

Kugluktuk High School's
Student Success Plan A Resource For Review

The KHS SSP infographic represents my first attempt to heed Ken Robinson's advice and address the situation in its entirety; Robinson, in *Creative Schools*, explains that "systemic transformation in education must appreciate the complexity of the education system and appeal to that system at multiple levels simultaneously" (2015, p. 70). Instead, we have focused on specific initiatives ultimately aimed at improving attendance and graduation: literacy, experiential learning, personalized programs of study, extracurricular activities, trips and living by IQ.

IQ is the abbreviation for *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*. IQ are "Inuit beliefs, laws, principles and values along with traditional knowledge, skills and attitudes" (Department of Education, 2007, p. 20). In Nunavut, we are all required to live by IQ and we strive to have each student "become an *inummarik*, ...an able person who can act with wisdom" (Department of Education, 2007, p. 17). Appendix A has a full list of our IQ Principles.

This Student Success Plan (SSP) aims to do exactly what Robinson is suggesting to achieve change, see the complexity and address issues at multiple levels simultaneously. We ask all involved from the individual student themselves, to community members, to the Minister of Education to join us. Hereafter, the KHS SSP Infographic will be discussed as necessary, clockwise from 'IQ'.

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In 2014 the Department of Education released *It Starts at Home*. The title says it all! In fact, “it has been estimated that out-of-school variables of home and family influence are more powerful predictors of student success than the in-school variables of curriculum and instruction” (Murray, 2012, p. 14). As educators it would be wise of us to let parents know just how important they are; at the same time it is interesting to learn how parents themselves feel about school, especially given Red Pedersen’s article from 1985; see Appendix C. We **need** families to achieve greater student success.

Continuing clockwise on the KHS SSP Infographic, and staying with the blue of the North Star, students are obviously central to our whole endeavour: “...research and practical experience show time and again that the critical factors in raising student achievement on all fronts are the motivation and expectations of students themselves” (Robinson, 2015, p. 24). The biggest part of this complex puzzle is quite literally, right in front of us.

KHS, or Kugluktuk’s High School (please don’t mind the playfully use of the apostrophe), is and has been on the right track for decades; we have been making incremental positive change. I believe we are also on the precipice of becoming a “vibrant school [that] can nourish an entire community by becoming a source of hope and creative energy” (Robinson, 2015, p. 64). We are told our school *feels* warm and welcoming. Our teachers

are consummate professionals who care for our students and we offer the best programming we can. Is there more for us to do?

Yes, I believe we can do a few things differently that have great potential. And we can even be inspired by other schools; Boston Arts Academy is an inner city school with 65% of students coming from poverty:

...These were seventeen-year-old young men reading on a third-grade level. If they get to spend two to three hours a day on the thing that lets them show their strengths, it's a lot easier to work with them one-on-one on the thing that makes them feel most disempowered. A parent said to me recently, 'This is the only school that started with what my daughter could do, not what she couldn't do.' The school is about showcasing the student's gifts and strengths. It changes the conversation (Robinson, 2015, p. 184).

Such a mind-shift could be possible for KHS and is very likely necessary. In fact, our VP recently remarked 'when we watched her jiggling at the complex she was flourishing and happy; but in school it is like we are asking her to do everything she dislikes and she becomes downtrodden' (J. Lee, personal communication, November 8, 2017).

It dovetails nicely with a subtle reminder that great teachers absolutely know their disciplines, but teach **students** first (Robinson, 2015, p. 104). Additionally, great teachers know that at the heart of educational improvement is **inspiring students to learn** (Robinson, 2015, p. 100).

We also need to remember that "all students are unique individuals with their own hopes, talents, anxieties, fears, passions, and aspirations.

Engaging them as individuals is at the heart of raising achievement” (Robinson, 2015, p. 52).

It is precisely this student-teacher relationship that student success is based on. **“Everything else depends on how productive and successful that relationship is.** If that is not working, then the system is not working” (Robinson, 2015, p. 71). It is my job to ensure this type of collaboration exists throughout KHS and out into our community.

