

# District Accountability Contract

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Guidelines: 2004 – 2005



May 2004

## **Guidelines for 2004 – 2005 District Accountability Contracts**

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# Guidelines for District Accountability Contracts

## Introduction

Improving student achievement is the top priority for the Ministry of Education. The intent of the School District Accountability Contract is to focus district attention and resources on improving student achievement.

The primary purpose of this document is to outline the rationale for the Accountability Contracts, to provide a basic framework with some key elements and to clarify common expectations. This is not a “how-to” guide and does not prescribe any particular process for the development of Accountability Contracts. Each district, in consultation with its education community and parents, will design a district planning process that suits its unique needs and circumstances.

## Background of the District Accountability Contract

The public is interested in clear information about the quality of service delivered by public institutions. Parents are interested in meaningful information that will help them make informed decisions for their child's education.

Amendments to the *School Act* created an accountability cycle that requires each school, each district and the Ministry of Education to review performance measures and to plan, annually, for improvement. The Accountability Contract is an integral part of the accountability cycle and reflects the Board's commitment to improve student achievement.

Connected with school plans and priorities, the Accountability Contract provides a framework for districts to articulate evidence-based decision making, and to describe the progress being made in improving student achievement

Meaningful collaboration in education planning increases district accountability and supports the development of shared goals. The involvement of principals, teachers, and parents in matters related to student achievement has been formally acknowledged in the requirements for School Planning Councils outlined in the *School Act*.

These guidelines have been developed using current research, reflections, observations and examples taken from Accountability Contracts. The following guidelines are intended to provide clarity without being prescriptive about process or presentation.

## District Planning

Effective school districts have a clear focus on improving student achievement. Decisions are based on a range of data and information and are supported by effective planning and resource allocation. Planning and decision-making support safe, caring and orderly schools and are the result of broad consultation. Progress towards achievement is reported regularly to parents and to the community.

# Accountability Contracts: Key Elements

## Context

The context of a district includes:

- Demographic data identifying major community groups (such as ESL, Aboriginal, Special Education) as well as student enrollment information;
- Unique Characteristics of the District; and
- Two or three areas of strength based upon student performance.

## Example

### **Demographics**

- *The District population is 55,000. Rural population is 25.8%. Approximately 3.8% of the homes are non-English speaking and 4.9% are Aboriginal (from the 2001 census)*
- *Enrolment is 9,642 and has been decreasing since 1996. It is projected to decrease each year until 2005 when it should then rise each year until 2010 when enrolment is expected to be approximately 9,800*
  - *5,409 - elementary and 4,233 secondary*
  - *695 - Aboriginal students enrolled in this district*
  - *138 - enrolled in low incidence/high cost Special Education programs*
  - *1,468 - enrolled in Career Preparation programs*

### **Unique Characteristics and District Strengths**

*The district faces the challenge of declining enrollment due largely to economic changes within the region and a widely dispersed population. The district provides a full offering of academic and career preparation programs. We are particularly proud of the Transitions program, initiated several years ago, providing students with preparatory pre-apprenticeship for college credit. Increasing numbers of students are enrolling in this program and successfully making the transition to post secondary. We are also proud of our work in Human and Social Development. We have systematically addressed issues related to violence, bullying and racism and have seen a decrease in the number of behavioural incidents. EBS, Restorative Justice and the tracking of behavioural incidents are ongoing priorities in the district.*

## District and School Connections

Efforts to improve student achievement are enhanced through a common vision, shared goals, effective use of resources, and connections among district, school and parent priorities.

A description of the connection between district and schools illustrates the relationship between the District Accountability Contract and school plans. This description includes the process to consult with School Planning Councils about:

- a) the allocation of staff and resources in schools\*
- b) the contents of the District Accountability Contract in relation to school plans
- c) educational services and educational programs in schools

\*The resources allocation form provided to School Planning Councils is appended to the Contract.

