

WILDways High School

BUSINESS PLAN



Acknowledgments

Wells Destination School Society would like to express how grateful we are to live, learn, and work on the shared unceded Traditional Territories of Lhtako, Nazko, Lhoosk'uz, Ulkatcho, ?Esdilagh, Xatśúll, Simpcw, and Lheidli T'enneh First Nations.

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Contact Details:

Wells Destination School Society
P.O. Box 12, Wells, BC, V0K 2R0
wellsdestinationschool@gmail.com

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1 About This Document

This business plan, developed by the Wells Destination School Society (WDSS), provides the society, authorities, regulators, partners, sponsors, and supporters with a roadmap for the establishment of a new high school in the community of Wells, British Columbia, Canada. The school is scheduled to open in September 2024.

This business plan includes the following information required by the Ministry of Education and Child Care.¹

- Background
- Business Case Analysis
- School Plan
- Marketing & Student Recruitment
- Human Resources Plan
- Financial Plan (or “Considerations”)

Some of the information in this plan is still in development; therefore, this plan is iterative and details about the project (i.e., opening a new high school), including operations, curriculum, marketing, and facilities, may change over time. This plan will continue to be updated to reflect changes.

The society’s work is supported by research conducted by Masters’ student, Christena L. McHarg (2023). McHarg’s thesis explores a grass-roots approach to establishing a destination high school in Wells. Findings from her work is reflected in this business plan and continues to inform the society’s approach and priorities. The thesis is available online at <https://arcabc.ca/islandora/object/unbc%3A59427>.

¹<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/independent-schools/independent-school-interview-checklist.pdf>



2 Background

Wells is a small mining and tourist town in the Cariboo District of central British Columbia, located on BC Highway 26, 74 km from Quesnel and 8 km before the highway's terminus at Barkerville¹. Wells is situated in School District 28 Quesnel, which serves approximately 3,000 students including the Wells Elementary School.

Situated at 1,200 metres elevation, Wells is a charming mountain town with a rich history of forestry, arts, recreation, and mining. The town is also the gateway community to Barkerville Historic Town and Park (located 10 minutes southeast of Wells) and Bowron Lake Provincial Park (25 minutes northeast).

Wells has a year-round population of approximately 218 residents that generally doubles in summer with artisans, second-home owners, and seasonal employees. Within a 40 km radius of the town centre, the population is approximately 300. The closest major urban centres are Quesnel (one-hour drive west) and Prince George (2.5-hour drive northwest).

Wells is more than just gold. Wells is history, art & adventure.

~ District of Wells



Wells is a unique mountain town, offering a rich history and culture of art, music, forestry, mining, and outdoor recreation.

Tourism

Between May and September, Wells sees more than 60,000 tourists pass through on their way to Barkerville Historic Town and Park. Many visitors and school groups stay or camp overnight in Wells, exploring its arts and recreation offerings. During the summer, visitors enjoy galleries and live performances as part of their visit to the area. In winter, visitors to Wells enjoy its world-class cross-country ski trails, snowmobiling, alpine skiing at nearby Troll Mountain Ski Resort, and artistic and study retreats.

Mining

Originally a company town, Wells was managed by Cariboo Gold Quartz Mine. At its peak in the 1930s, the town of Wells supported 4,500 people. However, in the early 1960s, as mineral

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wells,_British_Columbia

deposits were depleted, employment opportunities at the Cariboo Gold Quartz Mining Company started to dwindle. When the mine closed in 1967, many businesses closed or moved. With limited employment options, the population of Wells declined rapidly.

In 2018, Barkerville Gold Mines Ltd. (BGM) announced it is developing a new underground ramp-access mine—the Cariboo Gold Project—near Wells. BGM, which has completed its environmental assessment, is estimated to employ a workforce of up to 500 workers the life of the mine. It is anticipated that some workers will move to Wells (e.g., management positions) and the remaining workers will fly-in/fly-out for shift work. This could increase the population of Wells substantially and the need for services and amenities such as local schools. Construction is anticipated to start in 2024 with mining commencing in 2025 and continuing for 16 years.

Arts & Music

Established in 1977, the Island Mountain Arts Society (IMA) is a local arts organization that provides access to arts education, artisan spaces, and experiences. IMA is a leader in northern BC and has created numerous arts and music programs and events throughout the region. For 43 years, IMA has encouraged the growth and development of a strong artist community in Wells, a place previously only known for mining and logging.

Community Forest

Established in 2014, the Wells-Barkerville Community Forest is a 4,534-hectare forest located adjacent to the community of Wells. The vision of the Wells Community Forest Board is to harvest the forest within the parameters of enhancing recreational infrastructure and tourism. As such, the Forest provides critical viewsapes and valuable recreational opportunities (e.g., hiking and cross-country skiing), combined with logging revenues for the District of Wells (Morgan and Wright, 2020).

Approximately 40 hectares of the forest has been designated as a Learning Forest for students, locals, and visitors to learn and connect with nature.

2.1 High School Education in Wells

In the late 1930s, the community of Wells opened its first school. By 1942, a new school building was constructed to accommodate a growing number of local pupils as well as students from the nearby community of Barkerville. This new school was referred to as the Wells-Barkerville School and it included a science lab, home economics room, wood-working shop, library, and six classrooms. In 1964, a gymnasium, foyer, and supplemental washrooms were added to the south end of the building. By 1980, all students from kindergarten to Grade 10 attended school in Wells, with the older students boarding in Quesnel (approximately 80 km from Wells).

In 2002, School District 28 Quesnel (SD28) announced it was planning to close the Wells-Barkerville School due to low enrollment. The alternate plan was to bus all primary and high school students to Quesnel. Recognizing how vital the school was to the health and well-being

of the community, locals fought to keep the school in the community. Eventually, the District of Wells agreed to purchase and maintain the building as a multi-use cultural facility with SD28 leasing a portion of the building for an elementary school. The elementary school began operating under this new model in April 2003 and operates today with a student body of fifteen students in kindergarten to Grade 7. Unfortunately, students in Grades 8 to 12 who live in Wells or Barkerville must travel to Quesnel to attend high school, relocate, or be homeschooled. It is estimated there are currently three students being homeschooled in Wells.

2.2 Destination Learning

Destination learning is when a student (with or without their family) moves to another community to attend a desirable school. Some families in Wells are familiar with this model as their children—or part or all their family—have moved to another town to attend school that isn't available locally. This may be because the level of schooling isn't available (e.g., no high school), and/or because the type of schooling elsewhere is more desirable (e.g., place-based learning where schools offer standard academic programs as well as enhanced learning in areas such as arts, athletics, culture, and nature).

WILDways is based on a destination school model that provides high school education for local students as well as enrolling students from other communities who are seeking immersive place-based education. This model will ensure the school meets its minimum enrolment requirements for provincial funding.

2.3 Wells Destination School Society

In 2022, residents formed the Wells Destination School Society (WDSS) in response to the community's desire to open a high school in Wells. Recognizing that "it takes a village to raise a child," WDSS's board represents a diverse group of concerned local citizens, including educators, an artistic director, and high school parents. In less than a year, the society has completed the following:

- hired an educational consultant to lead the design of the school's curriculum;
- applied for charitable status and submitted an expression of interest for accreditation as a BC Independent School;
- developed an independent high school concept (WILDways High School) and business plan;
- raised \$35,000 and submitted additional grants for funding; and
- formed a partnership with the Wells Barkerville Community Forest to lease land for school facilities.

WDSS has identified the following organizational goals for establishing a new high school in Wells:

- a) Design, promote, deliver, and continue to enhance a place-based high school education program in Wells for local and destination students.
- b) Secure space and equipment for the new school.

"...communities should take an active role in ensuring schools deliver optimal learning environments to ensure happy, healthy, successful students."

~ Catherine Daly, 2022

- c) Develop, operate, and maintain educational facilities, residential housing, and equipment for students and instructors.
- d) Secure resources to support the long-term financial viability of the school.

Before opening the new school, WDSS will appoint a school board that will be responsible for overseeing the school's programs, operations, policies, and staff. The main duties of the school board are as follows:

- Meet provincial standards and requirements for operating an educational program in British Columbia.
- Oversee the fiscal health of the school and leading fundraising efforts.
- Oversee staff recruitment, evaluations, and supervision.
- Communicate with the principal to ensure all school policies are followed and amended as needed, and effectively deal with any issues that arise from policy infractions.
- Provide the community, parents, and other stakeholders with timely updates about the school, and respond to community and partner questions and concerns.
- Organize regular open board meetings where parents, staff, students, and other delegates may attend.

The society's work is supported by research conducted by Masters' student, Christy McHarg. In her thesis, she explored a grass-roots approach to establishing a destination high school in Wells. Findings from McHarg's work is reflected in this business plan and continues to inform the society's approach and priorities.

2.3.1 Current WDSS Board Members

- Alison Galbraith – President
- Lindsay Kay – Treasurer
- Elyssia Sasaki – Secretary
- Deborah McKay – Director
- Dennis Hawkins-Bogle – Director
- Devon Macdonald – Director
- Donna Williams – Director

Refer to Appendix A for Wells Destination School Society incorporation documents.

2.3.2 Guiding Principles

To guide the development and evolution of WILDways, WDSS identified the following vision and mission statements, and goals.

Vision

Students embracing their dreams through knowing themselves and serving their communities.

Mission

To provide an inclusive, vibrant, and experiential space for students to flourish through connection to nature, self, each other, and community.

Goals

The goals of WDSS are to:

- Provide local students with an opportunity to attend high school in their community.
- Provide students (local and destination) with place-based immersive learning that promotes student agency, explores their connections to the world, and reflects the needs, values, and hopes of Wells region.
- Improve the health of our youth as a 3-hour bus ride to school takes its toll (there is often higher absenteeism).
- Improve the health of our community by filling a demographic void.
- Retain families—that often leave when their children reach Grade 8—and the subsequent loss of skilled professional parents and guardians.
- Provide an alternative high school option for youth for whom the traditional model is not a good fit.
- Create new economic opportunities, including employment, in Wells.

2.4 About the Name: WILDways High School

The proposed name for the new high school—WILDways High School—incorporates the capitalized acronym, ‘WILD’ (which stands for Wells Immersive Learning Destination) and ‘ways’ which refers to many aspects of the school’s location and pedagogy approach, including:

- way out there (location)
- ways we learn (philosophy)
- ways to be (goals & self-expression)
- ways of the wild (exploration)

Including ‘ways’ in the name also differentiates the school from other ‘WILD’ education brands that exist.

3 Business Case Analysis

This business case analysis considers the challenges that the community of Wells has faced for many years with the absence of a local high school and the opportunities of opening a new high school in the community.

