

# **ROSS RIVER SCHOOL**

## **School Growth Plan**

**2016-2017**

LAST UPDATED:

May 27, 2016



## **PART 1: Context, Priorities, Connections**

### **Context:**

Majority of the Ross River School students are of Kaska decent and the members of the Ross River Dena Council.

Staff, students, parents, Ross River Dena Council and the School Council is working hard to make the Ross River School a place of learning. Our main vision is to have happy, respectful, confident, proud and caring individuals.

The Ross River School serves 55 pre-kindergarten to grade12 students in a rural setting. All of our students are members of the Ross River Dena First Nation. The Ross River Dena Council supports school initiatives and provides funding for school supplies and field trips. The Ross River Dena Council support also includes funding for an Education Support Worker in the school, Resident Elders, and cultural and experiential activities.

We have established a sense of “community” within our school. This was done with the Cultural Inclusion funding, First Nation funding, and the dedication and commitment of staff and school council members.

This year the classes are split into 7 multi-grade classrooms due to our low student population and classroom management. This is the first year that we are offering grade 11\12 in Ross River.

### **On-going Priorities:**

- To strengthen a warm and welcoming atmosphere at the school
- To introduce students to the growing world of Robotics, starting with the absolute basics, assessable to even the youngest child
- To increase their understanding of using technology (projects using a 3-D printer)
- To increase the number of cultural artwork and murals throughout the school (plus exterior)
- To continue the Self-Regulation initiative
- Build a Positive relationship between the school, school council, and the community
- Promote Culturally Relevant Kaska programs and activities
- Build positive relationships and attachments between staff and students
- Restorative practices when dealing with situations where behaviour needs to change

- Ensuring that there is a focus on high standards and continuous improvement
- An emphasis on experiential learning strategies and techniques
- To improve the overall attendance (focus: chronic non-attenders)

These guiding principles and ways will remain priorities for the Ross River School. We will continue our emphasis on growth in social responsibility and respect for others. A safe, caring, and respectful atmosphere is essential in order for learning to take place. We will continue using the principles of self-regulation to help children grow in their social responsibility.

We will also continue to do everything necessary to include the community, Chief and Council, School Council, parents, and elders in the lives of our children.

### **Response to School Review Recommendations:**

**The Ross River School underwent the formal school review process by an External Review Team in December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011. We are scheduled for another review in September 2017.**

**The next school review will take place in September 2017.**

#### **1. Norms and Culture: recommendations**

- **Create a seating area outside the school where parents could wait for their children**
  - The school purchased chairs and a coffee table equipped with magazines
  - The students have constructed benches, tables, and garden boxes for the entrance and playground area
  - The students have painted cultural designs on the benches
  - Coffee is also made available for visitors or guests if required
- **Explore ways to celebrate Kaska Culture and the successes of the students through art, crafts, and displays**
  - The school has an annual Cultural Day to celebrate the history\traditional knowledge of the Kaska people
  - The school will celebrate the National Aboriginal Day 2016 with Kaska Dances, songs, and activities
  - The school occasionally sets aside an afternoon for trapping, gathering medicines\berries, etc.
  - Elders are invited for cultural activities such as sewing, storytelling, and on the land activities
  - Artists participate through grants from the Artist in the School Program or local Recreation Dept.
  - As a school, we aim to strengthen the involvement of elders throughout our school year

- The students are in the process of painting culturally relevant murals on the outside of our school
- We are also building an outdoor classroom for experiential learning projects
- A community fire pit will be constructed at the front area of the school
- A tent is set-up for an outdoor experiential classroom
- The grade 9-12 is currently working on a historical photo collection with Bob Sharp and elders. These photos will be stored on Weebly with names and information for community reference.
- The school has started an annual camp with elders and the community (fall\spring)
- We started inviting resource people to conduct workshops on Kaska traditional knowledge

2. **Community:** Recommendations

- **To strengthen relationships within the school, explore strategies to engage the community casually**
- *The school hosts a number of events for students and the community: lunch is served three times a week for the community, the grade 8-12 students open a coffee house once a week in the evening, grade 8-10 have regular movie night with popcorn and juice, the staff organized an Easter Carnival with community members, coordination of daily breakfast and snack program for the students, and regular community dinners on special holidays.*
- *Staff are also involved in assisting with funeral arrangements and potlatches, and all other community functions as requested*
- *The school and school council are committed on building a strong working relationship with the community*
- *We are still planning on designating a PD day to use a facilitator to help build a new relationship between the school council, Ross River Dena Council, and the community. The first step is to continue inviting them to our annual cultural camp in the Fall or Spring*
- *This year, the school is offering a credit course for grade 10-11 for Food and Nutrition*
- *The grade 9\10 are building doghouses for sale and also planning to construct a shed through Skills*
- *The school is planning on hosting the first ever "Wellness Conference" in conjunction with the Ross River Dena Council in the fall*

