

**Auditor General of Canada
Report to the Nunavut Assembly
November 2013**

PLAIN ENGLISH VERSION

The OAG typically writes clear and precise reports. They choose their words carefully. In this paper they use technical terms which are accurate but not always clear to the average reader in Nunavut or on a DEA. This Plain English version may lose some detail, but it makes the main issues clear.

Who is the Office of the Auditor General (OAG)?

The OAG is authorized by Parliament and the Nunavut Act to check on the quality of government services to Canadians and to Northerners. They are not part of the GN.

What was audited?

The 2008 Nunavut Education Act (the New Act) replaced the Northwest Territories systems. The new Act is supposed to make sure that Nunavut values are the basis for our schools. The new Act also says there will be bilingual education for *all students in all grades* by 2019–20.

The Department of Education (Dept) is responsible to make this happen. The Dept is also responsible to make sure that District Education Authorities (DEAs) and schools have the resources make the Act work. The Dept has received about \$17.5 million up until March 2012 to do this.

The Office of the Auditor General checked out how the Department of Education has started this work. They looked at:

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

They did not check **quality** of education, but some parts of the report give us a peek.

Why Is it Important?

Making the new Act work, and creating bilingual education - these are big jobs. They need to be done over many years. This includes creating new curriculum and giving support to teachers, principals and DEAs. Success depends on the participation of students, parents, and communities.

These jobs are **essential** if we want Nunavut students to receive the high-quality, bilingual education that is key to our future.

What did they find out?

The Department of Education has not adequately managed most aspects of the implementation of the Education Act.

- The Dept has developed a plan and is working to follow the plan.
- Progress has been limited for
 - bilingual education,
 - curriculum development and
 - education for students with special needs (“Inclusive Education”).
- Planning, tracking progress, and reporting to authorities, including the Legislature, were not adequate and need to improve.
- The Department is not meeting the bilingual education requirements.
- The Auditors checked 8 schools
 - 5 of 8 offered bilingual K to Grade 3.
 - only 1 met the bilingual levels for K-3
 - only 1 expected they could meet the K- Grade 4 levels for 2013.
- The Act says that Bilingual education levels are supposed to increase grade by grade over the years —but trained people do not exist, **and there is no plan to train them.**
- The Department has not figured out how many bilingual educators need to graduate to meet the Act’s 2019–20 requirements for bilingual education. (This is The Wave issue).
- The Department has provided some Regulations but other areas of work to make the Act effective need more attention, especially:
 - teaching resources, such as handbooks and manuals, to deliver the curriculum.
 - training in **inclusive education** for students with differing abilities in the same class

Sometimes the Department does not control the issues which make it hard for them.

- Low attendance is a serious problem in Nunavut.
- English is often spoken in the home. This affects the Inuit language skills of students.
- GN hiring rules make it hard to get new projects operational.

What does the Department say?

The Department agrees with all of the recommendations.

What can happen?

The Nunavut Legislative Assembly is responsible for reviewing the Act. A legislative review was to occur in the 2011–12 school year and every five years thereafter.[18]

CONCLUSION .

The OAG concluded that the Government of Nunavut’s Department of Education has not adequately managed most parts of the new Education Act PARA 84

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS FROM THE AUDIT

PARA 22 We [OAG] examined whether the territory's Department of Education has adequately planned to implement the Act. [23] We found that the Department put a structure in place to establish a plan for implementing the Education Act. [30] Overall, we found that the Department is making efforts to implement the Act but that there are still many areas where progress has been limited due to factors both *within and outside* the Department's control.

PARA 31 We found that the Department *underestimated* the size of its task, in terms of time and effort required. This incorrect estimation of the work involved, as well as the existence of vacant positions, contributed to **incomplete or delayed work**.

PARA 36 Bilingual education is a cornerstone of the Act. The Act states that every student shall be given a bilingual education and that, by the 2019–20 school year, the bilingual education requirement is to apply to all grades.

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

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

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

Sources: Government of Nunavut, Language of Instruction Regulations

PARA 37 This requires students to be taught by **qualified bilingual teachers**, using **bilingual curriculum** and materials.

PARA 40 **The Department has not figured out how many bilingual educators will be needed each year to meet the 2019–20 goal.** The Nunavut Teacher Educator Program does not produce enough fully bilingual graduates to meet its needs. Therefore, the Department is **not in a position** to successfully achieve the 2019–20 bilingual education goal. *The lack of bilingual teachers will affect the Department's ability to produce bilingual graduates who could continue their education and qualify as bilingual teachers.* **In 2006**, the Department did work with Nunavut Arctic College to develop a 10-year educator training strategy

Recommendation. PARA 42 The Department of Education should:

Figure out the number of bilingual teachers needed and decide what it needs to do to make this work.

PARA 44 The Department does not provide enough training for people hired to fill in because of the bilingual educator shortages. Some individuals hired lack training in teaching techniques and assessment. This practice has had an ***effect on the quality of education*** received by students.

Recommendation. PARA 45 The Department of Education should:

[Provide proper training for language specialists and individuals hired to fill teaching positions.](#)

PARA 50 The pace of developing teaching resources for the new curriculum has been slow. When the Education Act was passed in 2008, the Department had already been working for almost 10 years. **In 15 years the Department has developed 50 percent of the teaching resources needed.** In our view, the Department will need to reassess its approach to developing the remainder of the teaching resources.

Recommendation. PARA 52 The Department of Education should:

[Reassess its plans and should also consider other options, such as adapting resources from other jurisdictions for use in the Nunavut education system.](#)

PARA 59 Individual students need extra support. Individual Student Support Plans “ISSP” plans outline the support, services, goals, and expected outcomes for these students. For the 8 schools audited, they reviewed ISSP plans for 35 students.

documentation did not show students receiving the needed services or adjustments about 75 percent of the time.

for some of the plans, we were told that students did not receive the services because specialists were unavailable in the community or parents had not signed consent forms

for 65 percent of the plans, tracking of progress was not done

Recommendation. PARA 62 The Department of Education should:

[Provide mandatory training to all Nunavut teachers and student support assistants on ISSP.](#)

Recommendation. PARA 63 The Department of Education should:

[Track progress on individual students and the plans’ effectiveness AND clearly communicate progress to teachers and assistants including whether the individual plans can be made to work, and if not, why not.](#)

PARA 67 The Education Act requires students to be assessed regularly. The assessment includes standardized Grade 12 exams developed by the Government of Alberta. **We analyzed this information for all Grade 12 students in Nunavut.**

PARA 68 On average, we found that for the three school years we tested, the **Nunavut classroom grade was 26 percent higher than the standardized test grade**. For the 2010–11 school year, the difference **was 30 percent higher**. *Schools in Whitehorse, Yukon, averaged 4 percent higher.*

PARA 69 The Department has not conducted an analysis to understand these discrepancies.

Recommendation. **PARA 70** The Department should:

[Analyze the information it has on these grade differences and identify ways to improve teaching for our students](#)

PARA 78 We identified several obstacles to the Department's implementation of the Act.

- *Attendance and parental involvement.* Low attendance is a serious problem.
- *Unfilled positions, the housing shortage,* high turnover, and overburdened staff contribute to the capacity problem.
- English is often spoken in the home and fluency in Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun is affected.

PARA 80 *District Education Authorities* have repeatedly raised concerns that they are unable to perform assigned duties, or that they need more clarity and training about their responsibilities.

CONCLUSION .

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