

Bicentennial School
School Improvement Plan
2004-2005



School Improvement team

1. Don Dine Principal
2. Helen Ferguson Vice-principal
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School Demographics:

The Bicentennial neighbourhood experiences a variety of extremes in the factors that affect learning, teaching and leadership. The majority of families with children enrolled in the elementary program are “lone female parent” families at 13 percent followed by 10 percent of families considered “married with children”. The junior high looks a little different with almost 20 percent of students coming from families with married parents and 9 percent being single female families. The families that derive from the larger community that feeds into the junior high are experiencing higher income levels with the highest percentage of incomes greater than \$90,000 in the Dartmouth High School Family at just over 13 percent. We also experience a high percentage of families with incomes from \$10,000 to \$30,000 at the elementary level, almost 40 percent. This high percentage of children living in or close to poverty has a direct effect on student success and learning.

The level of education of parents of our Bicentennial students experiences similar patterns though percentages are very similar to HRM levels. 24 percent of elementary parents and 21 percent of junior high parents did not graduate from high school while 54 percent of elementary parents and 61 percent of junior high parents are post-secondary graduates. For many of our elementary students, literacy levels at home create a challenge to partnerships in learning. Bicentennial is a multiracial school with a strong population of African Nova Scotian students, as well as other visible minorities.

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Target Areas for improvement

- A. Literacy – Elementary Reading
- B. Literacy – Junior High Reading
- C. Numeracy – Elementary
- D. Numeracy – Junior High

Literacy – Reading Elementary

1. Baseline Data:

- i. Running Records all students grades Sep – Oct 2004
- ii. Running Records most students Sep 03 – June 04
- iii. Grade Two literacy results Oct 04
- iv. Grade Two literacy results Oct 03
- v. Reading Recovery grade One assessment Sep 04

2. Observations and trends:

In the fall of 2003 only 4 of 26 grade two students were reading at or above grade two level. With intensive intervention, including Reading Recovery, PD from the Literacy coordinator and the infusion of new reading materials supported through supplementary funding, there was a significant improvement in student reading levels. The assessment in the fall of 2004 showed 9 students were above grade level and another nine were reading at grade level. The other 9 students were reading below grade level.

The running record results from 2003 showed that there were --- students who had made little progress. These students were referred to the school psychologist for a more in-depth assessment.

In Sep 04 11 of 14 grade One students were assessed for Reading Recovery, 78% were in the lowest 20% of the general population.

3. Improvement Goal: to increase by 5% the number of students reading fluently at or above grade level.

4. Measures:

- i. Running records all students May – June 05

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5. Standards:

- i. NSDOE reading grade levels

6. Strategies:

- i. Reading instruction 1 to 1.5 hrs. per day (implemented)
- ii. Team teaching with resource teacher 1 hr a day (implemented)
- iii. PD for teachers from the literacy coordinator on students selecting 'just right books' (implemented)
- iv. In-class support by literacy coordinator – mini lessons on selecting 'just right books' (implemented)
- v. PD for teachers from the literacy coordinator on teaching reading fluently (implemented)
- vi. In-class support by literacy coordinator, mini-lessons reading fluently (implemented)
- vii. Reading Recovery : 4-6 grade one students will receive RR support (implemented)

7. Action Plan 04

- i. Aug 31, informal PD session for all elementary teachers by Literacy Coordinator (implemented)
- ii. Sep – complete running records on all grade 3to 6 students (implemented)
- iii. Oct-Nov teacher workshops selecting 'just right books (implemented)
- iv. Nov-Jan teacher workshops by literacy coordinator re: reading fluently (implemented)
- v. Oct to June – in-class support from resource teacher for 1 hr. each day (implemented)
- vi. Oct to Jan – refer struggling learners to school psychologist (implemented)
- vii. Oct to March – develop Individual Program Plans or accommodations for struggling learners (implemented)
- viii. Oct to June – Reading Recovery support for grade one students (implemented)

8. Review date: May 1, 2005

9. Data & Evaluation June 2005:

Number of students = 113

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Date	Reading below grade level	Reading at or above Grade Level
Sep 2004	49%	50%
June 2005	31%	68%

Improvement criteria:

Significant improvement = an improvement of 3 or more reading levels

Some improvement = an improvement of 1-2 reading levels

Details	No improvement	Some improvement	Significant
Sep 2004 – June 2005	6%	4%	89%

