levels of support for learning do not inform who needs a written plan and when.

**Recommendation #2 in Gaps describes the need to outline a process for teachers to follow to help them determine an appropriate education program and supports for each student.**

The process should start with a review of existing information including transition plans, strengths, challenges, what works, what doesn't, learning styles, triggers, etc. and illustrate that, by definition, good teaching involves collaborating with other teachers/those who know the student, using a range of instructional, assessment and classroom management strategies, flexible groupings, and the use of formative assessment to make ongoing adjustments. In other words, of course you're doing something different – with everyone, all the time. **The focus should be on determining the supports that a student needs, not on identifying a Tunit level. Serious consideration should be given to eliminating labeling by levels completely.** That would also mean term Tunit – or footprint – would become irrelevant.

**What's missing from the current Tunit model is any reference students working on curricular learning outcomes that are different from their assigned placement.** The reality in Nunavut is that the majority of students are working below their assigned grade level for a variety of reasons - attendance, instructional practices, background knowledge, language acquisition, parental engagement, social issues and so on. Not all of these students need an Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP), and those that do, don't need a written plan that's nine pages long.\*

Where is the middle ground between avoiding social promotion - by documenting what students are working on and what supports they need - without overwhelming educators with too much paper?

- i. Teachers need to start by being clear about the curricular level at which a student is functioning. **Report cards/reporting to parents should include a statement as to the grade level of curricular outcomes that a student is working on in an**

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\* This is an example where the Regulations provide too much direction. The requirements of Regulation 6 are appropriate for an IEP, but not for an IAP.

- Inuit language (if applicable), English or Français (if applicable) and Mathematics.**
- ii. This requires that teachers know the curricula. To assist with this, particularly with curricular outcomes at a grade level other than the assigned grade, **one-page summaries should be developed showing an overview of learning outcomes for a given grade level.**
  - iii. As soon as a teacher can say that, “JJ is working on grade 4 learning outcomes in Mathematics,” then there is no need to write a plan that includes detail about those learning outcomes. What JJ may need however, is specific strategies to help him meet the Mathematics learning outcomes. **The current IAP template should be replaced with a much shorter template on which the teacher (not the SST or school team) documents student-specific strategies/equipment,** chosen by the teacher, parent and student (with the help of the SST or school team only when needed.) The strategies, which should go beyond differentiated instruction and other universal strategies, should be employed for as short a time as possible, and be reviewed/ revised at every reporting period at the very least.
  - iv. **The current IEP templates – IEP and SIEP - should be combined, and used for students for whom some or all learning outcomes are student-specific and/or not articulated in approved curricula. SMART outcomes should be retained** but several respondents commented that many if not most outcomes as currently written do not meet SMART criteria - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-related. **Staff development is needed in this area.**
  - v. **In senior secondary grades the focus for students with IEPs should include an increasing emphasis on transition planning for “life after high school.”**
- c. **Behaviour plans and supports (currently Tunit 3) should be separate from learning plans and supports – i.e. not part of the same model.**

There is no question that behaviour is an issue.

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*30-40 kids needing Tunit 3 supports is not uncommon. Sometimes an SSA is assigned just to keep kids from running away. Some teachers are just doing crowd control.*

*For the most part teachers don't panic over [their ability to teach diverse learners] as much as they worry about the behaviour issues that wreak havoc in the classroom.*

*If students need an IBP it's usually because they've done something really bad. So they need a full time SSA so they don't hurt anyone.*

*We have students I describe as "broken souls". These are the students who have little if any self worth, very low academic ability and their home lives are at best challenging. These students usually fall under the guidelines of behavioural concerns. Having them work within the classroom along side their peers is extremely important, however there are times "never scheduled" where they just can't handle life but school is the best place for them to be. These students can be the chair throwers, the swearing or physically aggressive...where do these students fit in an inclusive model?*

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All of that said, there are some things that schools can and should do to positively impact behaviour. As with learning **the majority of students will "do fine" if there are school-wide (universal) behaviour expectations that are clear, consistent, taught and positively reinforced. A smaller (targeted) number will need additional support in order to meet the behaviour expectations** through strategies such as daily check-in, pre-correction, refocusing and redirecting, solution circles and office referrals. **A few students will need individual interventions for chronic, severe behaviours.**

**As with learning plans, the number of students with written behaviour plans has to be manageable.** The IBP template as it currently stands requires a Functional Behaviour Assessment (page 3 of the template) which by definition is labour intensive and "doable" (by staff) for only a small number of students.

**All strategies that target behaviour should be reviewed for effectiveness/appropriateness.** These include "soft" suspensions (sending the student home for the rest of the day), behaviour contracts and pullout.

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*There should be no undocumented suspensions and reentry meetings should be required.*

*Contracts are naïve if there's no plan to help students develop the behaviours that you want.*

*If there are overriding issues in the home or personal life, literacy is not the most important thing right now.*

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5. The Auditor General's report found that documentation in ISSPs did not state whether the students received the needed services or adjustments about 75 percent of the time. Many respondents agreed.

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*The thing we don't know at the end of the day is the impact/analysis of the degree to which student needs are being met. Maybe our tool needs to change to be clearer about SMART goals or other targets so that we can see the measurables.*

*We are very weak in this area. This could have to do with the huge number of ISSPs we have, the size they are, who writes them and whether or not goals are written using SMART criteria. If teachers are not involved in the writing of ISSPs they are not in a position to assess their success in the goals.*

*Who is accountable for making sure an intervention is actually in place? And what about the quality of an intervention? Is it making a difference? We do a lot of things that keep us busy and are well intended but what's the evidence that we would accept that would show us if the intervention is effective?*

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If there were fewer students with written plans following-up on needed supports, including determining their effectiveness, would be more manageable. In addition, **there needs to be a written guide on how to plan, develop, implement, monitor, revise and assess any type of ISSP. This would include expected roles and responsibilities – who's accountable for what? - how to write SMART goals, when to review goals/interventions and revise them if necessary. This written guide needs to be Nunavut-wide, and accompanied by training on an on-going basis, and user-friendly templates that are on a school or region-wide data-base - rather than an individual teacher's or SST's computer - and transferable between schools/regions.**

6. Surprisingly only one interview revealed a strong opinion that there is not enough money to support inclusion. That said, there were references to money not being used wisely, to insufficient funds for specialized assessments, to the fact that there are no funds specifically designated for inclusion, and to the fact that most money spent in the name of inclusion is used to hire SSAs.

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*I wouldn't know if we're getting bang for our buck.*

*It's part of the pot. Schools request support as needed.*

*When a need presents itself being told to fund from within means robbing Peter to pay Paul. This is not acceptable.*

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With one exception respondents did not suggest tying funding or an SSA to individual students based on a specific label – such as “Severe” – meaning that there is support for the block funding method currently in place. However, **there need to be funds designated to support inclusion within the block funding model.** This does not suggest more funding *necessarily*, but it might, and it certainly suggests that there should be an expectation that schools/RSOs/CSFN use a certain percentage of their allocated funding for expenditures that support inclusion such as staff development to better address student diversity, or a student-specific need such as autism, the purchase of assistive technology, specialized equipment/resources/transportation, and contracting of specialized assessments and services.

**A detailed list of allowable expenses would need to be developed and RSOs/CSFN would have to show that inclusive education funding was used for allowable expenses.** The current model is too subjective in terms of deciding how to respond to requests/the need for any of the above.

Alarming, the wide range of supports/expenditures that are possible/necessary for inclusion was only rarely mentioned with the majority suggesting that the need was for more SSAs. This is addressed in #8 below.

**Specific, additional funding should be allocated to RSOs, not DEAs, for communities with magnet facilities** such as group homes. By definition the residents in such facilities have higher needs than the general population and of course they bring those needs with them when they come to school.

7. The issue of SSTs being an assignment of the school principal was mentioned by several respondents.
  - a. **SSTs should be hired specifically for the SST position and should be master teachers who are able to facilitate planning (e.g. MAPS) and solution circles, co-teach, coach/mentor other teachers and provide training for SSAs (in student-specific strategies, not pre-service training.) The passing mark for an interview should be at least 70%.**
  - b. **The role of the SST (as per Gaps, Recommendation #1) should be defined as supporting classroom teachers to provide appropriate education programs and supports to their students. It should not be *only* to support students directly – as in small group pullout.**



- c. **As a corollary to b this is an area where a change in terminology might be appropriate. The role of this key person should be to support education programs, as in Program Support Teacher (PST).**
8. No topic was more “popular” than that of problems relating to SSAs. The issues are many:
- a. Indeterminate positions and not being able to move or reallocate a position according to student need.

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*If we're truly looking at the student needs it should not be about employing someone in the community.*

*All positions are filled but there is not enough work to go around in some schools. In other schools there's more work than the SSAs can handle.*

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**If the Government of Nunavut is serious about inclusion specifically and quality education generally SSA positions must be allocated in response to student/class/school need.** This does not mean that positions should not be indeterminate but it does mean that an **SSA should be assigned to any school/class in a community as needs warrant, and in some cases it could mean that a position is eliminated if it is no longer needed.**

- b. Lack of training

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*How effective are SSAs really if they don't have training or expectations that they need to grow?*

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**SSAs should be hired in term positions until they have completed minimum training as determined by the Department of Education.**

- c. Low academic skills making it difficult or unrealistic to help older students.

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*[The SSA] is maybe working at a grade 3 level herself.*

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**SSAs with low/limited education levels should be hired in term positions.**

- d. SSAs being assigned to one student, rather than a class, or more than one class.

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*SSAs become the teacher rather than the teacher taking responsibility for the child.*

*If we're going to have the least skilled people helping the most needy people that's wrong.*

*The student has an SSA but it's, "somebody's minding them for their behaviour."*

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The idea of an SSA being responsible for a student, rather than the teacher doing so, is professionally unethical. **Recommendation #1, Gaps should address this issue by defining the SSA role as one where the SSA works under the direction and supervision of a classroom teacher, does not replace the professional responsibilities of the teacher, and performs a number of roles depending on need – regular meetings with the teacher, organizational tasks, instructional support, behaviour support, participation in team meetings, personal care support, etc.**

- e. SSAs “doing what they want” or doing busy work.

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*Has anyone given them anything meaningful to do?*

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This issue relates to others, such as lack of training, but it particularly relates to the issue and recommendation that follows.

- f. Teachers not knowing how to work with/use an SSA effectively.

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*In many schools the SST looks after the SSAs. The teacher abdicates.*

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**Although the relationship between SSA and teacher is shared teachers must take the lead in scheduling regular meetings to discuss students and obtain feedback, and in helping SSAs understand their role, the role of the teacher and where the two overlap. Teachers may need in-service in how to do this.**

The one area relating to SSAs where respondents did not agree is whether or not there are enough SSAs. This was mentioned in #6 above.

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*There are just not enough Student Support Assistants to do the best possible job.*

*We're fine.*

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**More SSAs are not recommended until the issues that limit their effectiveness (8 a-f above) are addressed. The focus should shift to other types of supports (and expenses), as identified in Areas Needing Improvement #6.**

**As with SSTs a name change – to Support Assistant, or Program Support Assistant – would be appropriate.**

9. School Community Counsellors (SCCs) – Ilinniarvimmi Inuusiliriji (II) - should be a valuable resource to provide support to students and liaise with families in order to improve student attendance and parental engagement. However, this does not appear to be the case.

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*SCCs are untrained, undervalued, underutilized and disrespected.*

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**Training should be provided and there should be an expectation that anyone employed as an SCC (II) take the training.**

10. Several respondents expressed frustration that the ideal of inclusion has translated into placement with peers without providing the assessments, identification and interventions that some students need.

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*The party line is that best practices will serve all, but they won't.*

*We are trying to be overly inclusive - trying to drive everything through this model.*

*What is not clear is the role of specialists.*

*One of our indicators should be decreased numbers with Tunit 2 so we can focus on the students with more needs.*

*Why are we not diagnosing? If there is a challenge with the child and their learning how can we assist them if we don't know what the root of the challenge is?*

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The current model however does acknowledge that the students at the top of the pyramid require specialized, individual interventions. As per Gaps, Recommendation #5, specialized assessments shouldn't be the first step, or even the second, but **there is very clearly a place for specialized assessments if a test can provide information not available from other sources and lead to programming suggestions and other interventions not already in place.**

**Referrals for specialized assessments should follow the protocol identified in Gaps, Recommendation #5 and be to specialists or institutions whose practices are supportive of a needs-based model**

**of service provision – i.e. one where the needs and strengths of students are more important in determining programming and essential supports than are categorical labels of disabilities.**

**In addition, referrals for specialized assessments should be to specialists or institutions that understand that Nunavut uses a block funding model.**

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*Much of the information within the [ed psyc] reports were related to accessing extra funding for support, i.e. stanine score, standard deviation, percentile rank, but did not have any educational value at our end, as we do not fund for support this way.*

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This issue was left until last, not because it is least important but because many of the recommendations that have already been made should help to address/impact this issue, specifically:

- Gaps #2 – a clearly articulated process for teachers to follow to help them determine an appropriate education program and necessary supports
- Gaps #4 – accountability for following up on referrals
- Gaps #5 – protocol for referral for specialized assessment
- Areas Needing Improvement #1 – principals responsible for overseeing inclusive education, not DEAs
- Areas Needing Improvement #2 – protocol for superintendents' visits that includes indicators of expected standards for inclusive education
- Areas Needing Improvement #4 b iv – SMART outcomes that are actually written to meet SMART criteria
- Areas Needing Improvement #5 – a guide that articulates process, expectations and accountability for developing written plans
- Areas Needing Improvement #6 – a list of allowable and “expected” expenses to support inclusion
- Areas Needing Improvement #7 – SSTs that are master teachers
- Areas Needing Improvement #8 – basic training for SSAs, training for SSAs in student-specific tasks/roles, training for teachers in how to work effectively with SSAs

## **Last Word**

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Most recommendations are based on what respondents said, either during interviews or in written responses. The exceptions are recommendations #1, and #3 in Areas Needing Improvement, which are the opinion of the external reviewer.

**Nunavut Inclusive Education Review  
Strengths, Gaps and Areas Needing Improvement  
Summary of Recommendations**

**Gaps**

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1. There need to be defined and expected roles and responsibilities articulated for [all school, region, and Department personnel involved in Inclusion, and the NTA.] These roles need to be Nunavut-wide and need to be in-serviced annually.
2. There needs to be a clearly articulated process for teachers to follow to help them determine an appropriate education program and necessary supports for any given student.
3. There needs to be *ongoing* staff development in strategies that are supportive of diversity... There need to be a limited number of such initiatives established by the Department. Ongoing staff development can and should take many forms...
4. The Department of Education should attempt to establish a protocol for the sharing of information, particularly with Health. ... This should include the timely sharing of pre-kindergarten screening information.

The roles and responsibilities described in Recommendation #1 should assign accountability for following up on referrals.

The Department of Education should attempt to work with the Department of Health to jointly provide FM systems in all classrooms.

5. The following quote is a recommendation. ... *staff believe that the child needs to go somewhere for a professional educational assessment, not realizing that if they worked together & spoke more about the child they have in common... they have already conducted quite a good educational assessment themselves..*

A clear, detailed protocol needs to be developed for referral for specialized assessments.

There will need to be separate or somewhat different criteria for Inuit when assessments not normed on Inuit are invalid. The diagnostic assessments that Dave Philpotts has been developing normed on Inuit in Labrador should be investigated to determine their appropriateness in Nunavut. Alternatively, Nunavut should develop its own Inuit-normed assessments.

## Areas Needing Improvement

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1. Overseeing the implementation of Inclusive Education in a school should be the responsibility and duty of the principal, not the DEA. The principal should be an instructional leader...
2. A protocol should be developed for superintendents when visiting schools, that identifies indicators that show if the school is meeting expected standards required for inclusive education.
3. The Terms of Reference and composition of the Student Support Working Group (SSWG) should be reviewed to determine whether or not they are realistic. Does the SSWG have the capacity to accomplish all the deliverables that are articulated in the TOR? If not then what do they have the capacity to do and what are the priorities? As for the composition of the SSWG serious consideration should be given to reducing the size. All members should be both knowledgeable and passionate about inclusion.
4. Referring to the Tunit model:
  - a. There should be fewer levels and clarity about how to determine which level is appropriate.
  - b. The number of students with written plans has to be manageable – by the teacher, the principal, the SST, the school team, everyone.

Adopting the term Response to Intervention (RTI) is not recommended. It will sound like something new when in fact the three basics of RTI – a variety of assessments, a continuum of research-based classroom instruction from universal to individual, and a problem-solving team - are already incorporated in the philosophy of inclusive education in Nunavut generally, and the Tunit pyramid specifically.

Recommendation #2, Gaps describes the need to outline a process for teachers to follow to help them determine an appropriate education program and supports for each student. The focus should be on determining the supports that a student needs, not on identifying a Tunit level. Serious consideration should be given to eliminating labeling by levels completely.

What's missing from the current Tunit model is any reference students working on curricular learning outcomes that are different from their assigned placement.

- i. Report cards/reporting to parents should include a statement as to the grade level of curricular outcomes that a student is working on in an Inuit language (if applicable), English or Français (if applicable) and Mathematics.

- ii. One-page summaries should be developed showing an overview of learning outcomes for a given grade level.
  - iii. The current IAP template should be replaced with a much shorter template on which the teacher (not the SST or school team) documents student-specific strategies/equipment...
  - iv. The current IEP templates – IEP and SIEP - should be combined, and used for students for whom some or all learning outcomes are student-specific and/or not articulated in approved curricula. SMART outcomes should be retained - staff development is needed in this area.
  - v. In senior secondary grades the focus for students with IEPs should include an increasing emphasis on transition planning for “life after high school.”
- c. Behaviour plans and supports (currently Tunit 3) should be separate from learning plans and supports – i.e. not part of the same model.