3.1 The Problem

In 2021, the population of Wells was 218 permanent residents—there were only 35 children between the ages of 0 and 14 and no children aged 15 to 19 (Statistics Canada). The absence of this age demographic is likely due to the absence of a high school in Wells (McHarg, 2023).

When children in the community of Wells graduate from the local elementary school (at the end of Grade 7), they have one of three options for attending high school. The first option is for a student to commute from Wells for three hours a day, five days a week—often leaving and returning in the dark—to attend high school in Quesnel. The second option is home schooling, and the last option is moving to another community where they can attend high school.

Rural high schools are often the heart of rural towns, as they can have significant social, cultural, and environmental contributions to community life. The absence of a high school can impact students' mental, physical, and social health and the entire community's social and economic well-being (McHarg, 2023). The following issues, associated with the absence of a high school in Wells, were identified during research and community engagement conducted by McHarg (2023).

- a) **Outmigration of Youth Population** – Sullivan et al., 2018, as cited by McHarg (2023), states that “one of the biggest threats to the well-being of a rural community is outmigration, and one of the most common reasons for outmigration in rural youth populations is to pursue educational opportunities”. In the past ten years, seven families left Wells to support their eldest children entering high school, removing younger siblings from the elementary school. This represents seventeen children who left the community with their families. “The absence of a high school has limited population growth in Wells, creating a cyclical effect where certain resources can only be accessed with a bigger population in town, but people keep leaving town because of a lack of resources” (McHarg, 2023). Through McHarg’s research, she noted that not only is there stagnation in population growth, but that outmigration of families often means the loss of one or two skilled professionals.
- b) **Lack of Community Connection** – High schools are a central link for a neighbourhood or community, contributing socially, culturally, and environmentally towards community development (Barter, 2008). They are gathering places; they host events for the broader community, and they help create connections and meaningful relationships between teachers, parents, students, and other community members. These relationships lead to a sense of shared responsibility for student learning among

community members (Peterson et al., 2018). Schools are a community resource for all the community, not just physical buildings (McHarg, 2023).

- c) **Impact on Economic Well-being** – Data collected by the community of Wells suggests that the absence of a high school has affected the community’s economic well-being by impacting the number of student/youth workers and professional/skilled workers in town (McHarg, 2023). Generally, healthy population growth bolsters the economies of rural communities. Specifically, the lack of teenagers in Wells is challenging for businesses and organizations offering student employment in summer/seasonal positions and minimum-wage jobs. Furthermore, if a family leaves Wells, the town may also lose skilled professionals as parents seek employment elsewhere. The absence of a high school also deters potential families from relocating to Wells to fill job vacancies (McHarg, 2023). High schools can be the heart of rural communities because of the important role they play in economic and social prosperity and by stabilizing a town’s population (McHarg, 2023).
- d) **Impact on Student Well-being** – Research shows that students who commute significant distances to attend school in other communities feel absent from their home community. For children who have commuted out of Wells to attend school in Quesnel, the time it takes to commute prevented them from mentorship and volunteer opportunities in Wells. If students wanted to pursue extracurricular activities in Quesnel, this further impacted their families since a parent or guardian would often need to drive to Quesnel to pick them up; not all parents have the flexibility or the resources to do this. Furthermore, commuting by bus is unreliable due to staff shortages and dangerous winter road conditions (McHarg, 2023).
- e) **Unable to Support a New Workforce** – The Cariboo Gold Mine project has recently been approved for the Wells area and is expected to have a large impact on the town and surrounding area. The proposal includes a workforce of approximately 500 over the life of the mine (16 years). To reduce the number transient workers, the nature of which can have negative impacts on communities, Wells needs to be proactively positioned to attract families and full-time residents. “Without a high school, the proposed mine will have difficulty enticing mining families to relocate and participate in the community” (McHarg, 2023).
- f) **Reduction in Academic Attainment Levels** – From 2016 to 2021, there has been a 25% decrease in residents in Wells attaining Grade 12 and those earning a bachelor’s degree has dropped by 50% (Community Info Tool). To reverse this trend, Grades 8–12 need to be accessible to youth within the community.
- g) **Fewer Education Resources** – A declining student population has led to less funding for education in Wells (McHarg, 2023).

“Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.”

~ Kolb, 1984

3.2 The Opportunity

The Wells Destination School Society believes that opening a destination high school in Wells will:

1. enable high school-aged children living in Wells (and nearby Barkerville) to attend high school locally, addressing several social and economic issues resulting from youth and family outmigration;
2. offer progressive, place-based learning that is inclusive, vibrant, and experiential and encourages students to flourish through their connection to nature, self, each other, and community; and
3. attract new families and destination students to Wells who will contribute to the financial stability of the school, grow the local economy, and support community well-being.

A destination school in Wells not only addresses the existing gap in local high school education, but it also provides students with a one-of-a-kind learner-focused education and broadens enrolment by attracting students, and their families, to Wells who are seeking an alternative approach to education. Opening a high school would also be instrumental to the social and economic well-being of the town. WILDways is proposed to open in September 2024.

Although the new BC curriculum supports “hands-on” inquiry learning in the context of community, there are very few school districts in BC offering place-based learning environments. The concept for WILDways is a school without walls, where the environment and arts-based community are a natural extension of the traditional classroom environment. Student learning is contextualized in place through experience and inquiry. “For Wells, a place-based approach to education integrates art-, community-, outdoor-, and land-based teaching and learning” (McHarg, 2023). The curriculum would promote collaboration amongst students—and with the community—and explore student strengths and interests.

Wells Destination School Society (WDSS) will be securing funding through donations, fundraising, and student tuition. In 2023 WDSS raised \$30,000 in partnership with a local forestry business; it is anticipated that this will be a recurring event. WDSS is also pursuing applicable provincial funding programs, working with its community partners to explore long-term corporate sponsorship, and leveraging in-kind donations from local expertise to build and operate WILDways. WDSS has been invited to apply for independent school accreditation for the 2025/2026 school year. If approved, this status will provide WDSS with up to 50% of the public per student funding rate for students attending WILDways.

3.3 Benefits

There are many benefits to place-based education. Below is a list of some of the benefits this type of learning provides students and their families:

- Economical – Wells offers low-density housing close to nature, lower housing and property costs, and lower taxes. Additionally, attending a local high school encourages continued employment in the community during and after graduation. A destination high school will also attract new families to Wells that will further support a growing economy.

“Research consistently shows that a neighborhood’s overall well-being and localized school performance go hand in hand.”

~ Vey & Morales, 2022

- Emotional – Maintaining a home base near school (vs. commuting) provides the comforts of home and support during a challenging time in life. The convenience of attending school closer to home and avoiding long stressful commutes promotes student well-being. This applies to both local and destination students.
- Social – Students can nurture childhood friendships and will feel more connected to their immediate and extended family and community. Local employment and volunteer opportunities are also important social environments for youth development and well-being.
- Health & Well-being – Students are more likely to walk or ride to school and participate in exercise when they attend a local high school.
- Employment – Greater opportunities for students to find local employment and gain important personal and professional skills at a young age.
- Experiential Learning – This type of learning, along with spending more time with peers, supports the socio-emotional development of students in key areas such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, and social skills.
- Community Connectedness – While attending a local high school, students collaborate with local organizations, businesses, and experts in the community, which encourages new mentorship opportunities and helps the students develop a sense of civic responsibility and empathy. Smaller schools also add greater social emotional value to learning because teachers know their students and build strong relationships with the students and their families over the years.
- Small Classroom – Smaller classes enables teachers to deliver more individualized learning and tailored instruction that helps build student agency and independence. It also improves engagement, critical thinking, life skills, and academic achievement.
- Enhanced Outdoor Education – WILDways will be located on a green space near forests and conservation areas in Wells. Research has shown a multitude of benefits to spending time outdoors including supporting creativity and problem solving, enhancing cognitive abilities, improving academic performance, improving self-discipline, reducing stress, and improving social relations (Gall, 2018).
- Cultural and Historical Appreciation – Students can explore and appreciate different cultures and the historical significance in their surroundings. This encourages a sense of identity, respect for different cultures, and a broader global perspective.
- Career Readiness – WILDways will offer rigorous academic programs that prepare students for college and other success through hands-on learning, critical thinking, and real-world problem-solving. Personalized attention also helps students explore career interests and make informed decisions about future career paths.

Place-based learning will also benefit WILDways’ teachers and the communities of Wells and Barkerville. This style of instruction increases teacher engagement and job satisfaction, and the communities will benefit from: greater connections between organizations and individuals; increased civic engagement, social capital, and community vitality; and advocacy and engagement by parents and families (Peer Associates, 2020).

4 School Plan

“It’s an envisioned education system that can empower individual and collective healing and well-being, if it enables students to find self-confidence and to connect to their true selves, their heritage, their ancestors, their spirit guides, their passion, and their community.”

~ Chartrand, 2016

WILDways will be established as a non-profit learning centre. WDSS will adhere to policies and procedures for establishing and operating an educational program in BC.

By following provincial guidelines, WILDways will:

- be operated by a non-profit school society;
- employ BC-certified teachers;
- offer education programs consistent with ministerial orders;
- provide programs that meet the learning outcomes of the BC curriculum;
- meet various administrative requirements;
- maintain adequate educational facilities; and
- comply with municipal and regional district codes.

WDSS’s priority is to ensure there are spaces available at WILDways for resident students whose families already live in Wells. If the school isn’t at capacity, these spaces will be available to destination students, i.e., students who attended Grade 7, or other high school grades elsewhere, but will relocate to Wells with or without their family to attend WILDways. In year one, destination students may be billeted with local families; in year 2, students will have the opportunity to live in student housing (see Operational Plan, Facilities).

4.1 School Classification

WDSS has been invited to seek Group 2 Independent School classification for the second year of operation of WILDways, and Group 1 classification in subsequent years².

In its first year of operation, WILDways will offer Grades 8 to 11. In subsequent years, the school will also offer Grade 12.

4.2 Education Philosophy

WILDways is best described as a place-based, integrated high school that encourages personalized learning, student empowerment, and strong community involvement. The Centre for Place-Based Learning and Community Engagement defines place-based learning as an “immersive learning experience that places students in local heritage, cultures, landscapes, opportunities and experiences, and uses these as a foundation for the study of language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum” (Getting Smart, 2017).

WILDways’ learning environment extends far beyond the walls of a classroom to include the local communities and the natural world that surrounds us. Students explore, discover, and

² <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/independent-schools/classification-of-independent-schools>

learn from everything and everyone around them; developing an authentic understanding of their place in the world while making important contributions as active and respectful inhabitants. WILDways students will experience the provincial curriculum through thoughtful interactions with place, becoming more aware of what is happening around them, and finding ways to get involved and connect with the greater world in meaningful and engaging ways. Recognizing and affirming a student's agency, creativity, and responsibility are core to WILDways' philosophy.

