

Grosvenor-Wentworth Park School

Responding to the Seven Questions

1. What are we doing well?

In reviewing the school data (including surveys, self-assessment and history of the school) there are many strengths in our school.

The Literacy data shows that that our students are improving in all aspects of the Language Arts program (Grade 2 literacy results, ELA, ELLA and tracking the term reports). The school has, over time, acquired resources in both English and French to support the classroom collections which are “leveled” to allow students to chose “just right books” and also be used in home reading programs. The library has an extensive inventory which supports the classroom program, in both English and French, and enables students to extend their access to books for home reading. Teachers have been involved in the initiatives of the Board’s PFI focus including BELLE, FAB, literacy workshops and training focusing on teaching strategies, LSP’s, LDR’s, assessment of ELLA etc..

In the area of Mathematics, the school has collected data (EEMLA, CAT 3 grade 2 and 5) which shows strengths and improvement in many of the strands of mathematics. As a result of various professional development training and workshops, staff has focused on lesson planning, use of manipulatives and teaching strategies which promote the three levels of questions, and the 5 representations enabling students to expand their mathematical literacy. Teachers have worked with Math Mentor, Dan Gilfoy individually and at lunch hour sessions, to examine and refine their classroom practice.

Professional Learning Communities and grade level meetings (through common planning time) have given teachers the opportunity to engage in discussions not only looking at data, but also sharing curriculum and program plans, classroom practices and organizational strategies which support and

promote the efficient use of time. Teachers (and the community) appreciate and recognize the dedication of the staff at the school and have good working relationships. The school community (teachers and parents) recognize and appreciate the dedication and positive relations established.

Teachers use a variety of assessment strategies to monitor student progress and intervention and support is available to address student needs. A flexible approach to scheduling for resource allows teachers to access, through the school planning team, support in a timely manner. The Literacy Coordinator has provided professional development to the staff in large group settings and as well as to individuals.

GWP is a dual track school and the classes are grouped by grade levels with English and French classes side by side. Students in both programs are primarily from the school catchment area (with only a few Out-of-Area students) and the children play together in the designated areas of the school yard.

Since the school opened in the 1950's, it has always enjoyed the support of the parent and school community. Parental involvement is strong and their expectations for student learning are high. Parental attendance at school and curriculum events is indicative of their concern/appreciation for their child's education. This is evident in daily operations in homework completed; students who demonstrate respect for themselves and others; parental support for behavior and social issues; and families who are able to provide proper nutrition and care for their children. The School Advisory Council and the Parent /Teacher Group (PTG) have been active and involved in supporting the school to provide materials and capital items which contribute to improved learning for our students (library funds, white boards, laptop etc.).

2. What trends do we see in the data?

In reviewing our data, we see a number of trends which reveal important information on student learning. The summary below highlights some general comments and these are followed by our findings in math, literacy and school culture.

The surveys show that teachers and parents are generally satisfied with the work we do here at Grosvenor-Wentworth. The surveys of parents, teachers and students show that most feel the school is safe and welcoming, the relationships between home and school are strong, teachers have confidence in their students, the staff has confidence in the administration, parents feel that they get feedback from teachers on their child's learning, teachers feel they are involved in a professional community which values their efforts and most importantly, makes learning their number one priority. Through the data, we have also determined that parents are looking for more information on the N.S. curriculum and learning outcomes.

As we reviewed the data in the Mathematics indicator, our results indicate that more than 80% of our grade 2 students and 85% of our grade 5 students are performing above the 4th stanine in the norm-referenced results. 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 the data, the grade 2 CAT 3 results reveal that in the area of subtraction our students were not strong. The grade 5 CAT 3 results show strength in the mathematical concepts however the results in computation and numerical estimation shows significantly lower achievement, in particular the estimation strategy. This trend is one which as a school, we need to address.

In Literacy, we have looked at the data and found that our students demonstrate many positive behaviors; many see themselves as competent readers (grade 2 literacy) particularly our French Immersion students, reading at home is supported, and most of our students can choose an

appropriate “just right book”. All of these findings are consistent with what classroom teachers at all levels report. The ELA results demonstrate that over time 90% (for all years except this year, we had 85%) our students are meeting the expectations. However, the results of the ELLA, Grade 2 Literacy and teachers’ own assessment indicate that while many of the students can read accurately, their reading is not always fluent and they are not always questioning the text they are reading. Since these two areas will affect a student’s comprehension we feel this area is one which needs to be addressed.

