



BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SD #50 (HAIDA GWAI)

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# *Navigating Students To Success*

## SCHOOL PLAN 2015-2018

For the 2015-2018 School Year  
George M. Dawson Secondary



George M. Dawson Secondary School Plan 2015-18 Overview

Introduction

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This year's plan is the next stage in a process for renewal by identifying the wide variety of student needs, cultural expectations, increased integration of Haida Culture into school curriculum and improved rates of academic learning. The school and its staff are committed to increasing student involvement in school activities, improving student attendance and learning, ensuring that grade to grade transition rates remain high and that graduation rates improve.

School, District, and Provincial educational reports all indicate that improved student performance is needed. Provincial exam results, school attendance records, and individual student assignment records all indicate that our students are performing below expectations. Learning and teaching styles require investigation to ensure that all students are learning and performing to the best of their abilities. Students with significant learning challenges or gaps in learning need to be assessed correctly, supported as necessary, and provided with work that is commensurate with their skills, knowledge and abilities. Students and their parents/Guardians require consistent and accurate feedback about student grades, attendance, and behaviour. In return, parents and the community need to stress and support the importance of: daily attendance, completing and turning in work that is above the standards deemed acceptable and complete, attending every class and giving their best effort in each of those classes, and the significant value of completing their secondary school education with their children. Moreover, the signing of the Educational Enhancement Agreement between School District #50 and the Village of Old Massett should signal a commitment by students and parents/guardians that improved student attendance and effort is an expectation, not only of the school district, school and its staff, but of the community as well.

Following school and teacher rules is another area that requires improvement. Most rules infractions by students are about inappropriate language and behaviour. Respectful behaviour towards all school members is not optional. It should be a right without question. Positive student behaviour should be reinforced at every opportunity and negative behaviour requires fair, consistent and equitable consequences.

Haida Language development and expanded exposure to Haida Culture remain a priority at George M. Dawson Secondary School. Several cultural activities took place this year and our staff recognizes the importance of expanding the number and types of Haida cultural experiences to students is important to our community.

Experiential learning and formal education instruction have both contributed to the development of these practices. The greenhouse provides food supplies for Food Studies courses and the school's lunch program. Education about food production is another essential by-product of this worthy school project. School organized activities that centre around food gathering (hunting, fishing, clamming, berry picking, sea weed harvesting, etc) allow our students to learn butchering, food preserving, and food drying skills. The school's staff recognizes that these activities not only add to the uniqueness of our school but are important to the continued survival of our world. While this area is not an official goal within the school plan it remains as one of the main focal points of the school, staff and students.



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This year the student body has articulated the need for a course focusing on mental wellness and addictions. The students at GMD are prepared, willing and enthusiastic about incorporating skills, strategies and approaches to better equip themselves for the future. The need and demand for mental health support for our students is increasing. We continue to seek support from the province, Northern Health, and School District 50 to meet the needs of all our students in this area.

### Highlights from 2014-15

- Second year COAST Program.
- School-wide traditional food gathering activities took place. Boys and girls hunting trips were organized and completed with success
- School Wide Cultural/Activity Days once a month.
- School Wide Writes
- Grade 9's participated in an student exchange with Ottawa.
- Grade 9 and 11 students participated in a week-long adventure camp at Mt. Moresby
- Musical Grant for 10,000\$ for new musical instruments.
- Students spent a week at Rediscovery maintaining the buildings and building a green house.
- School sports teams travelled off-island to participate in Zone Championships in soccer, basketball, volleyball and track and field.
- GMD Post Secondary Institution Tour took several grade 11 and 12 students to a number of colleges and universities for informational tours
- School sponsored and organized Student Youth Conference
- Cultural Field School day to Yaan by Haida students
- Tahayghen Elementary students participated in a number of activities hosted by George M. Dawson Secondary School.
- Tahayghen students also worked in the school's green house and gardens.
- Multiple presentations about anti-bullying, cyber-bullying, gay student issues, anti-racism, HIV, Suicide and anti-violence were presented to GMD students and staff.

### SCHOOL GOALS: OUTLINE

With the assistance of all stakeholders, George M. Dawson has arrived at the following goals in our commitment to continuous improvement and student achievement:

**Goal 1 – To increase all students personal responsibility and empowerment while increasing opportunities for cultural awareness.**



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Goal 2 – To improve student competency in reading and writing

Goal 3 – To improve student numeracy skills at all grades with a primary focus of improving student success from grades 8 through to 10.