## **Examples**

*Each school growth plan was developed through the work of the School Planning Council. This plan considered a variety of information including: classroom, school, district and provincial data; school and parent priorities; as well as the Resource Allocation Form (see Appendix 1). District staff and trustees reviewed each school growth plan and consulted with each SPC. Information from the school growth plans determined district-level priorities. A District Administration Team, comprised of school principals, analyzed student achievement data. The District's Accountability Contract was developed based upon goals generated by each school community and data analysis conducted by the principals.*

*A District committee identified District priorities through an analysis of classroom, school, district and provincial data. District priorities, the Resources Allocation Form provided to each principal (Appendix 1), and a variety of student data sources were considered by each School Planning Council when developing their school plans. A team of district staff and trustees met with each SPC to review their school plans and to provide input and advice. When school plans were inconsistent with district priorities, the school provided the District with a student-focused rationale for the departure. An opportunity for input into the District Contract was provided for school staff and parents when the District Contract was discussed in a public forum.*

## **Goals and Objectives**

### **Goals**

Clear Goals help to focus district priorities for improving student learning. District priorities are made visible in two to three goals based on analysis of student performance data from a range of sources.

Goal statements from the previous contract are brought forward each year until the Goal is no longer applicable. Plans for improvement may require changes as a result of circumstances in the district. If a goal has been eliminated from a previous contract, an explanation is provided (e.g., The previous Writing goal has been removed as steady progress has been made in this area and raised parental concerns have heightened the need to focus on safety).

### **Examples**

*Goal 1: Increase Student Reading skills*

*Goal 2: Improve school completion rate*

### **Objectives (Specific Area of Focus)**

Objectives help to focus district goals into more specific areas of attention. The District considers the performance of all students, including any specific group of under-performing students, when determining objectives.

Objectives from the previous contract are brought forward each year until the Objective is no longer applicable. If an objective has been eliminated from a previous contract, an explanation is provided (see Goals above).

## Examples

*Goal 1: Increase Student Reading skills*  
*Objective 1: Improve Reading in K – 3*  
*Objective 2: Improve Reading in Grade 7 – 10 boys*

*Goal 2: Improve school completion rate*  
*Objective 1: Increase the number of Aboriginal students successfully completing school*  
*Objective 2: Increase the number of students with special needs successfully completing school*

## Rationale

Providing a rationale demonstrates that student performance information, community context and values have been considered when identifying goals and determining objectives. The rationale connects the analysis of student performance (classroom, school, district and provincial data) and other pertinent information with goal decisions. A clearly understood rationale builds commitment to the goals and objectives.

## Examples

*Goal 1: Increase Student Reading Skills*  
*Analysis of reading results in FSA, Language Arts report card results, and Grade 12 English exams indicated a slightly lower than expected level of success, with students in Grade 4 and boys in Grade 7 through 10 falling significantly below expectations. For the next two years, the district will focus on improving the reading skills of all students in Kindergarten to Grade 3, and boys in Grades 7 through 10.*

*Goal 2: Improve school completion rate*  
*Secondary enrollment is growing in this district. Reviewing District drop-out figures, Dogwood completion rates and Reading FSA data in 2001/02 emphasized students in Grades 7 through 12, across the District, are not succeeding to the level expected. In collaboration with principals, teachers, and parents it has been determined that the success of Aboriginal students and students with special needs should be the most immediate priority.*

## Performance Indicators / Evidence

Performance Indicators are measures used to indicate progress towards attainment of goals and objectives. A variety of indicators, that are suitable for showing student performance over time, generate a more complete picture of student achievement in a district. Indicators include sources of information drawn from classroom, school, district and provincial data.<sup>1</sup> Once Performance Indicators have been identified, expected results are set (see Performance Targets).

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to Ministry website ([www.gov.bc.ca/bced/](http://www.gov.bc.ca/bced/)) for information about provincially-collected data.

## Performance Targets (Expected Results)

Clearly articulated expectations for short-term (one to two years) and long-term (three to five years) results support district planning for enhanced student performance. They help to determine progress towards meeting goals and objectives. Performance targets are directly linked to established goals and objectives, expressing both the desired level of student performance to be attained and the anticipated timeframe for achievement.

When examining student performance it is important to consider trends over time. Several years of data are needed (a minimum of three years) before a trend may be suggested.

