

Forty Years of Struggle and Still no Right to Inuit Education in Nunavut

DEREK RASMUSSEN

ABSTRACT: In this article issues related to policy and education in the Canadian Arctic are critically put to question. The focus is on the struggle for Inuit education, language issues, and supporting minority rights, with pragmatic solutions proposed to the problems confronting Nunavut.

KEYWORDS: Canadian arctic, Inuit education, Inuit language, Nunavut, Nunavut schools.

After 40 years of negotiating a land claim, a new territory, and a new government, how is it possible that Inuit still do not have their own school system in Nunavut?

What do you think of when you hear the word *Nunavut*? Polar bears? The Canadian Arctic? Perhaps you think of Inuit, the majority population, 85% of the people in the new territory?

But do you think of an entire school system that does not operate in the Inuit language? Do you think of Inuit language students studying an Alberta curriculum in English schools run by Ontario and Newfoundland teachers?

That is the sad reality. There is no school in Nunavut that offers K-12 education in the Inuit language, the mother tongue spoken by 75% of Inuit (Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, 2007, p. 18). There is one Francophone school board in Nunavut which gets to operate its own K-12 French school, but there are no Inuit school boards. There are district education “authorities” with no authority, merely carrying out instructions sent by the Minister of Education of Nunavut – the same Nunavut government spending \$3,400 each year for language education for each Francophone in the territory and only \$48.50 on Inuktitut education for each Inuk (p. 19).

What should be obvious is that Nunavut’s 10,000 Inuit students do not have the same rights as their 40 or so Francophone schoolmates.¹ As a French parent, your child can go to the new \$5 million French school in Iqaluit. And as an English parent, you will be able to send your kids to any one of the other 41 schools in Nunavut where they will get instruction in their own language from mostly southern teachers. But

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for an Inuk parent, your child will be going to school in the English language because only two schools offer Inuktitut instruction beyond Grade 3 (and then only to Grade 6), and the remaining schools offer only 45 minutes a day of Inuktitut (Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, *Saqqiqpuq*, 2007, p. 18). Despite living in a territory with the highest number of aboriginal language speakers in Canada, as an Inuk parent you will likely have to watch your child lose that language and culture because the new Education Act passed in the territory last September virtually guarantees that there will not be enough Inuit language teachers or Inuit curriculum until 2019 or later.

The long time-lag is precarious because the erosion of the Inuit language may be at a tipping point. Census Canada's most recent study noted that Inuit language usage in Nunavut had declined 7% from 1991-2001, most likely due to "in-migration of English-speaking individuals" and the "continued prevalence of the English language in public service jobs" (Sorensen & Aylward, 2002, p. 21). If this trend continues, by the time the Government of Nunavut (GN) finally implements an Inuit curriculum and 85% Inuit teacher employment (two big "ifs"), targeted for 2019, the Inuit language will likely be a minority language in Nunavut, spoken by less than half the population.

How did this happen? Wasn't Nunavut supposed to be the answer to the dreams of Inuit? Yes it was. Have Inuit ever told Canada that they want their own education system? Yes, they have, repeatedly (as you'll see below). So, if Inuit have asked for their own school system, why can't they get one? And is there anything we can do to help?

These questions are the subject of the remainder of this article. The next few pages will outline the Inuit battle to gain control over education and language rights, and provide a snapshot of the current state of those rights in Nunavut. Next, we look at the exclusion of Inuit rights from the territory's new Education Act which enshrines language protections for a few Francophone students while denying them to the Inuit majority, and finally cover some recommendations for improvement and what people in the south can do to help.

And don't be surprised if some of what you read shocks you; most southern Canadians probably won't know many of the things about Nunavut mentioned here. Many readers probably expect that Nunavut has an Inuit government (it does not – by law it has a non-ethnic public government); or readers might assume that Nunavut has Inuit school boards running its schools (it does not – the territory abolished all of its school boards – except the French one – nine years ago).

The starting point will be a short look back at the Inuit struggle for control of Inuit education.

*The Struggle for Inuit Language
and Education Rights: 1972-1990*

In 1972, Canadian Inuit held their own conference on education organized by the Eskimo Brotherhood under President Tagak Curley; at that time Inuit said they wanted their own teacher credential process which reflected their values, and an education system which passed on the Inuit way of life and emphasized the oral tradition of teaching. That same year, Inuk teacher Elizabeth Quaki delivered the following warning to a national meeting of Inuit in Pangnirtung: “As long as southern teachers and southern courses dominate schools, the Eskimo culture and heritage will continue to erode” (Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated – *Saqqiqpuq*, 2007, p. 12).

