



# Indigenous Standards in Education

*A Discussion Paper for the National Inuit  
Education Summit*

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## Executive Summary

### **Purpose of this Paper**

The purpose of this paper is to summarize some key successes and gaps within the education systems of each Inuit region as well as outline examples of reforms taken in Canada and internationally to transform education systems to achieve higher student success. This paper is structured into six sections: a definition of Inuit standards in education, regional summaries of Inuit education in Canada, other Canadian examples of indigenous education, international examples of indigenous education, key factors relating to policy and practice in Inuit education and a conclusion.

### **Definition of Indigenous Standards in Education**

Indigenous standards in education for the purposes of this paper are defined as those minimum standards within an education system that would allow for an indigenous people to design, implement and control all aspects of an effective education system that reflects their language, culture and perspective.

### **Methodology**

The research methodology for this paper consists of a document review and telephone interviews. The review consisted primarily of a scan of government reports, statistics and information supplied by those organizations involved in Inuit education. Twenty-one interviews were conducted and structured around questions included in a formal interview guideline supplied to all participants. Fourteen of the 21 respondents worked in the four Inuit regions either as representatives of Inuit land claims organizations or provincial/territorial governments delivering and supporting Inuit education. The other 7 respondents worked within other indigenous education systems within Canada and internationally.

### **Inuit Education in Canada**

This paper summarizes the current system of education, some notable successes and ongoing gaps identified by respondents in each of the four Inuit regions: Inuvialuit; Nunavut; Nunavik; and Nunatsiavut. Along with pointing out examples of key programs and initiatives, respondents also noted key conditions necessary for educational transformation and on-going gaps. Key conditions noted by respondents necessary for successful transformations in Inuit regions include:

- Establishment of local control through Community Education Authorities;
- Collaboration with Elders on development of long-term planning and initiatives through advisory groups at various levels;
- Instituting curriculum based on Inuit culture and language;
- Strong use of local language at all levels;
- Stable cohort of Inuit teachers at all levels;

- Teacher training in Inuktitut language with stable cohort of Inuit instructors; and
- Creation of new government structures to control administration and governance of education in Inuit communities.

Key gaps noted by respondents included:

- Need for training and retention of fluent Inuktitut/Innuinaqtun/Inuttitut/Inuvialuktun speaking qualified teachers;
- Lack of resources in local language;
- Lack of targeted training opportunities to learn local language in areas with substantial language loss;
- Too many students not staying in secondary school;
- Insufficient data collection of student and school achievement;
- Lack of parental involvement;
- Need for further collaboration between governments and organizations involved in Inuit education; and
- Lack of educational spaces where local language is principle language spoken.

### **Other Examples of Indigenous Education**

In order to broaden the discussion of indigenous education at the Summit, other Canadian and international developments in indigenous education have been selected to highlight successful models of indigenous educational transformation globally. Programs and policies initiated by the following peoples are highlighted: Mohawk and Mi'kmaq in Canada, Sámi in Norway, Māori in New Zealand and Yu'pik in Alaska.

### **Key Factors in Policy and Practice of Inuit Education**

Based on the literature review and interviews of this paper and supported by the research outlined in other papers submitted for the Summit, it is possible to identify several key factors that have led to transformative change in indigenous and Inuit schools systems. These key factors include:

#### **1. Control of Curriculum Development and Pedagogy**

Research and a majority of responses outline how successful transformation of indigenous education was predicated by indigenous control of indigenous education. The redesign of curriculum to fully reflect indigenous knowledge and worldview is one key transformation as a result of educational control in the hands of indigenous peoples. Curriculum in this sense is not seen as an add-on, but as a complete articulation of teaching and learning content and practice developed by and for indigenous schools.

## **2. Sustained Investment in Teacher, Principal and Education Leadership Training and Capacity Building**

Those indigenous or Inuit schools or jurisdictions which had committed a long-term investment in the recruitment, training and retention of indigenous educators and administrators appeared to have achieved significant successes in their system.

## **3. Sustained Investment in Language and Cultural Programming**

Respondents from all jurisdictions outlined the importance of sustained investment in indigenous language and cultural programming from the early years to the post-secondary level. Efforts in this area ranged from language revitalization in those regions where the language was threatened to other regions where the language was in a healthier position and in need of ongoing supports to maintain levels of fluency and literacy. The development of specific policy supporting Inuit language and cultural programs based in Inuit cultural values was also deemed as an important step towards transforming Inuit education systems.

## **4. Community, Parent and Elder Engagement**

A substantial body of research and a significant majority of respondents pointed to the importance of fostering a greater community voice in education through parent and elder involvement in schools and school governance. In this way, ownership of education and commitment for change is shared throughout the community and educational success and community health are viewed as complimentary goals. Elder advisory bodies were cited as models in which traditional knowledge can be shared between generations and holistically integrated into education policy and practice. These and other culturally preferred practices reflect the principle of the collective responsibility to support students in school.

## **5. Shared Research and Dialogue on Education**

Successful transformation of education among international indigenous groups has been grounded in a parallel investment in, and sharing of, academic and applied research on their respective systems. In contrast, research in Canada on Inuit education is very limited. Respondents pointed to the importance of building research capacity in Inuit education, including investment in Inuit researchers, research support, and an inter-regional forum on Inuit education where research and best practices can be shared.

## **6. Assessment and Reporting**

Changes introduced into education systems must be measured through systematic evaluation of successes and failures and through the identification of persistent gaps. The use of indicators and benchmarks to monitor aspects of a system such as investments in education, participate rates, retention and success of students was cited as a critical component to reinforcing an indigenous education system. Developing appropriate assessment tools for Inuit students is also considered integral to transforming schools systems to reflect an Inuit holistic vision of student achievement and community well-being.

## **7. Sustained Investment in Infrastructure and Operations**

Respondents suggest that that sustained investment in educational infrastructure and operations support transformative change. Examples of investment include building of school infrastructure, and operations capacity to maintain a realistic pupil-educator ratio, and appropriate programs, services and supports for students.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, transformations to education systems among indigenous people are initiated firstly with community and political leadership. Examples in this paper point to the role leaders play to help develop a new vision for education that stresses indigenous knowledge and worldview and the participation of parents, Elders and other community members as full partners. A wide range of efforts are necessary to support successful change: investment in research, monitoring and sharing of best practices to support reforms; sustained investment in the training and development of local educators, service providers, administrators, language specialists and researchers; and a corresponding investment in curriculum and teaching practices that incorporate and reflect an indigenous worldview. These changes are not necessarily linear, nor do they occur individually, but rather involve sustained overlapping efforts at all levels.

