

Question 1: What are we doing well?

Dutch Settlement School is a small rural school within the boundaries of the Halifax Regional School Board.

There are many positive aspects about our school.

Our teaching staff works together very well. We are concerned about student achievement and making our school the best it can be. We are always looking for ways to improve on what we do. Our hallways are alive with both informational items and student work on the bulletin boards. Within our surveys, the staff, students and parents all agree that we have a positive and inviting atmosphere in our building.

The teachers in our school are very involved. Along with Professional Development dictated by the board, they are constantly seeking other helpful P.D. to improve their teaching practices, competence and confidence. Teachers have a designated thirty minutes PLC time each week to discuss student achievement, programs and initiatives. We have a first year Literacy Coach that we share with another school. She is also our Reading Recovery teacher, in training. We have attended many Literacy cafes with this staff over the past number of years. As well, our staff is willing to work together on a number of other initiatives. For instance, we have many noon hour and after school clubs to enhance the school experience. Such things as sport clubs, volleyball, running, skipping, dance, table tennis, just to name a few. Other clubs such as drama, choir and guitar, as well as extra help are all provided by staff on a regular basis. This adds so much to our positive school climate. It should also be noted that many staff members have reached a Masters in Education with the remainder of the staff currently exploring that same option.

All classrooms are implementing the Reader's and Writer's workshop as part of the school day. We all incorporate Time on Task for both Language and Mathematics. Learning resources in our school are continually being updated.

Leadership within our walls adds to our positive learning environment. Parents, teachers and students all agree that students and staff are treated fairly and equally.

Our school prides itself on our communication skills. Our surveys indicate that we are doing a good job in this area. Teachers utilize many ways to communicate with parents such as phone conferences, report cards, parent/teacher interviews, curriculum night, and through email. We also send monthly newsletters both electronically as well as in hard copy to each home. We sport a lovely sign in the front of our building where we highlight what may be taking place within our walls. As well we are lucky to have a very active Parent /Teacher group which allows for an even more positive atmosphere in the building. This group is very supportive.

According to internal and external testing results, we continue to improve our language and mathematics achievement.

In Mathematics we have improved our scores in some areas of the external testing done in both the board and DOE. Our school has a good supply of materials and math resources which is being updated and renewed yearly. In previous years, we had a Math Coach, which teachers utilized fully. Much time has been spent on planning useful and good assessment materials, as well as aligning our outcomes and reviewing resources. Some of our teachers have spent time on extra Mathematics Professional Development in the summer months as well as during the school year.

In Literacy, the testing is showing that most of our children are meeting the outcomes. There has been a consistent increase over the past 4 years with the number of children meeting the required outcomes in reading and writing. We feel this is due to the knowledgeable staff. Most of the teachers at our school have been involved in the FAB workshops put on by the Board as well as time spent at after-school sessions on curriculum alignment. In addition to our PLC meetings, we have PFI meetings which focus on the implementation of the literacy strategies.

Parents are active and supportive in our literacy goals as well. Nightly reading and recording are part of each classroom's homework expectations. Some parents have received some instruction on how to read with children from our Literacy coach over the past two years.

In conclusion, we are an active staff that is attempting to focus our energies on a path which supports student achievement.

2. What trends do we see in the data?

In analyzing our data, we see a number of trends which gives us important information on student learning and achievement.

Trends in the data from a variety of classroom observations as well as provincial and HRSB assessments over the past three years have identified specific areas of strengths and needs in literacy. Students generally score well in reading accuracy: however, fluency and comprehension both require attention. The grade 2 literacy results indicate that our students are experiencing difficulty in choosing an appropriate “just right book” and that the students are below the board average for accuracy and fluency on leveled text. Students show strength in writing, organization, language and ideas. Using conventions and sentence structures are areas needing support. There has been an improvement in our student’s ability to express their personal opinions well but require further improvement in supporting their ideas.

In Math, the trends over the past three years indicate that operations at the early grades including addition and subtraction along with multiplication and division in the upper grades are a concern. Classroom data, provincial and HRSB assessment results confirm teacher observations of concern in this area. Students need a stronger foundation in basic number sense in order to demonstrate increasing success in operations. In the mathematics norm referenced data, our results indicate that 59% of our grade 2 students and 55% of our grade 5 students are performing above the 4th Stanine. In looking at the Board’s results we are, in some cases, at the average for HRSB but also above and below the regional average in various strands. Looking closer at our data reveals that in the areas of computation and numerical estimation (addition and subtraction) our students scored low. This trend is the one which we will need to be addressed as teachers acquire more professional development in math as well as access to more classroom tools required to facilitate teaching. Staff utilizes the expertise of HRSB support staff, however it would be beneficial if the school had a math coach assigned to the school.

According to survey data over the last three years, parents, teachers and students feel that Dutch Settlement School has a safe, welcoming and caring environment that treats all members of the community fairly and equitably. The survey shows that teachers and parents are satisfied with the work we do at Dutch Settlement and that student learning and achievement is a top priority. School administration and staff set high expectations. Student success is celebrated and communicated in a variety of ways. Parents/guardians are satisfied with the level of communication from teachers about their children’s academic successes and needs however, they are looking for more information on teaching strategies to support the implementation of the Nova Scotia curriculum and learning outcomes.