During the 1970s, Nunavut Inuit put forth dozens of reports and efforts to protect their language and education rights,² and by the 1980’s these efforts had coalesced into a battle to enshrine Inuit language and education rights, along with other rights, within a Nunavut land claim agreement. To this end, Inuit had organized themselves into the Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN), the group that would eventually sign a land claim with Canada (and then change its name to Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated – NTI). TFN’s first education and language clauses for their proposed land claim were presented to Canada in 1981, and then again in 1984 and 1986.

The Department of Indian Affairs was alarmed by Inuit insistence on putting protections for their language and culture into a constitutionally protected land claim – the consequences of extending constitutional protection to a language other than French or English were unknown. Quietly, behind the scenes, Ottawa commissioned research in 1983 into the cost of making Inuktitut an official language within Nunavut, while at the same time telling Inuit negotiators that this goal was a constitutional impossibility. Indian Affairs wanted to know the cost of an Inuit language school system “using Inuktitut as a language of instruction in school at all levels,” while recognizing that this would require “language training for all teachers” and “standardized Inuktitut curriculum development for all school levels including adult education.”³ Whatever the results of the research, it was not shared with Inuit negotiators.

The Inuit continued pressing Canada to acknowledge their language and education rights. During negotiations on August 24, 1987, TFN re-tabled this position:

An Inuk resident in Nunavut has the right to have his or her child receive primary and secondary school instruction in Inuktitut, and has the right to participate in the management of schools in Nunavut through the election of local committees and regional boards. (Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut, 1987, *Language Rights Position Paper*. Ottawa: TFN)

Donat Milortuk, President of TFN, followed that up three months later with a letter to Indian Affairs Minister Bill McKnight thanking him for meeting with TFN but reminding him that “It is TFN’s position that language rights must be negotiated within the context of the land claim agreement.” And TFN re-tabled their position – yet again including the Inuit right to Inuit education – in negotiations with Canada on April 11, 1988.

A year later (November 25, 1988), Minister McKnight wrote back to Milortuk, noting that in their November 1987 meeting, “we discussed at some length the importance of protecting and promoting Inuktitut. This is certainly an objective which I support, and a land claim settlement could contribute to that goal in a number of ways. However, the language guarantees which you are seeking go beyond the scope of comprehensive land claims policy.”

Whatever the outcome of the secret costing exercises,⁴ the federal government chose to block all Inuit efforts to put protections for their language and education rights into their land claim with Canada. It seemed then (and now) that Canada wanted access to Inuit land and the minerals underneath it, but was not interested in protecting the Inuit language and culture. As the Indian Affairs Minister said in his 1988 letter, the government’s position was that “the primary purpose of land claims negotiations is to provide certainty and clarity of rights with respect to lands and resources.” For other things, like language and education, the Indian Affairs Minister urged Inuit to appeal to lower levels of government, telling them “to cooperate with the territorial government in designing practical measures to promote the use of your language.”

Rebuffed but not discouraged, Inuit leaders decided to sign an Agreement-in-Principle with Canada in 1990, confident that they could secure language and education guarantees before a Final Agreement. Inside a massive igloo built for the historic AIP signing, TFN President Paul Quassa told Canada’s Indian Affairs Minister Tom Siddon that:

The Inuit agenda is comprehensive and still evolving ... it includes issues that the federal government has not been prepared to discuss. For example, we assert the right to use Inuktitut in all facets of life in Nunavut. ... We insist too that our children have the constitutional right to be educated in Inuktitut.

And Quassa warned Siddon that “TFN’s position remained that any constitution for a Nunavut Territory” must ensure that “residents of the Nunavut territory whose first language learned and still understood is Inuktitut have the right to have their children to receive primary and secondary school instruction in Inuktitut in Nunavut.”⁵

Reducing Inuit Education Rights to a “Right to Participate”

But in the end, all the carefully worded provisions to protect Inuit language and education rights were blocked by Ottawa. When Inuit leaders signed the final Nunavut Land Claim Agreement (NLCA) in 1993, all that was left to protect Inuit language and education was one clause, Article 32, saying that “Inuit have the right to participate in the development, design and delivery of social and cultural policies in Nunavut.”⁶

Has that “right” protected their language, culture, and education? Have Inuit been able to “design practical measures along with the territorial government” as the Minister proposed?

