

**Submission to Nunavut Arctic College
for the 10-Year Strategic Plan Consultation**

Submitted by the Representative for Children and Youth

February 28, 2020



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NUTAQQANUT INULRAMIRNULLU
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REPRÉSENTANT DE
L'ENFANCE ET DE LA JEUNESSE

REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

As the Representative for Children and Youth, I am pleased to provide this submission to Nunavut Arctic College on its 10-Year Strategic Plan Consultation. This submission is written on behalf of the Representative for Children and Youth's Office and is informed by the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, a legally binding, international, human rights agreement which explains all of the rights young people have. The United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* also lays out the responsibilities that governments have in supporting these rights, and can be used as a guide to assess how child rights are supported in legislation, policies, programs, and services.

The Representative for Children and Youth's Office makes these recommendations to Nunavut Arctic College in support of young people's rights and in accordance with our legal duty to make recommendations on child and youth-related programs and services, pursuant to Section 3 of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*.

Recommendation #1

Seek input from young people as part of a broader consultation process.

The Representative for Children and Youth's Office notes that Nunavut Arctic College made its survey available by posting it on their website. However, since today's youth are tomorrow's college students, we encourage Nunavut Arctic College to consult directly with youth, where youth are. For example, facilitate conversations about Nunavut Arctic College's strategic plan, including course offerings and the multiple pathways for accessing programming, with youth in schools, at youth centres, or at recreation facilities.

Article 12 of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* requires governments to give young people the opportunity to express their opinion and have it considered. Giving young people the opportunity to be heard does not mean that young people get to make the decision; it means that we, as adults, should ask for their opinion and listen to their ideas so we can make the best decisions on their behalf.

Creating opportunities for young people to share their opinions and aspirations not only supports the rights of young people, but may also assist Nunavut Arctic College in achieving its accessibility and stability goals, as proposed for its 10-year strategic plan.

Recommendation #2

Keep young people informed of post-secondary education and career options supported by Nunavut Arctic College.

Article 28 of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* calls on governments to “make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children.”ⁱ In order for young people to pursue post-secondary education and careers supported by Nunavut Arctic College, they must know about the education opportunities available to them and the multiple pathways of accessing programming.

Further support for continuous outreach with students about post-secondary opportunities includes:

- The *Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut - 2019: Support for High School Students and Adult Learners*, in which a recommendation was made stating, “Nunavut Arctic College should inform high school students about the various academic programs it offers and ensure that it keeps information on its programs and admission requirements clear and up to date.”ⁱⁱ
- Our submissions to the Standing Committee on Legislation regarding Bill 25 - *An Act to Amend the Education Act and the Inuit Language Protection Act*, in which we recommended that the Department of Education “prioritize the recruitment of young Inuit into the teaching profession under the Inuit Employment Plan.”ⁱⁱⁱ A key element of this recommendation relies on the successful graduation of students from Nunavut Arctic College’s Nunavut Teacher Education Program.

Awareness created by engaging with young people about post-secondary education and career options may encourage enrollment and support Nunavut Arctic College in achieving its accessibility, responsiveness, and stability goals, as proposed for its 10-year strategic plan.

Recommendation #3

Develop and implement a child rights module for delivery within all current and future course offerings.

Canada’s agreement to the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* means that all governments have the responsibility to implement policies, procedures, and legislation that support child rights. Equally important is the responsibility of governments in making sure that

all people know about child rights, as laid out in the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

Developing a child rights module and implementing it as part of each program offered by Nunavut Arctic College would help increase awareness of child rights for those graduates who may provide services in the future. This module should be delivered in all course offerings, but especially child and youth-service course offerings, including: the Nunavut Teacher Education Degree program, Early Childhood Education Diploma program, Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree program, Social Service Worker Diploma program, and the Juris Doctor in Law program.

The development and implementation of a child rights module may also assist Nunavut Arctic College in achieving its accessibility and responsiveness goals, as proposed for its 10-year strategic plan.

Recommendation #4

Offer professional programs to build the capacity of the mental health workforce in Nunavut and ensure that these programs offer a focus or specialty related to child and youth mental health.

In May 2019, our office completed a review of mental health services for young Nunavummiut and released our findings in the report *Our Minds Matter: A Youth-Informed Review of Mental Health Services for Young Nunavummiut (Our Minds Matter)*.^{iv} During our review, and as stated in our report, we heard from youth who “asked for improved and increased mental health services specific to children and youth.”^v In response, we recommended that “Nunavut Arctic College, in partnership with the Department of Health, offer professional education programs that build the capacity of the mental health workforce in Nunavut and that these programs offer a focus or specialty related to child and youth mental health.”^{vi} This recommendation remains relevant.

