



Del Van Gorder School Growth Plan

2015-2016 School Year → 2016-2017 School Year

Last Updated: April 29, 2016

**Prepared by: Angela Magon (Principal)
In consultation with the 2015-2016 School Growth Plan Committee
and school community stakeholders**

DVG: Every child. Every chance. Every day.



Abstract

Del Van Gorder School's talented staff and dedicated community members work collaboratively to ensure that all students receive a quality educational experience. This year we continue to focus on three major school goals: improving student **writing**, improving instruction and assessment of **numeracy**, and building our **science** program. The following document sets out the procedures/approaches used to meet our goals and the evidence used to determine our successes along the way.

Part 1: Context, Priorities, Connections

Context:

Del Van Gorder (DVG) School is a large and well-maintained K-4 to Grade 12 facility, located in Faro, YT - a former mining town roughly four hour's drive northeast from Whitehorse. The school once housed around 400 students, which is now the approximate population of the town itself. The current student population is 46 students, which is a decrease of 8 students from the end of last school year. However, when averaged over the past five years, the student population has remained roughly the same. The school also houses the Yukon College Campus and the Public Library.

In many ways, DVG is the backbone of the Faro community, and there is a strong desire to keep it a community-oriented school. While DVG has not traditionally had many English Language Learner (ELL) students, our changing town demographics have led to 24% of our students now being in this category. Unlike other schools in the Yukon, DVG is not formally connected to a First Nations Council, although 30% of our student population has acknowledged First Nations (FN) ancestry (Dena-Kaska being the predominant nation). Thirteen students are also on individualized education plans (IEPs) or student learning plans (SLPs).

The school is well-staffed with 7.5 full time equivalency (FTE) teachers. There is also a 0.5 FTE Principal/counsellor and several support staff (including 2.65 FTE Educational Assistants, a part time Library Clerk, and an Admin Assistant). The current Principal, Angela Magon, is in her fourth year at the school. As with most rural schools, there have been several changes in teaching staff over the years. Only 1 staff member (the Admin Assistant) has been at the school longer than 5 years, although there has been little turnover in the past 4 years.

School Strengths:

DVG's greatest assets are a supportive community and friendly students. Visitors constantly comment on how our students are so well-behaved, outgoing, and kind. They say "hi" to peers and teachers in the halls, and generally bring positive, happy attitudes to class. There are very few behavioural issues. The respectful nature of our students is an extension of the Faro community in general. Many parents volunteer in the school and the perception is that the school is a welcoming and community-oriented place. School programs, such as the Virtues Program (in its 4th year), specifically teach students about being thoughtful, globally-minded and culturally-sensitive citizens.

There has always been a high level of expectation for the school to provide a broad range of extra-curricular activities in addition to offering a high standard of academic and artistic programming for students. The presence of specialist teachers and a three year rotation of courses has allowed middle and high school students greater choice in their programming options. These choices have included: senior Sciences (Chemistry/Physics/Science and Tech), Music (vocal jazz, guitar, percussion), Woodworking and other trades programming, Foods, Textiles, Psychology, Law, Geography, History, media arts (film, yearbook, photography), and drama. Blended learning options for mathematics courses (and sometimes social studies or science) have also been impactful at the high school level to ensure all students can gain access to appropriate course choices. Elementary students also have access to Music, Woodworking, and French classes as well.

The teachers and staff at DVG all come with multiple talents and specialized skill sets (in addition to their defined teaching areas). These skill sets are used to create specialty programming and extra-curricular offerings both in the school and for the community. The school has also been very successful at accessing grant money and programs to bring in talented individuals from around the Yukon to offer supplemental programming. Special events and workshops, such as carving, FN story telling, dancing, song creation, painting, health, archery, curling, DARE, first aid, food safe, theatre productions, concerts, etc. have been enjoyed by all students in recent years.

Community members and parents are important contributors to the school's successes and are actively encouraged to be involved with the school. Community members volunteer as coaches, run clubs, and guest lecture in classes regularly. The school provides many opportunities for the public to come into the school. Some events include community BBQ's, pancake breakfasts, movie nights, the Terry Fox Run, Family Literacy Breakfast, Science Fair, Pirate Math Night, etc. The school also benefits from an excellent relationship with the town Recreation Center. The two organizations frequently share equipment, facility access, and instructors to improve opportunities available to the town's children.

Mission Statement and Vision

"Our mission is to dedicate ourselves to the development and success of the whole child as we foster a continual learning environment with our community and family partners."

At Del Van Gorder School we have a vision where:

- All students, regardless of background, gender, ethnicity or orientation are ACHIEVING and SUCCEEDING within a safe and caring, socially-just learning environment
- All students are recognized, affirmed, and celebrated
- The school, family, and community, in partnership with each other, collaboratively assume responsibility for the whole child

The 2015-2016 Growth Plan Committee

Angela Magon (DVG Principal)
Vicki Fitzpatrick (DVG Teacher)
Steve Marsh (DVG Teacher)
Cyndy Bekk (DVG Parent)
Laurie Berglund (DVG Teacher)

Kristine Gossen (Parent, School Council Member)
Julia Salo (School Council Member)
Tina Freake (School Council Chair)
Willis Bolton (Grade 10 student, Dena-Kaska YFN citizen)
Jeremiah Pilch (Grade 12 student, ELL student)

Part 2: Focus

2015-2016 Growth Plan Process

The Principal and volunteers from the greater school community (DVG staff, School Council members, parents, students) form the 2015-2016 School Growth Plan (SGP) Committee. The 2015-2016 SGP is an update and continuation of the 2014-2015 SGP, which was created in response to our 3 year School Review in 2014.