* Figures do not add up to a 100% due to rounding errors

DOE Grade 6 Elementary Assessment data:

Year	% Reading Met or Exceeded	% Writing Met or Exceeded
2003	63%	75%
2004	80%	85%

Professional development by Literacy Coordinator

Professional Development activities for the staff included:

- Promoting independent reading
- Running Records training
- How to improve reading fluency
- Curriculum mapping
- Reading Recovery observation
- Planning for small group and individual reading instruction
- How to develop a Literacy Support Plan

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Lessons in the classroom by the literacy Coordinator included:

Choosing 'Just Right Books'

Making connections

Asking Questions

Important information and how to support it

Expressing oneself in multiple ways; i.e. Art, Drama, Writing, etc.

Introduction to literature circles

Evaluation through Literature Circles

Small Group instruction for fluency, decoding, nonfiction, conceptualization, analysis and synthesis

Resource support: co-teaching model, each class was allotted a time every day when the resource teacher would co-teach with two classroom teachers. Students from two classes were divided into three instructional groups.

The goal to increase the reading levels by 5% was achieved.

Goals for Elementary 2005-2006

1. To increase by 5% the number of students reading fluently at or above grade level
2. All students will show some improvement in reading
3. To improve the writing skills of all students

Strategies:

- i. To implement a P-6 Spelling Assessment using Words Their Way by Donald Bear
- ii. All P-2 teachers will use the Lucy Calkins book Nuts and Bolts as a guide for writing instruction
- iii. All 3-6 teachers will use Write Traits as a guide for writing instruction
- iv. To complete an individual reading level tracking form on each student
- v. To encourage independent reading at home

Review date: June 2006

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Literacy – Reading Junior High

1. Baseline Data:

- i. Grade Six literacy NSDOE Assessment 03
- ii. Grade Nine Literacy Assessment – HRSB Oct 2004
- iii. Grade Nine Literacy Assessment - HRSB Oct 2003

2. Observations and trends:

- i. The results of the Grade Nine Literacy Assessment – HRSB Oct 2004, indicate that 95%+ of our students are able to read grade level material; however, they found non-fiction material the most difficult. Specifically, they had trouble using the text features of the print effectively. Our students find it difficult to read and understand text books.
- ii. The results of the Grade Six literacy NSDOE Assessment 03, indicate the 12% of our students entering grade seven have not met the provincial expectations for literacy.

3. Improvement Goal:

- i. To increase the ability of students to read ‘text features’ of textbooks.
- ii. To increase the reading levels of the 14 grade 7 students identified in the Grade Six literacy NSDOE Assessment 03

4. Measures:

- i. HRSB grade nine literacy assessment 2005
- ii. Running Records for the grade 7 students

5. Standard:

- i. Grade Nine Literacy Assessment - HRSB Oct 2003
- ii. NSDOE reading level W.

6. Strategies:

- i. PD for JR. High teachers from Literacy Coordinator (not completed)
- ii. Classroom support from Literacy Coordinator (as needed)
- iii. AYR workshop for Jr. High teachers (two system inservices)
- iv. Provide wider range of leveled books to classrooms (Literacy support funds)

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- v. Incorporate a reading period into each day (implemented)
- vi. Provide direct resource support to students not reading at grade level (implemented – funded using Literacy support funds)
- vii. Provide new support materials for the grade 7 students (funded using Literacy Support funds)

7. Action Plan 04

- i. Sep – June incorporate a 20 minute reading period into each day
- ii. Sep – Jan PD for JR. High teachers from Literacy Coordinator on selecting ‘Just Right Books’
- iii. Nov – May in-class support by the Literacy Coordinator
- iv. Nov & Apr AYR workshop for Jr. High teachers
- v. Nov – Feb purchase leveled books for Jr. High students to read during reading period
- vi. Sep – Jun reading support for grade 7 students by Resource teacher
- vii. Dec- Mar purchase support material for grade 7 students

8. Review date: May 15 2005

9. Evaluation: The Literacy Support funds enabled us to support this part of our plan. The grade seven students on literacy plans did show improvement especially with direct intervention. There was little direct data to support this. The indirect data, teacher observations and the fact that all students on Literacy Plans successfully met the grade seven outcomes supported our observations. There is a need to develop a baseline for these students and a need to continue with direct support to students on literacy plans.

