

WAVERLEY MEMORIAL/L.C. SKERRY
SCHOOL

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

2008-09



#1 What are you doing well at WMLCS school?

The mission of WMLCS School, as an inviting, caring and supportive centre of learning, is to promote respect for all, and to motivate individuals to develop attitudes and skills to confidently and independently adapt to a world of unlimited possibilities by providing a challenging environment incorporating the resources of the total community.

The Halifax Regional School Board is fully committed to improved student achievement through monitoring progress and understanding where further improvements are required. The HRSB is committed to ensure that “Every child can learn and every school can improve”.

WMLCS School fully supports the School Board’s commitment “that every child can learn, and every school can improve”. WMLCS has developed a comprehensive process of collecting and analyzing data; of identifying areas of strength and need; and of developing, implementing and monitoring a school-wide plan to demonstrate student learning and school growth.

It is through this collection and analysis of data that we were able to identify the many strengths at WMLCS. To help simplify the task of sharing our strengths with you, we have divided them in to three categories:

Achievement

Most students are successfully meeting reading and comprehension expectations for their grade levels. Our PFI data from June 2007 shows that 85% of students at our school are strong in reading fluency and comprehension. Additionally, 90% of students attained grade level expectations for transformational geometry. The entire Book Bureau budget is targeted to support Literacy and Math. Math assessment results and Reading Records help inform teachers’ instructional focus. Parent and teacher surveys clearly indicate a strong emphasis on academic achievement and a strong link between outcomes and instruction. Students learning needs are addressed regularly through SPT, PPT and PLC meetings. PLC meetings are centered on a variety of Provincial, Board and School data results. Survey results indicate that all teachers communicate with parents when children are having difficulties. Teachers indicate they are encouraging critical thinking and independence for all learners.

Assessment

School utilizes common assessment tasks and rubrics so that we are able to monitor learning regularly and across time. Math assessment results and reading records help inform teacher instructional focus. All teachers indicate that they provide feedback to students regularly and the majority of students feel that they are being encouraged to share their ideas and that their teachers listen to what they have to say. Teachers focus on a variety of Provincial, Board and School data results to drive student improvement and inform teacher practices. Grade 2 HRSB literacy results for 2007 were very strong.

Further, 89% of grade 6 students in 2006-2007 met the reading and writing expectations in the Provincial Literacy Assessment.

Atmosphere

Teachers, parents and students believe that our school is a safe place to learn, work and visit. Students indicate that they like their school and the majority of parents feel welcomed at our school. Our school has a positive learning environment and rules about student behaviour apply to everyone equally. Our Code of Conduct is addressed explicitly and continuously through teaching, modeling and visual reminders and evidence of expected behaviour is celebrated (PEBS). Our school has a process for addressing barriers to student learning and our school's culture and practices reflect RCH Policy. Parents, students and teachers indicate that people of all races and ethnicities are treated fairly at our school. Incidents of racial office referrals are very low.

#2 What trends do you see in the data?

MATH

In the **fall of 2007, WMLCS created grade level assessments** appropriate to 6 strands in math: number sense, operations, patterns, measurement, data management and probability. We administered the assessments to grades one through six. A team consisting of our math coordinator and two members of the PFI and MATH team collaboratively scored the results. The results show general trends across the six strands.

The data indicates that our students are generally able to complete grade level tasks that are process oriented. Students experience greater difficulty when asked to communicate or apply their understanding of basic mathematic principles. In Operations-based tasks, for example, 74% of students were able to successfully complete the operation requested. Of this 74%, however, only 25% were able to communicate their understanding and only 5% demonstrated the ability to apply their understanding to problem-solving situations. (**Appendix A**)

The 2007/08 Grade 5 HRSB Cat 3 assessments indicate that the students are competent and/or proficient in the areas of measurement, data analysis, geometry, and number concepts. Students are experiencing some difficulty with the basic computations, namely multiplication and division. Furthermore, the results indicate that students are experiencing greater difficulty with problem solving (45% meeting expectations) and communication of understanding (37% meeting expectations). (**Appendix B**)

