



Kluane Lake School Review Report May 2013

Kluane Lake Community School
May 2013

School Principal: Rose-Marie Blair

Date of Review: May 16, 2013

School Review Team:

Simon Blakesley, Director of Student Achievement, Systems Accountability

Meetings with the School included:

- The School Growth Planning Team
- The Principal
- Staff
- Students
- School Council representatives
- Informal classroom visitations

School Context

Kluane Lake School is a K – 8 school with 17 students (13 in grades K-4, and 4 in grades 5-8 as of March 2013). The school is located in Destruction Bay on Kluane Lake. It is a two- room school: additional facilities in the basement include space for gym, a library area, and a stage for performing arts. All the children are bussed in from Burwash Landing, which is 15 kilometers from the school. The school has grown from 7 students in 2011-12 to its current enrollment. Most of the students are from the Kluane First Nation. Southern Tutchone is the language taught at the school by the Native Language Instructor.

A number of the parents of the Kluane Lake School attended the school themselves. The priority for the current School Council is that all students have an understanding of their culture and heritage, become good citizens and have the capacity to integrate into the larger education system at any point in their education. They are very proud of the number of successful citizens who have attended Kluane Lake School.

Parents have expectations that their children will develop an understanding of their community and culture while also developing the skills necessary for when they leave school. The School Council and parents expect that their children are engaged in the learning process using strategies that build on the talents, interests, and needs of each individual child. The current principal functions as both teacher and administrator and has been at the school for 5 years.

Norms and Culture:

Characteristics:

Continuously improving schools are socially and culturally inclusive with high expectations for each learner. A focus on continuous improvement is evident.

Observations of the Team:

- There is a strong sense of community at Kluane Lake School. Everyone knows each other well, and all in attendance work together in support of student learning.
- Students expressed that they enjoy their school and feel safe there. Students feel their teachers care about them, will assist them when they need help, and take their jobs as educators seriously.
- The school has a welcoming and relaxed “family” atmosphere of mutual cooperation between all present that supports learning.

Recommendations for moving forward:

- Continue to foster individualized learning where each student’s individual interests and needs are taken into account, addressed, and supported.
- If the school grows in enrolment, seek to maintain the cooperative “family” atmosphere while concurrently individualizing learning as more students attend and needs become more diverse.

School and Community

Characteristics: In continuously improving schools build a shared commitment to success for each learner. The school collaborates with parents, students, school council, First Nations and community to support student learning. Ongoing parent/community involvement is embedded in school culture and the school communicates about progress and challenges in multiple ways.

Observations of the Team:

- The School Council member in attendance expressed appreciation of the nurturing environment of the school, and the efforts of the school staff to foster positive relations between all in support of student learning.
- The school staff members are well-known, and perceived wholly as members of the community rather than distinct from it.
- Recent language and culture activities included students from a Whitehorse high school and Nelna Bessie John School. All spoke very positively of the land-based learning which occurred at the Muskrat Camp that was supported jointly by Kluane First Nation and White River First Nation.

Recommendations for moving forward:

- Seek ways to continue to diversify the types of land-based learning activities offered to students and integrate them into student learning.
- Build upon the opportunity for positive learning opportunities for students through collaboration with Nelnah Bessie John School on activities of shared relevance and importance.
- Continue to seek ways to include other schools in land-based learning activities, to the educational benefit of all Yukon students.

School Organization

Characteristics: Continuously improving schools organize structures, actions, and interventions to ensure success for each learner. Work in the school is coherent and aligned to focus on improvement. Actions and interventions include effectively differentiating resources, time and professional development to get results. The Department supports the school and makes connections across the Territory to build capacity.

Observations of the Team:

- Focused effort is made to individualize the learning and assessment of each student.
- Community knowledge and assets, along with Yukon Department of Education resources, are coordinated to ensure an engaging level of French language instruction for all students.
- Staff meetings may not always be attended by all staff: the principal identified the need to express greater clarity with respect to the professional expectations of all staff for next school year.

Recommendations for moving forward:

- Communicate to all staff the importance of attending staff meetings in order that information can be shared in a timely manner, and school organization and processes can be discussed and clarified.
- Continue to utilize community assets, and employ Yukon Department of Education resources with a particular emphasis on applied and experiential programming for students.

School Processes and Progress

Characteristics: Continuously improving schools take responsibility for improving outcomes for students. They use evidence to guide decisions and actions and have processes in place to collectively monitor progress and make adjustments in key areas of their work. They demonstrate improvement over time – for individual students, groups of students, and the school.

Observations of the Team:

- The principal and professional staff regularly switches teaching assignments in order that they know each other's students and assessment and evaluation practices.
- Report cards are shared between staff members: They review each other's reports in order to ensure consistency in their assessment and reporting.
- A key focus is being placed on literacy, and in particular, writing. The school staff uses their assessment data to identify areas requiring further attention and plans their work based on student data.
- High expectations are placed on older students in regards to organization, homework, and what is expected of them by the end of the school year.

Recommendations for moving forward:

- Continue to incorporate and reflect upon assessment data as a means of ensuring that instruction is relevant and meets individual learning needs.
- Continue to employ student data in order to support school growth planning and assess whether goals have been achieved.
- Maintain positive practices which result in the sharing of the knowledge of students and the expertise of staff members.

In conclusion

The review team enjoyed visiting Kluane Lake School, and appreciated very much the open, warm, inviting, and collaborative culture evident at the school. The school staff and the relationships they foster with all stakeholders appear to be highly appreciated by the community. With student enrolment anticipated to grow next year, the importance of identifying and meeting individual learning needs and interests at Kluane Lake School will also increase. Using student data will thus become increasingly important in support of student achievement and the setting of school growth goals.

Practices to share:

- The team was impressed by the initiative of the staff to take each other's classes to better know the students and foster the alignment of assessment and reporting. This method could be employed in other schools as a means of ensuring staff are connecting with all students and communicating with their assessment and reporting practices.
- Urban high school students and staff were invited to attend the Muskrat Camp. This creates an excellent opportunity to build relationships and understanding through a rural/urban exchange, and for the cross-pollination of ideas, perspectives, and experiences.