Additionally, I whole heartedly agree that “the role of a creative leader is not to have all the ideas; it is to encourage a culture where everyone has them (Robinson, 2015, p. 205).

We are fortunate to be overseen by a locally elected District Education Authority, and already have many community partners from the Hamlet, to local retailers, to a local construction company, to mining and expediting companies. These networks must be nurtured and expanded for the benefit of our students.

We ask our Department of Education to collaborate with us to create a third Graduation Path, The Certificate of High School Achievement, that reflects the interests of many of our students; please see Appendix C for a draft for consideration. Currently we only have a college/university diploma and a diploma for students on an individual education plan. We understand that education is inevitably a grassroots process and that change must come

from the ground up too (Robinson, 2015, p. *xxiii*). We willingly share a draft third grad path that we believe to be in the best interests of our students.

Clearly, to see increased graduates and Inummariit we will need to continue practicing the IQ values of Tunnganarniq (fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming and inclusive), Pilimmaksarniq (development of skills through practice, effort and action), Piliriqatigiinniq (working together for a common cause) and Qanuqtuurniq (being innovative and resourceful). I am eternally optimistic; if Nunavut itself can be created from the Arctic Tundra, then surely we can practice the same IQ values and transform our educational system.

Schools like Smokey Road outside of Atlanta Georgia transformed by believing that “whatever is important to the student is the most important thing...kids started seeing that we valued what they valued, [then] they started giving back to us what we valued. ...You’ve got to listen to what’s important to the child” (Robinson, 2015, p.4). These sentiments are reminiscent of the Humanism Learning Theory: “without good feelings about themselves and without curiosity or motivation there is little chance for learning” (Ornstein, 2017, p. 125); see the Learning Theories PDF on the same website if you are interested!

On Wednesday April 11 at 7 pm, we will share these ideas and continue the dialogue at our community consultation; if you are in the neighbourhood, please join us!

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Appendix A

Education Act

Chapter 15 EDUCATION ACT

(Assented to September 18, 2008)

Recognizing that public education needs to focus on students, their intellectual development and their physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual well-being;

Recognizing that a high quality education is important for the development of confident, responsible and capable individuals who can contribute to Nunavut society;

Believing that learning should be continuous and that all parts of the education system should work closely together to encourage and support life-long learning, the opportunity for continued personal development and the pursuit of post-secondary education, training and employment;

Affirming that all children can learn, that learning is an individual process, and that diverse learning needs and abilities should be supported in an inclusive education system;

Recognising that communities should be significantly involved in the education of their children to reflect local needs and values, that parents have special responsibilities and that Elders can make important contributions;

Believing that high quality education is necessary for the effective implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and to support Inuit culture;

Recognizing the relationship between learning and language and culture, and the importance of the curriculum and school programs being developed and delivered accordingly;

Believing that bilingual education can contribute to the preservation, use and promotion of Inuit language and culture and provide students with multiple opportunities;

Recalling the establishment of Nunavut in 1999, as the result of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, and reaffirming the remedial objectives, obligations and guidance expressed by the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, particularly

(a) the stated objectives and positive obligations of government concerning Inuit self-reliance, Inuit cultural and social well-being and Inuit participation in the governance and economic opportunities of their homeland, including participation in the public service to a representative level;

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- (b) the obligation to involve Inuit and to reflect Inuit goals and objectives when developing and delivering educational policies, programs, services and curriculum; and
- (c) the mandate to implement and fulfil the objectives of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement in a timely, collaborative and accountable manner, consistent with its terms, conditions, spirit and intent;

Agreeing that the rights of Inuit shall be recognized and affirmed in a manner consistent with sections 15, 25 to 27 and 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982;

Affirming the minority language rights of the Francophone linguistic community under section 23 of the Constitution Act, 1982 in Nunavut's predominantly Inuit cultural environment;

The Commissioner of Nunavut, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly, enacts as follows:

PART 1 FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Inuit societal values and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit

1. (1) The public education system in Nunavut shall be based on Inuit societal values and the principles and concepts of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit.

Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit; guiding principles and concepts

(2) The following guiding principles and concepts of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit apply under this Act:

- (a) Inuuqatigiitsiarniq (respecting others, relationships and caring for people);
- (b) Tunnganarniq (fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming and inclusive);
- (c) Pijitsirniq (serving and providing for family or community, or both);
- (d) Aajiiqatigiinni (decision making through discussion and consensus);
- (e) Pilimmaksarniq or Pijariuqsarniq (development of skills through practice, effort and action);
- (f) Piliriqatigiinni or Ikajuqtigiinni (working together for a common cause);
- (g) Qanuqtuurniq (being innovative and resourceful); and
- (h) Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq (respect and care for the land, animals and the environment).

Duty of all

(3) It is the responsibility of the Minister, the district education authorities and the education staff to ensure that Inuit societal values and the principles and concepts of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit are incorporated throughout, and fostered by, the public education system.

Appendix B

Comments made by Red Pedersen, MLA
(1) Kitikmeot West at Education
Conference held in Bathurst Inlet,
July, 1985:

What I have to say to you will NOT BE complimentary to education. However, we have been asked to speak our minds openly, and I intend to do so.

Anything which is said is intended to be for the benefit of present and future students, not for throwing stones or laying blame on individuals from the past.

However, I feel compelled to make some references to the past. For one thing, I am probably one of the few who remember it, but also to show you some of the changes which have happened over the years, to show you where we came from and how we got to where we are today in education. If we today know what went on yesterday, then we can make a better suggestion for tomorrow.

30 years ago, I stood in this very building as the manager of the Hudson's Bay trading post, and that was not the first, but third, Arctic posting.

In 1959, still with the Bay, but at Perry River, I watched as a plane arrived and removed every child of school age to be taken to Inuvik, which had just opened and which needed to be filled. Some parents were not there at the time, they were away hunting and returned later to find their children gone. No one asked the parents or explained why their children were removed to school, but there were no protests. Back then, the actions of, or the word of, the white government man were never questioned. I am sure you have all heard of stories of the "kidnapping" to fill hostels which took place then; well, I just want to tell you, those stories are true. Later years, even planes with no government administrator came, they just sent the pilots, all this was done with the best of intentions, everyone involved truly felt that they were doing the right thing.

In subsequent years, this carried on until such time as we provided schools in most all communities, gradually bringing them up to Grade 9 levels, after which only high school students have left home.

In those early years, we seemed to have what we are so sadly lacking today, parental support. We had good attendance, few drop-outs. When I say we seemed to have, that is what I mean. I used to think that, but, I have, over the years, come to the conclusion that it was not parental support for an education system they neither understood or had asked for, but rather parental compliance from a generation who simply never questioned a government decision.

Many of these parents later became bitter and angry when their children returned from school, completely different from when they were taken away. Remember that back then, people lived in igloos all winter, tents in summer, many even still skin tents. When I was here 30 years ago, one old man, Allen Kaotak, still exclusively used a bow and arrow, and a skin kayak, everyone wore skin clothes, in the trading posts, we still used trade tokens, we ate traditional foods,

and people were proud of their heritage, and the values which went with the old life, their language which all spoke. Some of these values included the duty of all to contribute to the society in which you lived, the tradition of sharing, the respect for other people as people and the respect for the property of others. There was the respect for elders, for the family unit, and a deep pride in the Inuit culture, probably the most perfect culture ever, considering climate and materials available.

Back into this came these children, thoroughly southernized, many had lost their language, as they were punished in school for using it, they could not even talk to their parents and families. They now preferred cooked hostel food to the traditional foods, and many, because of what school taught them, looked upon their parents as savages who ate raw or frozen meat. The children were used to baths and showers and turned their noses up at the less than perfect smell of home dwellings and family members. The tents and igloos they returned to hardly compared to the soft warm beds of the hostels. The schools back then did everything, absolutely everything, to assimilate the children and this included a downgrading and cheapening and belittling of all which was Inuit, language, culture, values, tradition, everything.