The majority of students will “do fine” if there are school-wide (universal) behaviour expectations that are clear, consistent, taught and positively reinforced. A smaller (targeted) number will need additional support in order to meet the behaviour expectations... A few students will need individual interventions for chronic, severe behaviours.

As with learning plans, the number of students with written behaviour plans has to be manageable.

All strategies that target behaviour should be reviewed for effectiveness/appropriateness.

5. [In reference to the Auditor General’s report which found that ISSPs did not state whether students received needed services or adjustments about 75% of the time] there needs to be a written guide on how to plan, develop, implement, monitor, revise and assess any type of ISSP. This would include expected roles and responsibilities – who’s accountable for what? - how to write SMART goals, when to review goals/interventions and revise them if necessary. This written guide needs to be Nunavut-wide, and accompanied by training on an on-going basis, and user-friendly templates that are on a school or region-wide database and transferable between schools/regions.
6. There need to be funds designated to support inclusion within the block funding model.

A detailed list of allowable expenses would need to be developed and RSOs/CSFN would have to show that inclusive education funding was used for allowable expenses.

Specific, additional funding should be allocated to RSOs, not DEAs, for communities with magnet facilities.

7. SSTs should not be assigned by the principal
  - a. SSTs should be hired specifically for the SST position and should be master teachers who are able to facilitate planning (e.g. MAPS) and solution circles, co-teach, coach/mentor other teachers and provide training for SSAs (in student-specific strategies, not pre-service training.) The passing mark for an interview should be at least 70%.
  - b. The role of the SST (as per Gaps, Recommendation #1) should be to support classroom teachers to provide appropriate education programs and supports to their students. It should not be *only* to support students directly – as in small group pullout.
  - c. As a corollary to b this is an area where a change in terminology might be appropriate. The role of this key person should be to support education programs, as in Program Support Teacher (PST.)
8. SSAs
  - a. If the Government of Nunavut is serious about inclusion specifically and quality education generally SSA positions must be allocated in response to student/class/school need. An SSA should be assigned to any school/class in a community as needs warrant, and in some cases it could mean that a position is eliminated if it is no longer needed.
  - b. SSAs should be hired in term positions until they have completed minimum training as determined by the Department of Education.
  - c. SSAs with low/limited education levels should be hired in term positions.
  - d. The idea of an SSA being responsible for a student, rather than the teacher doing so, is professionally unethical. Recommendation #1, Gaps should address this issue by defining the SSA role as one where the SSA works under the direction and supervision of a classroom teacher, does not replace the professional responsibilities of the teacher, and performs a number of roles depending on need...



- e. – see f
- f. Although the relationship between SSA and teacher is shared teachers must take the lead in scheduling regular meetings to discuss students and obtain feedback, and in helping SSAs understand their role, the role of the teacher and where the two overlap. Teachers may need in-service in how to do this.

More SSAs are not recommended until the issues that limit their effectiveness (8 a-f above) are addressed. The focus should shift to other types of supports (and expenses), as identified in Areas Needing Improvement #6.

As with SSTs a name change – to Support Assistant or Program Support Assistant – would be appropriate.

- 9. Training should be provided and there should be an expectation that anyone employed as a School Community Counsellor (Ilinniarvimmi Inuusiliriji) take the training.
- 10. [Referring to concerns that some students are placed with their age peers but do not receive the assessment, identification and interventions that they need] there is very clearly a place for specialized assessments *if* a test can provide information not available from other sources *and* lead to programming suggestions and other interventions not already in place. Referrals for specialized assessments should follow the protocol identified in Gaps, Recommendation #5 and be to specialists or institutions whose practices are supportive of a needs-based model of service provision – i.e. one where the needs and strengths of students are more important in determining programming and essential supports than are categorical labels of disabilities. In addition, referrals for specialized assessments should be to specialists or institutions that understand that Nunavut uses a block funding model.

Other recommendations should also help to ensure that students who require specialized assessments and interventions do in fact receive them, specifically:

- Gaps #2 – a clearly articulated process for teachers to follow to help them determine an appropriate education program and necessary supports
- Gaps #4 – accountability for following up on referrals
- Gaps #5 – protocol for referral for specialized assessment
- Areas Needing Improvement #4 b iv – SMART outcomes that are actually written to meet SMART criteria
- Areas Needing Improvement #5 – a guide that articulates process, expectations and accountability for developing written plans; and a protocol for superintendent visits

- Areas Needing Improvement #6 – a list of allowable and “expected” expenses to support inclusion
- Areas Needing Improvement #7 – SSTs that are master teachers
- Areas Needing Improvement #8 – basic training for SSAs, training for SSAs in student-specific tasks/roles, training for teachers in how to work effectively with SSAs

July | 2014

# Nunavut Inclusive Education Review

Evaluation and Accountability (Question 2i, Step 1)

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# Nunavut Inclusive Education Review

## Accountability and Evaluation

### The Question

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Question 2i, Step 1 of the Terms of Reference required the reviewer to “examine how evaluation and accountability are integrated into inclusive education models in Alberta and the NWT.” Verbal communication revealed that there is particular interest in accountability for:

- learning outcomes and supports prescribed in ISSPs, and
- following up on referrals for assessments and supports.

### Accountability in Alberta

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*Standards for Special Education (2004)* sets out requirements for school boards regarding the delivery of education programming and services for students with special needs in grades 1 – 12. The requirements are organized under the four headings of:

- Access – to an education program through adapted or modified<sup>1</sup> programming
- Appropriateness – of education programming and services - designed around assessed student needs and provided by qualified, knowledgeable, skilled staff
- Accountability – for carrying out one’s assigned duties
- Appeals – to protect the rights of students and parents, and address differences of opinion about the education of students with special needs – using timely, fair, open processes

### Accountability in the NWT

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*Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling (2006)* was modeled after the Alberta standards and provides direction to NWT education bodies<sup>2</sup> under the same four headings – access, appropriateness, accountability and appeals. The NWT document differs however in that it prescribes expected standards related to educational programming and required supports for *all* students, not only for those identified as “students with special education needs.” Like Nunavut, the NWT uses an inclusive model and assumes that at some point in their schooling all students will need support to overcome barriers to their learning.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted and modified, as defined by Alberta, not to be taken as having the same meaning as in NU

<sup>2</sup> generic term that means District Education Authority, Divisional Education Council, or commission scolaire francophone de division.

Because the NWT Ministerial Directive was modeled after the Alberta standards the two documents bear many similarities and require school boards (AB) or education bodies (NWT) to do many of the same things. However, because the NWT model is inclusive it will be used to describe accountability in that jurisdiction, for the two areas of most concern to Nunavut.

## **Accountability for Learning Outcomes and Supports Prescribed in Written Plans (NWT)**

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The *Ministerial Directive* lays out well-defined expectations of education bodies that they, and in turn schools and education personnel, are expected to meet when assessing students and using that information to plan, implement, monitor, and revise a student's education program and any necessary supports. Expectations are also defined to ensure accountability in a number of areas, including reporting to parents, developing certain policies and procedures, and being accountable for the use of funding designated to support inclusive schooling. Finally the Directive lays out appeal procedures for the resolution and appeal of decisions related to access to the education program, appropriateness of the education program and supports, and accountability for responsibilities assigned by the *Directive*.

The *Ministerial Directive* is supported by series of handbooks that can be described as "how-to" manuals. These handbooks were developed to provide education bodies with tools and resources that would help them meet the requirements of the *Ministerial Directive*. As per the *Ministerial Directive*, schools and education personnel are expected to have and use the handbooks, which include:

- Student Support Plans (SSP): Guidelines for Development; and Toolbox
- Individual Education Plans (IEP): Guidelines for Development; and Toolbox
- Program Support Guide

In addition, there are electronic templates for SSPs and IEPs that all schools use and that can be transferred from school to school if/when a student moves.

It is significant that the process used to develop all handbooks required *total* consensus of Student Support Consultants (SSCs) from all NWT education bodies and student support staff at the Department. Development took longer, but it resulted in buy-in from all education bodies as opposed to resistance or a feeling of being "done to."

### **SSP Accountability**

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SSPs are relatively short documents – one or two pages - that state the curricular level for students working above or below their assigned grade, and list strategies to help with identified "focus areas" that are either general (such as organizing self and materials, or transitions), or specific to an academic need (such as

difficulty with math word problems, or word retrieval.) SSPs are reviewed at all school reporting times (at minimum) with a focus on the effectiveness of identified strategies, progress with respect to the curricular outcomes, and whether strategies need to be discontinued or additional strategies added. Templates are provided in the SSP Toolbox for the teacher, student and parent to use to reflect on the strategies already in place, and what needs to change, if anything.

## **IEP Accountability**

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IEPs are much longer documents and similar to IEPs in many other jurisdictions. They are used for students for whom some, or all, annual outcomes are outside of approved NWT curricula. The IEP Guidelines acknowledge the critical importance of collaboration by describing roles for a number of partners including parents, the principal, classroom teachers, the Program Support Teacher, the Student Support Consultant, Support Assistants, and others. (These roles are further detailed in the *Program Support Guide*.) The IEP process itself was modeled after the Manitoba process and includes 4 steps: Setting Direction, Gathering and Sharing Information and Establishing Priorities, Developing and Writing the IEP, and Implementing and Reviewing the IEP. Annual student outcomes are written using SMART criteria, and once implemented the IEP team meets formally at least twice a year to review the degree to which the IEP is meeting the student's needs, the effectiveness of strategies and resources identified in the IEP, the progress made towards the annual student outcomes and to consider whether there is new information that would suggest changes are necessary. Parents of students with IEPs receive progress reports during regular reporting times. The IEP template includes a section on progress, which can be completed and printed for a specific reporting period.

## **Summary and Relevance to Nunavut**

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The bottom line for accountability for learning outcomes and supports in written plans (or anything else) is simple:

- Responsibilities have to be assigned to specific individuals.
- Those individuals need to be supported to carry out their responsibilities, through resources (such as the SSP and IEP Guidelines), and ongoing staff development.
- Principals have to expect accountability from school-based personnel, look for it, and develop improvement plans if necessary.
- Superintendents have to expect accountability from principals, look for it, and develop improvement plans if necessary.
- And so on

This model is consistent with a number of the recommendations made in the portion of the inclusive education review that addressed Question 1, Step 1 - Strengths, Gaps and Areas Needing Improvement, specifically:

### Gaps Recommendations:

1. There need to be defined and expected roles and responsibilities articulated for [all school, region, and Department personnel involved in Inclusion, and the NTA.] These roles need to Nunavut-wide and need to be in-serviced annually.
2. There needs to be a clearly articulated process for teachers to follow to help them determine an appropriate education program and necessary supports for any given student.

### Areas Needing Improvements recommendations:

1. Overseeing the implementation of Inclusive Education in a school should be the responsibility and duty of the principal, not the DEA. The principal should be an instructional leader...
2. A protocol should be developed for superintendents when visiting schools, that identifies indicators that show if the school is meeting expected standards required for inclusive education.
3. –
4. b. i. Report cards/reporting to parents should include a statement as to the grade level of curricular outcomes that a student is working on in an Inuit language (if applicable), English or Français (if applicable) and Mathematics.
5. [In reference to the Auditor General's report which found that ISSPs did not state whether students received needed services or adjustments about 75% of the time] there needs to be a written guide on how to plan, develop, implement, monitor, revise and assess any type of ISSP. This would include expected roles and responsibilities – who's accountable for what? - how to write SMART goals, when to review goals/interventions and revise them if necessary. This written guide needs to be Nunavut-wide, and accompanied by training on an on-going basis, and user-friendly templates that are on a school or region-wide database and transferable between schools/regions.



## **Accountability for Following-up on Referrals for Assessments and Supports**

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The NWT *Ministerial Directive* requires education bodies to have written procedures for both assessment and specialized assessment.

The following two sub-headings, and Diagram 1, are a direct quote from the *Ministerial Directive*.

### **Assessment**

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Education bodies are required to:

- Develop or utilize a number of informal to formal assessment strategies (as per diagram 1) across time periods and situations to:
  - determine students' strengths and challenges.
  - assess performance in relation to NWT curricular outcomes.
  - make changes to instruction and assessment.
  - identify whether there is the need for a Student Support Plan or Individual Education Plan.
- Utilize assessment strategies which:
  - match the purpose for doing them.
  - replicate challenges and standards of performance required in the real world.
  - are responsive to the cultural, linguistic and other needs of individual students within their school settings.
  - produce program recommendations, for the classroom teacher, parents and others who are in daily contact with students, that are consistent with the student's placement in a regular instructional setting.
  - outline the use of particular strategies that should provide for student growth.
- Report results of assessments to parents and others involved with student programming.

### **Specialized Assessment**

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Specialized assessments are those reflected towards the bottom of Diagram 1, below.

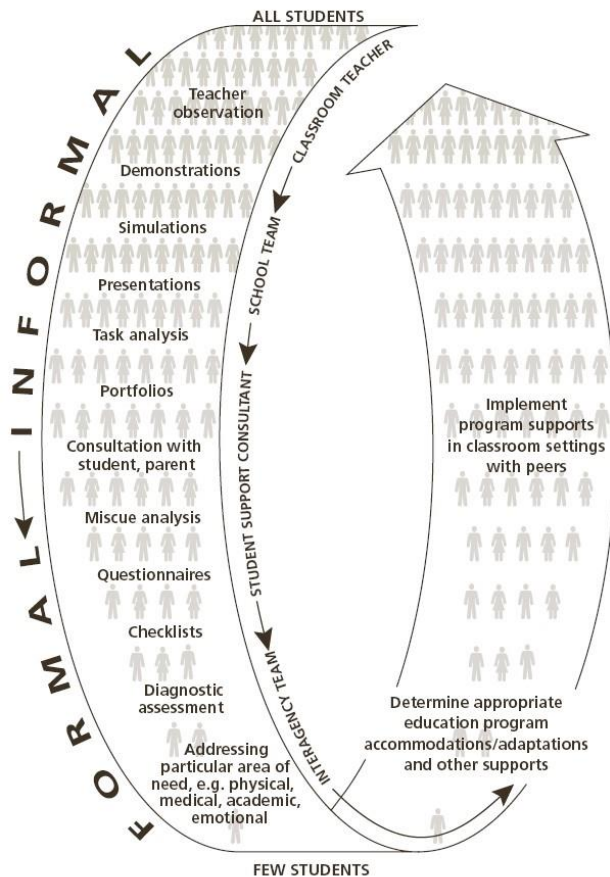
Education bodies are required to:

- Have written procedures for referral of students requiring specialized assessment.
- Base referrals on a variety of indicators such as:
  - screening procedures
  - teacher assessment and observation

- parent information
  - previous assessments
  - information from other professionals/service providers
- Obtain the parent's written, informed consent for specialized assessment or referral.
- Utilize assessments which:
  - match the purpose for doing them.
  - replicate challenges and standards of performance required in the real world.
  - are responsive to the cultural, linguistic and other needs of individual students within their school settings.
  - produce program recommendations, for the classroom teacher, parents and others who are in daily contact with students, that are consistent with the student's placement in regular instructional settings.
  - outline the use of particular strategies that should provide for student growth.
- Use qualified professionals who follow the expectations outlined by the standards and guidelines set by professional organizations for their members:
  - to conduct specialized assessments and interpret results, and
  - to provide programming recommendations that can be implemented and maintained by parents, teachers, and others involved with a student's programming, and are consistent with the student's placement in a regular instructional setting.
- Work collaboratively, when appropriate, with other service providers and/or appropriate professionals to complete the specialized assessments.
- Ensure that specialized assessments, when required, are completed within a reasonable time from the date of written referral, including completion of a written report, and meeting with the assessment professional to discuss the report.
- Provide parents with access to information about specialized assessments, in accordance with the *Departmental Directive on the Management of Information in the Student Record, and Other Records Pertaining to Students (1998)*.

Diagram 1

## ASSESSMENT



### End of quote of *Ministerial Directive*

Unlike the series of handbooks that were developed to support written learning plans, the Department of Education and education bodies did not collaborate to develop common, NWT-wide processes related to assessment, and specialized assessment. The Ministerial Directive sets out expectations in these areas and education bodies detail the specifics. Of course, education bodies share their procedures with each other, and borrow/adapt ideas to fit their particular contexts.

The following illustrates how one NWT School District (Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YCS)) developed assessment procedures, including procedures for specialized assessment, as required by the *Ministerial Directive*.

## **YCS Assessment Protocol**

### **Purpose of Protocol/Rationale:**

This protocol outlines procedures for identifying student strengths and challenges, in order to plan and deliver an appropriate education program and required supports.

### **Background:**

Information about student strengths and challenges will be reviewed, and/or generated in a number of ways. Specialized assessments are formal assessments (as defined in District Administrative Procedure #333) which will be considered only when information is required that is not available through less formal methods/sources.

### **Methods:**

1. Any assessment, whether informal or formal, will only be conducted if the information to be collected:
  - Does not already exist, or
  - Exists, but is outdated.
  - Will be used to plan and deliver the education program and required supports.
2. Information about student strengths and challenges will be gathered in two ways.
  - By reviewing existing information.
  - By collecting or generating additional information, including conducting assessment(s).
3. As illustrated in the chart below, information about a student's strengths and challenges will be reviewed or generated by:
  - First, the teacher:
    - working with the student in the classroom.
    - reviewing existing information from sources in the school.
    - meeting with others who know the student well or have worked with the student in the past.
  - Then, the PST/School Team:
    - reviewing information and assessing.
    - making referrals to other professionals.
    - analyzing these results with other professionals.

