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## TO OUR SPONSORS

When Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Canada’s national Inuit organization, along with the National Committee on Inuit Education released *First Canadians, Canadians First: a National Strategy on Inuit Education* ([www.amaujaq.com](http://www.amaujaq.com)) in June 2011, a new phase began for our national education initiative – identifying partners who would share our commitment toward a new era in Inuit education. We are deeply gratified by the response we have received from Canadians. When we had the opportunity to explain the goals of our National Strategy and its 10 recommendations for closing gaps, we found forward-thinking partners who wanted to be part of our effort to improve education outcomes for a new generation of Inuit.

The National Strategy was released at a time when a national conversation was emerging on what must be done to improve outcomes in aboriginal education. The stark reality in Canada’s Arctic is that in many of our communities 75% or more of Inuit students are not completing high school. The paradox is that in many of our Arctic communities there are simply not enough high school graduates to take advantage of the job opportunities unfolding in the public and resource sectors.

In February 2013 the Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education opened in Ottawa with the purpose of coordinating the implementation of the National Strategy. The opening of the Amaujaq Centre and our subsequent work on implementing the Strategy’s recommendations would not have been possible without the support of our funding partners. On behalf of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami Board of Directors and the National Committee on Inuit Education we would like to thank the following organizations for their continued generosity and leadership.

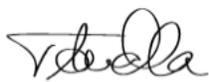
**Founding Partner:** Vale Canada Limited

**Founding Sponsors:** The Counselling Foundation of Canada and the RBC Foundation

**Founding Donor:** CIBC

**Founding Members:** Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Makivik Corporation, Nunatsiavut Government and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated

**Project Sponsors:** Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Arctic Inspiration Prize Donors Arnold Witzig and Sima Sharifi, ArcticNet Network of Centres of Excellence, Cisco, the Estate of Sophie Lucyk, Northwest Territories Government Department of Education, the Nunavut Government Department of Education, and the Walter & Duncan Gordon Foundation



Terry Audla, President  
Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami



Mary Simon, Chairperson  
National Committee on Inuit Education

1 Terry Audla, President, ITK – Opening of the Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education.

2 Dr. Christy Bressette, Coordinator Aboriginal Education, Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) – Opening of the Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education.

3 Kusugak family, President Terry Audla and NCIE Chairperson Mary Simon. Opening of the Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education. The Amaujaq Centre is named in memory of Mr. Jose Amaujaq Kusugak.



*“When parents create a home environment that encourages and supports learning with expectations of success, and schools provide a supportive school environment, achievement in school rises.” - Mary Simon*

## INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to present this Milestone Report on the implementation of First Canadians, Canadians First: the National Strategy on Inuit Education.

When we released the National Strategy in June 2011, we faced a daunting challenge. We had spent two years researching and identifying what we determined were the 10 key gaps in Inuit education. We then faced the even more difficult challenge of securing partners to close those gaps. Fortunately, we released the National Strategy at a time when a national conversation was emerging on Aboriginal education. In my travels across Canada, both north and south, I have found very supportive audiences who view education as the single most important investment we can make to improve the socio-economic conditions of aboriginal peoples.

We know that the successful implementation of the National Strategy will involve the right mix of partnerships, beginning with parents. When parents create a home environment that encourages and supports learning with expectations of success, and schools provide a supportive school environment, achievement in school rises. That is why the number one priority of the National Strategy was its first recommendation – launching a national initiative aimed at enlisting parents in improving the performance of our children by ensuring that children get to school every day, all day, rested and ready to learn. Thanks to the 2013 Arctic Inspiration Prize, we have been able to work with regional partners on building parent mobilization initiatives in communities across the Arctic.

With the support of another partner, the Counselling

Foundation of Canada, we have also made progress on examining the feasibility of introducing a unified Inuit writing system. Inuit have been discussing this important language and education issue since the 1970’s, and now there appears to be emerging agreement that in order to produce more Inuit literature, learning materials, and publications across dialects, we need to gradually and incrementally introduce a unified Inuit writing system.

In our research for the National Strategy we discovered that there was a comparatively small amount of published research and data on Inuit education. We discussed this gap with the ArcticNet Centre of Excellence and organized the first-ever Forum on Research in Inuit Education in February 2013. We are pleased to see that these discussions have resulted in the first ArcticNet Call for Proposals for Research in Inuit Education issued in April 2014. We have also found partners for projects in Early Childhood Education, Information Technology in the Classroom and Summer Literacy Camps. There have also been some delightful and unexpected surprises along the way such as the recent announcement by Agnico Eagle who are donating \$5 million to jump-start the establishment of a university in Nunavut.

It has been gratifying to see the sincere level of interest by Canadians for supporting a new era in aboriginal education.



Mary Simon, Chairperson  
**National Committee on Inuit Education**

1 Shawn A-in-chut Atleo, then National Chief, Assembly of First Nations and NCIE Chairperson Mary Simon.

2 Elizabeth Annahatak, National Inuit Youth Council and Cecile Lyall, Nunavut Sivuniksavut Program- photo taken during a parental engagement discussion at the opening of the Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education.

3 Mr. David McGown Vice-President for Government Relations (CIBC) (left) along with Ms. Mary Simon and Mr. Cory McPhee, Vice President of Corporate Affairs for VALE Canada during the opening of the Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education.

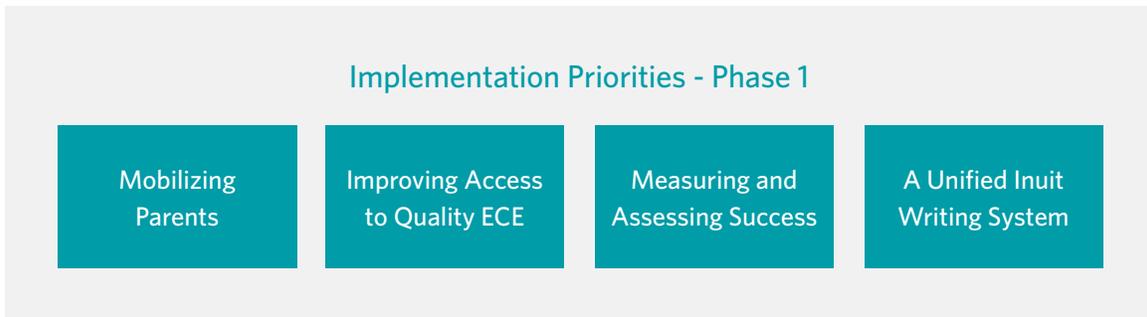


## THE NATIONAL STRATEGY ON INUIT EDUCATION

The development of a National Strategy was guided by three principles. Unlike First Nations, education in Inuit communities across Canada’s Arctic is delivered through public education systems in two Territories and two Provinces, so the first principle that guided the National Strategy process was a respect for the jurisdictional authority in each region to deliver education programs. This did not have a limiting effect because of the second principle, notably the recognition that collective action by Inuit from all regions could produce shared goals of a national scope. The third and final principle guiding the National Strategy process was the recognition that within each region, there were existing innovative and transformative best practices that could be shared and expanded through a national process.