3. What strategies do you need to address in order to make the greatest difference in student achievement?

One of the areas in mathematics that must continue to be developed is the opportunities for students to construct knowledge from the information either provided by the teacher or researched by the student to solve problems. Teachers must incorporate the 3 part lesson into daily math lessons. Teachers must continue to share, identify and discuss best practices that cause students to think and arrive at solutions through a path of their own.

In Literacy, teachers have a wide variety of strategies that support the outcomes. The strategies that will make the greatest difference in reading is through the daily Reader's Workshop approach. However, just as important is the development of a partnership with the parents. Teachers need to have more strategies to involve the parents with their own child's education. Reading for comprehension, accuracy and fluency must become as much a part of the home routine as it is the school routine.

Teachers need to assess the achievement of students which will guide their instruction. The teacher must be confident with their personal knowledge of assessment strategies and be prepared to offer enhancements to the program or remediation, when necessary. Teachers must use a variety of assessment strategies to determine "what" the student knows and is able to do and how to support them in the areas needed and direct their teaching in order to meet students' needs.

Parents must become a real partner in the education of their child with appropriate communication from home to school and school to home. Together, a partnership that has a focus on the outcomes will result in greater student achievement.

4. Based on the challenges you identified, what are your goals for student achievement?

Goal #1:

We will improve student math achievement in the area of operations from primary to six.

Goal #2:

We will improve student achievement in reading with a focus on fluency and accuracy in primary - 3 and comprehension in grades 4-6.

5. What strategies and date will you use to achieve each goal?

GOAL #1 To improve student math achievement in the area of addition and subtraction operations from grades primary to six.
Strategies to Achieve Goal:
○ Teachers will develop a progression map for the operation of addition and subtraction.
○ Teachers will create yearly math plans where operations are included in all 3 terms.
○ Teachers will implement the 3 part lesson model (teacher as facilitator-students are actively engaged in solving problems and or investigations)
○ Teachers will create common assessments in their PLC groups(could be 1 story structure) to assess students 3 times per year (Sept. -pre test, Feb and May)
○ Teacher will pose level 2 and 3 questions as part of the daily 3 part lesson
○ Teachers will implement the use of student math journals to explain their thinking.
○ Teachers will require students to demonstrate their understanding through the use of the 5 representations- pictures, symbolic, contextually, verbal, and concrete.
○ Teachers will share current practices around the operations of addition and subtraction with parents during a parent evening.

Professional development	Staff will learn from engagement in professional development
PD with HRSB math support staff- Teachers will go through the addition and subtraction outcomes in the curriculum guide and highlight areas that indicate student understanding of addition and subtraction.	To ensure required outcomes for addition and subtraction for each grade level are introduced and students are presented learning opportunities around operations throughout the year.
PLC teams or PFI meeting (all staff) book study of Chapter 1 (Vande Walle) 5 process standards- problem solving, reasoning and proof, communication, connection and representation.	Teachers will read and reflect on the process standards and how they influence our daily teaching and assessing of mathematical concepts.
After school PD with HRSB math support staff around clustering outcomes and creating a progression map for the operations.	Teachers will see the progression of the operations of addition and subtraction across grade levels. This will assist teachers when students require additional support with operation concepts.
PFI meetings- teachers will create and score common assessment tasks and a marking rubric to gather and determine the strengths and needs from the data and identify next steps for instructions. Teacher could request support from math teacher leader, consult Van de Walle book or Childrens' Mathematics Cognitively Guided Instruction for Instructional strategies.	Teachers will use the data from the common assessment tasks to determine student strengths and needs and identify next steps for instruction. It will also support what professional development may be required by teachers.
PLC meetings or PD with HRSB math support staff. Teachers will read and use curriculum guide and Van de Walle and Childrens' Mathematics to explore the story structure that apply to each grade level.	Teachers will develop a greater understanding of the various problem types of addition and subtraction so they are able to implement them within their daily activities and assessments.

Visit various teachers within the board who currently use math journals or invite them to attend after school PD. Teachers will access outside teacher mentors who have successfully implemented math journals	Teachers will dialogue and learn successful classroom strategies for implementing effective Math journal responses.
PD on how to implement the 5 representations. To read preamble of curriculum guide and discuss how to implement the 5 representations in all classes.	Teachers will develop a common understanding of the 5 representations.
In the PLC Teachers will pose and create tasks that encourage the use of the 5 representations and bring back student work to explore for strengths and challenges.	Teachers will develop a common understanding of what makes a good activity and assessment task requiring students to represent their knowledge using the 5 representations.