To prepare the updated plan, the Principal met with staff in September 2015 to go over the 2014-2015 SGP. Teacher Professional Learning Community groups were also directed to use the 2014-2015 SGP as the basis for their research and action. Feedback on the plan has been gathered on an ongoing basis from staff, School Council and community members and incorporated into the 2015-2016 draft plan. See Part 4 on page 15 for a complete listing of revisions and drafts during this process.

This Growth Plan is a working document and will go through a number of revisions scheduled throughout the rest of this school year (see the schedule in Part 4 of this document). Revisions will be made after consultations with the SGP Members, School Council, DVG Staff, parents, and student representatives before formal submission to the Department of Education in May 2016. While DVG does not have a First Nations Council to support and advise the school, it should be noted that several staff members are of mixed FN ancestry and have contributed to this document in addition to a student body member of the Dena-Kaska First Nation. Aboriginal voices have also been solicited from the DVG extended community and student body. This working document will be updated regularly and posted on the school website. Ongoing feedback from Department of Education partners for the evolving growth plan is also part of the process.

Progress and Evidence: Looking Back at 2009-2014 Data

The use of past data from Yukon Achievement Tests (YATs), BC Provincial Exam (BCP) results, school attendance information, high school course offerings, graduation rates, School Wide Writes (SWW), and District Assessment of Reading Tests (DART) are helpful for informative decision making. However, due to the small number of students in certain grades (sometimes only one student!), the use of statistical data and statistical targets can be misleading. For instance, a previous YAT result suggested that 100% of one of our classes was not meeting expectations for language arts skills. However, what this fails to note is that this 100% was 1 student on an IEP for language skills! However, sometimes statistics can be our friend – especially when we have larger cohorts. For instance, BC provincial exam results from 2012-2015 school years (Grade 10-12 core subjects of Math, English, Science, and Social Studies) have been strong in each subject area. Student averages were markedly above BC and Yukon average test scores (5-15% higher with actual percentages masked when there are 3 or less students taking the exams). Taken as a whole, the historical data supports the need for increased levels of literacy and numeracy in our students, which is in alignment with Yukon Education goals at the territorial level.

Goals and Priorities:

For 2015-2016, we have decided to continue with the 3 goals identified in last year's SGP. These goals include comprehensive plans to address our teaching and assessment of **writing** and **numeracy** skills, which will most likely continue as goals into the 2016-2017 school year as well. Our third goal is a two year plan to reinvigorate and reinterpret our K-12 **Science Program**, with a particular focus on elementary level science.

List of Appendices For This Report:

Appendix A: Abbreviations Used

Appendix B: Recommendations From the 2014 School Review and Response

Appendix C: Instructional Strategies for a Balanced Literacy Approach

Appendix D: School Wide Write historical analysis across Grade 1-10

Part 3: Act

Goal #1: Use the balanced literacy teaching framework and the K-12 writing continuum to improve student writing.

Objectives: All students will be able to

- **Identify where their writing fits on a writing continuum**
- **Identify what they need to do to move up to the next level on the continuum**
- **Make the transition from a lower level to a higher level on the writing continuum at least one time this year**

Rationale:

Longitudinal (year to year) student cohort analysis of achievement on the School-Wide Write (SWW) exams, in addition to other sources (YATs, BCPs, teachers' professional judgement, etc.) have indicated that the typical DVG student tends to stay at the same writing performance level year to year. For instance, a student who is "fully meeting expectations" this year, will usually be "fully meeting expectations" the next year. We believe that using a scientific/research-based approach to teach writing skills, will help more students transition up to the next level of achievement. The achievement categories are as follows: not meeting expectations, minimally meeting expectations, fully meeting expectations, and exceeding expectations. As can be seen from Appendix D, students at DVG typically fall into the minimally meeting or fully meeting expectations categories. Students improve over the year (see May results as compared to September results), but generally regress over the summer while school is out of session. As a vehicle for this change, research shows that teaching students literacy skills based on the "balanced literacy framework" (see Appendix C) is a practical way to improve writing. The use of a writing continuum across the entire K-12 curricula will also help clarify to students and parents their current writing levels and show them what they need to be able to do to get to the next level on the continuum. Other schools using this approach to teaching and assessing writing have observed a positive impact on achievement levels. Since writing skills impact performance in nearly every academic area, it is clear that a school-wide approach to improving instruction and assessment of these skills would be beneficial. In September 2014, all teachers at DVG began balanced literacy training. Offered as an initial form of evidence, the results in Appendix D indicate that less regression of student writing ability has happened between May 2015 and September 2015.

Central Questions Guiding Our Actions:

- **How can we adapt our writing continuums to be DVG student friendly?**
- **Are students able to use the writing continuum to identify the current levels of performance? What methods can we use to help students be able to do this consistently?**
- **How can the balanced literacy framework improve the strategies for teaching and assessing writing?**
- **Are all teachers using the same language around teaching and assessing writing at DVG? How can we better align our practice?**

