

2015-16 Community Report

Halifax Central Junior High School

Provincial Assessments		
	School (%) 2015-16	Board (%) 2015-16
Literacy Assessments		
Grade 8 Provincial		
Reading	90%	76%
Writing - Ideas	98%	91%
Writing - Organization	94%	80%
Writing - Language Use	92%	82%
Writing - Conventions	78%	70%
Math Assessments		
Grade 8 Provincial		
Mathematics	85%	63%

We are pleased to announce that Halifax Central Junior High School consistently scores above the Halifax Regional School Board and Provincial results in numeracy and literacy. Our dedicated staff continue to challenge students and look for ways to continuously improve student achievement to ensure the success of each student at our school.

In the 2015-2016 school year, we embarked on the first year of our five year Student Success Plan (SSP). This provided all staff the opportunity to look at both provincial and school based data to see our student's strengths and challenges, as well as conduct a rigorous self-assessment of current instructional and assessment practices. From this process, we developed high leverage goals and strategies in both mathematics and language arts. Each goal has three strategies; one in the areas of instruction, assessment, and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

Literacy Goal: *Students will demonstrate improvement in reading comprehension through critical thinking. Strategies:* 1) Through small group instruction in reading workshop, ELA teachers will differentiate instruction for students who are already achieving in relation to critical responses to texts. 2) Using PLC time, ELA teachers will collaboratively focus on formative assessment, running records, raising the bar and closing the achievement gap. 3) All teachers will focus on technology to support critical responses to a variety of texts.

Mathematics Goal: *Students will demonstrate improvement in their ability to answer analysis cognitive level questions. Strategies:* 1) Mathematics teachers will provide opportunities for students to explore strategies to solve analysis type questions. 2) Mathematics teachers will increase the frequency and variety of formative assessment events in class with a focus on analysis level questions. 3) Using PLC time, Math teachers will develop methods to examine the growth of students in respect to analysis level questions.

This past year, the English Language Arts PLC met weekly to focus on improvement in reading comprehension through critical thinking. We attended several professional development sessions

throughout the year to support the development of a reading record assessment for grade 7 students. All grade 7 students were assessed in December, 2015, to establish baseline data and to inform instructional next steps. A common rubric for assessing reading was developed and implemented across all grade levels. We will begin to focus on higher level questioning that allow students to demonstrate critical thinking.

We also attended several sessions on integrating technology in the classroom. Chromebooks and Google Apps for Education (GAFE) were integrated into the classroom at the beginning of October and continue to be used regularly. Students were engaged in their learning and experienced success using technology to meet the outcomes. There is further potential for Chromebooks and GAFE to play a larger, more significant role in implementing the English Language Arts curriculum. As a school, the use of technology increases each year. Many teachers have embraced Google Docs for Education and have seen firsthand the benefits of this wonderful resource for teachers and students. All classrooms now have mimeos/LCD projectors to assist in the delivery of instruction. With a \$2000 grant provided to both our ELA teachers, an extra class set of Chromebooks was purchased to ensure accessibility for all. It truly is impressive to see our staff and students excited and engaged with the many benefits technology can bring to the learning environment.

The Math PLC has been focusing on developing strategies that will encourage and support improving problem-solving skills at all levels and creating engaging challenging course material that aligns with the new curriculum. We have been pursuing the development of 'Powerful Problems' and the development of a rubric that will accurately reflect students' abilities. We are moving toward introducing Powerful Problems into our math program on a regular basis.

As a school we have taken full advantage of different specialists in our system by having them come to our school to guide and help us in our student success plan. The expertise of these individuals has been invaluable to our staff. Consultants supported us in literacy and math by visiting our school and providing suggestions as well as resources. We also received support from the board's Facilitator for Assessment and Evaluation, who in-serviced our staff around Gradebook and provided clarification around such things as the homework policy. We recognize the efforts of the HRSB's Facilitator for Student Success Planning, who has determined we are set to begin the implementation of year two of our plan in the 2016-2017 school year.