



School Improvement Plan – 2009/10

Tantallon Elementary School is a dual track school, with an early French Immersion program from primary to Grade 6. It is vibrant and growing learning community of over 740 students, making it one of the largest elementary schools in Atlantic Canada. Our school is located about 20 kilometres east of downtown Halifax.

In 2008/09, our school participated in the PFI/Accreditation School improvement process to identify goals to improve student achievement. The following summary highlights our journey through this process.



What are We Doing Well?

Analysis of our self-assessment data has made it clear that Tantallon Elementary School has a lot to celebrate. The information that we obtained through the self-assessment has enabled us to determine the strengths of our school and focus on target areas.

We have been collecting data in various areas for several years. The data that is collected is used to inform our practices and enables us to make decisions regarding professional development and resource purchases that will benefit student learning.

A combination of HRSB survey results and administration/staff observations confirm that Tantallon Elementary is a school where students are engaged in learning with the support of an active parent population.

Our School Advisory Council members were asked for their feedback when we were completing our School Self-Assessment. They reviewed and discussed **Category 5: Family and Community Involvement with the School** and **Category 6: Effective Communication**. Their responses indicate that overall, they feel that the school communicates very well with the school community, and that family and community involvement with the school is high, especially in the areas of volunteerism, participation in school activities, and community use of the school. Our SAC members are dedicated to being effective advocates for our school, and regularly participate in Board-sponsored PD for School Advisory Councils.

As a staff, we have worked together to determine target areas for improvement. We have engaged in dialogue that determines what has worked well in the past and what we can do to make improvements for the future. This year we have begun the process of understanding and developing Professional Learning Communities. We have been involved in discussions surrounding the importance of common goals and assessment. We have been developing a shared understanding of how assessments can be used to inform our teaching practices to improve student learning.

Professional Development opportunities are available, onsite and regionally. Teachers are encouraged to participate in these practical PD sessions as well as become involved in Professional Learning Communities that will enhance student learning.

Assessment results from the Department of Education and the Halifax Regional School Board indicate that most of our students consistently achieve better than the board and provincial and (where applicable) national standards.

Our staff is committed to providing the optimum learning environment for all students. We have a strong Student Support Team who assists in developing appropriate learning environments for students. Inclusionary practices also benefit through the support of the team.

The staff feels that we have many skills and resources to assist students; however, improved technology is needed to provide a more efficient program to support assistive technology in more classrooms.

Our school is considered a safe and welcoming place for students and parents. Evidence from the data indicates that we are accepting of differences and diversity.

The implementation of PEBS in September of this past school year has encouraged the celebration of positive and appropriate behavior. It has also fostered a sense of school community as we come together each month for an assembly and celebration. This year has also brought an increase in our school supporting our community/world through planned events such as food drives, collecting donations for Rwanda, supporting non-profit organizations to name a few. This has been made possible by the support and parents, staff and students. Engaged students, supportive parents and effective classroom management skills result in a low incidence of student discipline.

Our math assessment results are strong. CAT4 results indicate that our students are consistently performing above the board and national standards. Analysis of external data indicated that operations are an area of need. 20% of grade 2 students were low in subtraction of whole numbers and 33% of grade 5 students did not meet expectations in computation. Number sense was identified as the goal that would target this area.

Data from our literacy results indicated that our students do well in literacy assessments and the majority of our students are strong readers and writers. 97% of grade 6 students met the reading expectations and 90% met the writing expectations in the DOE October 2007 assessment. Further

review of the data, however, indicates that fluency and support for understanding need to be areas of focus. Connecting fluency and comprehension will improve student ability to effectively make connections and develop inference and questioning strategies.

What Trends Do We See in the Data?

In examining school survey data to determine trends over time, teacher surveys indicate that teachers use assessment information to plan for instruction, and that assessment of student learning is ongoing. Teachers also feel that Literacy skills and, to a slightly lesser degree, Mathematics skills, are assessed across the curriculum.

Parent surveys indicate that they are confident that their child can be successful at school and that their child's teachers set high expectations for student learning. Parent responses also show that they are satisfied with the school's efforts to meet their child's academic needs.

Grade 2 HRSB Literacy (English Program) Assessment data from 2003 to 2009 shows steady improvements in Reading Competence, Accuracy and Fluency. Inconsistencies have been noted over time in students' personal responses to text.

Grade 2 HRSB Literacy (French Immersion Program) Assessment data from 2006 to 2009 shows improvements in Accuracy and Fluency, but our results have shown a decrease in the areas of personal response to text and student support for their response.