It is no wonder that many parents "disowned" their children and took the attitude which has often been expressed, that the government took my children without asking me, they have turned them against me and changed them, they are no longer mine, they now belong to the government.

These children did not receive a great deal of benefit from their education, certainly not enough to cope with today and because of their education, they learned nothing of how to live the old way. No knowledge of the old, not enough of the new.

These children, in 1959, probably an average of 10 years old, are today the parents of the present generation of students. The students who now have such poor attendance and high drop-out rate. There is very little parental support for education of today's students. Knowing what our system put those children through back then, how could we even dare to hope, let alone expect them to support our education system today, a system which has not changed that greatly.

Oh, we do now teach inuktitut and cultural inclusion, but tokenisms at their worst, time spent on native languages is minute compared to english and the making of a carving, building of a sled or sewing of a cloth parka has nothing to do with culture, they are merely skills associated with particular time. It is about as culturally enriching as teaching a student in the south how to shoe a horse.

I am sorry to say that I feel that education has been the major contributing factor in the breakdown of Arctic society, there have been many other factors certainly, but none with the impact of education.

We see this destruction of our society , not only in the problems associated with schools specifically, such as poor attendance, low achievement, high drop-out, but also generally - high suicide rates amongst young in particular, increasing violence, increasing alcoholism, disrespect for property, spousal assault, etc., all signs of a society which does not know where the hell it is going and being torn apart by the unhappiness and confusion within itself.

As educators, you must not, in fact, you have no right to enter another society and without looking at what was there, blindly introduce all the education programs of a southern system. Now who in hell decided that all the programs taught over the years were good, or proper or even appropriate for northern society. Who gave us the right to presumptuously demand parental support for a system just because we told them that it was good for them, we have never proven that it was good.

When I arrived here, there were lots of good teachers, they taught the traditional values, great hunting skills, survival, skin preparation, maximum utilization of all resources, conservation, honesty, language, reading, writing, and basic math, they taught the skills needed to make a living. They were called parents, but they were teachers.

We also had Social Workers, not called that, but people who were good at advising others and who had everyone's respect, because of these skills.

We also had medical staff, only they were called midwives and medicine men.

We had then a society which had full employment, not wage employment, but occupational employment, everyone was busy contributing to the society in which they lived, in very rigid and well-defined roles.

We had almost 100% literacy in native language, both reading and writing and basic math skills, suitable and adequate for our society then.

That was before the Department of Education arrived, I want to emphasize that we already had local education then, it was not an educational desert back then, but a local system suitable for the society then. Unfortunately, we have destroyed this system by insisting that what the Department of Education brought in was superior and therefore was forced on people as I described earlier.

What I am trying to tell you is that there is more to education than merely a southern-style classroom instruction.

That is about what we have received, and not a high level at that, in return for the loss of all that we had before. Verily, I tell you, and I tell you as an old trader, it has been a poor trade indeed.

Now - where we must go from here. We can no longer experiment, time is a luxury which we cannot afford. We must create a system which makes sense to people and which they understand. We can here be helped by such studies as the Keewatin Youth Study that shows that students generally feel that elementary school is too easy, too boring and not strict enough, also many students complain about not knowing where they stand.

Our elementary education system must become compulsory, though I cannot support the police-state kind of suggestions contained in the document tabled at the Rankin session, there are better ways to persuade than that, like providing a better product. I feel it is essential that we return to the grade system, it is a system that people understand and support, we must never forget that education systems are for the students we serve and not an academic exercise for teachers and educators.

The continuous progress system has simply not worked, over 10 years it has been tried and it has not been good, the principle of it does not work later in life on the job market, indeed, it does not even work at the high school level. The departmental exam before graduation is entirely subject and grade oriented. As I said, we do not have time to experiment any longer, so let us return to a system that people want, understand, and support.