The demographics of our school have changed and will continue to change in the years to come. The enrollment data for the 2007-2008 school year shows that we have 17 ESL students which is more than a 300% increase over the previous year. We have a number of families who have adopted children from different cultures who appear racially different from their parents and it is important that we support and celebrate their heritage and support these families as well. The survey data shows that while teachers and parents feel the school is welcoming and supportive of *people who look, think, or act differently*, student surveys suggest they are not as satisfied with their learning of other cultures. In addition to the school data, the Community data acknowledges that this area of HRM is home to 3 times as many families moving from outside Canada than any other area of the HRM.

3. What improvements will make the greatest difference in increasing student achievement?

To support student learning, the school has identified the following areas of need and believe that focusing on them will promote student achievement.

In **mathematics**, we need to look at computation at all levels, including:

- Addition, subtraction, multiplication and division
- Strengthen students' abilities to estimate "reasonable" answers in all operations.
- Develop consistent classroom practices which will enable our students to gain greater competence and confidence with this fundamental skill.

In **literacy**, we need to increase the comprehension skill for our students to enable them:

- To enjoy greater success in "reading and viewing"
- Understand that reading is more than decoding the words on the page
- Understanding that they need to ask questions as they read to make sense of the information
- Strengthen their achievement across all aspects of the curriculum
- Enable them to experience the benefits of reading throughout their lifetime.

Along with changes in the student/family population of the school come new and different challenges in supporting student learning. Staff need to understand the implications of dealing with families new to our country; students who enter our school without the benefit of the spoken language need to feel welcome and respected, students who **look, think, or act differently** need to be proud of who they are, and students who have not

had the opportunity to live or travel outside their own community need to have opportunities to learn more about the diversity of the world's population.

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

In Mathematics

To improve student achievement in mathematics, we will focus on computational procedures and estimation strategies.

In Literacy

To improve student achievement in literacy, we will strengthen students' comprehension in reading by focusing on fluency and active questioning.

In School Culture/Climate

To increase family involvement and support student learning by establishing a school culture which invites, welcomes and celebrates the contributions of all students, staff and families.

5. What does the school plan to do?

Goal – Mathematics

To improve student achievement in mathematics, we will focus on computational procedures and estimation strategies.

Strategies

- All math materials in the school will be inventoried and master lists will be posted throughout the building. Needs will be identified, prioritized and acquired as funds are available.
- All teachers will assess their students' performance early in the year and record the results; results will be updated and tracked throughout the year. Teachers will be able to identify the students' strengths and needs and plan accordingly to address them.
- Teachers will provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.
- We will review current mental math practices and resources and establish baseline skills for each grade.
- Teachers will practice and use the "3 step lesson plan" to conduct effective math lessons.
- Teachers will engage students in activities which promote the 5 representations and 3 levels of questions.
- Teacher will teach math terms and provide opportunities for students to describe their learning using appropriate mathematical language (both written and spoken).
- Teachers will learn and share estimation strategies.
- Working with their PLC's, teachers will develop common assessments based on the grade level outcomes to assess student learning.

Staff will engage in the following learning activities	Staff will learn from engagement in the professional learning activities
<p>As a school, we will use our PLC's, inservices and PD sessions, to assess our current mental math programs, share resources, share "best practices", develop common assessments for grade levels and acquire new resources as necessary.</p>	<p>Teachers will have shared understanding of students learning and use assessment results in curriculum planning. Teachers will refine their current practices in mental math, and focus on developing/teaching strategies for computation and estimation skills.</p>
<p>The school math mentor will provide sessions on the 5 representations and 3 levels of questions.</p>	<p>Teachers will be able incorporate activities which allow for more than one representation and a higher level of thinking.</p>

Goal – Literacy

To improve student achievement in literacy, we will strengthen students' comprehension in reading by focusing on fluency and active questioning.

Strategies

- Teachers will model and coach selection of “just right books” for independent reading. Teachers will develop tools (rubric) to help students select appropriate (just right) texts in the classroom.
- Teachers will model and coach what fluent reading “*sounds like*” and will be able to identify “*fluent reading*” by using common assessment tools (i.e. rubric).
- The Literacy Coordinator will provide learning opportunities for staff to develop strategies to promote fluency.
- Teachers will provide multiple opportunities to read aloud at school and home.
- Parents will be invited into the school to participate in Literacy events so they can provide consistent support at home.
- The Literacy Coordinator will provide learning opportunities for staff (in class support, PFI, PD sessions) to develop strategies to promote active questioning.
- Teachers will model and provide mini lessons to ask questions to improve the student’s ability and increase their level of comprehension during their reading.
- Teachers will be monitor and assess fluency and comprehension during reading conferences or while doing running records.
- Students’ progress will be tracked on a school wide basis during regular reporting periods.