**Goals Details:**

## **Goal 1 Student Responsibility, Empowerment and Cultural Awareness.**

**Goal:** To increase all students' personal responsibility and empowerment while increasing opportunities for cultural awareness.

**RATIONALE FOR SELECTING GOAL:**

School data indicates that student attendance rates are far below provincial averages and the number of students arriving late to school and class are far above what is acceptable in other school district jurisdictions. An examination of recent referrals to the office by teachers about student behaviour shows that most students are sent to the principal for attendance related issues or for the excessive use of ambivalence. School marks and anecdotal reporting by teachers indicate that many students perform below their levels of academic readiness because they fail to, either, complete assignments or return them to their teachers in a timely manner at a level deemed acceptable or complete. In addition, the school's First Nations Worker routinely provides individual students with day-to-day school supplies to replace items that are lost or left on the floor yet, teaching staff report that there are students who arrive to class without school supplies each



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There are a very small number of students who do little work while at school, and some who refuse to follow the instructions of both their teachers and administration. As in most schools, a small number of students withdraw from class without permission and want to wander the hallways rather than apply their energy to the challenge of working in a scheduled class.

Haida culture and language remain a focal point for the school and district. Teaching staff are committed to increasing the number and quality of cultural activities available to all students. Art classes routinely include First Nations art projects like bentwood boxes, ceremonial paddles, drawing and painting. Clamming, seaweed gathering, berry gathering, and other traditional food gathering activities have occurred each year over the past several years and will continue to be scheduled into the school's calendar. A clear plan including proposed activities, proposed dates, and supporting activities for all disciplines is being developed and a master list of individual participants complete with areas of responsibility should be maintained both for historical importance and for specific documentation.

### OBJECTIVES:

- To improve the overall attitude of students towards school and specifically towards their own learning
- To further improve the behavioural management issues: expectations, communication, consequences, restitution
- To improve time management, materials organization and problem-solving of students
- To increase the involvement by students in planning and running student spirit activities (school pride)
- To improve personal pride through cultural awareness and identity building.
- To improve our response to students at-risk of falling through the cracks.

### SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE TARGET:

- Improved rates of student attendance
- Decreased rates of late arrivals by students to school and/or class
- Decreased referrals to administration about student behaviour and profane language
- Reduced referrals about students arriving to class without appropriate supplies



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- Increased numbers of students enrolled in Haida Language classes
- Increased numbers of cultural activities available to all students

### **DATA USED TO TRACE PROGRESS:**

- School Attendance records
- School late records
- Report card comments
- Student referral records
- School Field Trip Forms
- Teacher and administration observations

### **STRATEGIES:**

### **EVALUATION PLAN:**

To be developed in consultation with Administration, Teaching and Support Staff, the Parents Advisory Council, Old Massett Education Council and District Staff. It should include processes that document:

- Improved rates of student attendance
- Decreased rates of late arrivals by students to school and/or class
- Decreased referrals to administration about student behaviour and profane language
- Reduced referrals about students arriving to class without appropriate supplies
- Increased numbers of students enrolled in Haida Language classes
- Increased numbers of cultural activities available to all students
- The number of student learning support blocks



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- The use of student agenda planners by students, staff and parents
- The number of students enrolled in Haida Language and Culture, BC First Nations Studies 12 and English First Peoples courses
- The number of school field trips focussed on traditional Haida activities
- Tracks phone calls made to student homes informing parent/guardians about student attendance, lateness and accomplishments

## Goal 2 LITERACY

**GOAL: To improve competency in reading and writing**

### RATIONALE FOR SELECTING GOAL:

Current data indicates that our efforts have shown some positive changes in student performance and learning but that the school's overall Provincial exam performance is below provincial averages. This provides sufficient rationale for maintaining some of the same objectives and expanding school strategies to continue this improving trend.