Our education system must become career oriented. I would suggest an A and B line similar to Greenland. Basically, the A line is trade oriented and geared to students who would not need to leave their areas to achieve their career goals, almost all the careers at Thebacha now. The B line is the academic line leading to University. Possibly two additional lines could be considered, one for the student over age for his grade who desires to live traditionally, a camp-type school on the land taught by knowledgeable local people, possibly leading to a Renewable Resource Harvesting Diploma upon completion. The other line for exceptional students, for whom no expense should be spared, when identified, they should have the opportunity to attend the very best schools, within or outside the N.W.T., whichever is best.

I feel that community high schools should be established wherever and whenever numbers of students warrant it. However, I totally disagree with the Rankin Inlet concept. There need be no magic to a high school, it does not need a huge imposing structure or great hostels. High school need be no more than three new classrooms and sufficient teachers. In communities where students must be brought into high school from other places, instead of hostels, let us put the money into better housing and home board the students, giving both better accommodations and improving housing.

I want to see Adult Education, Apprenticeship training, in-service training, and college programs expanded, always keeping the career orientation in mind. However, I am not quite sure if these should be all in the same department. Maybe we should consider letting

the Department of Education concentrate on getting students from Kindergarten through Grade 12 and create another department to handle the rest.

I want to see us explore the possibility of using T.V. as a teaching aid at the college program level, maybe other levels too, it is too powerful a communications tool to ignore. I think T.V. should be used to promote our new, more relevant education system.

We need an honest and meaningful cultural program, intense language instruction, native history, back to pre-history, traditional customs, traditional values and in Social Studies, the achievements of aboriginal people, songs, dances, stories, everything that makes a person proud of being what he is. What we need is a cultural revival, a pride in heritage, a return to the values associated with the traditional ways, we need a vigorous campaign amongst our native people, similar to the "Black is Beautiful" campaign in the US some years back.

In closing, I want to return to where I began 30 years ago. I was a trader right here in Bathurst, among many of commodities I sold were canned beans, now I do not want to belittle you, but education is in many ways a commodity like a can of beans, you must be able to sell both. Now, if my beans did not sell then, I sure as hell did not pass an ordinance making it compulsory for people to buy my beans, I damned well ordered another brand that people liked better and would buy willingly.

Now I suggest to you that your educational can of beans may need to be replaced, if not with an entirely different brand, then at the very least, change the sauce.

Thank you

Appendix C

Kugluktuk District Education Authority

Certificate of High School Achievement

The Kugluktuk District Education Authority (KDEA) congratulates students who earn a minimum of 100 credits and achieve *The Certificate of High School Achievement*.

KDEA Certificate of High School Achievement		
Uqausiliriniq	<i>Communication</i>	18 credits
	ELA (Comm. or K&E any combination)	15
	Literacy Test (minimum 50%)	
	Art, Drafting or Music	3
Aulajaaqtut	<i>Wellness, Leadership</i>	15 credits
	Aulajaaqtut	10
	Physical Education	5
Nunavusiutit	<i>NU History, Heritage, Environment, Global and National Role</i>	10 credits
	Social Studies	10
Iqqaqqaukkaringniq	<i>Innovation and Technology</i>	25 credits
	Mathematics (+ financial...)	10
	Science	10
	Nunavut Cultural Studies, Career and Technology Studies (CTS), or Nunavut Early Apprenticeship Training	5
Additional credits at the 30 level		10 credits
	Additional Unspecified Course Credits	22
	Total <u>Minimum</u> Credit Requirements	100

ELA, Aula, Math & Science credits are at the usual 10, 20 and 30 level.

Grade 11 SS is often an unrealistic obstacle; perhaps Grade 12 SS?

We believe 100 credits is still a realistic; we want the same overall time with students.

The KDEA wishes to support all learners: IEP, Certificate & Diploma Graduates. We find the current IEP and Diploma Graduation options inadequate for our students and invite the Department of Education to pilot this 3rd proposed grad path with us.