The National Committee on Inuit Education<sup>1</sup> prioritized four of the National Strategy’s ten recommendations for implementation.



<sup>1</sup> The National Committee on Inuit Education is comprised of appointed members from four Regional Inuit Organizations, (Nunatsiavut Government, Makivik Corporation, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation) the Government of Nunavut, the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Government of Canada, the Kativik School Board, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Pauktuutit National Inuit Women’s Association, Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada, and the Government of Canada. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Government of Quebec and Labrador School Board participated as observers

## AMAUJQ NATIONAL CENTRE FOR INUIT EDUCATION: BUILDING THE CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

The opening of the Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education in February 2013 was made possible through the generosity of a key founding partner – VALE Canada, along with an annual investment from Regional Inuit Organizations and corporations in each of the four Inuit regions. The purpose of the Amaujaq Centre is to coordinate the implementation of the National Strategy on Inuit Education. The Centre operates out of the offices of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Canada’s national Inuit organization, in Ottawa. The following table lists the main achievements of the Amaujaq Centre since its opening.

2012-2014 MILESTONES – AMAUJQ CENTRE			
GOAL	TASK	STATUS	DETAILS
1. Build Organizational Capacity of Amaujaq Centre to Implement Strategy	Secure founding sponsors for Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding secured from corporate and Inuit partners through 2015</li> </ul>
	Recruit Centre Staff (3)	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed</li> </ul>
	Open Centre	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>February 2013</li> </ul>
	Develop Communication Tools	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Logo completed</li> <li>Initial package of communications tools developed</li> <li>Link to ITK website completed</li> <li>Newsletter format completed &amp; two newsletters issued</li> </ul>
	Finalize 2013, 2014 Work Plans	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed</li> </ul>
	Support & Inform National Committee on Inuit Education.	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NCIE meet annually, &amp; quarterly conference calls</li> </ul>
2. Implement National Parent Mobilization Program	Secure launch funding for the Campaign	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding for launch of campaign secured</li> <li>Ongoing fund-raising initiatives in progress</li> <li>Secured Arctic Inspiration Prize in December 2013</li> </ul>
	Plan and Launch Campaign	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Campaign launched in Nunavut, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut and Inuvialuit Settlement Region</li> </ul>
	Develop & Promote Campaign Message (Ongoing)	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Getting our children to school every day, all day, well rested and ready to learn”</li> </ul>
3. Implement Early Childhood Education Initiative	Identify prospective funding to launch initiative (ongoing)	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding secured from private trust for online ECE learning resource library</li> </ul>
	Identify key issues to advance with National Working Group on ECE	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Met with Working Group to discuss key issues in Inuit ECE</li> </ul>
4. Implement Measuring Success Initiative	Promote Need for Research in Inuit Education by Organizing Forum on Research in Inuit Education	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organized Roundtable at 2012 ArcticNet Annual Scientific Meeting</li> <li>Forum held in Iqaluit in February 2013</li> </ul>
	Publish Report on Research Priorities and Principles in Inuit Education	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report released in April 2013</li> </ul>
	Secure Research funding for priority research projects identified at Forum	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposal call issued through ArcticNet in April 2014</li> </ul>

2012-2014 MILESTONES - AMAUJAQ CENTRE			
GOAL	TASK	STATUS	DETAILS
5. Implement Unified Inuit Writing System Initiative	Secure funding for 1st phase of the initiative	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial funding enabled hiring of coordinator, preliminary research on Inuit language issues, and funding for a Pre-Summit meeting in March 2014.</li> <li>Report on key issues released.</li> </ul>

## COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

The success of the National Strategy is inextricably linked to the ability of the Amaujaq Centre to attract partners for funding priority initiatives. Chairperson Mary Simon has travelled extensively to address policy forums and meet with political leaders and education stakeholders to promote the goals of the National Strategy. Ms. Simon has also written a number of Opinion pieces in journals and newspapers to promote the importance of investing in Inuit education:

### 2013-2014 Speaking Engagements

- NWT Beaufort Delta Teachers Conference
- Canadian Teacher's Association Annual Meeting
- Mt. Saint Vincent University Convocation
- 2013 ArcticNet Annual Scientific Meeting
- 2013 Arctic Energy Conference, Iceland
- National Inuit Youth Council
- Nunatsiavut Government
- Nunavut Radio & TV Phone-In Show
- NWT Education Renewal Innovation
- Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities AGM
- Tukitaarvik Website Premiere
- Canadian Council on Aboriginal Business
- International Women's Day Panel
- Kangiqsuujuaq Youth Conference
- Public Policy Forum, 2014 Annual Meeting, Winnipeg
- Public Policy Forum 2014 Annual Awards, Toronto.
- Truth and Reconciliation Final National Event Edmonton. March 2014
- Nunatsiavut Youth Symposium
- OKalaKatiget Radio Show - Nunatsiavut
- Pre-summit meeting on the Unified writing system, March 2014

### Opinion Pieces

- Northern Public Affairs Special Issue on Inuit Education. (<http://www.scribd.com/doc/220624038/Special-Issue-2014-Revitalizing-Education-in-Inuit-Nunangat>)
- Globe and Mail Special Feature on the Arctic (<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/the-north/the-long-road-fostering-educational-culture/article16503860/>)
- <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/the-north/article16364070.ece>
- <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/search/?q=ian+brown>
- <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/nunavut/for-the-next-generation-of-inuit-hope-lies-in-education/article575418/>

*“We know that one of the contributing factors to these low graduation rates is poor attendance. If a child misses 40 days of school a year, and this is quite common in some of our communities, by the time that child reaches high school, they will have missed a combined total of 2 years of school. For a Grade 9 student, who has missed that many school days it’s only a matter of time before they drop out of school.” - Mary Simon. Remarks to Canadian Teachers Federation. July 2013.*