**Sources of Information**  
**Student Strengths and Challenges**

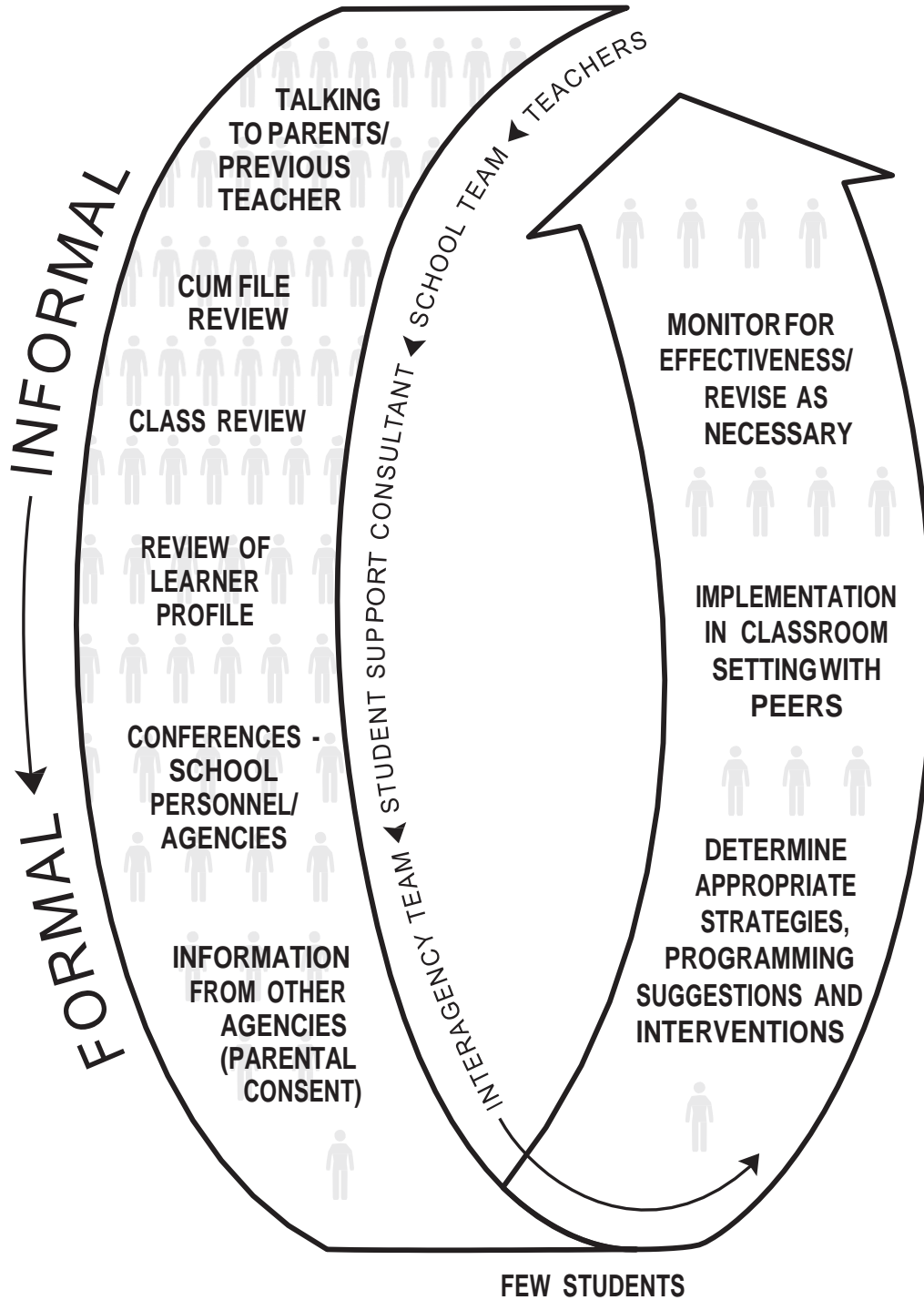
|                        |  | <b>Examples</b>  |  |
|------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Teacher</b>         | <b>Work with student In classroom</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Anecdotal notes</li> <li>• Work samples</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading inventories</li> <li>• Math inventories</li> </ul>  |
|                        | <b>Review existing information from school sources</b>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learner Profile</li> <li>• Cum File review, e.g.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Attendance</li> <li>○ Report cards</li> <li>○ Program type</li> <li>○ Student Support Plan or IEP</li> <li>○ Behavior Support Plan</li> <li>○ Previous schools</li> <li>○ Group/Prov tests</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class Review</li> <li>• Program Support File review, e.g.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Previous assessments</li> <li>○ Interventions</li> <li>○ Retention</li> <li>○ OT, Speech, Audiology, Vision/Hearing</li> <li>○ Medical concerns</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|                        | <b>Meet with others who know the student well/have worked with the student in the past</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous teacher(s)</li> <li>• Parent/Guardian</li> <li>• Elders</li> <li>• Program Support Staff</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counsellor</li> <li>• Mentor</li> <li>• Community Support Worker</li> </ul>   |
| <b>PST/School Team</b> | <b>Review information, meet with others and conduct assessments</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review information from teacher, as above</li> <li>• Observation in classroom</li> <li>• Referral to TEAM</li> <li>• Referral to counseling</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessments with standardized tools, e.g. miscue analysis, diagnostic</li> <li>• Functional Behavior Assessment</li> <li>• Case conferences</li> </ul>  |
|                        | <b>Refer for assessment by others</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OT, Speech, Audiology</li> <li>• Mental Health</li> <li>• Psychologist</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family doctor, pediatrician, psychiatrist, other</li> <li>• Specialized assessment</li> </ul>   |

Diagram 2, below, shows that some types of information will be reviewed or generated on most, if not all students, while other types of information will be reviewed or generated on very few.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Note to NU: Diagram 2 is presented two ways – the first shows the review of existing information as a fluid process. It is presented as an alternative to the second (original YCS) Diagram 2 which is a pyramid. Otherwise, the YCS policy has not been changed.

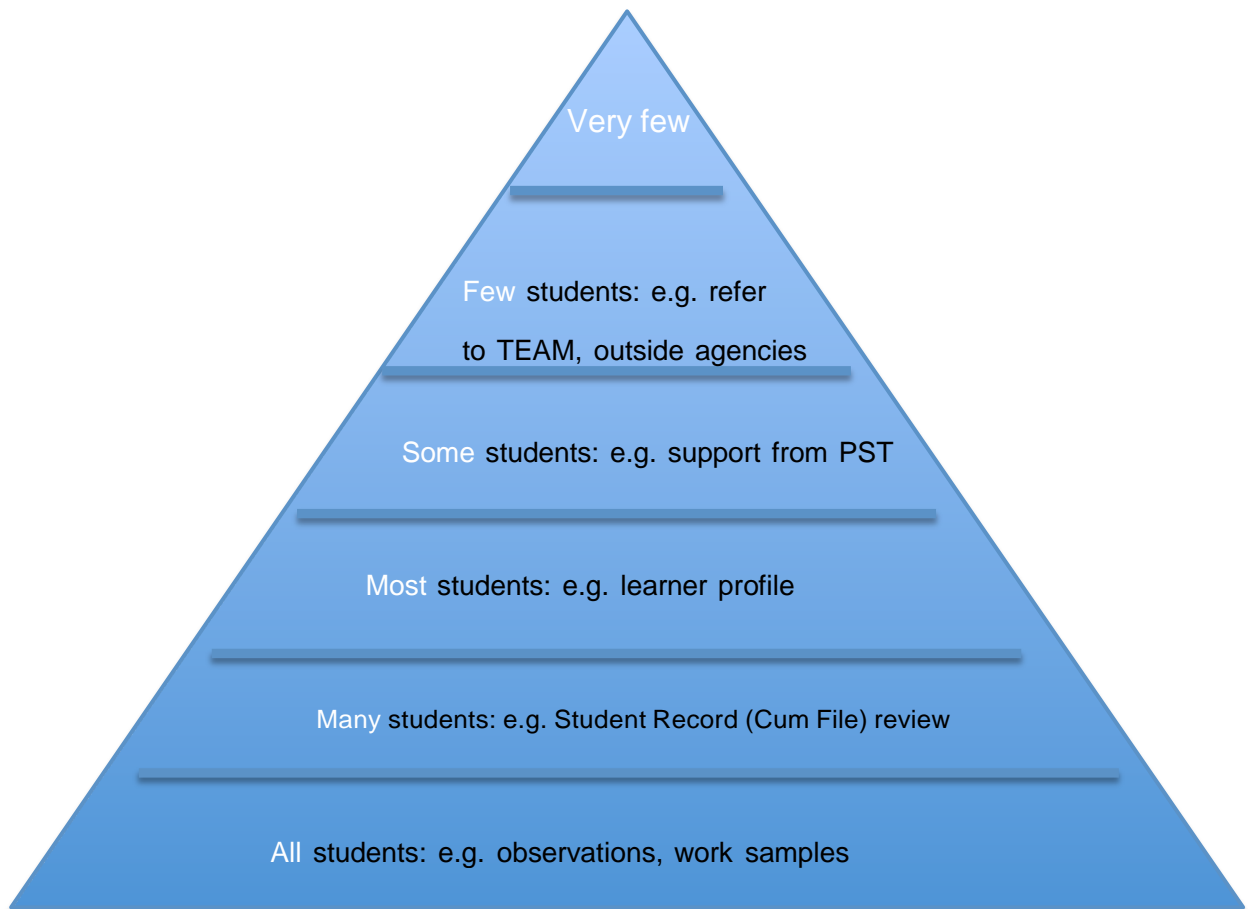
**Diagram 2**

**Sources Of Information Relative To Numbers Of Students**  
**ALL STUDENTS**



Note: When this document was submitted in July 2014, Diagram 2 was a hand-drawn draft. It has been replaced with a professional graphic. Otherwise the July document has not changed.

Original way of showing the same info



**Diagram 2 Sources of Information Relative to Numbers of Students**

**Specialized Assessment Criteria:**

As illustrated in the preceding graphic, very few students require specialized assessments.

**Conditions:**

Before a student will be considered for a Psychological Educational, or other specialized assessment the following conditions should be considered:

1. All attempts at the classroom and PST/School Team levels to develop an effective education program and required supports have been exhausted. The teacher and PST will articulate the strengths and challenges identified, through:
  - a. Reviewing existing information
  - b. Teacher assessments
  - c. PST assessments

2. The student has:
  - a. A Student Support Plan, or
  - b. An Individual Education Plan, signed/approved by the parent, or
  - c. A Behavior Support Plan, or
  - d. Documentation of previous/current concerns that support referral
3. There are documented:
  - a. Processes (e.g. to TEAM, talking to parent) leading to SSP or Behavior Support Plan revision
  - b. IEP team meetings with the parents to develop, review, adjust the IEP
  - c. Relevant achievement testing
4. Previous interventions have been completed through:
  - a. An Audiologist and/or
  - b. A Speech Language Pathologist, and/or
  - c. An Occupational Therapist, and/or
  - d. A Pediatrician
5. Hearing and vision have been checked within the past year.
6. No similar assessment has been conducted in the past 3 years.
7. Information from similar assessments older than 3 years is outdated.
8. There is parental support.

**Specialized Assessment Process/Responsibilities:**

If all of the above criteria have been considered and met where appropriate:

1. The Program Support Teacher will complete the Request for Student Assessment Form (Form #0041).
2. The PST will ask the parent to sign the referral so the process can proceed.
3. The Principal will sign and forward the Request for Student Assessment Form to the Coordinator, Student Services.<sup>4</sup>
4. The Coordinator, Student Services may take the request to a District Team to review the recommendation for assessment and to provide the school with direction, place the request on a prioritized list for assessment, or to make alternative recommendations for the student and his/her programming.
5. The Coordinator, Student Services will attempt to find a qualified professional to conduct the assessment, interpret the results and provide programming recommendations to those working with the student.

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<sup>4</sup> YCS term for Student Support Consultant



## **Considerations for Prioritizing Students for a Psychological Educational Assessment:**

### 1. Age/Grade:

It is recommended that children who are not at least 8 years of age in the current school year (age-appropriate grade 3), be considered for Psychological Educational assessments, except in exceptional circumstances.

Other factors may inform the decision to go ahead with a Psychological Educational assessment on children under age 8. For example, children who have experienced brain trauma in their early life, or have a medical condition that affects cognition, or other neuro-cognitive concerns (TBI, FASD, ASD, etc.) may be possible candidates for an early Psychological Educational assessment.

Alternatives to a full Psychological Educational assessment may also be considered for a child who is under the age of 8. This may include Level B testing, social/emotional assessment by a qualified individual, and/or recommendations for specific interventions that may address the observed concerns.

2. Students who have not had instruction in English Language Arts (or have only had 1 year of English instruction), or students who are ESL learners in their first few years of English, are poor candidates for full Psychological Educational Assessments as an appropriate analysis of their English Language skills in reading and writing cannot be completed. However, again, there may be information available to indicate directions of appropriate support and intervention for children who are struggling with their learning. This information may come from classroom observation, TOPA, Bracken or other assessment results, or other Level B and/or social emotional assessments, or cognitive assessments.

### 3. Referral Source:

Referrals from a pediatrician, psychologist, mental health practitioner or other health professional should carry some weight.

### 4. Student responsiveness to previous interventions and supports:

- What interventions have been tried with the student?
- Have they been consistently applied?

5. Relative complexity of learning concerns

6. Documentation of the following:

\_\_\_ Classroom-based assessment and intervention by the classroom teacher and learning specialists (i.e. literacy support etc., CTBS results)

\_\_\_ Level B assessment by PST or Student Services Coordinator (WJIII-Achievement; WIAT-III; Keymath-3 Cdn.; SMALSI; etc.) and evidence of intervention response to those recommendations

\_\_\_ Speech Language Assessment (if relevant)

\_\_\_ Occupational Therapy assessment (if relevant)

\_\_\_ Pediatrician referral (if relevant)

\_\_\_ Attendance - child should be in regular attendance at school. Children who are absent for extended periods of time, regardless of reason, are not a high priority to test because absenteeism for any reason affects learning; Review attendance history to analyze changes, if any; ensure that programming for the student has been appropriate and make those changes first to see if attendance improves.

\_\_\_ Previous diagnosis and purpose for current testing (e.g. to support post-secondary aspirations). A student with a diagnosis should be tested again during their high school years to provide documentation for post-secondary supports. NOTE that it is important to consider whether simply Level B testing may suffice. Typically, cognition is a relatively stable concept so if level of achievement is the only information being sought, the testing can be Level B testing within the district.

6. Referral Question(s):

- What does the school want/need to know?
- Can the question(s) be answered by other assessments?

7. Parental Commitment to Process:

If the referral question is about services beyond the scope of the school day and parents are reluctant to engage in the process, consider if the referral at this point is wise. Ask, are parents ready or at least willing to hear the message that may come from the Ed. Psyc? This does not mean they may not have a journey – but they need to be willing to take the first step.

## End of YCS Assessment and Specialized Assessment Protocol

YCS also has a number of forms to support their protocol – for teachers, parents, etc. These may be used/reviewed at later date if appropriate.

### **Summary and Relevance to Nunavut**

Accountability for following up on referrals for assessments has to start with the articulation of a process/steps/conditions that must be met before a referral would even be considered, and documentation that all steps have been taken.

The Yellowknife Catholic Schools example illustrate the full range of assessment and other information that is to be considered first, and the conditions that must be met if a student is considered to be a suitable candidate for a specialized assessment. This requires accountability at all levels starting with the classroom teacher who is *expected* to talk to others who know the student well, to review the cum file, and learning profile and other information before referring to the PST or school team. In turn they are *expected* to review or generate information before looking to the district level or external specialists.

As with accountability for learning outcomes and supports in written plans, accountability for following up on referrals has to be assigned to a specific individual, and their supervisor has to check/hold that person accountable, as does that person's supervisor... Certainly, in the case of referrals to specialists with "waiting lists" it may be difficult if not impossible to ensure that an assessment takes place in a timely manner. At the very least however, the responsible person should be checking to see the progress of the waiting list, and at best should attempt to locate another service provider able to conduct the assessment in a more timely manner.

Referrals for health-related assessments and services – OT, PT, SLP – will likely need to vary among the three Nunavut regions because these services are provided differently in each region. Those that know and work in the existing system would be in the best position to determine region-appropriate protocols.

October | 2014

# Nunavut Inclusive Education Review

## School-Based Multi-Tiered Interventions (Questions 3 and 4, Step 1)

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# Nunavut Inclusive Education Review

## School-Based Multi-Tiered Interventions

### The Questions

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Questions 3 and 4 of the Terms of Reference of the Inclusive Education review focus first on what school-based multi-tiered interventions are needed, and then on what a *model* for the provision of such services might look like in Nunavut. Question 3, Step 1 of the Terms of Reference required the reviewer to, “examine the models [of school-based, multi-tiered interventions and services] used in the NWT and Alberta and have focused phone conversations with key identified health personnel and the SSWG.” Question 4, Step 1 called for face-to-face focus groups with parents, representatives of the Coalition of DAEs, and the SSWG.

For clarification, school-based interventions have been interpreted as a variety of support services often understood as health-related therapies and services such as OT, PT, Speech, Audiology, Vision, Mental Health, and services for specific conditions such as Autism, or Deaf/Hard of Hearing. Educational Psychology services are also included. The concept of multi-tiered is understood to mean that there are some interventions that all students need and should have (such as vision and hearing checks), some services that targeted/smaller number of students need (such as Speech Therapy) and some services that very few individuals need (such as those having experienced Brain Trauma.)

### Limitations and Methodology

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Neither the NWT, nor Alberta have province/territory-wide systems of multi-tiered interventions and supports. The following models were identified and examined:

- A specific example of a multidisciplinary team in the Edmonton Catholic School District will serve to illustrate one possible model.
- The recent review of inclusive education in New Brunswick, along with the government’s response to the review recommendations will serve to illustrate the province-wide approach in that jurisdiction.
- The British Columbia model will illustrate another/different province-wide approach.

