



Watson Lake Secondary School

School Growth Plan

2016-2017

Last Updated: [June 1, 2016]

PART 1: Context, Priorities, Response to School Review, Recommendations, Processes and Connections

Context: (Includes a brief summary of demographics, the vision and values of the school, the cultural focus and things the school is proud of in relation to students or community engagement)

Watson Lake's contemporary role as a commercial, transportation and government services centre for the nearby communities of Lower Post, BC and Upper Liard has deep historical roots. The lake was known a T'etseluge Mun, or White Fish Lake, and was situated close to the two main transportation routes. An extensive trail system used by the Kaska passed close to the lake and provided trade, cultural, commercial, political and military linkages and the Liard River was used as an alternate transportation route across a vast northern area. Watson Lake is a town of approximately 1,500 people, about 600 of who are Kaska.

The history of schooling in Watson Lake began with the Lower Post Residential School that operated from 1940-1975 for status First Nations. Children of non-First Nations employees of the ministry of transportation went to Watson Lake Secondary, which was located at the Watson Lake airport. In 1965, St. Ann's Catholic School was built in Watson Lake, providing education to Catholics and First Nations people, which did not serve to unify the community. In 1970, St. Ann's Catholic School and the Watson Lake High School became one school, providing an elementary and a high school. The new high school was built in 1990.

The economy in Watson Lake has been in decline for a number of years. The student population has stabilized and increased to 98 students, 73% are First Nation. In the past five years staff turnover has diminished and our administrator, being a Watson Lake resident, has demonstrated a long-term commitment to the development of Watson Lake Secondary School and the community.

The vision of WLSS is dedication to academic and social success for our learners and the definition of success will be unique for each student.

Values:

- Love them, feed them, teach them
- Creating a healthy, safe, supportive environment for all learners
- Developing a strong Kaska language and cultural base
- Fostering respect for others and the development of productive citizens
- Recognizing and accepting personal and cultural differences

- Developing lifelong self-advocating learners
- Student ambassadorship

Cultural Focus:

WLSS is proud of the support it receives through partnerships with Food for Learning, Liard First Nation, DayluDena Council, Yukon College and the Town of Watson Lake. The funding we receive allows us to provide free, nutritional breakfast and lunch for all our students throughout the school year.

We are proud of our Kaska language and culture. We have elders in the school to create cultural crafts and to speak about cultural identity. We display the school mission statement, written in Kaska, in our front entrance. We have started a legacy piece of Kaska beading designs across the front of the office. Students in First Nations Art are invited to paint the images on the wooden trim above the entrance to the office. We have worked with the Artist in the School program to have carvers come into the school and make individual pieces with students. Once the initial techniques for carving have been mastered, we want to create a larger Kaska carving for our front entrance. The Kaska and Outdoor Pursuits classes have been going camping and incorporating science curricula with the Kaska traditional cultural perspective. There will be multiple opportunities for all students to participate in “on the land” experiences. We are planning a Welcome Back Feast in September 2016 for our entire community. From a school perspective, we are increasing the First nation content in all subject areas by inviting local First Nation’s resource people into our classrooms. The Kaska language instructor is developing curriculum for students in Grades 8-12 for Kaska regalia and a graduation focus.

We are very proud of the success of our students with the blended learning model that we have adopted in our school. There has been a large cultural shift in learning style at our school with collaboration between teachers, students and department staff being an identifier for it’s success. We have had many visitors in our school this year and it has created a sense of pride within the student, staff and community populations of Watson Lake.

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We are very proud of the success of our students with our blended learning model that we have undertaken. There has been a large cultural shift in learning at our school with collaboration between teachers, students and departmental staff being a marker for its success. We have had many visitors come to our school and it has created a sense of pride within the student, staff and community population of Watson Lake.

Once again we were given the opportunity to host REM inviting Robert Service School, Eliza Van Bibber, St Elias and Tantalus. The Experiential Learning opportunities included; Hair and Aesthetics, Culinary Arts, Dance, Drama, Woodworking, Small Engines, Fashion, Game On, First Nations Art –Design and Carving, Introduction to Trapping, Programming and Game Design and Music. REM also included many evening workshops that included; Artic sports and Dene Games, Bannock, Energy and the Teenage Brain, Beading, Movies, Paramedic for a Night, Bowling, Athletics, Creating Delectable Desserts, Fire Fighter for a Night, RCMP for a Night, Sushi Making, Digital Fabrication, Outdoor Hike, Music Jam Session, Trip to Liard Hot Springs. REM culminated with an afternoon school wide showcase of student accomplishments garnered during the week and finally a dance that was held on Friday evening.