**STRATEGY RECOMMENDATION:  
IMPLEMENT A NATIONAL INITIATIVE ON PARENT ENGAGEMENT**

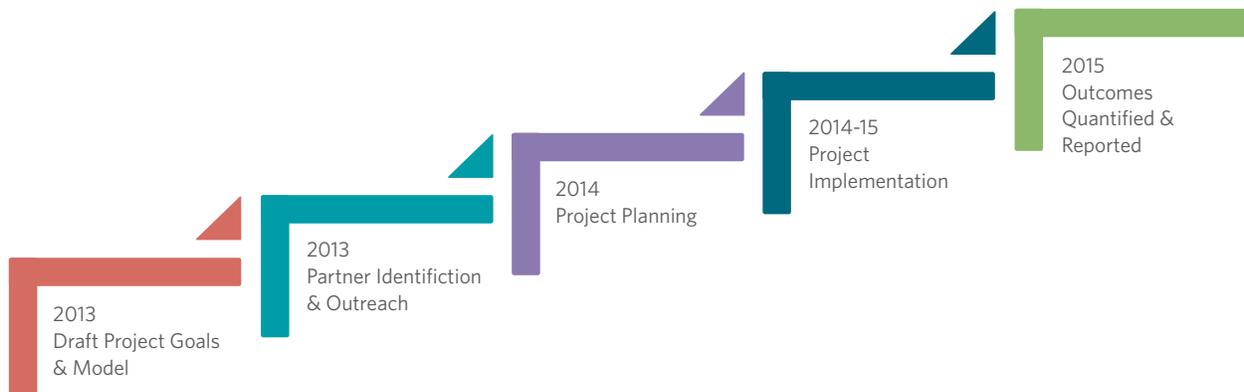
**Goals**

- Promote the importance of education among Inuit parents and develop tools and programs to increase their capacity to support their children in school.
- Increase public awareness about the need to improve school attendance.
- Support existing or new parent engagement initiatives in each of the four Inuit regions.

**How?**

- Establish strategic partnerships in each of the four Inuit regions to undertake community-based parent mobilization initiatives.
- Communicate key messages through public information and promotion campaigns with regional partners.
- Facilitate the sharing of ideas and best practices between regions on parent engagement initiatives.
- Seek appropriate venues to champion the initiative and increase opportunities for private and government funding and support.
- Continue to gather information and data on school attendance in all regions.

**Engaging Parents Timeline: January-March 2015**



1 NCIE Chairperson Mary Simon and NWT Commissioner George L. Tuccaro in Inuvik.

2 ITK President Terry Audla and CCAB President and CEO J.P. Gladu. Photo taken during the CCAB Roundtable on Inuit Education in the fall of 2013.

3 Vale Canada Peter Langlois (left) Nunatsiavut Government President Sarah Leo; Mary Simon NCIE Chairperson, and then Nunatsiavut Minister of Education and Economic Development Gary Mitchell (right) in Hopedale, Nunatsiavut.



## Project Initiatives

Discussions with regional partners indicate that there are parent engagement initiatives underway in some communities. For example, the Kativik Regional Government in cooperation with the Kativik Regional Employment Training Committee have developed an Action Plan for a School Perseverance Initiative. Best practice ideas that have been identified by the Amaujaq Centre for implementation include the following:

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	AMAUJQAQ ROLE
1. Profiles in Success	Commission a series of articles profiling individuals and families who have had success graduating their children. This series, titled "Profiles in Success" will be written for northern publications and supported by a media placement strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coordination</li> <li>▪ Some Funding as a Partner</li> </ul>
2. Parent Toolkits	Collect existing resources from Inuit regions and other sources that can be adapted for use in a 'parent toolkit'. The 'tool kit' will be made available to families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coordination</li> <li>▪ Identify national sources of funding</li> </ul>
3. Program for Community Based Solutions	Encourage direct community-based solutions to improving attendance through small, one-time only grants to communities/schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Some funding as a partner.</li> </ul>
4. Parent Engagement Pilot Project	Pilot project in a selected community to work with parents on improving attendance and outcomes in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coordination</li> <li>▪ Funding</li> </ul>
5. Media Campaign	Develop region- specific ads promoting the importance of attendance and parent support in school. Includes radio and TV ads along with social media campaign. Idea development in collaboration with students of Nunavut Sivuniksavut Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coordination</li> <li>▪ Matching funding with partners.</li> </ul>

## STRATEGY RECOMMENDATION: EXAMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF A UNIFIED INUIT WRITING SYSTEM

### Goal

Examine the feasibility of introducing a unified Inuit writing system in order to promote increased development and sharing of Inuit language materials across dialects.

### How?

Following research on the key issues surrounding the unification of Inuit writing systems, a National Summit on the Inuit Language Writing System will be planned and organized for 2015.

1 Shari Austin, VP Corporate Citizenship & Executive Director, RBC Foundation and Mary Simon, Chairperson, National Committee on Inuit Education.

2 Hon. Jim Prentice P.C., Q.C. Senior Executive Vice-President and Vice-Chairman, CIBC and Mary Simon, Chairperson, National Committee on Inuit Education.

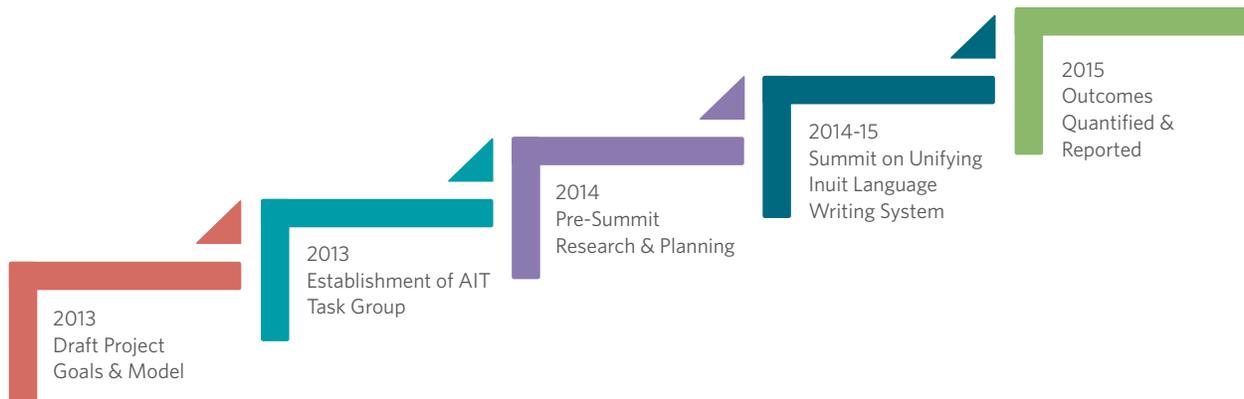
3 Jeela Palluq-Cloutier, National Inuit Language Coordinator; Bruce Lawson, Executive Director, The Counselling Foundation of Canada; Mary Simon, Chairperson, National Committee on Inuit Education; and Mario Gravelle, Learning and Innovation Analyst, The Counselling Foundation of Canada.



