

Chief Jimmy Bruneau School Review - Executive Summary

2020-2021

Review conducted by:

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Documents/Evidence: School Improvement Plan, School reports (3), school/class walkthroughs, PLC team meeting minutes, over fifty staff interviews, one parent engagement session (online survey), two interviews with board representative Rosa Mantla, and one interview with TCSA Board Chairperson Ted Blondin

Summary

Evidence for this school review was collected between August 2021 and May 2022 (see list of documents/evidence considered above). Key interviews were conducted with school staff, Board Representative Rosa Mantla, Principal Dianne Lafferty, Vice Principal Chris Cochrane, and program observations. The student and parent engagement sessions were not permitted due to COVID: thus, a virtual engagement was conducted in April 2022.

Chief Jimmy Bruneau School is located in Edzo, has 410 students in the 2021-22 school year in grades JK-12. Edzo is a community on the main highway. CJBS has 34 teaching staff and 36 school support staff, including custodians, secretary, cafeteria staff, bus drivers, support assistants, and Health and Wellness Elders. In 2021-22, the school had vacancies for 2 teacher and 5 other school staff due to limited housing in Behchoko, a lack of local applicants for school support positions, and a National teacher shortage. CJBS was significantly impacted by COVID-19. The school was closed to in person learning for over 20 weeks. Online learning was poorly attended, and limited community internet access created significant barriers to learning.

The enrollment at CJBS had a slight decrease from 2019-2020 (416.5 FTE) to 2020-21 (403 FTE) and 2021-22 (403.75FTE). This is due primarily to high school students who took work during the pandemic and have not returned. The school wide average attendance was 11.5% above the regional average of 71.6% for the 2020-21 school year (22-23 average not yet available).

The school has, like other Tlicho schools, has seen an increase in students with significant complex needs. Through measures such as the Early Development Index (EDI) and Middle Years Development Index (MDI), CJBS reports very few students who are 'on track' or 'thriving.' CJBS, like most Tlicho schools, has a significant number of students on Student Support Plans, Modified Education Plans, and Individual Education Plans.

CJBS has several programs to support the wide range of student needs: a transition program to offer an alternative high school pathway and program, a learning center to support students with complex needs, CJBS is a Northern Distance Learning schools which offers students the opportunity to take advanced courses that may not be offered in their school, a large community library that is open to students and the community, and a daycare operated by the Tlicho Government.

The evaluators are satisfied that the curricular learning outcomes for all students are within, or above, the range of reasonable expectation, given the context of the school and applicable Departmental direction. The TCSA uses a rotating schedule for school reviews, and the next review is scheduled to take place in 2026-2027.

Strategic Goals and Evidence

1. In line with the TCSA's key strategic goals (Tlicho language and Culture, Literacy and Numeracy, Student Health and Wellness, and Lifelong Learning) and CJBS' School Improvement Plan, the school has demonstrated:

Target 1: Tlicho Language and Culture

Goal – Enhance school community relationships, and review and ensure alignment of key cultural experiences.

Results

- *CJBS has an ILE team that is well established, with dedicated time and a variety of staff participating. The team focused on developing their camp and classroom cultural programming, Integrating language, pre and post camp lessons, teacher and Elder co-teaching in integrated studies, and an increase in the 'hands-on' nature of cultural programming.*
- *The school has shifted to utilizing support staff (ex: bus drivers) to support cultural programming, this has been a successful practice and an excellent use of resources.*
- *The "Our Language Curriculum" and associated resources are readily used and supported with coaching from regional and territorial supports.*
- *There is strong instructional evidence of the use of Dene Kede in CBIP classrooms, including lesson plans, teacher resources, and posters.*
- *CJBS has built awareness and connections between school and community through social media (ex: Viral video of hide preparation).*
- *CJBS has assigned language partners to Indigenous Language classrooms as a way of increasing the whole school approach to language.*

Target 2: Literacy

Goal – School-wide reading level target of 500, regional target for Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy (TROLL) of 60% above the 25th percentile, regional target for 50% of students to improve more than one-year reading growth, 50% of students to improve more than one-year math growth, dedicated PLC team approach to improving reading and early literacy, review and consider Response to Intervention (RTI) model, increase use of approved resources and coaching within the school.