## Introduction

Four Inuit regions currently exist in Canada spanning two provinces and two territories: the Inuvialuit region in the Northwest Territories; the Territory of Nunavut; Nunavik in the province of Quebec and Nunatsiavut in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Each region is administered through provisions outlined in their individual land claims, with education being delivered differently in each area. This complex jurisdictional reality demands unique regional approaches to education, while at the same allows for the development of innovative responses and partnerships to meet the pressing social, cultural and economic challenges facing all regions.

### **Role of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami**

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) represents all Inuit of Canada on matters of national importance as mandated by its Inuit board of directors. ITK's primary role is to secure a more equal and equitable place for Inuit within Canada. ITK defends and unites Inuit by advocating policy reform, and taking action on issues on Inuit terms. It is within this context that ITK has embarked on an initiative to encourage a new commitment to Inuit education. Currently, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, through funding provided by the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation, has organized a National Summit on Inuit Education to be held in Inuvik November 7 – 9, 2007. The Summit on Inuit Education is intended to develop consensus among participants from the four Inuit regions towards the development of a National Strategy for Inuit Education.

As part of the Summit on Inuit Education, ITK is undertaking research to examine both examples of initiatives and reforms that have had a measurable impact on the educational success of Inuit from early childhood to the post-secondary level. By doing this ITK will highlight success stories and gaps in overcoming barriers to education and setting education standards for Inuit. This research also explores other models of educational reform developed by indigenous peoples in Canada and internationally. The overall intent of this research is to provide forward thinking discussion material for the Summit.

### **Purpose of this Paper**

The purpose of this paper is to summarize key successes and gaps within the education systems of each Inuit region as well as outline examples of reforms taken in Canada and internationally to achieve higher student success. This paper is structured into seven sections: a definition of indigenous standards in education; methodology; regional summaries of Inuit education in Canada; other Canadian examples of indigenous education; international examples of indigenous education; key factors relating to policy and practice in Inuit education; and a conclusion.

## Definition of Indigenous Standards in Education

Numerous reports commissioned in the last several decades such as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) and the Berger Report on Implementation of the Nunavut Land Claim (2006) call attention to the education gap between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples within Canada. These reports draw attention to the need for education systems in regions where indigenous people reside to be designed for indigenous people and implemented and controlled by indigenous people. Education in Inuit regions is no exception, with Inuit having been advocating this approach to education for many decades.

Indigenous standards in education for the purposes of this paper are defined as those minimum requirements within an education system that allow for an indigenous people to design, implement and control all aspects of an effective education system that reflects their language, culture and perspective. Therefore, *standard* is used in this case to describe those programs, initiatives and/or legislation that have proven effective in meeting these goals and that may be specifically applicable to ensuring success in Inuit education.

## Research Scope and Methodology

The scope of this document covers education in each Inuit region in Canada as well as key educational programs/initiatives from 5 other indigenous peoples chosen by ITK as peoples engaged in exemplary educational development. It must be noted at the outset however; a relative lack of research relating to Inuit education exists. This is in contrast to other indigenous regions internationally where academic research is regularly undertaken by indigenous people themselves.

The research methodology for this paper consists of a document review of a scan of government reports, statistics and information supplied by those organizations involved in Inuit education and telephone interviews. Overall, 21 interviews were conducted during August and September 2007. Interviews were approximately 1 hour in length and structured around questions included in a formal interview guideline supplied to all participants (see appendix for copy of interview guideline). Fourteen of the 21 respondents worked in the four Inuit regions either as representatives of Inuit land claims organizations or provincial/territorial governments delivering and supporting Inuit education. The other 7 respondents worked within other indigenous education systems within Canada and internationally.

Decisions to highlight specific programs and initiatives from all regions were based on suggestions supplied by respondents from each Inuit region. As a result, findings within this paper rely heavily on the anecdotal evidence supplied by respondents as to which programs/initiatives have demonstrated success.

## Inuit Education in Canada

The following section summarizes the current system of education, some notable successes and ongoing gaps identified by respondents in each of the four Inuit regions: Inuvialuit; Nunavut; Nunavik; and Nunatsiavut. The relative order of the following summary sections does not imply a priority listing.

### Education in the Inuvialuit Region

#### Current System

Most of the approximately 5,000<sup>1</sup> Inuvialuit reside in six communities of the Northwest Territories (NWT): Aklavik, Inuvik, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tuktoyaktuk and Ulukhaktok (Holman). There is currently at least one school in each of the six Inuit communities of the region<sup>2</sup>, most of which offer full K-12 school. In the 2006-2007 year, there were 1356.5 full-time Inuit students in NWT schools. These schools are administered through the Beaufort-Delta district of the Northwest Territories Department of Education and governed under the 1995 NWT Education Act. The cost per student in 2004\5 in the Beaufort-Delta district was \$15,500.<sup>3</sup>

In 1984, the Inuvialuit settled their land claims with the Federal Government of Canada. While delivery of education remains under the authority of the Territorial government, some provisions in this agreement are indirectly related to education under the goal of preserving Inuvialuit cultural identity and values. For example, the initiation of a social development fund through this Agreement supports cultural programs, but does not replace government functions in this area.

#### Successful Initiatives

Four respondents were interviewed from the NWT including staff at the Department of Education and the regional Inuit land claim organization, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. With regards to notable achievements in Inuit education in the territory, all respondents noted the development and use of the 1996 document, *Inuuqatigiit - the curriculum from the Inuit perspective* as a key success. This curriculum document outlines Inuit goals and content for education in Inuit schools and remains one of the more important curriculum documents guiding instruction in both NWT Inuit schools today.

Seventy-five percent of respondents also noted the Northwest Territories (NWT) special committee on education, which published a groundbreaking report, *Learning: Tradition and Change in the Northwest Territories*, in 1982 as a significant policy development that influenced the current educational structure in the territory. In particular, this report

<sup>1</sup> Source: Inuvialuit Resource Corporation web-site: <http://www.irc.inuvialuit.com>, accessed Aug. 20, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Note: Inuvik has two schools – an elementary and secondary school.

<sup>3</sup> Source: NWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment (2005) *Towards Excellence: A Report on Education in the NWT*.

identified the need for increased community involvement and led to a reshaping of the schools through the establishment of divisional boards and community authorities.

