

Cunard Junior High



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School and Community Context

Cunard Junior High School has served the community of Spryfield, Purcell's Cove, and the surrounding areas since 1965. We offer programming to 213 students from grades 7 through 9. Our school is populated by two elementary feeder schools and because we are a small school there are many opportunities for staff and students to build rapport with each other.

Students are supported in academics through a 100% learning centre and resource, 70% guidance counsellor, 50% student support teacher, 34% literacy coach, 40% literacy support teacher, 60% librarian, eight classrooms, art, music instruction, physical education, family studies and technology education.

To address the diverse interests in our student body we offer many extracurricular activities. We offer leadership building through a student leadership team, instrumental

and choir music clubs, art clubs and a variety of sports (intramural and competitive sports). We offer more than 15 supporting programs and clubs, including a Green Team and a breakfast program. Our school actively promotes a physically active lifestyle to all of our students through activities like the Bluenose Marathon, boot camp, yoga, open gym, and hip hop dance.

Our parents and community are actively involved in our learning community. We have an active Parent Teacher Association and School Advisory Council. Our entire school community works hard to promote a positive and welcoming school environment. Staff strives to meet the needs of all learners.



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Family and Community Involvement

In a recent survey, 96% of parents feel that Cunard invites parent/guardian and community involvement in school activities. Over 84% of respondents feel they have a good relationship with their child's teacher and feel appreciated for their involvement in the school. Effective communication with parents/guardians has improved family and community involvement. Over 80% of parents feel that the school has communicated classroom and school activities effectively.

Safe and Orderly Environment

Our survey results over the last five years have indicated that 92% of parents at Cunard Junior High believe the school is a safe and inviting learning environment. We believe that this is due to the many programs that we offer at the school. We currently have programs every morning, every lunch hour as well as afterschool activities to promote physical activity and the arts within our school.

Our survey reports that 94.5% of students state that teachers care about them and that 92.3% of students feel safe at school. However, 4% of our 12% diverse population feel that they are treated differently. We will take steps to improve this so that everyone feels comfortable in our learning community.

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 8 Board	Reading: 83%	Reading: 81%
Grade 9 Provincial	Reading: 76% Writing: 96%	Reading: 84% Writing: 96%
Math Assessments	School Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations	Board Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations
Grade 8 Board	Mathematics Concepts: 79%	Mathematics Concepts: 72%

We are pleased to report that our students have performed very well on the CAT-4 Grade 8 Mathematics Assessment. However, specifically to this assessment, the percentage of students performing Stanine 4 and above for computation and numerical estimation is 77%. This is below the board level of 80%. More specifically, our students tend to have difficulty with whole number and decimal operations. Our teachers have identified fraction operations as an area of focus for the school Planning for Improvement (PFI) goal, however, whole number and decimal operation based outcomes are covered regularly through mental math and daily activities.

With regards to problem solving and communication, students have dramatically improved when compared to previous years. In 2005-2006, 24% of students were performing at the 4/5 level for problem solving. In 2007-2008, 59% of students were performing at the same levels. In 2005-2006, 24% of students were performing at the 4/5 level for communication. In 2007-2008, 60% of students were performing at the same levels. The math team has spent a great deal of time focusing on improving students' problem solving and communication skills.

In literacy, students in Grade 8 are performing well while reading in Grade 9 seems to be a challenge. Classroom common assessments provide a strong indication that our students are strong and confident readers. However, there are indications that student reading comprehension is an area that needs some attention. Writing skills however, are proving to be proficient among 96% of our Grade 9 students.

Classroom Assessment

Focus on Reading Comprehension and Writing

Writing samples from a common 'writing challenge' revealed that over 95% are proficient/confident in focus on topic; 82% in support of topic; 86% in writing conventions; and 87% in sentence structure. This data supports Provincial and HRSB Assessment which indicates that our students are confident and proficient writers.

Our primary instrument for tracking student reading has been the Reading Records and reflect the student's reading ability in regards to accuracy, fluency, and reading comprehension. The records for the 2008-09 year indicate that a high percentage (83% - 90%) of students are reading at an independent level of accuracy and 90% of our students are in the independent/transitional level for fluency. Reading comprehension is an area that needs some attention. Records reveal that between 75% and 85% of students are capable of retelling the main ideas of a sample of non-fiction reading, however, the percentages fall in the areas of making connections and effectively utilizing various text features.

Focus on Mathematics - Fractions

According to the common assessment results students are stronger with level one procedural type questions when compared to level 2 and 3 word problems. Students consistently demonstrated a weakness with deeper, conceptual understanding of fraction operations. In addition, when asked to demonstrate their understanding, students had great difficulty using the multiple representations: verbally, pictorially, and concretely. These results will be used to inform instruction next year.