Results

- *CJBS achieved 180 reading goals by May 2022 (the school was closed to in-person learning for over 20 weeks – 2020-2021 they reached 650)*
- *CJBS TROLL: 67% of kindergarten students were at or above the 25th percentile in the TROLL assessment (above the regional average)*
- *CJBS Reading: 32.5% of grade 1-9 student improved one or more years reading growth (within regional average)*
- *CJBS participated in the All Region Write (ARW) and writers' workshops to improve writing.*
- *CJBS's CTBS results were not available at the time of this report*

- *The literacy resource room is well stocked and utilized daily. Staff are using the approved resources and instruction is aligned with Regional Literacy Action Plan and Oral Language Initiative.*
- *Coaching was provided to all staff to improve reading instruction.*
- *A systemic literacy RTI is in place in the elementary but is still progressing in the Junior and Senior High where interventions are more difficult to implement.*
- *While some PLC teams are using an evidenced based approach to improve instruction and student achievement, others are still working towards this goal.*

Target 3: Lifelong Learning

Goal – improve transition programming and supports for students (high school pathway, MAP sessions, work experience, career pathways), specialized programming for students with complex needs (learning center) as well as those requiring alternative high school programming (transition program), in classroom coaching for teachers and SA

Results

- *CJBS has an effective transition program (alternative high school) and learning center that both support students who may otherwise not be successful in school*
- *CJBS has access to a Student Transition Coordinator and Career Education Advisor who have begun to integrate high school pathway and career education in grades 7-12*
- *Coaching is provided to all teachers and support assistants through mentorships, one-on-one modeling, as well as small group in-servicing / workshops*

Target 4: Student Health and Wellness

Goal – integration of mental health and wellness supports and services, improve access to services that support the delivery of SSP/MEP/IEP and increase monitoring of those plans, focus on transition planning between grade 9 and 10, review and update Safe School and Emergency Response Plans, review and reinforce behavioural expectations (including discipline procedures), better alignment with PST priority use guidelines, utilize Community Liaison to support families with attendance

Results

- *CJBS has two school counsellors (CYCC) and two Elders who are regular members of the SBST and are part of wrap around services in support of students*
- *Audits of SSP/MEP/IEPs have demonstrated an overall improvement in the specificity of the plans and in responding to recommendations from consultants and assessments*
- *The Safe School and Emergency Response Plans were updated in alignment with recommendations from the region and territory (including Personal Emergency Response Plans where appropriate)*
- *At the time of this report CJBS was beginning transitional planning for grade 9 students (ex: MAP, grade 9-10 transition, and high school pathway planning)*
- *Through the school review process CJBS identified that school behaviour expectations were not consistently applied or responded to. Staff took a trauma informed workshop and have begun work on an updated Behaviour Response Plan (Discipline Policy) that will be completed in partnership with staff, students, families, and the community. The updated plan is based on*



trauma informed practices with a clear goal to keep students in school by supporting self-regulation and social-emotional learning.

- *The Community Liaison position was recently filled and has initiated several successful conversations with poorly attending students.*

2. *Summary of 'conversation' evidence: quotes /insights from interviews, surveys, self-evaluations*

Without exception, evaluators noted the passion and effort of the staff to make changes in the lives of CJBS students as well as the willingness of staff to accept feedback. Staff also noted the persistent oral language and literacy challenges at all grade levels, and the positive change in this approach under the current leadership team which led to significant academic growth in 2020-2021 (over 650 reading levels).

The interviews focused on three themes: Inclusive Schooling, Indigenous Education, and Leadership. The common themes in all engagements can be collected and summarized in four main areas: support assistants, student discipline, building on current practice, and program effectiveness.