Actions: Strategies/Interventions	Evidence and Resources	Person(s) Responsible
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All teachers will engage in balanced literacy (see Appendix C) approaches each year with a specific focus on writing. 2. Teachers will work in PLC groups to share balanced literacy best practice. The following areas will be explored over the year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address ELL learning starting with the new ELL assessment protocols • Track each student longitudinally (year to year) • Involve students in planning for learning and self-assessment • The development of new professional resources to monitor, improve, and report on literacy levels. 3. All teachers will engage in implementation of writing strategies based on professional development and training (ex. elementary teachers will implement the 6+ 1 Traits of Writing framework) 4. A high school appropriate writing continuum will be created by the high school teachers and Principal by June 2016 using the provincial exam writing samples for English 10 & 12 and First Peoples English 10 & 12. 5. By the end of September each year, Gr 1-12 teachers will have <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed the fall SWW (Gr 1-12) assessments. (When possible, a team approach to scoring these will be used) • Collected a variety of evidence to ascertain initial student writing levels (Assessment FOR/AS/OF learning).* 6. Teachers will develop specific strategies for each student by mid-November each year after: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers review the Fall DART and SWW data, along with other available data to assess writing levels (ex. running records) • Teachers determine where students place on the 	<p>EVIDENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment and Monitoring • K-5: Early Development Indicator (EDI, past results only) • K-5: Early Years Evaluation (EYE, Fall and Spring assessments) • K-5: Boehm Test (Fall and Spring) • SWW (Fall and Spring Gr 1-12) • FSAs/YATs, BCP results • BC writing performance standards (DART, SWW) • 6+1 Traits of Writing standards • Writing continuum used and on display in the classrooms. Familiar to students • Less disparity will be found between students' reading and writing levels • Classroom formative and summative assessments including: Portfolios, Journals, daily writing, current report card results, student interviews, peer assessments, student work samples, running records, visual displays of progress • parent and student conversations • notes from staff collaboration time/PLC meetings <p>RESOURCES NEEDED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized resource rooms (in progress) • Writing continuum (have K-7, need 8-12) • Yukon Education In-service and YTA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom teachers • Learning Assistance Teacher • Principal • Paraprofessional educators • Yukon Education staff • YTA (funding for workshops) • Mentor teachers • Workshop presenters • Child Development Centre • Library staff • Parents & community members

<p>writing continuum or other related benchmark</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers ensure that students know where they place on the writing continuum/benchmark and understand what they have to do to get to the next level • Teachers determine whether a student needs to be on a learning plan/IEP and whether the student needs testing or targeted interventions <p>7. Teachers will create systems for their classes to enable tracking of writing levels by students and teacher</p> <p>8. Teachers will aim to meet once a month for collaboration time on the topic of building and improving literacy, specifically with a focus on writing.</p> <p>9. By the middle of each May, K-12 teachers will have completed the spring SWW (Gr 1-12) assessments, in addition to collecting classroom evidence to ascertain student writing gains over the year (Assessment OF learning).</p> <p>10. By the end of each May, PLC groups will have met to discuss the DART and SWW results and other evidence to determine whether we have been effective in meeting our writing goals for students and if not, to determine whether additional strategies need to be put in place to address shortcomings.</p>	<p>funded PD funds and days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor teachers and imported experts • PLC and internal PD/collaboration time and materials • Tumble books, library books, Internet and other Dept. Resources to assist with inspiration for the writing process • DART resource materials 	
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Goal #2: Improve student performance in mathematical problem-solving and creative thinking

Objectives: Teachers will

- **Use data from YATs, BCPs, numeracy nets and other sources to inform math lesson planning**
- **Train to use a variety of mathematical assessment tools to aid in student assessment and lesson planning**
- **Engage in PD and collaboration to determine how best to improve student numeracy attainment**

Rationale:

Year to year analysis of student numeracy achievements (based on data from YATs, BCPs, teachers' professional judgement, in-house numeracy assessment tools, etc.) has indicated that our students have the most difficulty with the creative problem-solving strand of the math curricula. Research supports that our students will be more likely to achieve mathematical performance gains with a coordinated teacher focus on using greater assessment evidence to inform and adjust planning for numeracy instruction. Furthermore, students will benefit when teachers engage in quality professional development and collaboration targeting numeracy improvement initiatives – especially those geared towards the teaching of creative-thinking and problem-solving approaches.

Central Questions Guiding Our Actions:

- **What is best practice for teaching problem-solving and creative thinking?**
- **What in-house methodology / resources should be shared? How should we share?**
- **How can teachers use the Numeracy Nets program to aid planning and assessment?**
- **For teachers who want to implement new mathematical assessment tools (ex. Numeracy Nets)**
 - ➔ **How do they access training?**
 - ➔ **How will the assessment be done and by whom?**
 - ➔ **How can they use the information to inform their planning?**

Actions: Strategies/Interventions	Evidence and Resources	Person(s) Responsible
<p>1. By June 2016, teacher PLC groups will meet for math sessions to address the following inquiry questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to give more time towards problem solving and encouraging creativity in math (ex. Destination Imagination style activities, project-based and inquiry-based approaches) • How can we ensure that common language for the major mathematical strands are used – ex. terminology (corner vs. vertex, add vs. plus) • Which skills do students generally struggle to gain/improve upon the most and share successful strategies. • How can we promote and celebrate math in the school and community • How can we connect mathematical ideas across curricula and to real life? • Which methodology, tips, resources, approaches have been successful • What teachers need the most amount of help with and how they can be supported in obtaining their goals • What math manipulatives and other resources are needed • How are numeracy nets being used in each math classroom <p>2. Each year all teachers will engage in at least 1 PD session on building numeracy skills or assessing numeracy skills if available.</p> <p>3. By June 2016 teachers will have been given the opportunity to use collaboration time to visit the math classroom of other teachers to help to standardize some of the systems and approaches used class to class.</p> <p>4. By the end of each year, elementary teachers will have been given the opportunity to do (or have done) a Numeracy Net assessment on targeted and/or struggling students.</p> <p>5. By Fall 2015, the LAT and high school math teacher will collaborate to implement testing to determine mathematical skill learning gaps in targeted high school students.</p>	<p>EVIDENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardized test results (BCP, YATS/FSA, etc.) • Numeracy Net or other math assessment tools • Teacher assessment records • Student engagement (time on task) • Wall displays of learning • Celebration of math events • PLC meeting notes • Report cards • Formative assessment observations • IEP/SLP math interventions <p>RESOURCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbooks/workbooks • Manipulatives • Numeracy Net assessment materials and training • Collaboration time • PLC time • Curricula • Math teaching resource books • Math consultants • School laptops and Mac computers • Online access to the blended math learning programs for Gr 9-12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal • classroom teachers/ Para-professional educators • SBT members • School Council • Parents • Students