The June 2007 Grade 3 EEMLA assessments indicate that most students were strong in all math strands but experienced difficulty (21% showed no evidence and 47% showed some evidence) when the required to show evidence of understanding. (**Appendix C**)

The June 2007 Grade 2 Cat 3 assessments indicate that the students were strong in all 6 strands of math. Students are experiencing some difficulty with subtraction (only 67% of students competent or proficient with subtraction). (**Appendix D**)

This overall difficulty for students to communicate and apply their knowledge is a fairly consistent trend across all math strands examined and across many grade levels.

LANGUAGE ARTS

In January of 2008, WMLCS developed a writing task for all grade levels. (The task was: “Introduce yourself to a person new to our school by telling about yourself and your family.”) We administered the assessments to grades primary through six. A team consisting of our literacy coordinator and two members from the school

Literacy Team created grade levelled rubrics (Emergent, Early, Grades 2-3, Grades 4-6) and collaboratively scored the results.

The data indicates that students at the Emergent Writing Level (grade primary) show strength in the area of writing conventions. Students at the primary level experienced more difficulty in the area of ‘meaning’; they had difficulty developing the idea, focusing on the topic and providing supporting details.

Students at the Early Writing Level (grade 1) demonstrate strengths in ‘meaning’ (topic and supporting details) and ‘word attack’ (recording most initial sounds appropriately and properly spelling some high frequency words). They demonstrated below grade level expectation in the use of ‘conventions’ (spacing, punctuation and capitalization) within their writing.

Overall the Grades 2-3 results indicated that students are strong in ‘spelling’ but weaker in utilizing descriptive vocabulary. Another area indicating a need for improvement includes ‘organization’ (sentence structure and overall structure).

Grades 4-6 demonstrated strength in the area of spelling. Areas of difficulty included ‘vocabulary’ and ‘organization’ (sentence structure, paragraphing and overall structure). (**Appendix E**)

The October 2007 Grade 6 ELA results indicated that most students were meeting the expectations in writing but some (20%) required support in the area organization and ideas. (**Appendix F**)

The September 2007 Grade 3 ELLA results indicated that most students are meeting the writing expectations but some experience difficulty with conventions. (**Appendix G**)

The 2007/08 1st term Report Card Language Arts marks indicated that 27% of students are not meeting expected outcomes in writing. (**Appendix H**)

Given this data, the general trend discovered was that students require support in the area of organization within their writing. This overall need for more support in terms of organization is a fairly consistent trend across all grade levels.

STUDENT AS LEARNER:

Surveys

WMLCS collected data from the annual parent, student and teacher surveys to determine another need. The results from the surveys were linked to the 30 Self Assessment Indicators and shared with staff. In teams, the staff studied the data and listed the Strengths and Needs for all 30 indicators and identified possible areas for improvement. The results did not clearly identify a school-wide Need on any of the 30 Indicators. Below are the identified needs:

Needs Assessment

- Some teachers indicated that there is a need to minimize class interruptions due to non-instructional activities.
- Investigate further, the reasons why some parents believe that rules do not apply to everyone equally.
- Approximately 58% of the staff attend various Literacy and Math café's.
- Needs assessment around classroom inventory of class libraries.
- Parents indicate there is a need for an increased emphasis on "goal setting" and "self-assessment by students (teachers need to teach this)
- Many staff members indicate that some staff are not taking chances to make our school better.
- School administrators should seek more input from all staff in the decision making process.
- As noted in the student survey, teachers need to spend additional time talking to students about their work.
- 23% of parents indicated that teachers don't contact them if /when their child is having difficulty.
- We need to find ways to get parents and community members more involved in extra curricular events outside of school hours
- Require time to share individualized PD. Organized time at staff meetings for sharing of PD
- Promote ways to encourage parents to attend evening meetings and events
- Due to several requests from parents, generate an email log to distribute any form of school communication to home
- Teachers need to encourage effective and independent usage of student agenda books to develop responsibility
- Could investigate ways we can increase parental involvement at extra curricular events: provide child care

-Parents indicate that there is a need to share more information around assessment with parents and students.