Half of respondents also mentioned the Inuvialuit teaching and learning centre (TLC) partnered with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) in Inuvik as another successful initiative. Funded by the Department of Education as one of a series of teaching and learning centres throughout the territory, this centre has 3 full-time staff and is mandated to preserve and enhance Inuvialuktun and Inuvialuit culture through the promotion of literacy and the integration of local language and culture in school programs. It supports culture-based education by producing print materials for use in classrooms and delivering annual training to Language Instructors. These materials are also designed to work with a new Second-language curriculum recently developed in the territory for use in Inuvialuit schools.

### **Gaps**

All respondents mentioned the increasing lack of fluency in Inuvialuktun in Inuvialuit communities and the specific challenge of finding, training and retaining fluent speakers of Inuvialuktun as teachers as key educational gaps in the region. For example, as part of a NWT language study<sup>4</sup> in 1992, only 19 percent of 176 respondents in three Inuit communities said that Inuvialuktun was their most fluent language, with no respondents under the age of 25 stating that they were fluent in the language. This survey also found that only 7 percent of respondents used Inuvialuktun as their home language. Overall, the results of this study outlined an alarming language shift that has broad repercussions in Inuit communities in the NWT.

Classroom instruction, for example, is one area where this language shift will pose increasing challenges since finding and training enough fluent Inuvialuit teachers is already problematic. Half of respondents surveyed for this paper stated that, with this dialect in danger of being lost, increased support for language immersion programs were necessary such as the early years immersion program at the Sir Alexander Mackenzie School in Inuvik. One respondent specifically stated the need for increased adult training to develop fluent Inuvialuktun speakers and writers.

Adding to the challenge of supporting Inuvialuit is the fact that the NWT has 11 official languages, 9 of which are Aboriginal languages all needing immediate attention and support for their preservation. Three respondents stated that this multi-lingual reality necessitates a consultative and collaborative approach to target those initiatives and partnerships that can lead to positive change for all Aboriginal languages in the NWT including Inuvialuktun.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: Languages of the Land: A Resource Manual for Aboriginal Language Activists, NWT Literacy Council Yellowknife, 1999.

## Education in Nunavut

### Current System

The Nunavut Department of Education is the government body responsible for education throughout the territory. While Nunavut became a territory in 1999, the *Education Act of the NWT* (1995) is the law that still governs education in Nunavut. However, a new Nunavut Education Act is currently in the process of being finalized by the Government of Nunavut.

In 2004/05, there were 9,163 children enrolled in Nunavut's 42 elementary and secondary schools, with the overwhelming majority of students (96%) being Inuit. The 2004/05 education budget for the territory was \$102,871,000, making the cost for public education per child in Nunavut \$11,227 for that year.<sup>5</sup> Schools in the territory include full Kindergarten to grade three instruction in Inuktitut with transition years in grades four to six as the primary language of instruction becomes English from grade seven and beyond. As of 2006, 218 (38 per cent) of the 573 teachers in Nunavut were Inuit with the majority of Inuit teachers (approximately 90 per cent) working in elementary schools.<sup>6</sup>

### Successful Initiatives

Four respondents from Nunavut were interviewed from both the Inuit land claim organization, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) and the Department of Education at the Government of Nunavut. All respondents stated that recent developments focusing on the principles of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) are an important initiative in the territory. Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is defined as "all aspects of traditional Inuit culture including values, world-view, language, social organization, knowledge, life skills, perceptions and expectations". While this term is often used in a holistic sense, the Government of Nunavut has broken Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit down into a set of 8 guiding principles<sup>7</sup>:

- Inuuqatigiitsiarniq: respecting others, relationships and caring for people.
- Tunnganarniq: fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming and inclusive.
- Pijitsirniq: serving and providing for family and/or community.
- Aajiiqatigiinni: decision making through discussion and consensus.
- Pilimmaksarniq/Pijariuqsarniq: development of skills through practice, effort and action.
- Piliriqatigiinni/Ikajuqtigiinni: working together for a common cause.
- Qanuqtuurniq: being innovative and resourceful.
- Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq: respect and care for the land, animals and the environment.

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<sup>5</sup> *Closing the Education Gap: A status report on the issues*, Iqaluit District Education Authority document, Nov. 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Source: Government of Nunavut statistics, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Government of Nunavut. (1999). *Towards an Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit policy for Nunavut - A discussion paper*. Iqaluit: Government of Nunavut.

These guiding principles have also been used to form the foundation for a new Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit Curriculum Framework due to be released in the fall of 2007. This framework will guide ongoing updates to the school curriculum and future design of teaching materials. This framework has also been designed in strong collaboration with Inuit Elders from the region. Through this process and other IQ work throughout the territory, Elders have taken on a central advisory role in transforming the education system to be more culturally responsive.

With regards to legislation, Nunavut is currently tabling a new Education Act and Language Protection Act for the territory. All respondents noted that this legislation is intended to support the use of Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun and Inuit culture throughout Nunavut schools and society. The recently developed *Bilingual Education Strategy for Nunavut 2004-2008* was also noted by these respondents as a key document to address Inuktitut language in the schools. Currently schools are developing locally responsive bilingual programs based on the options laid out in this strategy. Options within this strategy were drawn from earlier language of instruction research outlined in the report, *Aajjiqatigiingniq*<sup>8</sup>. The three options adopted for use in the territory through the strategy are:

- **Early Immersion:** A model to be used in communities such as Kugluktuk and Cambridge Bay, where Inuinnaqtun language fluency has eroded. This model will introduce children to Inuinnaqtun, in combination with teaching and using English, from Kindergarten to Grade 12.
- **Qulliq:** A model to serve communities with strong Inuktitut First Language and focus on teaching students to read and write fluently in Inuktitut first, while gradually introducing English as a second language. Instruction in Inuktitut is maintained through Grade 12 for some courses, while English is used for others.
- **Dual Language:** A model to be used in communities such as Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet where programs will be organized so students will receive instruction in language arts and core subjects in their first language, learn the other language as a second language, and receive non-core courses together in either language.

Another initiative noted by half of the respondents was a new reform at the secondary level that is underway in Nunavut to provide more diverse options for secondary school students. These options, already being piloted in Nunavut communities, will focus on specializations in areas such as trades, culture and language, and entrepreneurship. Expected outcomes of this reform include supporting Inuit youth to stay in school longer and offering a more diverse training for high school graduates.

## Gaps

Areas for further improvement as noted by all respondents related to the topic of supporting Inuit language and culture with responses focusing on the need for increased numbers of Inuit teachers at all grades. While at the same time, increased collaboration between the Government of Nunavut and land claims organizations was also noted by

<sup>8</sup> Martin, Ian: *Aajjiqatigiingniq Volumes 1 and 2*, Department of Education, Iqaluit, December 2000.

half of respondents as essential to further strengthen the place of Inuit culture and language within the society as a whole. Other specific gaps relating to language included the need for student assessment in Inuktitut as an important tool to support and evaluate Inuktitut language programs currently underway in the territory and the initiation of increased contacts between Elders and youth. Another related issue noted by two respondents was the need for increased parental and community involvement in school programs and initiatives.