These examples, along with current information about interventions in Nunavut, were used to identify the best possible model for Nunavut, and as the starting point for discussion with the various groups as identified at the outset.

## Edmonton Catholic School District, Genesis Early Learning Centre The Model: Early Learning Multi-Disciplinary Team

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All early learning classes receive services from the Early Learning Multi-Disciplinary Team which consists of:

- Early Learning Education Consultants
- Speech and Language Pathologists
- Occupational Therapists
- Physical Therapists
- Chartered Psychologists
- Family School Liaison Workers
- Emotional Behaviour Specialists
- Adapted Phys-Ed Specialist
- Early Learning Facilitators
- Fine Arts Specialists (dance, art, music)
- An “A-Team” (a group of specialists with expertise in autism)

When requested a Vision Consultant and a Hearing Consultant are also made available.

The multi-disciplinary team uses a Coaching Model process *to support teachers*. An example of a possible scenario best illustrates this 5 part model – 1) Joint Planning, 2) Observation, 3) Action/Practice, 4) Reflection and 5) Feedback. (The model is not lock-step; the order may change and/or parts repeated as appropriate.)

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Based on a combination of having worked with a child/children for at least a month, and having administered the *Early Years Evaluation*, a teacher is concerned about some students’ inability to attend.

The Emotional Behaviour Specialist and teacher develop a plan to work on attention through a module that targets the four areas of listening, movement, breaks and self-regulation. **JOINT PLANNING**

The teacher observes the therapist demonstrating strategies to develop the above skills with a group of children during a classroom activity. **OBSERVATION**

The teacher implements one of the strategies observed. **ACTION/PRACTICE**

The teacher and therapist discuss the strategy implemented and reflect on which strategies would be a good fit for the teacher/teacher’s classroom. **REFLECTION**

The therapist provides additional information on the strategies implemented and their benefits for the development of attending. **FEEDBACK**

The teacher and therapist develop an action plan to assist the teacher in implementing the strategy selected. **JOINT PLANNING**

A date is chosen for the next visit to review the strategy through observation and discussion, (ACTION/PRACTICE, FEEDBACK) & demonstration of new strategies. JOINT PLANNING

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## **New Brunswick**

### **The model: Education Support Services (ESS) Teams and Child and Youth Development (CYD) Teams**

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As a result of the findings and recommendations of *Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools: Report of the Review of Inclusive Education Programs and Practices in New Brunswick Schools: An Action Plan for Growth (2012)* New Brunswick has taken the following actions:

- ✓ Speech language pathologists, rehabilitation workers (OT and PT), social workers and others who support the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) were transferred from the Departments of Health and Social Development to EECD.
- ✓ A new position was created for each school district – Director of Education Support Services -- to provide leadership and coordination of programs and services.
- ✓ Led by the Director of Education Support Services each school district has an Education Support Services (ESS) Team whose role is to support School-based ESS Teams. The district-based team includes:
  - District Education Support Teachers in *each* of Resource<sup>1</sup>, Literacy, Numeracy and Francization
  - Subject coordinators
  - Psychologists
  - Speech Language Therapists
  - Social Workers
  - Other district-based staff that provide support to school-based ESS Teams
- ✓ Led by the principal each school has an ESS Team whose *role is to provide systematic support to classroom teachers*. The school-based team includes:
  - Education Support Teachers in *each* of Resource, Guidance, Literacy, Numeracy and Francization
  - Others as appropriate (education assistants, school psychologists, support services to education social workers and rehabilitation workers, First Nations support workers and school intervention/behaviour mentors)
- ✓ Two Integrated Service Delivery Demonstration sites have been in place since 2011 in which Child and Youth Development (CYD) Teams coordinate support to at-risk children and youth who have multiple or complex needs. The CYD Teams coordinate prevention, assessment and intervention services to families, schools and communities. Each CYD Team is composed of at least four professionals:
  - School psychologists
  - School-based mental health and addictions social workers

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<sup>1</sup> Education Support Teacher – Resource is the equivalent of a Program Support Teacher or in the case of Nunavut a Student Support Teacher.



- School counsellors
- Interventionists (child and youth care workers)
- Support services to education social workers or psychologists

The new (2014) Liberal Government is committed to expanding the CYD Teams province-wide by 2018.

## British Columbia

### The model: Inter-Ministerial Protocols

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*Inter-Ministerial Protocols for the Provision of Support Services to Schools (2013)* articulates agreements among a number of government ministries and the Solicitor General to *define each Ministry's responsibilities for specific services to the school-age population*. Parties to the protocols are the Solicitor General and the Ministries of:

- ✓ Children and Family Development
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Healthy Living and Sport
- ✓ Health Services
- ✓ Public Safety

These protocols are for the following services:

- ✓ Audiological Support Services
- ✓ General School Health Services
- ✓ School Environment and Health Inspection of Schools
- ✓ Nursing Support Services for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs
- ✓ Speech-Language Pathology Services
- ✓ Educational Programs in Youth Custody Services Centres...
- ✓ Educational Programs in In-Hospital, Hospital Outpatient or Residential Treatment Programs
- ✓ Psychological Assessment Services for School-Aged Children
- ✓ Services for Children and Youth with Mental Health Problems and Disorders and/or Substance Abuse Problems
- ✓ Safe Schools

The protocol agreement for each service is articulated under the following headings:

- ✓ The names of the Ministries that are part of the protocol
- ✓ Background
- ✓ Children Served
- ✓ Services Provided
- ✓ Obligations of Each Ministry
- ✓ Dispute Resolution
- ✓ Supporting Information (e.g. Regulations, Acts, Policies and Procedures Manuals)
- ✓ Signatures of the Deputy Ministers

## Discussion

Of the three models presented above the Edmonton Catholic Schools (ECS) and New Brunswick Education Support Services models differ from the British Columbia model in the following significant ways:

|                                     | <b>ECS and NB</b>  | <b>BC</b>   |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Purpose of model</b>             | To define the roles of various Specialists/Therapists  | To define the support services that will be provided  |
| <b>Services provided by</b>         | ESS specialists/therapists employed by education<br>CYD team members employed by the demonstration sites   | Specialists/Therapists employed by various Ministries or their authorities  |
| <b>Method of providing services</b> | Various specialists have specific responsibilities or areas of expertise but they function as a team – shared vision, joint problem solving, etc.  | Each ministry has specific obligations. (Note: Education is expected to hire or contract educational psychologists)                                     |
| <b>Process</b>                      | ESS specialists/therapists provide support to the classroom teacher through coaching, mentoring, co-planning instructional and intervention methodologies, etc.<br>CYD Team members provide direct assessment, intervention and support services, but also provide consultation at school-based team meetings and training to educators. | Each protocol articulates detailed roles and responsibilities of each Ministry, a timeframe for review of the protocol and a dispute resolution process |

The ECS/NB models are designed around the fundamental principles of collaboration and team-based problem solving and hold promise to overcome frustrations with interagency collaboration, particularly for more complex cases.

The BC model on the other hand has very little to do with the needs of the client or the quality/appropriateness of the service/intervention and everything to do with ministerial boundaries. That said, in the absence of other initiatives that focus on the provision of services to the school-age population the protocols are better than nothing. In fact, one must assume that BC is happy with the model since the 2013 publication replaces protocols originally developed in 1989.

All of the models acknowledge that, not only should identifying and responding to student needs *not* be the responsibility of education alone, the support /involvement of other agencies cannot be dependent on personalities and good will. It has to be part of the system.

## Nunavut: Current Reality

Nunavut may be unique in Canada in that access to specialized assessments and services varies greatly among the three regions. The appendix shows detail as provided by the Student Support Consultant in each region in September, 2014. In a nutshell:

- Kitikmeot generally receives services through the Stanton Territorial Health Authority in Yellowknife. Presumably the GN is billed for these services but the KSO does not know who pays for them.
- Kivalliq receives services primarily through J.A. Hildes Northern Medical Unit Therapy Services in Rankin Inlet. Ed Psyc services are paid for by Nunavut Health. Kivalliq School Operations pays for some services (vision, autism, deaf/hard of hearing) provided by Manitoba Education.
- Qikiqtani services are provided by a combination of itinerants hired by QSO, the Health Centre, and the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) in Ottawa.
- Referring to the areas of greatest concern:
  - Kitikmeot:
    - No mental health services for school age children
    - Parents have to request and pay for Ed Psyc services
  - Kivalliq:
    - School-age population is outside the mandate of Manitoba Education so – will those services continue?
  - Qikiqtani:
    - No speech services at this time
    - No ed psyc services
  - Wait times and provision of assessments and services:
    - Kitikmeot: therapists visit twice a year if they are not weathered out, meaning they sometimes visit once, or not at all.
    - Kivalliq: typical wait times are 3 months. Wait times for services provided by Manitoba Education are ~1 month.
    - Qikiqtani: most wait times are unknown. Others are three months or 3-6 months.
- As to whether or not assessments lead to a) services and b) strategies useful to classroom teachers:
  - Kitikmeot: Services = sometimes and Strategies = usually
  - Kivalliq: Services = usually and Strategies = usually (except audiology = not usually)
  - Qikiqtani: Services = sometimes (speech = usually) and Strategies = usually or sometimes

Also relevant to school-based multi-tiered interventions is information already reported in Strengths, Gaps and Areas Needing Improvement<sup>2</sup>:

- The need for Audiology and Speech-language services
- Serious behavior/mental health issues – to the point where behavior is as big a concern (if not bigger) than issues related to academic achievement
- Services that are discreet/distinct from each other with each service provider following the procedures of his/her organization. Some methods and assessments are inappropriate for Inuit.

The “smorgasbord model of assessment and services” may be less of an issue however than capacity. No one has suggested that services are adequate.

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<sup>2</sup> Document submitted in July 2014, as part of the Inclusive Education Review

## Implications for Nunavut

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Given the current reality, what school-based, multi-tiered interventions and services are needed? With the possible exception of the Kivalliq the simple answer is most or all of them -- assuming that the question implies that the services should be adequate and result in strategies useful to the classroom teacher, parents and others who are involved with the student on a daily basis.

The bigger question however is what would a *model* of school-based, multi-tiered interventions and services look like? It is also a more difficult question since each of the three regions is currently using a different model and those models are driven by Health or other departments/agencies not by Education.

Looking to the models examined in Edmonton and New Brunswick, multi-disciplinary teams, where team members work for education or the team (not for various departments or institutions), hold the most promise for a number of reasons:

- They provide services to the school age population, or in the case of Edmonton, the preschool/early years population.
- Services are coordinated – since they are often not distinct from each other in the first place. (They only “appear” to “become” distinct because of the current method of service provision.)
- Many formal/standardized assessments can be replaced with team-based problem solving and where formal assessments are required the team can identify and influence the choice of assessments which are appropriate.
- The focus is on building capacity in schools and classrooms through coaching, mentoring, co-teaching, solution circles, etc. so that teachers are better equipped to support students – with whom they are working on an ongoing basis anyway.
- Collaboration is not dependent on good will or personalities; it’s part of the structure of the model.
- Related to collaboration schools receive information relevant to educational programming and supports.
- In the case of NB the district-based ESS Team also connects with the Child and Youth Development Team (coordinating support to at-risk children and youth who have multiple or complex needs).

Given the population of Nunavut a multi-disciplinary team for each region with the kind of composition like those teams in Edmonton or New Brunswick is not realistic, or even necessary. However if Nunavut is to adequately meet the needs of students/families two such teams – one for Qikiqtani and one for Kitikmeot Kivalliq? -- could be established. Although the external reviewer does not have sufficient information to suggest exact numbers or how positions should be configured within the organization, the following positions are needed:

- Student Support Services Managers (to coordinate/supervise the teams)
- Hearing Specialists
- Speech Language Therapists

- Vision Specialists
- Occupational and Physical Therapists
- Emotional/Behaviour Specialists
- Educational Psychologists (appropriate for NU context and culture)
- Inuit language specialists -- if necessary to support/liaise between students/parents and therapists

As described in the Edmonton and NB models these professionals would have specific roles but would function as a team(s) with a shared vision, a focus on collaboration, peer support, joint problem-solving and providing strategies/practices that result in both teacher and student success. Their primary function would be to *build capacity* in classroom teachers (as well as SSTs and principals) through coaching, co-teaching, co-planning instructional and intervention methodologies and consultation.

Not realistic? Consider the alternative. Assuming there is agreement that specialized assessments and services are either lacking or that wait times are too long, the GN *must* invest more in specialized services for children and youth. So it could put more money into the current fragmented model, or it could invest in a model which holds far more promise.

Regardless of the model for specialized services, it needs to be absolutely clear that these services are one component or *part* of an overall model of inclusion. They don't stand alone. The overall model needs to show how various components relate to each other and in the case of specialized assessments and services a clear, detailed protocol needs to be articulated to show the various other assessments and strategies that teachers, SSTs, school teams, and SSCs are expected to utilize *before* specialized assessments are even considered. A possible protocol has already been described in detail in Evaluation and Accountability<sup>3</sup> and will not be repeated here, other than to emphasize that specialized assessments are formal assessments which should be considered only when information is required that is not available through less formal methods/sources.

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<sup>3</sup> Document submitted in July 2014, as part of the Inclusive Education Review

## References

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The following sources of information were used in the development of this document:

### Edmonton Catholic Schools

- *Guide to Early Learning 2013-2014 for School Teams*
- Personal communication/visit to Genesis Early Learning Centre

### New Brunswick

- *Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools: Report of the Review of Inclusive Education Programs and Practices in New Brunswick Schools: An Action Plan for Growth (2012)*
- *Government's Response to the Recommendations of Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools: An Action Plan for 2012-13*
- Personal communication with Brian Kelly, Director of Education Support Services

### British Columbia

- *Inter-Ministerial Protocols for the Provision of Support Services to Schools (2013)*

**Nunavut** (in additional to information gathered earlier in the Inclusive Education review)

- Student Support Consultant in each region, September 2014
- Focus Group meeting, Parents, DEA and Nunavut Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society representatives, Iqaluit, October 2014

## Appendix

### Specialized assessments: Kitikmeot

| Name          | Who does the assessment? (name of organization, contract...?) Who pays for it? | Where is the assessment conducted? (home community, elsewhere...) | Is there a referral form? (Y/N) If yes, whose form is it? (Educ? Stanton?...) | What is the average/typical waiting time for an assessment to actually take place (<1mo, <3mo, <6mo, etc...)                                    | Does the assessment lead to services or necessary devices? (3 pt scale)<br>1= not usually<br>2= sometimes<br>3= usually | Does the assessment provide suggestions /strategies useful to classroom teachers? (same 3 point scale) | Who tracks referrals? Is this responsibility formally assigned – i.e. in a job description? |
|---------------|--|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| OT            | Stanton Territorial Health Authority<br>It is paid for by the GN.              | Home community  | Yes<br>Stanton's referral form  | Therapists come twice in a school year – depending on weather. If they are weather out, they can be seen only once a school year or not at all. | 2   | 3  | SSTs track referrals if they are seen at the school   |
| PT            | Stanton  | Home community  | Yes Stanton's referral form   | See above   | 2   | 3  |   |
| Speech        | Stanton  | Home community  | Yes Stanton's referral form   | See above   | 2   | 3  |   |
| Ed Psyc       | Stanton  | Yellowknife   | Parents' request and pay for it   | N/A   |   |  |   |
| Audiology     | Stanton  | Home community  | Yes Stanton's referral form   |   | 2   | 3  |   |
| Vision        | "Eye" team from Yellowknife  | Home community health centres                                     | School refers to Health Centre  | N/A   |   |  |   |
| Mental Health | N/A<br>Mental Health workers for Adults only                                   |   |   |   |   |  |   |

## Specialized Supports/Services (following Assessment): Kitikmeot

| Name          | Who provides the support/device/services (the specialist?, or classroom teacher, or ...?) If there's a cost who pays?     | Are the services etc. included in an ISSP?<br>1= not usually<br>2= sometimes<br>3= usually | How adequate is the frequency of the service?<br>1= not at all<br>2= somewhat<br>3= fairly | Who tracks student progress/ outcomes? Is responsibility assigned – i.e. in job description? | Is there a typical “duration” (such as 5 sessions, or one school year)? If so what is the duration?                                      | What are the barriers to effectiveness? For each barrier can you identify/ suggest a solution?  |
|---------------|---|--|--|--|--|---|
| OT            | Classroom teacher and SSA in class, SSA out of class<br><br>The cost is paid by the School budget or the classroom budget | 3  | 2  | No it is not in a job description<br>Classroom teacher does the tracking and SST follows up  | The OT visits the school 2X's per year. If recommendations are not working, they are addressed at the meetings. There are no time frames | Practicality<br>Human resources – teachers have not been trained in how to implement assessment recommendations and/or teachers are non-compliant and do not want to provide the therapy<br>Time<br>Resources<br>One SST says she uses “Pinterest” for ideas because the schools don't always have the recommended resources. |
| PT            | NA  |  |  |  |  |   |
| Speech        | See above   |  |  |  |  |   |
| Ed Psyc       | N/A   |  |  |  |  |   |
| Audiology     | See above   |  |  |  |  |   |
| Vision        | N/A vision concerns are referred to Health Centre   |  |  |  |  |   |
| Mental Health | N/A – no children's Mental Health workers   |  |  |  |  |   |