*“Your dedication and desire to work on the Inuktitut writing system is part of our commitment... toward forging a new era in education for Inuit.”*

*- Mary Simon speaking to the Inuit Language Pre-Summit delegates, March 26, 2014.*

### Unified Inuit Writing System Timeline: January–March 2015



### 2013/14 Consultation and Planning Milestones

- Establishment of Atausiq Inuktitut Task Force to coordinate initiative.
- Confirmation of AIT Terms of Reference.
- Research on Key Issues.
- Pre-Summit Planning Meeting.
- Regional consultations commence.

1 Willa Black, Vice-President, Corporate Affairs and Corporate Social Responsibility at Cisco Canada and Mary Simon, Chairperson, National Committee on Inuit Education. Photo taken during the Opening of the Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education.

2 Mr. Clint Davis, Vice President Aboriginal Affairs at TD Bank Group and Mary Simon, Chairperson, National Committee on Inuit Education. Photo taken during the CCAB Roundtable on Inuit Education in the fall of 2013.

3 Following members of the National Committee on Inuit Education add ITK President, Amaujaq Staff, ArcticNet Inspiration Prize Sponsors. Photo taken following the awarding of the Arctic Inspiration Prize in Halifax, December 2013.



*“One of the things that became really evident to us when we were developing the National Strategy was the lack of research in Inuit education. Research on First Nations education dominates the literature... and there is no research on what’s happening in Inuit education today. Clearly there was a major research gap.”*

*- Mary Simon Addressing December 2013 ArcticNet Annual Scientific Meeting, Halifax.*

**STRATEGY RECOMMENDATION:  
INCREASE CAPACITY OF MEASURING SUCCESS**

**Goal**

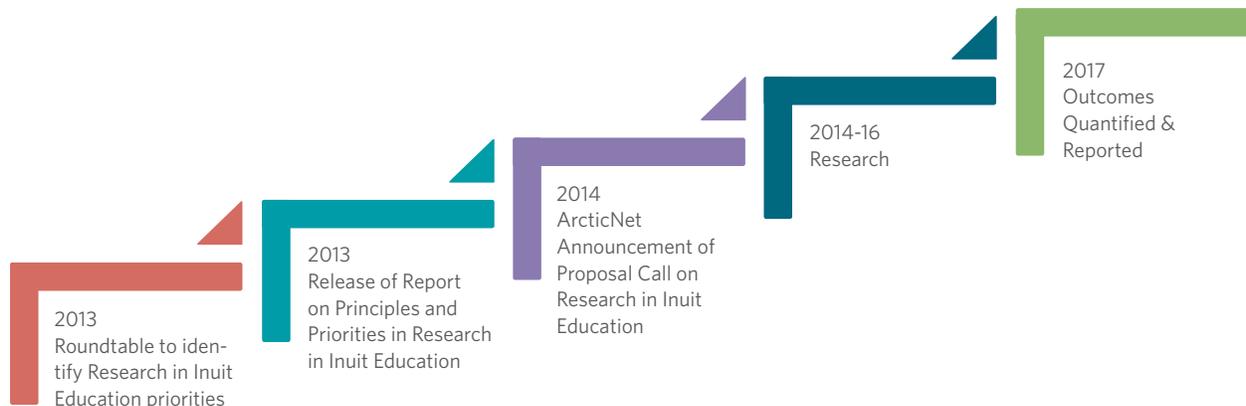
The establishment of national capacity for standards and applied research in Inuit education.

**How?**

Since 2013 the Amaujaq Centre has been working with ArcticNet Centre of Excellence in identifying the gaps in research in Inuit education. Through a series of organized meetings including a Forum on Research in Inuit Education held in Iqaluit in February 2013, principles and priorities for research in Inuit education were established. <http://artsandscience.usask.ca/icngd/ITK%20Forum%20Report%20Feb%2019-21%202013.pdf>

In April 2014, a formal request for proposals for research in Inuit education was issued by ArcticNet. [http://www.arcticnet.ulaval.ca/Docs/an\\_call\\_for\\_proposals\\_inuit\\_education\\_2014.pdf](http://www.arcticnet.ulaval.ca/Docs/an_call_for_proposals_inuit_education_2014.pdf)

**Measuring Success Timeline: January–March 2017**



1 Mary Simon Addressing December 2013 ArcticNet Annual Scientific Meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

2 Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Minister of Education, Government of the Northwest Territories and Mary Simon, Chairperson, National Committee on Inuit Education. Photo taken in Yellowknife, NWT.

3 ITK President Terry Audla, Honourable Paul Quassa, Minister of Education, Government of Nunavut and Mary Simon, Chairperson, National Committee on Inuit Education. Photo taken during a meeting in Ottawa with ITK and Education Nunavut.



## 2013/14 Consultation and Planning Milestones

In 2012 Chairperson Mary Simon wrote ArcticNet, a National Centre of Excellence to outline the research gaps identified through the National Strategy process with the aim of enlarging the focus of ArcticNet research into the social sciences and specifically, Inuit education. ArcticNet responded by inviting the Amaujaq Centre to host a Roundtable discussion on Research in Inuit Education at their 2012 Annual Scientific meeting. Key events in the Measuring Success initiative include:

- ArcticNet Annual Scientific Meeting (Vancouver) -2012
- Forum on Research in Inuit Education (Iqaluit) -2013
- ArcticNet ASM – Presentation on Results of Forum (Halifax) -2013
- ArcticNet Call for Proposals on Research in Inuit Education – April 2014

## STRATEGY RECOMMENDATION: IMPROVE QUALITY AND ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

### Goal

To increase access to quality, culturally relevant ECE throughout Inuit Nunangat.

### How?

Early childhood education is delivered in through different mechanisms in each of the regions and funding is fragmented. Despite some promising developments in ECE in several jurisdictions in the North (see Appendix), it is an aspect of Inuit education that desperately needs a national investment.

The challenge of implementing a national initiative to improve access to quality ECE in Arctic communities was discussed at the April 2014 meeting of the National Committee on Inuit Education. The next step in implementation is to engage the Government of Canada in supporting a process to address the fractured funding and standards across the four Inuit regions. The issues and gaps facing ECE delivery in Arctic communities have been thoroughly examined and identified, but processes for addressing the inequities has not been resolved. This requires some national leadership.

