

**NETWORKS OF INQUIRY AND INNOVATION
2011-2012**

**GEORGE M. DAWSON SECONDARY
#50 Haida Gwaii**

Leadership Team

English Department and School Leadership Team

Contacts

Derek Seifert – dseifert@sd50.bc.ca, David McLean – dmclean@sd50.bc.ca

School Context/Community Involvement

George M. Dawson has a population of approximately 100 students, 70% of whom are Haida. We are located in Masset at the northern tip of Graham Island, on beautiful Haida Gwaii. We are struggling with declining numbers, decreased funding, and a student body that struggles to see the relevance of academic pursuits. Our staff is a committed group focusing on making education culturally responsive while maintaining academic integrity.

School Inquiry and Action

School Question

Will a school wide write followed by a staff focus on the use of performance standards facilitate school wide responsibility for, and improvement of literacy?

Strategies

The school held a write where all students were required to plan and write in response to a writing prompt chosen by staff. At a Professional Learning day following the write staff used grade appropriate quick scales to grade and discuss grading of sample writes. Two afternoons were provided for four interested staff members to participate in marking the writes and establishing data for each grade in the school. Results will be shared with staff and accompanied by conversations and plans to increase the number of students who are meeting expectations and generally addressing the writing needs of our students. Provincial exam writing response data has also been collected to help with our planning moving forward.

School Findings

Numbers from last year are the grade 9's only

| | NY | A | M | E |
|-------------|----|----|----|---|
| Fall 2010 | 10 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Spring 2011 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 1 |
| Spring 2012 | 24 | 32 | 20 | 0 |

School Plans for 2012-2013

We intend to do two school wide writes next year, one in the fall, one in the spring. Data from this year's write will be shared with staff and goal setting for next year will be discussed as a group. Staff meetings and a literacy team will provide opportunities to help members of staff address literacy concerns. Comparing the results from this year and next year will help us to determine what is working and what needs more work.

Reflections, Advice

The sooner you can make a school wide write a part of your yearly routine the better. In the past we have lacked a unified school approach with the English department as the ones responsible for literacy. A school wide write with data shared and discussed helps make literacy everyone's responsibility.