## Specialized assessments: Kivalliq

| Name    | Who does the assessment? (name of organization, contract...?) Who pays for it?  | Where is the assessment conducted? (home community, elsewhere)            | Is there a referral form? (Y/N) If yes, whose form is it? (Educ? Stanton?...) | What is the average/typical waiting time for an assessment to actually take place (<1mo, <3mo, <6mo, etc...) | Does the assessment lead to services or necessary devices? (3 pt scale) 1= not usually 2= sometimes 3= usually          | Does the assessment provide suggestions /strategies useful to classroom teachers? (same 3 point scale) | Who tracks referrals? Is this responsibility formally assigned – i.e. in a job description?    |
|---------|---|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| OT      | <p><b>J.A Hildes Northern Medical Unit Therapy Services</b><br/>           Bag 72, Wellness Centre Rankin Inlet, NU X0C 0G0</p> <p><b>Alysha Friedman OT</b><br/> <b>Zacharay Harris OT</b><br/>           Ph: 867&gt;645&gt;8259<br/>           (direct) 867&gt;645&gt;8077<br/>           (reception) Fax: 867&gt;645&gt;8079</p> <p><b>Paid for by Health.</b></p> | Home community.   | <p>Yes.</p> <p>Created by Therapy Services.</p>                               | 3 months.  | <p>3.</p> <p>Services being support within the school from designated personnel if necessary, i.e. SST or SSA work.</p> | 3.   | School Team makes referrals to Therapy Services and SST tracks them.                           |
| PT      | Same as above.<br><b>Francine Mach PT.</b>  | <p>Same</p> <p>There is not very many referrals to PT in any schools.</p> | Same  | Same   | Same  | Same   | Same.  |
| Speech  | Same as above<br><b>Allyson Chidley</b>   | Same  | Same  | Same   | Same  | Same   | Same.  |
| Ed Psyc | <p><b>Nunavut Health</b></p> <p><b>Nunavut Health</b></p>   | Winnipeg  | Unknown, always done outside of education.                                    | 3 to 6 months.   | So far, the information provided from these assessments validates the already   | Same   | SST would not have referred the student, but maintains the Student Support Record in which the |

|                             |   |                                       |   |          |   |  |   |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|----------|---|--|---|
|                             |   |                                       |   |          | existing services and supports provided to the student.                           |  | assessment results and recommendations would be kept. |
| <b>Audiology</b>            | Therapy Services<br><br>Bruce Buelow Aud.<br>Heather Schilling Aud.   | Home Community                        | Not that I know of, usually SST refers students to Health who will contact the parent to make an appointment with audiologist.                        | 3 months | 3<br><br>in the form of hearing aids and teacher accommodations in the classroom. | No.<br><br>Consultation Note with recommendations is usually provided by visiting Consultant for Deaf/Hard of Hearing. |   |
| <b>Vision</b>               | Manitoba Education<br><br>Elaine Bradley Consultant for Blind/Visual Impairment .<br><br>Kivalliq School Operations | Home Community Functional Assessments | No. Arrangements are made by the Student Support Consultant to have Consultant for Blind/Visual Impairment travel to schools in Nunavut and consult.  | 1 month. | 3.<br><br>in the form of accommodations within the classroom.                     | 3.<br><br>Consultation Note with recommendations is provided by Consultant for Blind/Visual Impairments.               | SST and Student Support Consultant.                   |
| <b>Autism</b>               | Manitoba Education<br><br>Brent Epp – Consultant for Autism Spectrum Disorder.<br><br>Kivalliq School Operations    | Home Community Functional Assessments | No. Arrangements are made by the Student Support Consultant to have Consultant for Autism Spectrum Disorder travel to schools in Nunavut and consult. | 1 month. | 3.<br><br>in the form of accommodations within the classroom.                     | 3.<br><br>Consultation Note with recommendations is provided by Consultant for Autism Spectrum Disorder                | SST and Student Support Consultant.                   |
| <b>Deaf/Hard of Hearing</b> | Manitoba Education<br><br>Signe Badger – Consultant for Deaf/Hard of Hearing<br><br>Kivalliq School Operations      | Home Community Functional Assessments | No. Arrangements are made by the Student Support Consultant to have Consultant for Deaf/Hard of Hearing travel to schools in Nunavut and consult.     | 1 month. | 3.<br><br>in the form of accommodations within the classroom.                     | 3.<br><br>Consultation Note with recommendations is provided by Consultant for Deaf/Hard of Hearing                    | SST and Student Support Consultant.                   |
|                             |   |                                       |   |          |   |  |   |

|               |   |  |          |         |         |         |         |
|---------------|---|--|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Mental Health | Northern Medical Unit.<br><br>Clarke Wilkie Psychiatrist<br><br>Other Mental Health Nurses. | Home community and at times in Winnipeg. | Unknown. | Unknown | Unknown | Unknown | Unknown |
|---------------|---|--|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|

### Specialized Supports/Services (following Assessment): Kivalliq

| Name | Who provides the support/device/services (the specialist?, or classroom teacher, or ...?) If there's a cost who pays?  | Are the services etc. included in an ISSP?<br>1= not usually<br>2= sometimes<br>3= usually   | How adequate is the frequency of the service?<br>1= not at all<br>2= somewhat<br>3= fairly | Who tracks student progress/ outcomes? Is this responsibility formally assigned – i.e. in a job description?   | Is there a typical “duration” (such as 5 sessions, or one school year)? If so what is the duration?  | What are the barriers to effectiveness? For each barrier can you identify/ suggest a solution?   |
|------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| OT   | OT is considered a consultant rather than service provider. Since visiting only 4 times yearly, i.e. every three months, depending on the intervention, the SST, SSA or Classroom Teacher delivers the program, however practice has been that the SST and SSA are usually responsible for its delivery. Any materials related to the service required is up to the schools at this point. However the OT, is paid for through health. | 3 - Usually, it is the practice that we write an ISSP for any services related to OT. There is definitely space in all ISSP forms to include information relating to OT. This support is listed in the student support profile as tumit 2 support. | 3 – Fairly adequate, considering the model is consultation.                                | The support team should be tracking the outcome, however if the outcome is related to service the OT has recommended be delivered, it is the OT responsibility to follow-up during each visit and decide if the outcome has been met or not. | Any consent for OT is unlimited, so services go on indefinitely until not needed any longer. I am not sure the average duration of services at this point. | OTs are hired by health and the primary population is ages 0-6 and 21-onward. School-age children are after their primary clients are served at the health centre. This limits their presence in the schools. When they are delayed due to weather and cannot visit a community for the whole week, again their primary clients are served first and schools often miss out on their services completely. Solution, we need a regional OT dedicated to |

|           |  |               |  |   |   |   |
|-----------|--|---------------|--|---|---|---|
|           |  |               |  |   |   | schools only, to maximize their effectiveness in schools.   |
| PT        | Same as above  | Same as above | Same as above                                      | Same as above   | Same as above   | Same as above.  |
| Speech    | Same as above  | Same as above | Same as above                                      | Same as above   | Same as above   | Same as above   |
| Ed Psyc   | The SST, SSA, and/or Classroom Teacher, depending on the service support recommended.  | 3-Usually     | 1-not at all.                                      | The support team.   | Very seldom do we receive Ed Psych services, cannot answer this question.                         | Language/culture bias. We would require an Ed Psych who is experienced and familiar with the Inuit population who can see beyond the test results and make sound recommendations accordingly. |
| Audiology | The Audiologist will assess hearing at the health centre, any devices such as hearing aids are purchased through health, any devices such as soundfield systems are purchased by the school. Classroom Teacher is expected to accommodate for any student who is hearing impaired, however for severely impaired, i.e. Deaf/HH, interpreters and signers provide interpretation support. | 3-Usually     | Unsure – as it is delivered at health centre only. | The support team.   | Ongoing as it is related to health.   | Often schools do not know when Audiologist is visiting the community. Ongoing communication between audiologist and SST before and after community visits would help greatly.                 |
| Vision    | Consultant from Manitoba provides the recommendations. Classroom Teachers accommodate within the classroom, SSTs and SSAs will often provide the service if any are recommended. Materials are purchased at the school level.  | 3-usually     | 3-fairly adequate                                  | The support team, however it is also evaluated by the consultant during a school visit. | This service is ongoing, as it is related to blind/visual impairment. It is constantly monitored. | No barriers at this time. If one, it would be that Classroom Teachers could take more responsibility in making sure accommodations are in place within the classrooms.                        |
| Autism    | Consultant from Manitoba provides the recommendations. Classroom Teachers accommodate within the classroom, SSTs and SSAs will often provide the service if any are recommended. Materials are purchased at the school level.  | 3-usually     | 3-fairly adequate                                  | The support team, however it is also evaluated by the consultant during a school visit. | This service is ongoing, as it is related to blind/visual impairment. It is constantly monitored. | No barriers at this time. If one, it would be that Classroom Teachers could take more responsibility in making sure accommodations are in place within the classrooms.                        |
|           |  |               |  |   |   |   |

|                                    |  |                  |                          |   |  |   |
|------------------------------------|--|------------------|--------------------------|---|--|---|
| <p><b>Deaf/Hard of Hearing</b></p> | <p>Consultant from Manitoba provides the recommendations. Classroom Teachers accommodate within the classroom, SSTs and SSAs will often provide the service if any are recommended. Materials are purchased at the school level.</p> | <p>3-usually</p> | <p>3-fairly adequate</p> | <p>The support team, however it is also evaluated by the consultant during a school visit.</p>                                      | <p>This service is ongoing, as it is related to blind/visual impairment. It is constantly monitored.</p> | <p>No barriers at this time. If one, it would be that Classroom Teachers could take more responsibility in making sure accommodations are in place within the classrooms.</p>   |
| <p><b>Mental Health</b></p>        | <p>Support Team provides the services in the school. Cost for mental health is through health. However if materials need to be purchased, this falls under the responsibility of the school.</p>                                     | <p>3-usually</p> | <p>2-somewhat</p>        | <p>The support team, however again the service provider will conduct some follow-up assessments during school/community visits.</p> | <p>Ongoing.</p>  | <p>Don't have mental health services for every community. At this time, larger communities will have MH nurses, however several smaller communities must share one between them. Solution needs to be having a mental health nurse in each community.</p> |

## Specialized assessments: Qikiqtani

| Name          | Who does the assessment? (name of organization, contract...?) Who pays for it? | Where is the assessment conducted? (home community, elsewhere...) | Is there a referral form? (Y/N) If yes, whose form is it? (Educ? Stanton?...) | What is the average/typical waiting time for an assessment to actually take place (<1mo, <3mo, <6mo, etc...) | Does the assessment lead to services or necessary devices? (3 pt scale) 1= not usually 2= sometimes 3= usually | Does the assessment provide suggestions /strategies useful to classroom teachers? (same 3 point scale) | Who tracks referrals? Is this responsibility formally assigned – i.e. in a job description? |
|---------------|--|---|---|--|--|--|---|
| OT            | Pam Becker<br>QSO Itinerant  | school  | Yes   | 3-6 months   | 2  | 3  | SST<br>Copies sent to SSC   |
| PT            | Health Clinic  | clinic  | clinic  | unknown  | Unknown<br>(I do not receive any of these reports)   | Unknown  | Clinic  |
| Speech        | No services<br>No itinerant hired yet for this year                            | Usually, at the school  | Usually, at the school  | Unknown  | 3  | 3  | SST<br>Copies sent to SSC   |
| Ed Psyc       | none   | n/a   | n/a   | n/a  | n/a  | n/a  | n/a   |
| Audiology     | CHEO   | Ontario: CHEO   | Yes   | Unknown<br>This is done through the health centre  | 2  | 2  | Health Centre<br>SSTs and SSC get copies of reports   |
| Vision        | Health   | Clinic  | Unknown   | Unknown  | 2  | 2  | SST can refer to Health Centre  |
| Mental Health | Northern Counselling (Matt Corless)  | School  | QSO Consent Form  | 3 months or sometimes less, if there is an emergency   | 2  | 2  | SST<br>Copies sent to SSC/QSO does the work scopes and makes all plans                      |

## Specialized Supports/Services (following Assessment): Qikiqtani

| Name      | Who provides the support/device/services (the specialist?, or classroom teacher, or ...?) If there's a cost who pays? | Are the services etc. included in an ISSP?<br>1= not usually<br>2= sometimes<br>3= usually | How adequate is the frequency of the service?<br>1= not at all<br>2= somewhat<br>3= fairly | Who tracks student progress/ outcomes? Is this responsibility formally assigned – i.e. in a job description? | Is there a typical "duration" (such as 5 sessions, or one school year)? If so what is the duration?        | What are the barriers to effectiveness? For each barrier can you identify/ suggest a solution?  |
|-----------|---|--|--|--|--|---|
| OT        | School pays; if the cost is too great, sometimes QSO pays   | 3  | 3  | SST/classroom teacher/reports sent to SSC  | Depends on the number of referrals: from 2-5 days per school   | Distance. Pam Becker flies in from Winnipeg. However, she frequently follows up with phone calls.   |
| PT        | Health Centre recommends to school for equipment.   | 2  | 1  | SST  | Unknown: this is not done at the schools   | We have no itinerant PT.  |
| Speech    | SST/SSA/classroom teacher<br>The school pays  | Yes, whenever applicable   | 1  | SST responsibility   | n/a  | We have not had an itinerant S-LP for over a year. We are beginning year 2 without one.   |
| Ed Psyc   | n/a   | Yes, only if the child was referred by another agency, other than the school               | 1  | SST, if applicable   | Unknown  | Such assessments have been frowned upon. Yet, we get many requests from teachers and SSTs to have this service.                                       |
| Audiology | CHEO provides hearing aids<br>QSO sometimes replaces the batteries  | 2  | 1  | SST  | The students go to Ontario. In a few of our schools (Iqaluit, etc) students see an audiologist in Iqaluit. | CHEO and Kim Hurley have repeatedly recommended strongly that Sound Field systems be installed in classrooms. This has NOT been done. Years ago, some |

|               |                                   |   |   |     |                                |   |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|-----|--------------------------------|---|
|               |                                   |   |   |     |                                | were installed, but these are outdated and there are lost parts.  |
| Vision        | Health Centre/Health pays         | 1 | 1 | n/a | n/a                            | Vision testing needs to be done routinely.  |
| Mental Health | QSO pays for Northern Counselling | 2 | 2 | SST | Depends on number of referrals | Distance. The neediest schools get at least 1 visit per year. However, in special cases, the itinerant has made multiple visits to a school as necessary. |



# Nunavut Inclusive Education Review

## Parental Engagement and Informed Consent

### (Question 5, Steps 1 and 2)

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# Nunavut Inclusive Education Review

## Parental Engagement and Informed Consent

### The Question and the Methodology

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Question 5, Step 1 and 2 of the Terms of Reference required the external reviewer to answer the following question by having “a face-to-face meeting with parents and representatives of the Coalition of DEAs”:

How do we integrate protocols for parental engagement and informed parental consent into the model [of Inclusive Education]?

The same meeting was also to answer Question 4, Step 1: What would a sustainable, collaborative and accountable model of multi-tiered interventions and services – [aka interagency services] - look like?

The reviewer had already drafted a response to the question of school-based, multi-tiered interventions, having examined models in other jurisdictions. Input from the face-to-face meeting was then incorporated into the draft in order to complete and submit the document *School-Based Multi-Tiered Interventions*.

The remainder of this document will focus on the parental engagement portion of the face-to-face meeting.

The meeting took place in Iqaluit on October 21, 2014. Eleven people were invited, including ten Inuit. Six were chosen by their respective regions. The others were chosen because of their experience as educators and/or to ensure that key organizations, such as Nunavut Disabilities Makinnasuaqtitt Society were represented. Most participants were able to bring more than one perspective to the table – for example being a grandparent of a student with a disability as well as being an SSA, or being a former teacher as well as being the parent of a student with an undiagnosed learning disability. Two had lost children to suicide. The meeting was facilitated by the external reviewer with logistical support and note-taking provided by staff from the Department of Education. The agenda for the day can be found in the Appendix, along with a list of participants.

### Limitations

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Materials submitted for translation were not completed/available on time to be of use during the meeting. The facilitator had to “adapt” and the translator had more explaining to do.

Another limitation was that, in true northern fashion, not everyone was able to attend because of weather or the plane “going mechanical.” The external reviewer interviewed two individuals later by telephone. Although listed as a

limitation, in fact, hearing their stories one-on-one added both detail and clarity to the group discussion. (The two participants interviewed did not complete the survey below.)

## What participants said

The session began with a questionnaire designed to capture opinions, on comfort level with the school and teachers, communication between home and school, and on parent understanding of their role in their child’s education.

### Parents and Schools

How do you feel about the following statements? Think about your own experience with schools and think about parents you know. Then decide how much you agree or disagree with each statement:

SA = Strongly agree

A = Agree

NS = Not sure if I agree or disagree

D = Disagree

SD = Strongly disagree

NA = Not applicable (I don’t have enough experience with this topic)

|  | SA | A | NS | D | SD | NA |
|--|----|---|----|---|----|----|
| 1. I feel comfortable going into to the school.  | 3  | 3 | 1  |   |    | 1  |
| 2. Most parents that I know feel comfortable going into the school.  |    | 4 | 3  |   |    | 1  |
| 3. I feel comfortable talking to teachers.   | 3  | 3 | 1  |   |    | 1  |
| 4. Most parents that I know feel comfortable talking to teachers.  |    | 1 | 5  | 1 |    | 1  |
| 5. Teachers ask me about my child – what he or she likes, is good at, if there are any health concerns...                          | 1  | 2 | 1  | 3 |    | 1  |
| 6. I share important information with the school about how my child learns best, and about health, mental health and other issues. | 2  | 3 |    | 2 |    | 1  |
| 7. Teachers keep me informed about my child’s progress.  | 1  | 3 | 1  | 2 |    | 1  |
| 8. Parents understand that there are things that they can do to help their child succeed in school.                                |    | 2 | 3  | 1 | 1  | 1  |
| 9. Parents are invited to participate in school team meetings when the team is planning for their child.                           |    | 4 | 1  | 1 | 1  | 1  |

Participants completed the survey individually, after which responses were recorded on an enlarged copy posted on the wall. Most of these particular participants feel comfortable in school/with teachers, and report positive communication between home and school. However, they are not so sure about other parents.

