



# **JV Clark School Review Report**

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School JV Clark

Date:

**School Principal:** Silke Wissner

**Date of Review:** March 27-29

**School Review Team:**

Luke Campbell, CELC, Southern Tuschone First Nation  
Sam Donnesy First Nation Education Advisory Committee member  
Sandra Orban, Parent  
Mike Woods, Superintendent, Area 1  
Judy Arnold, Director, DOE

**Meetings with the School included:**

- The Principal
- Staff
- Meeting with students
- Meeting with School Council representatives
- Meeting with community members
- Classroom visits

**School Context**

J V Clark School is located in Mayo, Yukon. J V Clark School was built in 2001. The building has been well maintained and is in good condition. Mayo is home to the First Nation of Na–Cho Nyak Dun where Northern Tutchone is spoken. Our current school population is 62 students. 87% of the students are First Nations, with 68% belonging to Na–Cho Nyak Dun. The school is really three schools in one – primary, intermediate and secondary as we have students attending from Kindergarten (4 and 5 year olds) all the way to Graduation in grade 12. The students are at differing levels having greatly differing needs from an educational as well as social, personal and cultural perspective.

The school strives for improving relationships and partnerships with agencies in Mayo and works closely with Na–Cho Nyak Dun, the Village of Mayo and Yukon College.

## **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:**

- JV Clark is a beautiful well-kept building with a welcoming central foyer area. There is a calm, positive atmosphere at the school which staff and School Council noted is especially evident this year;
- The small school functions like a big family with small class sizes and cohesive staff;
- Staff appeared enthusiastic about their work, flexible, and eager to move forward in the journey to support all learners;
- The School Council commented that the school is a safe place with caring staff and they are appreciative of the stability provided for students this year;
- There was evidence of First Nations culture in pictures and posters at the school and there is a specific First Nations room that is used for lunches and meetings;
- Staff talked about further embedding First Nations culture in daily activities and the School Council and parents want to be confident that First Nations culture is embedded in the curricula and in classrooms practice.
  - The grade five curricula and possible work around residential schools was mentioned;
- Staff has very effectively used the previously developed mission statement to look at their work and identify areas needing attention and growth;
- Students and staff appeared to interact easily with each other and students noted that they liked the school and there was little or no bullying.

### **Recommendations for moving forward:**

- Find ways to celebrate and communicate about the many positive aspects of the school;
- Continue to enhance the look of the school with First Nations art, culture and examples of language around the school,
  - Use the First Nations room not only for lunches but as a place that visibly celebrates culture;
- Include School Council and First Nations in the work to connect the mission statement with the vision for the future and the current work of the school so that mutual understanding and the student centred focus is embraced;
- Work with the First Nation Programs and Partnership Unit (FNPP) to further embed First Nations culture in the curricula and find ways to share the information with parents and community.

## **Community**

**Characteristics:** Continuously improving schools build a shared commitment to success for each learner. The school collaborates with parents, students, school council, Yukon 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 Team observed that there is great collaboration and acceptance between students across the grades at the school;
- Staff is also collaborative, appear to work well together and a professional learning approach is developing;
- It was noted and much appreciated that the Na–Cho Nyak Dun First Nation supports a variety of in schools and after school activities for students including traditional lunches, homework club, staff orientation and food for learning to which all students have access;
- The School Council wants high expectations in place for all students and commented that the current administrator, unlike predecessors, has done a good job sharing evidence about student performance and discussing strengths and challenges;
- Staff members want parents to feel welcomed at the school in all classes even at the secondary level. However, both staff and School Council would like to build stronger ties and more ongoing communications among the school, school council, parents, and community. Staff would also like to find ways to encourage parents to be involved in parent teacher interviews;
- The Team noted that there appears to be a significant disconnect between the work the school is doing in relation to First Nations and the understanding of the community,
  - School Council mentioned that there is a bulletin board at the Na–Cho Nyak Dun offices that could be used regularly to inform the community about school events,
  - There is also some confusion about the use of the cultural inclusion funds and how the First Nations and the school share costs for initiatives,
  - School Council also wondered about how to encourage Elders to be part of school and language program without being penalized in relation to pensions;
- Students commented that they like their teachers, like the school rules which they thought were reasonable and appreciated the upstairs room for secondary student use,
  - Students also mentioned that they would like to have a student council again;
- Staff and students noted some facilities needs including shop upgrades and inspections to support trades and applied skills and some new gym equipment.