In 2013 Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami welcomed an investment through a private estate of funding to create a national library of ECE learning resources to be shared among the four regions.

### External Partners

- Private Trustee
- Regional and Federal Partners
- Inuit Early Childhood Development Working Group

1 Beverly Amos, Member of the Inuktitut Titirasiq Task Group presenting at the March 2014 Inuit Language Writing Systems Workshop.

2 Harry Tulugak, Member of the Inuktitut Titirasiq Task Group and Jeela-Palluq Cloutier presenting at the March 2014 Inuit Language Writing Systems Workshop.

3 Mary Simon and Jeela Palluq-Cloutier with members of the Inuktitut Titirasiq Task Group. (absent from the photo are AIT Members Maggie Putulik and Sophie Tuglavina)



## APPENDIX - INUIT EDUCATION IN THE NEWS



NEWS: Around the Arctic February 07, 2013 - 8:54 am

### New Inuit education centre opens at ITK's Ottawa headquarters

*"We are going to do many things, it'll be something that takes place over many years"*

SAMANTHA DAWSON



*The family of Jose Amaujaq Kusugak was represented by his wife Nellie and children Pujjuut, Aliisa, Alaana and Special at the Feb. 5 opening of the Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education. (PHOTO COURTESY OF ITK)*

A new centre for Inuit education named after Jose Amaujaq Kusugak, a former president of ITK, opened Feb. 5 at the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami offices in Ottawa.

The Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education's purpose is to coordinate the implementation of the recommendations of First Canadians, Canadians First: The National Strategy on Inuit Education, a report released in June 2011.

ITK will work on the strategy and its recommendations, while working with the Inuit regions that have jurisdiction over education, which includes school boards in Labrador and Nunavik, as well as the Nunavut government, said Mary Simon, the chair of ITK's National Committee on Inuit Education.

"We're not trying to reinvent the school system. We're trying to improve the education system. We identified gaps that haven't been addressed. We are having meetings right now looking at the four priorities that were first identified by the northern leaders," Simon said.

Those four priorities are: mobilizing parents; investing in early childhood education; measuring the success of the education system through research; and exploring the introduction of a standardized Inuit language writing system.

One NCIE working group will research, assemble and review resources and training programs that promote links between student success and parent engagement.

“It’s not just about how parents need to support their children. It’s not putting the onus strictly on parents. It’s about everybody working together to make sure that our education system is working well,” she said.

Another challenge is identifying how to help kids stay in school and eventually graduate from high school.

Also, adequate curriculum for teaching Inuktitut in the higher grades may need to be developed, Simon said.

“This group that is now established is going to be looking at how to recommend how to move forward on whether to standardize Inuktitut writing systems or not,” she said.

However, that decision will be made by Inuit “as a collective group because it’s a very big issue.”

Quite a lot of work needs to be done before it goes back to the national committee.

Early childhood education needs to be linked more directly with the school system, so that children with special needs can be identified as early as possible, Simon said.

That’s kindergarten teachers have a better idea of how to handle students.

ITK, the Amajuaq Centre and Inuit childcare coordinators are creating an online collection of “culturally and linguistically appropriate teaching tools” that will be available to every childcare centre in Inuit Nunangat.

A main purpose of the centre is to help regions develop requests and proposals to the centre and to receive funding for projects and education initiatives.

“It’s a direct benefit to the community,” Simon said.

Working with communities is a priority for the committee.

“We can’t just impose solutions, we have to find them [while] working with the community, we have to take ownership of our education system, to make it what we want it to be like,” she said.

The centre’s opening is important, she said.

“That was something that we had been working on for some time so it was really encouraging to see the opening take place.”

The national committee that developed the strategy will lead the direction of the centre, with Simon chairing it.

She said implementation plans are underway.

“We are going to do many things, it’ll be something that takes place over many years,” she said.

The centre is “within the ITK structure because we didn’t want to a separate organization or a new office, because that takes a lot of money,” Simon said.

She said money should be spent on education, not on administrative costs.

But to kick off the campaign, Simon is going to do community tours in the different regions, hosting town hall meetings and roundtable discussions with community leaders, parents and regional leaders to talk about the importance of education, she said.

Jose Amajuaq Kusugak was represented at the opening by his wife Nellie and children Pujjuut, Aliisa, Alaana and Special. ■

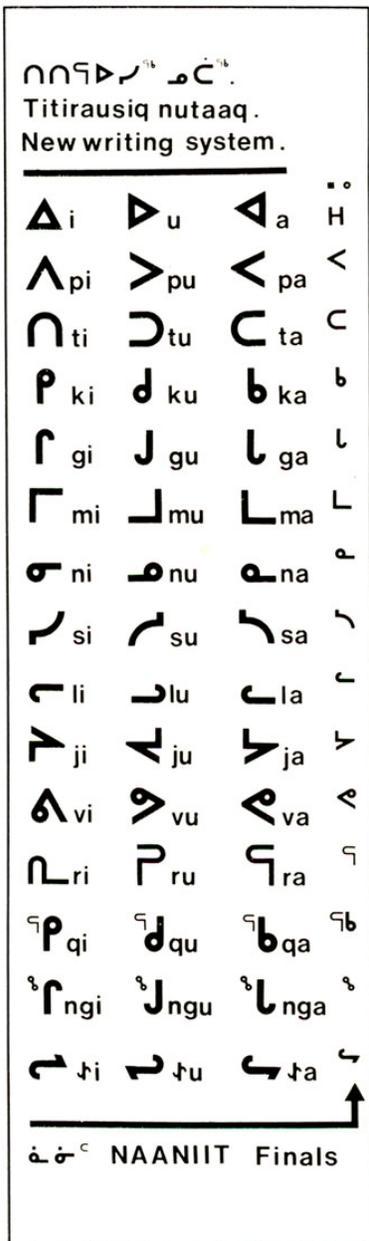
# NUNATSIAQ ONLINE

NEWS: Around the Arctic March 26, 2014 - 3:24 pm

## Expert task force looks at standard Inuit writing system

*“We want to maintain the richness of regional dialects, while enhancing the development of Inuit-specific curriculum materials”*

NUNATSIAQ NEWS



*In the “dual orthography” system that the Inuit Cultural Institute endorsed in 1976, each syllabic character matches a given character or set of characters in Roman orthography. (FILE IMAGE)*

Inuit language experts from across the country are meeting in Ottawa this week with members of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami’s Atausiq Inuklut Titirausiq task group to talk about the way Inuit words are written down.

AIT, which means “one writing system for Inuklut,” was created in 2012 to work on a standard writing system for the Inuit language.

The creation of AIT responds to one of the recommendations of ITK’s National Strategy on Inuit Education, released in 2011.

And its committee members, appointed by their respective land claims organizations, represent each of the main Inuklut dialect groups across Inuit Nunangat.

“We realized very quickly while developing the strategy that an essential component to delivering Inuit-specific education throughout Inuit Nunangat is the ability to share resources across Inuit regions,” said Mary Simon, chair of ITK’s National Committee on Inuit Education, in a March 25 release.

“But standardizing the writing system is not the same as standardizing the language,” she added. “We want to maintain the richness of regional dialects, while enhancing the development of Inuit-specific curriculum materials.”

During AIT’s two-day meeting this week, its members and language experts will identify key questions to pose during community consultations, which will be held throughout the North later this year.

The consultations will conclude with a national Inuit language summit in the fall of 2015.

ITK president Terry Audla said the standardization of the Inuit writing system would be “the greatest shift in our language” since the Inuit Cultural Institute developed the dual orthography system in the 1970s.

The dual system adopted Roman orthography – a standard way of writing Inuktitut using the English alphabet – and a standardized way of writing syllabics (see image) because Inuit language writing varied regionally, often depending on the religion of the user.

In 1976, the Inuit language commission recommended that “this dual system of writing should be reviewed after five or 10 years of use to measure its effectiveness and make revisions where necessary,” but little, if any official review has been done.

“Everyone who wants to have a say in these discussions will have one,” Audla said of the community consultations. “Our passion for our language is the key to keeping our language alive and strong into the future. ■



NEWS: Nunavut November 26, 2012 - 6:15 am

## Nunavut deputy education minister alarmed at low attendance rates

*“If every student attends 70.1 per cent of the time from K to 12, that means they’ve lost out on three years of education”*

DAVID MURPHY

Low attendance is the biggest worry for the Government of Nunavut’s deputy education minister, Kathy Okpik.

“This 70.1 [per cent attendance rate in schools], is quite alarming to me,” Okpik told Nunatsiaq News in response to the release of the department of education’s release of its 2009/10 annual report.

The report shows that attendance from kindergarten to Grade 12 for Nunavut students has dropped almost four percentage points since 2001.

“If every student attends 70.1 per cent of the time from K to 12, that means they’ve lost out on three years of education,” Okpik said.

That needs to change — and plans are being put in place to help increase those attendance rates, Okpik said.

“We’re actively working with DEAs and school administration to develop stay in school initiatives and to identify and share our best practices,” Okpik said.

This means implementing things like information technology workshops and land skills classes, as well as other special interest courses.

Okpik said this must happen in Grade 6 to Grade 9, when there is a steady drop-off in attendance.

But informing parents is a big part of boosting those attendance rates up too, she said.

“Parental engagement for us is a huge piece — hearing from parents and improving programming,” Okpik said.

“One of our biggest goals is parental engagement, and how we engage parents on, not necessarily always to come into school, but how to promote education from within the home,” she said.

But Okpik said her department is getting “slammed” in the controversy over “social promotion” in Nunavut’s schools, but she says Nunavut does not practice social promotion.

That’s when students are passed on to the next grade at the end of the school year, even though they may not have actually passed their grade.

Okpik said she wants to move towards a “continuous progress” model — which means holding children back if they don’t pass their grade.

Getting the word out on that policy is a focus for Okpik over the next year, she said.

Okpik said the department of education has also allocated money to district education authorities to write attendance reports.

“The purpose of this plan is to improve the school with the goal to increase student success. The DEAs have to report on schools and attendance and behaviour and implementation of Inuit Qaujimaqatunqangit every year,” she said.

However this adds more strain to the already overloaded workload that DEAs have to deal with, something Okpik recognizes is something the DEAs are worried about.

Okpik said the numbers from the 2009-10 annual report might look better in a few years time. The latest annual report only documents the period up to 2010, a year after the department’s new Education Act was released.

“People want results instantly. And that’s just in our nature. But the act came into force in 2009. You can’t see the benefits of the act right away,” Okpik said. ■

## ArcticNet

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### ArcticNet a Launches a Directed Call for Proposals to Address Priority Areas on Inuit Education

ArcticNet is launching a directed Call for Proposals to address research priority areas on Inuit Education developed in collaboration with ITK’s Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education following roundtable sessions and the Forum on Research in Inuit Education held in Iqaluit in 2013.

We encourage Inuit partners and supporters to look at the detailed Application Guidelines and Application Form which are available for download on the ArcticNet website at: <http://www.arcticnet.ulaval.ca/research/call.php>.

The call for proposals is open to all eligible researchers in Canada. New applicants and collaborators not previously engaged in ArcticNet are encouraged to apply.

The deadline for submission of full proposals is of Friday, 15 August 2014. Selected projects will start on 01 October 2014.

Please contact the ArcticNet Administration Centre (pls include hyperlink) if you require more information. ■

# NUNATSIAQ ONLINE

NEWS: Nunavut April 11, 2014 - 7:34 am

## Agnico Eagle donates \$5 million to jump-start Nunavut university

*"We can dare to dream big again"*

DAVID MURPHY



James Nasso, the chair of Agnico Eagle's board of directors, announcing April 10 that Agnico Eagle will donate \$5 million towards a university in Nunavut that would be created at a future date. (PHOTO BY DAVID MURPHY)

The surprise announcement came from James Nasso, chair of Agnico Eagle's board of directors, April 10 at the Nunavut Mining Symposium's closing gala before hundreds of conference delegates gathered inside the Iqaluit curling rink.

"The government is taking the initiative and under the leadership of education minister Quassa will spearhead, with the premier, the University of Nunavut," Nasso said.

The crowd gave him a lengthy standing ovation after he made the announcement.

Nasso also said Agnico Eagle will donate \$5 million to jump-start the project.

It's not clear where the rest of the funding for the university will come from.

But education minister Paul Quassa said the government can't build the university by itself.

"As our new mandate, Sivumut Abluqta, states, our government alone cannot achieve the vision of Nunavut. We need partners in industry, education, government and our Inuit organizations," he said.

Quassa said plans are in a "preliminary state." There's no indication of when or where the university will be built.

"As we said, this is a very good start. And I don't think it's a matter of talking about the timeframe at this time," Quassa said.

"But it's there now and it's a matter of stepping forward with it."

The idea of a university has been in the works for a while, Quassa said.

“A university of the North has been discussed for many years, as it would offer a broader spectrum of opportunities to all Nunavummiut,” Quassa said.