Inuit rely on four groups to represent their interests: NTI and the three Regional Inuit Associations (RIAs). Did any of these four groups manage to improve the “design, development and delivery” of education in Nunavut? Read on and then decide.

Gaining an Education Act: Losing Inuit Control

In 1999, the Northwest Territories (NWT) was divided in two, allowing the establishment of the Nunavut Territory, with a public government based in the capital of Iqaluit. This new government announced that its first Bill would be a new Education Act, “Bill One.” Coincidentally, Statistics Canada surveyed the Nunavut population around the same time and found that 97% of Inuit believed it was important to teach children using the Inuit language in school.

But Bill One dashed Inuit hopes: there was no mention of Inuit parents’ control of schools, or of running schools in the Inuit language for K-12. Instead Bill One gutted many of the positive things in the old NWT Education Act, removing provisions for local control, cultural

programs, teaching by elders, and removing the provision for “Aboriginal” schools.

Nonetheless, Inuit representatives from NTI and the RIAs agreed to try to reform the Bill through a joint working group, along with officials from the Department of Education. After a year’s effort, this joint working group made 84 recommendations to reform the bill, only to watch the government reject 60 of them, including all the important principles: Inuit control of schools, Inuit language of instruction, Inuit school boards with authority over budgets and teacher hiring, and Inuit curriculum.

Disillusioned, Inuit banded together with Nunavut’s Francophone community, (who were also upset that the bill ignored constitutional protections for French students) and together they defeated Bill One.

So government had to start again.

Round Two: Participation?

Things started better the next time around. In 2006, a Department of Education team led by veteran legislator Manitok Thompson and staffed with lawyer and teacher John Bainbridge and lawyer Susan Hardy conducted community consultations across the territory. Not surprisingly, the issue that got far and away the most feedback from communities was the need for more Inuit language and culture programming in the schools.

Again a working group was set up including the government and Inuit representatives and this time it was called an Education Act Steering Committee (EASC); the small education authorities from each community were also allowed to join in (their first gathering in six years). The first thing the steering committee did (and recall that it included Department of Education staff) was to record two formal Records of Decision saying that the new Education Act must reinstate Boards of Education, and make the Inuit language the language of instruction (LOI) in Nunavut schools. Being unanimous decisions, the government’s lawyer forwarded them as drafting instructions for the new Education Act (now “Bill 21”).

And then everything came to a screeching halt. Did government freak out when they saw the committee’s decisions? Presumably it did, because an order came down from the office of Education Minister Ed Picco (originally from Portugal Cove, Newfoundland) canceling all further steering committee meetings. Followed by four months of radio silence. And no explanation. When government finally allowed the

education committee to reconvene in November 2006, Inuit arrived to find out that all the government's staff who had voted for local control and Inuit language of instruction were gone. Replaced by trusted top staff – deputy and assistant deputy ministers – from the Department of Education who informed the remaining committee members that the Minister had scrapped their unanimous Records of Decision. The Nunavut Education Act was not going to include Inuit local control and Inuit language of instruction for K-12.

From this point on, the Department of Education stopped sharing any drafts of the actual Education Bill with the steering committee. With nothing to look at, and nothing to steer (and with any decision subject to being overturned by the Minister) the official representatives of Inuit had no way to participate in the drafting of the Education Act.

For the next year, government drafted the 100 page Education Act in secret, not sharing any drafts with the Inuit delegation. Finally, a week before official tabling, and under increased pressure from Inuit groups, government released a draft to Inuit, with the news that they could request no changes to it until the amendment stage after the Bill's second reading.

Denied any special access, NTI duly worked through the amendment process (along with dozens of other non-Inuit stakeholders) eventually making 77 recommendations to amend the Act to include Inuit concerns. Government rejected 72 outright, including every substantial Inuit issue: Inuit local control of schools, Inuit language of instruction, representative numbers of Inuit teachers, and so on.