Goal #3: Improve the quality of the DVG Science Program

Objectives: Teachers will collaborate to

- **obtain a more comprehensive set of in-house science resource materials**
- **share best practice science teaching approaches**
- **create a science program that has an emphasis on experiential, hands-on, inquiry activities - particularly at the elementary (K-7) grade levels**

Rationale:

The study and processes of science lead to enormous brain growth for students—particularly when it comes to developing skills for creativity, innovation, collaboration and logical/rational reasoning. Through practicing science, students gain the opportunity to test their theories about how the world works. They get to dream big, build cool stuff, and communicate their findings to others. Science is an essential curricular link between the logical and practical aspects of applied mathematics and the expressing/feeling skills developed in the humanities.

Science has been under attack more and more over the past few years—with people talking about “not believing in science”, as if collecting evidence about the world in a systematic way and working to solve problems based on evidence is some kind of religion to be believed in. We at DVG celebrate our student’s exploration of the natural world and its laws. By putting science in our growth plan, we are allowing ourselves to do an internal audit of this program – prioritizing the gaining of needed science resources and teacher training so we can be confident in offering a high quality program. We hope that our focus on raising the profile of science within our school will help our students become the rational thinkers, creators, and problem solvers Yukon needs them to be in the years to come.

Central Questions Guiding Our Actions:

- **Resources: What resources are needed the most? What will our budget allow? Where can we get them?**
- **Time: When can we meet and what are our time priorities when we do meet regarding science?**
- **How do teachers build a quality program without textbooks for the K-Grade 3 science programs?**
- **What PD (internal/external) can we access?**

Actions: Strategies/Interventions	Evidence and Resources	Person(s) Responsible
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By June 16, 2015, teachers will meet in PLC groups and at staff meetings at least three times to discuss/plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should be improved about our current science programs? • What in house resources are we lacking → and how to get needed resources (this will be a long term project as these materials only exist piecemeal in the Yukon for several science curricula) • A priority list of materials/resources to purchase by February 12, 2016 • Will we participate in a Science Fair this year? • What extra-curricular science-themed offerings can we run? 2. Collaboration and class time will be provided so that elementary teachers can collaborate with the science specialist teacher(s) and/or industrial education teacher(s) at DVG (A. Magon, M. Magon, F. de Jong) as often as needed to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get ideas for experiential, hands-on science activities • get new ideas for how to approach the topic • arrange for one of them to possibly do guest teaching in their class • learn about additional science resource material available that they might not have known about 3. Grade 3-12 students will have the option of participating in the science and engineering focussed Destination Imagination (competitive team this year) over the 2015-2016 school year 4. DVG science students will host a demonstration of learning event for parents and community to highlight their explorations in the realm of science (February, 2016). 5. Student delegates will be invited to visit the Whitehorse Science Fair as DVG Student Reporters. 6. Teachers will be on the lookout for members of the community or others who could come and do activities or be a guest speaker on scientific topics. (Ex. Yukon Association of Engineers sends an engineer each year to visit middle and high school classes) 	<p>EVIDENCE of SUCCESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student engagement (time on task) • Displays of learning • science events • PLC meeting notes • Formative assessment observations • Improved Science 10 BCP scores down the line • Improved readiness for the competency based science curriculum - implemented in 2017 (teachers and students) <p>RESOURCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbooks/workbooks • Science equipment and consumables • Collaboration time • PLC time • Curricula • science teaching resource books • School laptops and Mac computers • Online access to the blended science learning programs for Gr 8-12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal • classroom teachers/ Para-professional educators • Destination Imagination: Laurie Berglund • Science Clubs: Laurie Berglund, Vicki Fitzpatrick • Science Fair (Whitehorse): Laurie Berglund • Science Fair (DVG): Mario Magon, Steve Marsh, Laurie Berglund, Vicki Fitzpatrick • Science supply ordering: Roxine Cull, Elementary and Middle/High PLC teachers • Students

Ongoing and New Priorities:

#1 Attendance Initiative: DVG Morning School Bus

Rationale:

Lateness has become an increasing problem over the past few years at DVG. Other students, particularly young ones, have not always been able to come to school when their parents are not able to walk or drive them. Several parents have commented on how it can take a long time for some of our youngest students to walk from certain areas of town. Other parents have expressed concern about having to warm up their vehicles for half an hour in the morning to drive their students 3 minutes down the road because of the cold. A parent survey on whether a morning bus pilot program would be useful indicated great interest. After School Council and staff discussions on this topic and with Superintendent approval, we will pilot a morning school bus project for the remainder of this year. This program will start in February, 2016.

Inquiry Questions

The following questions will drive our evaluation of this pilot program and help us determine whether it will continue in the 2016-2017 school year:

- How many students are taking this bus each week? (Bus drivers to tally)
- Can we gain access to more funding to keep this programming going? (\$4000/year)
- What bus route serves our community best? (Considering Upper Bench → school, then Lower Bench → school)
- How will the bus stops be marked in the community? (previous bus stop signs from 20 years ago can be moved to the new locations)
- Are the procedures that we have put in place to deal with contingencies working and appropriate? (Ex. Bus doesn't start, driver sleeps in, driver is sick, too cold for bus pick up, etc.)