Data Sources

What data will you collect?	When will you collect the data?	Who will be responsible for collecting the data?
School common assessments	3 times a year (each term)	Classroom Teachers to turn in tracking sheets to Office.
Grade 2 CAT- HRSB	Spring (May)	Classroom teacher, assessment coordinator and HRSB
Grade 3 –DOE	June	Classroom teacher, assessment coordinator and DOE
Grade 5 CAT-HRSB	Fall	Classroom teacher, assessment coordinator and HRSB
Grade 6-DOE	spring (starting 2009/10)	Classroom teacher, assessment coordinator and DOE

GOAL #2 To improve reading comprehension of all students.	
Strategies to Achieve Goal:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers will provide daily instruction using reader’s workshop approach. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Gradual release of responsibility in daily instruction (i.e. explicit instruction, independent and guided practice and time to share.) ➤ Teachers will conference with students on a regular basis to help inform instruction around reading comprehension. ➤ Teachers will provide explicit instruction of reading comprehension strategies (ie. Retelling, connections, feelings, questioning, predicting, inferring) using fiction text in mini-lessons 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers will develop a common understanding of reading stages. (emergent, early, transitional and fluent). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers will assess and track student growth of reading comprehension strategies. We will develop a comprehension assessment rubric to support running records (P-3) and oral reading records (4-6). 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers will utilize professional reading resources to focus discussions on ways to enhance reader’s workshop and effective ways to teach comprehension strategies. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers will develop a common understanding of reading fluency and accurately assessing fluency. 	

Professional Development	Staff will learn from engagement in professional development
<p>Teacher will participate in a variety of PD activities focussing on teaching practices around reading workshop.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ PD by HRSB support staff- ➤ Teachers share resources and conversation previously learned during FAB. ➤ Visit classrooms within HRSB where reading workshop is well established and highly effective. ➤ Literacy Coach/Resource 	<p>Teachers will develop a better understanding of the Reader’s Workshop structure along with organization and management strategies within reader’s workshop.</p>
<p>Teachers will share current practices around readers’ workshop and the organization of readers’ workshop in PLC meeting/PFI staff meetings.</p>	<p>Teachers will learn strategies for the implementation of readers’ workshop and develop common organization strategies throughout the school, to assist student learning.</p>

<p>Teachers will participate in book studies and dialogue which may include: LA curriculum guide, <u>Guided Reading and Guiding Reader's and Writer's</u>(Fountas and Pinnell), <u>Comprehension Connections: Bridges to Strategic Reading</u> (McGregor), Lucy Calkins kits <u>Lessons in Comprehension</u> (Serafini).</p>	<p>Teachers will strengthen their understanding of reading comprehension and how to assess reading strategies. Teachers will recognize what strategies students are using effectively and where they need to take the students next.</p>
<p>Literacy Coach/Teachers Teachers will develop mini lessons and anchor texts for each comprehension strategy.</p>	<p>Teachers will create a variety of comprehension strategy mini lessons using an assortment of classroom anchor books and how instructional practices can be supported through these anchor texts.</p>
<p>Literacy Coach/Resource and Classroom teachers. Examine current practices around running records, oral reading records, reading stages and book levels to ensure accurate data is being collected and instruction supports development student learning needs at various reading stages.</p>	<p>Teachers will accurately and consistently assess & analyse student reading at appropriate stages. They will use comprehension rubric to guide their mini lessons during reader's workshop. Teachers will learn strategies to support student learning as they move through the stages of reading development.</p>
<p>Administration and staff. Develop tracking sheet to monitor school wide reading comprehension each term.</p>	<p>Assist teachers with the tracking of reading comprehension and support decisions made by School Planning Team to support students.</p>
<p>Literacy Coach/resource and classroom teachers/Admin. Teachers will monitor school wide assessment results of running records and ORR's including comprehension rubric.</p>	<p>Staff will support student learning by gaining a better understanding of students learning needs by monitoring school wide assessment results of running records and ORR's.</p>
<p>Teachers will develop a common understanding of reading fluency through PD from HRSB support staff.</p>	<p>To ensure teachers accurately assess reading fluency and teach fluency using a variety of strategies.</p>

Data Sources

What data will you collect?	When will you collect the data?	Who will be responsible for collecting the data?
Running Records and Oral Reading Records- School tracking sheets	3 times a year (each term)	Class Room Teacher to turn in tracking sheets to Literacy Coach and/or Office.
Grade 2 Literacy- HRSB	Fall	Literacy Coach- HRSB
Grade 3 ELLA (DOE)	Fall	Classroom teacher, assessment coordinator, and DOE
Grade 6 ELA	Fall	Classroom teacher, assessment coordinator and DOE
Grade 4 CAT (HRSB)	Spring	Classroom teacher, assessment coordinator and Literacy Coach

6 How will you involve the SAC, the parents, the students and the wider community?

The School Advisory Council will receive a report that describes the results of external assessments throughout the year.

Throughout the year, the SAC will have the opportunity to see student achievement from HRSB, DOE and school assessment results. We will highlight students' strengths while also examining areas that need attention and guide our instruction.

Students will receive their individual assessment results to take home to their parents. Parents are expected to share areas of strengths and concerns. Teachers will provide further instruction on content areas needed. The staff will organize a variety of events including curriculum night, literacy week, science fair and a math evening. The monthly newsletter will feature a section informing parents about the Planning for Improvement goals and progress we are making with the implementation of these goals and strategies.