Meanwhile, lawyers for the Francophone community had special side meetings with senior Department of Education staff to ensure that the new Education Act protected their constitutional interests. Their success is visible in the final Bill which enshrines a two-tier ethnically divided school system with a French school board and French local control and French language of Instruction for 40 Francophone students and none of these things for 10,000 Inuit students. Inuit protests were met by public statements from the Minister “dismissing or trivializing the recommendations of Inuit organizations for extending Inuit control of the schools to Inuit, Inuit suggestions for reforming teacher education, and Inuit recommendations for strengthening the language legislation.”⁶

Inuit groups tried to use other avenues to provide input into the Education Act. NTI used its 2007 *Annual Report on the State of Inuit Society and Culture* (a report it is legally required to write and table

each year in Canada's Parliament and the Nunavut legislature) to focus on Nunavut Inuit education. The report made nine recommendations for education in the territory; none of these recommendations were included in the new Education Act.⁷

In total, Inuit organizations prepared at least nine position papers on Inuit education rights and proposed almost 10,000 words of wording for the draft Education Act. Government ignored 99% of this (it appears that just one phrase from NTI made it into the government's 100 page Education Act: a single generic clause on Aboriginal rights).

So: did government break the law when it passed its Education Act in September 2008 without the participation of Inuit as required under Article 32 of their land claim? In the opinion of NTI's former Education Advisor, "Yes they did." Navarana Beveridge says,

The Department of Education didn't take Article 32 seriously. They might say there was participation in that NTI was invited to co-chair the steering committee, but when they absolutely refused to incorporate what we say then that's not following Article 32.

What Does "Participation" Mean?

Remember all that concern Inuit had during land claims negotiations? Remember how they fought (and lost) the right to get their language and culture and education rights included in the land claim? What they settled for, the only protection for language and culture that government would give to Inuit, was Article 32, the guarantee that Inuit had "the right to participate in the formation of social policies and programs, and in their method of delivery."

But for Inuit participation to be meaningful, it has to include Inuit formation of policy – not merely watching someone else form it. The final product must have Inuit fingerprints on it somewhere; there must be evidence that they determined the outcome. But in the case of the Nunavut Education Act, the law was drafted primarily by southern bureaucrats drawn from the department's predominantly non-Inuit senior and middle management.⁸ Designated Inuit representatives were not permitted to see drafts of the Act during the year it was written; their suggested wording for Inuit education rights were not included, their Records of Decisions supporting local Inuit control over schools and supporting Inuit language as the language of instruction were rejected; and, as a final affront, the government went ahead and guaranteed education and language rights to French parents which it refused to extend to Inuit parents.

With their culture and language at stake, Inuit were reduced to being mere spectators; government would not allow Inuit into the process where they could have any effect on the outcome. And when Inuit protested, government suspended the process entirely.

Teachers and Principals: 85% Inuit Employment?

So if government won't allow Inuit their right to design Education policy and delivery, is there any other recourse Inuit have in their land claim?

Yes: Article 23. This provision requires government to employ a representative number (85%) of Inuit in all government jobs and categories – and that includes teachers and principals. One school of thought says that if all the schools in Nunavut were staffed with 85% Inuit teachers and principals then they would be de-facto Inuit cultural schools. But in practice, how is the 85% target working out?

Dismally. The average number of Inuit in various positions at the Department of Education in 2007 was 38%. But even that average is inflated by including the mostly Inuit support staff and classroom assistants at the bottom of the employment categories.

In the key professions – teachers and principals – only 25% of teachers are Inuit, and only 13% of school principals (Table 1). And it didn't have to be this way. These numbers of Inuit could have been much higher. Back in 1996, the Government of the NWT had drafted an Inuit Employment Plan for teachers as required under the land claim. This NWT plan budgeted \$9 million over six years to graduate 306 new Inuit teachers by 2006 (136 Diploma, 108 degree, and 62 Language Specialists) – primarily from community-based teacher education programs (CTEP). Added to current numbers these Inuit educators would have raised the total to 490 Inuit Educators by 2006, approximately 87% of the GNWT's projected total of 563 educators and principals.

But this type of teacher training would have required a major financial commitment from the federal government, something Ottawa was willing to do only during the brief period from 1993 to 1999 when it shared joint responsibility for Nunavut (through its Office of the Interim Commissioner and INAC's Nunavut Secretariat) with the NWT. It was only during this six year period of Federal-NWT co-responsibility that the money flowed – \$39 million worth for education and training – all with the aim of increasing Inuit employment in government to at least 50%. This wasn't entirely altruistic. Ottawa's analysis had shown that by employing local Inuit, Ottawa could spend less money on new

infrastructure (less schools, less roads, sewers, and houses) than would have been required if there was a large influx of southern workers.⁹

Table 1. Comparison of employment positions for Nunavut Department of Education and Inuit Employees.