Goals for Junior High Literacy Support 2005-2006

- 1. To increase the reading level of all students on Literacy Plans by 5%.

Strategies:

- i) To establish a baseline for the reading level of all students on Literacy Support plans
- ii) To provide direct reading instruction to students on Literacy Plans
- iii) To incorporate reading instruction time into the timetable

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Action Plan 2005-2006

1. AYR PD for all teachers in Nov. and in Feb.
2. Increase the time for Language Arts instruction
3. Assign the resource teacher to work in the English Lang. Arts classroom for grade 7 & 8
4. Assign a teacher to be the Literacy Support leader
5. Train the grade 7 & 8 English teachers to do running records
6. Provide appropriate reading materials to the grade 7 & 8 classrooms

Review Date: June 2006

Elementary Math

1. Baseline data:

- i. Grade Three Assessment – HRSB 03
- ii. Grade Three Assessment – HRSB 04

2. Observations and Trends:

According to the 2003 Grade Three Math Assessment carried out by the Halifax Regional School Board, the relative strengths of Bicentennial students were in the number sense and probability strands. Approximately 61% of students gave correct answers in the number sense section, while 73% were able to produce correct responses to the probability questions asked. The Operations, Measurement, and Data Management strands all had similar results, with about 55% of students answering correctly questions from those areas. The area of Patterns and Relations was identified as a relative weakness (48% of students with correct answers), as well as the Geometry strand (with only 20% of students answering correctly).

The greatest challenge that students had was in the geometry strand and involved geometrical language and terminology. The language of mathematics was also a challenge in terms of measurement questions and indeed throughout all of the strands. Representing concepts in different ways, and interpreting patterns or graphs also presented significant challenges to Bicentennial students. This difficulty speaks to the way that literacy ability can often become a problem in the area of mathematics as well.

Students had difficulty during the paper and pencil part of the assessment as well. Out of 5 questions, only 2 were answered correctly by 5% of our students (1 student). The question that the most students could answer correctly was only successfully answered by 60% of the Grade Threes.

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It is interesting to note that very few of the students used the manipulative materials provided to assist them. Also, 70% of the Bicentennial students had difficulty finding the answer to a question that involved calculator usage.

3. Improvement Goal:

Bicentennial School will develop a school assessment tool to establish baseline data on student strengths and areas of need for all grades P-6.

4. Measures:

- i. Grade Three Assessment – HRSB 05
- ii. Elementary Math test – results from 2005-2006

5. Standard:

School elementary math test devised by Math leaders using questions from NSDOE curriculum documents

6. Strategies:

- i. Time to Learn (Math) implemented in all classrooms (implemented)
 - Primary
 - Grades 1-2 (60 minutes/day including 5 minutes mental math)
 - Grades 3-6 (60 minutes/day including 5 minutes mental math)
- ii. Professional Development (implemented)
 - 3 sessions facilitated by math leader
 - topics: measurement, number sense, geometry
 - Gr. 3 teachers will have PD for new math text
- iii. Math leaders (implemented)
 - Professional development sessions to facilitate role in the school
- iv. New DOE resources (implemented)
 - I Get It! Gr. P-4 (Gr. 5/6 expected in March)
 - Grade 3 math text (January 2005)
 - PM Math (Gr. P-3)

7. Action Plan 04:

- i. Sep-June Organize math materials and manipulatives in a common room to provide easy access for teachers. (completed)
- ii. Sep- May PD sessions (implemented)

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- iii. Sep-May Mentor math teachers (implemented)
- iv. Oct- June Extra help classes/ “Homework Club” (not completed)
- v. Oct-Dec Students in grades P-6 will have either personal or “Big Book” type self-or-teacher-created math dictionaries to facilitate and emphasize learning of mathematical terminology. (implemented)
- vi. Feb-Apr Family Math Night(s) to get parents involved and understanding changes in how math is taught. (not completed)

8. Review Date: June 1, 2005

10. Evaluation: The focus of our efforts in this area was to improve our teaching methods and our understanding of how children learn math. Teachers organized the math materials and participated in a number of workshops. Teachers were very positive about these experiences and indicated we need a teacher to act as a math leader and mentor.

