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COALITION OF NUNAVUT DEAs

COALITION OF NUNAVUT DEAs
TELECONFERENCE
JUNE 23, 2008
MINUTES

Executive Present: Jeeteeta Merkosak Chairperson
Simon Kuliktana
Jake Ikperiar
Johnny Kootook
Jesse Idlout
Lori Idlout
Chantal Maley
Alice Ladner – Executive Director

Teleconference started at 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Purpose

The teleconference was set up to discuss Bill 21 and the submission we would send to the Standing Committee on Health and Education.

Concerns Raised over Bill 21

The Coalition expressed concern that even though Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit, Inuit Culture and Inuit Societal values are mentioned throughout Bill 21, there is no place in the Bill that explains or directs how these values will be incorporated into the schools, how programs will be evaluated, and how the success or failure will be measured.

Section 144(1) in Bill 21 allows DEAs to hire people to support the school programs. The question is: Where do DEAs get the funds to pay people that may be hired? Most DEAs only get enough money to cover present expenses. The Department of Education (DoE) has stated that an extra \$14 million will go into education if Bill 21 passes, but there is no breakdown on where the money will be spent. The Coalition requested that the Bill include a Section giving DEAs the authority to prepare their own budgets and present them to the Minister for approval. This was not added to Bill 21.

One of the DEAs had a problem concerning who has authority to extend a principal's contract. This issue was brought to the Coalition's attention. Our Executive Director, Alice Ladner, reviewed the *Act* presently in use and found a section in the Regulations stating that DEAs shall "provide direction to and supervise the Superintendent in the recruitment, hiring, employment, discipline and dismissal of education staff and school staff in accordance with the *Act*, the regulations made under the *Act* and the *Public Service Act*." The members question why DEAs have never been informed of this right and are given very little, if any, say in the hiring, discipline, and dismissal of staff. Although this authority appears to be in the present *Act*, it is missing in Bill 21. Many of the members expressed concerns over not knowing what their roles and

responsibilities are. Their concern was based on being told by their RSO that they could or could not do something with no documentation to back up what was being said. Many times there is a complaint about a teacher, or other school staff. But when the DEA goes to their RSO, nothing is ever heard about the issue again. The Coalition has requested that the Executive Director check into this provision and find out what the legal standing is for DEAs concerning hiring, disciplining, and firing of education and school staff.

Nunavut Disabilities submitted concerns to the Standing Committee about Inclusive Education. They felt that there were Sections in Bill 21 that were unclear and inadequate concerning inclusive education. There was concern over the inclusion of 'costs' in providing materials and other requirements for special needs students. An amendment was made to Section 41(2) which removed the word 'costs' but replaced it with 'resources' which basically has the same meaning, or the 'resources' may not be available due to their 'cost'.

Another concern was Section 125 – Delegation of powers. This Section allows the Minister to delegate most of his powers to 'employees in the department.' These employees may not have as much knowledge or background information as a DEA, but would be able to tell DEAs what to do.

Concerns were expressed about the Commission Scolaire Francophone de Nunavut (CSFN) being given many of the authorities and powers that DEAs had requested, and none of these powers or authorities were given to the DEAs.

When discussion of Bill 21 was completed, it was decided that a letter would be prepared and sent to the Standing Committee. This letter will express our concerns with the Bill, and also the Coalition's unease that no major changes were made to Bill 21 that would correct some of the omissions, confusion, and lack of DEA authority noted by the DEAs, Coalition, Nunavut Disabilities, and NTI.

A short discussion took place on holding a teleconference to discuss the AGM which will be held in September. The next teleconference will take place on Wednesday, July 2, 2008. All the members are able to be present.

The meeting finished at 4:20

Date

Chairperson

Date

Office Administrator