	Nunavut Department of Education				Inuit Employees	
	Total	Vacant	Filled	Capacity %	Hired	Inuit %
2007*						
Superintendent of Schools	5	2	3	60%	0	0%
Principal	39	1	38	97%	5	0%
Ass't. / Vice Principal	30	1	29	97%	11	13%
Teacher	467	8	459	98%	117	25%
Student Support Ass't.	173	25	148	86%	107	72%
School Counselor	29	3	26	90%	26	100%
TOTAL	743	40	703	95%	266	38%

*2007 was the only year available with break-outs of positions.

But on April 1, 1999, as soon as Nunavut was declared and the media and cameras left, Ottawa also packed up and left, shutting down its training and education funding and leaving Inuit and the territorial government on their own.

With no money to carry it out, the new Nunavut government threw out the 1996 Inuit Employment Plan. Say goodbye to 87% Inuit educators. All that was left was a core-funded program called the Nunavut Teacher Education Program (NTEP), which was producing an average of ten teachers or less per year.¹⁰ This was in part because NTEP was centralized in Iqaluit, and had not been able to draw as many students as a collection of community-based programs would have. During land claim negotiations, Inuit leaders had insisted that locally-based training be included as a requirement under Article 23, because they knew that strong family attachments meant most Inuit do

not want to move away to go to school. Although teacher training is more successful when decentralized, community teacher training gets no core-funding in Nunavut, and thus cannot attract top-grade trainers and consistent programming.¹¹

“Newfoundvut”

If you don’t train local teachers, then you have to import them. According to research by Price Waterhouse, the Nunavut government spends in excess of \$65 million annually recruiting southern workers to come north to work for them.¹² The money government can’t find to train Inuit is suddenly abundant when it comes time to recruit southern teachers. During recruiting drives, southern teachers are offered incentives like relocation and housing (and removal costs at the end of their contract) to entice them to move to Nunavut for a couple of years.¹³ Flying one southern teacher, their family and all their furniture and belongings to Nunavut can cost as much as \$40,000 per teacher (not including a housing subsidy, and removal costs when they leave).

There are no accounts of similar levels of money being spent to recruit and support Inuit to enter the teaching profession; and housing is not offered to them – after all, they are “local hires.”

The average stay of a southern teacher in Nunavut is two years or less. Inuit students joke that every two years they have to “train another teacher all over again.” Flying in and out, these teachers do not consider Nunavut their homeland, thus few make any effort to enroll in Inuit language classes.

And where do most of these outside teachers and principals come from? Far and away the biggest source is Newfoundland.¹⁴ In just the last six years, the Department of Education has managed to import more teachers from Newfoundland (237) than Inuit teachers trained by NTEP over its entire 30 year history (224). But if Inuit schools are filled with teachers and principals from Newfoundland, what culture are the students absorbing?

Describing Nunavut as an exotic tourist-type destination makes it obvious that the Nunavut Teachers Association website (December 2006) is not focusing on Inuit teachers.¹⁵

On behalf of the Nunavut Teachers Association’s Central Council and Central Executive, I welcome you to your Arctic Adventure. You are about to set foot into Canada’s newest territory and take part in a cultural experience that you will remember for the rest of your life. If you are reading this prior to departing your home

community, please take some time to conduct some research about Nunavut, its people and its land. ... I am available to discuss any concerns you may have from the Collective Agreement, benefits available to new members, customs, cultural issues, and more. I suggest that upon arrival, you take a few days to orient yourself to your new community; it is essential to get out and explore your new home and meet the people. I hope that you enjoy this experience and welcome you to our teaching community. Sincerely,
Jimmy Jacquard, President, Nunavut Teachers' Association.

If you were a new Inuit teacher, how would you react to a union welcome like this one, which is clearly directed at non-Nunavut teachers?

Table 2. Southern teachers in Nunavut. Where do they come from?

