

HALIFAX WEST HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

Goals for Halifax West High School

and

A Revision of Statement with Goal Accomplishments



2005-2006

HALIFAX WEST HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT 2005-2006

GOALS FOR HALIFAX WEST HIGH SCHOOL

1. Within the next two years we will improve student attendance in all courses and decrease the amount of lates accumulated by students. This goal will be supported through the implementation of the "GEORGE" attendance program, the school late policy, the rigorous application of the HRSB attendance policy, and the support of the Student Attendance Support Program at Halifax West. We anticipate an improvement to meet or exceed a 95% rate of attendance.
2. Within the next two years we will improve student scores in English by ensuring that students are properly registered in appropriate levels, and supported with IPP's and adaptations as needed. This goal will be supported by the continued development of literacy strategies and skills among all teachers, implementation of English 10 Plus in September of 2006, regular reflection and development of individual adaptations plans and IPP's along with professional development, and through the continued development and support of English and English Communications programs. Course pass rates, survey results, teacher discussion, and averages will be used to measure the success of these programs.
3. Within the next two years we will continue to improve student performance in Math by ensuring that students are properly registered in appropriate courses, and supported with IPP's and adaptations as needed. This goal will be supported by the continued development of Math Essentials, Foundations, Regular, Advanced, Plus, and specialized courses. Students will be individually counseled to enroll in the appropriate level for their needs and ability. Staff will continue to be in-serviced, and participate in the collegial development of skills and strategies for supporting learners. Course pass rates, survey results, teacher discussion, and averages will be used to measure the success of these programs.
4. Within the next two years we will continue to improve the quality of communication amongst all members of the school community. This goal will be supported by the active use of the schools website,

newsletter, newspaper, PA system, GEORGE program, bulletin boards, meetings, mail-outs, and media sources. The key will be to analyze how the diverse methods are used to best serve their intentions, to facilitate an open and informative dialogue between all members. The annual self assessment and HRSB surveys will be used to measure the level of success, along with statistics relating to attendance for events, and mail-out returns.

5. Within the next two years we will continue to improve the course offerings at Halifax West to better suit the diversity of learners and their needs. Halifax West will pursue authorization for the offering of the International Baccalaureate Program, will initiate Co-Operative Education, and continue to develop courses in Outdoor Education and Space Technology, while expanding course offerings in all other areas. The school self-assessment, and survey data will be used to measure student satisfaction with the variety of course offerings, and information from post-secondary institutions will be used to verify the quality of programming as it applies to post secondary opportunities.

JANUARY 2006 REVISION OF STATEMENT WITH GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Halifax West High School has been involved with the Halifax Regional School Board Planning for Improvement process since its first full year of operation in 2003. Halifax West High School as a Phase 1 Planning for Improvement school, has consistently attempted to involve as many staff, students, parents, and school community members in the process as possible, to ensure a viable and considered plan.

Halifax West has an active Planning for Improvement team, which has been collecting and analyzing data for the past two and a half years. These data were generated by students, staff, parents and guardians and include school board surveys, course marks, results from provincial exams, standardized test results, course outlines, leaving statistics, Statistics Canada data, results from in-depth staff reflections and discussions.

We are now in the process of using the data collected to guide our efforts to improve our students' achievement. This will be an ongoing and dynamic process, as we face the challenges of increasing enrollment and staff. We hope that through presentations of our improvement plans to community members and our School Advisory Council, and the posting of this document to the Board website, that the channels of communication between home and school will be opened. We hope that the process of planning for improvement will help us make positive decisions in regards to the education of students at Halifax West.

The data collected thus far have been used as tools for the self-evaluation of our school and have served to direct and focus conversations about the strengths and challenges facing Halifax West. We have identified areas of strength, as well as areas in which we would like to focus our efforts to improve. The data show that Halifax West continues to be particularly strong in curriculum implementation, assessment and evaluation. We offer a variety of courses so that all students can pursue their interests. Our teachers are familiar with the programs, and practice outcome-based lesson development. At the beginning of each course, students receive well-developed course outlines, Department of Education outcomes, and documentation of the method of evaluation for that course. Teachers within departments communicate and coordinate well, ensuring consistency between sections of a course and smooth continuity between grade levels.

