

TANTALUS SCHOOL

School Growth Plan 2016
Last Updated: September, 2016



PART 1: Context, Priorities, Connections

Context:

Tantalus school is a newer building, located in the village of Carmacks on the traditional territory of Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation. Carmacks is home to many people, including Northern Tutchone citizens from the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation. There are approximately 111 students at the school from kindergarten to grade 12.

The current and on-going mission of the school states that Tantalus Hats Edan Ku prepares students to be contributing, self-sufficient, and self-confident members of society. With parents, guardians, and our school-community, students learn through engagement in a safe learning environment. Programs reflect the Northern Tutchone values of caring, sharing, learning, and respect.

We had a very successful School Review this year in October of 2015. The department's team saw a positive and growing school, happy and mostly engaged students, and a real team/family atmosphere amongst the staff.

Currently, the members of the Tantalus School Growth team are the Principal; The Staff of Tantalus School (which includes 3 elders from LSCFN), The School Council (including 3 members of the community at large, and 3 members of LSCFN, one of

whom is an elder). However, next year, School Council would like to see community meetings where a larger number of people from the community, outside of school council or school staff, could be involved with the development of the school growth plan.

To date, the SGP is drafted twice a year by the principal, outlining the successes and changes as well as the proposed objectives and goals. She then sends the draft to all members of the team, requesting changes and additions to the plan. It is then discussed by the school council.

As well, the principal meets with the Chief and Council several times through the year to review how the school is doing, and she answers any questions they have concerning projects and programming.

Response to School Review Recommendations:

The principal and staff model the behaviour we expect students to follow. The school is developing as a team and family. The actions of one can affect all members in the school. We foster an atmosphere that does not allow bullying but encourages collaborative work as well as individuality. We encourage students to find their strengths and support them in their investigation.

The principal and staff meet as often as necessary for team meetings concerning students, and they have staff meetings concerning all business of the school. The meetings are held in the “round room” of the school, and always allow for a sharing time at the end so that each staff member can bring up whatever is concerning them, projects they are working on, and any business they feel they want to discuss or share with their colleagues.

Processes and Connections:

The school will:

- Work with staff, students, School Council, First Nations, and community to create a new vision for the school that focuses on working together, supporting the conditions for learning and high expectations for each student;
- Use a focus on social responsibility and social justice to develop an approach to behaviour and social issues that is consistent across the school and restorative rather than punitive i.e. ensure that strategies used do not include physically handling students or completing meaningless, repetitive tasks. This year, 2016-17, Val Binder from the Restorative Community Justice Program will be working with teachers and students helping them to create talking circles that

will help implement and maintain communication and restorative measures in each class.

- Implementing the PBIS program in the school will not only help students with self-regulation, but it will bring a uniform language to the school with regard to social and emotional education. It will standardize responses teachers have to student “incidents” in the school, as a matrix will be used to help all members of our school community work towards a more positive and socially healthier school atmosphere.
- Focus on the development of reading and writing skills of the students through the implementation of the balanced literacy program. This work has begun with the help of Shari Worsfield coming 5 times a year to workshop and model teach in the elementary classrooms.

Community

The school will:

- Strengthen efforts to reach out to parents as decision makers and as partners in student learning. This includes liaising with the First Nations government, the community, and the organizations by:

- Organizing meetings with the LSCFN, staff, parents, and students to discuss what needs are required to help students become engaged learners and good community members.
- Supporting experiential and on the land opportunities through field trips and options courses, which will show students (and parents) how knowledge from subjects in the classroom is transferred to their everyday lives in a meaningful and authentic way.
- Bring the knowledge of elders into the school through Northern Tutchone materials developed and created at LSCFN with the elders.
- Bring in community members to teach traditional dancing, hand games, and other cultural activities.
- Send home letters to parents on a monthly basis outlining the various activities in the school. This information will be posted on the Tantalus School web site.
- Have an “open door” policy where parents are welcome to come and speak to the principal or teachers about any issue that concerns them.

- Ensure that the School Council is part of the progress taking place in the school by reporting at regular meetings, inviting them to the school to be part of the lunch program, and ensuring that there is always communication between Council members and the principal.
- Create a positive school community with the breakfast program and the lunch program, providing a nurturing, healthy environment that allows all students to interact and communicate in a positive way with each other. It also ensures that no child is hungry, helping students' learning.

School Organization

The school will:

- Move toward a consistent approach to the development of literacy skills at the school which includes a foundation of balance and the use of the performance standards, assessment for learning, and student self-assessment. The use of statistics from SWW and DART as well as the tracking system used in balanced literacy will help to measure the performances of students from fall to end of school year.