Half of respondents also noted the importance of developing innovative approaches and collaboration to encourage Inuit youth to stay in school. The current pilot program offering multiple options for youth at the secondary level was mentioned as one way to address this gap, especially for young men in the face of the mounting challenges of youth suicide and high drop-out rates not only found in this region but across all Inuit regions.

## Education in Nunavik

### Current System

Nunavik is the Inuit region of northern Quebec established in 1975 under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. Under this land claim agreement, education in Nunavik is the exclusive responsibility of the Kativik School Board (KSB) which was established in 1978 to provide education programming from pre-school to adult education. As part of this role, the KSB develops programs and teaching materials, trains Inuit teachers, and supports post-secondary education. KSB is governed by Quebec provincial legislation, *The Education Act for Cree, Inuit and Naskapi Native Persons*.

The Kativik School Board delivers programs that meet objectives under the Quebec Ministry of Education with curriculum content and language instruction adapted to reflect Inuit culture and language. The language of instruction from Kindergarten to Grade 2 is Inuktitut. Varying on a community's choice as to when second language immersion begins, parents can then have their children placed in English or French immersion streams generally at the Grade 3 level.

Currently, there are roughly 3000 students enrolled at schools in the 14 Inuit communities of the region. The KSB receives its operating funds from both the province of Quebec (75%) and the federal government (25%), with all monies channeled through Quebec and administered by the Board.<sup>9</sup>

### Successful Initiatives

Three respondents were interviewed from the Kativik School Board. Two respondents noted the existence of the KSB itself is a significant success since it represents a model organization that is governed by Inuit and staffed by a strong cohort of Inuit administrators and educators. It was suggested that since its inception the KSB had

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<sup>9</sup> Source: Kativik School Board web-site, <http://www.kativik.qc.ca> accessed on August 24, 2007

worked to reclaim Inuit education and redefine learning in the region to reflect the needs of Inuit communities. It was also cited that Inuit leadership at all levels of staffing and administration was key to this success.

A key policy cited by two respondents was the initiation of a recent KSB language policy in the region. This policy outlines how Inuttitut language is to be recognized as the foundation for education programming in the region. Both respondents suggested that this policy has paved the way for both communities and educators to support Inuttitut programming.

All respondents also stated that the teacher education program designed for Nunavik is a notable success in the region. Nunavik initiated the first Inuit teacher training program in 1975 in partnership with McGill University. This community-based program has student teachers primarily taught in their home community while continuing to work in schools throughout their period of study. It has proven highly successful in part because of the community-based delivery model, but also through the support offered by pedagogical counselors in each school and as a result of all courses being offered in Inuttitut. As a result, an extensive network of Inuit instructors has been trained throughout the region to teach most program courses. Two respondents stated that this cohort of instructors is a key success since they ensure that Inuit language and culture form the foundation for all training and provide leadership throughout the region.

Inuit teachers have also held a central role in the development of curriculum in region: providing content support and advising at all levels of development. The development of curricula in Inuttitut at multiple levels such as the K-3 program and local history curriculum and Inuit studies at the secondary level were noted by two respondents as other key successes in Nunavik. These developments in curriculum by the KSB are currently being followed by the drafting of secondary level examinations in Inuttitut for a number of subject areas.

## **Gaps**

Two respondents stated that there is a need for further development of teaching materials in Inuttitut at all levels. While the Board is involved in on-going design and distribution of such materials, it was noted that there remains a particular need for printed material for use in the classroom. Lack of parental involvement was also cited by two respondents as an ongoing challenge in the region. These respondents stated that addressing this situation is critical since it was believed that issues such as a high drop out rate, maintaining healthy families and low attendance for some students at the secondary level would be substantially improved with further partnering between schools and parents.

One respondent also noted the need for increased investments and support of Inuit education research for and by Inuit. More focused research in this area was deemed necessary to inform future policy and practice not only in Nunavik but all Inuit regions.

## Education in Nunatsiavut

### Current System

There are approximately 3000 Inuit living in Labrador, the majority of which live in the five coastal communities of Nain, Hopedale, Makkovik, Postville and Rigolet. Schools in these communities are administered by the Newfoundland Labrador Department of Education through the Labrador School Board and governed under the 1997 Newfoundland Labrador Schools Act. In May of 2004, the Inuit of Nunatsiavut voted to ratify the Final Agreement of their land claims settlement in Labrador. While the provincial and federal governments have yet to complete this process, the Nunatsiavut Government, under this agreement, will assume responsibility for the entire education system in the five Inuit communities.<sup>10</sup> Based on data from the Newfoundland Labrador Department of Education for the 2006/7 year, 663 students<sup>11</sup> attended in grades K to 12 in the five coastal Nunatsiavut communities.

### Successful Initiatives

Three respondents were interviewed at both the Labrador School Board and the Nunatsiavut Government. All respondents noted the creation of the Nunatsiavut government as a first step in reclaiming control over education in Inuit communities. All respondents all stated that the establishment of immersion programs in communities such as Hopedale has being a success at developing fluency in Inuttitut at the early years level. Two respondents also noted the Life Skills program at the K-12 level in schools as a notable program that supports Inuit culture in the school. These programs are embedded into the provincial curriculum and taught by culture teachers within each school.

The Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSP) in partnership between the Nunatsiavut government and regional post-secondary institutions was also noted by respondents as an initiative improving student success at the post-secondary level in Nunatsiavut. This program is made up of components that offer career guidance and transition support to post-secondary students from the region.<sup>12</sup>

### Gaps

All respondents from this region noted the critical need to support Inuttitut language in both schools and communities as a whole. Specifically, two respondents mentioned the lack of teaching materials in Inuttitut language for both classroom teachers and language instructors. This lack of materials was also matched by the need to train more qualified Inuttitut speaking teachers in the region. Two respondents also mentioned the need for greater numbers of educational spaces designated for the use of Inuttitut immersion programs. Increased collaboration between the communities, the Labrador School Board and the Nunatsiavut Government was cited as a possible path to addressing this issue.

<sup>10</sup> Source: Nunatsiavut Government website: <http://www.nunatsiavut.com>, accessed August 24, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Source: Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education Website, accessed September 15, 2007: [http://www.education.gov.nl.ca/sch\\_rep/pro\\_year.htm](http://www.education.gov.nl.ca/sch_rep/pro_year.htm)

<sup>12</sup> Note: For more information on the Post-secondary Student Support Program in Nunatsiavut, see Summit paper No.2 on post-secondary successes.