Halifax West has an active Program Planning team that monitors adaptations and IPPs. We use a variety of assessment strategies in order to ensure that students with differing learning styles can succeed. Our students succeed well in standardized testing and in post secondary studies. Staff Leadership is another area of strength identified from the data. Halifax West staff takes a lead in participating in a great spectrum of regional, provincial and

national initiatives, which include: teacher education, leadership teams, committees and special associations. As well, many members of our staff are involved in writing curriculum and marking Nova Scotia exams.

Halifax West staff provides leadership in creating a positive school climate. The survey data overwhelming indicate that students, parents and staff believe our school is a safe place to learn, work and visit. Our students feel respected by staff and other students. Halifax West invites student success with a large number, and variety, of extra curricular activities, including a substantial student government organization. A list of these activities includes the following:

School Committees:

RCH Committee
Cultural Committee
Curriculum Committee
Instructional Technology Team
Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee
Planning For Improvement Committee
Professional Development Committee
School Advisory Council

Clubs and Groups:

Anime Club
Art Club
Debating Team
Drama Club
Duke of Edinburgh Program
Environmental Club
Fashion Show
Gay-Straight Alliance Committee
Halifax West Band
Harmony West – Girls' Choir
Improv Team
International Students' Society
Islamic Students Group
Math Club
Model Parliament
Model UN
Musical
Outdoor Club
Reach for the Top
Robotics Team
School Choir
School Newspaper
School Spirit Society
Ski Club

West Christian Fellowship
Webmasters
Writers Club
Yearbook
Youth Teen Health Center

Inter-scholastic sports:

Badminton
Basketball
Boarder-Cross Team
Cross Country Running
Curling
Football
Girls Rugby
Girls Indoor Field Hockey
Golf
Hockey
Lacrosse
Soccer
Softball
Table Tennis
Track and Field
Volleyball
Wrestling

Intramural Sports:

Archery
Badminton
Basketball
Floor Hockey
Self-Defense
Soccer
Volleyball
Weightlifting

In today's world, technological competence is an important factor in our students' academic success. At Halifax West, our students and staff have access to a variety of technologies. These technologies are being used to an ever-increasing degree to facilitate communication, problem solving and expression. Our staff and students are becoming increasingly competent with technology and report a high level of confidence in technology education. Our students find that the use of computers and the Internet make learning more exciting

Two *Planning for Improvement* initiatives have been determined by the Halifax Regional School Board: Literacy and Numeracy. We have currently completed the second year of a Literacy initiative at Halifax West. All Grade 10 students in

2003/04 and 2004/05 took part in a Literacy program, in addition to English 10. Literacy assessments were conducted before and after students took part in this program. The data from these assessments were studied and it was determined that the program was an advantage to some but not all students. In the 2005/06 school year the English 10 program has been returned to a one semester course, but the skills learned within the English department regarding literacy are being applied in the regular program. This year grade 10 students are also the first to arrive at the high-school level having had the benefit of junior-high literacy initiatives.

In September of this year, we continued with our new Math 10 Plus program with the goal of increasing student achievement in mathematics. The Math 10 Plus program gives our students the opportunity to receive twice as much math instructional time as they would in a regular Math 10 program. Halifax West is also continuing the Math 10 Essentials course, and piloting the Math 11 Essentials course. With the addition of these new courses, we now offer our students four levels of math to choose from at the Grade 10 level: Essentials, Foundations, Plus and Enriched. Results of standardized testing, Nova Scotia exams and course marks will be monitored to determine the effectiveness of these programs.

The data collected have also helped us to identify another area we would like to target for improvement at Halifax West: communication. This includes communication between all partners in education: staff, students, parents and the community. We have implemented new ways to increase communication with parents and guardians – both good and bad news. We have improved Curriculum Night by increasing the frequency and including all grade levels. This year we are keeping statistics on the number of parents attending parent-teacher interviews and volunteering in school activities. Changes have been made to our school report card, including the process of mailing home the mid-semester reports. We have explored strategies to improve mass distribution of information. To this end we have integrated “GEORGE”, an attendance, demographic and mark sharing internet based program, which allows parents’ access to their student’s data online. This increases the ability for home and school to enact measures to promote regular attendance and participation. In order to improve communication between the SAC, staff, and community, SAC Minutes are now being posted to our school web site.

We at Halifax West hope to create more opportunities to celebrate our students’ successes and communicate their achievements to parents and the community. We want to display student learning for parents and community members to see when they enter the school. We need to encourage expressions of cultural diversity and make this more visible in the school.