- In June, the “sending” teacher will share reading records of their students’ achievement with the teacher for the upcoming school year (transition).

Staff will engage in the following learning activities	Staff will learn from engagement in the professional learning activities
Teachers will work with the Literacy Coordinator in PD session, in class support and PLC’s.	Teachers will learn new strategies for building fluency and questioning skills.
Teachers will participate in HRSB (i.e. FAB and BELLE) workshops to develop the connection between reading and writing.	Teachers will use the students writing to enhance their reading fluency.
The Literacy Coordinator will support and mentor new teachers.	New staff will have support for running records.

Goal – School Culture /Climate

To increase family involvement and support student learning by establishing a school culture which invites, welcomes and celebrates the contributions of all students, staff and families.

Strategies

- Staff will be introduced to PEBS and develop the matrix.
- Staff will identify new students each year which will require referral/assessment for ESL support.
- Teachers and support staff (YMCA support worker) will meet with parents to assist them with the transition to our school community.
- Teachers will be made aware of significant dates in various cultures so that they can respect and acknowledge their students' heritage.
- Staff will engage outside community agencies (adoption agencies, community cultural groups) to assist us deal with specific issues (adoption, learn more about traditions etc).
- Teachers/ staff will include speakers of English and French in school wide performances.
- Teachers will provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their learning through performances, readings and art.
- We will monitor the achievement of our ESL students in all aspects of school life.

Staff will engage in the following learning activities	Staff will learn from engagement in the professional learning activities
Staff will be engaged in PD on PEBS (Positive Effective Behaviour System)	Staff will learn about PEBS
On going dialogue with staff which raises the awareness of diversity in our school community.	Staff will learn who the school community is and be better able to support all students in the school.

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

Math

Data sources used to monitor progress	Time frames for data collection	Responsibility for data collection – who will be collecting?
CAT 3 (grade 2)	Annually (spring)	Classroom teachers / HRSB
CAT 3 (grade 5)	Annually (fall)	Classroom teachers / HRSB
EEMLA (grade 3)	Annually (spring)	Classroom teachers/DOE
Parent, Teacher and Student Surveys	Annually (fall)	Administration/HRSB
Classroom records (baseline)	September (each year)	Classroom teachers
Classroom records	May (each year)	Classroom teachers

Literacy

Data sources used to monitor progress	Time frames for data collection	Responsibility for data collection – who will be collecting?
Grade 2 literacy Assessment	Annually (fall)	HRSB and classroom teachers
ELLA (grade 3)	Annually (fall)	Classroom teachers/DOE
ELA (grade 6)	Annually (fall)	Classroom teachers/DOE
Running Records	Monthly	Classroom teachers and reading recovery teacher
Parent, Teacher and Student Surveys	Annually (fall)	Administration/HRSB
Parent Participation at Literacy Cafes	2 per year	Teachers (conducting the session)

School Culture

Data sources used to monitor progress	Time frames for data collection	Responsibility for data collection – who will be collecting?
PEBS data - Office referrals, minor student misbehavior, and Positive reinforcement tokens (Gotcha's)	Daily / monthly	Administration and teachers
Attendance at curriculum events and conferences	Approximately 4 times a year	Classroom teachers
ESL assessments	Each reporting term	ESL teacher
Parent, Teacher and Student Surveys	Annually (fall)	Administration/HRSB

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

SAC will continue to receive regular updates on school program, results of the various assessments, and plans for the future.

Our parents will receive regular updates in the monthly school newsletters, curriculum night, and since many prefer the electronic communication system, we will keep our plan and update on the school website. Along with the plan and supporting documents, there will be links to relevant websites.

We will prepare our school goals for display in the school entrance way and copies of the full document will be available in hard copy in the school library.

Parents will have opportunities through cafes and events to learn more about the plan, the strategies and outcomes we are working towards and through our school's Plan for Communicating Student Learning, parents will receive information on their child's progress in achieving the curriculum outcomes in their respective programs.

Through the use of community agencies, we will increase the awareness of the staff, students, parents and community of the diversity of our population so that all students and their families feel valued, celebrated and supported in the school and community.