



**What Sculpture is to Soapstone,  
Education is to the Soul:**

**Building the capacity of Inuit  
in the health field**

Ajunnginiq Centre



National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO)  
Organisation nationale de la santé autochtone (ONSA)  
ᑲᓐᑕᑦ ᓄᓐᑲᓐᑲᓐᑲᓐᑲᓐᑲᓐ ᑲᓐᑲᓐᑲᓐᑲᓐᑲᓐᑲᓐ ᑲᓐᑲᓐᑲᓐᑲᓐᑲᓐᑲᓐ

September 2004

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This discussion paper would not have been possible without the participation and input of the 27 Arctic high school principals, Inuit high school students across the Arctic, Inuit post-secondary students, northern and southern post-secondary schools, funding organizations for the Inuit regions, and people with an interest in Inuit education including school staff and local organizational representatives. Thank you to all who gave your time and energy to this project.

This paper is the product of a collaboration by the staff of the Ajunnginiq Centre, including Karin Kettler, Marja Korhonen, Mark Buell, Sipporah Enuaraq, and Tracy O'Hearn. We also wish to thank our colleagues at NAHO, particularly Virginia St-Denis and Paul Michna, for their assistance and patience!

Nakurmiik.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is important that Inuit become their own health care providers. Presently, most health care staff must be hired from the south, which can result in a lack of understanding between providers and patients, as well as high turnover, lack of trust, and other issues arising from differences in language and culture. Inuit need the opportunities and knowledge to enable them to take their place in the health care system. This paper deals specifically with health-related education needs of Inuit in the four Inuit regions of Canada.

Arctic high school and post-secondary school enrolment and completion statistics were collected. The experiences and opinions of high school students, post-secondary students and graduates, those who had left a post-secondary program, and educational system personnel were gathered through questionnaires. These respondents identified gaps, barriers, and problems related to educational success. They also made recommendations for high schools and post-secondary schools, and provided options about education generally and promotion of health careers specifically.

Not enough Inuit are going to post-secondary programs; even fewer are entering health-related programs; and too many are dropping out. More Inuit students are attending northern colleges than southern post-secondary schools, but health programs in northern colleges are limited. Students encounter problems whether attending northern or southern schools.

High school students must be taught the course content and skills that will enable them to be successful, according to the main recommendation made by post-secondary students. High school programs must meet southern standards so Inuit students will not need to spend time catching up to enter and successfully complete post-secondary programs. As well, not all northern high schools are able to offer higher-level academic courses in science, mathematics, and advanced English, which are all necessary for entry to and success in most post-secondary health programs. Alternatives, like distance education, are available in some schools, while other choices, such as online courses, video conferencing, and summer school, might prove useful.

Students and staff also emphasized the need for strong study skills, work habits, and organizational and coping skills.

The reasons for dropping out of high school and post-secondary programs are similar. The top reasons noted by students are lack of motivation and personal issues. All students stressed the need for a variety of support and counselling services at all levels of education. Inuit post-secondary students more often have families than southern Canadian students, so child care and financial needs are unique problems.

Students must also be provided with more detailed information about health careers and the post-secondary education required for those careers. The Ajunnginiq Centre's health-career database, which will be available on CD-ROM and on the Ajunnginiq Centre's section of the National Aboriginal Health Organization's website (<http://www.naho.ca/inuit>) is a first step in providing that information.

Many questions arise that indicate the need for further study. For example, what can be done to bring secondary school courses to a standard that would enable Inuit students to be successful without requiring upgrading? Why do women far outnumber men in post-secondary programs? What can be done to help students deal with personal issues?

A national forum on these educational concerns among the Inuit regions could be held to discuss best practices and find solutions for problems that concern a particular region or communities. Students themselves may be the best source of information and ideas. A

community discussion and the sharing of experiences and suggestions may provide motivation and solutions.

Success in post-secondary programs at all levels (from certificates to graduate degrees) is necessary for Inuit to take their place in the health care system. Inuit who complete post-secondary programs will also be better prepared to support the educational goals of their own children. Investing in students now will naturally invest in future students.

**“What sculpture is to soapstone, education is to the soul.”**

Unknown source.

**“The more you read, the more you’ll learn.**

**The more you use your mind, the more choices you will have.”**

Pierre Reid, Quebec Minister of Education<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

Inuit communities lead the nation in rates of many health problems ranging from child respiratory illnesses to suicide, but few Inuit are in health careers at any level, whether it be medical, technician, specialist services, etc. Inuit communities are culturally alive, with Inuktitut still the language of home for many, and Inuit cultural values and practices a part of daily life. But most health care staff is non-Inuit and transient, coming from southern Canada often for relatively brief periods.<sup>2</sup> This presents a number of problems affecting health care:

- cultural competence—health providers may not understand the context, ways of relating and issues of patients;
- cultural safety—patients may not feel trust and a sense of being understood and respected;
- lack of continuity in care; and
- omissions and misunderstandings due to language differences.

A solution to such difficulties is the presence of Inuit health care providers who have knowledge and understanding of the culture, people, and language. “We desperately need nurses who are representative of our people, both here in the Northwest Territories and in Nunavut, to serve our own people.”<sup>3</sup> To reach this goal, however, Inuit must obtain the post-secondary<sup>4</sup> education necessary for health-related careers.

The initial purpose of this project was to provide information for Inuit communities to encourage and promote health careers. A database of health-related programs in northern colleges and selected southern universities<sup>5</sup> has been developed. The database lists programs that are available, their location, the secondary school courses needed to enter each program, and other information including support services and contact names.<sup>6</sup>

In developing the database of programs, questions arose. It became evident that completion of certain secondary school courses including the sciences, higher-level English, and mathematics<sup>7</sup> are generally necessary just to enter health programs. Post-secondary studies build on this prior knowledge. Higher-level language skills are necessary to understand and communicate more complex texts and information.<sup>8</sup> Conversations and experiences with students indicated that Inuit students who enter post-secondary programs (especially diploma or degree programs) may find that they need academic upgrading before and/or during their studies.<sup>9</sup> Are high school students in Inuit regions getting the courses and content they need to enter and be successful in health programs at the post-secondary level?

How many students are entering and succeeding in post-secondary education? Although high school completion rates are gradually increasing, school dropout rates are a major concern in

Inuit communities.<sup>10</sup> Is this also true of post-secondary students? Why do students drop out of school at both levels?

Some students, however, are successful.<sup>11</sup> What are the factors in their success? What kinds of personal factors and educational/support services are necessary?

It became clear that promoting health careers and the database of programs might be ineffective if the knowledge of students' educational experience is lacking and the factors that affect success. It seemed the most useful answers would be from students themselves, as well as from school personnel. It was necessary to find out more about several areas:

- relevant and necessary secondary-school courses offered in Inuit-region high schools;
- numbers of Inuit students completing such courses;
- numbers of Inuit students entering post-secondary programs generally and health-related programs specifically;
- numbers of students completing post-secondary programs and especially health-related programs; and
- most importantly, the experiences and opinions of both secondary and post-secondary students themselves regarding problems/causes, needs and factors in success.

This paper is the result of responses gathered from all four Inuit regions in Canada. The information presented is based on a limited and informal participatory survey intended to encourage thought, discussion, and further research about needs and new directions that may lead to greater student participation and success in post-secondary programs generally and health-related programs specifically. Areas requiring further study are identified.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Statistics*

Principals of 27 schools that offer a final year of high school<sup>12</sup> in the four Inuit regions (Labrador, Nunavik, Nunavut, and Inuvialuit) were first contacted by telephone to explain the background and purpose of the project. Information about advanced level<sup>13</sup> science, math and English courses offered in each school was requested, as well as the number of Inuit students taking such courses. Grade 12 enrolment and graduation statistics for 2003 were also requested.

Northern colleges and select southern post-secondary schools in Canada were contacted for information about Inuit graduates (programs and male/female statistics) from 2001 to 2003. Enrolment, male/female ratio, and retention information for Fall 2003 was also gathered.

Since most southern post-secondary schools do not collect ethnicity statistics, major regional funding agencies were approached. Some university enrolment was determined through this method but the information is not exhaustive.

