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# First Nations Schools Assessment and Certification Process

## External Assessment Report K4-12 Schools

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External Report  
For  
n'kmapiqs i? sn'mama'ya?tn i? kl sqilxwtət

Prepared by  
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and  
Christine Jang

December 16, 2020



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(Signature of Penny Cortez, External Chair)



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(Signature of Christine Jang, External Team Member)

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Summary

# Description of the External Assessment Process

## Activities Undertaken During the External Visit

Representatives of School Governing Authority included among interviewees

External team reviewed Internal Document and School Growth Plan

Initial Zoom meeting was held with a Teacher, the School Vice-Principal and the Education Director.

Zoom and telephone interviews were held with an OKIB Counsellor, 2 parents, 2 Teachers, Certified Education Assistant, Vice-School Principal, Daycare Manager, and Education Director.

Video tour of n'kmaplqs i? sn'ma'ma'ya?tn i? k'l sqilx'w'tat School included classrooms, grounds, storage, playground,

External team met three times to review interviews, documents, video, and to complete External Document

External team reported certification to school staff virtually at staff meeting held on December 16, 2020

Documents reviewed include:

- Year-long overviews
- IEP Sample
- Report Card Sample
- School Newsletter
- Teacher Evaluation Policy and Current Teacher Evaluation
- Month long menu for lunch program
- Staff Evaluation Sample
- Field Trip week long plan
- Photos of playground

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# **Part One**

# **School Administration /**

# **Procedures**

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## **SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

**Observations** Education Director supports school and is informed on day-to-day operations by the Vice Principal. The Education Director keeps Council informed.

**Strengths**

**Suggestions**

## **MISSION OF THE SCHOOL**

**Observations** Visible in the school, teachers and staff are guided by the statement.

**Strengths**

**Suggestions**

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

**Observations** Student records are complete as per video and samples provided by Vice-Principal.

**Strengths**

**Suggestions** The External Team suggests inclusion of a Student Records Policy in the development of a new Policy Handbook.

## **DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

**Observations** The School uses and keeps their information up-to-date on Drums.

**Strengths**

**Suggestions**

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Observations**

Policy for teacher evaluations in place and followed \*

Band Council supports the school developing policies independent of Band policies.

### **Strengths**

**Suggestions** \*The school has identified this as a Growth Plan Area, and as such the External Team has made suggestions in that section of this document.

### **Requirements**

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# **Part Two**

# **School Programs**

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## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Observations** Teachers participate in PLC process. A large number of professional development offerings.

### **Strengths**

**Suggestions** The External Team suggests that instructional staff be consulted in planning of professional development, as indicated by interviews and survey results.

## **LEADERSHIP PROGRAM (STAFF AND STUDENTS)**

**Observations** Teachers and Vice-Principal attend PLC, and one teacher sits on a panel for literacy.

**Strengths** Grade 6/7 classroom provides Nsyilxen Big Buddies to primary grades, and Language Nest. Teacher present learning to other staff members.

### **Suggestions**

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS**

**Observations** Parents feel very welcome at the school, and have daily contact with teachers via agendas and texts.

**Strengths** The school maintains a social media presence for parents, sends home monthly newsletters, and welcomes parents to Nsyilxen Language classes.

### **Suggestions**

## **COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS (INTEGRATION OF SERVICES)**

**Observations** School is central and integral to community.

**Strengths** Partnerships with the RCMP, community service, ski program at Silver Star, partners with social service agencies for art therapy and speech therapy.

### **Suggestions**

## **SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE**

**Observations** Staff and families work together to create a positive and safe learning environment for students. Staff meet regularly and problem-solve together as needed. Entire staff and leadership is united in their goal of attaining a much-needed new school.

**Strengths** The school has intensive Covid safety protocols implemented. An Outdoor tent classroom was created both for safety and Cultural learning. A sense of community spirit and a welcoming environment underlies n̄kmaplq̄s i? sn̄maṁaṁya?tn i? k̄l sqilx<sup>w</sup>t̄ət School.

### **Suggestions**

## **STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTING**

**Observations** The school formally reports to parents three times per year.

**Strengths** Report cards are standards-based and parent-teacher interviews follow reports.

**Suggestions** The External Team suggests the addition of Nsyilxen Language to their current report cards, or the creation of a separate Nsyilxen report card.