-Assessment meeting for parents

-How to use rubrics

-Parents indicate a need for more instruction around information technology. Teachers need to promote more

-regular use of student Ednet accounts in grades P-6.

-Technology that was stolen needs to be replaced.

-Establish if there is a need or interest and find a means to increase the overall attendance of evening presentations in area of Healthy Lifestyles

-A small % of parents indicated that people of all races and ethnicities are not treated fairly, however the remainder indicated they were neutral.

-Teachers require more time during the day to attend PLC meetings

(Appendix I)

However, various points within a number of indicators revealed a common trend for improvement.

Points: The 2006/07 Student Survey data indicates that only 66% of students indicate that their teachers spend time talking to them about their work. The Parent Surveys indicate that many parents believe that students are unable to assess their own learning. Only 74% of parents surveyed indicate that they know what their child's teacher is looking for when evaluating their child's work. Only 67% of parents feel that their child knows how to assess the quality of their own work. Only 60% feel that their child knows how to set goals for their own learning. The staff expanded on this and discussed it in staff meeting and agreed that most students experience difficulty when attempting to set goals and most students have difficulty tracking their growth with the goals. Only 77% of parents surveyed feel their child's teachers contact them if/when their child is having difficulties.

(Appendix J)

The 2006/07 data mentioned above is very similar to the results collected from surveys in previous years. Given this data, the general trend discovered was that students require further support in the area of goal setting, self-assessment and self-evaluation.

#3 What improvements will make the greatest difference to increasing student achievement?

Our math team reviewed the data with the staff; through discussion decided that **the areas of communicating knowledge and application of skills (especially within the operations strand but including all strands) would be the area of focus that would make the greatest difference to increasing student achievement in numeracy.**

Our literacy team reviewed the data with the staff; through this discussion decided that **the area of organization (sentence structure, paragraphing and overall structure) would be the area of focus that would make the greatest difference to increasing student achievement in literacy.**

Our staff reviewed the data from the identified needs and examined points within the indicators and decided that **the area of student goal-setting, student self-assessment and student self-evaluation would be the area of focus that would make the greatest difference to increasing student achievement in all areas of the curriculum. Our intention is to incorporate this need in our Writing goal strategies.**

4 Of the challenges that were identified, which ones will be targeted for improvement?

Of the challenges identified throughout our data, the following were targeted for improvement:

- Writing
- Problem solving, in the area of application and communication
- Student goal-setting, self-assessment and self-evaluation

LITERACY:

By the end of 2008/09 school year, utilizing regular school-wide performance tasks and class assessments, our students will demonstrate improvements in writing in the area of ideas and organization of ideas (**sentence structure, paragraphing and overall structure**).

NUMERACY:

By the end of 2008/09 school year, utilizing school-wide performance tasks and class assessments, our students will demonstrate growth of the expected grade level operational outcomes, in the area of application and communication.

STUDENT AS LEARNER:

By the end of 2008/09 school year, utilizing a generic rubric/checklist and the Student Portfolio as evidence, our students will demonstrate improved learning through self-assessment, personal goal-setting and self-evaluation in the area of writing organization. **Our intention is to incorporate this goal in our Writing goal strategies.**

LITERACY GOAL

5. What does the school plan to do?

GOAL:

WMLCS collected data from a variety of sources and identified many strengths in literacy. Data collected throughout the school identified that our students were very strong in the area of Speaking/Listening and Reading. Data collected from Writing identified areas of strength and challenges that we targeted as areas for improvement.

Goal #1: Literacy

Our students will demonstrate improvements in writing in the area of Ideas and the organization of ideas.

STRATEGIES:

Grade level PLC teams reviewed data as it relates to their grade level and team. The P-1, Gr. 2-3, Gr. 4-6 teams developed a team Literacy Goal that is directly aligned to the school's Literacy Goal. Each team then developed strategies to achieve this goal.