### *Questionnaires*

The experiences, opinions, and views of Inuit high school students, Inuit post-secondary students, school staff, and others with involvement and interest in Inuit education<sup>14</sup> were gathered through questionnaires. Responses could be mailed, phoned, or e-mailed.

During initial contact with high school principals, the importance of getting information from students was discussed. One principal from each region agreed to distribute a brief questionnaire

to selected student groups (Appendix 1.3). Students had the option of responding in English, French, or Inuktitut.

Two different questionnaires were developed for post-secondary students. One questionnaire was for those in a post-secondary program or who had graduated from one (Appendix 1.4). The other was developed for those who left a post-secondary program (Appendix 1.5). Post-secondary-school participants were located through acquaintance, pre-arranged in-class visits, or through the co-operation of staff who sent letters to students explaining the purpose of the study and providing contact information.

Two groups of people with educational interests were also surveyed (Appendix 1.6). The first group included school staff, such as teachers and principals. The second group included school board members, education department staff, or Inuit organizations.

A total of 171 responses were gathered: 105 from current Arctic high school students, 18 from students attending or graduated from southern post-secondary programs, three from students who withdrew from post-secondary programs, and 45 from people with interests in Inuit education.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Enrolment and Completion**

According to Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, “The high school graduation rate is low. Even lower is the number of Inuit enrolling in and completing college or university programs. Inuit also experience high dropout rates.”<sup>15</sup>

Appendix 2.2 gives details of Inuit secondary school graduation statistics for 2003 from the 27 high schools contacted, as well as the number of graduates who continued with post-secondary programs. A total of 145 students graduated. Of these, about 36 per cent went on to post-secondary programs in September 2003. By November 2003, an average of 27 per cent of those students returned home without completing their programs.

In September 2003, about 284 students enrolled in their final high school year in these 27 schools (Appendix 2.3), although completion statistics were not available at time of writing. Three-quarters of students—mostly female—said they planned to pursue post-secondary education, although only a few had a definite idea of what they wanted to study.

Appendices 2.4 to 2.6 provide data about Inuit post-secondary graduation results (2001 to 2003) and 2003-2004 enrolments and withdrawals, compiled from selected schools and from funding sources. The Labrador and Inuvialuit regions were also able to provide graduation information, showing a total of 93 graduates in 2001, 85 graduates in 2002, and 60 graduates in 2003. The percentage of students enrolled in health-related programs is also shown in Appendix 2.5.

The available data provide interesting information that requires further investigation.

- Relatively few students are enrolled in, or have graduated from, health programs.
- Nunavut has the greatest number of Inuit post-secondary students. (Nunavut also has the largest Inuit population, so this result is not surprising.)
- Most Inuit students are in certificate and diploma college programs, mainly in northern colleges. About one-third of Labrador and Nunavik students and 14 per cent

- of Nunavut students are in universities. (The Inuvialuit region did not have this information.) More than half of Nunavut's students are in one-year certificate studies.
- Although little specific withdrawal data was available, the east/west and north/south statistics were interesting. Results showed that only two per cent of Inuvialuit students withdrew from their programs last fall. Numbers from other regions were significantly higher: 12 per cent of Labrador's students and 16 per cent of Nunavik's students. Nunavut's information was not available. Of the eight post-secondary schools surveyed, only one northern program, the Nunavik technical school, provided withdrawal data: 21 of 66 students enrolled in September had withdrawn. However, of the three southern schools that gave information, only 14 of 129 students had withdrawn.
  - The majority of post-secondary students are women, as are high school students planning to continue their education. The imbalance is quite startling, with two to three times as many women in most programs. (Nunavut data, however, indicated that almost equal numbers of men and women are attending southern schools.)

Enrolment in health programs may be affected by a number of factors. Access to health programs in northern colleges is limited: only a few programs are offered and they may only be offered once in a while or in certain years rather than as consistent on-going programs. Most health programs, and the greatest variety, are in southern colleges and universities. Distance, funding, academic, and personal issues may affect students' decisions.

More information about completion/graduation rates is necessary. How do completion rates compare for students in northern and southern schools? Are there differences in the factors that affect completion? For example, cultural context and awareness has been suggested as a possible factor in increased student success. Are students taking similar programs<sup>16</sup> in fact more successful in northern schools, which are more culturally familiar? More students are in certificate courses than diploma and degree programs. How do completion rates compare and what factors are involved?

An in-depth study should also be conducted to find more specific information about Inuit attending university programs. Southern schools do not record ethnic/cultural data and the data from northern funding sources provided few numbers.<sup>17</sup> University education is needed for many health care professions. To fully participate in health care, Inuit students must move beyond certificate and diploma programs. Those students already in university are both role models and important sources of information. How many Inuit have attended or are attending universities, in what programs, and what is their success rate? What suggestions do they have for northern schools, students, and communities?

The discrepancy between male and female students is a great concern. Because many more Inuit women enter and complete post-secondary programs than men, it is necessary to learn why men are being left behind. Further research should be done to understand this difference. Education is an important factor in mental, economic, social, and family wellness, and Inuit men have high rates of problems in such areas. Why are more males not furthering their education? What are the gaps and barriers and underlying problems? What are their needs? What can be done to encourage and involve men?

Of the 18 students currently in southern post-secondary studies, almost half would like to continue their education and then return to the Arctic when finished. Only six per cent planned to stay in southern Canada.

## Opinions, Experiences, Suggestions

### Readiness for Post-Secondary

Questionnaire responses from all post-secondary school students, staff, and other non-student informants indicated that a lack of academic readiness for post-secondary education was the major concern. (Appendices 4.4, 4.6, and 5.2).

Because advanced level courses—especially in English, math and science—are necessary for admission to and success in health programs, 27 secondary schools were surveyed to find out their academic course offerings. Table 1 shows an overview of advanced-level courses offered in the past school year. Appendix 2.1 provides more detailed regional information.

**Table 1**

<b>Overview of Arctic High School Course Offerings in Final High School Year 2003-2004</b>	
<b>Course Type</b>	<b>Percentage of Schools</b>
Advanced English	89%
Academic Math	74%
Advanced Math	63%
Biology	56%
Chemistry	48%
Environmental Studies	44%
Physics	26%
Calculus	4%
Academic Science	

Two schools provided complete information about the number of students taking math, science, and English courses in their senior year. In Inuvik, six were in biology, four in English, four in chemistry, five in pure math, and four in physics. In Nain, five were in academic English; however, seven were in practical English and eight in practical math (which may not meet the academic requirements for university and college programs).

It is evident that northern students have limited access to the advanced level courses necessary for post-secondary health programs. Schools noted that availability of these courses usually depends on the number of students interested and on the presence of qualified teachers. However, all regions make an effort to provide courses through online study or distance education, as well as some night classes, when students request them.

There are disadvantages to these alternative methods. In classrooms, students learn from each other's questions, comments, and debates, but such interaction is limited or unavailable in online or distance courses, as well as Internet discussion groups. Working on one's own with limited help requires great motivation, dedication, and supportive families to complete assignments and read materials. This is difficult even for the best of students. However, the fact that some

students have been successful in such alternatives indicates this is a beneficial option and should be available. Effective strategies for support (in school, in the community, and within families) need to be further developed.

Ways must be found to make these courses available. Possible options to consider (in addition to further development of effective distance and online study) are:

- summer school (for example, by bringing in qualified teachers from outside the community); and
- video conferencing, which is already used in some communities for telehealth. (It is also being used in Kangiqsualujjuaq, Nunavik in north/south music education and cultural exchange. A powerful advantage of video conferencing is that students can see what others are doing and saying in real time. Discussion, demonstration, and immediate feedback are possible. Is it feasible to provide video conference classes between Arctic schools, or from southern schools to Arctic students?)

More than three-quarters of the current post-secondary school students and post-secondary graduates surveyed said they felt ready for life in the south; however, only 56 per cent felt ready for post-secondary studies. Based on their experiences, they stated that the main need is for more challenging and higher quality secondary school work. Students want to be at the same level as others studying the same courses without requiring upgrading. One respondent was proud to graduate from high school, but was later frustrated to find that she in fact did not have the knowledge she needed. She explained:

When I went to college, my math skills were not meeting the work requirements in my classes. I had to take adult education classes on the side to catch-up. At one point, I wanted to go into dental therapy, but could not pass the physics or chemistry courses. (Post-secondary respondent: graduated, Dec. 5, 2003)

High school academic concerns included:

- work that is too hard or too easy;
- gaps in content knowledge and academic skills, leading to academic upgrading after high school;
- math and science concerns (e.g., content, course availability);
- inadequacies in the English language skills necessary for advanced education;
- differences in standards and credit value between the Arctic and southern Canada;
- and
- students falling behind due to poor attendance, inability to understand or do the work, etc.

