



Chief Zzeh Gittlit School
School Growth Plan
2016-2017

DRAFT



PART 1: Context, Priorities, Response to School Review, Recommendations, Processes and Connections

Context: Chief Zzeh Gittlit School (CZGS) is committed to ensuring it provides each student with engaging, culturally relevant, and socially responsible conditions for learning.

The community of Old Crow lies within Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory. Old Crow is a remote, fly-in community in northern Yukon, 112 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle. Approximately 245 people live in Old Crow. Between 25 and 35 students attend CZGS and most are members of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

CZGS has five combined grade classrooms – the Kindergarten classroom, the elementary classroom, the junior classroom, the senior classroom, and the alternative learning centre for high school students. CZGS will continue to run a full day Kindergarten for K5 students, with the option still available to K4s to attend every afternoon.

Students in Old Crow have access to a tremendously rich natural environment within easy reach of the school. Every year, the junior and senior class goes out on the land to participate in the fall caribou harvest and the meat from this harvest is contributed to the school's hot lunch program, which runs from November to April. As well, every year, all CZGS students take part in the spring Culture Camp that delivers a land-based experiential program in honour of both traditional Gwitchin culture and knowledge and Yukon Territory academic learning outcomes.

Priorities:

Strengthened Instructional Practice & Special Education Intervention

Best practice instruction will be provided by teachers who demonstrate an understanding & respect for diversity, self-determination, integrated cultural learning, rigorous experiential learning, the effects of trauma on learning, social, emotional, behavioural & learning delays, as well as demonstrate an effective ability to promote improved standard English language proficiency, provide ongoing authentic assessment & effective differentiated instruction.

Experiential Learning & Cultural Knowledge

Experiential learning & cultural knowledge will play a primary role in the education of students attending CZGS. Experiential learning will take a multitude of forms, including field-based learning, games, role playing, workshops, port-folios, interviews, experiments, projects, presentations, apprenticeships, electives and will be tied as possible to cultural knowledge and assessed according to carefully structured prescribed learning outcomes.

Social & Emotional Learning & Wellness

CZGS will strive to achieve social & emotional wellbeing through effective classroom instruction that promotes students' self-awareness, social awareness, positive relationships, and responsible-decision-making skills in order to improve student attitudes and beliefs about self, others, and school, and in turn provide a foundation for better adjustment and academic performance.

Early Learning & Prevention

In recognition of the fact that quality early learning opportunities provide the basis for healthy physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development in children and the need for expanded early learning opportunities in Old Crow, CZGS will continue to provide targeted full day Kindergarten programming to all K5 aged children. K4 aged children will have the option to attend every afternoon with the K5s.

Physical Facility

CZGS will restore/improve its classrooms, storage facilities, telecommunication and IT systems to their original purpose in order to better meet the students' learning needs and interests by providing more opportunities in experiential learning in efforts to attain improved academic achievement.

Parental Involvement & Communication

CZGS will encourage, develop and support broad parent and community involvement in program planning, implementation, and evaluation. CZGS will also improve its communication protocols and practices to families, VGG and community.

Response to School Review Recommendations: Chief Zzeh Gittlit School just went through the formal school review process in May of 2016. The School Review Final Report is not yet available to the school and its team. Once the recommendations are made available they will be included here and SGP draft will be finalized.

Below remain some of the recommendations made by the 2011 School Review Team, along with explanations and/or details of how the school continues to respond to these recommendations.

A. School Norms and Culture

Recommendations for moving forward:

1. Given the number of new staff coming to the school in 2011-2012, it will be important for the school to clearly articulate the vision, values and approaches that have moved the school forward in recent years.
 - Improved new staff orientation process in partnership with VGFN John Tizya Cultural Centre &VGG
 - Monthly staff meetings
 - Regular school based team meetings
 - Inclusive School Growth Plan meeting, May 2015
 - Inclusive strategic planning session, September 2015
2. Consider ways to involve School Council and First Nation in hiring process:
 - School Council involved in hiring for Principal position
 - School Council involved in hiring other staff as available

B. School and Community

Recommendations for moving forward:

1. Strengthen the connections to the parent community and First Nations Chief and Council so that everyone feels involved in the work of the school and understands the programs provided for students,
 - Inclusive School Growth Plan meeting, May 2015
 - Regular positive (other as required) telephone calls to parents; tracked by teachers

- Student agenda program
 - Culture Camp wrap up/information session & slide show
 - Afternoon student electives; community participation; team teaching with staff
2. Explore, with the community, creative ways to work together to engage students in physical activities, develop team sport skills, and experiences in the arts and applied skills.
 - A facility use agreement has been signed with the VGG Recreation Department granting access to the school gym every day after school for physical activity programming
 - All classes receive quality daily physical education lessons. Physical Education programming accounts for 10% of students' total academic time
 - Afternoon electives will include a variety of opportunities, including physical opportunities, arts & applied skills
 3. Work with the Department, Whitehorse high schools, VGG and Gadzoosdaa to better support students and parents in their long distance communication.
 - Make videoconferencing technology, Skype and/or face time easily available to parents and students in order to communicate when desired
 - CZGS continues to strive to consult and collaborate with FH and the department of education in order to improve the transition process for high school students to Whitehorse. This is not always an easy process to get everyone concerned at the table and follow up consistently.
 4. Provide high school options for those not ready for the 'away from home' high school.
 - In 2012 CZGS began offering high school options to students in Old Crow – this option still exists through alternative high school programming offered at the school and in partnership with the college and community
 - Students have the choice to complete highly individualized programs at CZGS, for example, anything ranging from completing a few courses, to all of grade 10, to all of high school or specific trades options - whichever suits the students needs and wishes best
 - Graduation pathways include Dogwood Diploma, Adult Dogwood Diploma, Evergreen Certificate (School Completion Certificate), and various trades options
 5. Engage students in the planning & evaluation of initiatives to support improved outcomes.
 - Senior students are regularly offered opportunities to provide input into school initiatives. These opportunities are provided in class through discussions, meetings, surveys, and at community events including VGG Education Conferences. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in the planned 2015 fall strategic planning session

