

HIGHLIGHTED SCHOOL
Kiita Learning Community
April 22, 2025

Principal: Shirley Hautala

1. Highlighted School Report

Introduction of Kiita Learning Community Graduates

Kiita Learning Community has experienced a year filled with powerful moments — of celebration, of learning, and, yes, of deep heartache. Through it all, our students have shown resilience, courage, and an unwavering drive to move forward.

*It is with great pride and heartfelt hope that I share with you the names of our **pending graduates**. While a few of our students are still working toward the finish line, we remain optimistic and supportive — encouraging them to finish strong and walk proudly alongside their classmates.*

Each of these students has overcome obstacles and carried with them the strength of their community, their culture, and their commitment. We are proud of who they are and who they are becoming.

CONGRATULATIONS KIITA GRADUATING CLASS

Kaden K., Lee

Ben

Kayla

Kaden B.

Skyler

Michael

Ryan

Sara

Marjorie

Nathaniel

Landon

William

Juel

AmyLynn

Brandon



AmyLynn

Brandon

Champ

Antonio "AJ"

Nolan

Braxton

Savanna

2025

2. Distinguished Students, Staff and Volunteers

1. Distinguished Students:
 - a. Evan Bodfish-
 - b. Braxton Suvlu-
 - c. Evan Bodfish-
-

Student Recognition: Evan Bodfish. –

A Model of Resilience and Compassion

Uvlaalluatiq members of the board, and thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

*I'd like to begin by recognizing one of our outstanding students at Kiita Learning Community — **Evan Bodfish**, a junior who has demonstrated remarkable strength, heart, and perseverance during one of the most difficult periods our school has experienced.*

Over the course of recent months, our community has endured several devastating losses. Evan was deeply affected by these events, as were many of our students. And yet, in the midst of that grief, Evan chose to keep moving forward — to show up, to support others, and to stay committed to his own future.

*Evan has not missed a single day of school this quarter. He is holding a 3.33 GPA and continues to work toward his goal of graduating high school — a goal he is well on his way to achieving. But what is most inspiring is the way he consistently demonstrates the **Iñupiat Values of Cooperation, Caring, Humor, and Compassion** in his daily actions.*

Evan is a quiet leader, a resilient spirit, and a source of light in our school. It is my honor to recognize him today.

Student Recognition: Braxton Suvlu

“Courage to Speak, Strength to Rise”

*I am proud to also honor **Braxton Suvlu**, a graduating senior whose resilience, work ethic, and heart make him an example of what it means to finish strong.*

Like many in our community, Braxton has been deeply affected by the recent losses we've endured. Even so, he has continued to show up, engage, and grow. Braxton currently holds a 3.5 GPA for this quarter and maintains a strong attendance record — evidence of his commitment to his education and his future.

*Throughout the year, Braxton has participated in a number of impactful opportunities, including the **Legislative Fly-In**, where he testified on behalf of issues important to him and his community. He's also completed multiple **QLC Intensives**, including Heavy Equipment*

and Intro to Welding — and earned **college credit** in welding. On top of that, Braxton joined our school visit to Job Corps in Palmer, where he explored career pathways in Welding, CNA, CMA, and Electrical. He plans to return there after graduation to pursue a career in welding.

Braxton lives out the **Iñupiat Values of Compassion, Respect, and Responsibility** — caring deeply for Elders, supporting his peers, and learning to advocate for his own well-being. He leads quietly but powerfully.

Braxton is proof that with courage to speak and strength to rise, a young person can overcome hardship and build a life they're proud of. It is an honor to recognize him today.

Student Recognition: Amber Hopson-Ahmaogak

Excellence in Every Step

Lastly, I'd like to recognize **Amber Hopson-Ahmaogak**, a junior who joined us just this January and has already made an incredible impression on our school community.

Amber brings with her a quiet strength and an unwavering focus. Since arriving at Kiita, she has demonstrated near-perfect attendance — missing only two class periods this quarter — and currently holds a **3.66 GPA**. In addition to her academic success, Amber recently scored the **highest of all our students on the ASVAB**, a clear indicator of her sharp thinking and future potential.

But Amber's excellence doesn't stop in the classroom. She is also a **gifted artist**, creating stunning paintings, and cultural works that include masks, carvings, and hand-sewn skin garments like mittens and hats. Her talent honors tradition while reflecting her own thoughtful creativity.

Though she has only been with us a short time, Amber has already set a high bar — for herself and for her peers. She leads by example, and it is an absolute joy to teach her. We are confident that with her talents, work ethic, and spirit, Amber will continue to thrive, and we look forward to supporting her as she walks the path toward a bright and purposeful future.

It is my great pleasure to recognize her today.

– Teacher: Kern Wilson

“Rooted in Service, Leading by Example”

As we continue to celebrate the people who make Kiita Learning Community a place of growth, strength, and care, I am proud to recognize someone who has been a steady, guiding presence in our school for over a decade — **Mr. Kern Wilson**.

Now in his 12th year at Kiita, Kern wears many hats: he teaches Math, Physical Education, Shop, and English Language Arts — and somehow still finds time to manage the **Kiita**

***Store**, a project that takes countless hours of personal time and behind-the-scenes effort. But it's not just the roles he fills — it's how he fills them.*

Kern is the first to lend a hand, whether it's school-related or not. He's helped build a doghouse for a coworker, repaired a Honda for another, and is always nearby with a tool in hand or a quiet word of support. His actions speak volumes, and his generosity is felt throughout the building.

When students voiced a desire to travel off the Slope and explore their future at Job Corps, Kern didn't hesitate. He encouraged them, supported the planning, and stood alongside them every step of the way.

*Mr. Wilson exemplifies what it means to serve with humility, teach with heart, and live the Iñupiat Value of **Cooperation**. His impact is lasting, and it is my great pleasure to recognize him today.*

Staff: Dolph Dowdy

"Steady Hands, Kind Heart – A Legacy of Service"

*Lastly it is my great privilege to recognize someone whose presence has shaped not only the safety and function of our school building, but also the spirit and culture of Kiita Learning Community — **Mr. Dolph Dowdy**.*

As Dolph nears his well-deserved retirement, he continues to show up every day with the same dedication, humor, and quiet leadership that have made him such a trusted and valued member of our team. In his role as Plant Manager, Dolph has worked tirelessly to keep our school safe, warm, and running smoothly — even in the harshest of conditions.

From the moment I arrived at Kiita, Dolph made me feel welcome. He didn't just unlock doors — he opened them. He helped me learn the ropes of being a building leader, from safety procedures to who to call when something went sideways. He responded quickly, showed up without being asked, and always brought a smile or a kind word along with him.

It's often said that the best leaders are those who serve others, and Dolph has lived that truth every day. His humor, humility, and care will be missed by all of us — staff and students alike. And while we wish him all the joy and rest he deserves in retirement, we know Kiita won't quite be the same without him.

Dolph, congratulations on your pending retirement. Thank you for your years of service, your steady presence, and the kindness you've given so freely. You will truly be missed.