Students' examples of what Arctic high schools could specifically do include:

- giving more and harder homework or assignments;
- being stricter;
- having students read more;
- having students do more presentations (for skills, public speaking confidence);

- giving students more to learn; and
- providing courses at the appropriate level.

Inadequate work habits, study skills and time management skills were also an important concern. One principal gave this view about the gaps and barriers to success:

There are definite gaps for students leaving high school to pursue post-secondary studies. For most students, this involves work habits and study skills—features that are not a priority for them here. As much as we attempt to foster these values, they are rejected. Other students have a gap in the independence and confidence required to leave home and go out on their own. In terms of academics, the biggest issue is the language barrier. Even though our students speak English—and for the most, this is their first language—they lack the necessary skills for fluent oral and written communications. (Respondent working in the educational system, Dec. 4, 2003)

Post-secondary school students also stressed that skills such as how to save money, budget, do homework, manage time, and study effectively are crucial to success and must be taught to high school students. Development of work habits necessary for educational success is also essential. A published letter from a student emphasizes such needs:

By the time a student gets to college, they should have an ingrained attitude that putting homework off until the last minute, or even later, is not a good way to approach an education, and will likely lead to self-sabotage. . . A student who does not procrastinate about their homework is likely to become an employee who also gets things done on time. . . In fact, meeting deadlines is merely good manners and shows respect for those who depend on us.<sup>18</sup>

One post-secondary school respondent stated:

I don't think I was prepared enough for university life, even after Nunavut Sivuniksavut (NS) as I was prepared for the workload with NS. In university, the workload is far greater than the workload that is given to you during high school (which I think should be changed so that more students are better prepared for post-secondary education). What I mean is, I know what was expected of me in university, but I had to make a lot of changes in my lifestyle to accommodate what was expected (i.e. time management). (Post-secondary respondent: current student, Jan. 22, 2004)

Lack of motivation was commonly mentioned as a barrier to further education. Examples of possible factors in poor motivation included: education as a low priority; peer influence and distraction by others; thinking it is easier to quit; boredom; laziness; and lack of vision. Family or financial problems and responsibilities may also affect personal motivation. Teachers, educators, and parents must find ways to develop students' interest in education and motivate them to stay in school. The whole community may need to be involved in promoting education and enhancing student motivation.

There are psychological and emotional challenges in post-secondary education. For example, leaving home is often difficult for Inuit students and their families even when attending northern programs. It requires a change from life in a small community where one is surrounded by family and known to everyone, to a larger centre of many strangers and new ways of living. The differences between remote communities and urban lifestyle, language, and environment are especially great for those considering or attending southern schools, especially if the student has had little real-life exposure to the south.

[Inuit] students need to prepare emotionally and mentally for the changes that lie ahead, because when deciding on what field or occupation she or he wishes to pursue, the chances are that the courses are not offered in [the Inuit regions].<sup>19</sup>

Further research is necessary to understand the gaps in skills and knowledge that create difficulties for Inuit in post-secondary studies. A two-year study, with input from 400 faculty in 20 universities, found that crucial elements necessary for university success included: critical and analytical thinking skills; problem-solving skills; curiosity; language comprehension and ability to express ideas orally and in writing; ability to use knowledge, recognize important knowledge and sources, and draw inferences; and the ability to cope with frustrating and ambiguous learning tasks. Such mental skills developed in high school were considered even more important than actual content knowledge, which can then be learned if these foundation cognitive skills are in place.<sup>20</sup> What are the specific needs for Inuit students? What are culturally-appropriate learning environments for Inuit students? What changes may be needed in curriculum content, teaching strategies and course offerings, and how might these changes be effectively implemented? What are Inuit values as related to learning? Are there differences in the skills/knowledge of students in northern colleges and those attending southern schools? How many students found it necessary to take upgrading, tutoring, and access programs<sup>21</sup> and in what courses? How effective is it to upgrade courses? Are students able to gain the in-depth knowledge necessary for success, especially in the advanced levels needed for professional health programs?

### Information, Awareness, Resources

Lack of information and resources were also important concerns. Although high school students learn about post-secondary programs from many sources (RCMP, media, etc.: Appendix 3.2), information was usually provided by teachers. Friends and family were the second most important source.

Post-secondary school students suggested that more post-secondary education information be given to high school students and their parents. Guidance counsellors or designated school staff should be available in every Arctic high school to provide post-secondary school information. Currently, principals or high school teachers can take on this role when counsellors are unavailable.

Colleges and universities arrange orientation weeks for new students once they arrive at school. It was suggested that providing these activities for high school students would give them a better understanding of post-secondary school life. (Some Inuit regions are already giving week-long orientation sessions to students going south for school.)

The searchable database developed by the Ajunnginiq Centre at the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) is one effort to provide information relevant to health-related

programs. The database will be made available to Arctic high schools and can be used by students, teachers, principals, and parents. It will give Inuit an idea of the opportunities and options in Canada, as well as the prerequisites necessary for various health careers. The database will be provided on NAHO's website on the Ajunnginiq Centre page (<http://www.naho.ca/inuit>) and on a CD-ROM. This CD-ROM will be distributed to schools across the Arctic and made available to students, teachers, and parents living in Inuit communities. The information is mainly in English, but will also include relevant French institutions. All additional information, like tips or suggestions, will be available in Inuktitut.

### Dropping Out of High School

Lack of motivation and personal problems were cited by both secondary and post-secondary school students as the main reasons why students drop out of high school (Appendices 3.4 and 4.3).

Post-secondary school students said the lack of motivation and support were the most important issue for high school dropouts, with personal issues also a significant factor. More than a third also viewed academic issues as a reason.

There were some interesting differences in the responses from male and female secondary students: more than half the girls stated personal issues as the most important reason; only a third of the boys noted personal issues, ranking this as the second most important reason after motivation. A significantly greater percentage of boys, 29 per cent of boys versus 19 per cent of girls, also stated that work considered "too hard" was a factor in dropping out.

Interest and difficulty affect whether students continue in school or in specific courses. The high school students were therefore asked which courses they enjoy and which they find difficult (Appendix 3.3). Again, there were some gender differences. Math was the course students most often found difficult (41 per cent of boys, 38 per cent of girls), but math was also the girls' most enjoyed course (36 per cent), whereas it ranked second with the boys—but at only 18 per cent. Language courses showed a significant difference. No females cited difficulties in English specifically and only three per cent said Inuktitut and French were difficult. However, 18 per cent of boys said English was difficult (tied with social studies for second place in terms of difficulty); Inuktitut and French were also seen as more difficult by a significantly greater percentage of boys. Relatively few students found their science courses difficult, but science was not ranked as an especially enjoyable course. Schools might therefore consider new ways of creating challenge, excitement, and interest in science.

The gender differences might be an area for further research in Inuit communities. Are boys having fewer personal problems? Coping with them better? Denying them? Are boys having greater problems with school work? For example, in a study in the United States, boys generally have higher rates of attention deficit disorder combined with learning disabilities.<sup>22</sup> Research also shows that boys generally do not achieve as well in school as girls and their reading skills are significantly behind girls' skills. Poor reading skills are known to be a factor in school dropout rates and good reading skills are crucial to school success.<sup>23</sup>

Drug use as a problem was cited by a quarter of all high school respondents. Alcohol, however, was low on the list for both boys and girls. This is important information. Education, information, and counselling services may need to develop more effective drug-specific prevention strategies.

The need for school guidance counsellors, family support, and post-secondary school and career information was suggested as possibly helping student motivation. As well, it was noted that students should be encouraged to continue learning outside of school.

Poor attendance was cited by a number of respondents as a separate concern, as it may be the result of a variety of reasons. Schools, families, and communities may need to work together to promote the importance of attendance for educational success and to develop solutions to the underlying causes.