Following the survey and discussion, participants were asked two key questions:

1. What can schools do to help parents be more engaged in their child's education?, and
2. What things do parents need to do to help their child in school?

Individually they wrote their ideas on large sticky notes. Each person could write as many ideas as they wanted. The sticky notes were then posted for all to see, and discussed as a group. This methodology ensured that everyone contributed ideas.

### **What can schools do to help parents be more engaged...?**

Without quoting all of the sticky notes word-for-word there were some basic themes that emerged for the question, "What can schools do to help parents be more engaged in their child's education?"

1. Have regular communication beyond parent teacher interviews and:
  - a. Be more honest with parents about students' progress
  - b. Meet somewhere other than the principal's office – a neutral place
  - c. Have translation available
  - d. Keep meetings low-key
  - e. Recognize that parents are "professionals"
  - f. Listen
2. Teachers need to learn skills to help engage parents in meaningful ways, such as skills for:
  - a. Building rapport
  - b. Solution-focused team meetings
  - c. Making "suggestions" so it doesn't sound like blame
  - d. Making 3 (at least) positive comments for each negative
  - e. Facilitating meetings, especially across cultures
3. Plan more activities and invite parents, such as:
  - a. A tea or open house – with door prizes!
  - b. Celebration of events that took place outside of school
  - c. Parent/student events
  - d. Recognizing parent volunteers
  - e. Inviting parents to observe their child
  - f. Inviting small groups of parents to discuss common issues
  - g. Parent workshops led by parents
4. Schools need clear procedures for parent engagement, and engagement of high school students/students who are adults, in individual planning and school team meetings.

## **What things do parents need to do...?**

---

There was even more consensus around the question, “What things do parents need to do to help their child in school?” The following are copied almost word-for-word from the sticky notes:

1. Parenting is a tough job but that’s no excuse not to do it.
  - a. Learn from those who are doing it well
  - b. Make sure children get enough sleep, healthy food, ask about their day, be interested in them, give high 5s and lots of hugs
  - c. Be a parent: nurture them, curfew, feed them, let them know school is important, start reading to them before they start school
  - d. Get reluctant kids up and out
  - e. Make sure home projects are getting done
  - f. Stay connected to your child, especially when they become teenagers
  - g. Listen to your children
2. Have EXPECTATIONS!
  - a. EXPECTATION to attend school
  - b. Never stop asking them what they want to be or where they want to go
  - c. Dream Big!
  - d. Talk about the importance of education
  - e. Remind them that education is about growth
  - f. Help them to believe “Education” is about life. Believe to success – success to journey
3. Never give up on your kid. They are your kid all of their life.
  - a. Believe in your kids! Advocate!
  - b. Meet with teachers no matter + or –
  - c. Visit the school regularly
  - d. Help with your monthly themes at school
  - e. Arrange extra supports

As one participant said, “Never give up. I was 45 when I got my GED.”

## **Discussion and Recommended Actions**

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The reviewer was left with one overriding impression - if all parents thought this way and did these things, we wouldn’t need to have a discussion about how to get parents more engaged. These parents *are* engaged.

But what about other parents? The reviewer asked for suggestions on how they would go about getting other parents more engaged? Sadly – but clearly a reflection of one individual’s perception of her community – reasons were cited for non-engagement. “Gambling, drinking and bootlegging are really bad [in my community]. So is theft and vandalism. Kids are out all night because their parents are playing cards.” To which another said, “There are lots of good Inuit.”

Of course there are “lots of good Inuit” and those are the ones where efforts to improve parental engagement will pay off.

Largely, improving the relationship between home and school hinges on the leadership of the principal and his or her willingness and ability to work with staff to:

- Communicate with parents frequently, using a variety of methods
- Create a warm, respectful, and welcoming school environment
- Be flexible in accommodating parents and families
- Provide a variety of resources for parents
- Support parents in helping their children at home

There’s no shortage of published resources with dozens of tips and strategies designed to do those exact things, but such resources are invariably (and appropriately) directed at the school level. They are not directed at the regional or Department level – i.e. the system level.

What is appropriate at a system level, then? In other words, what are the expectations for parental engagement that an observer should be able to see if they walked into any school in Nunavut? Suddenly the list becomes shorter:

- School team meetings that include parents, and an advocate if they so choose
- Learning outcomes in ISSPs developed with input from the parent
- Strategies to achieve those learning outcomes developed with input from the parent
- Regular review and adjustment, as necessary, of strategies and progress toward learning outcomes, with the parent involved

All of the above should also include the student, as appropriate to their age and development level.

What should *never* be seen is an ISSP developed and then presented to the parent for their signature after the fact.

*Strengths, Gaps and Areas Needing Improvement* - submitted to the Department of Education in July as part of the Inclusive Education Review - noted or recommended the following, which are relevant to the issue of parental engagement and informed consent:

1. Referring to determining education programs for individual students:

- a. There needs to be a clearly articulated process for teachers to follow (p 6). *Evaluation and Accountability*<sup>1</sup> (p8 and 11) further detailed that part of the process should be an expectation that teachers seek and use information about students from a variety of assessments and sources – including parents.
  - b. There need to be defined and expected roles and responsibilities for a number of positions, including the principal, SST, classroom teacher, parents, and others (p4); and a list of indicators for the superintendent to look for during school visits that show if a school is meeting expected standards (p 9) (which would include parental involvement in school team meetings, and ISSP development and review.)
2. The number of students with written plans has to be manageable – by the teacher, the principal, the SST, the school team, everyone. Right now there are too many students with written plans... so “it’s easier for schools to write them and then have the parents sign” (p 10).
  3. The current IAP template should be replaced with a much shorter template on which the teacher documents student-specific strategies and equipment chosen by the teacher, parent and student... (p12).
  4. There needs to be a written guide [for teachers] on how to plan, develop, implement, monitor, revise and assess any type of ISSP. This would include expected roles and responsibilities<sup>2</sup>... (p14).
  5. Report cards/reporting to parents should include a statement as to the grade level of curricular outcomes that a student is working on in an Inuit language, English and Français (as applicable) and Mathematics (p11).
  6. There needs to be ongoing staff development in strategies that are supportive of diversity (p6). (Note: When this recommendation was written in July it was referring to teaching strategies, but input at the face-to-face meeting – see #2 under What can schools do? - shows the need for teachers to develop knowledge and skills to facilitate parental engagement, particularly given the cross-cultural reality of many parent-teacher relationships in Nunavut.)

The above recommendations, if incorporated into the model of Inclusive Education that Nunavut is seeking to define, would all ensure that parental engagement and informed consent is an integral part of the model. Simply put, they would set out expectations, including expectations for parental engagement and informed consent, and provide educators with knowledge, skills and tools to help them meet those expectations.

Referring to another aspect at the system level, the Education Act and Inclusive Schooling Regulations are not only *not* written in a way that encourages positive communication with the school, the tone is almost adversarial. “Parents can accept or reject an ISSP,” Act 43(8), and Sections 49 through 52 detail mediation

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<sup>1</sup> Document submitted to the Department of Education in July 2014 as part of the Inclusive Education Review

<sup>2</sup> These are the same roles and responsibilities referred to in 1b, and include roles for parents.



and review board procedures “if a parent is not satisfied...” with any number of things. Meanwhile 6 of the 11 pages of the Inclusive Education Regulations detail requirements related to review boards. As has already been suggested in the Student Support submission<sup>3</sup> regarding proposed changes to the Education Act, *all* of this ink (and tone) should be replaced with a much more general statement about parents right to appeal any decision that significantly affects their child, supported by Appeal Regulations (not specific to inclusion) to detail procedures.

Setting out expectations at a system level for the engagement of parents, particularly for students with ISSPs, will *not* ensure parental engagement and informed consent 100% of the time. As referenced by the earlier comment from one of the focus group participants, some parents are struggling with issues that prevent their engagement in school. However articulating expectations for parental engagement and informed consent as part of the Nunavut model will define what *schools* are expected to do to support the engagement and informed consent of other parents.

## Last Word

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To return to the importance of the principal’s leadership in improving and enhancing the relationship between home and school, the Department of Education should:

- a. either identify or develop (a) resource(s) with parental engagement tips and strategies appropriate at the school level – including those suggested by participants under “What can schools do...?”, and
- b. train Nunavut principals in the use of those resources.

Because of the added importance of engaging parents of students with learning difficulties, development of this/these resource(s) should be led by Student Support Services, or at the very least include their significant involvement.

In closing, improving parental engagement requires *both* Nunavut-wide, system-level expectations and procedures, *and* school-specific initiatives, supported by regional operations as necessary.

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<sup>3</sup> C Borg, Manager Student Support Services, to B Archambault, Director Policy, October 30/14



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Building *Nunavut* Together  
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Bâtir le *Nunavut* ensemble

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Department of Education  
Ilinniaqtuliqiyikkut  
Ministère de l'Éducation

## **Inclusive Education Review Focus Group: Support Services for Students, and Parental Engagement**

**October 21, 2014 – Building 2225 – 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM**

Inclusive Education is:

- All students learning in a regular classroom or settings (such as trips on the land) with other students in their age group.
- Teachers using a range of teaching and assessment strategies because not all students learn the same way or at the same rate.
- Students receiving a wide variety of supports depending on their needs.
  - Supports means things that the teacher/school can do like instruction in small groups, extra time to complete tests, or specialized equipment such as a sound amplification system for a student or classroom.
  - Supports also means things that are beyond what the school/teacher can do, such as assessment and strategies from specialists such as a Speech Therapist or Mental Health worker.

8:30 – 9:15

- ❖ Welcome and overview of the Inclusive Education Review
- ❖ Introductions – What is your involvement in Inclusive Education?

9:15 – 11:30 (with one break)

- ❖ Support Services
  - What support services are school providing well?
  - What do school need to do better?
  - What support services do students receive from outside agencies?
  - What do outside agencies need to do better or differently?

11:30 – 12:30 - Lunch

12:30 – 4:00 (with one break)

- ❖ Parental Engagement
  - What can schools do to help parents be more engaged in their child's education?
  - What things do parents need to do to help their child in school?

4:00 – 4:30

- ❖ Summary and Closure

**Inclusive Education Review Focus Group:  
Support Services for Students, and  
Parental Engagement**

**October 21, 2014 – Building 2225 – 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM**

**Participants**

|                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Amy Nivingalok    | Kugluktuk   |
| Martha Martee     | Baker Lake  |
| Louisa Sulurayok  | Arviat      |
| Carmen Satuqsi    | Igloolik    |
| Rosie Kilabuk     | Pangnirtung |
| Sheyla Kolola     | Iqaluit     |
| Nikki Eegeesiak   | Iqaluit     |
| Elisapee Flaherty | Iqaluit     |
| Wendy Ireland     | Iqaluit     |
| Saimata Arlooktoo | Iqaluit     |

Meeting Coordinator and Host – Charlotte Borg

Recorder – Peter Worden

Facilitator – Barbara Hall

# Nunavut Inclusive Education Review

## Staff Knowledge Skills and Attitudes Necessary for Inclusive Education (Question 6, Steps 1 and 2)

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| Principal  |      |
| Student Support Teacher  |      |
| Student Support Assistants   |      |
| School Community Counsellor (Ilinniarvimmi Inuusiliriji)                               |      |
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# Nunavut Inclusive Education Review

## Staff Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes (KASs) Necessary for Inclusive Education

### The Question and the Methodology

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Question 6, Steps 1 and 2 of the Terms of Reference for the Inclusive Education Review required the external reviewer to have a “face-to-face focused conversation with the Student Support Working Group” in order to “list the staff Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes (KASs) necessary for effective Inclusive Education in Nunavut.”

Identifying KASs evolved over several months and was definitely not limited to the face-to-face meeting with the SSWG. In fact, every question that the reviewer looked at illuminated topic-specific KASs – for example KASs related to assessment, or KASs related to parental engagement. The required staff KASs listed in this document were identified through:

- all of the interviews, surveys, meetings, and telephone conversations conducted as part of the review, combined with,
- current evidence-based strategies that support teaching and learning in classrooms characterized by a diverse student population.

### Beliefs and Practices - The Current Situation

---

Earlier in the Inclusive Education Review the Student Support Working Group, Student Support staff at the Department, and nine Inuit educators were invited to complete a series of surveys about their perspective on the inclusiveness of schools with which they work. Respondents indicated their level of agreement with statements, each of which captured a specific concept or practice considered important in an inclusive model. Thirteen people completed the surveys. Their responses should be taken as food-for-thought, not generalized Nunavut-wide.

When it comes to attitudes there is little or no debate over inclusion. Only one respondent disagreed with the statement, “diversity is valued as an enriching aspect of the school environment.” That said, however, the majority of respondents either *weren't sure, disagreed or strongly disagreed* with the statements:

- a. all staff take responsibility for the success of all students
- b. there are high expectations for all students

Responses to survey questions about inclusive instruction and supports showed that the majority of respondents either *weren't sure, disagreed or strongly disagreed* with these statements:

- a. differentiated instruction is an integral part of classroom practice
- b. teachers provide multiple ways for students to access new information and concepts
- c. learning experiences are designed to tap into the strengths and interests of all students
- d. students receive ongoing descriptive feedback to inform their learning
- e. students have multiple ways to demonstrate their learning and growth
- f. services and interventions support classroom learning
- g. Inuit learners receive the academic and cultural support they need to be successful learners
- h. activating and/or building background knowledge is an integral part of every learning experience
- i. supports and interventions are in place to reduce barriers to attendance

Only *about half agreed* with the following:

- a. teaching staff have regular and structured opportunities to engage in collaborative problem solving
- b. administration and staff work together to establish priority areas for enhancing inclusion
- c. professional learning activities help staff value and respond to student diversity
- d. positive behaviour supports are imbedded in classroom and school routines
- e. ongoing assessment identifies when students need additional supports, interventions and services

Needless to say the opinions of survey respondents are worrisome because key beliefs and practices fundamental to, and necessary for, inclusion are lacking - in respondents' opinions. The need for *ongoing* staff development in practices supportive of inclusion has already been identified during the review<sup>1</sup>, and the opinions of survey respondents serve to underscore the importance of that recommendation. As staff knowledge and skills increase, so too will their competence and confidence, and they may start to believe that success is possible – both for them and for their students.

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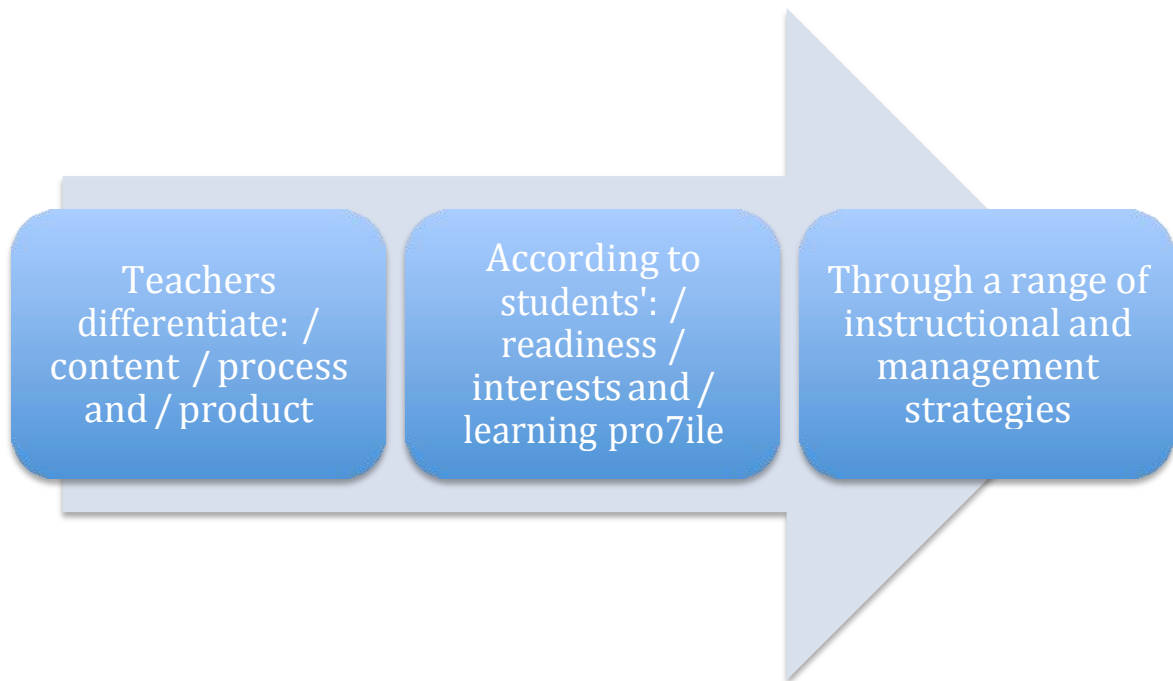
<sup>1</sup> *Strengths, Gaps and Areas Needing Improvement*, July 2014, p.6

## Teacher Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes Necessary for Effective Inclusive Education

Because so much attention has been focused on **Differentiated Instruction** (DI) as a way to reach and teach all learners, it seems a logical place to start. DI is guided by the principles of:

- respectful tasks
- flexible student groupings
- ongoing assessment and adjustment

DI, which can be thought of as the opposite of one-size-fits all instruction, is not individualization either. DI means giving students multiple opportunities for taking in information (i.e. content), multiple opportunities for making sense of ideas (i.e. process), and multiple opportunities for expressing what they learn (i.e. product.) DI can be illustrated as follows:



Identifying the range and variety of instructional and management strategies is outside the scope of this document. Suffice it to say the list is long and includes such elements as flexible grouping options, scaffolded instruction, choice, and consideration for different interests and learning modalities.