WILDways' certified staff will work closely with each student to ensure that all learning standards are met through very creative, meaningful, and engaging experiences. Rather than a more traditional approach involving separate classes within a regular timetable taught by specialists, WILDways will combine the following pedagogies to establish a unique and powerful approach to high school education.

Place-based Education

The beautifully wild town of Wells and the surrounding Cariboo region will serve as the school's extended classroom, providing WILDways' students with a diverse array of learning opportunities, venues, local mentors, community projects, history, natural environments, and collective wisdom. The school experiences will focus on authentic actions and explorations that contribute to where we live, while we learn valuable lessons from the land and its people.

Integration

Rather than dividing learning into specific, isolated course classes, WILDways will demonstrate the power of blending and activating knowledge, skills, and attitudes from many different subject areas at the same time; just like people do in real life. There will be times when it makes sense to focus on just one subject at a time, but in most cases, WILDways will encourage and credit students as they use the depth and breadth of their knowledge in all subject areas to successfully complete their assignments and projects.

Project-based Learning

WILDways students will be continually engaged in the creation and completion of purposeful local projects that develop their curricular competencies, reinforce key content, and strengthen their core competencies, while contributing to their place and the people around them. For example, students may work together to build student accommodations, plan, and enjoy a five-day canoe trip along the Bowron Lake Chain, or design and facilitate a Winter Carnival for the town of Wells. Each of these projects requires the development and application of important knowledge, skills, and core competencies in a variety of subject areas at once.

Multi-age Learning Community

As a small school in a small town, WILDways will unite students in one cohesive multi-age high school community where everyone supports, teaches, and learns from each other no matter what their grade level. Though there may be times when it makes sense to work with one age group at a time, in most cases all students will work together as one multi-talented cohort to develop and follow a Code of Conduct that will allow them to tackle complex projects and complete in-depth curricular challenges far beyond the abilities of individual students. WDSS acknowledges that everyone possesses multiple intelligences, personal strengths, and unique needs that will help guide and shape WILDways' learning activities so that everyone succeeds together.

Student Empowerment

WILDways students will also be teachers, mentors, planners, designers, and leaders when it comes to their own education and the well-being of their peers. They will know the curriculum and what is expected of them so that they can set realistic goals, reflect on their growth, and evaluate their own progress. They will contribute to the planning of group and individual learning experiences and co-design individual learning explorations through the creation of Independent Directed Studies (IDS) courses and projects along with their teachers and community mentors.

Personalized Learning

While striving to create a cohesive, multi-age community, WDSS acknowledges the importance and power of personalized learning as outlined in the BC Ministry's curriculum overviews. To ensure that each of student is honoured and supported for who they are, WDSS will:

- acknowledge that not all students learn successfully at the same rate, in the same learning environment, and in the same ways;
- provide high-quality and engaging learning opportunities that meet the diverse needs of all students;
- provide flexible timing and pacing through a range of learning environments, with learning supports and services tailored to meet learner needs;
- enhance student engagement in learning by providing students with relevant and purposeful choices—more of a say in what and how they learn—leading to lifelong, self-directed learning;
- co-develop learning plans with teachers and students to build on student interests, goals, and learning needs;
- involve students in reflecting on their work and setting new goals based on their reflections; this will allow them to take more control of their learning; and
- immerse students in place-based learning, where learning experiences are adapted to the local environment and individual contexts.

4.3 Student Body

WILDways is an ideal learning environment for young people who are:

- adventurous, open-minded, and ready to learn by doing;
- dedicated to protecting the natural world through thoughtful actions;
- excited about being outdoors in the sun, rain, snow, or cold;
- ready to meet, play, work, learn, and solve problems with new friends;
- able to contribute energy, ideas, and resources to the local community;
- fun-loving, positive, and respectful of themselves, their surroundings, and others;
- looking to escape the rigid structures, social challenges, outdated teaching practices, and institutional limitations of some other high schools; and
- seeking a memorable, inspiring, and purposeful school experience.



In year 1, the catchment area for WILDways will be focused on the Cariboo/Fraser-Fort George region. In subsequent years, WDSS will increase its recruitment catchment area to include greater BC.

The projected student body composition at WILDways over its first five years of operation is as follows:

Table 1 – Projected Number of Students (2024–2029)

Year	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	TOTAL
1 (2024/25)	4	2	5	1	0	12
2 (2025/26)	0	4	6	5	1	16
3 (2026/27)	2	0	7	2	5	16
4 (2027/28)	2	2	6	4	2	16
5 (2028/29)	3	2	5	2	4	16

4.4 Assessment Methods & Achievement Standards

WDSS will comply with the following BC school requirements:

- The school will offer a program that meets provincial graduation requirements set out in the Education Standards Order if catering to Grades 10–12.
- The school will have an evaluation program that demonstrates student progress in achieving intellectual, human, social, and career development.
- The school will participate in provincial academic assessment programs (e.g., Foundation Skills Assessment tests in Grades 4 and 7) and Graduation Program Examinations in Grades 10, 11 and 12, where applicable to the grades offered by WILDways.

4.5 Curriculum

4.5.1 Expertise

WDSS's board and advisors have more than 50 years of public-school teaching experience in British Columbia and are very familiar and comfortable with the provincial education curriculum.

The lead advisor and interim school principal on this project is Steve Dunsmuir, the founder and principal educator of the Saturna Ecological Education Centre (SEEC)³ located on Saturna Island, BC. Steve also designed and facilitated an internationally recognized place-based, multi-aged high school program for the Gulf Islands School District. For five years, he was a Faculty Associate in Simon Fraser University's Professional Development Program, guiding young educators through their practicums and facilitating curriculum-based courses in Language Arts, Social Studies, Physical Education, Reflective Practice, and Learning Communities.

4.5.2 Provincial Curriculum Requirements

WILDways will follow the BC provincial education curriculum as part of its mission to develop and support "Educated Citizens"⁴ who are:

- thoughtful and able to learn, think critically, and communicate information from a broad knowledge base;
- creative, flexible, and self-motivated, and developing a positive self-image;
- capable of making independent decisions;
- skilled and able to contribute to society generally, including the world of work;
- productive, satisfied through achievement, and striving for physical well-being;
- co-operative, principled, and respectful of others regardless of differences; and
- aware of the rights of the individual and prepared to exercise the responsibilities of the individual within the family, the community, Canada, and the world.

Required & Elective Graduation Program Course Credits

The following courses will be included in the WILDways curriculum for Grades 8 and 9:

- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Physical and Health Education
- Arts Education
- Career Education
- Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies
- Language other than English

³ <https://seecsaturna.ca/>

⁴ <https://bcforhighschool.gov.bc.ca/offshore/bc-curriculum-assessment-overview/the-educated-citizen/>

All students in Grades 10, 11, and 12 will be provided with a range of courses that meet the Ministerial Order 302/04 requirements (i.e., the Graduation Program Order).

Refer to Appendix B for Curriculum Samples.

4.5.3 Core Competencies

WILDways will strive to provide students with meaningful learning experiences that challenge them to embrace and live the school's core competencies. No matter what the topic or subject area, we know that the following core competencies⁵ are key to learner success and will be integral to student learning and assessment:

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Creative Thinking
- Critical & Reflective Thinking
- Personal Awareness & Responsibility
- Positive Personal & Cultural Identity
- Social Awareness & Responsibility

4.5.4 School Year

WILDways will operate on a four-day school week, running from Monday to Thursday, except when Monday is a statutory holiday. In those cases, the week will run from Tuesday to Friday. This abbreviated school week will allow families to use the fifth day for travel, appointments, and additional home time, while providing the staff with more time for teaching preparation.

The typical school day will begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 5 p.m.; this will include 7.5 hours of instructional time and a one-hour break (taken at once or as smaller breaks). The school year will begin the first week of September, on the Tuesday following Labour Day, and run for 38 weeks. There will be two weeks off for Christmas break, two weeks off for spring break, and no school on statutory holidays. Total instructional time for the year will exceed 988 hours over the 152 days in the school year.

When engaged in learning experiences that involve more hours of instructional time than the usual day, students and staff may earn extra time off. This additional "not in session" time will be thoughtfully scheduled and communicated to parents and students ahead of the more intensive learning periods.

⁵ <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/competencies>

5 Marketing & Recruitment

5.1 Marketing & Communications

The primary channel for marketing and student recruitment in Year 1 will be WILDways' website. The website is currently in development and is expected to be completed by June 2024.

As stated previously, recognizing and affirming a student's agency, creativity, and responsibility are core to WILDways' philosophy. In line with this philosophy, students will be involved in the design and implementation a marketing strategy for the second year of the school's operation. Examples of marketing activities include a WILDways blog, a community radio station, artistic performances, and elementary school presentations.

Leading up to September 2024 (the start of the first school year), WILDways board will draw from its strong community connections to recruit local students. The school's marketing plan (developed by the students) will be implemented in the 2024/2025 school year with the goal of recruiting a select number of students for year 2 (2025/2026). The marketing plan will also include messaging targeted at destination students, in Grades 10 to 12, who are interested in moving to Wells (either with their families or boarding in the school's new cabin accommodations).

WILDways is also committed to developing connections and relationships with First Nations. First Nations students who live in the region will be offered places at the school alongside other destination students.

Due to the school's limited capacity, marketing will be focused on reaching local non-Indigenous and Indigenous families. As WILDways becomes more established and demand grows, the school's marketing reach will be expanded to more regional communities and include a broader range of marketing tactics (e.g., social media, press releases, special events, elementary school collaborations).

5.2 Admissions

During its first year (2024/25), WILDways will accommodate 12 students with priority given to students who already live in Wells or the immediate surrounding area (e.g., Barkerville). If there is significant interest from families outside of this catchment area, WDSS will consider increasing the total number of students and finding suitable homestays in Wells for the students. In year 2, destination students (and local students) will have the opportunity to board in student housing located on the school grounds (construction planned for 2024/25).

In the second year of operation (2025/26), WILDways' capacity will grow to 16 students and include student accommodations for destination students.

To assess a student's interest and compatibility with WILDways, prospective students will be asked to submit an application before May 1. Each application will include a detailed form



(available on WILDways' new website), a student statement, and three reference letters. After reviewing student applications, WILDways' board will contact prospective students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) to schedule an in-person trial experience that enables each student and the WILDways team to determine if the program is a good fit.

During the same visit, WILDways staff and/or board members will meet with the parents/guardians to discuss the curriculum, facilities, housing, and other aspects of the WILDways' experience.