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Newfoundland	38	32	39	53	42	33 (Total 237)
Ontario	21	43	17	35	33	29 (Total 169)
New Brunswick	8	6	2	6	3	2
Nova Scotia	6	9	8	4	2	3
British Columbia	6	7	5	5	8	4
Alberta	1	5	2	7	8	2
Manitoba	3	3	0	3	3	4
Prince Edward Island	0	3	3	0	0	0
Quebec	3	3	3	2	4	4
Saskatchewan	3	5	0	2	2	6
U.K./Australia	1	0	1	3	1	2
Maine, U.S.A.	3	3	5	3	2	6
New York, U.S.A.	0	1	0	3	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0	0	3

Article 23.4.2 of the Nunavut Land Claim obliges all government job descriptions to include a requirement for “an understanding of the social and cultural milieu of Nunavut including: knowledge of Inuit culture, society and economy; community awareness.” Why would a southern teacher have to “do research” or “orient themselves” (as the NTA advises) if they had already fulfilled these job criteria?

And despite the apparent legal standing of the land claim, none of these criteria are used to establish pay or compensation for any teachers in Nunavut; in fact only two factors are measured: “the number of years of post-secondary education plus the number of years of teaching experience.”¹⁶

What can be Done to Support Inuit Education Rights?

It is evident that Nunavut Inuit have had a very difficult time establishing their own education system in their homeland. But there may finally be some hope. A new Nunavut government has been elected, led by a Premier who has been a strong advocate for Inuit language rights. Before becoming Premier, during her tenure as Nunavut’s Languages Commissioner, Eva Aariak pushed for Inuit language rights under the Education Act, saying that “parents who speak Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun must be given the same rights as French and English speakers. ... It simply isn’t good enough to teach Inuktitut only as a subject beyond Grade 4.”¹⁷ Since becoming Premier, she has gone on record saying that education is “an underlying solution to many of the issues that we’re dealing with today.”¹⁸ But she may face an uphill battle trying to convince the largely non-Inuit senior management¹⁹ that dominates the Nunavut Department of Education to return responsibility for the education of Inuit children to Inuit parents and Inuit school boards.

In 1990, the Supreme Court of Canada in its Mahé decision listed all the education protections that must be put in place to prevent a people’s culture from being wiped out.

The minority language representatives should have exclusive authority to make decisions relating to the minority language instruction and facilities, including:

- (a) expenditures of funds provided for such instruction and facilities;
- (b) appointment and direction of those responsible for the administration of such instruction and facilities;
- (c) establishment of programs of instruction;

- (d) recruitment and assignment of teachers and other personnel;
and
- (e) making of agreements for education and services for minority language pupils.

All the things the Mahé decision said must be done to protect a culture and language *are* happening in Nunavut, it's just that they are being done for the Francophone population, not Inuit. So here are some proposed solutions:

Solution Number One: Implement Mahé Rights for Inuit

It's wrong to pursue justice only for European-Canadians while ignoring the people who've been here for 5000 years. This means local control: • Inuit school boards must be re-instated, along with Inuit curriculum – no more teaching math using examples full of trains and grain silos (two things never seen in Nunavut).

Solution Number Two:

Implement Thomas Berger's Recommendations

In June 2005, Justice Thomas Berger was appointed by the federal government as conciliator between Nunavut Inuit and Ottawa. Berger recommended that Ottawa – at a minimum – should immediately pay \$20 million for six near-term initiatives to tackle the drop-out rate by improving bilingualism in the schools. In his final report, Berger noted rhetorically: “What did we expect? When we agreed to the establishment of Nunavut, it cannot have escaped our notice that the overwhelming majority of the people of the new territory would be Inuit, speaking Inuktitut.”

Berger's six near-term initiatives (\$20 million per year):

- Nunavut Sivuniksavut expansion: \$1.3 million per year;
- summer student program: \$950,000 per year;
- internship expansion: \$40 million over five years or \$8 million per year;
- community career counselor program: \$3.3 million in the first year and \$2.6 million each year thereafter;
- mature graduation/returning student program: \$1.85 million in startup costs and \$5.225 million each year thereafter; and
- Scholarship program: \$1.5 million per year.²⁰

Solution Number Three: Revise the Education Act

Nunavut has recently elected a new group of legislators; this new government should re-open the Education Act for revisions by Inuit. Let Inuit finally exercise their Article 32 land claim rights to design the law to suit their needs (starting with the points listed in Mahé).

Solution Number Four: Form an Inuit Teachers' Union

There's nothing wrong with having a Newfoundland – oops, sorry! – *Nunavut Teachers' Association*, but Inuit need a union that will speak with them and for them in the Inuit language.