### Examples

Goal 1: Objective 1: Improve Reading in K-3

*District Benchmark Reading Assessment – Grade 3*

<i>Evidence</i>	<i>01/02 Baseline</i>	<i>02/03 Target</i>	<i>02/03 Results</i>	<i>03/04 Target</i>	<i>03/04 Results</i>	<i>04/05 Target</i>	<i>04/05 Results</i>	<i>05/06 Target</i>
<i>Meeting Expectations</i>	45% <i>n=303</i>	48%	49% <i>n=325</i>	51%	53% <i>n=333</i>	55%		59%
<i>Participation</i>	95% <i>n=674</i>		94% <i>n=664</i>		94% <i>n=628</i>			

Goal 2: Objective 1: Increase the number of Aboriginal students successfully completing school

The results of 3 cohort groups of Aboriginal students (assessed as at risk of not succeeding in Reading) entering Gr 7 over a 4-year period are tracked using District Literacy Assessment results. The participation rate for all cohort groups remains 98% – 100% throughout the 2001/02 – 2003/04 assessments. Targets for meeting expectations follow.

Cohort 1 (n=43) In 2001/02, the number of students meeting expectations: 13(baseline); targets are to increase the number of students meeting expectations to 17 in 2002/03, to 21 in 2003/04 and to 25 in 2004/05.

Cohort 2 (n=46) In 2002/03, the number of students meeting expectations: 19(baseline); the target was set to increase the number of students meeting expectations to 22 in 2003/04, however, as the 03/04 target was not met this target has been maintained for 2004/05.

Cohort 3 (n=47) In 2003/04, the number of students meeting expectations: 21(baseline); the target is to increase the number of students meeting expectations to 25 in 2004/05.

Goal 2: Objective 1: Increase the number of Aboriginal students successfully completing school

<i>Evidence</i>	<i>01/02 Baseline</i>	<i>02/03 Target</i>	<i>02/03 Results</i>	<i>03/04 Target</i>	<i>03/04 Results</i>	<i>04/05 Target</i>
<i>6-Year Dogwood Completion rate Aboriginal Students</i>	45%	48%	50%	55%	52%	55%

## Achievement of Performance Targets

Achievement, or progress towards achievement, of established performance targets informs ongoing district planning. Performance targets are presented as “met” or “not met”. When targets are not met, results are presented accompanied by an explanation and any additional plans or modifications made to support increased student achievement.

## Examples

Goal 1: Objective 1: Improve Reading in K-3

### District Benchmark Reading Assessment – Grade 3

Evidence	01/02 Baseline	02/03 Target	02/03 Results	Target Met	03/04 Target	03/04 Results	Target Met	04/05 Target	04/05 Results	05/06 Target
Meeting Expectations	45% n=303	48%	49% n=325	yes	51%	53% n=333	yes	55%		59%
Participation	95% n=674		94% n=664			94% n=628				

Goal 2: Objective 1: Increase the number of Aboriginal students successfully completing school

The table below follows the results of 3 cohort groups of Aboriginal students assessed as at risk in Reading. A baseline is established in Gr 7 for each cohort.

### Number of Aboriginal Students Meeting Expectations

Evidence	Cohort Groups	01/02 Results	Target Met	02/03 Target	02/03 Results	Target Met	03/04 Target	03/04 Results	Target Met	04/05 Target
District Literacy Assessment	Cohort 1 N=43	13 Gr 7 Baseline	N/A	17	18	yes	21	21	yes	25
	Cohort 2 N = 46				19 Gr 7 Baseline	N/A	22	18	no*	22
	Cohort 3 N = 47							21 Gr 7 Baseline	N/A	25

N = the number of students in the cohort group entering Grade 7.

\* An analysis of student results has led to the development of improved strategies designed to strengthen connections between the school and Aboriginal parents

Note: The participation rate for all cohort groups remains 98% - 100% throughout the 2001/02 – 2003/04 assessments.

Goal 2: Objective 1: Increase the number of Aboriginal students successfully completing school

Evidence	01/02 Baseline	02/03 Target	02/03 Results	Target Met	03/04 Target	03/04 Results	Target Met	04/05 Target
6 year Dogwood Completion rate Aboriginal Students	45%	48%	50%	√	55%	52%	Not met <sup>1</sup>	55%

1. The results have not improved as rapidly as expected. In consultation with teachers and aboriginal parents an evaluation plan has been developed to assist in monitoring the effectiveness of improvement strategies. Completion rates will continue to be closely monitored for any indication of trends in student completion rates.