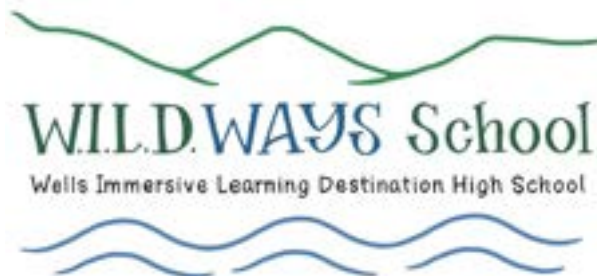
WILDways staff and board members will review and discuss all applicants and officially invite those who appear to be the best fit.

Refer to the WILDways Policy Manual for the WILDways Admissions Policy.

5.3 Branding

The WILDways brand is currently in development, including a logo (see concept below), brand colours and fonts, and brand style (e.g., photography, graphic elements, and brand voice). Once these branding elements are final, they will be used to design the website, marketing materials, and school materials.

Logo Concept (November 2023)



6 Operational Plan

WDSS is in the process of developing a comprehensive operational plan and financial plan for the planning, funding, and construction of the WILDways Learning Centre . This work is ongoing; therefore, this operational plan is a precursor to a more detailed plan that will advance in the coming six months. Several components of the plan are complete (e.g., school policies and procedures); however, WDSS is working with community members, partners, and vendors to finalize other parts of the plan including facility designs, costs and funding strategy.

6.1 Policies & Procedures

WDSS has developed the following policies and procedures that are aligned with the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care independent school policies and procedures⁶.

- Admissions Policy
- Anaphylaxis Policy and Procedure
- Substance Use Policy (Student, Staff and Volunteers)
- Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Boarding Policy
- Anti-money Laundering and Cash Payment Policy
- Child Abuse Prevention and Neglect Policy
- Discipline Policy and Procedures
- Educational Resource Policy
- Emergency Preparation, Management and Response Policy
- Field Trip and Community Exploration Policy
- Graduation Program Policy
- Independent Directed Study & Board Approved Courses Policy
- Challenge & Equivalency Policy
- Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Homeschooling Policy
- International Student Policies
- Personal Information Privacy Policy – Students and Parents
- Personal Information Privacy Policy – Employees and Volunteers
- Refund Policy
- School Closure Policy
- Special Education Policy
- Student Records Policy
- Student Supervision Policy
- Teacher Evaluation Policy
- Head of School [Principal] Evaluation Policy

⁶ <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/independent-schools>

- Water Testing (Lead Content) Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy
- Reporting Policy
- Technology Use Policy

Refer to the WILDways Policy Manual for more details.

Additional provincial processes and guidelines will be used in the day-to-day operations of WILDways—these include:

- Processes and guidelines outlined in the [Manual of School Law K–12](#)
- [Independent School Act](#)
- [Legislation and regulations related to independent schools](#)

6.2 Facilities

WILDways will be located on a 1.3-acre lot situated on Margaret Road in Wells. WDSS is leasing the land in a long-term, 25-year agreement with the Wells Barkerville Community Forest (WBCF) Board for an annual fee of one dollar. On this land, WDSS will build a new learning centre (planned completion in 2024) and two cabins for student housing (planned completion in 2025). Collectively, these facilities will be called the Ecological Learning & Living Centre. WDSS will also lease indoor space in the Wells/Barkerville Community Centre from the District of Wells (details to be confirmed).

Although WILDways will have limited capacity in year 1, WDSS envisions growing the school over time to meet local and destination demand so long as each student’s learning experience isn’t compromised and the school continues to provide “an inclusive, vibrant, and experiential space for students to flourish through connection to nature, self, each other, and community.”

Table 2 – School Facilities

Facility	Location	Purpose	Date Operational
Learning Centre (new)	Margaret Road property	Common learning and living space with bathrooms and showers, an outdoor meeting area and fire pit, outhouses, and small open-air group meeting sites. Also referred to as the Learning Centre.	Sept. 2024
Wells/Barkerville Culture & Recreation Centre (existing)	4386 Mildred Ave	Use of commercial kitchen, gymnasium, classrooms, fitness centre, washrooms, and other amenities, as needed, for school curriculum. Wells Elementary School (School District 28) currently operates in this building.	July 2024

Facility	Location	Purpose	Date Operational
Student Accommodations (new)	Margaret Road property	Housing for up to 6 students per cabin. With guidance from professional local cabin builders, students will help build two 160 sq. ft. log cabins in year 1. The cabins are designed to provide six separate sleeping compartments with storage similar to sleeping quarters on a train.	Sept. 2025

Refer to Appendices E and F for preliminary designs for learning centre and student cabins.

6.2.1 Construction Timeline

The following timeline is an estimation of work provided by WDSS in collaboration with local contractors in Wells. This timeline will be finalized once design, planning, and permitting work is completed.

Table 3 – Construction Timeline

Construction Activity	Completion Date
Engineered Plans and Building Permits (Learning Centre & Staff Housing)	April 2024
Site Preparation and Foundation for the Learning Centre building	July 2024
Log Shell Assembly for the Learning Centre building	July 2024
Roofing, Plumbing, Electrical for the Learning Centre building	August 2024
Finishing Work for the Learning Centre building	October 2024
Cabin accommodation site prep and screw piles (x2)	October 2024
Log shell Assembly for the cabin accommodation (x2)	June 2025
Lock up for cabin accommodations – roofing, electrical, finishing work (x2)	August 2025

6.3 Student Housing

The target years for destination students who move to Wells (without their families) to attend WILDways will be Grades 10, 11 and 12; younger students may find being away from home more challenging. Ideally, both local and destination students in Grades 10 to 12 will stay in the cabin accommodations to create a strong student community. This experience will support student well-being as they build valuable life skills, independence, and form deep connections with their peers.

In year one of WILDways (2024/2025), the first cohort of students will help build the student housing with the assistance of staff and volunteers. They will help build two 10 x 16 square foot insulated cabins that will be ready for occupancy for students in year 2 (2025/2026). Each cabin will sleep six students with their own private space, windows, and storage areas. The cabins will be built to municipal and provincial building codes.

In addition to the Learning Centre and cabins, WILDways will make good use of the existing Wells-Barkerville School building, which is owned and managed by the town. While part of the building is home to the public elementary program, WILDways students will have access to the gymnasium, showers, kitchen, lounge, and a break-out classroom space. There is also a playground, playing fields, and a newly constructed covered outdoor skating rink that may be used by WILDways. The school building is within walking distance from the site of the new Learning Centre and cabin (within 150 metres) as well as most students' homes in town.

As a place-based program, WILDways' learning facilities will include many of Wells' unique buildings, businesses, and other structures. WILDways students may use the Wells Community Hall, public library, community garden, Sunset Theatre, Island Mountain Arts gallery, and Sarras stage and recording studio, all within a few 100 metres of WILDways.

One of WILDways key partners is the Wells Barkerville Community Forest. Students will have access to its large outdoor shelter, kilometers of trails, interpretive signage, a boardwalk, warming cabins, and many other outdoor facilities that will enhance their learning experiences.

6.4 Transportation

Families will be responsible for transporting students to and from school each day. For most local and billeted students, they will be able to walk to school.

In year two, parents of students coming from beyond the Wells area will either need to drive them to and from the program each week or work with WILDways' staff and board to arrange homestays in the area during non-school days. Families may also choose to relocate to Wells to support their children attending WILDways.

Parents and school staff in Wells have a long, safe, and successful history of organizing and providing approved volunteer drivers for field trips. WILDways will maintain and regularly update a list of willing drivers with reliable vehicles and clean driver's abstracts so that we can safely transport students to places beyond walking distance.

6.5 Staffing & Leadership (Human Resources Plan)

WILDways is a community-based project—by the community, for the community. The school program will be supported by a dedicated group of trained and certified professionals who will ensure the program, and its students, are successful and the school's philosophy and curriculum reflect the unique values and attributes of the community of Wells.

Refer to Appendix C for the Student/Staff Recruitment Information.

“Personalized learning acknowledges that not all students learn successfully at the same rate, in the same learning environment, and in the same ways. It involves the provision of high-quality and engaging learning opportunities that meet the diverse needs of all students.”

~ BC Ministry of Education, 2015

BC Certified Teacher

WILDways will begin its journey as a small, innovative, blended learning program. WDSS will hire one certified teacher who has the passion, experience, training, and energy to thrive in a place-based, multi-age, integrated program. Ideally, WDSS will recruit someone who has strong ties to the region or is excited about becoming an integral part of the Wells community. The teacher will be responsible for guiding and facilitating the full educational program for all students in each grade, though they will receive daily support from a strong team of community volunteers, mentors, businesses, and an educational consultant, Steve Dunsmuir, who will provide guidance, stability, experience, leadership, instructional support, and professional development as needed.

Educational Consultant

The educational consultant has extensive experience, training, and a passion for place-based, multi-age, integrated education. They will help guide the evolution of the school as it develops facilities, marketing strategies, and human resource plans, while also serving as a liaison with the Wells community, the WILDways board, and other agencies.

WILDways’ educational consultant has outlined a unique place-based, integrated, and multi-age approach to exploring the standard BC Curriculum, largely based on his very successful work with the Saturna Ecological Education Centre. Drawing on his extensive experience in teacher training, he will provide WILDways staff with ongoing professional development through one-to-one mentoring, collaborative planning, and team teaching. He will continue to offer workshops for the WILDways board, local community, and parents so that they have a better understanding of the goals, pedagogies, and structures of the unique learning community and how they can best support it.

Night-Time Supervisor

As year two approaches and the living facilities are ready to welcome local and destination students, WILDways will hire a trustworthy person to look after the students when the teacher and principal are not on active duty. This person will have their own sleeping quarters on the school property and ensure that the students are safe and well-behaved after school hours.

Wells Destination School Society

WILDways is guided and supported by an active and talented board of directors who have worked long and hard to make the school a reality over the past decade. This small, local group oversees hiring staff, marketing the program, fundraising, building local partnerships, and volunteering as needed. They will also provide clerical and budgetary support with access to office facilities and equipment needed to take care of the school’s needs. They will help recruit community mentors, keep the town informed about WILDways, and meet regularly with the staff and students to understand their needs and celebrate their successes.

Community Mentors

WILDways will benefit greatly from the diverse talents, skills, and knowledge the people of Wells. Though the school may only employ a pair of certified educators, as a place-based program, students will work and learn with dozens of resourceful, skilled, and expert “teachers” who are willing to share with young people in a safe and respectful environment. As talented and experienced as our certified teachers may be, there will always be willing local people who can lead workshops, lessons, demonstrations, displays, and storytelling on topics that go far beyond what a small staff can offer. WILDways’ certified teachers will provide guidance, supervision, and support during the students’ work with community mentors, while the principal and board will ensure that each person involved with the school has undergone a criminal record check and is well known as a reliable and trustworthy individual.