DI also requires teachers to:

- **know the curriculum**, and be clear about “what matters in subject matter” – i.e. the big ideas of what’s important for students to learn
- **develop learner profiles and class profiles**, and use them when planning instruction
- **use formative assessment**, using a range of strategies, to monitor progress and adjust instruction
- **use summative assessment** (differentiated of course) to judge student achievement against predetermined criteria

**Multiple Intelligences and Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** are not the same as DI but they are not totally distinct from it either. Multiple Intelligences identifies 8 “ways of being smart”<sup>2</sup>, and a teacher who is differentiating instruction would purposefully plan to engage as many of those intelligences as possible. As for UDL, it’s three main principles would also be evident in a differentiated classroom – multiple means of acquiring information and knowledge, multiple means of expressing what learners know, and multiple means of engaging/motivating students.

It should be a given that the DI/Multiple Intelligences/UDL combination is a cornerstone of good teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and Nunavut teachers need ongoing opportunities to develop their competencies in this area. However, it would be naïve and an oversimplification to suggest that “DI can do it all.” The importance of many other KSAs also emerged during the review process.

1. **Teachers need to know how to determine which education program is appropriate for any given student** – a regular program (where the student is working on curricular outcomes at grade level), a modified or adjusted program (where the student is working on curricular outcomes above or below their assigned grade level), or an individual program (where some or all of the student’s learning outcomes are outside of approved curricula.) As corollaries to this:
  - a. **Teachers need to know when a written plan is required** and of course they need to know how to plan, develop, implement, monitor, revise and evaluate those written plans.
  - b. **Teachers need to know when to provide, and how to choose, targeted supports/strategies, and individual supports/strategies** when students do not respond positively to universal supports/strategies, such as DI.

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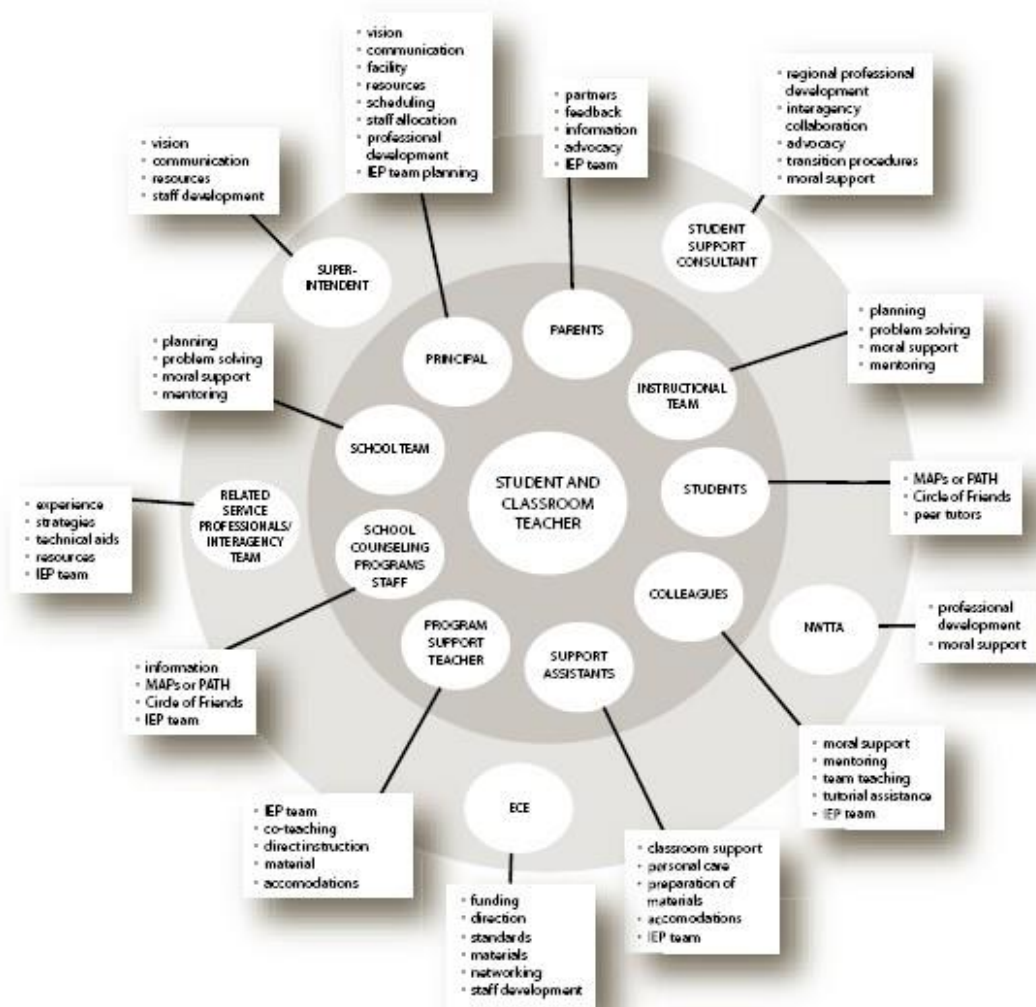
<sup>2</sup> Verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, spatial, musical-rhythmic, bodily-kinesthetic, naturalist

2. **Teachers need to be able to choose and use a range of assistive technologies** appropriate for a student's needs – from low-tech options such as raised-line paper, to mid-tech options such as talking spell checkers, to high-tech options such as specialized software and hardware.
3. **Teachers need classroom management skills and they need to know how to identify, teach and support positive behaviour expectations.**
4. **Teachers need to be able to work in a variety of team situations** including:
  - a. problem-solving teams
  - b. school team
  - c. teacher-support assistant team
  - d. instructional teams - e.g. in larger schools all grade 3 teachers

At its core Inclusive Education requires that teachers work with parents colleagues, and other professionals to solve problems and identify strategies necessary for both teacher and student success. Whether or not it is evident from walking into any given classroom/school, the days of teachers working alone are gone - and if they're not they should be. All staff need to understand that inclusion is not an add-on. It's a change in approach to teaching and working with fellow staff in support of all students.

The following graphic, which was adapted for the Northwest Territories, illustrates the full range of support available to the classroom teacher through team and other collegial interactions in a truly inclusive system.

# CIRCLES OF SUPPORT



Graphic, adapted from "Understanding the Principal's Role in Inclusion," Haginal and Staniloff, The Canadian School Executive, Vol 16, No 6, December 1996. (ECE = the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.)

5. **Teachers need knowledge and skills to effectively communicate with and engage parents/families, including:**
  - a. cross-cultural awareness (if the teacher's culture/language is different than that of the parent/family)
  - b. creating a warm, respectful and welcoming school environment
  - c. using a variety of methods to communicate with parents – frequently
  - d. delivering at least 3 positive comments for every negative one

In summary, teachers in an inclusive setting need many, many tools in their toolkit, and those tools extend well beyond quality instruction/DI.

## **Other Staff Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes Necessary for Effective Inclusive Education**

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The preceding section deliberately focused on the knowledge, skills and attitudes required by teachers. However, as illustrated in the Circles of Support graphic, in an inclusive model “everyone” has role to play in supporting the classroom teacher, most notably the following:

### Principal

The principal is key. His or her beliefs and actions *will* determine the degree to which a school reflects the collegiality illustrated in Circles of Support, and the practices reported earlier from the inclusive indicators surveys. As the instructional leader the principal needs the same knowledge and skills as teachers. But (s)he also needs to be creative with staff scheduling, facilitate staff development opportunities, ensure regular school team meetings, and create a welcoming environment and opportunities for meaningful parental involvement in the life of the school. If it doesn’t already, principal certification requirements should include a module on the principal’s role in inclusion.

### Student Support Teacher

As stated in *Strengths, Gaps and Areas Needing Improvement*, submitted in July 2014, the SST should *not* be an assignment of the principal.

“SSTs should be hired specifically for the SST position and should be master teachers who are able to facilitate planning (e.g. MAPS) and solution circles, co-teach, coach/mentor other teachers and provide training for SSAs (in student-specific strategies, not pre-service training.) The passing mark for an interview should be at least 70%.” (p.15)

As with the principal, the SST needs the same knowledge and skills as teachers, plus, plus, plus. The SST should have several years of demonstrated competence as a classroom teacher.

### Student Support Assistants

Student Support Assistants need to understand their role(s), and then they need knowledge and skills to carry out specific duties. Again, quoting from *Strengths, Gaps and Areas Needing Improvement*, the role of the SSA should be defined as:

“... one where the SSA works under the direction and supervision of a classroom teacher, does not replace the professional responsibilities of the teacher, and performs a number of roles depending on need – regular meetings with the teacher, organizational tasks, instructional support, behaviour support, participation in team meetings, personal care support, etc.” (p.17)

The Support Assistant training modules currently being rolled out by the Department are an important initiative and should be mandatory.

### School Community Counsellor (Ilinniarvimmi Inuusiliriji)

Section 89(2) of the Education Act mandates that every school have at least one Ilinniarvimmi Inuusiliriji (II), and that an II must be a member of the school team (Section 90(1)). Circles of Support identifies the role of the school team as one of planning, problem-solving, moral support and mentoring, yet *Strengths, Gaps and Areas Needing Improvement* reported that, “SCCs are untrained, undervalued, underutilized and disrespected” (p. 18). If that is the case how can they fulfill their role as a member of the school team? A training program for IIs should be mandatory, and ongoing staff development is essential.

The most critical issue related to IIs, however, is one of role clarity. Is their main role to liaise between home and school and promote regular attendance, as the name School Community Counsellor suggests? (This was very definitely the initial intent of the SCC position when it was introduced in the 1980s.) Or is their main role to provide counselling services – as the name Ilinniarvimmi Inuusiliriji suggests? The two would necessitate a very different set of knowledge and skills and a very different level of training.

Section 100 of the Education Act assigns specific duties to IIs, and also states that an II may consult with and make referrals to community agencies. This may imply that IIs are not providing clinical counselling services. However, the fact that their role is not clear was raised a number of times during the review, meaning that it needs to be better defined, particularly around clinical counselling (or not.)

## **Summary**

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There are a number of important take-aways here. Aside from the fundamental beliefs that students belong with their age peers, and that all students can learn, school staff need knowledge and skills that are somewhat position-specific:

1. Teachers need a wide range of skills to teach a diverse student population. DI is key, but it is not a magic bullet.
2. Other school staff need to work with and support teachers in their central role of working directly with students:
  - a. Principals must understand their role in providing leadership in an inclusive model, and must possess the skills to promote/lead teams, be an instructional leader, and ensure ongoing professional growth for their staff.

- b. SSTs must be master teachers, able to coach, mentor, co-teach, problem solve, help determine necessary equipment/accommodations, train SSAs, and help both teachers and SSAs to work as a team.
- c. SSAs and IIs need to understand their roles, and training for their roles must be both available and mandatory.

In closing, staff development is key to developing required knowledge, skills and fundamental beliefs supportive of inclusion. To repeat the recommendation made in *Strengths, Gaps and Areas Needing Improvement*, there must be a plan for, and commitment to, *ongoing* Nunavut-wide staff development related to Inclusive Education.

August | 2014

# Nunavut Inclusive Education Review

Comparative Analysis of Essential, Current Inclusive Education Policies  
In New Brunswick, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut  
(Question 8, Step 1)

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# Nunavut Inclusive Education Review

## Inclusive Education Policies – Comparative Analysis

### The Question

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Question 8, Step 1 of the Terms of Reference required the reviewer to “complete a comparative analysis of essential, current inclusive education policies in Alberta, the NWT and Nunavut.” However, the Alberta model of inclusion begins by identifying students with special education needs – either mild, moderate or severe - and the Alberta standards/policy is written to ensure access to an appropriate education program and supports for those students. New Brunswick, like Nunavut and the NWT, uses a model of inclusion which focuses on ensuring access to an appropriate education program and supports for all students. For that reason, it was decided to use the New Brunswick policy for comparison purposes instead of Alberta’s. In addition, the New Brunswick policy is very current - September 2013.

### Limitations

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Every attempt was made to locate and identify the appropriate references for each of the topics related to inclusive education that were compared among the three jurisdictions. However, given the length and complexity of legislation, regulations, policy and other government documents it is possible that some references were “missed.” The three-jurisdiction comparison should be taken as a summary/overview and not as a 100% complete and fully accurate picture. Missing references can be added if necessary.

The information presented in the comparative analysis is limited to what is stated in writing, not what might be known because of familiarity with a given jurisdiction. Documents from each jurisdiction that were used to compile the comparative analysis are listed at the end.

## Comparative Analysis

The following chart identifies various topics associated with, and important to, an inclusive model and shows where that topic is addressed – the Act, Regulations or policy/other – in each of New Brunswick, the NWT and Nunavut. In the column titled Prov/Territorial Standard/Policy/Inuglugijaittuq or other, unless otherwise stated references are to:

- *Policy 322, Inclusive Education* (New Brunswick)
- *Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling* (NWT)
- *Inuglugijaittuq: Foundation for Inclusive Education in Nunavut Schools* (Nunavut)

| Topic   |   | Act | Regs | Prov/Territorial Standard/Policy/<br><i>Inuglugijaittuq</i> or other   | NA<br>/No |
|---|---|-----|------|--|-----------|
| 1<br>Philosophical<br><i>definition</i> of<br>Inclusion | N |     |      | 3.0 Statement of values and beliefs that allow all to participate with peers in the common learning environment and develop to full potential. |           |
|   | B |     |      |  |           |
|   | N |     |      |  | x         |
| 2<br>Practical<br><i>definition</i> of<br>Inclusion     | T |     |      | No definition in <i>Inuglugijaittuq</i> .<br>Note: There <i>is</i> a definition in the glossary of <i>Ilitaunnikuliniriniq</i> ,               | x         |
|   | N |     |      | 3.0 as per philosophical, above  |           |
|   | B |     |      | 1.2 Access to education program and supports in regular instructional setting.   |           |
|   | T |     |      | As per #1 above  | x         |
|   | N |     |      |  |           |
|   | U |     |      |  |           |

| Topic   |        | Act   | Regs | Prov/Territorial Standard/Policy or Inuglugijaittuq | NA /No |
|---|--------|---|------|---|--------|
| 3<br>Attend school in regular instructional setting | N<br>B | 12(3) Programs and services received in the common learning environment to the fullest extent considered practical...   |      |   |        |
|   | N<br>T | 7(1) (2) Programs and services provided in a regular instructional setting in the home community.<br>8 Education staff must make modifications to the education program when... necessary to accommodate the needs or abilities of the student. |      |   |        |
|   | N<br>U | 2 Students entitled to access to the education program in a regular instructional setting.<br>41(1)(2) Entitlement to adjustments and supports that are "reasonable and practical."   |      |   |        |
| 4<br>Provision for exceptions to full inclusion     | N<br>B | 12(3)(4) Decision of the superintendent - inclusion to the extent practical given the rights and needs of that student and the needs of other students.   |      |   |        |
|   | N<br>T | 7(3) Various reasons, including health of student, agreement (including parental) that educational needs cannot be met in regular instructional setting, and "unduly interfering with the education program for other students."                |      |   |        |
|   | N<br>U | 45 Decision of principal - various reasons, including health of the student, educational needs that cannot be met in regular instructional setting, and "unduly interfering with the education program for other students."                     |      |   |        |

| Topic  |        | Act  | Regs  | Prov/Territorial Standard/Policy or Inuglugijaittuq   | NA /No |
|--|--------|--|---|---|--------|
| 5<br>Alternate placements if student meets requirements for an exception to full inclusion | N<br>B | 12(4) Superintendent “may” deliver programs and services in home or other setting.   |   | 6.4 Detailed list of conditions that must be met if the common learning environment is to be varied, including ongoing documentation & monitoring, and anticipated date of return to the common learning environment.                                     |        |
|  | N<br>T | 7(4) Education body* is still required to provide the student with an education program.<br>* means District Education Authority, Divisional Education Council or Commission scolaire francophone de division      |   | 2.4 Repeats requirements of the Act.<br>3.1 Education program must be “appropriate” – based on collaborative planning, what the student needs to be able to do that they can’t do now, and subject to limitations that are reasonable...                  |        |
|  | N<br>U | 45(4) Principal to consider placements in accordance with direction of the Minister, and in consultation with the school team and parent.<br>45(7) Decision rests with the Minister, based on principal’s opinion. | 6(2) ISSP must include reasons for exclusion, description of alternate placement, beginning and end dates, and explanation of how placement will address needs. |   |        |
| 6<br>Homogeneous groupings   | N<br>B |  |   | 6.2.1(4) Must be flexible, temporary, have targets, short-term goals, pre-determined strategies, and ongoing assessment to monitor success.<br>6.2.2(1) Segregated, self-contained classes for students with learning or behaviour issues must not occur. |        |
|  | N<br>T |  |   | 2.4 Classes of students with similar characteristics (e.g. academic or behaviour delays) do not meet the requirement that exceptions to placement with peers in regular instructional setting be rare.  |        |
|  | N<br>U |  |   |   | x      |

| Topic                        |        | Act   | Regs   | Prov/Territorial Standard/Policy or Inuglugijaittuq   | NA /No |
|------------------------------|--------|---|--|---|--------|
| 7<br>Identification of needs | N<br>B |   |  |   | x      |
|                              | N<br>T |   |  | 3.4 Education bodies required to have written procedures for early identification of strengths and challenges, to involve parents, consider all domains, and provide ongoing staff development.<br>3.5 Education bodies required to utilize a number of informal to formal assessments. Criteria include using assessments which match the purpose for doing them, replicate real world challenges, are culturally and linguistically responsive, and result in program recommendations.<br>3.6 Education bodies required to have written procedures for referral for specialized assessments. Criteria as per 3.5 above. Parents must consent. |        |
|                              | N<br>U | 43(1) Teacher responsibility to determine students entitled to adjustments or supports and to involve the school team 43(3) if support is beyond what the teacher can “reasonably” provide.<br>43(4) Parents may also request school team to review the need for adjustments and supports.<br>47 If the school team decides that specialized assessments (and services) are required, the Minister must agree, and if there is agreement the Minister must ensure that they are provided. | 1 Teachers to use assessment tools and strategies approved by Minister, and consider all domains.<br>2 Teachers to consider learning needs and strengths in all domains – physical, intellectual, behavioural, etc. and choose adjustments and supports that build on student strengths. |   |        |