#2 Continue to focus on our professional learning community (PLC) groups

Rationale:

Our PLC groups form the core of how staff members work on SGP initiatives. These groups meet once a month, typically in primary/intermediate and middle/secondary teacher groupings. They are critical to moving forward with accountability and evidence.

Inquiry Questions

The following inquiry questions guide our use of PLCs:

- Which areas of the growth plan should be tackled at each meeting?
- Who will lead the PLC groups? Who sets the agendas?
- How are we collecting evidence for whether our initiatives are successful?
- What resources are needed to proceed?

#3 First Nations Programming Initiatives: Access more YFN cultural programming

Rationale:

Del Van Gorder School is the only school in rural Yukon that is not connected to a First Nation Council, despite 30% of our students being of First Nations ancestry (the majority of whom are Dena-Kaska). It is the only school in all Yukon to not have a YFN language and culture teacher. Over the years, without having access to in-school YFN expertise, DVG staff members have brought in YFN guest artists and speakers to hold workshops to give students better access to YFN traditional knowledge and art forms. However, this sporadic cultural programming is not the same as embedding First Nation's perspectives throughout, which is required by the new Yukon curriculum. Because of our need, funding was approved this year to staff a 0.44 FTE Kaska and language teacher position at DVG, which went unfilled, despite efforts to find a suitable candidate. It is anticipated that the school will have a Kaska teacher for the 2016-2017 school year.

Inquiry Questions

In light of the difficulty providing consistent and ongoing YFN cultural and language programming at DVG, the following inquiry questions are guiding our actions:

- How can we work more closely to establish better relationships with the Dena-Kaska Council in Ross River and also the Ross River School to access valuable Kaska programs, materials, and YFN cultural leaders?
- Who are the individuals we can get to come into the school with YFN traditional knowledge and Kaska language skills?
- How can our teachers gain training so they can supplement their curricula with First Nations perspectives? Which teachers need this the most? Do we have staff members who are able to provide YFN traditional knowledge and perspectives in house?
- How do we prepare teachers to work with a Kaska teacher next year so that Kaska language and culture are embedded throughout the curriculum?
- How do we help the new Kaska teacher prepare for his/her role?

Part 4: Monitor and Adjust

The first draft of the 2015-2016 SGP was written by the Principal in January 2016 and was based on staff feedback and the desires of the 2014-2015 SGP team for a 3 year growth plan (to be updated yearly).

Tentative dates for adjustments to the plan:

- Draft 1 of the updated 2015-2016 Growth Plan mailed out to SGP members for commentary and revision in late January 2016 → feedback excepted electronically and plan updated by Principal to Draft 2
- Draft 2 discussed at early March, 2016 SGP meeting and revised → Principal writes Draft 3
- Draft 3 discussed with staff at the March, 2016 staff meeting and revised → Principal writes Draft 4
- Draft 4 will be presented to the School Council by email for review and commentary at the April 2016 School Council meeting → Principal writes Draft 5.
- Draft 5 will be submitted for internal and external feedback by posting it on the school website in April, 2016 → Draft 6
- The “final draft” of the 2015-2016 School Growth Plan will be formally submitted to Yukon Education before May 2016.

The 2015-2016 School Growth Plan will remain a working document and will be regularly updated and kept posted on the school website. Continued feedback on the SGP will always be accepted and progress will be updated as necessary with the information at hand.

Communications Plan:

The document will be reviewed by committee at each of the stages described above. A link to the working document will be on the DVG School website and the monthly school newsletter will alert parents and students to its presence. The school newsletter (print and electronic) will also be used as the primary communication tool for the school community to be updated on progress with meeting our school objectives.

Appendix A: List of Abbreviations Used in this Report

BCP	British Columbia Provincial Exam (Grade 10 English & Math, Grade 11 Socials, Grade 12 English)
DART	District-wide Assessment of Reading Test (a standardized reading and writing test)
DVG	Del Van Gorder
ELL	English Language Learner
FSA	Foundation Skills Assessment – aka the YAT (see below)
FN/YFN	First Nation(s)/Yukon First Nation(s)
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
IRP	Integrated Resource Package (learning outcomes and resources for the course)
K	Kindergarten (K-4 is for students in their first year of K (3&4 year olds), K-5 is the 2 nd year of K)
LPI	Language Proficiency Index (a test of graduating students' English language fluency and literacy)
PLC	Professional Learning Community
Pro-D	Professional development
PD	Professional development
REM	Rural Experiential Model – a model that offers intensive 1-2 week long full day immersive programs
SBT	School Based Team (the mechanism through which the school addresses exceptional needs students)
SWW	School Wide Write (a standardized assessment of students' formal writing abilities)
YAT	Yukon Achievement Tests – BC standardized tests of literacy and numeracy for Gr 4 and Gr7 students
YSIS	Yukon Student Information System

Appendix B:

Recommendations From the 2014 School Review and 2014-2015 SGP Team Editorial Comments in Response

(Writing in **bold** are from the Review Team. [] brackets are used to denote the SGP team's editorial comments.)

