

# amaujaq

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National Centre for Inuit Education  
Kanatami Inuit Ilinniarniliriningat  
Centre national de scolarisation des Inuits

## News

We have witnessed a great deal of momentum in these past few months with the implementation of the National Strategy on Inuit Education. With each milestone we are getting positive feedback on the need for Inuit across Inuit Nunangat to work together to improve outcomes in education. The history of this project has already been one of doing things not done before, as you will read in this newsletter. The release of *First Canadians, Canadians First: The National Strategy on Inuit Education* in June 2011 marked the first time in the 80-year history with formal education that Inuit from across the Arctic collaborated on a common vision for education. This is a significant achievement because Inuit education is delivered through four separate public education systems operating across two provinces and two territories and based on different historical contexts, legislation, and systems of governance. Yet, for decades, Inuit leaders in each of the four Inuit regions – Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut (Figure 1) – have called for fundamental and complementary changes to their education systems to reflect Inuit culture, language, history and worldview. The National Strategy provides 10 recommendations (Figure 2) to close gaps in education systems common to all Inuit regions and to address the gathering storm in Inuit

education where roughly 75% of Inuit children are not completing high school and some who do graduate find that their education doesn't compare to that of non-Aboriginal Canadians.

Of those 10 recommendations, the National Committee has identified 4 recommendations for priority implementation over the next 3 years. They include:

1. Mobilizing Parents.
2. Increasing Access to Quality Early Childhood Education.
3. Examining the Feasibility of a Standardized Writing System in the Inuit Language.
4. Increasing the Capacity to Measure Success in Education.

This is the first update on the implementation phase of these priorities. A lot is planned for the coming months, including the launch of a national initiative on engaging parents in education.

I want to thank all our early funders and partners who have collaborated with us and are making a difference in Inuit education. Nakurmiik. Merci. Thank you.



Mary Simon, Chairperson  
National Committee on Inuit Education



(Chairperson Mary Simon)

Figure 1  
Four Inuit Regions in Canada



## The National Committee on Inuit Education

The National Committee on Inuit Education guides the implementation of the Strategy. The Committee is chaired by former ITK President Mary Simon and its members represent the 13 signatories to the 2009 Inuit Education Accord. The Committee reflects the collaborative approach that Inuit have taken in developing a National Strategy. The four provincial/territorial governments responsible for delivering education are members of the Committee along with the Inuit land claims organizations in each of the four regions. The National Committee also includes members from the four national Inuit organizations – Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Inuit Circumpolar Council (Canada) and the National Inuit Youth Council.

Figure 2  
The National Strategy's 10 Recommendations



## Accomplishments since June 2011

Following the release of the Strategy in June 2011, effort has been focused on four key aspects of implementation:

1. Promoting the strategy as a collaborative initiative between Inuit, governments, school boards, corporations and the non-government sector.
2. Fundraising in support of implementation of the Strategy.
3. Establishment of the Amaujaq Centre for Inuit Education.
4. Implementing the four priority initiatives.

## 1. Promoting the strategy as a collaborative initiative between Inuit, governments, school boards, corporations and the non-government sector.

The Strategy continues to draw national attention for its proactive vision of what needs to be done to close gaps in Inuit education, with the goal of graduating more students. Chairperson Mary Simon has been invited to speak at a number of national events including the 21st Century Learning

Leadership Forum in Banff, Alberta, the Circumpolar Conference on Indigenous Education in Nunavut, and the Indigenous Education Summit in Niagara-on-the-Lake. There has been a real interest at the national level about the partnership model that was established to complete the Strategy and in establishing the Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education and this has attracted a number of national sponsors wanting to partner with Inuit on the implementation of the Strategy.