While offering programs that build the capacity of the mental health workforce in Nunavut is essential to improving mental health outcomes for all Nunavummiut, it is particularly important to offer programs with a focus or specialty on child and youth mental health. This is evident when considering that 40% of Nunavummiut are 19 years of age or younger.^{vii}

Implementation of this recommendation may also help Nunavut Arctic College achieve its responsiveness and stability goals, as proposed for its 10-year strategic plan.

Recommendation #5

Form a partnership to allow students to earn a Bachelor of Social Work.

Our office recognizes that Nunavut Arctic College currently offers a Social Service Worker Diploma. However based on the work of our office, we see increasing demands for community social services workers across the territory.

We note that Nunavut Arctic College and Memorial University of Newfoundland signed their 10-Year Strategic Partnership in November 2019. However, Nunavut Arctic College should consider its current partnership with Memorial University as an opportunity to explore options for an Inuit-specific Bachelor of Social Work program, similar to the Inuit Bachelor of Social Work program that the Nunatsiavut Government contracted Memorial University's School of Social Work to deliver in 2009.^{viii}

Offering a Bachelor of Social Work program would help support the needs of all Nunavummiut and may assist Nunavut Arctic College in achieving its specialization, accessibility, and responsiveness goals, as proposed for its 10-year strategic plan.

Recommendation #6

Explore and implement ways to enhance offerings that will support post-secondary education and career options in the recreation field.

Throughout our review of mental health services for young Nunavummiut and as mentioned in *Our Minds Matter*, young people made positive connections between their mental health and recreational, cultural, and leisure activities. For this reason, we recommend Nunavut Arctic College explore and implement ways to enhance current recreation programs, such as the Municipal Government Program, the Nunavut Municipal Training Organization, and the Recreation North Training Program.

The implementation of this recommendation would support the mental wellness needs of young Nunavummiut and may assist Nunavut Arctic College in achieving its responsiveness goal, as proposed for its 10-year strategic plan.

I, the Representative for Children and Youth, make this submission in the spirit of collaboration with Nunavut Arctic College and in support of the rights of young Nunavummiut under the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, particularly:

Article 3: The right to the protection of the best interests of the child;

Article 4: The responsibility of government to implement children's rights;

Article 12: The right to have one's opinion heard and considered;

Article 13: The right to freedom of expression;

Article 19: The right to be protected from all forms of violence;

Article 24: The right to the highest attainable standard of health;

Article 28-29: The right to education;

Article 31: The right to rest, leisure, play, recreational, and cultural activities; and

Article 42: The right to know their rights.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important work. I look forward to following how Nunavut Arctic College responds to these recommendations. I am available to meet with you to discuss this submission or to provide more information about child rights and the work of our office.

Sincerely,



Jane Bates
Representative for Children and Youth

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- ⁱ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2017). Convention on the rights of the child. Geneva, CH: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>
- ⁱⁱ Office of the Auditor General of Canada (2019). *Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut – 2019: Support for high school students and adult learners*. Retrieved from http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2019/bvg-oag/FA3-155-2019-eng.pdf
- ⁱⁱⁱ Office of the Representative for Children and Youth. (2019). *Response to Bill 25, an Act to Amend the Education Act and the Inuit Language Protection Act*. Retrieved from https://rcynu.ca/sites/rcynu.ca/files/RCY-2019-Bill%2025%20Submission_EN.pdf
- ^{iv} Office of the Representative for Children and Youth. (2019). *Our Minds Matter: A Youth-Informed Review of Mental Health Services for Young Nunavummiut*. Retrieved from https://rcynu.ca/sites/rcynu.ca/files/RCYO_MHReview_EN_Web.pdf
- ^v Office of the Representative for Children and Youth. (2019). *Our Minds Matter: A Youth-Informed Review of Mental Health Services for Young Nunavummiut*. p. 32. Retrieved from https://rcynu.ca/sites/rcynu.ca/files/RCYO_MHReview_EN_Web.pdf
- ^{vi} Office of the Representative for Children and Youth. (2019). *Our Minds Matter: A Youth-Informed Review of Mental Health Services for Young Nunavummiut*. p. 34. Retrieved from https://rcynu.ca/sites/rcynu.ca/files/RCYO_MHReview_EN_Web.pdf
- ^{vii} Statistics Canada. (2017). *Nunavut [Territory] and Canada [Country] (table). Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. Retrieved from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed January 10, 2020).
- ^{viii} Memorial University. (n.d.). Aboriginal education/curriculum: Inuit Bachelor of Social Work Program. <https://www.mun.ca/socialwork/programs/teachingandlearning/AboriginalEducationCurriculum.php>