

Cornwallis Junior High



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School and Community Context

Cornwallis Junior High is an urban school which has served central Halifax since 1950. Our colours are red, white and black and our mascot is the Chough. Our enrollment has remained steady for the last 5 years. We offer programming for 220 students from grades 7-9. Class sizes range from 24-30 students per class. We also have a Learning Centre and Resource Centre. Our students follow the Nova Scotia Public School Program which means we offer a wide variety of courses including language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, French, art, music, family studies, technology education, healthy living and a physical education program that includes fitness training and the promotion of a physically active lifestyle. Approximately half of the students in our school participate in our music program and over 65% participate in athletics. Our Battle of the Books

teams and our Math Olympics teams are always competitive in regional events. We offer over 45 co-curricular and extracurricular activities, clubs, teams and events that support our focus on the 4 As: Academics, Arts, Athletics and Attitude..

As members of a school community focused on 'learning for all' our staff and students engage in a wide variety of learning opportunities. We use a pyramid approach to student support which allows us to design programs that benefit individual learning. Staff professional development is aligned with our school and Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) goals. It strengthens our ability to offer best practice programming. At Cornwallis Junior High we have a commitment to providing the best possible learning environment and we are continually planning for improvement. Go Choughs Go!



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Family and Community Involvement

This year over 90% of parents/ guardians surveyed agreed they feel welcome at our school and that the school invites their participation. 91% say they feel appreciated by our school staff when they help with school activities and 81% say that school staff responds to their concerns effectively. However, only 69% indicated that they find out about classroom events and activities well before they happen. To that end we are currently working on ways to improve school to home communication.

Safe and Orderly Environment

As a school participating in Positive Effective Behavioural Support (PEBS) we offer positive effective behaviour support through our Code of Conduct, clubs, activities, our guidance program and our daily ways of being in the school. Conflict is addressed with the intention to educate and help students make good choices. Our survey results over the last 5 years have consistently indicated that our students feel safe.

This year 97% of parent respondents stated that the school is a safe place to learn and 95% said their children like Cornwallis Junior High. However, only 64% of students indicated that they learn about the effects of discrimination. Cultural awareness will be an area of focus for us as we determine our school goals in our school improvement process.

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: 97%	Reading: 81%
Grade 9 Provincial	Reading: 94% 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: 95%	Mathematics Concepts: 72%

Classroom Assessment

Our classroom Literacy assessment for the last two years has focused on both reading and writing and has been accomplished with the support of our Literacy Coach.

Reading Assessment - In Grade 7 we assessed all students orally. In Grade 8 we only assessed students previously identified as being transitional readers, students new to the school, and students identified by the teachers as possibly having difficulties.

Results - The majority of students in Grade 7 are comprehending information text at grade level. The Grade 8 students tested were mostly fluent but had difficulty stating a main idea and making connections. It is recommended that new students to Grade 9 follow the same process as the Grade 7s and 8s.

Writing Assessment - The writing rubric assessed performance related to Grade 7 and 8 outcomes. Results were shared with teachers in a timely fashion so they could use the information as a means of supporting student learning.

Results – Grade 7: In the fall the majority of the students were scoring in the 3 and 4 range of the rubric in all categories. The spring results continued to show improvement as the number of students scoring 4 in each category was higher. In fact, a few students achieved 5 in Matters of Correctness, Spelling and Ideas. Given that the rubric is designed so that most Grade 7 students should score in the three range, this group of students was already performing above expectations in the fall and continued to show improvement between fall and spring. The majority of students are at or above grade level in all categories.

Grade 8: Improvement was shown in the area of Organization. Ideas, Spelling and Word Choice showed improvement and they will continue to be areas of focus with this group of students. In Paragraphing and Matters of Correctness slight improvement was evident. The majority of students in Grade 8 are to be at or approaching grade level expectations.

JHLA Grade 9 results – seven of the eight Grade 9s, previously on literacy support plans (based on the results of the Grade 6 Literacy assessment) met the outcomes in writing.

Recommendations from Cornwallis Literacy Assessment:

- The results of this year's Grade 8 assessment indicated students would benefit from extra support around Ideas, Spelling, and Word Choice.
- The focus of mini lessons next year in Grade 9 will be around these topics.

Our Report Card data indicates that over 70% of students are demonstrating achievement of the outcomes (B or 70% and higher) in every subject. 13% are demonstrating achievement of the outcomes in all but one subject and the remaining 17% have C, or below 70%, in multiple subjects. We continue to refine our Student Success Support Program with the intention of having all of our students achieve the outcomes in all subjects. This will take a concerted effort by staff, parents and students and it is a worthwhile goal.



Student Engagement

In all English language subjects, over 80% of students feel confident in their ability to learn with 92% feeling confident in English Language Arts. 72% of students feel confident about their ability to learn in Core French. Providing targeted support in Core French will be a focus in 2009. Our activity data indicates that 86% of students participated in at least two extracurricular activities. Participation in clubs and activities shows a decline in Grade 9. Although not one of our formal goals we are working toward increasing student participation in at least two school activities to 100%.