### OBJECTIVES:

- To increase the percentage of Grade 8,9,10 students meeting or exceeding expectations in the School Wide Write by 50 percent within three years
- To increase the percentage of students passing the written portions of the BCFN 12 Provincial Exam
- To increase the percentage of Grade 12 students meeting or exceeding provincial averages as described in the Topic/Cognitive Level Reports for Grade 12 Provincial English 12, Communications 12, and English First Peoples 12 exams by 50 percent within three years
- To increase the number of students who score C+ or better on the English 10 Provincial Exams by 50 percent within three years





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- To increase the percentage of students with stronger essay and vocabulary development

**DATA USED TO TRACE PROGRESS:**

- School Wide Writes Gr. 8- 12
- Provincial Exam Results (English FP 10, Grade 12 English, Communications 12, English 12 First Peoples and First Nations Studies 12)
- Provincial satisfaction Surveys
- School Course marks

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:**

- An increased percentage of students in Grades 8 meeting or exceeding expectations in the School Wide Write
- An increased percentage of students who pass the written section of the BCFN 12 Exam
- An increased percentage of students will display stronger essay and vocabulary development in their classroom portfolios
- An increased percentage of male students who meet or exceed expectations in all of the performance indicators listed above
- An increased percentage of Grade 12 students meeting or exceeding provincial averages as described in the Topic/Cognitive Level Reports for Grade 12 Provincial English 12, Communications 12, and English First Peoples 12 exams
- An increased number of students who score C+ or better on the English 10 Provincial Exams



**EVALUATION PLAN:**

Staff will review School Wide Write and Provincial Examination data at a department level, in staff meetings and Reading meetings. Review of data will also occur in the collaborative marking sessions for the School Wide Write. School Data will be reviewed annually by school staff and members of the PAC and be used to formulate new school plans and guide teaching strategies to improve student learning.

**Goal 3 NUMERACY**

**GOAL:**

**To improve numeracy skills at all grades with a primary focus of improving student successes from grades eight through ten.**

**RATIONALE FOR SELECTING GOAL:**

Provincial Exam results demonstrate that George M. Dawson Secondary School regularly perform below provincial averages.

**OBJECTIVE:**

**Primary:**



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1. Increase the number of students achieving 60 percent or greater on the Grade 10 Provincial Math Exams by 25 percent within three years.
  2. Increase the number of students who pass all Math courses by 50 percent.
  3. Improve the Numeracy skills of students as demonstrated by increased math course pass rates; Provincial Exam Pass Rates, and Provincial Final Marks scores.

### **Secondary:**

1. Establish baseline data for Principles of Math 8 students using the School District #50 Assessment tools and disaggregating the data by gender and aboriginal students.
2. Continue to establish baseline data for grade 10 using the Provincial exam results for both Pre-Calculus and Workplace Math programs and disaggregating the data by gender and aboriginal students.
3. Improve attendance rates in all math courses.

### **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:**

1. Improved pass rates in Math 8 – 12 courses.
2. Improved School Mean Scores on Provincial Math exams.
3. Increased number of students achieving 60% or greater on Grade 10 Provincials Exams.
4. Increased number of students achieving 60% or greater in Provincial Exam Final Blended Marks

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Create School schedule that allows for an extra semester for Math for grades 8 & 9.
2. Support within the class for all students.
3. Regular communication with parents about school grades, sooner rather than later.



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**EVALUATION PLAN:**

Teachers involved in the Numeracy goals, Math Assessment program and the Math department will evaluate the data from the assessments as the data becomes available, and continue to share with the staff as a whole. Provincial exam data, course marks and letter grades, and the grades 8 & 9 Mathematics Assessments will be reviewed at the end of each semester. The data and the discourse will be used to formulate revisions of school and department strategies and to guide teaching practice to meet the needs of students.

**SUMMARY STATEMENT:**

This school plan sets out an ambitious agenda for it students and staff. It is not intended to be prescriptive. We have established guidelines and set out numerous strategies that could be used over time to accomplish the stated goals. It is a plan that spans at least three years. Some modifications should be expected in that time span but it is hoped that any strategies employed by the school and its partners will occur over the life of the plan so that the necessary tweaks and twists will have time to do their work and meet the goals set out in the plan.

There are specific targets in those areas where improvement in student learning and performance is integral to student success, both at school and later in life. George M. Dawson Secondary School is a unique school. Its students and staff work well together. It is our hope that that school and students will demonstrate improved success rates in learning in the future, and this plan will help the school move forward in a positive manner.