## Strategies

Clearly articulated strategies connect district efforts and activities with desired student results. Strategies clearly link to the district goals and objectives. They are the actions and activities, directed toward student learning in the classroom. The strategies selected to achieve the goals and objectives are drawn from research, best practice, and innovative thinking.

## Examples

Goal 1: Objective 1: Improve Reading in K – 3

- Select and/or develop an instrument for screening students at risk for reading failure
- Introduce the Firm Foundations Program (Reading 44) – placing an emphasis on phonological awareness
- WiggleWorks early reading software installed on computers at all schools and training of teachers and support workers provided this year

Goal 2: Objective 1: Increase the number of Aboriginal students successfully completing school

- Revamping the service delivery model to focus specifically upon Aboriginal students at high risk of not succeeding to provide effective methods of delivery instruction that lead to Dogwood certificates
- Implementing Journey to Literacy intervention programs for Aboriginal students
- Expanding tutorial support for middle and secondary Aboriginal students to improve performance in Reading
- Continuing implementation of strategies developed to increase Aboriginal student attendance, e.g. Extended Learning Salmon Release Program
- Enhancing connections with parents and the community to support improved student Literacy: consulting with First Nation Education Committee and individual parents to develop strategies for increased performance in Literacy including: Literacy- related information in school and Band newsletters; increasing the awareness of Literacy intervention programs offered in the District; developing strategies to encourage aboriginal students and their parents to participate in Library assessment and book purchasing opportunities
- Providing Aboriginal cultural opportunities for students within the school setting at all levels
- An evaluation plan, developed in consultation with teachers and aboriginal parents, to assist in monitoring the effectiveness of improvement strategies

## Structures

Structures underpin strategies. Structures reflect the way the district has organized resources, time, personnel and organizational planning to support achievement of goals and objectives. This includes allocating resources in the areas of highest need for improvement. Structural changes made in the district to support improved student learning are clearly linked to achieving district goals and objectives.

## Examples

Goal 1: Objective 1: Improve Reading in K-3

- Reduce Primary class size and provide enhanced professional development in the five lowest performing schools
- Target the Early Literacy Support teacher positions to focus on “at-risk” students in specified schools
- District professional development will make Early Literacy a priority

Goal 2: Improve school completion rate

- Realign schedules and timetables for later secondary school start time
- Implement a secondary school common timetable

## Reporting

Although education planning and decision making is an ongoing process in the district, the Accountability Contract between the District and the Minister is an annual occurrence. Each year, the district contract is submitted on or before October 31 as follows.

A paper copy is sent to:

Honourable [Minister's name]  
Ministry of Education  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, British Columbia  
V8V 1X4

An electronic copy (PDF format) is sent to:

[EDUC.AMR@gems7.gov.bc.ca](mailto:EDUC.AMR@gems7.gov.bc.ca)

The district ensures that a copy of the Contract that was submitted to the Minister October 31 is available for public review in the district office in both electronic and a hard copy formats. This Contract is also placed on the Ministry website.

## Appendix A: Accountability Contract Obligations

The following items are required to be included in each year's District Accountability Contract.

1. District Context
2. Explanation of District and School Connections
3. District priority Goal statements<sup>1</sup>
4. Objectives<sup>1</sup> supporting each Goal
5. Rationale for the selection of each Goal
6. Performance Indicators<sup>1</sup> directly linked to each Objective
7. Performance Targets (Expected Results)<sup>1</sup> and Timelines<sup>1</sup> directly linked to each Objective
8. Achievement of Performance Targets
9. Strategies directly linked to each Objective
10. Structures aligned to support achievement of Objectives
11. Accountability Contract Reporting

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<sup>1</sup> A brief explanation accompanies any significant changes to established Goal statements, Objectives, Performance Indicators, Targets, Timelines.

## **Appendix B: Contract Samples**

The illustrations that follow have been drawn from district contracts. These are offered as examples only. While it is advantageous to use the same or similar format for presenting district data year-over-year, each district should present the information in a way that most suits the needs of those it serves.

Contract year for all the following examples is 2004/05.