Students also participated in field trips/programs such as girls and boys volleyball, Young Women in Trades, Ski days at Mt. Maichen, Lucky Lake Fun Day, Youth for Safety, Go Girls, Grade 8/9 REM in Faro, 10-12 REM at Robert Service School, Lower Post Cultural Enrichment Program, Wrestling Tournament, local Job Fair and hosted local volleyball and track and field events. We have also invited many organizations into the school in order to add to our school programming some of which include; Community Health Nurse Presentations, MADD, BYTE, Artist in the School, Alcohol and Drug Services.

We are working very hard to improve collaboration with JES. We have had regular visits from grade 7 students into our shop. JES and WLS have social events planned in conjunction with school council on a regular basis.

Priorities: (See the school growth planning guide for details)

- Self-Regulation
- Develop a Balanced Literacy Program
- Collaboration between WLSS and JES for a shared Vision for Watson Lake students
- Creating pride in our culture, where you are from and who you are
- Safe, supportive and healthy environment for students and staff
- Fostering success through student driven, individualized educational planning and programming
- Improving student attendee and course completion rates
- Improving technological literacy and competency
- Offering more opportunities for course choices to encourage individualized educational programming
- Creating connections between traditional beliefs and values and modern technologies
- Maintain our free breakfast and lunch program

Response to School Review Recommendations:

(See the school growth planning guide for details)

- From the school review in the section regarding norms and culture observations which were made in regards to students being left on their own in the MOODLE platform. We are addressing this by adding a teacher student advisory block to the 2015-2016 timetable. This will allow teachers to remain up to date on student progress and concerns. We are also adding set classes to the timetable next year where the teacher will focus on specific competencies required for success in courses.
- From the school review in the section regarding community and recommendations for moving forward regarding the continued use of collaborative time. In the beginning of the school year the administrator will create a schedule for collaborative opportunities for all staff once a month.
- From the school review in the section regarding school organization recommendations were made with regards to greater attention to the junior high model specific to project based/experiential learning with a range of strategies for literacy development. We are also attempting to address the communication with students regarding the new direction of programming in grade 8 and 9 by offering a presentation on June 2, 2015 as

well as a second presentation in September of 2015. This presentation is for all new and returning students and parents.

- From the school review in the section regarding school processes and progress it was recommended that we focus on a school wide literacy program and insuring staff knowledge of the pyramid of intervention framework. As a staff we will be using our local PD days early in the school year to focus on developing, implementing and assessing our balanced literacy program. We are also going to work with Area 3 Schools and participate in an Area 3 PD opportunity on October 5 focusing on balanced literacy in the Yukon. Mr. Lee (LAT) will be participating in a school visitation with Teslin School (a leader with regards to the pyramid of intervention and its implementation).

Processes and Connections:

(See the school growth planning guide for details)

All staff reviewed the growth plan during the first staff meeting in September. It is also a line item on our staff agenda for every meeting where time is dedicated to specific areas of refinement with the growth plan. The school participated in a school review in April 2015 . The members of the school growth plan team are: Jean Maclean, Harmon Lee and Shannon Evans. As the principal of the school it is my intention in the upcoming school year to engage the community with regards to the school growth plan.

PART 2: Focus

Progress and Evidence: (See the school growth planning guide for details)

Looking Back at 2015-2016:

What do you know about the students of WLSS?

- High needs and high risk youth
- Our student ability levels are concentrated at either end of the spectrum with very few in what would traditionally be the norm group
- Deficiencies in Literacy and numeracy directly linked to poor attendance presently or historically
- Serious social and emotional needs
- Constant and repetitive engagement in high risk behaviours
- Students are becoming more self-advocating
- More students are seeing a future for themselves

How will the work you did during the 2015-2016 school year help you guide your planning for the 2016-2017 year?

Recognizing that the social emotional needs of Watson Lake Secondary students is a priority we continue to offer a number of workshops that students were able to participate in. These included; Youth for Safety, BYTE, Blood Ties, MADD, LDAY, Alcohol and Drug Services and the continuation of our GSA.

