

Year 1

LeMarchant St. Thomas School Improvement Plan

Writing the plan for school improvement consists of responding to seven key questions. Response to each question needs to focus on the evidence/data collected and analyzed, conclusions drawn, strengths and challenges identified through the self-assessment process. These questions need to be approached from a school-wide perspective and from the perspective of school-based Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Conversations at one level will help to inform the dialogue at the other.

1. What are you doing well?

École LeMarchant St. Thomas School community has high expectations. Our students have performed exceptionally well on provincial, regional and school based assessments in literacy and math. Our indicators around the Public School Program, Time to Learn, Outcomes and Instruction, Promoting Academic Achievement, Effective and Varied Responses to Student Needs, Second Language Learners and Aesthetic Expression were all rated as areas of strength. Our surveys indicated that parents, students and teachers are satisfied with the curriculum, instruction, resources, and the academic achievement of our students in most subject areas.

École LeMarchant St. Thomas School has a warm and inviting school climate. Over 90% of our staff, students and parents state that our school has a positive learning environment and that École LeMarchant St Thomas School is a safe, respectful place to work and learn. Parents and students agree that school rules are applied equally, and that all children are treated with respect. Visitors to our school frequently state that our students are well behaved and that our school is very welcoming.

The success of our school is a result of the commitment and dedication of all of the members of our school community. Our staff, parents and community members work together to provide opportunities of success for our students. Administrators promote and provide opportunities for staff leadership. Teachers believe that administrators are confident in their expertise and that they set high expectations for teaching and learning. Teachers lead their colleagues in professional development and they lead students in a variety of academically related extra-curricular activities. Our staff is very active in mentoring volunteers, student teachers, new teachers and their peers.

We have an extremely supportive and active school community. Our parents are involved in their children's education through their volunteerism in the classroom, on the home & school association, and the school advisory council. Parents are learning how to be supportive partners in their child's education by attending

curriculum night, open house, musical events, and through on-going interviews and discussions with teachers. Our school shows exceptional strength in the areas of communication and parental involvement.

2. What trends do you see in the data?

Both our assessment and survey data indicate consistent success in academic performance, staff leadership, parental involvement, and providing a positive school climate. We have had a steady increase of both parents and teachers who agree that school events focus on curriculum and learning. Over 90% of teachers and 85% of parents have consistently agreed that we have a positive learning environment. Our low incidents of student discipline problems, our academic success and high numbers of extra-curricular involvement also indicate that students are positively engaged in learning.

Over the three years of the survey, we have had a 20% increase in the numbers of students who see themselves as good readers. More than 90% of parents have consistently stated that they encourage their children to read at home. 83% of students said they are good writers; up from 68% in 2004-05. However fewer students state that they like writing. Our grade six students have consistently been successful on the Provincial Literacy assessment; 100% have passed the reading portion over the last three years and over 95% have passed the writing. We have also had increased success rates in the numbers of students who read accurately at the grade two level in both our French and English programs.

Parental satisfaction with our math program has steadily increased over the three years of the survey. Three quarters of our students have consistently stated that they are good at math. Our grade two and our grade five students performed above the Board and national norm on the CAT 3 assessment and 89% of our grade three students met expectations on the provincial assessment. We have had a 13% increase in the numbers of teachers who state that they assess math across the curriculum.

Our data indicates an improvement in student self-assessment, communication of assessment results and our response to struggling students. However, parents are still unsure about their child's ability to assess themselves and set goals for their own learning. There has been a slight decrease (76%-71%) in the numbers of parents who state that they are contacted if their child is having difficulties. However our assessment data, school planning team and discipline tracking results indicate that the numbers of students who are struggling are low. 86% of students have stated that they know when they are doing a good job; this is a 10% increase over the three years of the survey. Approximately 80% of teachers have consistently stated that they encourage students to be self-assessors and 86%-90% of teachers stated that they give feedback to students regularly.

We have had slight improvements in our high satisfaction rate around issues of inclusion. Approximately 80% of staff and parents and over 95% of students have stated that they are treated fairly regardless of ability, race, gender or ethnicity. Teachers are using more materials that reflect diversity and teaching about different cultures.

We have had a significant increase (55%-78%) in the numbers of teachers who state that they take time to plan and learn together. Over 90% of teachers have consistently stated that administrators, teachers and staff work together to make this school run effectively.