Strategies:

- Students will write daily
- Students will write school-wide common assessments
- PLC teams will work together to develop a common understanding of the writing.
- Teachers will teach through the Writer's Workshop Model, including explicit teaching (modelling) writing through mini-lessons, guided, share and independent practice
- Student will be provided with opportunities to be reflective about their learning through a debrief of the writing workshop
- Implement regular teacher/student conferencing to inform teacher practices that demonstrate ideas and organization of ideas.
- Present writing exemplars to students. Draw exemplars from student work.
- Use Writing Portfolios as a tool for students to set writing goals each term on ideas and organization of ideas; to file written work; to reflect and assess their writing goals; and to plan next steps
- Implement Peer Conferencing. Present strategies to students that will assist them

- to talk about ideas and organization of ideas in their writing.
- ☐ Students will be given a choice of topic or genre in their writing.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TO SUPPORT ACHIEVEMENT OF GOAL:

The P-1, Gr. 2-3, Gr. 4-6 teams each developed a PD plan to support the achievement of the Literacy Goal. The school’s Accreditation Team/Chair Committee will support individual PLC teams by coordinating the Professional Development events/activities for the teams and for the entire staff. The school administrative team will work with individual teachers to ensure that their Professional Growth Plans are aligned with the school’s Literacy Plan. School administration will assist individual teachers in attaining their goals.

Professional Development	Staff will learn from engagement in professional development
Literacy Coordinator/Leader: Student Portfolios	Teachers will learn how to develop an effective Student Portfolio that will help students and teachers set individual writing goals in the areas of ideas and the organization of ideas. This portfolio will follow a child throughout their elementary stay at WMLCS
PLC Team/Staff Meetings - article, journal reviews - website reviews - prof. resources (ex. Lucy Calkins)	Teachers will collaborate and discuss during PLCs and staff meeting information gained from current research. The goal is to reflect on current methods and to develop best practices in our writing goals.
Finding a Balance –FAB (when available)	Teacher will attend FAB workshops in order to learn current Best Teaching Practices in developing an improved Language Arts program – Reading and Writing Workshop.
Literacy Coordinator, Teacher Colleagues, Class Visits, Support Staff	Teachers will dialogue and learn successful classroom strategies for implementing an effective Writers Workshop; an effective student portfolio; and effective teaching strategies to improve student writing.

6. How will we know what is being done is making a difference for student achievement?

Data Sources used to monitor progress	Timeframe(s) for data Collection	Responsibility for data collection- Who will be collecting
Student Portfolio	Ongoing but reported to office Each term (3 times/year) using a generic rubric that will be developed by the office.	Teacher and office
School-wide Common Assessments: Rubrics	Each Term (2 times/year: Fall and Spring)	School Personnel (Administration)
HRSB Assessments: Grade 4 Cat 3 level 14 (writing component)	Once/year	HRSB
DoE Assessments: Grade 3 ELLA(writing component) Grade 6 ELA(writing component)	Once/year	DoE

7. How will we involve the SAC, the parents, the students and the community?

SAC:

WMLCS will involve the SAC in the Accreditation by keeping the committee informed of the school's work in implementing the strategies in the writing plan, the students' progress in achieving the goal and the interventions in place for students who continue to be unsuccessful. With this information, the SAC will advise the principal on programming that is or should be in place to support the plan. Accreditation is presently the first item on our SAC meeting agendas and will continue to be a permanent item of our future SAC meeting agendas. This provides SAC with the location and opportunity to be informed and to advise the principal.

The SAC will serve as a sounding board for parents on issues pertaining to the writing plan.

The school will host Family Information Evenings/Family Workshops on writing and will align these events with SAC meetings. This way, the SAC can participate in the events and advise on its success of the events.