Time to Learn

All schools in HRSB follow the Time to Learn requirements set by the Department of Education. This means that each course or subject has a required or recommended number of minutes. The 2008-09 survey indicated that 51% of students indicated that their learning is interrupted by friends talking to them when they shouldn't. Student discipline and announcements are no longer cited as major interruptions of learning.

Professional Development

At Cornwallis we believe that effective assessment is central to providing students with a clear understanding of their learning. This understanding allows students to develop self advocacy skills that will benefit them throughout their lives. Our school based inservices have focused on classroom assessment for student learning and individual teachers have attended conferences and sessions related to Assessment Of /For/As Learning. In our school wide 'What Did You Do In School Today' survey only 6% of students indicated that they did not have a clear understanding of their assessment results. At the Grade 7 level 98% of students indicated they felt positive about their understanding of their assessment results. Remarks such as "...the teachers clearly mark the rubrics with where we did exceptionally well and why and where we could improve. they also tell us beforehand how we will be graded and how the rubric works." were offered by many students.

Additional School Supports

We have a full support team which includes:

- Learning Centre
- resource
- guidance
- student support teacher
- social worker
- psychologist
- youth health centre nurse
- speech language pathologist
- ESL specialist
- community liaison officer
- literacy Co-Coordinator
- school secretary
- two custodians
- library assistant
- two educational program assistants

We also have volunteers who participate in Home and School, SAC, leadership and support of activities and clubs, and coaching teams at Cornwallis. These volunteers come from our families, community, staff and alumni.



Planning for Improvement

The Cornwallis school community takes great pride in our students' success and accomplishments. There is much to celebrate at Cornwallis including: our provincial and HRSB assessment results; our team and club results such as Math On Olympiad and Battle of the Books; our safe and inviting learning environment; and our improving student success rates. There always remains room for improvement and we are dedicated to becoming the best school that we can be. Through our Accreditation and Planning for Improvement processes we have been able to identify our strengths and our challenges and develop goals, indicators, strategies and professional development that will lead to even greater success. Our school goals were developed in 2005-06 through an Internal Review

process that included students, staff, parents and community members. As a community we chose goals in Mathematics, Literacy and Overall Achievement of outcomes. The focus of Professional Development at Cornwallis Junior High for the last three years has been related to developing a Professional Learning Community through engagement in the following areas:

- Differentiated Instruction
- Formative Assessment
- Mentoring and Co teaching
- Curriculum Alignment
- What works in schools
- Data collection and analysis

School Goals

GOAL #1

The percentage of students who will meet all outcomes, achieve a B or higher in Grades 7 & 8, and 70 or higher in Grade 9, in every subject will increase by 15% by 2009.

When this goal was developed in 2006 55% of our students were achieving at this level. Some of the strategies and indicators are:

- Develop a flexible timetable that allows for multiple progressive interventions
- The interventions will be directive not invitational and will be within the school day
- Continue to support teachers in developing formative assessments through targeted PD
- Tracking forms will be kept for every student in the Student Support Program

Over the last year and a half the number of students achieving this goal has ranged between 69% and 74% and even though we are meeting success we will work to increase the effectiveness of the Student Success Support Pyramid.

GOAL #2

The percentage of students who demonstrate proficiency in writing by the end of Grade 9 will increase by 10% by 2009.

- Indicators and Strategies
- There is a focus on writing in all subject areas
- Students independently generate ideas for initiating the writing process in each subject area, using a variety of methods
- Students select and utilize appropriate graphic organizers for their assignments in each subject area
- Students use revising and editing checklists on a regular basis for their own writing
- Language Arts (LA) teachers in collaboration with the Literacy Coordinator will create the assessments

In 2006 76% of Grade 7 students were demonstrating proficiency in writing as measured by DOE assessments. In 2009 96% of those students have demonstrated proficiency as demonstrated in DOE assessments.

GOAL #3

The percentage of students dem-

onstrating competency, meeting the outcomes in all strands of Mathematics will increase by 10% from Grade 7 to Grade 9 by 2009.

- Indicators and Strategies
- There is a focus on measurement and problem solving in all subject areas
- Support all teachers in integrating problem solving opportunities within their subject areas

In 2005-06 Problem Solving (60% competent or proficient) and Communication (59% competent or proficient) were areas identified for improvement. By 2007-08 those areas showed marked improvement at 80% and 85% competent or proficient respectively.

The 2007-08 results show that 88% (measurement) -99% (Order of Operations & Number Operations) of Grade 9s were meeting expectations in all strands.

Our current HRSB results indicate that 95% of Grade 8 students are meeting expectations. Whole number operations were identified as a school and Board wide area for attention.



Every Student Can Learn. Every School Will Improve.

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