In order for our school to run effectively, administrators and staff need to continue to collaborate and develop effective and varied responses to student needs. A

new IPP internal procedures have been developed that involve more staff in a collegial process for the writing of IPP's. Regularly scheduled staff meetings have created opportunities for staff sharing and participation. A Professional Development committee has been established, allowing for the input of ideas from teachers to steer school-based professional development in areas such as instructional strategies and literacy across the curriculum. We still hope to develop strategies to find more time for teachers to meet and address curriculum issues related to subjects they are teaching with other teachers.

In order to promote academic achievement, we have minimized disruptions in class time due to intercom announcements and students arriving late for class. Intercom announcements are confined to the scheduled time during third period. When announcements must be made outside this time, they are being confined to the last few minutes of the period. A new late policy has been developed by staff and has been implemented since September.

Work has been completed on a new Safety and Emergency Response Plan. The Regional Fire Department has been involved in developing a plan to get our students and staff safely out of the building in the event an emergency. The Fire Department is continuing to work with the school to evaluate the effectiveness of the new plan. The school has ensured that all responsibilities under the Joint Occupational Health and Safety act have been completed, and we are in compliance with the act.

Halifax West is proud of our tradition of academic excellence within a safe and diverse learning environment. We are committed to developing and maintaining programs and standards that provide our students with skills for the future and opportunities to help them to realize their full potential. Our Planning for Improvement process is ongoing and dynamic and we will continue to collect data to guide our efforts to improve student achievement. We welcome comment from students, parents and community members, our partners in education, as we strive to become an even stronger school.

Halifax West High School
Planning for Improvement

November 24, 2004

Planning for Improvement

The Halifax Regional School Board has undertaken a Planning for Improvement initiative, in which schools collect and use data as resources to develop plans to improve student achievement. Halifax West has an active Planning for Improvement team, which has been collecting and analyzing data for the past year. These data were generated by students, staff, parents and guardians and include school board surveys, course marks, results from provincial exams, standardized test results, course outlines, leaving statistics, results from in-depth staff reflections and discussions and Statistics Canada data.

We are now in the process of using the data collected to guide our efforts to improve our students' achievement. This will be an ongoing and dynamic process, as we face the challenges of increasing enrollment and staff. We hope that through presentations of our improvement plans to community members and our School Advisory Council, and the posting of this document to the Board website, that the channels of communication between home and school will be opened. We hope that the process of planning for improvement will help us make positive decisions in regards to the education of students at Halifax West.

The data collected thus far have been used as tools for the self-evaluation of our school and have served to direct and focus conversations about the strengths and challenges facing Halifax West. We have identified areas of strength, as well as areas in which we would like to focus our efforts to improve.

The data show that Halifax West is particularly strong in curriculum implementation, assessment and evaluation. We offer a variety of courses so that all students can pursue their interests. Our teachers are familiar with the programs, and practice outcome-based lesson development. At the beginning of each course, students receive well-developed course outlines, Department of Education outcomes, and documentation of the method of evaluation for that course. Teachers within departments communicate and coordinate well, ensuring consistency between sections of a course and smooth continuity between grade levels.

Halifax West has an active Program Planning team that monitors adaptations and IPPs. We use a variety of assessment strategies in order to ensure that students with differing learning styles can succeed. Our students succeed well in standardized testing and in post secondary studies.

Staff Leadership is another area of strength identified from the data. Halifax West staff takes a lead in participating in a great spectrum of regional, provincial and national initiatives, which include: teacher education, leadership teams, committees and special associations. As well, many members of our staff are involved in writing curriculum and marking Nova Scotia exams.

Halifax West staff provides leadership in creating a positive school climate. The survey data overwhelming indicate that students, parents and staff believe our school is a safe place to learn, work and visit. Our students feel respected by staff and other students.