- **Support Assistant** – Most staff felt that there needed to be stronger accountability for staff who missed time, were late, or otherwise did not complete their job duties. Particularly for support assistants, the high absenteeism resulted in safety issues, increased workload on school leadership, and frustrations at all levels. It was noted that where collaborative planning between teachers and SA was in place there was strong purposeful instruction for students. Nearly all interviewed indicated that a higher level of training for support assistants was required.
- **Student Discipline** – *"CJBS is committed to using a trauma informed lens, but our policies and actions aren't always aligned with trauma informed practices"* – Chris Cochrane, Vice Principal. There is consensus among staff that CJBS should use trauma informed approaches, but several staff gave examples of school beliefs, protocols, and policies that aren't aligned with these and self-regulation processes. A lack of clarity on the purpose of school disciplinary policies and approaches have resulted in some feeling parents weren't involved early enough, documentation was unclear, and confusions that students were returned to class without 'consequence' when they had regulated their behaviour and were ready to learn. CJBS is updating their Behaviour Response Plan (discipline plan) and will bring this plan to stakeholders before finalizing.
- **Building on current practice** – *"The school has always felt a home to a great many and is in fact dear to my heart growing up. The staffing selections and teamwork of the staff has always put our school on the map. If it was not for the continuous support, spirit and love that went into our students CJBS wouldn't be what it has been and still is today."* – CJBS Parent. This sentiment was echoed by many staff, students, and stakeholders; CJBS needs to keep their core foundation while they grow and adapt. There is a strong sense of purpose, highly functioning school teams (ex: SBST, leader team, ILE team, OHS), and highly regarded cultural programming that do not require significant change or attention. In the spirit of continual growth, recommendations were provided to the school to streamline and improve efficiencies in communication, leadership structures and processes, and whole school approaches to language and culture. Several parents spoke to the need to increase communication with homes and to bring back sport teams (this has been impacted by restrictive COVID protocols).
- **Program Effectiveness** – All stakeholders spoke with pride about school programs such as the learning center, using Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and Response to Intervention (RTI) to address student achievement, recent growth in literacy measures, and most particularly

on the cultural programs delivered in the past year. Several staff expressed confusion about how to access some school supports such as the School Based Support Team (SBST) and school counsellors, however, they overwhelmingly agreed the school effectively supports students. Staff at all levels spoke to the ongoing requirement to appropriately maintain, organize, catalog, evergreen, and store the extensive Indigenous and literacy materials already in the school and the time required to complete these tasks.

3. *Summary of walkthrough evidence: insights, checklists, celebrations, pictures of student achievement*

- The Director, contractor, Regional Principal, Vice Principal, and Principal completed school walk-throughs – they focused on building safety, Tlicho language and cultural programming, inclusive schooling, and the academic programs.
 - Example of best practice: CJBS looks and feels like a Tlicho school (Elders pictures, artwork, pictures of students, and regionally produced posters). The school culture camps have begun purposeful language focuses, culture camps are popular due to the hands-on activities for students, and Tlicho can be heard throughout the school. CJBS has a culture of safety for both staff and students.
 - Example of the area improved during the review: After the first round of feedback, CJBS undertook a review of their discipline policy and practices. A large portion of the staff participated in trauma informed practices workshop and updated their protocols. CJBS also committed to encouraging staff and students to lead the morning prayer in Tlicho.
 - Example of the area to continue to improve: RTI and PLCs are underway with excitement how they can leverage the power of RTI to make improvements in how we identify and respond when students aren't making progress. Staff and parents identified that some teachers had a high reliance on work sheets or teacher-centered instruction practices. Student-centered flexible learning strategies, modeling, shared and guided practice, and explicit reading instruction must be embraced to close the student achievement gap.
- Celebrations and evidence of success