Students:

The students at WMLCS will play a significant role in the implementation and success of the school's writing plan. Teachers will share the plan with students and explain their role in achieving the writing goal. Students will be responsible for directing their own learning progress in writing by setting term goals and tracking their growth. Students will also play an important role in the development of a Writing Portfolio.

WMLCS will host a series of Family Evenings/Workshops and/or Student-led Conferences/Showcases on Writing where students may be responsible for leading and/or participating in the events.

Students will also be invited to participate in a school's Writing Club.

Parents:

Parents will receive regular updates on the school's writing progress by way of monthly school and class newsletters and the school's website. The school newsletter will include a section that will be devoted to Parent Feedback. Parents will have the opportunity to

comment on issues concerning the writing plan and return these comments to the school to be addressed.

Members of the parent community will serve on the SAC and the PTA and will receive updated information regularly on the school's progress in writing. Parents will also serve as school volunteers and provide writing support to individual students.

Parents will be invited to participate in Family Evenings/Workshops and/or Student-led Conferences/Showcases on Writing.

The students will set personal goals in writing and a component of this process will be intended for parents. Parents will assist their child in the developing their writing goals; in supporting them with schoolwork; and in tracking their child's progress.

Community:

Community members will serve on the SAC and will receive updated information regularly on the school's progress in writing.

Community members will be invited to school events such as Writing Showcases or Student Exhibits.

Community members will be invited to volunteer in the school to support students with writing.

Community authors will be invited to present workshops to parents and students.

WMLCS will develop a pen pal relationship with students from community schools or with school outside our community.

NUMERACY GOAL

GOAL:

WMLCS collected data from a variety of sources and identified strengths and needs in Numeracy. Data collected throughout the school identified that our students were competent and/or proficient in Number Concepts, Measurement, Geometry, Data Management and Probability. School, HRSB and DoE assessment results indicated that our students are experiencing some difficulty with basic operations and in applying these operations to problem solve and to communicate their understanding.

Goal #2: Numeracy

Our students will demonstrate improved learning of the expected grade level operational outcomes (Gr. P-3 Addition/Subtraction, and Gr. 4-6: Multiplication/Division), in the area of application and communication.

STRATEGIES:

The Math Accreditation team reviewed school data and Grade level PLC teams reviewed data as it relates to their grade level and team. The P-1, Gr. 2-3, Gr. 4-6 teams developed a team Numeracy Goal that is directly aligned to the school's Numeracy Goal. Each team then developed strategies to achieve this goal.

Strategies:

- Students will write school-wide assessments
- Pre and Post- classroom assessments (interviews, checklists, quizzes, tests, etc...). This evidence will provide baseline data for the teacher and the student and will inform teaching.
- School-wide interventions will continue to be implemented to support struggling students.
 - a. Student concerns will be presented at PLCs and interventions discussed.
 - b. Student concerns will be presented to SPT/PPT and interventions discussed.
 - c. Student may be placed on Resource
- Implement regular teacher/student conferencing to inform teaching
- Teachers will use a 3 part teaching format (before- explore, during-activity and class discussion on Examples and Non-examples, after- real world application)

- Engage students in Level 3 questions regularly to support learning by using story structures and problem solving strategies
- Implement Math Journals/Learning Response logs (non-fiction writing) or oral response logs/journals to have students practice their communication of understanding.
- Ensure a common understanding and employment of mental math in every classroom daily.
- Have students use a variety of manipulatives to demonstrate their understanding and application of math operations.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TO SUPPORT ACHIEVEMENT OF GOAL:

The P-1, Gr. 2-3, Gr. 4-6 teams each developed a PD plan to support the achievement of the Numeracy Goal. The school’s Math Accreditation Team, Math Leader and Math Mentor will support individual PLC teams by coordinating Professional Development events/activities, sharing current articles and through coaching and mentoring. Teacher Professional Growth Plans are aligned with the school’s Math Plan. School administration will assist individual teachers in attaining their goals.