### Support

The need for a variety of supports in post-secondary education—including financial, personal, emotional, and academic—was an important issue. The vast majority of post-secondary school students cited family as their main support system, with friends and school staff a significant second source of support (Appendix 4.2).

Both high school and post-secondary school students frequently mentioned personal problems as a cause of school problems. Issues may include low self-esteem, dependence, depression, confusion, frustration, serious relationships, problems outside of school, social difficulties, the desire to be ‘cool’ when school success is seen as ‘uncool,’ pregnancy, alcohol and drug use, and marital problems.

I’ve seen students with tremendous potential and capabilities give up because of problems relating to alcohol and drug use, whether it be themselves or their spouses. As a population with many young people, we need to look at the risk much more seriously than we have.<sup>24</sup>

Homesickness and loneliness also affect those away from home, whether at northern colleges or southern schools.

Counselling for such personal issues at the secondary school level may be especially inadequate in smaller communities and schools where there is a lack of funding and qualified staff. Southern post-secondary schools may not recognize cultural differences and possible stresses. Therefore, they may not provide the most helpful services. All respondents made note of alcohol and drug issues, so alcohol/drug-specific counselling should be provided in both secondary and post-secondary school services.

The fact that Inuit students are more likely to have children was an important financial and service issue for post-secondary school students. The stress caused by trying to cover family living expenses on the amount of financial assistance provided can be great. One female respondent currently attending a post-secondary school describes her family’s situation:

The difference I am expected to pay from my pocket. This places a real strain on our lives and causes unneeded stress. I already receive stress from assignments, deadlines, and research. Do not get me wrong, I decided to come here because I do dream of being a [health provider] and I know that no one forced me to be here. I just wished there was more financial support from [my region]. Especially when they are constantly saying. . . “We need more Inuit [in the health field].” They may say that, but they do not support it. (e-mail, Jan. 23, 2004)

Issues related to child care, such as cost and availability, are barriers to students who have families, especially for single parents or those without family support:

If it were not for my husband's willingness to stay at home to watch the kids while I work, I would not have been in this program. . . Along with myself, there were two other Inuit [students] who were taking the program. They also struggled with daycare costs and were forced to quit the program. I did not quit thanks to my supportive family and my husband's willingness to help and support me. (Post-secondary school respondent: current student, e-mail, Jan. 23, 2004)

Those students who withdrew from their post-secondary school programs (Appendix 4.6) offered another reason for dropping out: not enough extracurricular activities. Involvement in extracurricular and social activities may be a factor in comfort level, stress relief, support, etc., so students were asked about their participation. Physical activity was cited most often. However, almost one quarter indicated they did not participate in any extracurricular activities. Social and physical activities promote physical and mental wellness, so opportunities for such activities seem a necessary component of post-secondary programs. Students especially appreciated services such as an Inuit community centre, homework clubs that offer meals, and culturally-sensitive on-campus student services.

Students made several suggestions regarding the support that southern post-secondary schools could provide to Inuit students (Appendices 4.5 and 4.6). The need for academic and other learning supports were noted most often. It was also recommended that school staff develop awareness of cultural and lifestyle differences, and provide a sense of safety and encouragement.

### Promoting Health Careers

Respondents were asked how health careers could be promoted among Inuit both generally and among students (Appendix 5.3). The need for adequate information and understanding about health careers at the elementary and secondary school level was mentioned most often. Suggestions for such promotion activities included:

- providing a variety of presentations or visits in or after school by health professionals;
- incorporating health careers information at an earlier age in the curriculum;
- providing experience opportunities for students (e.g. career or science fairs, and/or a career experience week);
- promoting local graduates and role models;
- providing up-to-date health curriculum, materials, and courses; and
- providing good relevant information: i.e. job descriptions.

Nunavik respondents also suggested a college be set up within that region. "If more can be done at the community level, you'll have more success" (Respondent with an interest in Inuit education, Nov. 19, 2003). Existing colleges might consider more branch campuses and/or programs that would reach more Inuit at the community level.<sup>25</sup> Nunavut Arctic College and Kativik School Board, for example, have had great success in teacher education because they offer bachelor's degrees affiliated with a university. These programs are offered in a variety of

northern communities. Nunavut Arctic College is offering a nursing diploma/degree program affiliated with Dalhousie University.

It is also necessary to do a thorough study of Inuit already working in the health field. From conversations and community stories, it is known that there are Inuit nurses in various communities, and that there is at least one Inuit dentist and at least three Inuit doctors. An Aboriginal dental therapy program has been operating in Saskatchewan for many years, but has not been successful in attracting and retaining an equitable number of Inuit students. It is not fully known who is doing what and where, yet such individuals are both role models and sources of important advice to Inuit communities and Inuit youth.

## CONCLUSION

It is important that Inuit become health providers in their communities so ongoing and culturally-appropriate services are available in the Arctic. Cultural, community, and individual strength and confidence also develop when people do not have to depend on outsiders for important services. This strength and confidence also grows when a community is empowered to care for its own people. But Inuit must be provided with the tools necessary to acquire the skills and knowledge.

Increasing numbers of Inuit students are accessing and completing post-secondary education, both in the north and the south. Despite personal issues, family responsibilities, and academic challenges, students repeatedly demonstrate that they are committed to goals, capable of overcoming obstacles, and willing to set positive examples:

I'd just like to state that not all [Inuit] students are lazy; that not all [Inuit] students are just in it for a free ride; that not all [Inuit] students quit midway, and that not all [Inuit] students procrastinate. . . I think it's wonderful that the Nunavut government is investing in their future. If not for their help, I would not be able to do this, and I feel superb that I am able to set an example for my child, who is seven.<sup>26</sup>

Students are also willing to share their experiences, learning, and advice with others.

The primary need emphasized by respondents is that high schools must better prepare students for advanced study. Students need cognitive/study/personal skills, course content, and expectations that meet the standards and prerequisites necessary for post-secondary school success generally and health careers specifically.

High school courses appropriate to advanced health careers must be offered. Further development of options like online and/or distance education, video conferencing, and summer school may be considered as alternatives to provide access to necessary courses, with adequate support.

Effective strategies for helping students maintain motivation, attendance, and personal wellness are needed. All students, at both secondary and post-secondary schools, require adequate support, counselling, and guidance services. Schools, families, and communities all play a role in providing this support and establishing an environment that encourages and enables individuals to continue their education. Inuit students' lives, experiences, and environments may be significantly different from those raised in southern communities. Leaving home may therefore result in great stresses, even among students who move from small communities to attend northern colleges. Post-secondary school students may also have children, so financial and

child care needs add difficulties. Again, support services and skill teaching are needed to help students cope.

Strategies for developing awareness of the wide variety of health careers are needed. Inuit students should be aware from a young age that opportunities in many fields are available—not just as doctors, nurses, counsellors, and dentists, but also countless other health-related professional and technical jobs. Students need to become aware that those opportunities are available.

More Inuit students are attending northern colleges than southern post-secondary schools. However, few health care programs are offered in northern colleges. Northern colleges must therefore find ways to provide a wider variety of health-related programs in the Inuit regions. However, most health education is offered in universities and southern colleges. Students must therefore be provided the solid foundation of skills and knowledge that will enable them to succeed in any health program in any location. Inuit should be enabled to access all options and areas of interest.

A number of issues require further in-depth and rigorous research: the needs of men, including males at the high school level; better high school preparation; elements necessary to motivate students to stay in school; and comprehensive information about Inuit already working in the health field, including the professions. Perhaps most importantly, specific and concrete information about the factors that lead to success is needed. What are the qualities, skills, attitudes, knowledge, and environmental factors common to successful post-secondary students?

A discussion forum with participants from all regions could be helpful for educators, leaders, community members, and youth to share what works and what has not worked and to find solutions for problems that concern a particular region or community. At such a forum, post-secondary and high school students would be invited to offer their opinions and experiences, thus providing invaluable concrete information. Post-secondary school students and graduates are perhaps the best source of such evidence. Such participatory community discussion and sharing of experiences and ideas may provide motivation and solutions. If needs are identified and addressed, Inuit will be better able to acquire the tools they need to become their own health providers in every area of health care. Each individual who is successful becomes an example and an inspiration to the following generation.