**Summary Table of Inuit Education**

Region	Legislation/ Policies/ Programs/ Initiatives	Key Transformative Conditions	Key partnerships	Identified Gaps
Inuvialuit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NWT Education Act 1995</li> <li>• New Second-language curriculum for Inuvialuktun</li> <li>• Establishment of Teaching and Learning Centre in Inuvik to design Inuvialuktun teaching materials</li> <li>• Development of Inuuqatigiit Curriculum Document</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of local control through Community Education Authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher training through Aurora College</li> <li>• IRC and Department of Education partnering on Teaching and Learning Centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreasing numbers of fluent Inuvialuktun speaking qualified teachers</li> <li>• Lack of resources in Inuvialuktun language</li> <li>• Lack of targeted training opportunities to learn Inuvialuktun</li> </ul>
Nunavut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Act 1995 with new Nunavut Education Act and Language Protection Act pending</li> <li>• Drafting of IQ Curriculum Framework documents</li> <li>• Piloting of secondary level options program</li> <li>• Bilingual Education Strategy 2004-2008</li> <li>• Re-visioning of both campus-based and community-based Teacher Education Program</li> <li>• Initiation of Master's level program for Inuit teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration with Elders on development of long-term planning and initiatives through advisory groups at various levels</li> <li>• Instituting curriculum based on Inuit culture and language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New teacher training partnership with University of Saskatchewan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too many students not staying in secondary school</li> <li>• Low retention of Inuit teachers</li> <li>• Insufficient data collection of student and school achievement</li> <li>• Lack of resources in Inuktitut</li> </ul>

Region	Legislation/ Policies/ Programs/ Initiatives	Key Transformative Conditions	Key partnerships	Identified Gaps
Nunavik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Act for Cree, Naskapi and Inuit Native Persons</li> <li>• Establishment of Teacher Education Program</li> <li>• Development of Inuttitut curriculum document and materials</li> <li>• Establishment of training certification in School leadership and for School Councilors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong use of language at all levels</li> <li>• Stable cohort of Inuit teachers</li> <li>• Teacher training all in Inuttitut language with stable cohort of Inuit instructors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher training with McGill University</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient numbers of resources in Inuttitut</li> <li>• Lack of parental involvement</li> </ul>
Nunatsiavut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newfoundland Labrador Schools Act 1997</li> <li>• Creation of the Nunatsiavut Government and mandate for control of Inuit education</li> <li>• Establishment of immersion programs at primary level</li> <li>• Development of language and life skills curriculum at the K-12 level</li> <li>• Development of Inuttitut Rosetta Stone language instruction software</li> <li>• Establishment of Curriculum Centre to support the development of resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of new government structure to control administration and governance of education in Inuit communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher training program currently under review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of teaching materials in Inuttitut language</li> <li>• Need for further collaboration between new Nunatsiavut Government and Labrador School Board for communications and transfer of administration and governance</li> <li>• Lack of educational spaces designated for the use of Inuttitut</li> </ul>

## Other Canadian Examples of Indigenous Education

During the same period that Inuit have struggled to develop education systems to better suit their own needs, other indigenous peoples in Canada have worked to gain control of and transform the education systems in their own regions. Numerous examples of successful transformation exist with a growing body of literature demonstrating this development.<sup>13</sup> This paper will highlight two examples in particular that have demonstrated success in the literature review and were of interest to ITK. These examples are the Mohawk of Akwesasne Board of Education and the Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey.

### Mohawk of Akwesasne Board of Education

Akwesasne is one of six Kanien:kehaka (Mohawk) First Nations communities which form the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Approximately 12,918 people live in Akwesasne which straddles the borders of Ontario, Québec and New York State and covers roughly 50 km<sup>2</sup> of land and water on both sides of the St. Lawrence River.<sup>14</sup>

Established in 1985, the Akwesasne Mohawk Board of Education (AMBE) is an elected school board, which together with a Director of Education and three school principals, are responsible for administering education at three local schools. In 2005, 77 percent of all teaching staff and 82% of all non-teaching staff at these schools were of First Nations ancestry, while 97% of teachers outside the Early Years unit possessed Bachelors degrees and 36% had a Master's degree.<sup>15</sup>

While a number of key successes have been cited at the AMBE, this section will focus on the area of indigenous language acquisition. Beginning in 1998, AMBE initiated the development of its own guidelines for the teaching of the Mohawk language through the Ahkwesasne Mohawk Language Curriculum Program. One of the notable results of this program was the standardizing of the local Kanien:keha orthography in 1993 and its continued use by Mohawk-language teachers in school instruction and immersion programs.

The AMBE Early Years Program, instituted in 2000, is also considered a model program for indigenous communities across Canada.<sup>16</sup> This full-day program is structured around Head Start and Kindergarten classes to provide a Kanien:kehaka cultural environment and to promote Mohawk and English language acquisition, school readiness and early identification of student supports. A Head Start class is located in each of the three schools of the Board with programming fully integrated to permit greater continuity in

<sup>13</sup> Recent studies include the Sharing Our Success (2004 and 2007) case studies in Aboriginal Schooling, published by the Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education.

<sup>14</sup> Source: Akwesasne community website: <http://www.akwesasne.ca>, accessed August 29, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Source: Chapter on AMBE pp.29-56, In Sharing Our Success: More Case Studies of Successful Aboriginal Schooling, SAEE, Kelowna, 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

planning, curriculum development and professional development. This program has led to measurable increases in student retention in the elementary years.

The AMBE has also developed a Mohawk K-4 immersion program that has generated greater oral fluency among elementary students. A large part of the success of this program has been the design of a holistic language environment within the school in which a multi-grade group is integrated into one setting referred to as Skahwatsi:ra or 'family'. In this single space, 35 K-4 students are taught by 5 staff members all of whom speak the Mohawk language while teaching all elementary course content. Instruction for this program is strongly integrated with Mohawk daily ceremonies, music and video and focuses on the development of oral proficiency in Mohawk language. According to the AMBE, the immersion programs in place have already produced more than 50 speakers with a high level of proficiency (i.e. able to conduct conversations and think in Mohawk) and a larger number with basic proficiency.<sup>17</sup>

### Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey

In April of 1999, related federal and provincial legislation under the title, *Mi'kmaq Education Act* signaled the return of jurisdiction for on-reserve education to First Nations in Nova Scotia. This transfer covers both K-12 education and post-secondary student support. Through provisions in this legislation, the Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey (MK) was established as an umbrella organization to provide education funding and educational advice to individual Mi'kmaq school boards and help establish standards for Mi'kmaq education. This organization has been cited as a successful model for education administration in indigenous communities.