## **FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGE AND CULTURE \***

**Observations** Language and Culture teacher is working to integrate throughout content areas.

**Strengths** The majority of staff is from the community and motivated to learn and instruct culture. Outdoor tent classroom created. Working on digitization of Language and Culture resources.

### **Suggestions**

### **Requirements**

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM \***

**Observations** Teachers are committed to systematic instruction using Readwell, Reading Mastery and Article a Day.

**Strengths** Instruction includes all four Language Arts domains. The big ideas and curriculum are addressed with thorough planning and overviews. Instructional Staff planned collaboratively and committed to online delivery of Language Arts during Covid lockdown.

## **Suggestions**

## **Requirements**

### **MATHEMATICS PROGRAM \***

**Observations** Teachers are committed to systematic instruction Saxon Math as core program. Year Long Overviews include forward pacing for school year.

**Strengths** Instructional Staff continued delivery via Zoom during lockdown and supplemented instruction using Khan Academy.

## **Suggestions**

## **Requirements**

### **SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAM \***

**Observations** Social Studies focuses deeply on Okanagan Culture. Students also complete additional units such as Ancient Greece.

**Strengths** Thorough planning and year long overviews ensure curricular standards are met.

## **Suggestions**

## **Requirements**

### **SCIENCE PROGRAM \***

**Observations** Science instruction is largely land-based, integrated with Okanagan Culture, and takes advantage of community partnerships. Additional units such as human body are taught.

**Strengths** Thorough planning and year long overviews ensure curricular standards are met. The External Team notes the strength and unique learning opportunity of the OKIB Territorial Stewardship Department Dig experience.

## **Suggestions**

## Requirements

### APPLIED DESIGN, SKILLS AND TECHNOLOGIES

**Observations** Students built a prototype of a lunch box.

**Strengths** Okanagan Culture woven into ADST instruction, for example, in their embroidery projects students learned a variety of stitches while creating a local design. A partnership with University of British Columbia Okanagan provides annual instruction in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).

**Suggestions**

### TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

**Observations** Teachers use SmartBoards for instruction, and iPads with apps available for students.

**Strengths** First Voices app provide a tie to local Language and Culture, and research projects include webquests.

**Suggestions**

### LIBRARY RESOURCES

**Observations** The External Assessment Team is unable to comment on this topic, as due to the COVID-19 pandemic an in-person school visit was not possible and this topic is difficult to assess virtually.

**Strengths** School access the Community library; PAC has provided book bags for take home reading, as well as leveled readers.

**Suggestions** \*The school has identified this as a Growth Plan Area, and as such the External Team has made suggestions in that section of this document.

### SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM \*

Activities in place as per Workplan\*

IEPs developed with family participation\*

IEP goals reviewed\*

### **Observations**

The External Assessment Team is unable to comment on this topic, as due to the COVID-19 pandemic an in-person school visit was not possible and this topic is difficult to assess virtually.

\*As per 2019-2020 review by FNEESC SEP Team

**Strengths** Staff and parents are united in their appreciation for the amount of additional Educational Assistant support given to students. Classrooms use Zones of Regulation to support self-regulation.

### **Suggestions**

### **Requirements**

## **PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION**

**Observations** Staff member, trained by ISPARC School sponsors a Run Club. Students attend swimming lessons. A partnership with the BC Fruit and Vegetable program provides fresh fruit and vegetables to students.

**Strengths** The school has a partnership with Silver Star to provide a ski and snowboard program. The staff focus on mental health and development of a growth mindset. Physical Education is taught in Nsyilxen Language. Students and staff participate in annual OKIB traditional games.

**Suggestions** The External Team suggests consideration of a fourth growth plan goal, that the school explore options for a new playground.

## **ARTS EDUCATION**

**Observations** The classroom has chalk art displayed on the bulletin board. First Nations Art is displayed in the hallway.

**Strengths** Students have carved pumpkins. They are currently practicing music for the Winter Celebration. They learn to drum Okanagan songs. This year they completed a painting on canvas. Student work is displayed as exhibits at the public art gallery.