## 2. Fundraising in Support of the Implementation of the Strategy:

**Fundraising for the Strategy has followed three tracks:**

1. **Founding Partners: Vale Canada Limited** is participating as a founding partner for the Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education along with the four **Regional Inuit Organizations**. All have committed to three years of operational funding to build the national capacity to implement the Strategy.
2. **Project-Specific Funding:** Chairperson Simon has been actively pursuing opportunities for funding from philanthropic or non-government sources. This has resulted in a \$300,000 funding contribution from the Counselling Foundation of Canada for the standardized writing system initiative. The **Government of Canada, CIBC, CISCO**, and the **Royal Bank of Canada** have provided funding toward the Mobilizing Parents initiative. The **McCain Foundation** is providing in-kind support for the ECE initiative and the **Paul Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative** is collaborating on a pilot education initiative in Nunavut. **ArcticNet** is providing funding toward a Forum on Research in Inuit Education. The Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education has received funding to review the Nunavut Learning Object Repository, (virtual library) and similar libraries that may

exist with the potential for expansion into all four Inuit regions. The creation of an Inuit Nunangat virtual library that allows students and teachers to freely access a common database to retrieve books, multimedia courses, documents, historical audio/visual materials, curriculum resources and professional development programs supports the National Strategy on Inuit Education recommendation number 5, the development of an initiative to create an Inuit-centred curriculum and common standards.

3. **Governments** continue to be apprised of developments with the Strategy and their representatives are participating in the implementation working groups who are developing action plans. Governments have indicated that they will participate on a project by project basis once implementation plans are finalized.

*In total, \$2,000,000 has been raised in the last 18 months.*

## 3. Establishment of the Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education:



*(Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami President Terry Audla, Official Opening of the Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education, February 5, 2013)*

On February 5, 2013 the official opening of the Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education occurred in Ottawa at the Nunavut

Sivuniksavut Training Program Centre. The opening of the Amaujaq Centre was witnessed by a number of dignitaries, National Committee on Inuit Education members, sponsors, media and friends. The ceremony recognized the many sponsors of the Amaujaq Centre including the four **Regional Inuit Organizations** and **Vale Canada**. The Amaujaq Centre is named in honour of Inuit leader Jose Amaujaq Kusugak. Jose's wife Nellie and her four children attended the event.

The National Committee on Inuit Education has met by conference call on several occasions in 2012 and held a face-to-face on February 5 and 6, 2013 in Ottawa following the official opening of Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education.



*(Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami President Terry Audla with the family of Mr. Jose Amaujaq Kusugak, February 5, 2013)*

#### 4. Implementation of the four Priority Initiatives:

Work has commenced on all four initiatives.

- **Mobilizing Parents (Strategy Recommendation # 1):** A Mobilizing Parents Working Group has now completed a work plan, and is finalizing details for a national campaign on 'getting kids to school every day, all day, well rested, and well fed'. The national campaign will include an inspirational video, town hall meetings led by Chairperson Simon, media placements

and the recruitment of Inuit leaders in all four regions to serve as campaign champions. The National Committee is also examining best practices in parent mobilization campaigns that have been successful in other jurisdictions.

Chairperson Simon is setting up meetings with Government and Inuit Organizational Leaders to plan a roundtable discussion on the importance of our youth staying in school and parental involvement in their children's education. The first of these sessions was held March 27th. Work continues on fund-raising to support this multi-year initiative through 2013-2014.

- **Increasing Access to Quality Early Childhood Education (Strategy Recommendation # 4):**

The Inuit Early Childhood Development Working Group and the National Committee on Inuit Education have commenced their work towards implementing the recommendations of the Strategy. Discussions are ongoing with **McCain Family Foundation** for leveraging in-kind support for the Early Childhood Development initiative. Work continues on fund-raising to support this multi-year initiative through 2013-2014.

The Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education participated in the Nunavut Early Childhood Education Conference held from March 7 to 11 in Iqaluit.