The MK is governed by a Board of Directors made up of the chiefs of participating communities. Currently, 10 of the 13 Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq First Nations have opted to participate within the organization.<sup>18</sup> The objectives of the MK are:

- To assist and provide services to individual Bands in the exercise of their jurisdiction over education;
- To assist individual Bands in the administration and management of education for the Mi'kmaq Nation in Nova Scotia;
- To provide the Mi'kmaq Nation in Nova Scotia a facility to research, develop and implement initiatives and new directions in the education of Mi'kmaq people; and
- To coordinate and facilitate the development of short and long-term education policies and objectives for each Mi'kmaq community in Nova Scotia, in consultation with the Mi'kmaq communities.

While many successful initiatives have been initiated by MK, this section will focus on the recent development of a 2007 School Improvement Framework initiated by MK in partnership with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). The purpose of this

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Source: Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey website: <http://kinu.ns.ca/milestones.php> accessed on Aug. 27, 2007.

framework involves reviewing baseline data on school performance and student achievement, identifying strengths and needs, setting priorities, reaching consensus on achievable goals and taking specific actions to achieve the desired results.<sup>19</sup>

The MK school improvement process is school-centred with school administration and staff taking on significant roles in the process to design and implement school improvement plans. Validated by external teams drawn from other Mi'kmaq schools, these improvement plans are central to the process and include goals, strategies and actions related to the following areas:

- Mi'kmaq language and culture development of the children;
- Programs and services for the children; and
- Facility and environment improvements and community connections.

Regular assessment and reporting of incremental progress towards meeting goals are also key aspects of the improvement process. In association with the MK school improvement framework, MK is currently developing a customized database management system (Datapro FN 4.5) designed specifically for use in Mi'kmaq communities that covers Early Childhood Education, K-12 and Post-secondary student achievement under a holistic vision of student success beyond traditional achievement statistics. Overall, the structure of this process is believed to encourage local ownership over the implementation of school improvements and to build evidence-based decision making at both the school and regional level.

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<sup>19</sup> Source: Orr and MacCormick (2007) Framework for School Improvement in Mi'kmaq Schools, Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey.

## International Examples of Indigenous Education

In order to broaden the discussion of indigenous education at the Summit, international examples have been selected to highlight successful models of indigenous education globally. The following section outlines work undertaken by three peoples: Sámi, Māori and Yu'pik. The work initiated by these peoples has increasingly been recognized internationally and within the academic community as successful models of educational transformation.

### Sámi

The Sámi are an indigenous people living within a region of northernmost Europe called Sápmi. This homeland stretches across approximately 300,000 – 400,000 km<sup>2</sup> of four nation-states – Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. The Sámi way of life has and continues to be strongly connected to reindeer herding and the land of Sápmi in contrast to the increasing presence of modern industries throughout the region. The roughly 100,000 Sámi living throughout Sápmi speak a diversity of Sámi languages with an estimated 70 to 80 per cent of all Sámi speaking North Sámi.

Sámi have been struggling for decades to take back control of their education system. These efforts have culminated in a diverse number of successful educational initiatives and programs. One of the earliest changes came with the introduction of Sámi as the language of instruction in some schools as early as 1967. Since that time, federally funded schools have been established that teach in the Sámi language from grades 1 to 10. These schools are now staffed by a stable cohort of fluent Sámi-speaking teachers. Specialized secondary schools have also been developed to train students in traditional reindeer herding and traditional craft skills. Successful curriculum developments include the ability for secondary students to write their matriculation exams in the Sámi language.

Notable success in Sámi education can be seen in the establishment of three post-secondary colleges in Sápmi that are specifically mandated to serve Sámi people and to also teach Sámi culture and language: Sámi Educational Centre in Jokkmokk, Sweden, the Educational Centre of the Sámi Area in Anár, Finland which are both open colleges with adult education programs, and the Sámi University College in Guovdageaidnu, Norway.

Established in 1989, the Sámi University College in Norway has made significant strides in developing a strong Sámi education model since it is a fully Sámi institution where the principal language of instruction is Sámi and all teaching and research staff are Sámi. The content and structure of the school is grounded in the Sámi language and culture and offers courses and programs in higher education relevant to Sámi people including teacher training and journalism.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Source: Sámi University College website: <http://www.samiskhs.no/>, accessed August 28, 2007.

As of 2007, the College has merged with the Nordic Sámi Institute. This research institute was established in 1973 with a mission to strengthen and develop Sámi language, culture and social life through research as seen in a pan-Sámi perspective. This partnership allows for the development of ongoing educational research projects in Sámi language conducted by staff at either the institute or the College. Through this research agenda, College staff are also encouraged to continue their own graduate and post-graduate studies.

Another unique process adopted by the Sámi University College is a recent redesign of its curriculum. This process has formed an important component of this institution's ability to build a training program fully based on indigenous methods and structures. Also worthy of note is the fact that the college provides nationally recognized teaching certification in which teachers trained through this program are eligible to teach anywhere in the country.

## Māori

The Māori are an indigenous people living in New Zealand. In 2006, 525,329 people stated they were Māori, representing approximately 15 percent of the New Zealand population.<sup>21</sup> Nearly one half of the Māori population are under 25 years of age with approximately 30 percent speaking the Māori language at home to their preschool children.<sup>22</sup>

For many decades, Māori have been developing unique and effective programs to support the transformation of Māori education to better reflect Māori language and culture. These programs are helping create a seamless system across educational boundaries such that Māori children can now enter early childhood education and continue through to post-secondary graduate studies all in institutions with Māori as the language of instruction and content formed using Māori knowledge and values.

The most successful development at the early childhood education level is the establishment of language nests, or Te Kōhanga Reo, throughout the country. The Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust was set up as a Charitable Trust in 1983 as the umbrella organization for all Kōhanga Reo and acts as guardian of Te Kōhanga Reo teaching. Numbering 486 across New Zealand in 2006,<sup>23</sup> these sites have a unique structure for children up to the age of 4 with instructional content that focuses on revitalization of the Māori language and Māori nation building on a more general level. According to the Ministry of Education in 2006 there were approximately 9,480 Māori children enrolled in a Kōhanga Reo.