Recommendations for moving forward:

- **Ensure that all staff are cognizant of the needs of high school students, and interact with them in age-appropriate ways that make them feel distinctive from elementary students** [The Review Team shared that this is a common concern for K-12 schools due to the broad age range and the changing methods for how teachers tend to interact with students over that age range. Teachers not used to interacting with students at the other end of the spectrum sometimes struggle in adjusting for age differences. High school students are particularly sensitive when they think they are being treated like younger children, even though staff members have strived to be respectful. We continually address this issue through collaboration and staff meeting discussions, in addition to speaking with our older students.]
- **Continue the very strong efforts made since the last review to create a culture at DVG as a welcoming school for all children and community members** [This continues to be a key focus at DVG. We make strong efforts to communicate what goes on at the school for parents and community (ex. Newsletters, emails, community newspaper, facebook messages, face to face interactions, having a staff member present in the boot room in the mornings to greet people, etc.)]
- **As suggested in the 2011 Review, continue to make progress in fostering a supportive learning culture that deploys creative ways to maximize student learning** [Most students at this school have music and woodworking in their regular timetables. Middle and high school students can choose from a broad elective array of courses. A focus on increasing creative problem solving skills is part of our numeracy and science goals.]
- **As the DVG staff's expertise and ability to offer more in terms of programs and activities continues to grow, continue to ensure that the knowledge and skills of community members are included in order to keep the strong community connection with the school** [All teachers ensure that they have at least one guest speaker from the community into their classes per year and at least one community-oriented field trip.]
- **Continue to seek ways to include Elders and other First Nations resource people from various communities (e.g. Carmacks and Ross River) in order to help all DVG students make connections to the land and further incorporate First Nations teachings at the school** [We have several cultural field trips to Ross River planned for 2015-2016. We also have begun to combine with Ross River and Carmacks to hold regional volleyball and basketball get together games. Last year we piloted the new Residential School course module for Socials 10 and utilized elders in Ross River to make this course more impactful. Each year we have YFN artists come into the school to do projects with our students. This year we worked to gain funding for a 0.44 FTE Kaska language and culture teacher, although this position is currently unfilled.]

- **Work with the Department of Education to build capacity at the school with respect to required training and certifications that would allow greater use of the outdoor education resources, as well as the wood shop at the school** [We hired a wood shop teacher and have begun offering wood shop courses last year for the first time in over 5 years. We have the Outdoor Education Consultants come out to the school to plan outdoor trips with students typically twice a year. We now have a teacher certified with the Wilderness First Aid course, Water Rescue course and the Canoe course so we can undertake a variety of journeys. We also now offer an elective rotation that includes drama, textiles, music, and foods classes for Grade 6-12 students.]
- **Continue the process of identifying materials to be removed from the school (as was done with the science lab) as a means of better organizing and utilizing space** [We have disassembled the school store that was an unused corner of the school and many staff have also been involved in tidying and organizing Room 3 – our materials store room.]
- **Dedicate frequent and sequential meeting times for staff to conduct PLC work in order to ensure that students and staff will benefit from this initiative. Each grade division should have an agenda that contributes to the school wide goals which could be monitored on a regular basis.** [PLC meetings happen every month and are a corner stone of our growth plan]
- **Identify what would constitute a profile/file for students and a process on how they would be used to inform planning and instruction for students as they progress through the grades. This process could be aligned in part to assist in the achievement of the school's growth planning goals** [We have discussed this as a staff and are working on it, beginning with compiling Boehm, SWW, DART, YAT, BCP, and other assessments in a file for a student that can be passed on with their cumulative file. We are also collecting larger cohort DART and SWW data (grouping into elementary and middle/high school) so we can have meaningful longitudinal studies → see Appendix D. We are also considering a form of literacy and numeracy portfolio related to our growth plan efforts.]
- **Continue to use a variety of data sources as a means of informing instruction, identifying needs (individual and group), developing robust programming, and celebrating successes at DVG** [We will! We are both a heart and data-driven school.]
- **As a school-wide initiative, develop a writing continuum that can be used by students to gain more-consistent results across all grades** [See Goal #1 for 2015-2016 DVG SGP]

Considerations for the Department of Education

- **Consider the allocation of administration time to a K-12 rural school such as DVG, given the large amount of organization that is required in order to be successful in such a context** [The Principal is only teaching 3.5 courses this year, which is fewer courses than last year.]

Recommended Resources available through Resource Services at the Department of Education

6 plus 1 Traits of Writing for Primary and Intermediate/Secondary

6 plus 1 Trait Crates for grades K-9

Reading Power and Non-Fiction Reading Power by Adrienne Gear (appropriate for all grades)

The Write Genre (Grades 7-9)

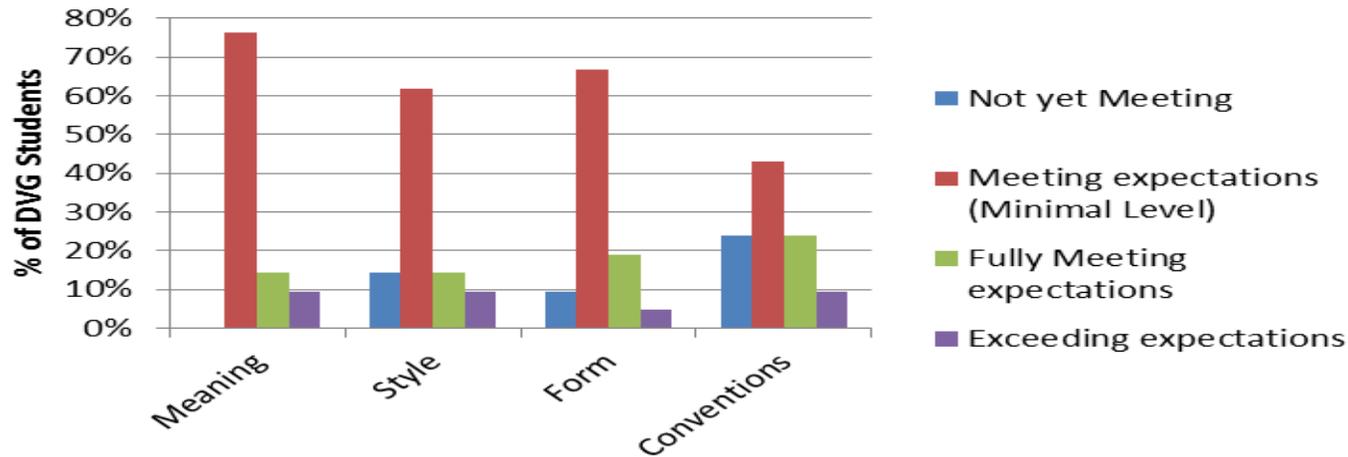
Daily Five (Organization of Literacy Centers) (appropriate for all grades)

Literature Circle collections of leveled books.