- This year we have a full-time LA teacher for the 2015-16 school year, which will help us to give greater support to all students who have or need to have StLP, IEPs, and other support in the school from K to 12. Next year, 2016-17, the LA teacher will also take the reading recovery portion as well.
- We will be hiring a teacher exclusively for the K4 program for one year. This will allow the K5 teacher to work on the Early Learning/Literacy program implemented in K5 this year.
- Assessment for Learning is a new practice that will be part of all Yukon Education. This mode of pedagogy allows for great team work between student and teacher. Students will be a part of their own evaluation and assessment. While it will take three to four years to fully implement this particular system, we will start it the 2016-17 year. Use of portfolios will also be a part of this project, as the seven areas of AFL consist of collecting data, students co-constructing criteria with the teacher for significant learning areas, reflective feedback by students, quality samples to be given to students, peer feedback, setting goals, and, finally, teachers giving rounds of feedback and allowing students “second chances” so they can show their competence in an area.
- Comparison of SWW and DART results at the beginning of the year and at the end of the year will be used to assess development in literacy. Assessment of

students' numeracy skills will take place in the elementary sector with monthly meetings to evaluate the progress of students in this area. The use of consultants in both of these fields will be invited regularly to the school to aid in evaluation of development.

- Ensure that all grading and reporting to parents accurately reflects student progress in relation to grade-level, prescribed learning outcomes; and allow time for parents to meet with teachers to go over their child's progress.

PART 2: Focus

Progress and Evidence:

Looking Back at 2015-16

The following was accomplished in 2015-16:

Tantalus School was the only rural school invited to be part of the Early Literacy/Learning Intervention program. We will have data only at the end of the year to see how the first year has gone, but observation and class enthusiasm would indicate its success. We are testing students in K5 now to see if they are at a level 3 reading. If so, it should allow that student to reach at least level 16 by the end of grade one.

Our school is also now involved with the Yukon wide positive intervention support program that all schools will be implicated in come the next 3 years. Ruth Buyck, Mitch Bruce, and Morgan Douglas-Alexander are the committee being trained in this process, and it will start in our school September of 2016.

The blended learning model was implemented for grades 8-12 this year. Support is provided by Yukon Educations' TAL department and IT department. The Department, through the School Review for 2015-16, showed the grades were 11% higher than other Yukon Schools. We will continue for a 3rd year with this model.

We have weekly meetings with students from grades 8 to 12 to discuss each student's progress, what their learning goals will be for that week, and what is expected to be completed by the end of each week. Since starting this process, students have been on track with completing their courses and succeeding with learning goals.

Music has been brought into the school again this year with the Artist in the school program. Steve Slade came to school for 6 weeks and helped students and staff create an wonderful Christmas concert. Many community members stated it was the best concert in 25 years!

We also had Rhoda Merkel working with textiles in our elementary group. A beautiful button blanket telling a salmon story was created and is now hanging in our Round Room.

We continued the breakfast and lunch programs. These projects have brought all students and staff closer together as we are sharing all our time together each day.

We continued with the fish camps, community gatherings, and other outdoor activities whenever possible.

We had Amy Ekins as our elder in the school this year. She comes 3 full days a week and works in the FN language class primarily, but also visits other classes. We have been very blessed to have Amy in our school.

The school now has a beautiful front entrance foyer with many Northern Tutchone cultural artifacts hanging, reflecting the community's First Nation values.

Parents have been invited to come into the school to see how their children are doing. They are invited to have lunch with us as well. We also had an open house from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. this year. Twenty parents attended.

Both REMS were successful for our students. We even received emails from organizers telling us our students were terrific!

Joseph O'Brien had been invited for three separate weeks to teach Traditional Dancing to our students. This has been a very successful event. We had a performance for community members, which brought tears to some of our elders, who told me that they "never thought they'd see dancing like this in our school."

We have had significant success with our literacy objectives, again, this year, with now almost 90% of our students meeting or exceeding reading and writing goals. The HS and Elementary staff has worked together to create literacy goals for the students from K to 12.

We have had wonderful addition to our staff with Dene McDonald hired as a full-time physical education teacher. We now have even more collegiality amongst students and staff with the introduction of "Harry Potter" type house teams and bi-weekly, Friday games amongst the house teams. We have also had more involvement with Yukon wide sports thanks to his coaching and enthusiasm.