Professional Development	Staff will learn from engagement in professional development
PD with Math Support Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers will develop a common understanding of problem solving. What is problem solving? They will learn how to improve practices in the area of application and communication of operations - Teachers will learn grade specific mental math strategies to assist students in communicating their understanding <p>Gr. 2-3: Training on how to use the big math kits that have manipulatives.</p>
PLC Team/Staff Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - article, journal reviews - website reviews - prof. resources - book/chapter studies 	Teachers will collaborate and discuss during PLCs and staff meeting information gained from current research. The goal is to reflect on current methods and to develop best practices in our numeracy goals.
Math Support Staff, Teacher Colleagues, Class Visits, Support Staff	Teachers will dialogue and learn successful classroom strategies for implementing an effective Math journal responses and Problem solving activities.
Teacher Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ex. Vander wall 	Teachers will learn multiple story structure models and problem solving strategies.
Math Makes Sense	Teacher will learn strategies for teaching in a 3-part teaching format

6. How will we know what is being done is making a difference for student achievement?

Data Sources used to monitor progress	Timeframe(s) for data Collection	Responsibility for data collection- Who will be collecting
Observation Checklist: Classroom observation checklist/rubric developed by the school	Ongoing but reported to office each term (3 times/year)	Teacher
School-wide Common Assessments: Rubrics	Each Term (2 times/year: Fall and Spring)	School Personnel (Administration)
HRSB Assessments: Grade 2 and Grade 5 (Level 12 and 14)	Once/year	HRSB
DoE Assessments: Grade 3 EMLA	Once/year	DoE

7. How will we involve the SAC, the parents, the students and the community?

SAC:

WMLCS will involve the SAC in the Accreditation by keeping the committee informed of the school's work in implementing the strategies in the writing plan, the students' progress in achieving the goal and the interventions in place for students who continue to be unsuccessful. With this information, the SAC will advise the principal on programming that is or should be in place to support the plan. Accreditation is presently the first item on our SAC meeting agendas and will continue to be a permanent item of our future SAC meeting agendas. This provides SAC with the location and opportunity to be informed and to advise the principal.

The SAC will serve as a sounding board for parents on issues pertaining to the Math plan.

The school will host Family Information Evenings/Family Workshops on Operations, Mental Math, Problem Solving and Communicating understanding and will align these events with SAC meetings. This way, the SAC can participate in the events and advise on its success of the events.

Students:

Teachers will share the Math plan with students and explain their role in achieving the math goal.

WMLCS will host a series of Family Evenings/Workshops and/or Student-led Conferences/Showcases on Problem Solving where students may be responsible for leading and/or participating in the events.

Students will also be invited to participate in a school's Math Club.

Parents:

Parents will receive regular updates on the school's math progress by way of monthly school and class newsletters and the school's website. The school newsletter will include a section that will be devoted to Parent Feedback. Parents will have the opportunity to comment on issues concerning the Math plan and return these comments to the school to be addressed.

Members of the parent community will serve on the SAC and the PTA and will receive updated information regularly on the school's progress in writing. Parents will also serve as school volunteers and provide math support to individual students.

Parents will be invited to participate in Family Evenings/Workshops and/or Student-led Conferences/Showcases on Problem Solving, Mental Math and Operations.

Community:

Community members will serve on the SAC and will receive updated information regularly on the school's progress in problem solving.

Community members will be invited to volunteer in the school to support students with math.

WMLCS ACCREDITATION 2008/09

BUDGET

FUNDS AVAILABLE: \$5000

Materials and Resources required for year 2	Estimated cost	Actual cost
Prof. Dev. (individual): substitutes, resources, courses, workshops, etc...	\$1500	
School-Wide Assessments (coordinating and correcting: substitutes)	\$800	
Material Resources (Lucy Calkins Kits, V. Books, manipulatives, Prof. Reading materials – PLCs)	\$800	
School-Wide PD (cost of presenters)	\$500	
Accreditation Lead Team mtgs. (substitutes for Lead team work)	\$500	
Office Materials	\$200	
Total Estimated Cost for 2008/09 school year	\$4 300.00	