3. **School Organization:** recommendations

- **Explore ways to have all staff engage in some land-based or experiential programs which are embedded in the work to meet outcomes in literacy**
- *Our Annual camp will be held in September\Spring for staff, parents, school council, students, and elders.*
- *Students will record their experiences in a daily journal, take photos, and record short videos for a presentation*
- *The school is in progress of setting-up an experiential building on the front property for easy access for all grades*
- *A community fire pit will also be constructed*

- Monthly seasonal activity chart will be posted to allow staff to incorporate on the land lessons with elders\Language teachers such as: gathering plants, snaring rabbits, ice fishing, trapping, etc.
- Regular announcements incorporating Kaska sentences for student practice
  
- **Continue to develop consistency of language and approaches across the grades in literacy**
- A committee was formed to explore and develop language and approaches across the grades in literacy
- The committee will develop “same” language to be used by all staff members
- The committee will develop a scope and sequence of literacy skills so the staff, students, and the community can see the “end in mind”
- **Continue to develop class libraries to address the needs and interests of individual readers.**
- Staff will continue to add guided reading books to individual reading books within their classrooms and also in the LAT room
- Staff will continue to locate more east “non-fiction” resources for older students
- **Ensure that there are strategies in place to challenge stronger students**
- A class meeting with individual teachers will be held in September after assessments are completed to group students for EA\LAT\Tutor support
- Teachers will have allotted times to challenge students not on IEP\Learning Plans
- Regular meetings will be held to ensure students are progressing
- The grade 7\8 class was split to better assess and strengthen academics
- The grade K5-3 started centers to meet individual needs for all students

#### 4. School Processes and Progress:

- Develop a transition plan for the grade 9/10 students.
- Continue working with Aurora Virtual School for students not returning to school in Whitehorse or Faro
- Continue to develop and deliver ungraded programs for those students who prefer to stay in the community after the grade 10 graduations, and those students who have not succeeded in their studies in Whitehorse.
- Staff will develop individual student profiles so that students are on a learning continuum and challenged to move forward
- All teachers will teach with a sense of urgency

### **Processes and Connections:**

Special attention has been given to students' learning styles and learning impediments. Eighteen Intensive and shared Plans (*Individual Learning Plans Student Learning Plans and Student Behaviour Plans*) have been developed and monitored on an on-going basis, thus the processes have been put in place.

*All staff will participate in the ongoing development, monitoring, and adjusting of the school growth plan. The topic of the school growth plan will be added to every school staff and also the School council meetings.*

*School Growth Planning meetings will also be held on a regular basis. These meetings will help assess evidence towards meeting our goals and objectives.*

*Students will also be made aware of the discussions and results during regular student assemblies.*

*Teachers will maintain data binders for all students and monitor the data on a b-monthly basis,*

## **PART 2: Focus**

### **Progress and Evidence:**

### **Looking Back:**

*Our goals for 2015-16 were to improve literacy outcomes for students. Overall we have achieved success, although improvement in literacy outcomes for our students is still a priority. We are hopeful that the discussions generated by the whole-school self-regulation project will assist children in finding success in the school.*

*Lunches are now being offered 3 times per week for all students. Parents and community members were also invited to join their child\grandchild for lunch. The lunches have also allowed more students to remain at school during lunch instead of walking home, etc. Attendance has also increased since we started our lunch program.*

**Some initiatives and strategies that continued to be successful this year include:**

- Monthly student assemblies
- RPAY – funding for school activities
- Skiing, snowshoeing, sliding, skating, and canoeing
- Overnight canoe trip – Faro\Ross River
- Field trips to Faro school – sports
- Fiddle Lessons – Katie Avery
- BYTE – workshops on bullying, self-awareness, and taking risks
- Kaska Café – students learn working how to work with customers and learn importance job skills
- Shop – students build benches, tables, dog houses, and learn basic carpentry skills
- Monthly birthday cakes and draws
- Monthly awards (K4-7: attendance award & Student Responsibility Award: 8-12)
- Class meetings
- Mental Health workshops with grades 7-10 (Many Rivers)
- Food For Learning initiatives
- Dene drumming and dancing
- Cultural Activities
- Purchase of Hoodies for all students
- Increased attention to music (Guitar\fiddle lessons)
- Morning Computer time
- Dance classes after school
- Lunches 3 times a week
- Snow Cone business – the grade 4\5\6 started a snow cone business to learn about starting their own business venture