6.5.1 Staff Salaries & Benefits

Table 4 – Staffing 5-Year Budget

Position	Year 1	(FTE)	Year 2	(FTE)	Year 3	(FTE)	Years 4/5	(FTE)
Principal	\$50,000	(0.5)	\$40,000	(0.4)	\$40,000	(0.4)	\$40,000	(0.4)
Teacher	\$62,000	(1.0)	\$68,000	(1.0)	\$75,000	(1.0)	\$75,000	(1.0)
Support Teacher	\$40,000	(1.0)	\$40,000	(1.0)	\$40,000	(1.0)	\$16,000	(0.4)
Admin. Staff	\$10,000	(0.2)	\$10,000	(0.2)	\$10,000	(0.2)	\$10,000	(0.2)
Supervisor	-	-	\$20,000	(1.0)	\$20,000	(1.0)	\$20,000	(1.0)
Total Salaries & FTE	\$162,000	(2.7)	\$178,000	(3.6)	\$185,000	(3.6)	\$161,000	(3.0*)
Total Benefits	\$31,266 (19.3%)		\$34,354 (19.3%)		\$35,705 (19.3%)		\$31,073 (19.3%)	
TOTAL STAFF BUDGET	\$193,266 (Y1)		\$212,354 (Y2)		\$220,705 (Y3)		\$192,073 (Y4/5)	

*A full-time Support Teacher is forecast in Years 1 to 3 based on three students receiving Special Needs funding from the provincial government. In years 4 and 5, only one student is forecast to receive this funding.

6.6 Technology

Technology is an essential part of education, yet it can also serve to distract, overwhelm, misinform, and endanger students and staff if not used in a thoughtful and responsible way. At WILDways, technology is intended to support the learning process and assist in connecting people and ideas.

WILDways will strive to ensure all students have access to the most relevant and purposeful technology for curriculum activities. This will include Internet connection and a range of computer software related to the school’s learning experiences. In many cases, the school will introduce students to low-tech tools and ways of doing things that can simplify, enhance, and ground their daily lives, while at the same time adding to their overall personal resiliency and adaptability.

WILDways will encourage all students to provide their own device for class assignments. If this is a barrier of entry for a student, the school will work with the student’s family and WDSS’s partners to find a solution. WDSS is committed to ensuring all students can participate in WILDways’ program regardless of their financial situation.

Refer to the WILDways Policy Manual for the WILDways Technology Use Policy.



7 Financial Plan

7.1 Tuition (5-year forecast)

In many Canadian provinces, including British Columbia, education funding is allocated according to enrolment (i.e., on a per student basis) which means that small rural schools with lower enrolment numbers may not receive the funding they truly need. However, with accessibility a top priority for WDSS, tuition will be on a sliding scale and bursaries will be available to students in need.

Table 5 – Student Tuition 5-Year Revenue

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Grades	8–11	8–12	8–12	8–12	8–12
Students Enrolled	12	16	16	16	16
Tuition Range*	\$2,500– \$5,000	\$2,500– \$5,000	\$2,500– \$5,000	\$2,500– \$5,000	\$2,500– \$5,000

*Sliding scale for tuition commensurate with each family’s household income to ensure accessibility.

Refer to Appendix C for the five-year proforma financial information.

7.2 Facility Construction Costs

In partnership with the Wells Barkerville Community Forest (WBCF) and Bowron River Log Homes, the Wells Destination School Society (WDSS) will begin construction of the Learning Centre facilities in spring 2024. As a collective, we are pursuing a variety of funding avenues (grants, fundraising, and sponsorship) and in-kind donations of material and labour. The WBCF is providing the logs for the structures and BRLH has committed to completing the log work in-kind using grants for two apprenticeship positions (refer to Table 7).

Table 6 – Construction Costs (Materials & Labour)

Services Description - Learning Centre	Estimate (\$)
Design Services – Octo Engineering	6,400
Foundation – Site Work, Materials and Labour	32,000
Framing and Insulation – Materials, Labour, and Equipment Rental	42,000
Framing and Insulation – Materials (Logs) IN-KIND	(5,000)
Exterior Windows and Doors (including installation)	7,000
Electrical and Plumbing – Material and Labour	16,000
Roofing Material and Labour	6,000
Interior finishing – Drywall, Countertop, Doors, Flooring, Paint, Hardware	13,400
Interior finishing IN-KIND	(2,000)
Exterior Veneer and Finish – Material and Labour	7,000
Fireplace and Appliances	5,000
Student Housing Cabins (2)	30,000
SUB-TOTAL:	171,800
IN-KIND:	(7,000)
TOTAL:	164,800

Bowron River Log Homes has the capacity to provide apprenticeship training to two individuals (ideally from the community or the surrounding area) who are interested in learning the log construction trade. A proposal for funding for these positions has been submitted to the Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program (REDIP) and Canada Summer Jobs program (CSJ).

Table 7 – Apprenticeship Training Costs

Apprenticeship Training	Hours	\$/hr	Sub-Total (\$)
Structure Building Apprentice x 2 (\$16.75/hour through CSJ)	640.00	16.75	10,720
Structure Building Apprentice x 2 (\$3.25/hour through REDIP)	640.00	3.25	2,080
TOTAL:			12,800

7.3 Funding strategy

Partners & Sponsors

WDSS is working with potential partners and sponsors to confirm their support with funding and in-kind donations. Several businesses have expressed support for the new school, including local construction companies, the local lumber mill, the community forest, several arts and culture businesses and organizations, and the local ski hill.

In October 2023, Osisko Development was granted an environmental certificate from the Province of British Columbia to undertake a mining development in Wells. According to their website, "The Cariboo Gold Project will create nearly 500 new, well-paying jobs in the Cariboo Region, contribute millions to the local economy, and revitalize a historic town and its infrastructure. The Cariboo Gold Project will strengthen the BC economy, including over \$2.7B in investment and operating expenses over its lifetime, broadening the tax base and contributing to vital infrastructure including schools, roads and hospitals." Osisko Development Corp. fully supports the concept of a destination high school in Wells and stated, "as one of the community's largest employers, we recognize the need for a high school in Wells as part of attracting and retaining the best possible employees, including those with families" (excerpt from letter of support; refer to Appendix G).

West Fraser Mills is a large local forestry company that produces diversified wood products. The company has shown their support for a new high school by sponsoring an annual tree-planting fundraiser. They are committed to continuing their sponsorship of this event, which raised \$30,000 in June 2023.

The Wells Barkerville Community Forest is a significant community supporter of WILDways. In addition to supporting WDSS's annual fundraising efforts, the organization has agreed to lease 1.3 acres of land to WDSS for an annual fee of one dollar. On this land, WDSS will build a new learning centre (planned completion in 2024) and two cabins for student housing (planned completion in 2025). The community forest is also donating logs for the construction of the school's new facilities.

Refer to Appendix F for Letters of Support received by WDSS to date.

7.4 Five-Year Proforma Financials

Refer to Appendix C for the five-year proforma financial information).

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9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix A – Wells Destination School Society Incorporation Documents



ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATE



CONSTITUTION

BC Society - Societies Act

CERTIFIED COPY
Of a document filed with the
Province of British Columbia
Registrar of Companies

T.K. Sparks
T.K. SPARKS

NAME OF SOCIETY: WELLS DESTINATION SCHOOL SOCIETY

Incorporation Number:	S0078202
Business Number:	71589 9340 BC0001
Filed Date and Time:	May 9, 2023 02:22 PM Pacific Time

The name of the Society is **WELLS DESTINATION SCHOOL SOCIETY**

The purposes of the Society are:

Constitution of the Wells Destination School Society

NAME

The name of this society is **Wells Destination School Society** (hereafter referred to as "the Society").

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Society is, for the benefit of the public, to create an immersive, place-based destination high school in **Wells** for learners from within and outside the community and to:

- to promote, encourage, develop and provide education programs in **Wells**, British Columbia and area
- to develop, maintain and operate residential facilities for students and instructors
- to develop, maintain and operate educational facilities and equipment
- to acquire and expend funds and other resources for the above listed purposes
- to acquire, own, lease, develop, improve, and exchange property for the above listed purposes.





T.K. SPARKS

**Bylaws of
Wells Destination School Society (the "Society")**

PART 1 – DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

Def nitions

1.1 In these Bylaws:

"Act" means the Societies Act of British Columbia as amended from me to me; **"Board"** means the directors of the Society;

"Bylaws" means these Bylaws as altered from time to time.

Def nitions in Act apply

1.2 The def nitions in the Act apply to these Bylaws.

Conflict with Act or regulations

1.3 If there is a conflict between these Bylaws and the Act or the regulations under the Act, the Act or the regulations, as the case may be, prevail.

PART 2 – MEMBERS

Application for membership

2.1 A person may apply to the Board for membership in the Society, and the person becomes a member on the Board's acceptance of the application.

Dues of members

2.2 Every member must uphold the constitution of the Society and must comply with these Bylaws. Amount of membership dues

2.3 The amount of the annual membership dues, if any, must be determined by the Board. Member not in good standing

2.4 A member is not in good standing if the member fails to pay the member's annual membership dues, if any, and the member is not in good standing for so long as those dues remain unpaid.

Member not in good standing may not vote

2.5 A voting member who is not in good standing

(a) may not vote at a general meeting, and

(b) is deemed not to be a voting member for the purpose of consenting to a resolution of the voting members.

Termination of membership if member not in good standing

2.6 A person's membership in the Society is terminated if the person is not in good standing for 6 consecutive months.

PART 3 – GENERAL MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

Time and place of general meeting

3.1 A general meeting must be held at the time and place the Board determines. Ordinary business at general meeting

3.2 At a general meeting, the following business is ordinary business:

- (a) adoption of rules of order;
- (b) consideration of any financial statements of the Society presented to the meeting; (c) consideration of the reports, if any, of the directors or auditor;
- (d) election or appointment of directors;
- (e) appointment of an auditor, if any;
- (f) business arising out of a report of the directors not requiring the passing of a special resolution.

Notice of special business

3.3 A notice of a general meeting must state the nature of any business, other than ordinary business, to be transacted at the meeting in sufficient detail to permit a member receiving the notice to form a reasoned judgment concerning that business.

Chair of general meeting

3.4 The following individual is entitled to preside as the chair of a general meeting: (a) the individual, if any, appointed by the Board to preside as the chair;

(b) if the Board has not appointed an individual to preside as the chair or the individual appointed by the Board is unable to preside as the chair,

- (i) the president,
- (ii) the vice-president, if the president is unable to preside as the chair, or
- (iii) one of the other directors present at the meeting, if both the president and vice-president are unable to preside as the chair.

Alternate chair of general meeting

3.5 If there is no individual entitled under these Bylaws who is able to preside as the chair of a general meeting within 15 minutes from the time set for holding the meeting, the voting members who are present must elect an individual present at the meeting to preside as the chair.