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<sup>21</sup> Source: Statistics New Zealand, <http://www.stats.govt.nz>, accessed October 21, 2007

<sup>22</sup> Source: <http://Māori.org.nz>, accessed August 10, 2007 and Ministry of Maori Development 2007 Language Survey at <http://www.tpk.govt.nz/publications/docs/factsheets/fs-tpk-maori-lang-2007.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> Source: Address to UN general assembly on Indigenous peoples: *The Revival of Indigenous Languages: New Zealand Experience* <http://www.kohanga.ac.nz/docs/UNAddressMay21.pdf>, accessed September 3, 2007.

Māori language is also taught in many schools as a subject and also through Māori bilingual/immersion education programs often delivered in separate streams or schools (*kura kaupapa Māori*) that adhere to Māori values and protocols.

Examples of recent institutional developments at the post-secondary level include the establishment of traditional Māori centres for learning called Wānanga as outlined in the New Zealand Education Act of 1989. One such institution of higher learning is the Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa<sup>24</sup> where the method of teaching is based upon Māori traditional knowledge with courses taught using a holistic approach and based on group learning or 'hui' rather than through individual learning.

The Poumanawa Mātauranga Whakaakoranga, for example, is a three-year teaching degree offer at this institution and designed to produce teachers to teach at primary level in tikanga Māori learning environments (full Māori immersion). The course is delivered in the Māori language and fully integrates a computer-based distance learning component which enables students to continue studying while working in distant communities. As a result, all students are expected to have a computer to access the on-line instruction, communication tools and course content.

Wānanga institutions are noteworthy because their structure and content are based on the Māori language, culture and worldview as seen in the physical learning environment (e.g. incorporating spaces for dance and performances) and content delivery structures (e.g. group work rather than individual work). A significant majority of staff are Māori and in most cases Māori language is the principal language of instruction. These centres have been instrumental in supporting a growing number of Māori language immersion schools throughout New Zealand as well as having been an important factor in the significant increase in Māori receiving a doctoral level education.

## Yu'pik

Like the Northwest Territories, the American state of Alaska is home to a diversity of indigenous people's. This paper will focus on one particular group in the state: Yu'pik. The Yu'pik are an indigenous people related to Inuit located in communities of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region of Western Alaska.<sup>25</sup> Yu'pik public schools are administered through the Alaska Department of Education through the Lower Kuskokwim School District. This district has 27 schools: five in the regional centre of Bethel and the remainder in 21 rural villages ranging in size from about 60 to 600 people. Of the approximately 3600 students in the school district, 91 percent are Alaska Native.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Source : Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa website : <http://www.twor.ac.nz>, accessed August 15, 2007.

<sup>25</sup> Source: The Yup'ik bilingual curriculum of the Lower Kuskokwim School District. Edited by Delena Norris-Tull, University of Alaska Fairbanks, 1999: accessed August 29, 2007 at: <http://ankn.uaf.edu/curriculum/Yupiaq/DelenaNorrisTull/aKuskokwim%20Delta.htm>

<sup>26</sup> Note: Alaska does not distinguish at the state level between various Alaska Native populations in their administration of education. Instead, individual schools are allowed considerable freedom to offer programming that reflects local cultural and linguistic needs.

As a people, Yu'pik have been successful in instituting significant changes to the education system to better serve their communities. One noteworthy initiative in the region is the distance learning program offered through the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Through a campus in the regional centre of Bethel, the distance learning program offers a combination of workplace skills, internships, and on the job training, with basic skills improvements in reading, writing, and mathematics. The program is delivered through one or two-week intensive training courses in Bethel, village-based training, audio-conferencing, web-based instruction and / or campus-based instruction in Fairbanks.

Another example of a successful development in post-secondary education is the recent establishment of an educational and vocational learning centre called Yuut Elitaurviat (Yuut) in Bethel. The Yuut Elitaurviat is dedicated to providing training and education opportunities for the people of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region and provides services to both youth and adults needing additional skills to enter high skilled, high wage jobs or further baccalaureate or graduate programs.

Yu'pik education has also been taking significant steps in the development of integrated educational research projects through the University of Alaska Fairbanks. For roughly 25 years, university staff members and Yu'pik educators have been engaged in research specifically addressing the needs of Yu'pik teachers in the region. This research agenda has focused on examining pedagogy that is appropriate for Yu'pik students and culminated in the publication of an extensive record of academic literature.<sup>27</sup>

The development of partnerships between Yu'pik Elders, teachers and academics has led to a unique model of collaboration. Recent developments resulting from these partnerships include the design of Yu'pik math curriculum materials based in part on past research findings. With material modules focusing on topics such as star navigation, measurement and cultural activities, these documents have become extensively used at the classroom level throughout the region. Overall, these materials represent tangible evidence of a concerted effort to develop research-based change in Yu'pik schools that resembles a 'third-way': a new way of schooling that fully integrates Yup'ik cultural knowledge and 'western' knowledge of education.

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<sup>27</sup> Referring to theme issue in Journal of Native American Education, Vol.44 (2005) on Alaskan Education research.

### Summary Table of Other Indigenous Examples

Indigenous Group	Programs/ Initiatives/ Policies	Key Transformative Conditions	Key Partnerships
Mohawk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of Akwesasne Mohawk Board of Education to control three local schools</li> <li>• Holistic Mohawk Immersion Program</li> <li>• Seamless Early Years Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable cohort of qualified indigenous teachers</li> <li>• Emphasis on early tracking of students and continuous evaluation to inform evidence-based decision making</li> <li>• Sufficient supports to and emphasis on Mohawk language programs with parental support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration between local education institutions</li> <li>• Partnership with university for specific training (McGill University)</li> </ul>
Mi'kmaq	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nova Scotia and Federal legislation on Mi'kmaq control of education</li> <li>• Establishment of Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey regional organization to support Mi'kmaq education</li> <li>• Locally developed long-term school improvement process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional collaboration among schools</li> <li>• Control of education at community level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual schools and school boards working together to support common regional goals for Mi'kmaq education</li> </ul>
Sami	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of indigenous post-secondary institutions with indigenous language of instruction</li> <li>• Curriculum redesign and development of targeted programs to more reflect indigenous culture and language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable cohort of qualified fluent-speaking indigenous teachers and academics</li> <li>• Emphasis on using indigenous language at all levels</li> <li>• Integration of research and educational agenda to further develop use of indigenous</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership between post-secondary institutions and research institutes</li> </ul>