YEAR-AT-A-GLANCE
2021/2022

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JULY 2021							AUGUST 2021							SEPTEMBER 2021																				
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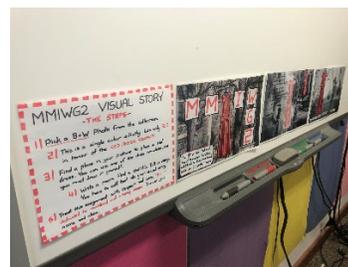
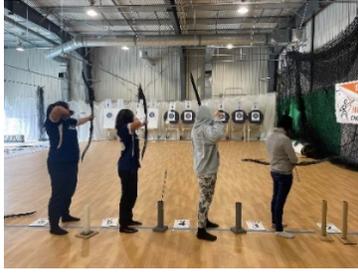
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APRIL 2022							MAY 2022							JUNE 2022																
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■ First Day of Classes
 ■ Student (Senior/6th) Days
 ■ Early dismissal
 ■ Statutory Holiday
 ■ School Closed
■ School Closed (Lance & Senior High On-Is)
■ Last day of classes for 7-12
■ Last Day of Classes for JK-6





Celebrations/Commendations

- CJBS staff and students care about each other. Mutual respect is evident in the interactions. There are very few suspensions. Staff embraced the trauma-informed practices workshop and updated policies and procedures in the school to reflect these beliefs. CJBS fully integrates the School Counsellors to participate in regular school functions.
- CJBS has a culture of safety for staff and students.
- CJBS has made significant increases in their cultural programming over the last year. The school has a frequent camp schedule and works to provide outdoor on-the-land instruction for all students. The school looks and feels like a Tlicho school. The school leadership has put considerable school resources to improve the materials required to safely run these programs, including hiring local experts to ensure traditional knowledge is a critical component of the learning at CJBS. Camps have focused on net and ice fishing, hide preparation, muskrats trapping, and puberty.
- Through the review process, a need for increased communication was noted. CJBS leadership initiated 'what's up emails', common agendas for department meetings, and clarified referral processes for school-based support teams and counsellors.
- CJBS is a Northern Distance Learning school; they offer courses by distance each year that allow high school students to take academic courses that may not be provided at the school.
- CJBS set a goal of 500 reading levels for 2021-22 – by May 2022, they had reached 180 (over 20 weeks of school were delivered via distance learning)
- CJBS has a wide range of unique programs, initiatives, and educator teams to ensure students' unique needs are anticipated and met.
- CJBS hired two full-time Indigenous Health and Wellness Elders to support student's health, wellness, and cultural identity and complement the Child and Youth Care Counsellor program.
- Through Jordan's Principle funding, CJBS has delivered an increase in SLP, behaviour and reading intervention, and one-on-one support assistants for students with complex needs.

Recommendations

1. *Student Achievement* - Place a sustained and enhanced effort on responding to the student achievement data to improve student achievement as identified in the TCSA Strategic and Operational plans. Set school improvement goals that reflect the commitment to closing the gap in student achievement. Refine RTI, and focus PLC teams on responding to evidence to improve student achievement.
2. *Tlicho Language and Culture* - Continue to offer integrated culture programming that focuses on student experience with hands-on activities. Build on success by strengthening pre and post camp learning activities in classrooms. Maintain the efforts to organize, inventory, and appropriately store culture materials and equipment.
3. *Effective School Teams* – While most school teams are highly effective, they are not well understood by all staff. This may be due, in part, to the COVID interruptions to regular operations. Build efficiencies in meetings with communication tools, consider member composition in SBST and ILE teams, train and build awareness in all school staff by including meeting updates in general staff meetings, and in orientation.
4. *Community Engagement* - Implement a Student Council and Parent Advisory Committee to support the community feedback to improve the community/school relationship. Return to

CJBS' rich history in extra-curricular activities by offering sports, drumming, hand games, and other extra-curriculars. Increase communication between parents and teachers with both formal and informal methods.

5. *Human Resources* – The leadership team at CJBS is well regarded however, they are also seen as over-tasked. Consider: organizational management structure, map responsibilities of the leadership and administrative support positions to identify overlap, utilize regional coaching staff for mentorships to reduce load on PSTs, increase accountability with chronically absent staff, consider models to respond when experiencing high staff absenteeism, and utilize department head structure to create efficiencies.