Quorum required

3.6 Business, other than the election of the chair of the meeting and the adjournment or termination of the meeting, must not be transacted at a general meeting unless a quorum of voting members is present.

Quorum for general meetings

3.7 The quorum for the transaction of business at a general meeting is 3 voting members or 10% of the voting members, whichever is greater.

Lack of quorum at commencement of meeting

3.8 If, within 30 minutes from the time set for holding a general meeting, a quorum of voting members is not present,

(a) in the case of a meeting convened on the requisition of members, the meeting is terminated, and

(b) in any other case, the meeting stands adjourned to the same day in the next week, at the same me and place, and if, at the continuation of the adjourned meeting, a quorum is not present within 30 minutes from the time set for holding the

continuation of the adjourned meeting, the voting members who are present

constitute a quorum for that meeting.

If quorum ceases to be present

3.9 If, at any time during a general meeting, there ceases to be a quorum of voting members present, business then in progress must be suspended until there is a quorum present or until the meeting is adjourned or terminated.

Adjournments by chair

3.10 The chair of a general meeting may, or, if so directed by the voting members at the meeting, must, adjourn the meeting from time to time and from place to place, but no business may be transacted at the continuation of the adjourned meeting other than business left unfinished at the adjourned meeting.

Notice of continuation of adjourned general meeting

3.11 It is not necessary to give notice of a continuation of an adjourned general meeting or of the business to be transacted at a continuation of an adjourned general meeting except that,

when a general meeting is adjourned for 30 days or more, notice of the continuation of the adjourned meeting must be given.

Order of business at general meeting

3.12 The order of business at a general meeting is as follows:

- (a) elect an individual to chair the meeting, if necessary;
- (b) determine that there is a quorum;
- (c) approve the agenda;
- (d) approve the minutes from the last general meeting;
- (e) deal with unfinished business from the last general meeting;
- (f) if the meeting is an annual general meeting,
 - (i) receive the directors' report on the financial statements of the Society for the previous financial year, and the auditor's report, if any, on those statements,
 - (ii) receive any other reports of directors' activities and decisions since the previous annual general meeting,
 - (iii) elect or appoint directors, and
 - (iv) appoint an auditor, if any;
- (g) deal with new business, including any matters about which notice has been given to the members in the notice of meeting;
- (h) terminate the meeting.

Methods of voting

3.13 At a general meeting, voting must be by a show of hands, an oral vote or another method that adequately discloses the intention of the voting members, except that if, before or after such a vote, 2 or more voting members request a secret ballot or a secret ballot is directed by the chair of the meeting, voting must be by a secret ballot.

Announcement of result

3.14 The chair of a general meeting must announce the outcome of each vote and that outcome must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Proxy voting not permitted

3.15 voting by proxy is not permitted.

Matters decided at general meeting by ordinary resolution

3.16 A matter to be decided at a general meeting must be decided by ordinary resolution unless the matter is required by the Act or these Bylaws to be decided by special resolution or by another resolution having a higher voting threshold than the threshold for an ordinary resolution.

PART 4 – DIRECTORS

Number of directors on Board

4.1 The Society must have no fewer than 3 and no more than 11 directors.

Election or appointment of directors

4.2 At each annual general meeting, the voting members entitled to vote for the election or appointment of directors must elect or appoint the Board.

Term of appointment of director filling casual vacancy

4.3 A director appointed by the Board to fill a vacancy ceases to be a director at the end of the unexpired portion of the term of office of the individual whose departure from office created the vacancy.

PART 5 – DIRECTORS’ MEETINGS

Calling directors’ meeting

5.1 A directors’ meeting may be called by the president or by any 2 other directors. Notice of directors’ meeting

5.2 At least 2 days’ notice of a directors’ meeting must be given unless all the directors agree to a shorter notice period.

Proceedings valid despite omission to give notice

5.3 The accidental omission to give notice of a directors’ meeting to a director, or the non-receipt of a notice by a director, does not invalidate proceedings at the meeting.

Conduct of directors’ meetings

5.4 The directors may regulate their meetings and proceedings as they think fit. Quorum of directors

5.5 The quorum for the transaction of business at a directors’ meeting is a majority of the directors.

PART 6 – BOARD POSITIONS

Election or appointment to Board positions

6.1 Directors must be elected or appointed to the following Board positions, and a director, other than the president, may hold more than one position:

- (a) president;
- (b) vice-president;
- (c) secretary;
- (d) treasurer.

Directors at large

6.2 Directors who are elected or appointed to positions on the Board in addition to the positions described in these Bylaws are elected or appointed as directors at large.

Role of president

6.3 The president is the chair of the Board and is responsible for supervising the other directors in the execution of their duties.

Role of vice-president

6.4 The vice-president is the vice-chair of the Board and is responsible for carrying out the duties of the president if the president is unable to act.

Role of secretary

6.5 The secretary is responsible for doing, or making the necessary arrangements for, the following:

- (a) issuing notices of general meetings and directors' meetings;
- (b) taking minutes of general meetings and directors' meetings;
- (c) keeping the records of the Society in accordance with the Act;
- (d) conducting the correspondence of the Board;
- (e) filing the annual report of the Society and making any other filings with the registrar under the Act.

Absence of secretary from meeting

6.6 In the absence of the secretary from a meeting, the Board must appoint another individual to act as secretary at the meeting.

Role of treasurer

6.7 The treasurer is responsible for doing, or making the necessary arrangements for, the following:

- (a) receiving and banking monies collected from the members or other sources;
- (b) keeping accounting records in respect of the Society's financial transactions;
- (c) preparing the Society's financial statements;

(d) making the Society's filings respecting taxes.

PART 7 – REMUNERATION OF DIRECTORS AND SIGNING AUTHORITY

Remuneration of directors

7.1 These Bylaws do not permit the Society to pay to a director remuneration for being a director, but the Society may, subject to the Act, pay remuneration to a director for services provided by the director to the Society in another capacity.

Signing authority

7.2 A contract or other record to be signed by the Society must be signed on behalf of the Society

(a) by the president, together with one other director,

(b) if the president is unable to provide a signature, by the vice-president together with one other director,

(c) if the president and vice-president are both unable to provide signatures, by any 2 other directors, or

(d) in any case, by one or more individuals authorized by the Board to sign the record on behalf of the Society.

9.2 Appendix B – Curriculum Samples

WILDways students in Grades 8 and 9 will explore a full slate of courses in every subject area over the course of a full school year. WILDways students in Grades 10 to 12 will be enrolled in graduate program courses that may last a semester or run for the entire school year depending on the student and the courses chosen. WDSS expects to enroll local students in Grades 8 to 11 in Year 1, but be prepared to welcome students in Grade 12 if new students move to the area. In Year 1, we plan to offer the following curriculum:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 8–12

Communication skills and knowledge will permeate all we do, as English will be practiced daily through everything we say, write, read, hear, view, and share. Similar and complementary curricular competencies can be found at all the grade levels, allowing for an effective and relevant multi-age, integrated approach to instruction.

PHYSICAL & HEALTH EDUCATION 8–10 / OUTDOOR EDUCATION 11/12

Staying active and fit while developing a healthy lifestyle are keys to every grade level in these courses and all our students can work, play, and learn together to develop the skills and knowledge outlined by the Ministry curriculum documents.

SCIENCE 8–10 / ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE 11/12

While there will be small group learning activities and projects based on grade-level content, there are also many important curricular competencies that all ages can develop together. Becoming more skilled, knowledgeable, and aware citizen scientists is the overarching goal that our whole multi-age cohort can experience together.

SOCIAL STUDIES 8–10 / HUMAN GEOGRAPHY 12

Just like science, we will use small group learning activities and projects to explore the various content areas that differ from grade to grade, while engaging in meaningful, place-based experiences that help all ages to become more skilled, knowledgeable, and aware as young historians. Together we will create and share an interactive timeline that stretches the length of our school building, with each grade producing and sharing their own section of history as outlined in the curriculum. We have chosen Human Geography 12 as our graduation level course due to its close ties to the Grade 8-10 curricular competencies, content, and big ideas.

MATHEMATICS 8/9 / FOUNDATIONS OF MATHEMATICS & PRE-CALCULUS 10 / WORKPLACE MATH 10/11 / APPRENTICESHIP MATH 12

All students will be part of a purposeful math community where they can explore, practise, and develop common skills, knowledge, and ideas. We will try our best to provide our students with different math pathways, though our place-based, experiential setting will lend itself best to Workplace and Apprenticeship courses where hands-on, minds-on learning is most accessible.

APPLIED DESIGN, SKILLS & TECHNOLOGIES 8/9

The courses we explore in this strand of the curriculum will change as our school evolves and opportunities present themselves. We will take advantage of rich local knowledge, talents, and passions by working with Community Mentors, organizations, and businesses that are eager to pass on their skills and wisdom to the younger generation. Our Grade 8/9s will explore each theme as modules, while Grades 10 to 12 will most likely earn credits for specific courses as outlined below:

- **YEAR 1: MEDIA DESIGN 10 & WOODWORK 10 and YEAR 2: TOURISM 11 & CULINARY ARTS 10.** In future years, the needs and interests of the students, along with the talents of the community and needs of the school, will determine the design courses that are explored.
- **ARTS EDUCATION 8–9 / ART STUDIO 10 &/OR DRAMA 10.** Much like our Applied Design, Skills & Technology courses, we will use a unified design combining two or more disciplines, which will serve as modules at the Grade 8/9 level, and specific courses for the Grade10-12s. In future years, the needs and interests of the students, along with the talents of the community and needs of the school, will determine the design courses that are explored.
- **CAREER EDUCATION 8–9 / CAREER-LIFE EDUCATION / CAREER-LIFE CONNECTIONS.** Our students will explore and consider possible life journeys as they develop personal confidence and competence through self-discovery, work experience, community mentorship, and hands-on learning. After exploring possibilities and their own passions, attributes, and strengths in Grades 8 and 9, they will be ready to further refine their career-life goals and identify positive steps to success as they experience Career-Life Education and Career-Life Connections during Grades 10 to 12.
- **LANGUAGE LEARNING 8/9.** Our younger students will explore a language other than English. The specific language will be determined early in the year based on student interests, teacher knowledge, community mentors, and available language learning resources. We will strive to provide experiential and authentic language experiences as much as possible. Our Grade 10 to 12 students could opt to explore a language as part of an IDS course, provided we can find them a suitable mentor, otherwise, the older students will not be engaged in regular language learning courses.
- **INDEPENDENT DIRECTED STUDIES (IDS) COURSES.** Each of our Grade 10 to 12 students will have the opportunity to co-design and explore their own IDS journey in any course that we can support with a Community or Staff Mentor. Students in Grades 8 and 9 will also design an IDS project, but it will be in either ARTS EDUCATION or an APPLIED DESIGN topic that will add another module to their learning portfolio.