Goals for Elementary Math 2005-2006

- 1. To enhance our understanding of math
- 2. To coordinate how we teach and assess math

Strategies:

- 1. To assign a teacher to be the math leader and mentor
- 2. To provide PD opportunities in math for teachers
- 3. The math leader will plan and coordinate the math program

Review date: June 2006

Junior High Math

1. Junior High Baseline data:

- i. Grade Nine assessment 04
- ii. Grade Nine assessment 03

2. Observations and conclusions: The data is not conclusive.

3 Improvement Goal: to develop baseline data

4 Measures: Report Card marks from 2002-03, 2003-04, and 2004-05

5 Standard: under development

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6 Strategies:

- i. Mental Math (implemented)
 - All Jr. high students will have a min. of 5 min. a day of mental math
- ii. Measurement (implemented)
 - Teachers will be emphasized in all math lessons
 - Teachers will emphasis measurement in 1 science class per cycle
- iii. Number Sense (implemented)
 - Teachers will instruct students on the relationship between decimals and fractions

7 Action Plan 04

- i. Timetable adjusted to incorporate and emphasis measurement in science (implemented)
- ii. Establish a math team (implemented)
 - Set time aside in timetable for regular meetings (implemented)
 - Train math mentor – system responsibility
 - Mentor math teachers (implemented)
 - PD sessions on, Mental math, Measurement, Number Sense (implemented)
- iii. Provide resource support for struggling math students (implemented)
- iv. Provide extra help classes for any student needing help (implemented)
- v. Utilize web-based system to provide extra practice opportunities for grade 8 students (implemented)

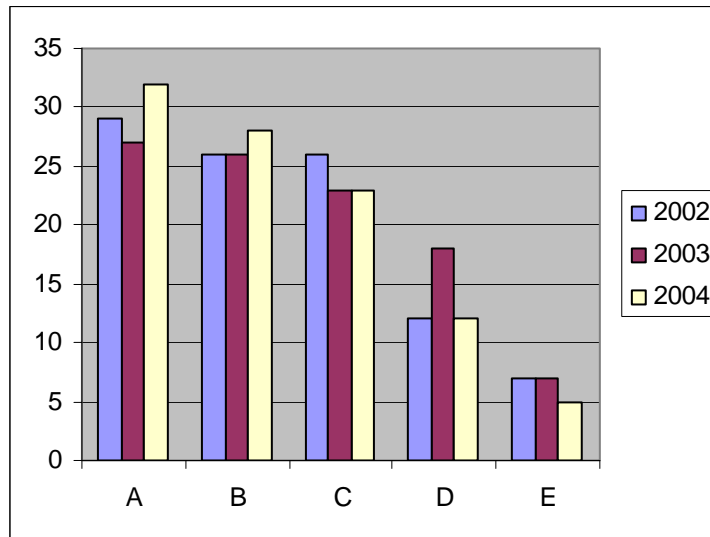
8 Review date: April 1 2005 to November 2005

9 Evaluation: The emphasis of our work in this area was to improve our understanding of how best to teach math. Unfortunately we did not find a suitable tool to use to establish a baseline.

We decided to use the final marks on the report cards; although not specific, we could see general trends. The data was collected from the years 2002-2003 and 2003-04 school years as a

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baseline. This was compared to the 2004-05 school year – the first year of our plan.



There was an increase in the percentage of students who achieved a higher grade category: there was an increase in the percent of As and Bs, with a corresponding decrease in Ds and Es. The data reinforced our beliefs that our efforts should continue to focus on improving our teaching skills. We decided this could be best achieved having a Math Mentor on staff.

10 Goal 2005-06: to increase the percentage of students who achieve an A or B for math from 60% to 65%.

11 Strategies 2005-06:

- i. To allot 50% of a teaching assignment for mentoring teachers in math
- ii. To access support from the Program dept. of HRSB to assist our math mentor
- iii. To financially support teachers who are attending math workshops, inservices and conferences
- iv. To increase the instructional time for math
- v. To provide resource support for math

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12 Action Plan 2005-06:

- i. Increase the instructional time for math
- ii. Assign one teacher to be math mentor
- iii. Schedule the resource teacher to co-teach in with each math teacher
- iv. Budget money for professional development activities

13 Review Date: June – November 2006

14 Evaluation: