

Ash Lee Jefferson Elementary



WWW.ALJS.EDNET.NS.CA

School and Community Context

Ash Lee Jefferson Elementary School (ALJES) has served the community of Fall River since the early 1900's. The school was renovated in 1999 to include additional classrooms, music room, gymnasium, and cafeteria. We offer elementary programming to 648 students from grades primary to 6. The Fall River community has experienced continued growth and our enrollment has steadily increased over the past ten years. We currently have 26 classes that include 4 portables adjacent to the building. Our students are bussed and all students stay for the day. Our student population is stable, with most students remaining in the school for grades P-6. Staff tend to stay as well, and therefore lasting relationships are built among staff and students. French Immersion is offered and 190 students are enrolled in 8 classes across Grades P-6. Students in Grade 6 have the oppor-

tunity to participate in instrumental music and an enhanced physical education program helps to promote a physically active lifestyle to grades 4 to 6. Students in grades 3 to 6 have opportunities to participate in clubs, teams and activities. Our school choir participates in community events and every second year a school play is hosted for students, and families. Our school website is updated continually and more information is available at this location. www.aljs.ednet.ns.ca.

All members of our school community work hard to ensure a positive and welcoming school environment where student success is the focus. During a recent survey 95% of parents and teachers believe our school sets high expectations for the quality of teaching. Our staff is dedicated to meeting the needs of all of our learners.



Contents

School & Community Context	1
Family & Community Involvement	1
Safe & Orderly Environment	1
Assessment Results	2
Student Engagement	3
Professional Development	3
Time to Learn	3
Additional School Supports	3
Planning for Improvement	4

Family and Community Involvement

In the HRSB's Getting to Great survey we had 290 respondents. From the survey, 95% of those respondents volunteer to help their child's teacher or school. The same percentage believe our school is an inviting and welcoming place and feel appreciated by our school staff. ALJS has wonderful volunteers serving on our SAC, PTO, Safe Arrival, cafeteria and library as well as supervising field trips, reading with students; the list goes on. Working with such a dedicated and caring group of volunteers is a huge asset to ALJS.

Safe and Orderly Environment

Our survey results over the past 5 years have been consistent indicating that our students feel safe and their teachers care about them. Over 96% of the students surveyed believe that teachers are concerned about them. At ALJS we have peer mediation, behaviour programs, Positive Effective Behaviour Supports (PEBS) and monthly "Caught Ya" assemblies. Our teachers will continue to receive training on effective class-

room management and how to promote positive student behaviour. We have a large number of students who stay for lunch. Intramurals and other activities are offered on a daily basis. The school staff developed an extensive School Emergency Plan. As in past years, a classroom code of conduct was developed with the students. Also, the PEBS matrix was reviewed with all students.

Provincial and Board Assessment Results

Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) students participated in provincial and board-wide assessments. The information gained through these assessments will help us determine our next steps in improving student achievement in literacy and mathematics. Please note that the percentages used throughout this report are rounded to the nearest whole number.

* French Immersion students completed the assessment in French.

Literacy Assessments	School Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations	Board Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations
Grade 2 Board	English Reading Accurately: 87% English Reading Fluently: 81% FI Reading Accurately: 73% FI Reading Fluently: 64%	English Reading Accurately: 74% English Reading Fluently: 67% FI Reading Accurately: 46% FI Reading Fluently: 46%
Grade 3 Provincial	Reading: 89% Writing (Information/Non-fiction) : 98% Writing (Narrative/Fiction) : 90%	Reading: 81% Writing (Information/Non-fiction) : 82% Writing (Narrative/Fiction) : 82%
Grade 5 Board	Reading: 92%	Reading: 81%
Grade 6 Provincial	Reading: 93% Writing: 96%	Reading: 88% Writing: 94%
Math Assessments	School Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations	Board Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations
Grade 2 Board	Mathematics Concepts: 99%	Mathematics Concepts: 95%
Grade 3 Provincial	Mathematics Concepts: 86%	Mathematics Concepts: 71%
Grade 5 Board	Mathematics Concepts: 95%	Mathematics Concepts: 84%

At AshLee Jefferson School, we are very proud to report that our students scored above all Department of Education (DOE) and Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) assessment results in both math and literacy in all grade levels. With our English and French Immersion Grade 2 students, we scored significantly higher in reading accuracy and fluency. Our Grade 2, Grade 3 and Grade 5 math results proved to be substantially higher as well. Teachers will continue to participate in professional development sessions to maintain and improve these very positive results. Professional learning communities (PLC) provide excellent opportunities for teachers to meet with their grade level partners to discuss, create and evaluate common grade specific assessments.

Classroom Assessment

Focus on Writing

Teachers developed and revised student writing rubrics from the previous year. Writing samples from December were marked using these rubrics to identify areas of strength and areas requiring additional classroom instruction. These results revealed that most students from Primary to Grade 6 generate and develop ideas with confidence. The May writing pieces which were marked in our PLC's, showed results that support this data as well as showing improvement in the use of conventions.