Our Goals:

The completion of the school self assessment process has led us to the following goals:

LITERACY: We will improve student achievement in reading through development of fluency and comprehension

While students appear to do well in external testing and overall classroom performance, there did seem to be specific areas where our scores could improve. The data showed that although students scored well in fluency and accuracy, they could not support questions with personal understanding. Teachers felt that they were doing a good job of tracking reading levels for fluency and accuracy, but that using a common assessment tool that consistently incorporated comprehension would give them a more complete picture of comprehension.

MATHEMATICS: We will improve student achievement in Mathematics through development of number sense.

Although our Grade 3 EEMLA results confirm that 91% of our students met or exceeded expectations, teachers noted that Grade 2 CAT .3 results showed that 20% of our students were low in subtraction of whole numbers and Grade 5 CAT .3 data state that students did not meet expectations of computation and numerical estimation. These results support the need for a goal focusing on number sense even though our student results were good overall.

School-based discussions with our math leader helped us narrow our focus by targeting student ability in operations through the development of number sense.

By incorporating these consistent instructional practices into their daily teaching, teachers will be better equipped to participate in more meaningful and effective Professional Learning Communities and to plan for their own professional development that will support our school goals.

Goal 1 Literacy: We will improve student achievement in reading through development of fluency and comprehension.

Strategies to achieve the goal:

- Through PLC time and school-based Professional Development with

the Literacy Coach, teachers will develop a common understanding of what fluency is and how it impacts comprehension

- Teachers will implement a common reading assessment approach throughout our school (Grades P-3 English and Grade 3 FI: PM Benchmark; Grades P-3 French: GB Plus Books and Liste de livres d'IPLÉ Immersion (Ébauche, December, 2008); Grades 3-6 French: ORR Evaluation Rapide; and Grades 3-6 French and English: AYR Assessment)
- Teachers will use purchased AYR assessment materials appropriate to grade levels (specific titles for each grade level from 3-6)
- Teachers will use comprehension strategies rubrics (AR for grades P-2 and AYR for grades 3-6) and reading fluency-expression rubric (HRSB for all grades) to assess students' reading
- Teachers will use explicit teaching models in their classrooms such as mini-lessons through Reader's Workshop
- Teachers will use the daily/weekly collection of reading and comprehension assessment data to help inform their teaching practice (through personal reflection and regular discussion during PLC times)
- Teachers will deliver specific comprehension Mini-lessons concentrating on making connections, questioning, making inferences and synthesizing
- Teachers will establish and engage in regular PLC time with grade level teachers to discuss data collected through on-going common assessments
- Teachers will work together to develop and deliver Literacy cafes to the parent community that will support ongoing comprehension initiatives in the classrooms

Professional development to support achievement of the literacy goal:

Staff will engage in the following learning activities...	Staff will learn the following from the professional learning activities (knowledge, skills, and professional practices)...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development and co-teaching opportunities with the Literacy coach to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • common approach to reading assessment • teachers will be instructed in

refine reading assessment practices	<p>the delivery of specific daily Mini-lessons on fluency, concentrating on intonation, expression and rate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> teachers will be instructed in the delivery of specific daily comprehension Mini-lessons concentrating on making connections, questioning, making inferences and synthesizing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and engage in regular PLC time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop common comprehension assessments, share data, program for individual/differentiated needs, share ideas, mini-lessons and instructional strategies time with literacy coach literacy cafes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HRSB, DOE and School-based PD, FAB/Belle presentations during PLC time from trained staff members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers will become knowledgeable in the best practices to teach and assess fluency and comprehension

Data sources:

What data will you collect?	When will you collect the data?	Who will be responsible for collecting the data?
Reading Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> November, March and May March & May only for Primary E May only for Primary FI 	<p>Classroom teachers</p> <p>School Administration</p>
What data will you collect? (cont'd)	When will you collect the data? (cont'd)	Who will be responsible for collecting the data? (cont'd)

Comprehension Rubrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November, March and May • March & May only for Primary E • May only for Primary FI 	Classroom teachers School Administration
Fluency Rubrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November, March and May • March & May only for Primary E • May only for Primary FI 	Classroom teachers School Administration
HRSB Grade 2 Literacy Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 	HRSB School Administration
HRSB Grade 5 CAT .4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 	HRSB School Administration
DOE Grade 6 ELA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 	DOE School Administration
DOE Grade 3 ELLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter 	DOE School Administration
DOE Grade 6 ELA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 	DOE School Administration
DOE Grade 3 ELLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter 	DOE School Administration

Goal 2 Mathematics: We will improve student achievement in number operations through the development of number sense.

