

What We Heard

About This Report

All responses from the online and partner engagement have been included in this report. The responses were themed, and responses prepared. All the input was valued and influenced the development of our 2023-2024 School Success Plan that will be finalized and posted in September.

In reading through the responses, it became apparent that the school could improve on communicating what is taking place within the school. This report will serve as a communication avenue to share School practices and activities in order to provide the community with a better understanding of what is taking place at the school to address the needs of our students and families.

Themes Arising from the Responses

Inclusive practices

At GSS we continue to grow in our understanding of inclusive practices. Our focus within the last strategic cycle was to improve our practice around Universal Design for Learning (UDL). The underpinnings of this model focus on student engagement, representation and expression of learning. We have a strong belief that students need to be engaged in their learning and that by providing multiple means of representation and expression, students are able to understand and show their learning in a way that is best suited to them. By providing various opportunities for students to express their learning, teachers are able to assess students' understanding in a variety of ways. Given this, you will notice that as a school, we do not solely rely on test taking as evidence of student learning and students are being engaged in a variety of ways to demonstrate what they know. Give this you will probably have noticed that we have moved away from having a Final Exam break as many courses are moving away from final exams as the means for summative assessments.

Community Connections

It was shared in the feedback that it is important to create strong community connections by providing opportunities for our students to be active within the community, but also for the community to play an active role in the learning taking place within the school. We have been working to provide students opportunities to engage and learning from the community since the restrictions from COVID have been lifted. This year students have had a variety of guests speakers from the community come into the classrooms, such as local business owners, Okanagan Regional Library staff, Interior Health staff, the Youth Centre coordinators and Elders. We have continued to offer important learning around safe partying, cyber bullying, and consent with our Donuts and Diddams program with our RCMP liaison officer. Other opportunities included field trips to court house, the Grade 8 ROCK Solid Orientation that introduces the Grade 8s to the adults who they may work with in various community agencies and a French film screening for our French Immersion students at the Golden Theatre. Lastly, we have some students who elected to take a Work Experience course that connects them with community partners within the workforce to help provide more experience in the workforce for students. Next year to

continue to grow in this area, our fourth Priority, Stewardship for the Future, is looking at how to incorporate service-learning projects in the community into courses in a meaningful way.

Important Learning

It was brought forth that there needs to be education around life skills and opportunities for learning in the trades. For next year we are planning to grow our Youth Train in Trades program by creating more awareness of this opportunity and by working with community partners to offer opportunities for students to learn in the trades through the mentorship of the trades people in Golden. When it comes to providing more learning within the school on budgeting and financial awareness and life skills, these are topics that are addressed in Careers 8, 9, Career Life Education 10 and Career Life Connections 12 as well as in Math 8, 9, 10 and Foundations Math 11 and Workplace Math 10 and 11.

Extra-Curricular Activities & Field Trips

This year there were many opportunities for students to participate in Field Trips and we hope to be able to continue to provide more opportunities for this in the coming year. Students in Grade 8 and 9 Drama were able to attend a performance in Calgary and participate in acting classes put on by a professional. Our Band program participated in the Kiwanis Music Festival in Kelowna and our Career Life Education 10 classes went to Calgary for tours of various Post-Secondary Institutions. When it comes to athletics, we had various sports teams travelling for tournaments and competitions throughout the province. Within the community, our Grade 9 Science class participated in Wildsight's Know Your Watershed program, as well as the Physical Education classes, Lifestyle Recreation and Outdoor Education classes participated in the Ski program at Kicking Horse Mountain Resort and the Cross-Country Ski programming at the Dawn Mountain Nordic Centre. We continue to promote place-based learning opportunities and ways to authentically engage students through experiential learning.

Mental Health and Wellness

Mental Health and Wellness continues to be a top priority going forward. Our GSS Belonging Survey shared with us that though students generally feel that they have good relationships to the adults in the building, we have noted that the students who are not feeling a sense of belonging at school are the same students who do not have good peer-to-peer relationships and are victims of bullying or discrimination. This has led us to our goal for our first Priority of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Next year we will be targeting social emotional learning activities within our Homeroom classes to build a sense of understanding and belonging amongst students. We will continue to engage students to provide feedback as we work on ways to build stronger relationships and empathy amongst students. Another initiative that has been quite successful this year was the implementation of the Health Hub at GSS. This has helped eliminate barriers for students to access health professionals within the community. Once a week, students are able to either book appointments or drop into the Health Hub where they have access to doctors and community counsellors.