## **Suggestions**

### **CAREER EDUCATION COUNSELLING**

**Observations** The External Assessment Team is unable to comment on this topic, as due to the COVID-19 pandemic an in-person school visit was not possible and this topic is difficult to assess virtually.

**Strengths** Guest speakers such as RCMP to discuss positives and negatives of occupations. Students access online Career Cruising program.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

#### **COUNSELLING**

**Observations** School provides access to Art Therapy.

#### **Strengths**

**Suggestions** \*The school has identified this as a Growth Plan Area, and as such the External Team has made suggestions in that section of this document.

# School Growth Plan \*

- Evidence that there was community/governance involvement in the development of the School Growth Plan
- The External Team concurs with the internal document

## **SCHOOL GROWTH PLAN GOAL NUMBER 1:** Policy and Procedures

**Observations** Current polices blanket all OKIB operations.

**Strengths** Counsel and Education Director are supportive of the development of policies supporting the unique needs of the school.

**Suggestions** The External Team suggests inclusion of a student records policy. The External Team further suggests that the school consider development of a plan to inform staff and families of new polices. The External Team further suggests that the school create a specific timeline for regular revisions.

## **SCHOOL GROWTH PLAN GOAL NUMBER 2:** Counselling

**Observations** Staff, Parents, and Leadership are united in support for this goal.

**Strengths**

**Suggestions**

## **SCHOOL GROWTH PLAN GOAL NUMBER 3:** Library

**Observations** Staff and family interviews identify a need for more Okanagan and First Nations resources.

**Strengths**

**Suggestions** The External Team suggests that the school explore available apps as an affordable option for cataloguing books.

# Summary

First off, we would like to thank the Governing Authority, school staff, and parents that participated in this process and External Assessment. Your patience and commitment to this process should be celebrated. There is obviously overwhelming support for the school and appreciation for the lengths school staff routinely go to, in order to ensure student success. One Okanagan Counsellor commented that the teachers love their experiences there, and will never have those experiences anywhere else. The teachers teach from the heart. We, the External Team would agree!

Governance and School Staff are united in their primary objective to build a new school and unite all grades under one roof. We wish you success in that journey.

The Nsyilxcen Language and Culture program is foundational to the school and we regret that during a virtual External Visit, we did not get to experience and see first-hand all the components outlined in the document. Hopefully, in the future we will have that opportunity. Students are well-prepared and successful when leaving the school, and have a foundational confidence instilled in their identity.

We, the External Team, agree that your Growth Plan makes sense for the forward progress of the school.

Goal Number One: As the n'kmaplqs i? sn'ma'ma'ya?tn i? kl sqilx'wtat School team completes the Policy Development and Revision work that they have begun, we are hopeful that these policies will guide the school forward in a strong, balanced and uniquely Okanagan way.

Goal Number Two: Families, staff, and leadership are united in their support for increased counselling access for students. We recognize the creativity that n'kmaplqs i? sn'ma'ma'ya?tn i? kl sqilx'wtat School team has put forth to access services such as Art Therapy thus far for their students, and commend your commitment to this next step.

Goal Number Three: It is apparent through interviews, program area documentation and survey results, that the school maintains high academic standards and improving library resources and access will support further student success. A thorough account of current inventory, addition of Okanagan resources, and implementation of an electronic catalogue system will help make the library an accessible and practical centre for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning for staff and students, with the ultimate goal of moving the library into a new space in the new school.



After discussions with school staff and parents, the External Team suggests the consideration of a fourth growth goal. We suggest the addition of a goal aimed at exploring options for the creation of a new playground.

Again, we thank the *n̄kmaplqs i? sn̄m̄am̄aya?tn i? k̄l sqilx<sup>w</sup>t̄at* School School staff, governing authority, and families for their participation and assistance in the Assessment and Certification Process. Additionally, we would like to recognize Tanya for her tireless commitment to the students and the school, as well as to this process.

***Based on the School Assessment Report, observations, and information provided, it is with pleasure that we hereby certify *n̄kmaplqs i? sn̄m̄am̄aya?tn i? k̄l sqilx<sup>w</sup>t̄at* School, as having met the criteria and standards for First Nations Schools Association Certification.***