Strategies to achieve the goal:

- Teachers will develop a common understanding of number sense across grade levels and connect it to the teaching of number operations
- P-6 teachers will use assessment resources such as DOE CAMET, DOE Mathematics Supplementary Resource and common grade level assessments, etc.
- Teachers will implement a common mathematics assessment approach throughout our school (create and implement common grade level assessments to measure student achievement in number sense)
- Teachers will incorporate the use of NCTM Process Standards in daily lessons
- Teachers will use the 3-part lesson model (Van de Walle) as it applies to the instruction of number operations and number sense
- Teachers will use purchased Mathematics materials and resources appropriate for each grade level
- Teachers will work together to develop and deliver Mathematics cafes to the parent community that will support ongoing number operations and number sense initiatives in the classrooms
- Teachers will establish and engage in regular PLC time with grade level teachers to discuss data collected through on-going common assessments

Professional development to support achievement of the mathematics goal:

Staff will engage in the following learning activities...	Staff will learn the following from the professional learning activities (knowledge, skills, and professional practices)...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time with Mathematics leader and/or coach • School-based PD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop progression mapping and a common understanding of number sense from curriculum documents • early in the school year, develop an understanding of and implement 3-part lessons • early in the school year, develop an

	<p>understanding of and implement NCTM Process Standards, e.g. 5 ways of representing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to develop school-based common assessments • effective use of materials, resources, trained staff members, mathematics leader and/or mentor • discuss data collected through on-going common assessments, share book/chapter study opportunities, share open-ended questions and 3-part lessons 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRSB PD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new to the system or new to a grade level teacher PD • ACT cohorts 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and engage in regular PLC time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop common number operation assessments, program for individual/differentiated needs, share pre-assessment/post assessment data, share meaningful interview questions to promote rich dialogue, to use CAMET resource or 'Math Makes Sense' binders for 1 or 2 common assessments, share best practices and instructional strategies • common understanding of student engagement in Mathematics 	
Data sources:		
What data will you collect?	When will you collect the data?	Who will be responsible for collecting the data?
School-based common assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January and April (year 2) • November, March and May (year 3) 	Classroom teachers School Administration

DOE Grade 3 EEMLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall 	DOE School Administration
HRSB Grade 2 CAT .4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter 	HRSB School Administration
HRSB Grade 5 CAT .4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter, Spring 	HRSB School Administration

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

Each September, updated copies of the ‘**TANTALLON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAN for COMMUNICATING STUDENT LEARNING**’ are provided for each family. Teachers are also responsible for creating their own individual ‘Classroom Plan for Communicating Student Learning’. These documents provide parents/guardians with timelines and an overview of how assessment and evaluation of students is conducted. They communicate how their child’s learning and achievement will be shared; they assist parents/guardians in understanding the variety of ways that student progress is monitored. Parents/guardians are also provided with an outline of school, Board and DOE protocols that are in place for students who are having difficulty achieving curriculum outcomes. Both of these documents are also available on our school website.

Planning for Improvement progress reports are provided at SAC meetings. Regional and provincial assessment data is shared with the school community through the SAC, our monthly newsletters and the school website. Parents/guardians and the wider community are encouraged to access our SIP through the school finder link on the HRSB website.

In the past, we have invited parents/guardians to attend informal school and classroom-based sessions in Literacy and Mathematics. Both of our

school goals include embedded strategies to provide continuing Literacy and Mathematics learning opportunities for the school community.

Parents/guardians, students, and teachers (and support staff, when their feedback is requested), are encouraged to complete the annual planning for improvement surveys; survey results are shared with staff and community through staff meetings, our newsletter and website, and SAC meetings.

Our School Improvement Plan, when approved by the Peer Review Team, will be shared with the SAC and the Parent/Teacher Association at scheduled meetings. We will share our SIP with the school community through our school web page, newsletters, and the Annual Report to the Community that will be prepared this spring. Teachers will be proactive in discussing our goals with their students in an age-appropriate manner.

We feel that with the information that we have at this time and with the support of a very involved school community, we are on the right track in providing opportunities for continuing community participation as our school moves forward.

We will continue to seek the support of all community members in our pursuit to fulfill the HRSB statement that ***'Every student can learn. Every school will improve.'***