GETTING TO GREAT: ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY
SEPTEMBER 2008 — JUNE 2009

Atlantic Memorial - Terence Bay Elementary

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School and Community Context

Atlantic Memorial -Terence Bay School (AMTB) is comprised of two sites. Both sites serve rural communities, consisting of villages and coastal communities from White's Lake to East Dover, along Highway 333. The rural culture makes for a strong relationship between community, home, and school. The sites are important centres of activity for the community. One unique feature of our school is that it has educated several generations of local families.

Our school serves Grade Primary to five students. The current enrollment at our Atlantic Memorial site is 204 students, while 46 are housed at our Terence Bay site. Both sites have seen a steadily declining enrollment over the past 10 years. Our class enrollments range between 15-25 students. Most students spend their entire elementary years with us.

In addition to the twelve classroom teachers, our school has physical education, music, core French, and two resource/learning center teachers. School staff also includes two educational program assistants, a full time secretary, two caretakers and a part-time custodian. Teachers choose to spend many years at AMTB, providing staff and students the opportunity to get to know one another well. This provides a built in support structure for our students.

All members of our school community work hard to ensure a positive and welcoming school environment where student success is the focus. Our staff is dedicated to meeting the needs of all of our learners.

We offer many programs to supplement learning; Hackmatack Book Club, intramurals, Canwest Spelling Bee, Kid's Council, running club, track and field, concerts, and CREATE, a month long arts infusion program, and cooperative games.

Safe and Orderly Environment

AMTB prides itself on providing a safe, nuturing environment for students, staff and visitors. On the 2008-09 School Board surveys, 97% of parents feel that AMTB is a safe place to learn while 95% indicated they work with school staff to encourage positive and appropriate behaviours. School-based statistics have shown a decrease in behavioural incidents in recent years. A number of initiatives to support and encourage positive learning and social behaviors, include peer mediation, Gotcha' s, student leadership building, assemblies, noon hour extracurricular activities and staff-student mentoring. Expectations for student behaviour is consistent throughout our school as outlined in our Code of Conduct. Our expectations for behavior are posted in all learning areas and referred to on a regular basis.

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Family and Community Involvement

Atlantic Memorial-Terence Bay School is very much a community oriented school, with many students second or third generation family members who have attended AMTB. In past HRSB parent surveys, most feel the school invites community involvement. In the 2008-09 survey 97% feel they are appreciated by school staff when they do something to help their child at home or in school. Many indicated that, although welcomed, they are unable to help at school due to work commitments.

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: 91%	English Reading Accurately: 74%
	English Reading Fluently: 78%	English Reading Fluently: 67%
Grade 3 Provincial	Reading: 100%	Reading: 81%
	Writing (Information/Non-fiction) : 100%	Writing (Information/Non-fiction) : 82%
	Writing (Narrative/Fiction) : 89%	Writing (Narrative/Fiction) : 82%
Grade 5 Board	Reading: 85%	Reading: 81%
Math Assessments	**School Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations**	**Board Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations**
Grade 2 Board	Mathematics Concepts: 98%	Mathematics Concepts: 95%
Grade 3 Provincial	Mathematics Concepts: 58%	Mathematics Concepts: 71%
Grade 5 Board	Mathematics Concepts: 88%	Mathematics Concepts: 84%

At Atlantic Memorial-Terence Bay School we are very proud that our students do well in Department of Education (DOE) and School Board assessments consistently scoring above provincial and board averages in literacy. Our students are very strong readers and writers. In the past years we have noticed that an area needing attention was use of writing conventions. We are addressing this in our Planning For Improvement goals. On DOE and HRSB math assessments, we continue to do well, generally scoring at or above Board results. Again, results have shown an area requiring further work is in computation which we are now focusing on as a school goal. We are pleased to note that in Professional Learning Communities, teachers have been learning how to differentiate instruction to reach more learners.

Classroom Assessment

Teachers worked in their Professional Learning Communities developing assessments to measure student achievement of grade level outcomes in the areas of computation, addition and subtraction, and use of writing conventions. These assessments were administered in October to provide a base line score, and then repeated in May to measure improvement.

Literacy Goal

Assessments included items on which students demonstrated their ability to use writing conventions appropriate to their grade level. For example, early elementary tests included items in which children recorded sounds, recorded meaning with pictures, and demonstrated use of proper spacing. Upper elementary students proof read prepared text, and developed a piece of original writing on a given topic. When retested in May, students scored 32% higher overall than in October in their use of expected grade level writing conventions.

Math Goal

Assessments were made up of items testing students' ability to use strategies in mental math to demonstrate correct use of addition and subtraction algorithms, and their ability to use these algorithms to create and solve word problems. When retested in May, students showed an overall improvement of 34% when compared to their October results, in understanding and application of these computation skills.