# Contract Example 1

**Goal 2:** Improve school completion rate

**Rationale:** Secondary enrollment is growing in this district. Reviewing District drop-out figures, Dogwood completion rates and Reading FSA data in 2001/02 emphasized students in Grades 7 through 12, across the District, are not succeeding to the level expected. In collaboration with principals, teachers, and parents it has been determined that the success of the lowest performing students should be the most immediate priority.

**Objective 1:** Increase the number of Aboriginal students successfully completing school

**How are we doing?**

## Aboriginal Students\*

Evidence	2001/02 Baseline	2002/03 Target	2002/03 Results	Target Met	2003/04 Target	2003/04 Results	Target Met	2004/05 Target
6 year Dogwood Completion	45%	48%	50%	√	55%	52%	Not Met <sup>1</sup>	55%
Attendance Rates Gr 8	72%	80%	87%	√	90%	93%	√	95%
Attendance Rates Gr. 9	70%	76%	77%	√	82%	85%	√	90%
Transition Rates Gr 9 – 10	75%	80%	76%	Not Met <sup>2</sup>	85%	88%	√	90%
FSA Reading Gr 7 meeting/exceeding	36% n =25	42%	44% n =36	√	48%	47±5% n =36	√	55%
FSA Reading Gr 7 Participation # and (%)	70 (84%)	----	83 (86%)	----	----	78 (80%)	----	N/A <sup>3</sup>

\* Additional data is included in the Enhancement Agreement attached to this Accountability Contract.

1. The results have not improved as rapidly as expected. In consultation with teachers and aboriginal parents an evaluation plan has been developed to assist in monitoring the effectiveness of improvement strategies. Completion rates will continue to be closely monitored for any indication of trends in student completion rates.
2. With increasing attendance rates and the introduction of Stay-in-School initiatives and Extended Learning programs (e.g. Salmon release) as well as formalized communication with parents related to the value of learning outside the classroom it is felt that the long range goal (04/05) of 90% will be achieved.
3. Participation rates were included in the analysis when setting targets for student achievement. Participation rates will be included as a specific focus in next years' contract.

The table below follows the results of 3 cohort groups of Aboriginal students assessed as at risk in Reading. A baseline is established in Gr 7 for each cohort.

## Number of Aboriginal Students Meeting Expectations

Evidence	Cohort Groups	01/02 Results	Target Met	02/03 Target	02/03 Results	Target Met	03/04 Target	03/04 Results	Target Met	04/05 Target
District Literacy Assessment	Cohort 1 N =43	13 Gr 7 Baseline	N/A	17	18	yes	21	21	yes	25
	Cohort 2 N = 46				19 Gr 7 Baseline	N/A	22	18	no*	22
	Cohort 3 N = 47							21 Gr 7 Baseline	N/A	25

N = the number of students in the cohort group entering Grade 7.

\* An analysis of student results has lead to the development of improved strategies designed to strengthen connections between the school and Aboriginal parents

Note: The participation rate for all cohort groups remains 98% - 100% throughout the 2001/02 – 2003/04 assessments.

## **What are we doing?**

### **Strategies**

- Revamping the service delivery model to focus specifically upon Aboriginal students at high risk of not succeeding to provide effective methods of delivery instruction that lead to Dogwood certificates
- Implementing Journey to Literacy intervention programs for Aboriginal students
- Expanding tutorial support for middle and secondary Aboriginal students to improve performance in Reading
- Continuing implementation of strategies developed to increase Aboriginal student attendance, e.g. Extended Learning Salmon Release Program
- Enhancing connections with parents and the community to support improved student Literacy: consulting with First Nation Education Committee and individual parents to develop strategies for increased performance in Literacy including: Literacy- related information in school and Band newsletters; increasing the awareness of Literacy intervention programs offered in the District; developing strategies to encourage aboriginal students and their parents to participate in Library assessment and book purchasing opportunities
- Providing Aboriginal cultural opportunities for students within the school setting at all levels
- An evaluation plan, developed in consultation with teachers and aboriginal parents, to assist in monitoring the effectiveness of improvement strategies

### **Structures**

- Realign schedules and timetables for later secondary school start time
- Implement a secondary school common timetable

## Contract Example 2

### Goal 2: Improve school completion rate

Secondary enrollment is growing in this district. Reviewing District dropout figures, Dogwood completion rates and Reading FSA data in 2001/02 emphasized students in Grades 7 through 12, across the District, are not succeeding to the level expected. In collaboration with principals, teachers, and parents, it has been determined that the success of the lowest performing students should be the most immediate priority.