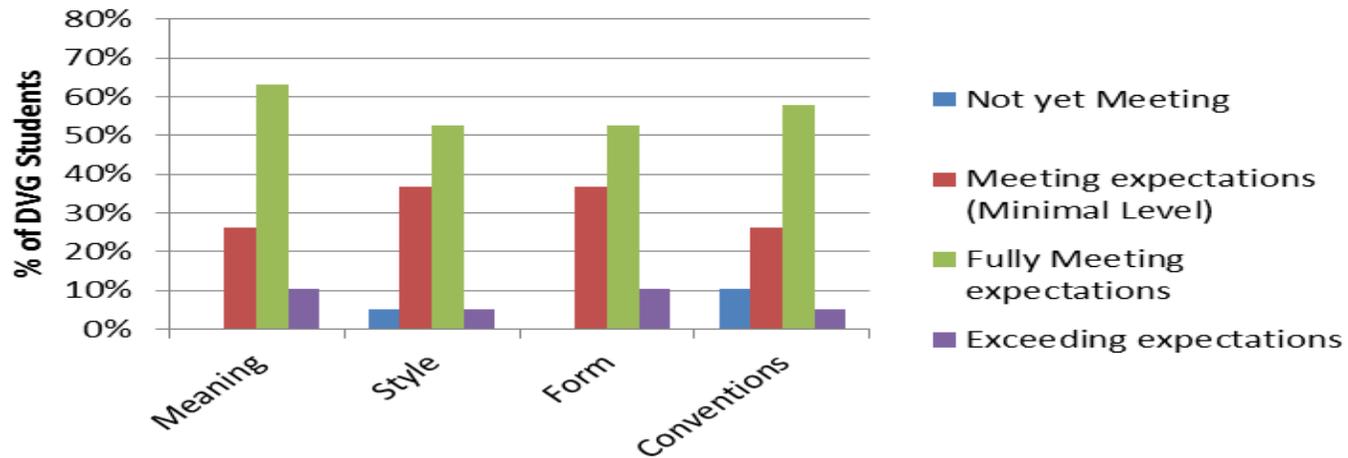
Appendix D

2012-2015 School Wide Write Data

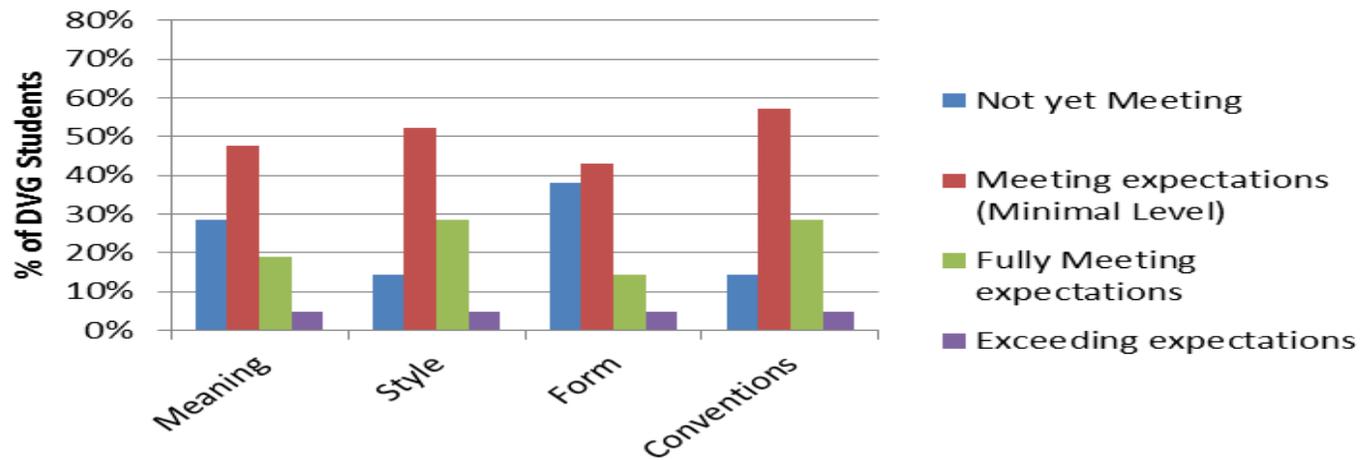
Gr 2-9 SWW Totals, September 2012



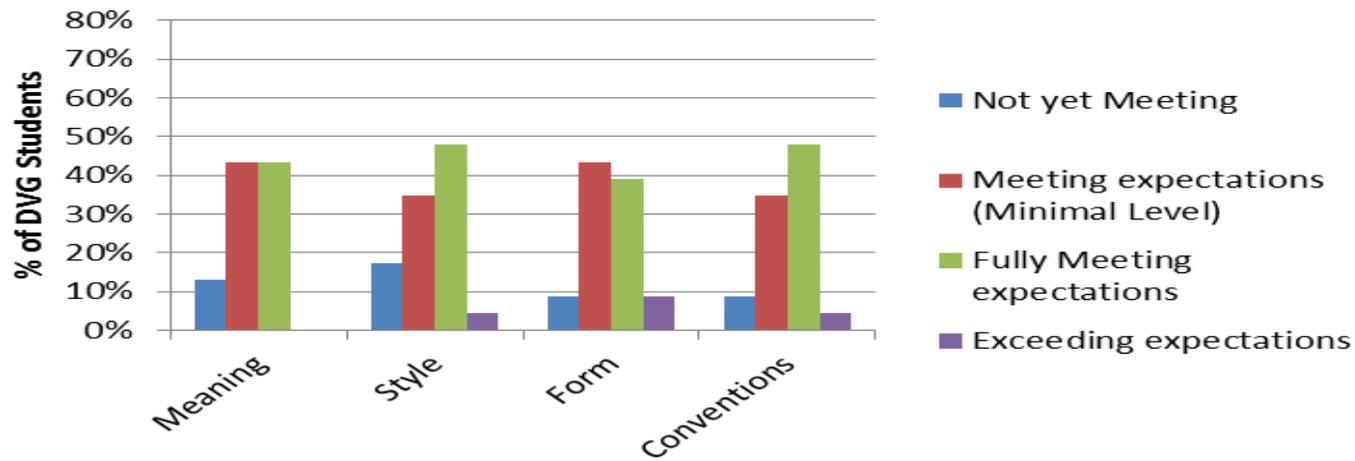
Gr 2-9 SWW Totals, May 2013