If a Grade 10 to 12 student needs to take a course that WILDways doesn't offer, they can access other courses through other providers (such as distributed learning) instead of an IDS course. WILDways will find ways to support individual student studies using mentors, on-line resources, and/or distance education courses.

9.3 Appendix C – Proforma Financial Information

REVENUE

Local Students	Projected		Pro Forma		Projected		Pro Forma		Projected		Pro Forma	
	Year 1	Per Student	Year 2	Per Student	Year 3	Per Student	Year 4	Per Student	Year 5	Per Student	Year 6	Per Student
BC Resident Students	\$2		\$5		\$5		\$5		\$5		\$5	
Tuition Fees	\$45,200	\$3,600	\$57,600	\$3,600	\$64,000	\$4,000	\$64,000	\$4,000	\$72,000	\$4,000	\$72,000	\$4,500
Government Grants (W 3455%, W2450%)	\$0		\$47,906	\$4,244	\$67,600	\$4,200	\$67,600	\$4,200	\$67,600	\$4,200	\$67,600	\$4,200
Sponsorship	\$46,800	\$3,900	\$12,198	\$2,012	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Donations and Fundraising	\$30,000	\$2,500	\$30,000	\$1,875	\$32,980	\$2,024	\$32,980	\$2,024	\$33,180	\$2,014	\$33,180	\$2,075
Facilities Rental (holidays and summer break)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000	\$375	\$5,000	\$375	\$7,000	\$575	\$7,000	\$458
All Other Fees (Special Education Grants)	\$30,000		\$69,840		\$69,840		\$69,840		\$23,280		\$23,280	
Total Local Students	\$150,000	\$10,000	\$257,544	\$13,731	\$269,830	\$12,499	\$269,830	\$12,499	\$233,040	\$12,499	\$233,040	\$53,130

International Students	Year 1	Per Student	Year 2	Per Student	Year 3	Per Student	Year 4	Per Student	Year 5	Per Student
International students										
Tuition Fees										
ELL Fees										
Boarding/Homesday										
All Other Fees										
Total International Students	\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0	

TOTAL REVENUE	\$150,000	\$12,500	\$257,544	\$14,096	\$269,830	\$12,499	\$269,830	\$12,499	\$233,040	\$12,499	\$233,040	\$53,130
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EXPENSES

SALARIES & BENEFITS EXPENSES	Projected			Pro Forma			Projected			Pro Forma			Projected			Pro Forma		
	Year 1	FTE Staff	Per Staff	Year 2	FTE Staff	Per Staff	Year 3	FTE Staff	Per Staff	Year 4	FTE Staff	Per Staff	Year 5	FTE Staff	Per Staff	Year 6	FTE Staff	Per Staff
Principal/head of school	\$0	0.00	\$0	\$50,000	0.30	\$120,000	\$40,000	0.40	\$100,000	\$40,000	0.40	\$100,000	\$40,000	0.40	\$100,000	\$40,000	0.40	\$100,000
Teachers	\$62,000	1.00	\$62,000	\$68,000	1.00	\$68,000	\$75,000	1.00	\$75,000	\$75,000	1.00	\$75,000	\$75,000	1.00	\$75,000	\$75,000	1.00	\$75,000
Support Teachers	\$25,000	1.00	\$25,000	\$40,000	1.00	\$40,000	\$40,000	1.00	\$40,000	\$40,000	1.00	\$40,000	\$40,000	1.00	\$40,000	\$40,000	1.00	\$40,000
Administrative Staff	\$10,000	0.20	\$50,000	\$10,000	0.20	\$50,000	\$10,000	0.20	\$50,000	\$10,000	0.20	\$50,000	\$10,000	0.20	\$50,000	\$10,000	0.20	\$50,000
Supervisor			\$20,000	\$20,000	1.00	\$20,000	\$20,000	1.00	\$20,000	\$20,000	1.00	\$20,000	\$20,000	1.00	\$20,000	\$20,000	1.00	\$20,000
Casual Labour (DOWT)																		
Total Salaries	\$97,000	2.20	\$44,000	\$188,000	3.70	\$50,831	\$181,000	3.60	\$51,189	\$181,000	3.60	\$51,189	\$151,000	2.85	\$54,386	\$151,000	2.85	\$54,386

Employee Benefits	\$18,721		\$6,284	\$5,705		\$5,705	\$5,705		\$5,705	\$5,705		\$5,705	\$5,705		\$5,705	\$5,705		\$5,705
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Total Salary and Benefits	\$115,721	77.1%	\$224,284	\$194,505	87.2%	\$220,705	\$220,705	81.8%	\$220,705	\$220,705	81.8%	\$220,705	\$184,915	79.9%	\$184,915	\$184,915	79.9%	\$184,915
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SERVICES AND SUPPLIES	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5									
Office, Postage and Courier	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300									
Technology, Phone, Internet, etc	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000									
Building (Lease / Mortgage Costs)	\$1	\$1	\$1	\$1	\$1									
Professional Services	\$1,778	\$2,335	\$8,500	\$8,500	\$8,500									
Bank Charges	\$300	\$24	\$24	\$24	\$24									
Insurance	\$5,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000									
Repair and Maintenance	\$0	\$500	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000									
Technology and Equipment	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000									
Board of Director Support	\$500	\$500	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000									
Travel	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000									
Professional Development	\$2,500	\$500	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000									
Marketing and Advertising	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500									
Learning Resources and School Supplies	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000									
Other (District of staffs school rent)	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$5,600	\$5,600	\$5,600									
Total Services and Supplies	\$54,279	22.9%	\$51,260	\$49,125	\$49,125	\$49,125	\$49,125	18.2%	\$49,125	\$49,125	18.2%	\$49,125	\$48,125	20.7%

Total Expenses	\$56,000		\$257,544	\$269,830	\$269,830	\$269,830	\$233,040
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PROFIT(LOSS)

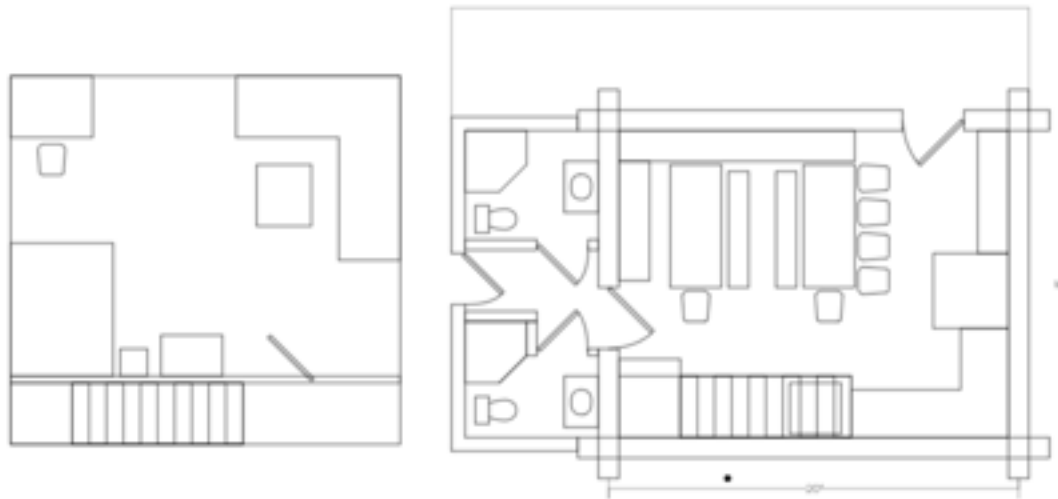
Contingency	Projected		Pro Forma		Projected		Pro Forma		Projected		Pro Forma	
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Contingency	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Operating Income	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%
Debt Financing / Return to Owner	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Retained Equity	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	0.0%

9.4 Appendix D – Learning Centre Preliminary Design

Learning Centre Building – Outside

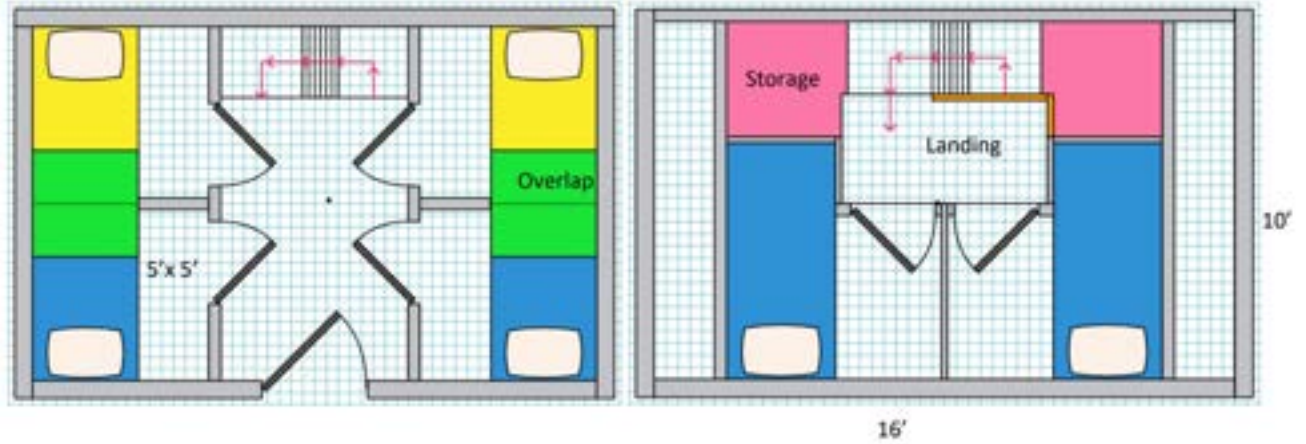


Learning Centre – Downstairs (right), Upstairs (left)

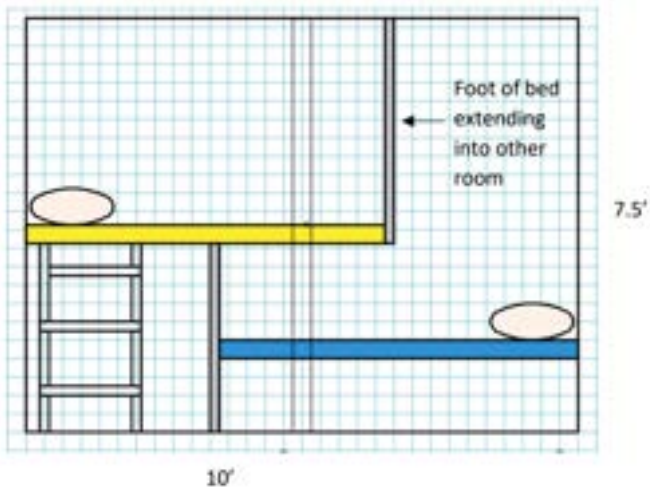


9.5 Appendix E – Student Cabin Preliminary Design

Student Cabin – Bottom Floor (left), Top Floor (right)



Student Cabin – Side View



9.6 Appendix F – Letters of Support for BC Independent School Accreditation for 2025/26



PO Box 69
Wells BC V0K 2R0

October 14, 2023

Wells Destination High School Society
PO Box 12
Wells BC V0K 2R0

attn: Alison Galbraith, President

Dear Alison,

Wells-Barkerville Community Forest Ltd unreservedly supports your application for certification as an independent school in conformance with the Independent School Act of British Columbia.