We have brought back the "Caught you being good" tickets for each house team, where we have draws for good attendance and behaviour every two weeks at our house team games.

With School Council, attendance and field trip policies were developed. This has helped make clear the expectations of student behaviour to both students and parents.

Rationale for 2016-17 goals and objectives:

Goal(s): To continue building a school that is engaging, interesting, and inviting in the learning process for students as well as reflecting the Northern Tutchone culture and ways.

Objective(s) to support the goal:

- Continue with successful projects from the 2015-16 school year.
- Implement the PBIS program with all staff starting September 2016.
- Begin the implementation of Assessment for Learning in the school.
- Continue working with the literacy goals with the support from the principal and the DOE.
- Continue with the weekly meetings with high school students, grades 8-12, to support and guide them with their learning and achieving success.

- Staff, students, and parents can meet with regard to course selection, which will help to ensure students meet their future goals.
- Continue meetings with LSCFN chief and council to ensure communication.
- Reach out to parents and decision makers in the community to help reach this goal.
- Continue to bring the knowledge of the elders into the classrooms and lives of the students and staff.
- Send home a letter of information about school activities and upcoming events to the parents every month.

Target(s):

- Continue the numeracy and language arts projects grades 1 to 7.
- Continue strengthening the writing and reading skills of the high school students.
- Ensure that the blended learning project continues to be at least 60% teacher oriented and 40% computer oriented.
- Meet the literacy goals set by the staff, principal, and consultants from DOE.

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PART 3: ACT

Goal:

Objective:

Actions: Strategies/Interventions

**Evidence to Track
Progress**

**Person(s)
Responsible**

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| <p>The breakfast and lunch programs will be used to build a community atmosphere in the school.</p> | <p>Attendance figures in the school will speak to this success.</p> | <p>Principal, staff, volunteers</p> |
| <p>Working with language consultants, create literacy goals that are attainable by the students for this school year.</p> | <p>Continued evidence of skill development using the fall/spring DART and SWW results as well as report card evidence.</p> | <p>Staff, Consultants, Principal</p> |
| <p>The numeracy project will continue to support students in their math skills</p> | <p>Success will be evidenced by the work the students do, tests and projects they complete.</p> | <p>Teachers grade 3 – 7 and the principal</p> |

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| <p>The language arts project will continue to support students in their reading and writing skills</p> | <p>The results at the beginning of the year from DART and SWW compared to the end of the year. As well, monthly reporting of “meeting results” are generated and send to Shari Worsfield from the department.</p> | <p>Teachers grade 1 – 7 and the principal, Shari Worsfield, DOE</p> |
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Goal:
Objective:

| Actions: Strategies/Interventions | Evidence to Track Progress | Person(s) Responsible |
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| <p>Bringing the knowledge of the Elders into the classrooms and the lives of the students and staff by ensuring the books from the LSCFN Elder's project are in the classroom supported by the Elder in the school project.</p> <p>Send home an information letter to parents each month letting them know all the activities coming up in the school</p> <p>Support each student in high school by helping them create weekly, attainable goals for their learning</p> | <p>Students become more aware of their own cultural milieu and the Northern Tutchone language is strengthened as evidenced by the work they produce in the FN language classes.</p> <p>Parents become more involved.</p> <p>Weekly meetings with each student to track their achievements</p> | <p>FN language teachers, Elder in the school, Joseph O'Brien, classroom teachers, principal</p> <p>The principal with help from the staff and students</p> <p>Students, staff, principal</p> |
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| <p>Begin implementing the Assessment for Learning principles in the school</p> | <p>Staff meetings, team meetings, discussions with principal</p> | <p>Staff, principal, students</p> |
| <p>Begin implementing the Positive Behaviour Intervention process</p> | <p>Committee of M. Bruce, R. Buyck, M. Douglas-Alexander to meet with Alison Borden from SSS to create process</p> | <p>Staff, principal, students</p> |

PART 4: Monitor and Adjust

Dates for monitoring progress:

We will review this at staff meetings and school council meetings twice a year. School Council will add community meetings as they see fit.

Communications Plan:

The latest edition of the School Growth Plan will be sent to staff and school council members for their input and changes twice a year. The School Growth Plan is also put on the Tantalus School Website for anyone to read.

Date and description of adjustments made to the plan:

May 2016 and again in November of 2016. At the beginning of the new school year, copies of the adjusted school growth plan will be given out to members for their comments and changes. Discussions will ensue from there. A plan to include the larger community, outside the school growth plan team, will be developed.

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