Solution Number Five: Enforce Article 23 Job Descriptions

This means write job descriptions for teachers and principals that include the requirements listed under Article 23.4.2: “An understanding of the social and cultural milieu of Nunavut including: knowledge of Inuit culture, society and economy; community awareness, fluency in Inuktitut and/or Inuinnaqtun, and knowledge of the environmental characteristics of Nunavut.”

Solution Number Six: Employ 85% Inuit Teachers and Principals

This is required under Article 23 of the land claim, therefore Canada must help pay for this.²¹ Nunavut can also help by shifting spending from recruiting southern teachers to training Inuit teachers in their home communities. This means it should core-fund community-based Inuit teacher training, with good trainers on long-term contracts, and then guarantee all graduates teaching jobs in their home communities (replacing non-Inuktitut-speaking teachers). Nunavut's new Premier has openly called for training “more teachers, many more teachers.” But Eva Aariak has also warned that “we need money to do these things. We need a collective effort, both our government and Canada, to work together.”²²

*Arctic Sovereignty: Protecting the Land,
but What About the People?*

The historical record lists the enormous efforts Inuit have waged to try to regain control over the education of their children. But, 16 years after signing their land claim there is still no Inuit education system in Nunavut.

It's not that Canada can't afford to pay for an Inuit education system. Last summer, the Prime Minister announced plans for a \$720 million icebreaker²³ to patrol *our* Arctic (enough to pay for Berger's \$20 million education initiatives 36 times over). This summer he flew up to Nunavut to highlight an expensive series of military exercises designed to assert our Arctic sovereignty. But if Canada had not signed a land claim with Inuit who have actually lived there for 5,000 years, its Arctic assertions would be laughed at by other nations.

A land claim is a contract between two parties; Inuit have been doing their part to honour this – we have to do ours. Write to the federal Minister of Indian Affairs and insist that Canada financially support the development of Inuit curricula and the training of Inuit teachers so that we can live up to our side of the deal in the Nunavut land Claim. Up to this point, Canadian sovereignty has focused almost exclusively on getting access to Inuit land and the minerals beneath it, while on top of it priceless Inuit languages and culture remain unvalued and unprotected. We call it *our* Arctic; let's not forget the people who live there.

NOTES

1. In the rush to create Nunavut ten years ago, Parliamentarians neglected to notice that they were creating a territory that would relegate both English and French to minority language status, thus not conforming to Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Canada's Official Languages Act. The Official Languages Act and Section 23 of the Charter say that the minority official language group can be English or French, but apparently cannot be both. For the past ten years, Ottawa has allowed these two minority groups to get almost all the public education money in the new territory, depriving the majority of essential funds to build up an Inuit language school system. See *Rabble.ca*: "Nunavut's promise still lost in translation," by Derek Rasmussen, April 6, 2009. Retrieved August 31, 2009 from: <http://www.rabble.ca/news/2009/04/nunavuts-promise-still-lost-translation>.
2. Some of these are archived at InuitEducation.com; others are listed in *Saqqiqpuq*, (Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, 2007, pp. 7-8), and in Darnel, F. & Hoem, A. (1996), *Taken to Extremes: Education in the Far North*. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.
3. Letter from B. Heidenreich, Northern Political Development Group, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to J. Hucker, Director General, Northern Policy and Coordination branch, INAC, Dec. 2, 1983.
4. Although INAC has not made public the 1983 Inuktitut cost studies, a later estimate made by INAC in 1998 at the request of Federal official

Maryantonett Flumian, estimated the cost to the federal government of funding Inuktitut as a language of government within the Nunavut Territory at \$8-10 million per year. See April 30, 1998 *OIC Report from Louis Langois to Maryantonett Flumian*. OIC: Iqaluit.

5. Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut. (1990). *Notes for an Address by Paul Quassa, President, TFN, on the Signing of the Nunavut Agreement in Principle between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty in Right of Canada*. Igloolik, April 30, 1990.