The Wells destination high school will make it possible for students and their families to remain in Wells to obtain a secondary school education. The school's experiential community-based learning program and accommodation for out-of-town students will attract other students to Wells, too.

These outcomes align perfectly with the community forest's efforts to retain and attract more residents and visitors to Wells with our forest education and forest recreation initiatives.

Experiential community-based education also harmonizes with our efforts to encourage and provide hands-on learning opportunities in our 4,530 hectare community forest for students of all ages, but particularly youth. We aim to excite students to learn from, in and about the forest, from the fundamentals of biology to wildlife management to forest enhancement to environmental research.

To date we have supported the development of the destination high school by actively participating in community dialogue, by paying the travel costs of an education consultant who visited Wells in December 2022, by financing the school's business plan, and by contributing to a tree planting fund raiser for the school in June 2023.

page 1 of 2

We are providing further support by leasing land to the high school for student accommodation and a student common for one dollar and by supplying logs for the common, a log building that will provide kitchen, dining, washing and meeting space for students.

In the future we will continue to contribute materially to the success of the school, in particular by participating in fundraising efforts.

More important, we hope to host and mentor learning projects tailored to the interests and goals of the students. They could include day-long or multi-day surveys, cone collection, or harvesting of food and medicinal plants. They could include weeks-long projects to monitor wildlife or to develop forest recreation trails, bridges and cabins. They could also be year-long and even multi-year research projects engaging successive cohorts of students.

Please feel free to include this documentation of our support in your application for accreditation.

Sincerely,

Cam Beck, Coordinator



OSISKO DEVELOPMENT

CARIBOO GOLD PROJECT

3700 Ski Hill Road
PO Box 250
WELLS, BC V0K 2R0
250.994.0002

Ministry of Education and Child Care
Independent Schools Office
PO Box 9153
STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC, V8W 9H1

October 4, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

Please accept this as a letter of support for the Wells Destination School Society in their application for interim certification as a BC Independent School.

Osisko Development Corp. is the 100% owner of Barkerville Gold Mines Ltd., located in Wells, which includes the proposed Cariboo Gold Project. This proposed Project, another underground mine in Wells, is currently in review under the BC *Environmental Assessment Act, 2018*, and beginning the permitting process.

Osisko Development Corp. fully supports the concept of a Destination High School in Wells. As one of the community's largest employers, we recognize the need for a high school in Wells as part of attracting and retaining the best possible employees, including those with families.

Sincerely,

Chris Pharness
VP Sustainable Development,
Osisko Development Corp.

Osisko Development Corporation
1100, avenue des Canadiens-de-Montréal, suite 300, Montreal, Québec, Canada H3B 2S2
Telephone (514) 940-0685 - Fax (514) 940-0687
www.osiskodev.com

November 6th, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

Subject: Support for the Establishment of Wells Destination High School

I am writing to you as the President of the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and a concerned parent from the Wells community to bring to your attention a critical issue affecting our families and children for years. The absence of a local high school for grades eight and above has our children having to endure a daily three-hour commute to pursue their fundamental right to education. This letter seeks your support for the application to establish the Wells Destination High School. This solution promises to bridge the educational gap and foster family unity within our community.

Our town's conversations have made it clear; the absence of higher grades locally is hurting our kids and affecting every aspect of life in Wells. Families are moving away to find better education options, and it's taking a toll on our elementary school and community life.

The current situation is driving families away. Over the past ten years, the departure of numerous families has left a noticeable void in our youth population, signaling an urgent call for action.

My family's story is a testament to this struggle. Last year, my son, who entered grade 8, could not be accommodated by the busing system due to his learning disability, which demands more rest and less strain to maintain his academic performance. Consequently, our family had to make the heart-wrenching decision to live apart, with my son residing in Quesnel during the school week. This separation has been challenging for us, emotionally and logistically.

The establishment of Wells Destination High School is envisioned as a sustainable educational model that not only retains families but also caters to students who may not thrive in a traditional institutional setting.

This initiative is urgent, as my daughter will soon face the same predicament of having to leave Wells for her grade 8 education. We aim to reunite our family under one roof, in the community we love and contribute to, without compromising our children's educational needs.

We are at a pivotal moment where your support can make a significant difference in the lives of our children and the future. We seek your endorsement for the Wells Destination High School.

Thank you for considering our request. We're eager for a response that reflects our dedication to our children's education and the vitality of Wells.

Sincerely,

Dawn Leroy

Ministry of Education and Child Care

Independent Schools Office

PO Box 9153

STN PROV GOVT

Victoria, BC, V8W 9H1

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my full support of the WILDways High School proposal to provide secondary education in Wells, BC.

I am the parent of two children who live in Wells. My twin daughters attended the Wells Barkerville Elementary School from grades K to 7. When my daughter, Omineca, was 12 years old she was formally diagnosed as autistic. Prior to her diagnosis I was already wary of enrolling her in high school in Quesnel (our only current option in Wells, if we wish for our children to remain within the public school system). Omineca is highly socially anxious, a common aspect of autism, and the idea of her leaving Wells at 6:45 and returning at 4:45 is simply ludicrous. It would be so damaging to her mental health to negotiate the bus, a large high school (after attending a tiny school for her entire elementary school career), and the structure of a school day, all while a significant distance for her hometown, family, and known supports.

As a parent, I also am so disturbed by the idea of my children suddenly being absent from their home and community for most of their waking hours. The children of Wells are a vibrant part of our town, and the sad reality for decades has seen them suddenly and abruptly forced to leave town for most of the day as soon as they reach grade eight.

I homeschooled my daughters for grade eight and am currently doing the same for grade nine. Although homeschooling is going well, my girls lament the loss of a peer group. They often express how they wish they could be educated in Wells with other students.

I am an artist and educator, and I would be thrilled to offer my service to the proposed high school. Wells is a unique small-town, teeming with experts in arts, industry, outdoor adventure, environmental expertise, and our community is so excited to create an education option where our young citizens could remain in their hometown and benefit from the mentorship of their community.

Our dedicated WILDways team has proven, in their relentless pursuit of making this dream a reality, that Wells could be a role model for any small town wishing to create a fair and unique educational model for a rural community.

Sincerely,

Danette Boucher

250 983 8121, queevee@gmail.com

Ministry of Education and Child Care

Independent Schools Office

PO Box 9153

STN PROV GOVT

Victoria BC, V8W9H1

To Whom it May Concern,

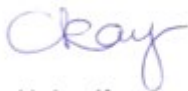
I'm writing today to support the efforts of the Wells Destination School Society in their application for an Independent school for Wells, BC. I have been a resident of Wells for 17 years and in that time I have witnessed the negative impact on the community caused by the absence of a High School in Wells. As you may know, we have a one-room K-7 school with one teacher, and we are always told (by the School District) that if we want more than one teacher (which we desperately do) then we need to increase the numbers of students. The problem is that once a student gets to grade 8 they have to be bussed for up to 3 hours a day to go to the nearest centre and many people choose to move out of the community instead. This leads to families pulling younger children out of the elementary school and thus, in the 17 years that I have lived here, we never made those numbers to get a second teacher. Not only that, but we are missing a key demographic in our community, which are teenagers.

I am now a Mother with a child in grade 9 and one in grade 7. Both of my children are autistic and I am beyond uncomfortable with them being on a bus for 3 hours a day and being in a different town for 5 days of the week. Currently my eldest is part of a small homeschool collective with two other grade 9 students. It is a great temporary solution but the truth is that it's not possible for him to get a proper education that way, and he misses out on the social aspect of being in a regular school.

I have been a huge proponent of the creation of a destination high school in Wells for many years and have dedicated a lot of time and energy to this cause because it benefits me personally, but also because I am a community-minded person that sees the wider benefits to the whole community in this endeavor.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Sincerely,



Lindsay Kay
lindsaykayart@gmail.com
250-994-6804

Ministry of Education and Child Care
Independent Schools Office
PO Box 9153
STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC, V8W9H1

To Whom it May Concern,

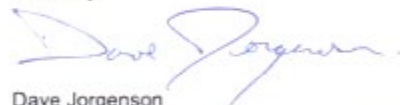
Please accept this as a letter of support for the Wells Destination School Society in their application for an Independent School.

The Wells and Area Community Association (WAACA) was created in 2013 with a mandate to be an umbrella organization which represents the interests and needs of the Community of Wells and surrounding area, to cooperate with other community groups in the area on projects of mutual interest and, to undertake projects and support activities that make Wells a more resilient and viable place to live.

One of the priorities of WAACA has been to create a high-school in Wells. In 2016 we completed a feasibility study on the topic and have been slowly working at implementing the project. Last year we decided that we needed to create a new society whose sole purpose was the high-school initiative, thus, the Wells Destination School Society (WDSS) was formed. The WDSS is now operational with its own board and operates separately from WAACA.

In summary, the Wells and Area Community Association recognizes the great need for a high-school in Wells and has full confidence in the Wells Destination School Society to make it a reality. We fully support their efforts and are excited to watch their progress and help and assist them in any way we can.

Sincerely,



Dave Jorgenson
Treasurer, Wells and Area Community Association

Support from the District of Wells [Email Correspondence]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jerry Dombowsky, CAO** <jerrydombowsky@wells.ca>

Date: Thu, Nov 9, 2023 at 1:47 PM

Subject: District of Wells facility support for Destination High School accreditation

To: Alison Galbraith <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

The District of Wells would like to confirm our interest and support for your Independent School accreditation application by confirming that the Wells-Barkerville Culture & Recreation Centre is available for use by the Wells Destination School with specific terms on spaces, times etc. to be agreed upon later. As you know, the facility has multiple rooms and spaces available for use including a gymnasium, washrooms, commercial kitchen, and grounds. I can confirm that the facility meets all current municipal/regional district codes, regarding zoning, building, fire prevention, and health bylaws and regulations.

We look forward to working with you to advance this project.

Sincerely,

Jerry

Jerry Dombowsky



Wells Destination School Society
P.O. Box 12, Wells, BC, V0K 2R0
wellsdestinationschool@gmail.com