

# report

## to the community



George Waters Middle School

2019-2020



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*The Middle Years (Gr. 6 -8) provides a stimulating and supportive learning environment where high expectations, collaboration and continual learning are promoted. Early adolescents have unique emotional, social and developmental characteristics. Staffing, curricula and programming in middle schools are focused on meeting these needs. The programs in the Middle Years build on the programming in the Early Years.*

### Last Year's School Accomplishments (2018-2019)

Using our provincial and divisional and school data our school has been able to respond by implementing a balanced school day and whole school Numeracy and Literacy learning block.

As a team through continuous improvement we have been able to build a database of resources that teachers can use to teach basic Numeracy and Literacy foundational concepts.

Through these learning blocks we have created an opportunity for students to continue to expose students to a variety of grade level texts and they were able to demonstrate comprehension of these texts. Students also had the opportunity to compose their own writings from various points of view. Student worked through a variety of thinking strategies to help both their reading and writing skills.

Students were challenged in the area of problem solving and mental math. Various math strategies were used to teach a variety of concepts, with the help from divisional coaches to further increase student engagement.

By establishing essential skills in the previous school year we have been able to adapt our teaching practices to reflect the needs and learning gaps of our students. Our goals will continue to keep our students organized and grounded in the necessary skill sets that they require to help them transition

#### **Our Mission Statement**

George Waters Middle School is devoted to academic excellence, respect for individual rights and differences as well as to the development of individual strengths.

#### **School Profile**

Number of teachers: 24

Number of students: 320

Grade levels: 6-8

#### **School Highlights**

- Arts Education (Art, Band, Choral, Computer Art, Drama, Dance)
- C.A.R.E. (Celebrating and Recognizing Excellence) Assemblies held monthly
- Comprehensive Growth Portfolio completed by all students
- Destination Imagination
- Full service cafeteria and lunch program
- St. James Hockey Academy
- Winnipeg Jets True North Foundation Hockey Academy
- Laptops available for students
- Breakfast/Lunch Program
- Active Parent Council
- PDHS (Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students)
- Practical Arts (Home Economics, Woodworking)
- Spring Camps for all grades

#### **Extra-curricular Activities**

Large variety of activities and opportunities:

- A wide range of extra-curricular Athletics (Volleyball, Basketball, Track and Field, Cross Country, Flag Rugby/Football, Ultimate, Badminton and more) for all grades

from one grade to another. The goals created in the following year will continue to be data driven and will be adjusted as needed based on student performance and engagement.

## A Quick Snapshot of the Classroom

**English Language Arts:** Teachers at George Waters use a variety of interesting lessons to teach kids about the fundamentals of communication: reading, writing, speaking, representing, listening, and viewing. With a focus on literacy development, we give students the opportunity to read, write, and create in a collaborative setting. We believe in giving students choices in what they read as it increases engagement and learning. This leads to engaging class projects and assessments.

**Numeracy Skills:** Each school day students spend 20 minutes of focused Numeracy time outside that allotted in our Mathematics Program. This program is unique to George Waters Middle School and focuses on specific student needs in the area of Mental Math and Problem Solving. This school wide Numeracy program is delivered by all teachers to all students.

**Literacy Skills:** Each school day students spend 20 minutes of focused Literacy time outside that allotted in our Language Arts Program. This program is unique to George Waters Middle School and focuses on specific student needs in the area of Reading, Writing, and Critical Thinking skills. This school wide Literacy program is delivered by all teachers to all students.

**Mathematics:** Our math department is currently developing a mental math program for grade 7's that is in line with the provincial assessment and will proceed with grade 6 and 8 once the first one is completed. Teachers will be exploring the problem-solving bank of questions collated by the division. These will be used to assist students to see a variety of types of problems, including many problems used in the 5 Practice professional development that many staff have participated in. Staff continue to collaborate to provide best practices in instruction and common assessments.

**Science:** Students continue to develop the skills and attitudes of the design process that lead to a broader understanding of technological problem solving. Students are going to use technology and scientific inquiry to address questions about the world when doing research projects. Students will do hands-on labs, experiments and activities as well as field trips to increase engagement. This year we are focused on finding opportunities to take our learning outside and explore the environment surrounding our school.

**French:** Teachers will be engaging students by creating lessons centered around themes and topics that are meaningful to the students. These themes will be used to promote conversation amongst students so they may utilize, practice and reinforce their French speaking and listening skills.

**Social Studies:** Social Studies teachers teach students about the world and its people from a geographical and historical perspective. The focus is on developing student understanding of the interconnection between people and places at local, national, and international levels.

**Physical Education:** Students in physical education classes at George Waters are actively engaged in a wide range of activities designed to develop an appreciation for regular physical activity. Students are given opportunities to apply skills in a variety of team and individual pursuits. Time is also dedicated to working with our students to understand healthy relationships and healthy lifestyle practices.

**Practical Arts:** Students at George Waters are enjoying participating in the many Destination Imagination instant challenges. Teams will be entered in regional competitions to represent our school. They are also practicing their

- Student Leadership Group
- Daily Intramurals at lunch
- Choir and Jazz Band
- Book Club
- Improv Club
- Public Speaking Club
- Dance Club
- Homework Club
- Science Club
- Chess Club
- Pokemon Club
- And more...

teamwork and creativity while building structures using common materials, creating catapults and building airplanes from foam.

## **Planning & Goal Setting**

School goals are created using the Divisional Strategic Plan as the guideline ([www.sjsd.net/planning](http://www.sjsd.net/planning)). The goal setting process begins in early Spring and includes input from students, teachers, parents and the community. Goals are developed around the needs and direction of the various departments with student progress and achievement and our mission and vision statement as our focus. We at George Waters Middle School believe that our goals are a living document that can be seen in all of our classrooms and are belief statements that encompass our learning environment.

### **This Year's School Goals and Priorities (2019-2020)**

#### Literacy

All teachers are language teachers. All teachers will be incorporating literacy time under common monthly themes throughout the year. This time will follow the same structure on a weekly basis and be led by teachers. As the year progresses our goal is to create student capacity to take on ownership of their literacy development (ex. Read aloud, free writes, etc). Students will have portfolios to collect artifacts that will be used in conferencing with their Language Arts teacher. GWMS will collect assessments several times throughout the year to inform both teachers and students on the progress achieved.

#### Numeracy

GWMS will work towards improving student problem solving and mental math strategies. Teachers will use common benchmarks to assess student progress. Numeracy will be embedded as a part of the school culture. Daily dedicated numeracy time will occur where teachers provide guided instruction to teach basic concepts and skills in the area of numeracy to all students. These sessions will be focused on skills including mental math, number talks, problem solving. Students will have portfolios to collect artifacts that will be used in conferencing with their Math teachers. GWMS will collect assessments several times throughout the year to inform both teachers and students on the progress achieved.

#### Skill Sets/Exemplars

Teachers will continue to collaborate and establish the skills sets and exemplar work that reflect each grade level's set of student expectations. Teachers will build on common assessments so that every teacher has an understanding of what the expected learning outcomes for their students and a greater understanding of the curriculum. Students will develop grade and subject specific portfolios to help inform teachers and their learning progression. The school will provide opportunities to showcase student learning throughout the year.

Teachers and students will need to be explicit and answer the following questions:

- Why are we learning?
- What are we learning?
- How do we know we are learning?

Ultimately, the goal will be precision in the use of our tools and process to create rigor