### **Recommendations for moving forward:**

- Work with the School Council to find ways to build understanding about the work that the school is doing to support learning, First Nations culture and the current use of culturally relevant materials and experiential programs. This could include but is not limited to the ongoing use of the bulletin board at Na–Cho Nyak Dun and finding a place outside of the school to hold information sessions or parent teacher interviews,
  - Consider holding student lead conferences as a way to encourage parent involvement Students can lead the interview discussions by talking about the things they do well at school, the areas in which they need to focus on growth and the ways they can be supported at school and at home to improve;

- Work with Na–Cho Nyak Dun to clarify for staff and community the use of cultural inclusion funds and cost sharing in relation to events and initiatives;
- Implement a student council and have students participate in the work of the school growth planning process;
- Work with the Department to address facilities issues.

## **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:**

- The team commends the school for the number activities and opportunities provided for students including sports teams, clubs, carving and hands on activities, and experiential programming;
- The secondary school runs a linear program. A semestered program was tried in the 2010-2011 year but it did not work well. However some students mentioned that they liked the semestered approach;
- Students at JV Clark take French and Northern Tutchone beginning in grade one. School Council and parents commented that support from the Department is needed for the First Nation Language program to ensure students are comfortable and develop good language skills;
- Staff is implementing the use the pyramid of intervention to identify students who require interventions. Staff is also beginning to use assessment for and as learning although the team did not note the use of consistent language and approach to ensure a balanced literacy program across the grades;
- The staff commented on some success with students on Individual Education Plans and are working to identify early interventions that can be used for students for whom Reading Recovery is not effective or later those who do not have strong literacy skills at grade 4;
- It was noted that to support social emotional development the implementation of drug and alcohol prevention programs would be very helpful;
- School council, students and staff noted the need to reach all students, academic and non-academic, through trades, applied skills, woodworking, and the arts at the secondary level as well as more use of technology to support learning;
  - Staff appreciated that the computer lab is up to date and has virtually no issues with good support from JoAnne Davidson and the ITSS team;
- The School Council, staff and students are concerned about attendance and the school is working to improve student attendance with timely phone calls and emails to parents for students not attending;
- Students commented that attendance issues are distracting in the classroom especially at secondary school when class time is used to get students caught up.

### **Recommendations for moving forward:**

- Continue to develop a consistent approach to literacy development as well as strategic early and ongoing interventions or initiatives for struggling students and those who do not consistently attend,
  - This may include exploring creative ways to use educational assistants (EAs) to support the success of all students;
  - Enhancing the use of assessment for and as learning through the performance standards in language arts from primary to secondary school would support improved outcomes

- Build connections between community and school, for example, math programming related to trade and mines,
- Develop ways to further integrate curricular prescribed learning outcomes with experiential or on the land learning approaches well as through trades and applied skills
  - The project based learning approach the principal has begun to develop may be a way to move forward,
    - Use technology to support the work;
  - This may also involve working with neighbouring rural schools to identify expertise and finding ways both virtually and in reality to connect students;
- Explore the reason behind attendance issues i.e. scheduling and address the issues.
- Work with the Department to provide job-embedded professional development rather than always having staff go to Whitehorse.

## **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:**

- Staff and school council are concerned about improving outcomes for all students including those who struggle and those who are capable and need challenges,
  - It was noted that credit recovery at the secondary school had met with some success;
- The small student population allows the school to know students well and to see developmental growth over time;
- Staff are in the early stages of comfortably using evidence to explore where the student are and why some students are struggling and then using that information to guide actions and interventions;
- The Team noted that staff could use more collaboration time together to explore formative assessment and the use of performance standards;
- The school growth process is under development with staff.

### **Recommendations for moving forward:**

- Consider developing individual student profiles that reflect personal development and a more individualized approach to learning,
  - Maintain high expectations for each learner while using a variety of evidence to ascertain student strengths and challenges,
  - Reflect on attendance and academic issues especially for boys in the early secondary years who are disengage,
  - For stronger students consider dual credits with college and for all students electronic connections to Whitehorse or other schools;
- Work with the Department to arrange collaboration or professional development time to focus on the use of formative assessment,
  - Consider marking the school wide writes in the fall with another school and developing a teacher support network;
- Develop a school growth plan that functions as a road map to the future and includes staff, students, school council and parents in its development.

### **Conclusions:**

JV Clark is a beautiful facility with a caring staff that in a short time have come together as a team to focus on the success of each learner at the school. Staff members are working to use evidence to inform school wide decisions and actions to improve student outcomes and are eager to engage with School Council, parents, and the Na–Cho Nyak Dun First Nation in the work. With a focus on open and ongoing communications and the use of creative approaches to

learning that include First Nations perspectives, the Team is confident that the school will be successful in meeting its goals.

**Practices to share:**

The mission vision and values wall

The support for the school provided by Na–Cho Nyak Dun