Student Financial Supports

We believe at Golden Secondary School that all students should have opportunities to participate equitably in all aspects of school life. When it comes to supports in learning, nutrition, participation in school activities, we strive to meet the needs of students so that finances never inhibit a student's ability to participate fully at school. The school will provide financial aid for students to participate in extra-curricular activities within the school on a need basis. We support families in accessing funds through Kids' Sport to help cover costs of athletic fees. We have been providing morning snacks for all students before school starts and provide snacks and lunches for those in need. In the coming year, we will be growing our Food programs at the school through the Ministry's Feeding Futures fund.

Public Engagement Question 1:

What are some creative suggestions for things we can do in our school to continue to improve?

- Allowing kids to choose between group projects and tests for marks.
- Healthier lunch options at the concession, along with a monthly or weekly ordering system
- Organize more events that invite and involve community service providers and members into the school to meet students and staff.
- Make sure all students have equal opportunity. Enhance extra-curricular activities to ensure students are receiving as many different activity options.
- More food options for the kids. Full suspension for students who vandalize school property - the kids not vandalizing have had to deal with closed bathrooms, chaos at school. Seems like these kids should not be allowed to continue at school if they have no respect for others - a small minority of students have taken total control of the school and have inconvenienced the rest of the students and staff and custodians. 4-day school week once a month. More access to mental health counsellors. Job action should include a staff member from the LGBTQ+ community.
- Perhaps more interest in the trades. I understand there are competitions that students can compete with other districts that are geared towards trades. Carpentry, cooking and welding for example. Allowing students to have a goal and life plan to be the best of the best in the Kootenay's, Province and Country.
- Parent-Teacher communication
- Some kind of recycling program.
- My high school always played music in the mornings before announcements and classes started.
- More funding to support field trips so teachers can take their students into the community and area to explore the place they call home and connect it to the curriculum (place-based learning). Perhaps start an endowment fund to grow money that can be used for such field trips.

Public Engagement Question 2:

What are some examples of key things you appreciate, or think are working well about our schools?

- Awards ceremony is great. It's good to see the variety of awards, for a variety of skills, be handed out.
- Extra-curricular sports teams are great. Would love to see more communication from the school/coaches about practice times, games, tournaments, etc.

- The health hub, website and the student portals.
- Diversity and inclusion.
- Front office staff are amazing! Most students seem happy.
- The teaching staff is lovely and caring towards students.
- The things that are working well in the school are: A friendly and helpful environment. Helpful and supportive teachers. Overall teaching system.
- Encouragement to participate in extracurricular activities like sports teams and band.
- I think it's cool how there are open spaces for different things, like Angie's room.
- Field trip to Dawn Mountain for Nordic skiing.

Public Engagement Questions 3:

What are some examples of things you think our students should be able to experience or accomplish to enhance their learning, that they currently do not have access to?

- I think the course selection is already great, I would maybe like to see more budgeting, cost of living (thinking of food costs and rent) 'real life skills'.
- A textiles/sewing class.
- Maybe more collaboration with local industry and job awareness. More urban field trips or collaboration with – universities, colleges, IT projects with companies, museums, theater, etc.,. Essentially rounding out the rural strengths with the things that students don't typically get exposure to.
- Making mistakes and learning from them. Being taught coping mechanisms if/when bullied online or in person. Access to tools to help with overcoming adversity.
- A free pass to the new pool facility! A broader Arts program. A school Principal that doesn't take everything so personally.
- More electives that are geared for pre- university employment. Restaurants and the public services sector. Food safe, serving it right, job placement experience, can be credited for helping cook hot lunches.
- Everything is quite accessible for everyone.
- More time in the community or with community members
- I'm not sure.
- Have a ski track set in the school yard and connect it to the municipal campground and trails in the area using student leadership and shop students who fix snowmobiles for track setting. The school has ski equipment but no ski tracks/trails.