C. School Organization

Recommendations for moving forward:

1. Support students going to Whitehorse for high school better with an improved transition process and formal protocol.
 - An improved process and protocol is still in development and includes a series of meetings between CZGS staff, CZGS Principal, Whitehorse guidance counsellors, Gadzoosdaa head master, VGG Education Director, students and families.
 - These meetings will commence in January, with course selections and all applications completed by the end of each February.
 - Yearly, the senior class will visit Whitehorse to participate in Whitehorse high school life. This exposure over 3 years will help provide more exposure to and knowledge of the expectations in Whitehorse

D. School Processes and Progress

Recommendations for moving forward:

1. Continue to refine the growth plan and the school growth process to include parents, students and community to address areas of highest priority to ensure improved student outcomes,
 - The School Growth Planning Process for the 2016-2017 School Growth Plan included all CZGS teaching staff, VGG ESW worker.
 - Final consultation on SGP includes School Council and VGG Chief and Council

Processes and Connections: The 2016-2017 School Growth Plan was developed in response to student needs as identified by staff and community representatives (as listed below) over the 2015-2016 school year and is based on informal and formal observations and assessments, as well as in continued response to the School Review feedback from the Review Team's visit in May of 2011.

School Growth Plan participants:

Eleanor Charlton	Principal	Carman Lam	HS Learning Centre Teacher
Marion Schafer	Gwich'in Language Instructor	TBD	Education Assistant
Florence Netro	Gwich'in Language Instructor Trainee	Susie Wiese	Education Assistant (Sub)
Patti Tetlich	Kindergarten Teacher	TBD	VGG Education Director
Andrew Cameron	Primary Class Teacher	TBD	VGG Health & Social Services Director
Frances Ross	Intermediate Class Teacher	Cheryl Charlie	VGG Education Support Worker
Monica Sharma	Senior Class Teacher		

The 2013 VGG Education Summit Report 'Honouring Choices and Inspiring Success' was also used to highlight community priorities in the interest of student success. These priorities fall primarily into 2 main categories –

- Parent and community involvement;
- Vuntut Gwitchin cultural values and principles

PART 2: Focus

Goal #1: Improve Parent & Community Involvement with CZGS

- Principal is in regular contact with all parent, grandparents, guardians, and family networks.
- Staff will regularly communicate with families through positive, supportive, & disciplinary telephone calls, as well as the student agenda program. Staff will document all communication.
- Report card parent/teacher interview protocol will change and occur in the evening when families have more time to attend.
- School Council will be encouraged to appoint (as permitted) 2 VGFN community members – now has 4/5 VGFN community members.
- School Council will be encouraged to hold open School Council meetings at the community hall to encourage community members to attend.

Goal #2: Augment the inclusion of Vuntut Gwitchin cultural values and principles into the teaching & learning at CZGS

- In partnership with VGG, CZGS leadership and the Education Support Worker will coordinate and invite resource people from the community to team teach with school staff in order to provide afternoon elective opportunities to students relevant to their interests and Vuntut Gwitchin values and community principles.
- In partnership with VGG, CZGS will receive cultural inclusion funding for the Elders in Residence programming host scheduled classroom teas with Elders. Teas will be scheduled at the beginning of the year to occur once a month in each classroom. Programming during tea will sometimes be informal, for example just visiting or telling stories in the classroom while students continue to work; other times more formal, for example students, teacher and Elder might garden at the community garden or bead. Protocols and guidelines for hosting an Elder in the classroom will be established and not informal. CZGS knows that the visiting Elders will organically convey Vuntut Gwitchin worldviews to students and staff, embed Vuntut Gwitchin philosophies and cultural values into the fabric of the school, as well as help build a stronger relationship between students, teachers, and community members. This program will also include 3 lunch events throughout the school year in honour of the Elders and their support at the school.

Goal #3: Improve early learning at CZGS

- CZGS will continue to operate a full day Kindergarten for K5s, with the option remaining for K4s to attend every afternoon.
- Kindergarten learning will emphasize English language development as the learning of an additional language system – seeking not to undermine the Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation dialect or the system of knowledge that it conveys - as well as prescribed early literacy foundations.
- The tentative goals of the KG English Language Development program for the 2015-2016 school year are as follows:
 - Principal will train the Kindergarten teacher & EA, as well as the Grade 1 teacher and EA in Hanen's approach to learning language - ongoing
 - SLPs will assess all K4 and K5 students' language development with CELF-V and follow up with Grade 1 cohort as well.
 - In response to the assessed needs, team will establish targeted learning centres to facilitate the targeted (and informal) language learning.
 - SLPs will reassess all students at the end of the year.

PART 3: Act

The Principal of the school, in consultation with staff, VGG and community will be responsible for spearheading all initiatives described above.

PART 4: Monitoring and Adjusting the Plan

Progress on above initiative will be monitored and discussed at monthly staff meetings to determine forward steps based on current progress.