We continue to offer counselling services by retaining a full time female counsellor that provides services halftime at JES and WLS. We will continue to maintain the services of both CATS and Many Rivers.

After participating in a school review and reviewing academic progress (DART, School Wide Writes and Provincial Exam results) we have decided that a balanced literacy component must be the continued focus of the upcoming school year. We will continue to use a Jerry Johns assessment tool in September where the data will be used to direct development of a balanced literacy approach. We will continue to utilize DART and School Wide Writes (five times a year)

as well as; individual EA support, progress charts, homework club, tutoring and mentoring. Student success will be facilitated by the use of individual student success plans, “Keep Your Eye on the Prize”, calendar for due dates, encouraging teachers to communicate with the parents/guardians for support, and strongly encouraging peer tutoring.

We believe that the students who are not yet meeting expectations are struggling with high social emotional needs and poor organizational skills. We are addressing this by providing the AURORA workshop from LDAY to all high school students coupled with previously mentioned tools for success.

Self-directed blended learning has given our students an advantage over the traditional class in that the power to succeed doesn't reside with the teacher but lies with the student because it is flexible, self-paced, stigma removed, individualized and engaging. They do not fail courses as they pick up where they left off at the end of the semester/school year.

What progress did the school make in achieving the targets set last year?

Our target for last year was; By June 2016, 75% of students will be reading at or above grade level. We are keeping literacy as our main goal after completing the reading inventory assessment it has been determined that 65% of our students are reading at or above grade level for the 2015-2016 school year. We are going to continue to focus on improving reading skills with the plan to reach 75% reading at or above grade level by the end of the 2016-2017 school year.

Looking Forward *Goals and objectives identified represent the highest priorities*

for improvement at the school. It is strongly recommended to limit the focus to one or two specific goals.

*Evidence may be discussed and displayed here, or discussed here and displayed as an appendix

Rationale for goals and objectives:

Students are becoming self-directed learners and strong literacy skills will enhance their ability to succeed. Through the results of our School Wide Writes and DARTS from the previous year it was evident that this is a goal that we need to continue to focus on. The blended learning model indicates that students with high competency in reading and writing have the most success especially with regards to completion rates.

<p>competitions</p> <p>Encourage reading for pleasure</p> <p>Guided Reading, Paired Reading, Literature Circles and Sustained Silent Reading</p> <p>Broad based assessment must occur in early September to determine all students reading levels</p> <p>Bi-Monthly School Wide Writes</p> <p>Retrofit the Student Lounge to be a Reading Center</p>	<p>Creating a display area to track books read by students</p> <p>List of completed novels and list of participating students</p> <p>Jerry Johns</p> <p>School Wide Write, Dart, Running Records, LPI, English, and Communications</p> <p>Track the number of students that are utilizing the space</p> <p>utilising the space</p>	<p>Mrs. Rotondi , parents and guardians</p> <p>Mr. Lee, Mr. Fraser and Mr. Slager</p> <p>Mr. Lee</p> <p>All staff and Department Personnel</p> <p>All teachers</p>
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<p>Self-regulation as a strategy to create an effective learning environment. Specific furniture to create a comfortable learning environment that supports individual preferences or learning style, breathing exercises before students participate in individual assessments (ie. Test, exams, presentations, SWW and DARTS) and fidget tools</p>	<p>Results or observations after exercises are completed</p>	<p>All staff</p>
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*Cut and paste to add additional goal and objective areas as required

PART 4: Monitoring and Adjusting the Plan

Dates for monitoring progress:

Dates and description of any adjustments made to the plan:

Reading level will be determined for each student by the end of September 2016 and then again at the end of May 2017. The School Growth Planning Team will meet a minimum of three times throughout the year (in early September, again in early January and lastly in early June). Staff will be updated regularly at staff meetings and they will be able to observe the school display as new information gets posted.

Communications Plan: (To be completed during the 2016-2017 school year)

Information display for the first parent teacher interviews identifying the goal and the process we are taking to reach our literacy target will be created. Information will be added to this designated display for the remaining school year and can be viewed at any time throughout. School council will have the opportunity to read the display board as well as receive updates at all school council meetings.

Upon approval of school growth plan, it will be distributed to parents, School Council and interested community stakeholders with a specific request for feedback on programs and initiatives.

All staff review the second draft of the school growth plan in September 2016.