6. John Bainbridge, interview with the author. August 10, 2009. John Bainbridge has lived in and worked for Aboriginal communities and organizations throughout the Canadian arctic and sub-arctic regions for 22 years as a school principal and lawyer. Until recently he was the Senior Policy Advisor for Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI). The full text of this interview is posted at <http://www.policyalternatives.ca>

7. Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. (2007). *Saqqiqpuq: Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education in Nunavut; the Annual Report on the State of Inuit Culture and Society*. Iqaluit: Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. P.37. Retrieved August 5, 2009 from

<http://www.tunngavik.com/documents/publications/2005-2007-Annual-Report-on-the-State-of-Inuit-Culture-and-Society-Eng.pdf>

8. Department of Education's senior management is 88% non-Inuit, middle-management is 69% non-Inuit, according to December 31, 2008 statistics. See page 7, *Towards a Representative Public Service*, Prepared by Inuit Employment Planning office of GN Department of Human Resources, Dec. 31, 2008.

9. January 19, 1997 GNWT, *Department of Public Works Memo re: Demographic Assumptions of the Nunavut Municipal Infrastructure Program*. Memo notes that the percentage of non-Nunavut hires for incremental Nunavut jobs is assumed to be 50%: reducing the building of infrastructure for Iqaluit in particular. Coopers and Lybrand Consulting Group (1992). *The cost of creating and operating a Nunavut Government*, December 1992 "Executive Summary" warns that "more community infrastructure will be required to support the larger population caused by a greater degree of in-migration," p.16.

10. *Saqqiqpuq*, p. 30.

11. In 2006, Justice Thomas Berger noted that

It is presently very difficult for the NTEP program to recruit candidates for teacher education. A solution to this problem may well require concerted delivery of education programs within the communities, and a much more robust level of support (childcare, housing, etc.) for the teacher education students. *Conciliator's Final Report: Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Implementation Planning Contract Negotiations for the Second Planning Period*, p. 50. Retrieved August 25, 2009 from

<http://www.tunngavik.com/documents/publications/2006-03-01%20Thomas%20Berger%20Final%20Report%20ENG.pdf>

12. PriceWaterhouseCoopers. (2003), *The Cost of Not Successfully Implementing Article 23: Representative Employment for Inuit within the Government*. Ottawa: PWC. Retrieved August 6, 2009 from <http://www.tunngavik.com/documents/publications/2003-02-17-PriceWaterhouseCoopers-The-Cost-of-Not-Successfully-Implementing-Article-23.pdf>

13. Nunavut Teachers Association. "Benefits." Accessed August 25, 2009 from

<http://mailhub.edu.nu.ca/qikiqtani/orientation/Important.html>

14. Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. (2007). *Saqqiqpuq: Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education in Nunavut; the Annual Report on the State of Inuit Culture and Society*. Iqaluit: Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, p.37. Retrieved August 5, 2009 from

<http://www.tunngavik.com/documents/publications/2005-2007-Annual-Report-on-the-State-of-Inuit-Culture-and-Society-Eng.pdf>

15. NTA welcome letter retrieved December 21, 2006 from

http://www.ntanu.ca/For_New_Members/Where_We_Teach.html

16. Nunavut Teachers Association. "Salary and Other Allowances." Accessed August 25, 2009 from

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17. October 1, 2002. Media Release from the Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut: *Education Bill denies Inuktitut speakers equal rights*.

18. March 31, 2009. CBC report: *Education key to Nunavut's next decade: Premier*. Retrieved from

<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/north/story/2009/03/31/education-nunavut.html>

19. Across the entire Nunavut Government, senior and middle-management averages 74-78% non-Inuit; in Education, senior management is 88% non-Inuit, according to December 31, 2008 statistics. See pages 2 and 7, *Towards a Representative Public Service*, Prepared by Inuit Employment Planning office of GN Department of Human Resources, Dec. 31, 2008.

20. Berger, T. (2006). *Conciliator's Final Report: Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Implementation Planning Contract Negotiations for the Second Planning Period*, pp. 54-59. Retrieved August 25, 2009 from

<http://www.tunngavik.com/documents/publications/2006-03-01%20Thomas%20Berger%20Final%20Report%20ENG.pdf>

21. NTI has filed a lawsuit to force Canada to implement Article 23 and other provisions of the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement. Their statement of claim is posted here:

<http://www.tunngavik.com/documents/publications/2006-12-00%20Statement%20of%20Claim.pdf>

22. Office of the Prime Minister, 28 August 2008, *Backgrounder*, The John G. Diefenbaker National Icebreaker Project. Retrieved from <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?category=5&id=2252>

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Author's Address:

P.O. Box 70036
Place Bell RPO
160 Elgin Street
Ottawa, Ontario
CANADA K2P 2M3
EMAIL: derekras1@gmail.com
dharma_eh@yahoo.ca