Nunavummiut currently have some post secondary options — there’s Nunavut Arctic College, and the Ottawa-based Nunavut Sivuniksavut.

Neither of those institutions offer full degree programs within Nunavut, however.

The Akitsiraq Law School offered a degree program in law several years ago, and talks are under way to offer a possible second round in a couple of years.

But there is no brick-and-mortar university in any of the three Canadian territories.

There have been talks of creating a pan-Arctic university in the past, but nothing has come to fruition.

And there is a University of the Arctic that connects post secondary institutes such as Nunavut Arctic College to other circumpolar colleges and universities around the world, but UArctic is not a degree-granting institution.

There has also been push for a physical Arctic university from the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, and a researcher from Laval University.

Nasso is optimistic this project will become a reality, however.

“We were bent on doing it. This is a good beginning, and I think a lot of people are going to come forward and this will come to fruition sooner than you think,” Nasso said.

“This is all new to some of the folks here. But there’ll be much support coming from many quarters. I don’t know where from. But people will be involved,” he said.

Nasso said resurrecting the idea of a university came after he read comments in a Globe and Mail article from chair of the National Committee on Inuit education Mary Simon, who said Canada is the only circumpolar nation without a northern university.

“It’s long overdue. We’re a G7 nation. I think that’s scandalous. It’s about time something happened,” Nasso said.

Nasso also praised Nunavut MP Leona Aglukkaq, as well as Premier Peter Taptuna and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. president Cathy Towntongie for helping with the initiative.

Overall, Quassa said this is a big step for the territory.

“We face difficulty and challenges in our education system. And our department of education is focused on building the foundation from kindergarten to Grade 12 and beyond to give our students the skills and academic background to enter post secondary,” Quassa told the crowd.

“I hope this gesture inspires future sponsorships between governments, industry, Inuit organizations and other stakeholders — we can dare to dream big again.” ■

# NUNATSIAQ ONLINE

## Nunavut will train more early childhood educators: Shewchuk

*“This is wonderful news for Nunavut Arctic College”*

### NUNATSIAQ NEWS



*Dan Shewchuk, the minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, said May 14 that the college will use \$1.1 million in federal funds to expand early childhood education across Nunavut. (FILE PHOTO)*

Nunavut Arctic College will use \$1.1 million in federal funds to train more early childhood educators for jobs in daycares, schools or as operators of their daycare centres, Dan Shewchuk, the minister responsible for the college, said May 14 in the legislative assembly.

“This is wonderful news for Nunavut Arctic College and its education programs division, which is committed to providing more opportunities for Nunavummiut to obtain training and careers in early childhood education,” Shewchuk said in a minister’s statement.

The money to pay for the program flows from the federal government’s Aboriginal Head Start Strategic Fund and has been approved for the next two years, Shewchuk said.

It’s part of a project called “Capacity Building for Early Childhood Development Educators.”

Shewchuk said the program is aimed at training people to work with children from infancy to the age of six, for work in day care centres, nursery schools, schools or as operators of their own day care homes “with a strong emphasis placed on the preschool years.”

He also said the money will help the college expand early childhood education across the territory and “support and enhance culturally sensitive programming in our communities.” ■

# NORTHERN Journal

February 10, 2014 at 7:17 PM From Across the North

## Junior kindergartens to spring up across NWT

*Every school in territory to include 4 year-olds by 2017*

BY MEAGAN WOHLBERG



*Education Minister Jackson Lafferty says the move to bring 4 year-olds into NWT schools comes from expert and community feedback.*

Four year-olds will soon be attending every school in the Northwest Territories thanks to a reallocation of funding within the department of Education, Culture and Employment aimed at boosting the territory's early childhood development programming.

Announced in the 2014-15 budget released last Thursday, \$1.8 million of existing school contribution funding will be transferred within the department to establish junior kindergarten classrooms in every community in the territory, starting this fall in the 29 smallest communities, 10 of which currently have no licensed early childhood programming.

The following year will see similar kindergartens established in all four regional centres, with Yellowknife's schools following in 2016-17.

"All 49 schools in all 33 communities, we want to cover them with junior kindergarten into our existing school system. That's our overall objective," Education Minister Jackson Lafferty told The Journal.

He said the new initiative is part of the department's ongoing Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative and the Early Childhood Development Framework, which involves the department of Health and Social Services.

"We've heard ideas and voices and suggestions from those people that we engaged with, community members and parents, so we wanted to provide some options for the parents and also quality early childhood development into our schools," Lafferty said.

“So far, I’ve been hearing positive comments on this particular subject, especially in the small, isolated communities – very positive feedback. It came directly from the parents, the grandparents and the educators in the 33 communities that we have...especially the 10 communities that do not have licensed early childhood programming.”

The initiative is also supported by the work of world-renowned experts in early childhood development, one of which recently visited the NWT to provide his insights, which included establishing a junior kindergarten program.

“This junior kindergarten is very exciting because it will provide parents and families with opportunities for their 4 year-old children to participate in safe, high quality, play-based programming,” he said. “It’s also hands-on programming, focused on helping our kids develop their language and social skills and physical health.”

The junior kindergarten students will be combined in classrooms with the kindergartens, using existing staff. In the regional centres, the territory has qualified people already employed in the school system, along with 120 early childhood workers across the territory.

“Once we take the 4 year-olds out of the day care establishments, the daycare’s primary focus will be ages 0-3,” Lafferty said. “Our overall enrollment is down, so that leaves plenty of space for these 4 year-olds to enter our school system.”

Curtis Brown, superintendent of the South Slave Divisional Education Council (SSDEC), said he’s excited about the new program.

“I’m really pleased to see the addition of junior kindergarten to our schools. It’s becoming more and more obvious that early childhood education is critical to the development of children, not only for their literacy, numeracy, their social responsibility, but general readiness for school,” he said.

That said, he is concerned about the affordability of an additional 100 students per year after full implementation. Though the new students will be captured as part of the federal formula funding, which will help to increase funds for the division, the SSDEC will experience a net reduction of \$200,000.

“We’re pleased to have access to 4 year-olds, but concerned that it is not coming with new funding,” Brown said.

The department expects around 600 new youngsters to enter the school system in junior kindergarten this fall. ■



## Cisco Launches Connected North To Enhance Education and Healthcare Services in Remote Northern Communities

*High-definition two-way video communications broaden classroom experiences and health services delivery*

IQUALUIT, NUNAVUT/TORONTO, ONTARIO – April 2, 2014 – The Government of Nunavut today joined Cisco Canada for the official launch of Connected North. The Connected North program delivers immersive and interactive education and healthcare services to remote and northern Aboriginal and Inuit communities through high-definition two-way video communication and collaboration technology. The program represents a \$1.6 million investment by Cisco in Canada’s North.