- Daily breakfast available
- Daily morning snacks available
- Arctic games & Dene Games
- Wrestling tournaments
- Archery lessons with Aboriginal Sport Yukon
- Annual Cultural Events
- Cooking Classes
- BBQ
- Field Trips with elders – on the land experiences
- Releasing Chinook Salmon with the community (Blind Creek)
- Artist in the School Program
- Local Recreation Involvement
- Annual Kaska Days, Spring Carnival, and Aboriginal Day Celebration
- Community visits (First Nation Office, RCMP)
- Workshops with Alcohol and Drugs (Sandy Schmidt)
- Regular staff meetings

K4-K5: gains made in social interactions

Grade 1\2\3: Most students are making progress in reading and writing (Balanced Literacy with Shari Worsfold)

Grade 4\5\6: Majority of students are meeting expectations in reading and writing

Grade 7\8: Interactive whiteboard integrations are being driven by the need to create an environment that is more engaging for students. The class are also split in the AM to better meet the needs of individual students in Math and Literacy.

Grade 9\10: Some students are meeting expectations in reading and writing, but low attendance is an issue for struggling students.

This year, the class are taught by two separate teachers in the AM and PM.

Grade 10-12: Individual learning plans and credit recovery programs are in place for this year.



## **Looking Forward:**

*\*Evidence for goal choice has been discussed in the previous section of this plan. The school review team and the staff have made suggestions about the areas of academic concern, successes, attendance and about social responsibility.*

*We will continue to target improvements in literacy, numeracy, cultural identity, attendance, and social responsibility as a major focus for Ross River School. We will work towards making significant progress over the next few years achieving these goals.*

*The staff is hopeful that the school-wide self-regulation initiatives and making students feel proud with a sense of belonging will increase their academics in all areas. Students that do not know how to self-regulate and do not feel a sense of purpose and pride will probably not be successful in Dart, School Wide Write, etc.*

*The evidence of learning has been collected through the teachers' observations of student performances and teacher generated tests, YAT Tests, DART, and School Wide Write tests. We have noticed that students' attitudes declined considerably during the formal YAT testing, thus causing a discrepancy between the results and actual levels of skills and knowledge as gathered in less formal classroom settings.*

*We will establish an alternate high school program (Aurora Virtual School) for students unable to attend schools in Whitehorse. This will not include all courses offered in high schools, but will provide credits.*

## **PART 3: ACT**

### **Rationale for Goals and Objectives:**

When we assess, we are gathering information about student learning which tells us how to teach. This will assist student learning and increase student achievement. Assessment for learning teaches students, while helping them learn how to assess their way to success.

#### **GOAL 1: Assessment: Reading and writing**

**Teachers and students will set goals together and students will learn to self-direct their studies and self-assess their progress.**

1. Objectives:
2. Involve students in setting and using criteria
3. Engage students in self-assessment
4. Increase the sources of specific, descriptive feedback
5. Assist students to set goals
6. Have students collect evidence of learning in relation to standards
7. Have students present evidence of learning in relation to standards
8. To use a common assessment tool for all grades

#### **Program Base for Goal 1 & 2:**

- 6+1 Writing traits (class kits), Daily 5 Reading Resource, Nelson Language Arts (teacher resources 1-2, 3-6), Spelling Through Phonics (McCrackens), High Interest-Low Vocabulary books, levelled books, Non-Fiction Units, Reading Power, Observation Survey Bench Mark Assessment, Making Classroom Assessment Work (Anne Davies), Promising Literacy for Every Child: Reading Recovery and a Comprehensive Literacy System (Self-assessment tools to help you build a school wide professional learning community) and Data Binder.

#### **Target(s):**

*All students will show improvement in literacy skills as measured by daily assignments, Data binders, Observation Survey, and on-going assessment of progress through the year.*

Actions: Strategies\Interventions	Evidence and Resources	Person(s) Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing professional development</li> <li>• Ongoing consultation\collaboration with Dept. of Education Consultants (reading strategies)</li> <li>• Students will set goals for reading</li> <li>• Regular staff monitoring</li> <li>• Daily assessments by teachers (running records)</li> <li>• Beginning of the year observation assessments (data binders)</li> <li>• Staff commitment to try whatever is required to increase reading levels</li> <li>• Reading buddies</li> <li>• Reading boxes</li> <li>• Daily reading from a variety of purposes</li> <li>• Home reading program</li> <li>• Donation of books for home reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Running records – daily</li> <li>• Student records – assessment data binders</li> <li>• Reading portfolios</li> <li>• Reading Conference data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ALL staff, including the Principal, LAT, and EAs</li> <li>• Consultants</li> </ul>

**GOAL 1:      Balanced Literacy: Writing**  
**Overall writing skills of all grades will show improvement**

- Rationale.

Many students struggle on a daily basis with all aspects of writing. It is hoped that with all teachers using the “6+1 Writing Traits and using a common assessment tool; student writing will improve.