Indigenous Group	Programs/ Initiatives/ Policies	Key Transformative Conditions	Key Partnerships
Māori	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National legislation that supports indigenous education in the form of New Zealand Education Act</li> <li>• Development of full immersion programs and schools at the elementary and secondary level</li> <li>• Establishment of Wananga indigenous post-secondary institutions to provide wide range of programming in indigenous culture and language</li> </ul>	<p>knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad network of early years language nests to support revitalization of indigenous language</li> <li>• Community support to revitalize the language among youth and adults</li> <li>• Development of a cohort of indigenous teachers and academics to support indigenous education at all levels</li> <li>• Seamless and accessible programming from early years to post-secondary level education in indigenous language and culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships between schools and education institutions at the national level</li> <li>• National charities established to support the work of individual schools and centres</li> </ul>
Yu'pik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of post-secondary and vocational centres to offer services at the regional level</li> <li>• Development of indigenous teaching materials based on locally developed research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration between academics, indigenous teachers and Elders</li> <li>• Establishment of immersion programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships between regional universities for teacher training and research on Yu'pik education</li> </ul>

## Key Factors Relating to Policy and Practice

Based on the literature review and interviews of this paper and supported by the research outlined in other papers submitted for the Summit, it is possible to identify several key factors that have led to transformative change in indigenous and Inuit schools systems. These key factors include:

### **1. Control of Curriculum Development and Pedagogy**

Research and a majority of responses outline how successful transformation of indigenous education was predicated by indigenous control of indigenous education. The redesign of curriculum to fully reflect indigenous knowledge and worldview is one key transformation as a result of educational control in the hands of indigenous peoples. Curriculum in this sense is not seen as an add-on, but as a complete articulation of teaching and learning content and practice developed by and for indigenous schools.

### **2. Sustained Investment in Teacher, Principal and Education Leadership Training and Capacity Building**

Those indigenous or Inuit schools or jurisdictions which had committed a long-term investment in the recruitment, training and retention of indigenous educators and administrators appeared to have achieved significant successes in their system.

### **3. Sustained Investment in Language and Cultural Programming**

Respondents from all jurisdictions outlined the importance of sustained investment in indigenous language and cultural programming from the early years to the post-secondary level. Efforts in this area ranged from language revitalization in those regions where the language was threatened to other regions where the language was in a healthier position and in need of ongoing supports to maintain levels of fluency and literacy. The development of specific policy supporting Inuit language and cultural programs based in Inuit cultural values was also deemed as an important step towards transforming Inuit education systems.

### **4. Community, Parent and Elder Engagement**

A substantial body of research and a significant majority of respondents pointed to the importance of fostering a greater community voice in education through parent and elder involvement in schools and school governance. In this way, ownership of education and commitment for change is shared throughout the community and educational success and community health are viewed as complimentary goals. Elder advisory bodies were cited as models in which traditional knowledge can be shared between generations and holistically integrated into education policy and practice. These and other culturally preferred practices reflect the principle of the collective responsibility to support students in school.

## **5. Shared Research and Dialogue on Education**

Successful transformation of education among international indigenous groups has been grounded in a parallel investment in, and sharing of, academic and applied research on their respective systems. In contrast, research in Canada on Inuit education is very limited. Respondents pointed to the importance of building research capacity in Inuit education, including investment in Inuit researchers, research support, and an inter-regional forum on Inuit education where research and best practices can be shared.

## **6. Assessment and Reporting**

Changes introduced into education systems must be measured through systematic evaluation of successes and failures and through the identification of persistent gaps. The use of indicators and benchmarks to monitor aspects of a system such as investments in education, participate rates, retention and success of students was cited as a critical component to reinforcing an indigenous education system. Developing appropriate assessment tools for Inuit students is also considered integral to transforming schools systems to reflect an Inuit holistic vision of student achievement and community well-being.

## **7. Sustained Investment in Infrastructure and Operations**

Respondents suggest that that sustained investment in educational infrastructure and operations support transformative change. Examples of investment include building of school infrastructure, and operations capacity to maintain a realistic pupil-educator ratio, and appropriate programs, services and supports for students.

## Conclusion

The research and consultations informing this paper outline how the educational systems in Inuit regions share similar challenges beyond their respective borders. Issues such as the threat to Inuit language and culture and the need to support Inuit youth are common to Inuit communities throughout Canada. Innovative and holistic educational approaches from early childhood through to adult and post-secondary programs are being developed in various regions. A significant possibility exists to share these approaches across jurisdictions.

Overall, transformations to education systems among indigenous people are initiated firstly with community and political leadership. Examples in this paper point to the role leaders play in a process to develop a new vision for education that stresses indigenous knowledge and worldview and the participation of parents, Elders and other community members as partners within the education system. A wide range of efforts are necessary to support successful change: investment in research, monitoring and sharing of best practices to support reforms; sustained investment in the training and development of local educators, service providers, administrators, language specialists and researchers; and a corresponding investment in curriculum and teaching practices that incorporate and reflect an indigenous worldview. These changes are not necessarily linear, nor do they occur individually, but rather involve sustained overlapping efforts at all levels.

## List of Individuals Consulted

Region	Name	Position
<b>Inuit Regions</b>		
Nunatsiavut	Darryl Shiwak	Minister of Education, Nunatsiavut Government
	Sarah Townley	Program Specialist, Labrador Board of Education
	Doris Flower	Vice-Principal, Amos Comenius Memorial School, Hopedale
Nunavik	Sarah Airo	Coordinator, School Support, Kativik School Board
	Betsy Annahatak	Associate Director, School Services, Kativik School Board
	Valentina de Krom	Assistant Director, Teacher Education and Research, Kativik School Board
Nunavut	Kathy Okpik	Deputy Minister, Department of Education, Government of Nunavut
	Cathy MacGregor	Director of Curriculum Services, Department of Education, Government of Nunavut
	Navarana Beveridge	Policy Analyst, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
	Peter Geikie	Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Education, Government of Nunavut
Inuvialuit	Sandra Elanik	Inuvialuit Education Foundation
	Pauline Gordon	Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Education, Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT)
	John Stewart	Acting Director, Early Childhood and School Services, Department of Education, GNWT
	Don Morrison	Director, School Operations and Development, Department of Education, GNWT
<b>Other Canadian and International Indigenous Examples</b>		
Mohawk	Barry Montour	Director, Mohawk Akwesasne Board of Education
Mi'kmaq	John Jerome Paul	Director, Education Programming Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey
	Stephen Augustine	Mi'kmaq Hereditary Chief and Curator, Canadian Museum of Civilization
Māori	Paula Rawiri	Senior Manager, Māori Education, Ministry of Education, Government of New Zealand
Sámi	Jan Henry Keskitalo	Professor, Sámi University College, Norway
Alaska	Jerry Lipka	Professor, University of Alaska Fairbanks
	Eric Fry	Public Relations Specialist, Alaska Department of Education