Halifax West invites student success with a large number, and variety, of extra curricular activities. A list of these activities includes the following:

School Committees:

- Anti-Racism Committee
- Cultural Committee
- Curriculum Committee
- Instructional Technology Team
- Health and Safety Committee
- Improvement Committee
- School Advisory Council

Clubs and Groups:

- Drama Club
- Environmental Club
- Fashion Show
- Halifax West Band
- Harmony West – Girls’ Choir
- International Students’ Society
- Islamic Students Group
- Math Club
- Model Parliament
- Musical
- Debating Club
- Reach for the Top
- Robotics Team
- School Choir
- School Newspaper
- School Spirit Society
- Ski Club
- West Christian Fellowship
- Webmasters
- Yearbook

Inter-scholastic sports:

- Badminton
- Basketball
- Cross Country
- Curling
- Track and Field
- Football
- Girls Rugby
- Girls Indoor Field Hockey
- Soccer
- Softball
- Hockey
- Golf
- Table Tennis
- Volleyball

Intramural Sports:

- Archery
- Soccer
- Badminton
- Self-Defense
- Basketball
- Floor Hockey
- Weightlifting
- Volleyball

In today's world, technological competence is an important factor in our students' academic success. At Halifax West, our students and staff have access to a variety of technologies. These technologies are being used to an ever-increasing degree to facilitate communication, problem solving and expression. Our staff and students are becoming increasingly competent with technology and report a high level of confidence in technology education. Our students find that the use of computers and the Internet make learning more exciting.

Two *Planning for Improvement* initiatives have been determined by the Halifax Regional School Board: Literacy and Numeracy. We are currently in the second year of a Literacy initiative at Halifax West. All Grade 10 students take part in a Literacy program, in addition to English 10. Literacy assessments have, and will be, conducted before and after students take part in this program. The data from these assessments will be studied to determine the future direction of this initiative.

In September of this year, we started our new Math 10 Plus program with the goal of increasing student achievement in mathematics. The Math 10 Plus program gives our students the opportunity to receive twice as much math instructional time as they would in a regular Math 10 program. Halifax West is also piloting the Math 10 Essentials course. With the addition of these new courses, we now offer our students four levels of math to choose from at the Grade 10 level: Essentials, Foundations, Plus and Enriched. Results of standardized testing, Nova Scotia exams and course marks will be monitored to determine the effectiveness of these programs.

The data collected have also helped us to identify another area we would like to target for improvement at Halifax West: communication. This includes communication between all partners in education: staff, students, parents and the community. We need to explore ways to increase communication with parents and guardians – both good and bad news. We are examining the possibility of improving Curriculum Night by increasing the frequency and including all grade levels. This year we will keep statistics on the number of parents attending parent-teacher interviews and volunteering in school activities. Changes are being made to our school report card. We are exploring strategies to improve mass distribution of information. One possibility being considered is a mass e-mail database of parents and guardians.

In order to improve communication between the SAC, staff, and community, SAC minutes are now being posted to our school web site. Future plans for the school website also include a comment section for parents and community members. The number and nature of responses will be monitored.

We at Halifax West hope to create more opportunities to celebrate our students' successes and communicate their achievements to parents and the community. We want to display student learning for parents and community members to see when they enter the school. We need to encourage expressions of cultural diversity and make this more visible in the school.

We are continually exploring ways to improve school spirit. On this note, we started the school year off with successful grade level assemblies in the gymnasium. More assemblies are being planned for the upcoming school year.

In order for our school to run effectively, administrators and staff need to collaborate and develop effective and varied responses to student needs. A new IPP policy is being developed which will involve more staff in the process of writing IPP's. Regularly scheduled staff meetings have created opportunities for staff sharing and participation. A Professional Development committee will be established, which will allow the input of ideas from teachers to steer school-based professional development in areas such as instructional strategies and literacy across the curriculum. We hope to develop strategies to find time for teachers to meet and address curriculum issues related to subjects they are teaching with other teachers.

In order to promote academic achievement, we must minimize disruptions in class time due to intercom announcements and students arriving late for class. Efforts are already underway to confine intercom announcements to the scheduled time during third period. When announcements must be made outside this time, they are being confined to the last few minutes of the period. A new late policy has been developed by staff and implemented in September. Statistical data will be collected to determine the effectiveness of this new policy.

Work has begun on a new Safety and Emergency Response Plan. The Regional Fire Department has been involved in developing a plan to get our students and staff safely out of the building in the event an emergency. The Fire Department is continuing to work with the school to evaluate the effectiveness of the new plan. Also, an up-to date list of staff members with first aid training will be created and made available for medical emergencies.

Halifax West is proud of our tradition of academic excellence within a safe and diverse learning environment. We are committed to developing and maintaining programs and standards that provide our students with skills for the future and opportunities to help them to realize their full potential. Our Planning for Improvement process is ongoing and dynamic and we will continue to collect data to guide our efforts to improve student achievement. We welcome comment from students, parents and community members, our partners in education, as we strive to become an even stronger school.