A successful pilot phase in education was initiated in September 2013. Utilizing prioritized satellite bandwidth donated by SSi Micro, grade 6, 7 and 8 classrooms in Iqaluit's Aqsarniit Ilinniavik have been connected in real-time with teachers, experts and other students throughout Canada, for a more engaging, diverse and dynamic classroom experience. Following today's announcement, two additional schools – the Deh Gah School in Fort Providence, Northwest Territories, and John Arnalukjuak High School in Arviat, Nunavut – will be joining the program in September 2014.

Connected North was designed to showcase innovations in the field of learning with the aim of encouraging students to attend class regularly. The virtual education program utilizes Cisco TelePresence® and Partners In Research's (PIR) successful VROC (Virtual Researcher on Call) platform.

Students in Iqaluit are benefitting from directly engaging with subject matter experts brought into the classroom through two-way video, for interactive sessions lasting up to 40 minutes. Students also connect with peers of the same age throughout Canada as part of the program's Classroom Connect component, to share rich educational and cultural experiences. In a study conducted by York University, on the impact of the program, preliminary research results show that both teachers and students view the program positively. A majority (89%) of students reported that the remote learning experience made science more enjoyable and 81% said they felt they learned more in the virtual sessions than they did through traditional classroom learning. The focus of the program is to provide a fresh approach to learning, allowing teachers and administrators to expose their students to new people, experiences and ideas.

Connected North is also focused on bringing psychiatric and youth mental health services to Northern Aboriginal and Inuit communities via Cisco TelePresence® high-definition video links. To that end, RBC Foundation and Cisco have joined with the Tele-Link Mental Health Program developed by Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), to launch Tele-Link in select Nunavut health centres in September 2014.

Tele-Link was developed by SickKids in 2009 to provide mental health services to children, youth and their families in difficult to access rural areas, using videoconferencing and other technologies to give timely, equitable access to specialist services. The program has met with positive results in Ontario since its launch and now, with funding provided by RBC and technology donated by Cisco, it is hoped that success will be matched in Nunavut.

## Facts and Highlights:

- Content provided through Connected North education programming will focus in the following key areas:
  - o Bio-science and Nature: bringing real time lab experiments and conversations with leading experts to students;
  - o Teacher mentoring and professional development; and
  - o Classroom Connect: bringing together students from Iqaluit with their peers across Canada through dedicated joint programming.
- Connected North was established in 2011 by Cisco Canada to leverage the company's core competence in Internet, networking and collaboration solutions to bring education and healthcare services to remote communities across Canada's North.
- Connected North is composed of a strategic partner ecosystem that includes:
  - o Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami;
  - o The Department of Education of the Government of Nunavut;

- o The Department of Health of the Government of Nunavut;
  - o Cisco Canada;
  - o SSi Micro;
  - o Partners In Research;
  - o The Toronto Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids);
  - o The Royal Bank Foundation;
  - o York University;
  - o Sheridan College; and
  - o Canadian North
- Connected North is made possible by the delivery of video conferencing sessions over SSi's Qiniq network using Meet Online Enterprise, an audio-video solution optimized for satellite networks by SSi with support from Infrastructure Canada and the Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation.
  - Run by Partners In Research, the VROC program seeks to inspire students by bringing experts directly to the classroom through two-way video. The VROC program offers five to ten-minute spontaneous videoconferencing sessions, hour-long interactive presentations and semester-long mentorship style sessions.
  - Cisco Canada press releases are always issued in English and French. For this announcement, the release will also be translated into Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun.

## Supporting Quotes

### Monica Ell, Minister of Health, Nunavut:

"The partnership with the Hospital for Sick Children gives us greater access to patient psychiatric care for children and youth to assist in their healing. Working with the Hospital for Sick Children will also help us deliver clinical training to our health care professionals. "

### Paul Quassa, Minister of Education, Nunavut:

"Rich and diverse educational programs are important investments to building a solid educational foundation for our current and future students. The Connected North program in Iqaluit is the first pilot project and we are encouraged by the initial results. The physical geography of our communities is always a challenge and Connected North allows us to literally connect our classrooms with expertise in other jurisdictions. This means, for example, we can have two-way interaction between a scientist and students in real time.

### Mary Simon, Chairperson, National Committee on Inuit Education:

"This project will help young Inuit connect with larger communities in the Southern Canada, and perhaps more importantly, it will help them connect with each other. It puts Inuit in the driver's seat and helps us explore our surroundings in new and evolving ways. Such innovative partnerships are essential if we are to transform Inuit education systems and prepare Inuit students to succeed in a 21st century economy."

### Nitin Kawale, President, Cisco Canada:

"Cisco Canada strongly believes there is significant potential for transformational change and positive impact in

the areas of health care and education in Canada's remote Aboriginal communities. By leveraging our technology expertise and uniting key private and public sector partners, we are aiming to make Connected North a vital and productive component of northern communities that will bring new levels of opportunities to inhabitants. And what you see here today is only the beginning. The program's results in Iqaluit will be studied and used to develop longer term strategies for sustainability throughout Canada."

**Jeff Philipp, SSi Group Founder and CEO:**

"Connected North has immense potential to become a critical service, dedicated to bringing unique and state-of-the-art solutions for education and health care to the North and beyond. We are proud to partner with Cisco and we look forward to expanding on this exciting new service in the coming years."

**David Willis, Clinical Manager, TeleLink Mental Health Program, SickKids:**

"We believe this partnership will help build local capacity, supporting local health systems to respond, care and plan for the mental health needs of their communities. Our goal is to help improve the mental health and well-being of children and youth living in Northern Canada by providing them with barrier-free access to child and adolescent psychiatry, regardless of their location."

**Shari Austin, Vice President, RBC Corporate Citizenship and executive director, RBC Foundation:**

"Timely access to mental health specialists and treatment is critical. Most mental disorders begin in childhood or adolescence - when the signs of mental illness are recognized and treated early, those affected can go on to lead healthy, productive lives. Today, access to mental health services in the Canadian North is largely unavailable. Through our \$200,000 donation to Sick Kids and by partnering with Cisco, we will help deliver access to health experts in a region where these services might not be available otherwise. This support is part of our RBC Believe in Kids Pledge, a five-year, \$100 million commitment to improving the well-being of at least one million children and youth in Canada."

**About Cisco**

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