Focus on Math

Classes worked to increase proficiency in basic number fact recall appropriate to each grade level. Students are given daily opportunities to do mental math activities in order to increase proficiency. Data was collected indicating noticeable improvements in the fluency and accuracy of fact recall. We also worked to improve students' abilities to solve word problems with specific grade level criteria. The data proved our students have a very good grasp of mathematical concepts needed to solve problems as well as demonstrate effective problem solving strategies. We also learned that students need to communicate their understanding, giving detailed and clear explanations needed to solve the problems.



Student Engagement

92% of our Grade 4-6 students are happy with their grades in school. 99% of those students believe that most days they try their best and they believe their teacher always wants them to do their best. At ALJS, we offer lunch time intramural and after school clubs for our grades 4-6 students. Some of these include cross country running club, lunch time soccer and floor hockey, volleyball, Doctors NS Running Club and Bluenose Youth Run, to name a few. Of the 245 student respondents, 67% have been involved in extra-curricular sports teams. Our music program offers choir to our grades 4-6 students and a musical production is performed every second year.

Time to Learn

The HRSB follows the Time to Learn strategy that is put forth by our NS Department of Education. This means that each subject has required or recommended number of minutes daily. These time allotments provide a guideline to assist teachers in planning their instructional time and to make the most of every minute of the day. At ALJS, we strive to minimize interruptions in the students' learning. All students are expected to attend school on time. We know that learners who are regularly on time for school experience greater personal success. We ask all parents/guardians to ensure their child arrive at school before bell time.

Professional Development

Teachers at Ash Lee Jefferson School are lifelong learners who strive to find optimum ways to meet the needs of their students. They are actively involved in DOE, HRSB and school-based professional development on a regular basis. This year our school-based PD was based on improving students' writing skills in various genres. At each grade level, teachers created rubrics to assess student writing based on their grade level outcomes. Teachers at each grade level met in their professional learning communities. Literacy cafes were also implemented to strengthen the scope and sequence of our school wide writing assessments. Continual improvement in student learning is a direct result of this collaborative reflection on student learning. Professional development in math focused on basic number fact recall and improvement in students ability to solve a variety of math problems. Giving teachers an opportunity to work together to learn and plan has made ALJS a successful learning environment.

Additional School Supports

At ALJS we have a number of additional school supports to improve student achievement. The following list is in no particular order.

- educational program assistants
- Reading Recovery teacher
- literacy coach
- board math mentor assigned to our school
- school psychologist
- speech language pathologist
- two learning center teachers
- one primary - 2 resource teacher
- one Grade 3 - 6 resource teacher
- librarian
- lunch monitors
- administrative assistant
- IWK physiotherapist
- IWK occupational therapist
- APSEA - itinerant teacher



Planning for Improvement

We are very pleased to present Ash Lee Jefferson's school improvement plan for your information. Each year, based on data collected and analyzed throughout the year, staff at ALJS take into account all of the information and decide on goals for the following year. This data helps us to identify what our students are doing well and what areas need further attention and improvement. There is much to celebrate at ALJS. Our students scored high on DOE and HRSB assessments. The information from these assessments, along with ongoing classroom assessment, indicate areas of strength, areas where additional support is needed, and informs instruction and professional development needs.

After analyzing all of the data, our school staff has come

up with two goals for the 2009-2010 school year. Our goal in literacy is specific to writing, where the students will work to organize their thoughts and ideas in written communication. This goal will help to improve students' confidence in their writing abilities since only 84% believe they are good at writing. In mathematics, 81% of our students feel they are good at sharing their ideas. It is very important for students to feel comfortable to communicate their thinking and understanding in mathematics. Our goal is for students to improve their communication skills to demonstrate their mathematical understanding when problem solving.

At ALJS we have high expectations for all students to achieve.

School Goals

Literacy Goal

Our students will demonstrate improvement in the organization of their thoughts and ideas in writing.

Strategies:

- Students will write daily.
- PLC teams will work together on a regular basis to discuss, plan and implement grade specific writing strategies.
- Students will write two school wide common assessments.
- PLC teams will assess school wide writing samples to identify strengths and areas that need further instruction.
- Teachers will teach through modeling, mini-lessons and guided writing.
- Students will self-edit their writing pieces given a specific checklist/rubric.
- Our literacy team, with representatives from each grade level, will develop instructional strategies for the two school wide assessments.
- Teachers will teach the use of graphic organizers as a tool for students to organize their

thoughts before writing.

- Teachers will provide lessons on creating good leads, following a logical flow, and creating a strong ending to a writing piece.

Mathematics Goal

Students will work to improve their communication skills to demonstrate their mathematical understanding when problem solving.

Strategies:

- ALJS will continue to share a common understanding in regards to expectations for good communication in math at each grade level.
- Teachers will communicate expectations for good communication in mathematics through modeling, direct feedback and mini-lessons.
- Students will communicate their understanding using models, pictures, and words in daily math activities.
- Our math team, with representation from all grade levels, will develop instructional strategies for each school wide

assessment.

- Students will complete two problem solving tasks, one in early October to use as a baseline and one in May to be assessed for communication strengths and areas of need.
- Teachers will organize data to determine needs and strengths.
- Teachers will work together in their PLCs to evaluate the school wide assessments.
- Our math mentor will assist in providing after school workshops to teacher as the need arises.



Every Student Can Learn. Every School Will Improve.

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