## APPENDIX 1.1

### **Letter 1: Asking Principals to Distribute High School Questionnaires**

Date

Principal  
Address  
VIA Facsimile

Dear Principal,

I appreciate you taking some time to talk with me over the phone today about what your high school is offering in upper level Science, Math and English. To complement my report about post-secondary programs for Inuit students, I am starting to conduct interviews with students who are in high school, who are going or went to a post-secondary program, and who left post-secondary programs.

In our conversation, you agreed to conduct some of the interviews. The information collected will be only used for my work in a confidential manner. What I am looking for are gaps and barriers that students face when trying to go to university or college. One of the goals of NAHO is to build the capacity of Inuit working in the health related field.

I have attached two types of questionnaires: one for high school students; and one for high school teachers, principals or counselors. Students or teachers can contact me by phone directly with their answers. If students want to write their answers in Inuktitut, let them know they can.

Your help will greatly contribute to this report. I estimate my work will be done by the end of February. Please mail the interviews to the address below or fax or e-mail them.

Thank you for your help,

Karin Kettler  
Junior Policy Analyst  
National Aboriginal Health Organization  
56 Sparks St., Suite 400  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5A9

Telephone: 1-877-602-4445, ext. 241  
Fax: (613) 237-1810  
e-mail: [kkettler@naho.ca](mailto:kkettler@naho.ca)

## APPENDIX 1.2

### **Letter 2: Asking Students Who Withdrew From a Post-Secondary Program to Participate**

Date

Dear Inuk from Nunavik,

My name is Karin Kettler. My family is originally from Kangiqsualujjuaq. I work as a Junior Policy Analyst in the Ajunnginiq Centre at the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) in Ottawa. I am working on a discussion paper about Inuit students and post secondary education and health careers. What are barriers for Inuit students to go into post-secondary? How can we promote health-related jobs to Inuit?

I have been collecting information on health related programs at the post-secondary level across Canada for Inuit students. My focus has been on post-secondary schools in the North and ones in the major cities in the South. I have also collected information about what high schools are offering in upper level science, math and English.

Now, I am interested in getting information from high school students, post-secondary students, students who left post-secondary programs, teachers, principals, and other school staff like counselors. I am interested in finding out what you think is necessary in order for Inuit to do well in health careers and/or post-secondary. All the information I collect from these interviews will be held confidential and will be used for the purpose of my discussion paper only.

Would you be willing to participate in my questionnaire? See the attached questionnaire and please fill it out and return to me by the end of January 2004.

Thank you for your time,

Karin Kettler  
Junior Policy Analyst  
National Aboriginal Health Organization  
56 Sparks St.  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5A9

Toll free: 1877-602-4445, ext. 241  
Fax: 613-237-1810  
e-mail: [kkettler@naho.ca](mailto:kkettler@naho.ca)

## APPENDIX 1.3

### Questionnaire for High School Students

---

*Please indicate your current grade level:*

(Grade 9 \_\_\_) (Grade 10 \_\_\_) (Grade 11 \_\_\_) (Grade 12 \_\_\_)

Male \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_

*What Inuit region you are from?:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

---

1. Do you plan to go to a post-secondary program? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
2. If you answered “Yes” to Question 1, what do you plan to take?
  - a. Where would you like to go?
  - b. How did you hear about the college/university/program?
  - c. Has anyone helped you get prepared for post-secondary program? How?
3. If you answered “No” to Question 1, what would you like to do after high school?
4. What high school classes do you find difficult? Why?
5. What high school classes do you enjoy? Why?
6. In your opinion, why do students drop out of high school in your community?

## APPENDIX 1.4

### Questions for Students at Post-Secondary Programs (and Graduates)

---

Male \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_ Length of program you entered: \_\_\_ year(s)

Current year of study: \_\_\_\_\_ Did you graduate? \_\_\_\_\_

What Inuit region you are from?: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

1. What post-secondary institution are you attending?
2. What program are you in?
3. Do you think you were prepared for college life? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No  
Do you think you were prepared for Southern life? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No  
Please explain your answers.
4. What course(s) do you find hard? Why?
5. What course(s) do you do well in? Why?
6. Who gives you support while you are here? (i.e. Friends, family, student services, etc.)  
What kind of support do they give? (Financial, personal, academic)
7. In your opinion, what are the reasons for a high school student to drop out of high school?
8. Do you have any advice for Inuit high school students in the North about post-secondary programs and/or studying in the South?
9. How can high schools in the North better prepare Inuit for post-secondary programs?
10. How can college/university in the South better help Inuit do well in their programs?
11. Are there any events or clubs that you attend at the post-secondary institution? Which ones?
12. What do you plan to do after the post-secondary program is finished? Do you plan to return to the North?

## APPENDIX 1.5

### Questions for Students Who Left Post-Secondary Programs

---

Male \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_ Length of program you were in: \_\_\_ year(s)

Indicate the year/month/week of study you left: \_\_\_\_\_

What Inuit region you are from? : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

1. Which post-secondary institution did you attend?
2. Why did you leave?
3. Did you have support while at the post-secondary school? If yes, what kind of support?
4. Were there any events/seminars/clubs that you attended during your time at the post-secondary program? If yes, which ones?
5. Do you think you were prepared for post-secondary studies? Why or why not?
6. Did someone try to help you stay in the post-secondary school? How?
7. What would have helped you stay in the program?
8. Did you seek help? Were you able to get help? What kind of help were you seeking?
9. What are you doing now?
10. Did you like high school? Why or why not?
11. In your opinion, what are the reasons for a high school student to drop out of school?
12. How can high schools in the North better prepare you for a post-secondary program?
13. How can college/university in the south help Inuit students continue and do well in their programs?

## APPENDIX 1.6

### Questions for People with an Interest in Inuit Education

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What Inuit region are you working in? : \_\_\_\_\_

---

1. What is it like teaching secondary in the North?
2. What do you think are the gaps for Inuit students who may want go into a post-secondary program?
3. How can we promote health-related programs to Inuit high school students?  
OR  
How can health-related programs be promoted among Inuit?

## APPENDIX 2.1

<b>Regional Overview of High School Upper-Level Course Offerings 2003-2004</b>	
<b>Course type</b>	<b>No. of Labrador schools out of 7</b>
Level-3 Academic Science	1
Level-3 Biology	5
Level-3 Chemistry	2
Level-3 Environmental Studies	4
Level-3 Physics	1
Level-3 Chemistry/Physics—Distance Education	3
Level-3 Academic Math	6
Level-3 Advanced Math (three schools offer it online)	5
Level-3 Academic English (one school offers it online)	6
<b>Course type</b>	<b>No. of Nunavik schools out of 7</b>
Biology 534 (one school offers it at night)	2
Chemistry 534	2
Physics 534 (one school offers it at night)	2
Advanced Math 536	1
Academic Math 526	1
Academic English	7
<b>Course type</b>	<b>No. of Inuvialuit schools out of 4</b>
Chemistry 30	1
Biology 30	2
Physics 30	1
Environmental Science 35	1
Applied Math 30	3
Pure Math 30 (one school offers it online)	2
Academic English 30-1	3
<b>Course type</b>	<b>No. of Nunavut schools out of 9</b>
Chemistry 30	6
Biology 30	6
Physics 30	2
Environmental Science 35	7
Applied Math 30	6
Pure Math 30	8
Calculus	1
Academic English 30-1	8

**Note:** All course designations (i.e. Level 3, Academic, Advanced, 30, 35, 534 etc.) indicate senior level content; regions use different terms.