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

The following indicators demonstrate overall strengths; however, we also noted areas for improvement: Assessment and Evaluation, Independent Learners, Technological Competence, Problem Solving, (Student) Communications and Professional Learning Communities. Even though there have been improvements, both parents and teachers have concerns with students' ability to set goals and assess their own work.

In terms of reading, we found that students require further support and instruction to actively question text as they read and to support their questions with evidence from the text. Although we have been collecting data on reading accuracy and fluency, we need to collect more comprehensive data on reading comprehension. We also have noted some challenges in the grade six literacy assessments in terms of students' abilities on critical response questions.

In the survey data, we have seen a trend of students who claim that they are not challenged in school. Teachers are working on ways to further differentiate instruction to meet the needs of both struggling and exceptional students.

Although parent survey responses indicate a lower satisfaction with instruction in technology, we have purchased new computers since the last survey and we have set up a new computer lab. Teachers are at a variety of stages in their professional development in this area.

70% of teachers, down from 77%, agreed that instructional strategies in all of our classrooms support a problem solving approach. We need to collect more data on our students' abilities to read critically and respond and to solve problems across subject areas. Specifically in the area of math, teachers have identified through classroom based assessments that students don't apply their basic skill knowledge to more complex problems.

Over the last three years we have had a 20% increase in the numbers of teachers who state that we are learning and planning together. However we are still only at 75% agreement. We have time allotted in our schedules for grade level teachers to meet and plan together. We have begun collecting common assessment data in reading, writing and math; however we need to refine this process. In math we need to align both the instruction and assessment of the various math strands at the different grade levels. Teachers meet to review provincial and regional assessment results and to plan for future instruction. Our school is dual track French Immersion and we have only one grade or combined grades in each program at many levels, which adds to the challenges of planning together. As well, finding time for our larger professional learning community teams to meet regularly is also challenging.

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

- Problem solving in math
- Creating critical readers

5. What does the school plan to do?

Goal One:

Our goal is to improve student achievement in problem solving and communication of strategies for problem solving in math.

Strategies:

1. we need to clearly define problem solving to develop a common understanding amongst teachers
2. we need to identify appropriate mathematical problems for each grade level in each strand
3. we need to identify and/or obtain appropriate problem solving resources such as the curriculum guides
4. we need to create or find appropriate problem solving assessments and/or rubrics
5. we need to access our students' prior knowledge on problem solving by collecting baseline assessment data
6. we need to align our problem solving teaching and assessment with our mathematical instruction in the various strands
7. we need to develop a common understanding amongst staff and students of the five representations, which can be used to solve and communicate mathematical understanding of a problem
8. we need to explicitly model a variety of strategies which can be used to solve problems
9. we need to provide a variety of opportunities for students to practice problem solving both independently and collaboratively

10. we need to define the frequency at which we need to collect assessment data around problem solving
11. we need to identify strategies to support those students who are having difficulties or who require enrichment
12. we need to collect student and parent “attitude” data about problem solving in math
13. we need to communicate our progress to students, parents and the school community

Professional Learning to Support Achievement of Goal:

Staff will engage in the following learning activities:	Staff will learn the following from engagement in the professional learning activities (knowledge, skills, and professional practices).
Access our math mentor, Dan Gilfoy, to help us to define problem solving:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review power point on problem solving (April 2008) • review examples of problem solving with Dan Gilfoy as in school PD (April 2008) • work with Dan Gilfoy in classes to practice problem solving activities with students • implement problem solving into our math teaching and review our success with our PLC teams.
Review problem solving resources for instruction and assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and practice using the math guide, “puddle questions”, Marilyn Burns, Van De Walle and other activities around problem solving • Review and practice using the “CAT 3” problem solving rubric 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers will become knowledgeable about the available problem solving instructional and assessment resources • teachers will practice using a variety of problem solving lesson resources • teachers will use appropriate assessment tools such as “puddle questions” and the CAT 3 rubric to assess problem solving

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

- Students will be able to represent their solutions to problem solving in a variety of ways
- Students will demonstrate confidence and success when independently solving problems
- Students will perform better in problem solving on classroom and standardized assessments
- Students will have and use common mathematical language to communicate, verbalize, and debate their problem solving strategies
- Students will be able to transfer their skills to a new problem
- Students will be able to create their own problems
- Students will demonstrate increased enthusiasm and risk taking behaviours with mathematical problem solving

Data sources used to monitor progress	Timeframe(s) for data collection	Responsibility for data collection – who will be collecting
Baseline assessment data – “puddle questions”	May 2008	Classroom teachers handed in to the PFI team
Assessment data for each strand	Two assessments per term 2008-09	Classroom teachers handed in to the PFI team
HRSB CAT 3 assessments	Baseline grade 2 & 5 2008-2009	School administration, grade two and grade five teachers
DOE assessments	Grade 3	Grade 3 teachers and their PLC teams
Student attitude survey	Fall 2008 & Spring 2009	P-6 teachers
Parent attitude survey	Fall 2008 & Spring 2009	P-6 teachers

Goal Two:

Our goal is to *continue* to improve student achievement with fluency, accuracy and comprehension and to *focus on reading critically* a variety of texts.

