

# Garden Valley School Division

Students and teachers at the school use Micro Focus® Vibe® to sharpen their communication and collaboration skills in a safe online environment.

### Overview

Garden Valley School Division (GVSD) educates more than 4,300 K–12 students and employs 600 educators and administrators across 12 facilities throughout south central Manitoba, just outside the capital city of Winnipeg. GVSD has an annual growth rate of approximately 300 students per year.

### Challenge

GVSD built its reputation of superior education by offering a wide range of high-quality programs and services to prepare students to eventually compete in a fast-paced job market. Yet its lapse in technology innovation left many teachers and administrators feeling they weren't adequately preparing students for a world increasingly run online—thus breaching the ethics instilled within the foundation

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IT Manager  
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of GVSD's mission. GVSD needed to find a way to help teachers keep up with students and innovate in their classrooms in a quick, efficient, and effective manner—especially on the social media side.

“We realized that students' adoption of the latest and greatest technologies was far outpacing our adoption of these tools to further the educational process,” said James Reimer, IT manager for Garden Valley School Division. Reimer continued, “The fragmentation between students and teachers was becoming apparent, sending up a huge red flag to a school IT system that always embraced open collaboration. Unfortunately, administrators knew that with the playing field becoming increasingly unequal, it would only be a matter of time before the overall performance of the students, teachers, and school system as a whole suffered.”

### Solution

GVSD turned to Micro Focus Vibe to help close this technology gap. The district began using Micro Focus Vibe as a teaching tool with several goals in mind. First and foremost, GVSD wanted students to be the predominant users; therefore, it needed a solution that had a user-friendly social media interface. It wasn't long before students caught onto the social side of Micro Focus Vibe. For example, they



### At a Glance

#### ■ Industry

Education

#### ■ Location

Manitoba, Canada

#### ■ Challenge

The educational process was suffering because the school wasn't keeping pace with the student body's adoption of emerging technologies.

#### ■ Solution

Use Micro Focus Vibe to foster online learning, communication, and collaboration for teachers and students.

#### ■ Results

- + Revolutionized how teachers collaborate with students and correspond with colleagues
- + Reduced the risk of cyber bullying via online safety courses and ethical-use-of-technology discussions
- + Sharpened student writing and social media skills
- + Gave students a way to make their voices heard, and a way for teachers too ask for instant feedback

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were able to learn about blogging and improve their writing through practice with the solution’s secure microblogging tool. Additionally, Micro Focus Vibe provided a secure environment for students with a robust selection of tools, allowing GVSD to ensure students are safe online.

Given its size and extensive network of education professionals, GVSD also wanted to establish a professional learning community among the teachers within each school while also fostering cross-collaboration among the units. The goal was to provide forums for teachers to correspond openly about curriculum questions and specific learning techniques. Using Micro Focus Vibe, GVSD took what was once a siloed and spread-out organization and created an active community of teachers collaborating on all things classroom-related.

### Results

In the first year, more than 500 active students and educators used Micro Focus Vibe. GVSD then expanded the system to all 4,300 students and 600 staff. “Teachers really enjoy it and see a lot of potential in it revolutionizing how they conduct their classroom affairs, correspond with their colleagues, and collaborate with students. For students, they’re able to sharpen their writing and social media skills, while also being able to relate to their teachers and fellow students on a closer level,” said Reimer.

Additionally, the risk of cyber bullying has decreased as teachers have used Micro Focus Vibe to run specific online safety courses, discuss ethical uses of technology, and exemplify the advantages and dangers of having an online presence. Another overall benefit for GVSD is in its ability to link each teacher and student quickly and easily. With such a large campus, students have the ability to make their own voice heard, while teachers can ask for advice and receive feedback almost instantly. In an effort to further extend collaboration, GVSD also looks to leverage full integration between Micro Focus Vibe and Micro Focus GroupWise® in the near future.

“Our teachers are extremely busy and don’t want to log into multiple sites, so this integration will enable them to automatically sign-in to their email account while also having access to all Vibe folders,” continued Reimer. “The more integrated we can be, the easier it will be to have full access within a few clicks, and the faster teachers will adopt and advocate for the solution.”

### About Micro Focus

Since 1976, Micro Focus has helped more than 20,000 customers unlock the value of their business logic by creating enabling solutions that bridge the gap from well-established technologies to modern functionality. The two portfolios work to a single, clear vision—to deliver innovative products supported by exceptional customer service. [www.microfocus.com](http://www.microfocus.com)