APPENDIX 2.2

<b>What Inuit High School Students are Doing After Graduation in 2003 27 Arctic High Schools</b>			
<b>Community</b>	<b>No. of Graduates June 2003</b>	<b>No. of Graduates attending post- secondary school September 2003</b>	<b>No. of Students returned by November 2003</b>
Inuvik	11	2	---
Aklavik	0	0	---
Holman	2	---	---
Tuktoyaktuk	4	---	---
<b>Inuvialuit Subtotal:</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>---</b>
Arviat	11	4	2
Iqaluit	15	---	---
Igloolik	7	2	---
Baker Lake	0	0	---
Kugluktuk	5	2	---
Cambridge Bay	3	0	---
Gjoa Haven	1	---	---
Pond Inlet	9	6	---
Rankin Inlet	11	6	---
<b>Nunavut Subtotal:</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2</b>
Inukjuak	12	12	8
Kangirsualujuaq	3	1	---
Salluit	5	---	---
Kuujjuaraapik	1	1	---
Kangiqsujuaq	3	2	---
Puvirnituk	7	4	1
Kuujjuaq	6	5	3
<b>Nunavik Subtotal:</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>
Nain	8	---	---
Northwest River	2	---	---
Makkovik	6	4	---
Hopedale	4	---	---
Postville	1	1	---
Happy Valley	8	---	---
Rigolet	0	0	---
<b>Labrador Subtotal:</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>---</b>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>14</b>

“---” = information not available at the time of interview

APPENDIX 2.3

<b>2003-2004 Inuit Students in Final High School Year 27 Arctic High Schools</b>	
<b>Community</b>	<b>No. of Students</b>
Inuvik	13*
Aklavik	5
Holman	10
Tuktoyaktuk	10*
<b>Inuvialuit Subtotal:</b>	<b>38*</b>
Arviat	24
Iqaluit	32
Igloolik	15*
Baker Lake	8
Kugluktuk	18
Cambridge Bay	12
Gjoa Haven	8*
Pond Inlet	17
Rankin Inlet	13
<b>Nunavut Subtotal:</b>	<b>147*</b>
Inukjuak	15
Kangiqsualujjuaq	5
Salluit	7
Kuujjuaraapik	6
Kangiqsujuaq	2
Puvirnitug	5
Kuujjuaq	11
<b>Nunavik Subtotal:</b>	<b>51</b>
Nain	11
Northwest River	2*
Makkovik	6
Hopedale	8
Postville	2
Happy Valley	11
Rigolet	8
<b>Labrador Subtotal:</b>	<b>48*</b>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>284*</b>

\* Principals estimated these numbers at the time of the interview.

**APPENDIX 2.4**

**Post-Secondary Graduates and Enrolment**  
Post-Secondary Informants June 2001-2003

College	Graduates in 2001	Female	Male	No. in Health program	Graduates in 2002	Female	Male	No. in Health program	Graduates in 2003	Female	Male	No. in Health program	Enrolled in Fall 2003	Female	Male	# of students to date
Nunavimmi Pigiursavik	25	---	---	0	33	---	---	9	8	---	---	0	66	---	---	45
Nunavut Arctic College	262	176	86	15*	204	142	62	14*	244	146	98	4*	485	---	---	---
Aurora College	12	10	2	4	10	10	0	0	15	10	5	2	304	174	130	---
College of the North Atlantic**	55	---	---	1	56	---	---	0	55	---	---	1	141	---	---	---
John Abbott College	3	1	2	1	2	1	1	0	2	0	2	0	18	13	5	14
Cégep Marie-Victorin	2	2	0	0	0	---	---	---	1	0	1	0	---	---	---	---
Nunavut Sivuniksavut	16	12	4	0	15	8	7	0	17	12	5	0	22	17	5	19
<b>College SUBTOTAL:</b>	375	201	94	21	320	161	70	23	342	168	111	7	1036	204	140	78
<b>University</b>																
Memorial University	16	---	---	9	18	---	---	2	13	---	---	5	89	---	---	82
<b>University SUBTOTAL:</b>	16	---	---	9	18	---	---	2	13	---	---	5	89	---	---	82
<b>TOTAL:</b>	391	201	94	30	338	161	70	25	355	168	111	12	1125	204	140	160

“---” = not available at the time of interview

\* Nunavut Arctic College health program figures may include graduates of a teacher education program.

\*\* 20 Inuit students graduated from the Home Support Program at College of the North Atlantic between 2001 and 2003, but an annual breakdown was not available.

**Note:** Other universities were approached for Inuit student statistics; however, the information was not available due to lack of tracking or privacy issues.

## APPENDIX 2.5

Information for this table was collected from the major regional funding sources. Not all funding sources were contacted.

<b>Enrolment At Post-Secondary Schools Funding Sources Informants Fall 2003</b>								
Region	Total	College	University	Other Programs	Male	Female	Health Program	Who left their program by Dec. 2003
Labrador	180	63%	37%	0	34%	66%	14%	12%
Nunavik	31	68%	32%	0	26%	74%	16%	16%
Nunavut	438	81%	14%	5%	29%	71%	11%	---
Inuvialuit	91	---	---	---	---	---	31%*	2%
TOTAL/ Average %:	740	75%	22%	3%	30%	70%	14 %	9%

“---” = not available at the time of interview

“Other Programs” = upgrading programs or the programs were not mentioned by the funder

\* Inuvialuit health-related enrolment figure may have included teacher education students.

## APPENDIX 2.6

This table offers a great deal of information about the Inuit students attending post-secondary schools. The “Number of students” row in the table below includes students who were pending approval and those who have been approved for funding.

“Undergraduate” includes bachelor degrees that are general, honours, or joint. “Graduate studies” includes masters and doctorate degrees. “New student” includes students receiving funding from this group for the first time. “Continuing student” includes students receiving funding for a second or consecutive school year.

<b>Inuit Post-Secondary Enrolment Results Nunavut Funding Source Informant Fall 2003</b>					
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>New Student</b>	<b>Continuing Student</b>
Number of students	n=438	71%	29%	76%	24%
New student	76%	71%	29%	---	---
Continuing student	24%	69%	31%	---	---
Northern college	71%	76%	24%	77%	23%
Southern school	23%	54%	46%	68%	32%
Certificate	54%	75%	25%	96%	4%
Diploma	27%	55%	45%	55%	45%
Undergraduate	13.4%	85%	15%	41%	59%
Graduate studies	0.9%	75%	25%	50%	50%
Upgrading	0.2%	100%	---	---	---
Did not state school and/or program	6.5%	69%	31%	---	---

“n” = number of students

“---” = not applicable/available

### APPENDIX 3.1

What are students planning to do after graduating from high school? Male and female responses are the percentages of those who responded for that line, not the total.

<b>If you answered “Yes” to Question 1, What do you plan to take? Arctic High School Respondents</b>			
<b>What they know</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Number of responses	n=81	37%	63%
The program	26%	48%	52%
The school/location	37%	33%	66%
The program and school/location	27%	27%	73%
Does not know	10%	50%	50%

*“n” = number of responses*

“Program” means the students know which program or career they would like to study.  
“School/location” means students wrote the name of the school and relevant city or town.  
“Does not know” includes those students who wrote “I don’t know” and those who did not write an answer.

**APPENDIX 3.2**

<b>How did you hear about the college/university/program? Arctic High School Respondents</b>	
<b>Source</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Teachers	25%
Friends	21%
Family	19%
In school	11%
Those who had been there	8%
Some people	4%
College representative	3%
RCMP	
Visited the post-secondary school	
Myself	
The radio	1%
A magazine	
We hear about it all the time	
Planning since Grade 10	

### APPENDIX 3.3

The tables below displays the most difficult and most enjoyed courses by high school respondents, categorized by male and female responses. Students may have written more than one answer.

<b>What high school courses did students find difficult/enjoyable? 44 Male Arctic High School Respondents</b>			
<b>Difficult Course</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Enjoyed Course</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Math	41%	Gym	43%
Social Studies, English	18%	Math	18%
Inuktitut	14%	English	16%
None	9%	Computers	14%
French	7%	Social Studies	11%
Biology	5%	Culture	9%
Chemistry, Gym, Keyboard, Science, “Grade 11”, Culture	2%	Science, Biology, All	7%
		Art, Chemistry, French	5%
		Inuktitut, “Grade 7”, “Grade 5”, None	2%

<b>What high school courses did students find difficult/enjoyable? 61 Female Arctic High School Respondents</b>			
<b>Difficult Course</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Enjoyed Course</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Math	38%	Math	36%
Social Studies	15%	Computers	25%
		Gym	15%
Science	12%	English	13%
None	10%	Culture	15%
Geography, Inuktitut, Gym, French	3%	Science	8%
		Art	7%
Environmental Studies, Biology, Most of the subjects	2%	Biology, Social Studies, None, French	5%
		Language Arts	3%
		History, Geography, Northern Studies, Business, Physical Science, Inuktitut, Religion, “Grade 7”	2%

### APPENDIX 3.4

The following are lists of common reasons students quit high school, as suggested by their peers. Multiple reasons were grouped together when they had the same results. Male and female results are shown separately. Some students gave more than one answer.