- **Examining the Feasibility of a Standardized Inuit Language Writing System (Strategy Recommendation # 9):**

Key to building a bilingual education system in schools in Canada's Arctic is the ability to produce, publish and distribute common Inuit language learning materials. A

standardized Inuit language writing system with common grammar, spelling and terminology will facilitate the production of these materials. Currently Canadian Inuit use two different writing systems – Inuktitut Syllabic and Roman orthography that uses the latin alphabet.

An Inuit language task group, Atausiq Inuktitut Titirausiq, has now been established to examine the feasibility of a common Inuit language writing system. A Terms of Reference for the Atausiq Inuktitut Titirausiq Task Group has been approved and it held their first in-person meeting on February 13 and 14, 2013 in Ottawa. The **Counselling Foundation of Canada** has provided partial funding for this initiative for three years.



*(NCIE Chairperson Mary Simon with the Atausiq Inuktitut Titirausiq Task Group February 13, 2013)*

#### **Increasing the Capacity to Measure Success in Inuit Education (Strategy Recommendation # 10):**

The Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education and its partners convened a **Forum on Inuit Education Research** to address the large gap in Inuit-specific information and data related to education, and to outline a course of action for future research on Inuit-specific education. The Forum was held the week of February 18, 2013, and

was funded in part by **ArcticNet** Centre of Excellence. There were 35 participants from three Inuit regions and 14 academic researchers in attendance. The outcome of the Forum will be the development of a national framework for research in Inuit education that will set out the principles and practices of research that Inuit want to incorporate in future research practices.

Following the three day forum on research the Amaujaq Centre received an invitation from Laval University to participate in a discussion of a project examining Inuit post-secondary education success.



*(Participants at the Forum on Inuit Education Research, February 20, 2013)*

**For more information on the National Strategy on Inuit Education or to discuss funding partner opportunities, please contact:**

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**Coming Events for Promotion/Discussion of National Strategy on Inuit Education**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>
Nunavut/Northwest Territories Leaders Roundtable discussion on the importance of our youth staying in school and parental involvement in their children's education	March 27, 2013
Roundtable: National Strategy on Inuit Education - Toronto	Tentative (TBD)– April, 2013
Webinar – Inuit Education and the National Strategy on Inuit Education	April 11, 2013
Nunatsiavut Youth Summit	April 25 to 28, 2013
A Taste of the Arctic	April 29, 2013
Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami Board Meeting	April 30, 2013
Northwest Territories Education Roundtable Meetings	April 30 to May 2, 2013
Canadian Teachers Federation Presidents Forum – First Nations, Metis, Inuit Education	July 9, 10, 2013
National Inuit Youth Summit	August 16 to 21, 2013
Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education Regional Tours	September/October 2013
Inuit Nunangat Conference – Supports for Youth with Learning Disabilities	2014 - TBD

**National Strategy on Inuit Education Committee Members:**

Mary Simon	Chairperson, National Committee on Inuit Education
Kathy Okpik	Deputy Minister, Department Education, Nunavut
Andy Moorhouse	Makivik Corporation, Corporate Secretary
Jodie Lane	Ilinniatusut UKautjigiaji/Education Counsellor - Nunatsiavut
Natan Obed	Director of Social and Cultural Development, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
Jeannie Arreak-Kullualik (alternate)	Policy Analyst, Education and Language, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
Francoise Ducros	Assistant Deputy Minister, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
Candace Morgan	Chief Human Resources Officer, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation
Rita Mueller	Assistant Deputy Minister, Department Of Education, Culture and Employment, NWT
Janet Vivian Walsh	Deputy Minister, Department of Education, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Henry Windeler	Director of Education, Labrador School Board
Christie Brown	Services a\ la Communaute et aux Autochtones, Ministere de l'Education
Harriet Keleutak	Secretary General, Kativik School Board
Elizabeth Annahatak	National Inuit Youth Council
Carole Simon	Inuit Circumpolar Council
Melissa Santoro Greyeyes-Brant	Manager Socio-Economic Development, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada