

# NEWS RELEASE



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## Courts Approve Residential School Settlement Agreement

(December 15, 2006 -- Iqaluit, Nunavut) Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. President Paul Kaludjak said he is pleased that significant steps were taken today toward final approval by the courts of the proposed Residential School Settlement Agreement.

While the courts in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories have not yet released their decisions, courts in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, British Columbia and the Yukon released decisions earlier today, announcing their approval of the settlement agreement subject to the parties addressing administrative concerns.

Final approval of the settlement agreement will not take place until the courts in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories approve the settlement. Kaludjak said NTI is hopeful this approval will come early in 2007. Common Experience Payments will not be made in any jurisdiction until these approvals are received.

"When the agreement was first being developed, NTI worked very hard to ensure that Nunavut Inuit who were sent away to residential schools, and resided in hostels or residences, were included in the agreement. Because of our efforts, Inuit will benefit from the settlement. NTI hopes this means that families can find peace and closure, and move on," said Kaludjak.

Once all the courts approve the settlement agreement, Inuit will have a period of five months to decide if they wish to opt out or to be included. NTI is planning information sessions to assist former students in Nunavut communities with making this decision. Once the opt out period ends, application forms for the Common Experience Payment and the Independent Assessment Process will be available from the Government of Canada and NTI.

The Common Experience Payment provides former residential school students with \$10,000 in financial compensation for their first year of residential school, and an additional \$3,000 for each year after that. Students who resided at a residential school or hostel are eligible for this compensation for loss of language, culture and family environment. Inuit do not need to consult a lawyer to apply for the Common Experience Payment.

Former students who were 65 years or older as of May 30, 2005, are eligible to receive an advance payment of \$8,000 as part of the Common Experience Payment. The deadline for applying for the advance payment is Dec. 31, 2006.

Former students who were subjected to sexual abuse and serious physical abuse can participate in the Independent Assessment Process. NTI recommends Inuit consult a lawyer if they wish to participate in this portion of the agreement. The Residential School Settlement Agreement includes some financial assistance toward legal costs if an individual establishes an entitlement to a further award.

Significant funding for healing, truth and reconciliation, commemoration and education initiatives are also available as part of the settlement agreement.

“NTI will ensure that Inuit participate in every aspect of this agreement, and we will continue to assist Inuit in their healing efforts through the Qauma Mobile Treatment Project.”

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