Strategies:

1. We need to continue to focus on reading accuracy and fluency in conjunction with improved comprehension skills
2. We need to clearly define critical literacy to develop a common understanding amongst teachers
3. We need to access the HRSB literacy consultants and our literacy coordinator to provide professional development for both French and English programs around critical literacy.
4. We need to define an appropriate critical literacy focus for each grade/developmental level of our students

5. We need to collect, identify and review a variety of texts appropriate for each developmental reading level in French and in English, which can elicit a critical response
6. We need a consistent way to measure student responses at each grade level
7. We need to clearly articulate our expectations for critical responses to the students

Professional Learning to Support Achievement of Goal:

Staff will engage in the following learning activities.	Staff will learn the following from engagement in the professional learning activities (knowledge, skills, and professional practices).
Access Lynn Landry and Nathalie Martel-Fairbairn (HRSB Staff) and our school literacy coordinator, Michelle Walsh to provide in school workshops around reading comprehension and critical literacy Review articles and resources about critical literacy in professional learning communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the components of critical literacy as outlined in the ELA and FLA curriculum guides • identify and review teaching strategies to promote critical comprehension skills • work with the literacy coordinator and/or colleagues to practice instructional strategies around critical literacy
Review available assessment strategies and resources appropriate to the developmental level of the students	Use oral reading records and appropriate rubrics to collect student assessment data

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

- Students will read accurately and fluently at their grade level
- Students will be able to actively question texts as they read. They will be able to explicitly state: “I wonder...”
- Students will be able to make inferences. They will be able to identify the “unwritten” text.
- Students will be able to identify an author’s point of view
- Students will be able to express their comprehension and critical understanding of texts orally, pictorially and/or in writing
- Students will be able to examine and question texts in terms of accuracy and bias, appropriate to their developmental level
- Students will be confident, active participants in discussions about texts they have read

Data sources used to monitor progress	Timeframe(s) for data collection	Responsibility for data collection – who will be collecting
Running Records	P-2: on-going as needed 3-6: as needed for specific students *Grade 3 French Immersion students may need to continue being assessed with Running Records	P-6 classroom teachers
Oral Reading Records	Fall and Spring terms *only parts of the Atlantic Canada Oral Reading Record are available in French	4-6 classroom teachers
Class room observation and conferences	On-going	P-6 teachers, resource and administration
Teacher created critical literacy rubrics: one rubric for each PLC grade level team P/1, 2/3, 4-6	One per term	P-6 classroom teachers
HRSB Grade Two assessments	Fall	Literacy staff, grade 2 teachers and P-3 PLC team
DOE Grade Three ELLA	Fall	Literacy staff, grade 2 teachers and P-3 PLC team
Grade Four Literacy assessment	Spring	Grade 4 English Program teachers and 3-4 PLC team
DOE grade six Literacy assessments	Fall	Grade 6 Teachers and 5-6 PLC team

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

All parents are invited to a presentation on planning for improvement on curriculum night each year before they visit the individual classes. A Planning for Improvement update/report is provided at every home and school and SAC meeting. Regional and provincial assessment data is shared with the school community through SAC, Home & School meetings and our monthly newsletters. Planning for improvement initiatives are highlighted in all monthly school newsletters. Parents and students are encouraged to complete the annual planning for improvement surveys. Parents have been encouraged to provide input into our school self-assessment. The SAC was asked to review and provide feedback for the indicators around parental involvement, communication and school climate. Our school plan will be shared with the SAC and the home & school at meetings and the general school community through our school web page.

Teachers will discuss our literacy and math goals with students. We will develop student and parent attitude surveys around both problem solving and critical literacy. We will highlight student performance in these areas at our annual open house by providing activities which students can have their parents complete and by displaying student work. We will share our progress on these goals at our parent meetings and in our newsletter, which is posted on our web site.