<b>Reasons for Dropping out of High School</b>	
<b>41 Male Arctic High School Respondents</b>	
<b>Reason</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Lack of motivation	37%
Personal issues	32%
Too hard	29%
Drugs	24%
Bullies	17%
Sleep in	12%
Alcohol	7%
Poor attendance; lack of support	5%
<b>53 Female Arctic High School Respondents</b>	
Personal issues	51%
Lack of motivation	45%
Drugs	25%
Too hard	19%
Sleep in	15%
Poor attendance	13%
Bullies; lack of support	11%
Alcohol	8%
Too easy	4%

## APPENDIX 4.1

Answers were grouped together when they had the same number of responses. Respondents may have given more than one answer.

<b>What course did they find difficult/enjoyable?</b> <b>Post-Secondary Respondents: Current and Graduates</b>			
<b>Difficult Course</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Enjoyed Course</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
History	28%	History	33%
Land claims, Literature, English	17%	English	22%
		Contemporary issues	17%
Inuktitut	11%	Everything else, Land claims, Computers	11%
Contemporary issues, Math, None, Science courses, "Individual and Society"	6%		

## APPENDIX 4.2

What kind of support did students receive while attending a southern post-secondary institution? Respondents may have given more than one answer.

<b>Support for Post-Secondary Inuit Students Post-Secondary Respondents: Current and Graduates</b>	
<b>Source</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Family*	83%
Friends	67%
School Staff	
Classmates/ Students	39%
Financial Support Group	28%
Roommates	5%

\* Most students did not specify if it was their immediate or extended family members who gave them support.

### APPENDIX 4.3

Respondents may have given more than one answer.

<b>In your opinion, what are the reasons for a high school student to drop out of high school? Post-Secondary Respondents: Current and Graduates</b>	
<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lack motivation	61%
Lack of support	50%
Personal issues	44%
Academic issues	39%
Drugs	17%
Bullying or peer pressure	
Alcohol	11%

#### APPENDIX 4.4

Seventeen current post-secondary school students and graduates responded to the question: What suggestions do you have for high schools in the north? Respondents may have given more than one answer.

<b>Suggestions for High Schools in the North Post-Secondary Respondents: Current and Graduates</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>
<b>Expect more from students:</b>	
Give more and harder homework and assignments	5
Be more strict, stick to the rules	3
Get students reading more	2
Ask more from students, but also give more to learn	1
Make students do more presentations	
<b>Provide information for post-secondary school:</b>	
Hold a week-long introduction to post-secondary education including what to expect	2
Provide after-school information sessions	1
Provide sessions for parents of high school students	
<b>Teach skills:</b>	
How to budget and save money	2
How to do homework	1
How to manage time	
How to study	
<b>Provide support:</b>	
Support or motivate students	3
Emphasize that learning does not stop at school	1
Provide education counsellors	
<b>Offer appropriate classes:</b>	
Offer appropriate level courses	3
Offer evening classes	1

## APPENDIX 4.5

Thirteen current post-secondary school students and graduates were asked: What suggestions do you have for post-secondary schools in the south? Some respondents may have given more than one answer.

<b>Suggestions for Post-Secondary Schools in the South Post-Secondary Respondents: Current and Graduates</b>	
<b>Response</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>
Provide programs, session, or tutors to help Inuit or Aboriginal students	3
Have Inuit-only classes (less people means more learning)	2
Give presentations about studying, time management, study habits, etc. Maybe make a brochure about it	2
Provide a successful Inuk or people for advice, encouragement, and understanding who are familiar with Inuit culture	2
Be aware of cultural differences	1
Create a safe environment for students	
Provide students with needed encouragement	
Become friends or talk with them enough so they feel welcomed and wanted	
Offer homework programs	

## APPENDIX 4.6

### **Post-Secondary School Students Who Withdrew From Their Studies: Summarized**

Of the three informants who withdrew from their post-secondary studies, two are currently working full-time and the third is looking for work. All agreed they had felt ready to go to a southern post-secondary school and all left for personal reasons. Two left because of pregnancy, one for other unspecified personal reasons. One stated she would have stayed had she been able to receive parental leave or study by correspondence; another would have continued had she not decided to start a family; and the third stated that remaining in school under any circumstances was impossible given her personal situation.

The students suggested that reasons why students drop out of high school include academic issues, lack of motivation, peer pressure, and not enough extracurricular activities.

These students offered several ways Arctic high schools and southern post-secondary institutions could better prepare students for post-secondary education.

<b>Post-Secondary Students Who Withdrew From Their Studies: Summarized Comments</b>
<b>Suggestions for high schools in the north:</b>
Expect more from the students
Make high school more challenging
Provide some core courses in Inuktitut (it may be easier to learn some concepts in the mother tongue)
Provide speakers outside of the school to talk about their careers
Ask a dropout to encourage students to finish school
<b>Suggestions for post-secondary schools in the south:</b>
Ensure tutors are available
Offer courses by correspondence
Be aware of the different lifestyle of Inuit
Offer a CÉGEP in the Arctic (" <i>CÉGEP</i> " is <i>Collège d'Éducation Général Et Professionnel</i> ; a technical/preparatory school for recent Quebec high school graduates preparing for further studies in college or university..)

## APPENDIX 5.1

School staff, such as teachers and principals, were asked about their experience working in the Arctic. Thirteen responses were collected. Experiences with the same number of responses were grouped together. Some respondents may have given more than one answer.

<b>What is it like teaching secondary school in the Arctic?                      Respondents with an Interest in Inuit Education</b>			
<b>Rewards</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Rewarding generally	62%	Motivating students and encouraging good attendance	54%
Students more relaxed and respectful	15%		
Enjoying the northern environment and experiences		Challenging generally	46%
		Students' personal issues outside of school	15%
The opportunity to get to know your students personally	8%	In smaller schools: smaller curriculum resources	8%
Smaller classes		Split-level classes	
Since Grade 12 has been offered in the community, there has been an increased success of students completing final year of high school		Personal—had to adapt and be open to change	
	Accessing needed support services		
	Students lack self-discipline to do the required work		
	Cost of purchasing everything		
		Attracting qualified staff	

## APPENDIX 5.2

Of the 45 total respondents, most gave more than one answer. Issues with the same number of responses have been grouped together.

<b>What are the gaps or barrier Inuit face when going to a post-secondary school? Respondents with an Interest in Inuit Education</b>	
<b>Gaps or Barriers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Academic Concerns</b>	
General academic concerns	22%
Attendance issues	16%
Credit value is not the same from north to south	
Skills in studying and time management	
Students have to catch up after high school or spend longer to complete their programs	13%
Math: higher level thinking, problem solving (which might be due to language barriers), math literacy	7%
Science: do not have the vocabulary	
There are no concerns: it is getting better and students are able to write college-level essays; Inuit have the same opportunities as non-Inuit	4%
Mature students are the most interested in post-secondary school. Few young students are going on after high school	
Lack of understanding how colleges and universities function	
Difficulties trying to fit a mould and don't fit in the southern schools	2%
Language: lack oral and written communication, lower reading level	
<b>Personal or Social Concerns</b>	
Homesickness or loneliness	42%
Support from family, community or post-secondary school	38%
Difficulties adjusting to a new environment	16%
Different lifestyle, language, and culture	13%
Social issues: pregnancy, family responsibilities, depression, serious relationships, and easy access to drugs/alcohol	9%
College or university not a priority	7%
General personal or social concerns	
Philosophy/social issue: the land is important to Inuit	2%
Return to the community and feel like an outsider	
<b>Resources for Students</b>	
Not aware of the career possibilities and opportunities	16%
Lack of local role models	13%
Not enough support: child care, computers, basic living	7%
Not enough funding support	
The choice of place, program, and support will depend on how big the gap is for each student	4%
Access to programs and resources are an issue in smaller communities	
The small number of students in a course will determine if it is offered or not at the high school	2%
Post-secondary programs are getting harder to get into	

### APPENDIX 5.3

Suggestions have been grouped according to relevance. Respondents may have given more than one answer. Suggestions with the same number of responses were grouped together.