The teachers will administer similar assessments in October 2009 determine the ongoing impact of these strategies.

Student Engagement

Past HRSB surveys indicate that 98% of AMTB students are happy to come to school. Our staff makes an effort to supplement provincial curriculum through a variety of experiences both within and outside the classroom. Eighty seven percent of students indicate they have chances to learn by doing things and 83% state they like what they are learning. Student learning and achievement are celebrated in many ways. Our CREATE program is a prime example of the variety of opportunities children have to engage in, and develop interests, skills and talents as an extension of classroom curriculum.

Time to Learn

All schools in the Halifax Regional School Board follow the Time to Learn requirements set by the Department of Education. This means that each subject has a required or recommended number of minutes of instruction. As a staff we always look at ways to minimize interruptions and maximize the use of time on task during our school day.

Professional Development

When teachers learn, students learn. Teachers at AMTB are actively involved in professional development on an ongoing basis. This year our school based PD days were used for staff to focus on our school goals, developing assessments and planning strategies to improve computation and writing conventions. Through Professional Learning Communitities, teachers spent time with grade level collegues both from our school and from Prospect Road Elementary, researching and implementing best practices in instruction. AMTB staff also engaged in numerous individual PD opportunities including math conferences, assistive technology workshops, furthering our understanding of assessment practices, specific training in Reading Recovery, literacy coaching, race relations/cross cultural understanding, developing effective Individual Program Plans, and post graduate courses.

Additional School Supports

At AMTB we have a number of additional school supports to improve student achievement:

- speech language pathologist
- Learning Centre teacher
- resource teacher
- literacy coach
- school psychologist
- Reading Recovery teacher
- library support specialist
- educational program assistants
- behavioural support specialists
- public health nurse
- R.C.M.P.
- school board nutritionist
- student teachers

We are very fortunate to have dedicated volunteers whose support of the school enhances student success.

Planning for Improvement

During the 2007-08 school year, Atlantic Memorial-Terence Bay School participated in the Planning For Improvement process. We began with a school self assessment to determine what we were doing well. We then identified trends in the data collected through parent and student surveys. And finally, we analyzed results from Department of Education, School Board and classroom assessments. Based on this data we determined which goals and strategies would make the greatest difference in student achievement. We identified computation, beginning with addition and subtraction, and writing conventions as the areas we would be focusing on over the next few years for improvement. Professional Learning Communities (grades P/1, 2/3, 4/5, and resource/ learning centre groups) act as the vehicle to develop and implement strategies and assessments that enable us to reach our goals. The strategies provide a solid framework to improve achievement of our students in the areas of math and literacy.

Our plan is continuously reviewed within our Professional Learning Communities. Progress is reported through regular newsletters and on the school website.

Details of our goals, and the strategies teachers have identified in their PLC groups, which are having the most impact on student learning, are found below.

School Goals

Literacy Goal

Increase the number of students who use expected writing conventions at their grade level.

Strategies:

- Implement writing in all subject areas
- Use popsicle sticks for finger spacing
- Routine use of sight words
- Use of a variety of editing strategies i.e. rubrics, checklists
- Use of frequent proof reading exercises and daily grammar tune ups
- Editing and revising sheets using checklists, both self and peer
- Maintaining an awareness of writing conventions in all print encountered and produced
- Use of assistive technology programs and devices
- Re-teaching of specific writing conventions in small group or one on one situations
- Group editing of student samples on a chart or overhead
- Daily message from teachers with errors for proofreading practice.

Math Goal

Increase the number of students who are able to demonstrate achievement of the computation outcomes based on grade level expectations, beginning with addition / subtraction

Strategies:

- Restructure delivery of math concepts from math centres to three part lesson (whole lesson, practice, sharing)
- Use of mental math to develop number sense
- Embedding number sense and computation into everyday activities
- Use abstract representation of two digit addition and subtraction, with and without regrouping, introducing use of concrete materials to develop a better understanding of "what to do"
- Frequent math homework review
- Continuing to revisit subtraction in mental math
- Differentiating instruction
- Multiple entry points
- Use of assistive technology
- Use of a variety of games to teach concepts
- Encouraging students to orally explain their thinking
- Timed recall of number facts to increase recall and accuracy
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Strategies for Parents to assist their children include:

- The focus of our school wide curriculum night is to provide parents with information on strategies for literacy and math to support their child's learning.
- In January 2008, we presented "Captain Conventions Night" to educate parents of expected writing conventions at each grade level.
- Provide parents with information on how to use addition and subtraction strategies
- School wide curriculum night focus

Halifax Regional School Board

Every Student Can Learn. Every School Will Improve.

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