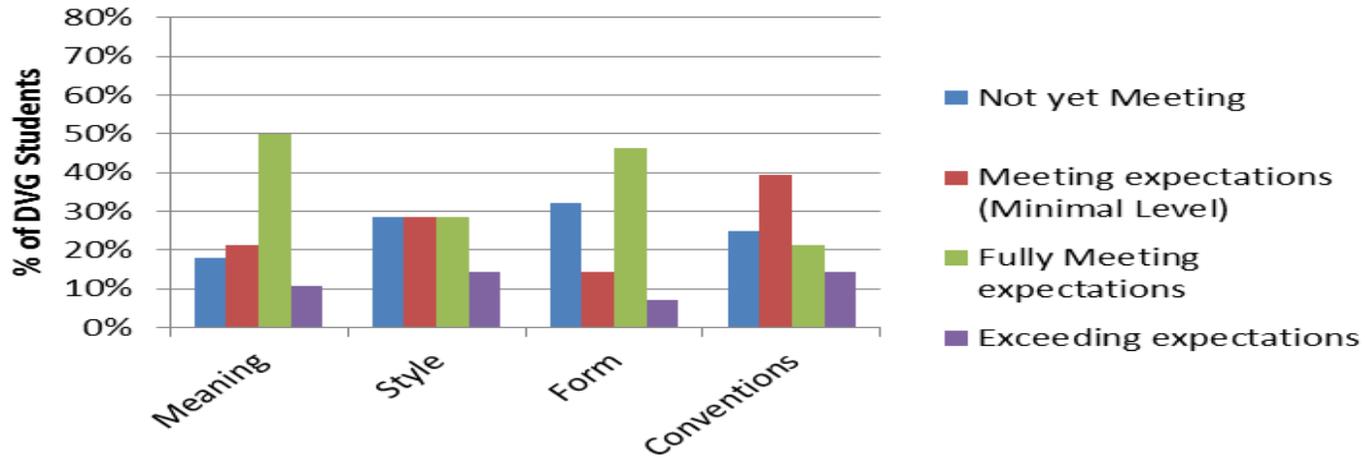
Gr 2-9 SWW Totals, Sept 2013



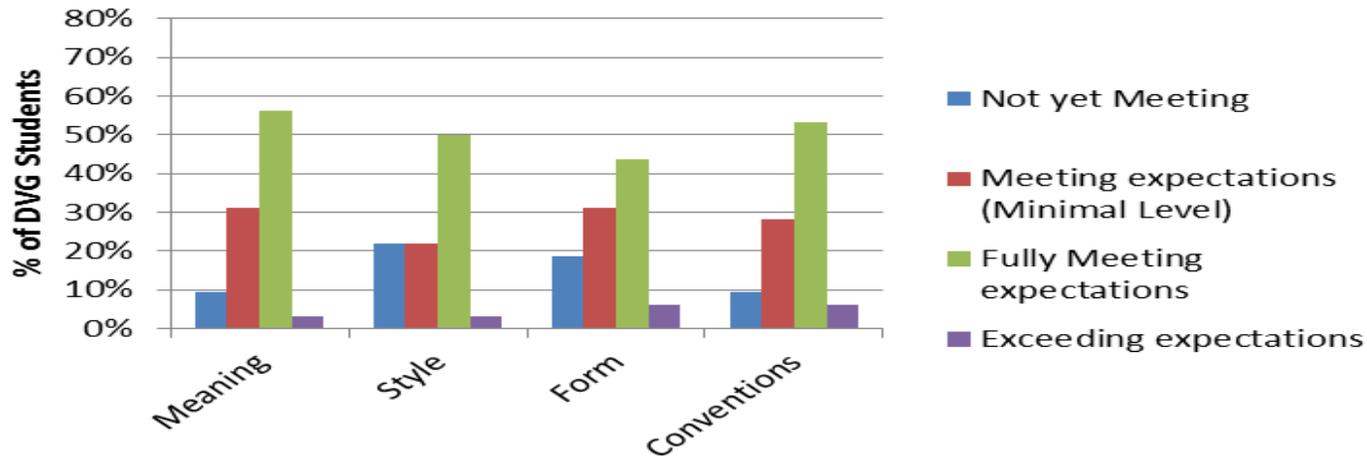
Gr 2-9 SWW Totals, May 2014



Gr 2-9 SWW Totals, Sept 2014



Gr 2-9 SWW Totals, May 2015



Gr 2-9 SWW Totals, Sept 2015