Student Engagement

For junior high students a positive school learning experience is very important in engaging students. Over 85% of our students participate in the various sports, clubs and other activities. Our focus is on a healthy life style and many grants support such activities that promote healthy alternatives. As well as their participation in sports, clubs and other activities, 88% of our students feel confident in their ability to learn English language arts; 78% in mathematics; 94% in physical education and family studies and 81% in science. We will continue to work as professional learning teams to improve student performance to a proficient level in ELA and math.

Time to Learn

At Cunard Junior High we follow the Time to Learn requirements. "Getting to Great Survey" results show that our students feel that their learning is most often interrupted by their peers. The second is the time spent by teachers on student discipline. Least likely to interrupt learning was extra-curricular activities. Our students feel that they usually are able to learn by doing things and not just by listening. Our students have also stated that they are given the opportunity to work in groups at least 25% of the time.

Professional Development

Teachers at Cunard Junior High are actively involved in professional development (PD) on an ongoing basis. This year our school-based in-service days were on Planning for Improvement (PFI).

Our teachers met in Professional Learning Community (PLCs) teams and grade level groups regularly throughout the year. Our math PLC team met weekly during the year. Our teachers participated in many individual professional development (PD) sessions including geometry, improving semiotic activity in the math classroom grades 6-9, sexual health, PRIME-math, Individual Program Plan (IPP) development, inclusive education- differentiated PD, data coaching, CAT 4 assessment marking, health promoting school, visual art, Positive Effective Behavioural Supports (PEBS), technology integration in the areas of "Moodle", creating online courses, Global Positioning System usage, and Classroom Suite (assistive technology).

Additional School Supports

- English as a Second Language
- speech language pathologist
- Learning Centre/resource teacher
- student support teacher
- guidance counsellor
- literacy Coach/Literacy support
- school psychologist
- school social worker
- Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) teacher
- club activities: open gym, intramurals, boot camp, yoga, hip hop dance, bluenose, leadership team, floor hockey, ski club, eco team, art club, chess club, spirit team, enrichment group, phoenix youth program
- competitive sports: X-Country running, soccer, volleyball, ice hockey, basketball, field hockey, badminton, track and field



Planning for Improvement

The school staff, in consultation with the School Advisory Council, has chosen goals in the areas of literacy, mathematics and positive school climate. In literacy, we have discovered from analyzing student achievement data that our students would benefit from a focus on reading comprehension. We want our students to further their critical thinking particularly in making connections (with other texts, and with personal experiences) and proposing extension questions. There is also some evidence that students are not effectively utilizing various text features. This past year in math teachers focused on fractions. In general, students struggle in all aspects of fractions. Common assessments have been developed to inform instruction and measure success. We have recognized that com-

munication and the development of school norms with regard to respect for self, others and the learning environment are all paramount to success in school. With that in mind, positive school climate strategies were implemented to further a positive learning experience.

School Goals

Mathematics Goal

We will see improved student achievement in fraction operations and number sense.

Strategies:

- Teachers will provide opportunities for students to use manipulatives to model operations with fractions.
- Teachers will reinforce appropriate math language verbally and through written expression during instruction.
- Teachers will schedule a common meeting time to discuss curriculum mapping, instructional strategies and assessment.
- Designated teachers will have time to support students identified to be struggling in fraction based outcomes.
- Teachers will implement common assessment tools to measure student performance in fraction operations and number sense.

ciency and confidence scores in reading comprehension in both fiction and non-fiction.

Strategies:

- develop and implement a common assessment tool for establishing benchmarks and the level of improvement in student performance in reading comprehension
- develop and implement a common rubric to promote vocabulary building, reading analysis and meaning in context activities across all subject areas and grade levels
- incorporate the use of non-fiction materials in the ELA classroom (using the science and social studies texts, and current affairs pieces)
- offer workshops for parents and teachers to support reading comprehension instruction
- provide opportunities to link what the students are learning to the real world.

school climate that is supportive of learning for all.

Strategies (how will we get there):

- identify a staff member to lead the Positive School Climate initiative and develop a team to support with the implementation.
- develop a communication plan in partnership with the SAC, PTA, parents, staff and students which will reflect celebration of achievements at Cunard Junior High
- implement the Positive Effective Behavioral Supports (PEBS) initiative, including the respects matrix and a student incentive program
- invite motivational guest speakers and hold school spirit building activities monthly
- teachers/Administration support and promote benefits/value of PTA for students, parents and school community
- develop a protocol to support substitute teachers

Literacy Goal

We will see improved student achievement with respect to profi-

Positive School Climate Goal

We will see an improvement in our



Every Student Can Learn. Every School Will Improve.

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