| Topic   | Act    | Regs  | Prov/Territorial Standard/Policy or Inuglugijaittuq  | NA /No |
|---|--------|---|--|--------|
| 8<br>Qualifications to do assessments, and availability | N<br>B |   | 6.9 Superintendents must establish a district-based Education Support Services (ESS) team which includes district education support teachers (e.g. literacy), subject coordinators, psychologists, speech language therapists, social workers and others to support school-based ESS teams.<br>6.10 Principals must establish a school-based ESS team.<br>6.11 Members of district and school-based ESS teams must adhere to the standards of practice established by the Department for their respective positions. |        |
|   | N<br>T | 9(1) At the written request of parent or principal, the DEA may designate one or more persons to assess the student... to determine if the education program is too challenging or not challenging enough...                                | 3.6 Education bodies must use qualified professionals (for specialized assessments) who follow the standards and guidelines of their professional organizations, and can provide programming recommendations that can be implemented by parents, teachers, others... in regular instructional settings.  |        |
|   | N<br>U | 46 DEA shall ensure that school team or person qualified to make the assessment, conducts an annual assessment of student with ISSP - to assess progress, and make recommendations and adjustments.<br>47 As per #7 Identification of needs | 12 Annual assessment of student with ISSP must be made by a teacher who has taught or had significant involvement in observation, the ISSP process, & has training wrt annual assessments under the Act section 46.<br>13 Person making specialized assessment under section 47 must be qualified to use and   |        |

|                                    |        |  |  |   |  |
|------------------------------------|--------|--|--|---|--|
|                                    |        |  | interpret assessments that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, and be familiar with education in Nunavut, including inclusion and Inuit values.   |   |  |
| 9<br>Written plan required when... | N<br>B | 12(1) Decision of the superintendent after consultation with qualified persons and parents 12(2).  |  | 6.3 Personal Learning Plan (PLP) required when strategies beyond “robust instruction” are required, when behaviour supports are required as per Policy 703 <i>Positive Learning and Working Environment</i> (6.6), and when the common learning environment is to be varied.  |  |
|                                    | N<br>T | 9(1) If assessment (as per #8 Qualifications to do assessments...) determines that the education program is too challenging or not challenging enough, the principal recommends development of an IEP to the parent. |  | 3.8 Student Support Plan (SSP) required in order to list accommodations for difficulty or enrichment, or when a student is working above or below grade level. Principals accountable to ensure that teachers follow procedures in <i>NWT Student Support Plan Guidelines</i> .<br>3.9 IEP required when some or all of a student’s learning outcomes are outside approved curricula. Principals accountable to ensure that teachers follow procedures in <i>NWT Individual Education Plan Guidelines</i> . |  |
|                                    | N<br>U | 43(5) School team responds to 43(3) or (4) – as per #7 Identification of Needs - makes necessary assessments and develops ISSP.  | 3 List of eight criteria that school team is to consider/use for ISSP development – strengths and needs in all domains, review previous work and ISSPSs, consider all relevant information, acquire any additional information, review assessment information, and build on student strengths. |   |  |

| Topic                            |        | Act                                   | Regs  | Prov/Territorial Standard/Policy or Inuglugijaittuq   | NA /No |
|----------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------|---|---|--------|
| 10<br>Name/# of written plans    | N<br>B | 12(1) Personalized Learning Plan      |   | 6.3 Personalized Learning Plan  |        |
|                                  | N<br>T | 9 Individual Education Plan           |   | 3.8 Student Support Plan<br>3.9 Individual Education Plan   |        |
|                                  | N<br>U | 43(5) Individual Student Support Plan | 6 Individual Student Support Plan   | p 37 Individual Accommodation Plan<br>p 37 Individual Behaviour Plan<br>p 38 Individual Education Plan<br>p 38 Secondary Individual Education Plan<br>Glossary: Individual Support Plan |        |
| 11<br>Written plan written by... | N<br>B |                                       |   | 6.3.3 Classroom teacher   |        |
|                                  | N<br>T |                                       |   | 3.8 SSP - Classroom teacher<br>3.9 IEP - Classroom teacher  |        |
|                                  | N<br>U | 43(5) School team                     | 3(h) School team  | p 37 IAP developed by the teacher with the assistance of the SST.<br>p 37 IBP developed by the teacher with the assistance of the SST.  |        |
| 12<br>Content of written plans   | N<br>B |                                       |   |   | x      |
|                                  | N<br>T |                                       |   | 3.8 Teachers must use the approved SSP electronic template.<br>3.9 Teachers must use the approved IEP electronic template.  |        |
|                                  | N<br>U |                                       | 6 Detailed list of required contents - same for all ISSPs regardless of the type of ISSP. |   |        |



| Topic             |        | Act | Regs   | Prov/Territorial Standard/Policy or Inuglugijaittuq   | NA /No |
|-------------------|--------|-----|--|---|--------|
| 13<br>Transitions | N<br>B |     |  | 6.3.2(5) Principals must ensure that PLPs in high school... include transition strategies developed in collaboration with student, parent, and community agencies...  |        |
|                   | N<br>T |     |  | <i>IEP Guidelines</i> , p 125-127, IEP template includes box (5a) for transitions and the <i>Guidelines</i> clarify that this means a range of things depending on the student <i>and</i> their age/grade. Templates in the <i>IEP Teacher Resource Kit</i> designed to assist with post-secondary transition planning. |        |
|                   | N<br>U |     | 6(1)(h) Types of transitions are described – e.g. from one grade to another. No detail on process or factors to be considered. |   |        |

| Topic   |        | Act   | Regs  | Prov/Territorial Standard/Policy or Inuglugijaittuq   | NA /No |
|---|--------|---|---|---|--------|
| 14<br>Monitoring progress on written plans and reporting to parents | N<br>B |   |   | 6.3.3(5) Classroom teachers must monitor and evaluate “on an ongoing basis” the effectiveness of strategies and the appropriateness of goals.<br>6.3.3(6) Classroom teachers must provide formal progress reports for students with PLPs on the same report card and at the same time as is done for all other students.  |        |
|   | N<br>T |   | <i>Student Record Regulations</i> - Student record must contain:<br>4(1)(n) a semiannual summary of progress in the education program or IEP.<br>4(1)(o) a semiannual summary of any recommended learning strategies (i.e. an SSP). | <i>SSP Guidelines</i> , p 32 - SSPs reviewed and revised, if necessary, at all regular school reporting times. Parents receive the same report card as do parents of other students.<br><i>IEP Guidelines</i> , p 61 – IEP team to monitor/meet as necessary and document meetings, to meet formally at least 2x a year to review progress, effectiveness, etc., make changes as necessary; p 63 – parents to receive progress report at regularly scheduled reporting times. Format of reporting variable, depending on student goals. |        |
|   | N<br>U | 46 annually   | 9 School team shall monitor implementation of ISSP – no schedule prescribed.  |   |        |
| 15<br>Parent Role   | N<br>B | 13(1) General role such as encouraging homework, communicating with school personnel, ensuring attendance, and ensuring that basic needs are met. |   | 6.3.2(1) PLP developed by planning team that includes parent & student.<br>6.3.3(2) Classroom teachers must develop and implement PLPs in collaboration with various others including parents and the student.<br>6.4.3(2) When student requires learning outcomes other than those of provincial curricula, parents are  |        |

|        |  |  |   |  |
|--------|--|--|---|--|
|        |  |  | informed and “have consented to...”   |  |
| N<br>T | <p>26 General role to support and encourage student to learn, ensure attendance and cooperate with education staff.</p> <p>25(1) Parent entitled to, and responsible for, being informed of progress, behaviour and attendance, and “to be involved in decisions that significantly affect the education, health or safety of the student.”</p> <p>25(2) At request of teacher or principal parent may meet to discuss student progress.</p> <p>25(3) Parent may request to observe student during instruction; 25(4) Principal to grant request unless not in the best interests of the parent, teacher or students.</p> <p>9(2) Parents involved in any IEP decision – development, content, implementation, evaluation, alteration.</p> <p>9(3) Principal must obtain parent approval before IEP is implemented or altered.</p> <p>9(5) Provision for written disagreement under Section 39. (See #22 Appeals.)</p> |  | <p>3.2 Education bodies required to ensure parents have opportunity for “meaningful involvement” in planning, problem-solving and decisions related to student’s education program, and to assist them to understand the information needed to make informed decisions. Parents expected to work with education body to ensure child’s needs are met, subject to limitations that are reasonable... If parents are unable or unwilling to participate education bodies should ensure that attempts are documented.</p> <p>3.4 Education bodies required to involve parents in determination of student strengths and challenges, and to request information from parents relevant to student’s education.</p> <p><i>NWT Individual Education Plan Guidelines</i> clarifies that the Act 9(3) requires parent signature.</p> |  |
| N<br>U | <p>34(8) Parents must promote regular and punctual school attendance. The duty to attend rests with the student under 34(1).</p> <p>43(6) Parents are entitled to, and have the responsibility to, participate in the development of an ISSP.</p> <p>43(8) Parents can accept or reject an ISSP. (See #22 Appeals for process if rejected.)</p> <p>55 Parents have responsibility to be involved in decisions that affect student’s health, education or safety... and to encourage learning, support teachers, and encourage student to support Innuqatigiit-siarniq policy and learn about IQ.</p>   | <p>4 School team must provide parents with explanation of legal and policy foundations for inclusion, their rights wrt inclusion, and explanation of process if the parent believes the student requires adjustments or supports.</p> <p>5 Parents “may attend school team meetings” and may request to bring someone with them.</p> <p>11 Parents of a student not yet attending can request school team to consider adjustments or supports.</p> |   |  |

| Topic                                   |        | Act  | Regs  | Prov/Territorial Standard/Policy or Inuglugijaittuq   | NA /No |
|---|--------|--|---|---|--------|
| 16<br>School team composition and roles | N<br>B |  |   | 6.10 Details of the composition and duties of the team - led by the principal, meets regularly, focuses on <i>support to teachers</i> , and problem-solving, should include outside professionals as needed, written record of meetings required. |        |
|   | N<br>T |  |   | <i>Ministerial Directive</i> , definitions, and <i>Program Support Guide</i> , p 9 defines role as primarily problem solving and/or program planning. Members include principal, PST and “rotating members” as situation-appropriate.             |        |
|   | N<br>U | 90 Principal must establish and direct a school team. Members include principal or vice-principal, SST, II, classroom teacher and others as situation-appropriate.<br>43(5) Role is to assist in identification of needs if requested by teacher or parent. School team may conduct assessments and develop an ISSP. | 3 Detail of how the school team is to carry out its duties under section 43(5) of the Act – i.e. consider all domains and strengths, review existing information and goals, etc., acquire new information if necessary, develop ISSP...<br>5 List of people who may attend school team meetings including an SSA, an Elder employed and working with the student, and outside agencies. |   |        |

| Topic                                |        | Act | Regs | Prov/Territorial Standard/Policy or Inuglugijaittuq  | NA /No |
|--------------------------------------|--------|-----|------|--|--------|
| 17<br>Student<br>Support<br>Teachers | N<br>B |     |      | <p>6.11.2 Superintendent must ensure that Education Support Teachers (ESTs) have the necessary experience, competencies, skills and knowledge to perform their duties...</p> <p>6.11.3 ESTs must spend minimum 60% of time on directly supporting and collaborating with classroom teachers, maximum 25% on direct instruction to small groups, and occasionally individuals (with specific entry and exit criteria and documentation of outcomes achieved by individual instruction) and maximum 15% on administrative duties directly associated with supporting teachers and students.</p> <p><i>Standards of Practice for Education Support Teachers</i> – listed as a reference in the <i>Inclusive Education Policy</i> - no hyperlink/not reviewed.</p> |        |
|                                      | N<br>T |     |      | <p><i>Ministerial Directive</i>, definitions, and <i>Program Support Guide</i>, p 14 define role as in-school support for teachers wrt educational programming, and as being an instructional leader. <i>Program Support Guide</i>, p 14-17, lists key roles and examples of effective practices.</p>  |        |
|                                      | N<br>U |     |      |  | x      |

| Topic                                  |        | Act | Regs | Prov/Territorial Standard/Policy or Inuglugijaittuq  | NA /No |
|--|--------|-----|------|--|--------|
| 18<br>Student<br>Support<br>Assistants | N<br>B |     |      | <i>Standards of Practice for Education Assistants (2013) aka Teacher Assistant Guidelines (1994) detail the role of education assistants under 8 headings including professional conduct, rapport with students, team support, instructional support, behaviour support...</i>   |        |
|  | N<br>T |     |      | <i>Ministerial Directive, definitions, and Program Support Guide, p 20 and 99 define role as one of carrying out instructional plans and assisting with classroom management, providing instruction and other supports under the direct supervision of a qualified teacher.<br/>Program Support Guide, Appendix is a Support Assistant Competency Profile (modeled after the NB Teacher Assistant Guidelines.)</i> |        |
|  | N<br>U |     |      |  | x      |
| 19<br>Staff<br>development             | N<br>B |     |      | 6.13 Ongoing staff development for administrators, teachers, EAs, others is essential, and reflected in the school improvement plan and district plan.   |        |
|  | N<br>T |     |      | 3.4 Education bodies required to make available, on an ongoing basis, staff development to enhance ability to meet needs of diverse learners...  |        |
|  | N<br>U |     |      |  | x      |

| Topic  |        | Act   | Regs | Prov/Territorial Standard/Policy or Inuglugijaittuq  | NA /No |
|--|--------|---|------|--|--------|
| 20<br>Funding  | N<br>B |   |      | 6.12.1 Superintendent must ensure that funding for Education Support Services is used solely for that purpose...   |        |
|  | N<br>T | 128(1.1)(b) Funding for “student support services” (aka Inclusive Schooling) is an additional 15% of all O&M. |      | 4.2 Education bodies required to report all Inclusive Schooling expenditures annually under the headings of IS Staffing, IS Staff Development and IS Program Assistance (e.g. assistive technology, transportation, student resources...) Detailed list of examples of allowable and non-allowable expenditures. |        |
|  | N<br>U |   |      |  | x      |
| 21<br>Overall (buck stops here) accountability assigned to <i>one</i> person or body | N<br>B |   |      | 6.13 Superintendent  |        |
|  | N<br>T |   |      | 4.1 Education bodies (with acknowledgement that some duties will be delegated.)  |        |
|  | N<br>U |   |      |  | x      |

| Topic      |        | Act   | Regs   | Prov/Territorial Standard/Policy or Inuglugijaittuq  | NA /No |
|------------|--------|---|--|--|--------|
| 22 Appeals | N<br>B | The only decisions that can be appealed are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- suspensions of more than 5 days</li> <li>- suspension from school</li> <li>- transportation of more than 5 days</li> <li>- <b>placement (Act 11(3))</b></li> <li>- access to student records</li> </ul>   |  | <i>A User's Guide for the Appeal Process</i> outlines the process, appeal committee membership, and timelines for the resolution of an appeal. Provision for complaint to Ombudsman or judicial review. A variety of sample forms included.  |        |
|            | N<br>T | 39(1) Where a decision of an education staff significantly affects the education, health or safety of a student...the parent or student may notify the principal in writing that they disagree...<br>42(1) Where a decision of a Divisional Education Council significantly affects... the education, health or safety of a student...the parent or student may notify the DEC in writing that they disagree... | <i>Education Appeal Regulations</i> detail the process and timelines of appeals made under section 39 or 42 of the Act. Includes membership criteria for appeal committee. An appeal is resolved at the level that made the decision being appealed – e.g. school level. The only appeals that can go to the Minister are cases where a student has been expelled. | 5.1 to 5.5 Details of appeal procedures as they relate to the <i>Ministerial Directive</i> – i.e. appeals related to decisions concerning access to the education program, to appropriateness of the education program, to appropriateness of supports, and to accountability. Basically repeats the requirements of the <i>Education Appeal Regulations</i> but tries to be more user-friendly. |        |
|            | N<br>U | 43(9) to (13) Details of process in the event of a parental rejection of an ISSP.<br>49(1) Parent or adult student may request mediation by DEA for a number of reasons (a to f) if not satisfied with decisions or adjustments or an ISSP. (Remainder of 49, and all of 50, 51, 52 and 53 (e to i) provide detail of process for mediation and review by review board if mediation does not resolve the issue. | 14 through 35 Details of process to be followed for a request for a review by review board under Section 50 of the Act.  |  |        |



## Documents Reviewed for the Comparative Analysis

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### New Brunswick

- *Education Act, 1997*
- *Policy 322, Inclusive Education, 2013*
- *Policy 703, Positive Learning and Working Environment, 2013*
- *Teacher Assistant Guidelines, 1994*
- *A User's Guide for the Appeal Process, 2004*

### Northwest Territories

- *Education Act, 1996*
- *Education Appeal Regulations, 1996*
- *Student Record Regulations, 2010*
- *Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling, 2006*
- *Programming for Student Success (2006 and 2008)*
  - *Student Support Plan Guidelines*
  - *Student Support Plan Teacher Resource Kit*
  - *Individual Education Plan Guidelines*
  - *Individual Education Plan Teacher Resource Kit*
  - *Program Support Guide, including Appendix: Support Assistant Competency Profile*

### Nunavut

- *Education Act, 2008*
- *Consolidation of Inclusive Education Regulations, 2011*
- *Inuglugijaittuq: Foundation for Inclusive Education in Nunavut Schools, 2008*

### Alberta

- *Standards for Special Education, 2004*