



## Report to the Utqiagvik SAC August 30, 2021

### **Current Situation**

It's great to be back, and have students in the building again!

I am happy to report that the entire staff has returned: Geoff Buerger, Principal; Laura Simmonds, Secretary; Jen Brower, Counselor; Alice Sage, Science, Health, & Night School; Pamella Simpson, English & Social Studies; Kern Wilson, Mathematics; Thunder, Emotional Support Animal.

Kiita currently has 26 students enrolled, with several more possibly in the pipeline. We consider that 30 is an optimal number for our facility and program, but the COVID year created an artificial hiatus in our admissions. My guess is that we will be back to our average enrollment soon. Thanks to Mr. Jenkins for allowing me to pitch the Kiita alternative at the BHS opening assemblies for juniors and seniors.

We need to hire a Special Education teacher. Our previous 0.5 FTE SpEd teacher has been permanently assigned to Barrow High School, so our position has been posted for a new hire. However, while the Board-approved budget includes a full time 1.0, HR posted only a 0.5 – and it is doubtful that anyone will come here for only half a job.

### **COVID Update**

On Monday, August 23, a parent called to report a student had received a positive COVID test. We closed immediately, and asked students to consider themselves first contacts and isolate right away. The next day we sent home a week's worth of work, and on Wednesday—following the decision made by the Mitigation Team—we allowed fully vaccinated students to return to school. Because the last exposure was Friday, August 20, the reopening date for all students was Tuesday, August 31.

On Monday, August 30, we received word that another student has tested positive. Because that student was not in school during the infectious periods, no one at Kiita is considered a close contact and thus the reopening date was unaffected.

### **Added Duty Contracts**

The Business Office being shorthanded and swamped, I have been helping out by producing Added Duty Contracts for all schools. ADCs are stipends given to teachers who take on duties above and beyond their contracts – most entail either coaching assignments, responsibility for special events (*e.g.*, Science Fair) or programs (*e.g.*, Battle of the Books), or substantial year-long commitments (the biggest being Activities Director, Building Test Coordinator, & Site Technologist).

Kiita has six ADCs: Night School (long overdue; our thanks to Mr. Limani for identifying appropriate funding and coding), Kiita Store, Site Technologist, Building Test Coordinator, Class Advisor, and Mapkug Mentor. None of these were included in our budget, which indicates that the process is deeply flawed. I have made the suggestion to include Principals in the budget process from the start, to avoid there (and other) significant errors of omission.

### **Budget & Finance**

Our school operating budget for the year is approximately \$18,000, to cover all materials and program expenses.

We have applied for an Alternate Schools grant, and are optimistic that we will qualify for it again this year. We have also submitted an application for a School Improvement Grant, but that has been held up by incomplete paperwork at other sites around the District. (All SIGs must be submitted at the same time, so we are having to wait on other schools.)

### **Items of Interest**

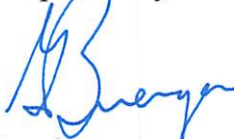
On Tuesday, August 17, Tennessee Judkins and I testified via Zoom before the federal Commission on Indian Education. I described the Kiita program and analyzed the reasons for our success, and took advantage of the opportunity to urge the Commission (a) to lobby Congress to fund adequate Internet access for isolated schools, and (b) to lobby the Department of Education to alter their highly prejudicial formula for calculating graduation rates.

Kiita was without active fire alarm coverage for the latter part of the summer. Our fire panel was on “test” for some weeks, so had there been a fire no call would have gone out from the site. That unit has now been replaced, and the entire alarm system has been brought up to code.

Just before the start of the school year, the back entrance was vandalized by boys of middle school age using spray paint. The cameras captured their images, and the matter was referred to the police – we have heard nothing further. Thanks to Plant Manager Dolph Dowdy and his crew for promptly cleaning up the graffiti.

Inside the building, we made a special effort to spruce up before opening our doors. We pitched out tattered posters, put up framed photographs of graduates from the last five classes—we invite you to come walk the central hall and see our Wall of Fame—renewed the backing & contents of bulletin boards, acquired covers for down-at-heel chairs in the reception area, rearranged permanent artwork, and purged the Kiita Store accumulation to out “the Big Room” back in daily use. We also purchased a Kiita-logo banner, which now welcomes visitors at our main entrance.

Respectfully submitted,



Geoff Buerger  
Principal