<b>How can health-related programs be promoted among Inuit? Respondents with an Interest in Inuit Education</b>	
<b>Suggestions relevant to primary and secondary schools</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Provide a variety of presentations or visits in the school by health professionals	24%
Expose students to and incorporate health careers information in the curriculum at an earlier age	22%
Provide up-to-date health curriculum, materials, and courses	8%
Promote local graduates or role models	7%
Provide options to parents	7%
Hold career fairs	4%
Offer science camps or science fairs	4%
Have a career experience week	4%
Promote science and math courses in Grades 9 and 10	2%
Offer real-life situations to provide practical and concrete information	2%
Group students who wish to be in advanced courses and those who wish to be at a general level in high school	2%
Provide summer courses like intensive two or three week courses for high school students to catch up or upgrade	2%
Provide a way for students to get the prerequisites they need in their home community or send students to other larger communities within the same Inuit region to take the same course	2%
Fund breakfast programs	2%
Hire Elders to work in the schools	2%
Get help or support from other departments/organizations	2%
Give lots of information about attending a program (e.g., costs, amount to be received from funding supports, schedules, etc.)	2%
Have two or three counsellors travelling to each community to offer help to students in making a decision about their future or career path and also promote vocational trades as well as college and university options	2%

<b>How can health-related programs be promoted among Inuit? (cont'd) Respondents with an Interest in Inuit Education</b>	
<b>Suggestions relevant to post-secondary schools</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Bring post-secondary school agents to the communities to promote their courses and programs to students and parents	4%
Provide a preparation year for students	2%
Make students aware of opportunities working in the health field	
Allow for learning through the Internet or by correspondence	
Have homework club where a supper is served	
<b>Suggestions for local governments and organizations</b>	
Set up a college in the region	13%
Distribute promotional posters	7%
Provide access at the community level	2%
Check with other departments on what they are doing or have done	
Build Inuit-specific residences at two or three post-secondary schools	
Have Inuit working in the health field as a promotion in itself	
Provide adequate financial support, particularly to students with families	
<b>Suggestions relevant to all</b>	
Provide good relevant information; i.e. job descriptions	11%
Improve drug and alcohol awareness	4%
Promote health careers at the local level	2%
Provide counselling for parents and students	
Promote healthy choices	
Give rewards for not starting to smoke	
Change their mentality	
Encourage youth to take ownership of health care service delivery in their communities and regions	
Continue to provide options for physical activity	

## REFERENCES

- Ellsworth, Lena, *How the Current Education System in Nunavut May Still be Perpetuating Social Inequality and How it Relates to the Social Issues that Inuit are Facing Today* (2002)  
[http://www.carleton.ca/~mflynmbu/iqaluit\\_sociology/lena\\_ellsworth.htm](http://www.carleton.ca/~mflynmbu/iqaluit_sociology/lena_ellsworth.htm)
- National Aboriginal Health Organization, *A Listing of Aboriginal Health Careers: Education and Training Opportunities* (2003)
- R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd., *Aboriginal Peoples and Post-Secondary Education* (Montreal, January 2004)
- R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd., *Best Practices in Increasing Aboriginal Post-Secondary Enrolment Rates* (Victoria, May 2002)
- Richardson, Cathy and Natasha Blanchet-Cohen, *Survey of Post-Secondary Education Programs in Canada for Aboriginal Peoples* (Victoria, January 2000)

---

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Nunatsiaq News*, KSB Monthly Update, Jan. 30, 2004 (page 25).

<sup>2</sup> Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, *Evaluation of Models of Health Care Delivery in Inuit Regions* (2000). For example, four doctors from Kuujuaq, Nunavik, are leaving the regional hospital in 2004. Carl Bromwich, who has been a doctor in Nunavik for 11 years, told *Nunatsiaq News* (Jan. 16, 2004), "It's one of the unfortunate things that we have here in Nunavik that we don't have any doctors who have been born and bred here."

<sup>3</sup> Suzie Napayok, Letter to the Editor, *Nunatsiaq News*, Jan. 16, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Post-secondary includes any program that starts after high school including vocational, college, and university.

<sup>5</sup> Universities were chosen in those cities known to have Inuit populations, or were believed to be most familiar to Inuit, as well as some with specific supports for Aboriginal students.

<sup>6</sup> The database will be available on the Ajunnginiq Centre's section of the National Aboriginal Health Organization's website.

<sup>7</sup> Mathematics, especially advanced-level mathematics, is a foundation for science. It develops the analytical and problem-solving skills necessary in health careers.

[http://www.s4s.org/03\\_viewproducts/ksus/math.php#top](http://www.s4s.org/03_viewproducts/ksus/math.php#top).

<sup>8</sup> Standards for Success Consultants, *Understanding University Success* (2003).

<http://www.s4s.org/understanding.php>.

<sup>9</sup> For example, Nunavut Arctic College has set up a Health Careers Access Year (sciences, English, math) for students interested in its nursing program, and access programs (especially English and math upgrading) for community teacher education programs. Individual stories often reflect that of a bachelor of science student who required two years of upgrading after high school.

<sup>10</sup> National Aboriginal Health Organization, Ajunnginiq Centre, *Regional Health Workshops* (2002).

<sup>11</sup> In the process of gathering information, it became evident that the numbers are greater than anticipated.

<sup>12</sup> Some northern high schools only go up to Grade 10; some schools are combined elementary and secondary; and others are only secondary schools.

<sup>13</sup> High schools offer courses at different levels of difficulty, e.g., basic, general, and academic; the terms used to indicate the level are different in different areas. "Advanced level" means the most complex courses, which are generally required for acceptance to university or college.

<sup>14</sup> Respondents in this category included school staff, and representatives of Inuit and community organizations.

<sup>15</sup> Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, National Inuit Youth Council, *Inuit Youth and Education*, <http://www.tapirisat.ca/inuit-youth/niyc-education.html> (Downloaded July 26, 2004).

<sup>16</sup> The question of similar programs is an important variable. For example, a Licensed Practical Nurse program is not the same as a Registered Nurse program in terms of course content, skills, knowledge, and length of study. However, completion rates could be compared between an RN program in the north and one in the south.

<sup>17</sup> There may be students with alternate sources of funding. Some Inuit students may also have been living in the south at the time of entry into university; northern funding organizations would have no record.

<sup>18</sup> Bob Mesher, Letter to the Editor, *Nunatsiaq News*, April 2, 2004.

<sup>19</sup> Mary Kootoo, Letter to the Editor, *Nunatsiaq News*, April 30, 2004.

<sup>20</sup> Standards for Success Consultants, *Understanding University Success: Introduction* (2003).

[http://www.s4s.org/03\\_viewproducts/ksus/intro.php#top](http://www.s4s.org/03_viewproducts/ksus/intro.php#top) The study outlines specific skills necessary for a variety of study areas.

<sup>21</sup> Access programs, offered by some post-secondary schools, may be one or two years in length. They are intended to allow students to obtain the necessary prerequisite for acceptance to various programs.

<sup>22</sup> Information is from a study of 80,000 families in the United States: Attention Deficit Disorder and Learning Disability: United States 1997-1998 (Summary), 2004.

[http://www.ldonline.org/ld\\_indepth/add\\_adhd/add\\_ld\\_1997\\_1998.html](http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/add_adhd/add_ld_1997_1998.html).

---

<sup>23</sup> See the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada and the National Centre for Learning Disabilities websites for research details and information. <http://www.ldac-taac.ca/english/research/boysread.htm>; [http://www.ld.org/research/nclld\\_reading\\_comp.cfm](http://www.ld.org/research/nclld_reading_comp.cfm).

<sup>24</sup> Suzie Napayok, Letter to the Editor, *Nunatsiaq News*, Jan. 16, 2004.

<sup>25</sup> Nunavut Arctic College has Community Learning Centres in all communities and college campuses in the three Nunavut sub-regions. Aurora College has Community Learning Centres in all the Inuvialuit communities, as well as campuses in Yellowknife, Fort Smith, and Inuvik, all of which have Inuit students. The College of the North Atlantic also has several campuses, but Happy Valley/Goose Bay is the closest to Inuit in the Labrador region.

<sup>26</sup> Mary Kootoo, Letter to the Editor, *Nunatsiaq News*, April 30, 2004.