**Objectives**

- To assist students in gaining more land based experiences to assist them when completing their School Wide Write
- To see if students’ writing ability improves over the school year
- To gradually build students writing skills
- To use common assessment tools for writing
- To focus on assessment For learning to provide meaningful feedback to students about their strengths and to identify skill deficits in writing
- To assist with meaningful instructional planning and to help identify specific strategies for improvement. E.g. the use of differential instruction, vocabulary building, reflective editing
- To increase literacy skills due to land based experiences
- To increase literacy skills at home (book bags)

**Target(s):**

- Majority of students will show improvement in literacy skills as measured by daily assignments, school wide writes, whole-school projects, and ongoing assessment of progress through the year

Actions: Strategies\Structures\Interventions	Evidence and Resources	Person(s) Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning of the year assessments (Data Binder\BC Performance Assessment</li> <li>• Use a common tool: writing aids, clothes line, quality writing samples, and scoring guides (The Trait Crate black master)</li> <li>• Daily writing activities</li> <li>• School Wide Writes – examples</li> <li>• Literacy Celebrations</li> <li>• Daily writing activities for a variety of purposes</li> <li>• Frequent use of BC Performance standards for writing</li> <li>• Examples of quality writing displayed in all classrooms</li> <li>• Ensure that planning and organisation skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation</li> <li>• Writing portfolios</li> <li>• Student records of assessment</li> <li>• 6+1 Traits of Writing</li> <li>• Quality writing samples</li> <li>• Clothesline</li> <li>• Assessment binders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ALL staff, including the Principals, LAT, and EAS</li> <li>• Consultants</li> </ul>

<p>are taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain writing portfolios for all students</li> <li>• Use of graphic organisers are displayed in all classrooms</li> <li>• Use technology (Co-Writer) as a tool</li> </ul>		
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## Ongoing Priorities: 2015-2016

### **#1. Build and maintain school-community Relationships**

<p><b>Action Research, Strategies, and Interventions</b></p>
<p>1. Addressing past concerns from community and 2011 School Review</p> <p><b>School Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Movie nights: by the end of the 2015-2015 school year we will have hosted about 20 movie nights at the school</li> <li>• Kaska Café: The Café is operated by the school\students and is open to the community once a week</li> <li>• School Lunches: The school has started offering lunches 3 times per week for staff\students\community</li> <li>• Easter Carnival: The staff participated and assisted with the organization of an Easter Carnival for the community</li> <li>• Potlatches: Staff willingly participated in potlatches when held in the school</li> <li>• Report Cards: Report cards are no longer mailed out and teachers invite parents\guardians to choose days they are available</li> <li>• School BBQ: By the end of the 2015\2016 school year we would have had 3 community-school BBQ's</li> <li>• Community Guests: We hope to increase the number of local guest speakers from (RCMP\Traditional Knowledge) from 2 to at least 6</li> <li>• Other Community Events at school: Story Telling, carving, Haunted House, Halloween Carnival, Halloween Dance, hand games, Easter Carnival, Potlatches, Grandmother's Tea, Sports Day, release the Chinook salmon, Flea Markets and Christmas Carnival</li> <li>• The school is utilized by the Ross River Dena Council for workshops, and meetings as requested</li> </ul>

## **PART 4: Monitor and Adjust**

### **I. Dates for monitoring progress and adjustment:**

The plan will be discussed at monthly staff meetings. There will be monthly growth plan meetings which will involve the school staff, school council, and the Ross River Dena Council. The school growth goals will be posted in the staff room as a reminder for staff and school council.

### **II. Communications Plan:**

#### **1. Staff:**

- Regular staff meetings (monthly); IEP meetings (3 phases a year); Professional Learning Team meetings: sharing experiences (monthly);
- Principal's meetings with individual staff members (re: monitoring and adjustment at a class/grade level).

Website: The Plan will be displayed on the Ross River website.

#### **2. Department:**

- Month-end Reports (including statistics re: student progress); Area meetings; Conferences/consultations with Superintendent; Director of Student Achievement; and or consultants.

#### **3. Parents/Guardians:**

- Homeroom teachers' contacts with individual parents on a need-to basis.
- Principal's "Notes to Parents", or individual correspondence.
- Report Card conferences;
- Open Houses;
- Principal's meetings with parents on an individual basis.

**4. School Council:**

- Regular monthly meetings including Principal's report, occasionally teachers' reports.

**5. First Nations:**

- Principal's/teachers' contacts with Ross River Dena Council representatives (informal, on-going on a need-to basis).
- Regular meetings with the Dena Council representatives.
- Principal's meetings with Dena Council and/or Margaret Thomson centre representatives (monthly).

**III. Date and description of adjustments made to the plan:**

The dates coincide with the monitoring dates. Changes will be when necessary and school goals will be discussed at all staff meetings and assemblies. A bulletin will also display the goals and actions of the New Vision.