Objective 1	Indicator/Evidence	Target	Results	2003/04 Target Achievement
Increase the number of Aboriginal students successfully completing school	6 year Dogwood Completion rate	2002/03: 48% 2003/04: 55% 2004/05: 55%	2001/02: Baseline 45% 2002/03: 50% 2003/04: 52%*	*Target not met. The results have not improved as rapidly as expected. In consultation with teachers and aboriginal parents an evaluation plan has been developed to assist in monitoring the effectiveness of improvement strategies. Completion rates will continue to be closely monitored for any indication of trends in student completion rates.
	Attendance Rates Gr 8	2002/03: 80% 2003/04: 90% 2004/05: 95%	2001/02: Baseline 72% 2002/03: 87% 2003/04: 93%	Target met
	Attendance Rates Gr 9	2002/03: 76% 2003/04: 82% 2004/05: 90%	2001/02: Baseline 70% 2002/03: 77% 2003/04: 85%	Target met
	Transition Rates Gr. 9 - 10	2002/03: 80% 2003/04: 85% 2004/05: 90%	2001/02: Baseline 75% 2002/03: 76% 2003/04: 88%	Target met
	FSA Reading Gr 7 meeting/exceeding expectations	2002/03: 42% 2003/04: 48% 2004/05: 55%	2001/02: Baseline 36% (n=25) 2002/03: 44% (n=36) 2003/04: 47% ± 5% (n=36)	Target met
	FSA Reading Gr 7 Participation # and (%)	-----	2001/02: Baseline 70 (84%) 2002/03: 83 (86%) 2003/04: 78 (80%)	N/A – Participation rates were included in the analysis when setting targets for student achievement. Participation rates will be included as a specific focus in next years' Contract.

Objective 1 (Continued)	Indicator/Evidence	Target	Results	2003/04 Target Achievement
	District Literacy Assessment:  # of Aboriginal Students (at risk in Reading) meeting expectations*	Cohort 1  2002/03: 17 students 2003/04: 21 students 2004/05: 25 students	Cohort 1: 43 students entering Gr 7 in 2001/02  2001/02: Baseline 13 students 2002/03: 18 students 2003/04: 21 students	Target Met
	District Literacy Assessment:  # of Aboriginal Students (at risk in Reading) meeting expectations*	Cohort 2  2003/04: 22 students 2004/05: 22 students	Cohort 2: 46 students entering Gr 7 in 2002/03  2002/03: Baseline 19 students 2003/04: 18 students	Target Not Met: An analysis of student results has lead to the development of improved strategies designed to strengthen connections between the school and Aboriginal parents.
	District Literacy Assessment:  # of Aboriginal Students (at risk in Reading) meeting expectations*	Cohort 3  2004/05: 25 students	Cohort 3: 47 students entering Gr 7 2003/04  2003/04: Baseline 21 students	

\* Note: The participation rate for all cohort groups remains 98% - 100% throughout the 2001/02 – 2003/04 assessments

### Strategies

- Revamping the service delivery model to focus specifically upon Aboriginal students at high risk of not succeeding to provide effective methods of delivery instruction that lead to Dogwood certificates
- Implementing Journey to Literacy intervention programs for Aboriginal students
- Expanding tutorial support for middle and secondary Aboriginal students to improve performance in Reading
- Continuing implementation of strategies developed to increase Aboriginal student attendance, e.g. Extended Learning Salmon Release Program
- Enhancing connections with parents and the community to support improved student Literacy: consulting with First Nation Education Committee and individual parents to develop strategies for increased performance in Literacy including: Literacy- related information in school and Band newsletters; increasing the awareness of Literacy intervention programs offered in the District; developing strategies to encourage aboriginal students and their parents to participate in Library assessment and book purchasing opportunities
- Providing Aboriginal cultural opportunities for students within the school setting at all levels
- An evaluation plan, developed in consultation with teachers and aboriginal parents, to assist in monitoring the effectiveness of improvement strategies

### Structures

- Realign schedules and timetables for later secondary school start time
- Implement a secondary school common timetable