

Duc d'Anville Elementary



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School and Community Context

Duc d'Anville School (DDES) has served the community of Halifax West for many years. A single stream school, we offer programming for 332 students from Grade Primary to Grade 6. Although we do not offer French Immersion, we have long had the reputation of being the most multicultural school east of Montreal. There can be as many as 42 languages and dialects represented in the school. We believe this makes our school a special place for our students to learn. As is a general trend in the Halifax West Family of schools, we have also seen a steady decline in enrollment. Our classes, for the most part, are small and students get to know one another quickly. Although we have seen few retirements over the past few years, staff choose to stay at the school if they can. Staff work hard to promote an inclusive culture; one that builds a sense of community within our four walls.

DDES has historically experienced high movement of families, making the monitoring of some programs challenging. Duc d'Anville is rich in diversity; not only because of the many cultures found in our school but there are opportunities also for student leadership (Playground Activity Coordinators, Eco-Club, Chess Club, Recycling Club etc.) Our students are given the opportunity to expand their creative sides with programs such as Grade 6 Band, Strings, Choir, Extra-curricular sports, Chess Club and projects such as Duc d'Anville. Always a major success!

Parents and staff are partners in providing a caring, inviting and motivating learning environment for our students. We are committed to meeting the needs of all students as outlined in our plan to improve student achievement.



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Family and Community Involvement

This year's survey showed that our parents continue to feel welcomed at the school. We run a number of volunteer programs: VIP Reading Program, Breakfast Program and ESL Support. Many of our parents are actively involved in our Parent/Teacher Association while others serve on our School Advisory Council. Although our survey results show that 95% of our families feel the school encourages volunteers and parent involvement, we always see this area as needing growth.

Safe and Orderly Environment

DDES strives to be a safe environment for students and staff. We embrace the belief that it takes a community to raise a child. Staff is visible throughout the day, especially during transition times, welcoming students as they come and go. Yearly surveys have been consistent in showing that 95% of our students feel safe at school. We believe that this is due in part to the many ways we promote good behaviour in our

school, such as the Playground Activities Team, Student Workshops provided by our Police Liaison Officer as well as the use of the Second Step Program. We have also hosted two Anti-bullying presentations for students. We have implemented the Positive Effective Behavioural Supports approach to problem solving with our students. The Safe Arrival program ensures that all students are safe and accounted for.

Provincial and Board Assessment Results

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 results below indicate the percentage of students who met expectations on the assessments. Also note that all percentages used throughout this report are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Literacy Assessments	School (%)		Board (%)
	Baseline	2009-10	2009-10
Grade 2 Board			
English Reading Accurately	45%	71%	76%
English Reading Fluently	48%	64%	69%
Grade 3 Provincial			
Reading	82%	64%	75%
Writing (Information/Non-fiction)	87%	79%	86%
Writing (Narrative/Fiction)	77%	55%	77%
Grade 5 Board			
Reading	78%	80%	82%
Writing-Ideas	58%	58%	64%
Writing-Organization/Correctness	45%	45%	60%
Grade 6 Provincial			
Reading	70%	71%	87%
Writing	77%	84%	92%
Math Assessments	School (%)		Board (%)
	Baseline	2009-10	2009-10
Grade 2 Board			
Mathematics Concepts	86%	98%	97%
Grade 3 Provincial			
Mathematics Concepts	81%	80%	70%
Grade 5 Board			
Communicating Math Thinking	54%	54%	51%
Mathematics Concepts	70%	80%	83%
Problem Solving	57%	57%	53%
Grade 6 Provincial			
Mathematics Concepts	51%	51%	64%

This year we continued to focus on writing, math problem solving and school climate. Last year was a 'baseline' year, which means we used the data to plan for improved student achievement in our target areas. We are using this data along with ongoing classroom assessment data to meet our students' needs. Progress has been noted this year especially in Math at grades 2, 3 and 5. Even though we have surpassed the board levels for problem solving and math communication at the Grade 5 level, there is still room for growth. Although our students are making gains with writing skills, data shows a need for improvement.

Classroom Assessment

Teachers meet during regularly scheduled planning time and work in grade level teams to review student work and plan for individual student instruction. Teachers look at strengths and needs in the areas of writing and mathematical problem solving and communication.

For writing, teachers collect and review personal writing samples in the fall and spring of each year. They identify the individual strengths and needs of each student and plan for areas requiring additional support or instruction. Our spring results revealed that 60% of our Primary to Grade 6 students met expectations for writing conventions (punctuation and capitalization). Through writer's workshop, our teachers are guiding our children to become independent and efficient writers.

Staff also wanted to collect classroom data on student achievement in problem solving and communication in the area of number and operations. Over the past two years, teachers have collected and maintained records to show growth and have used these results to inform their teaching practice and are now using a problem based approach to teaching math. Our students are becoming more proficient at explaining their mathematical thinking and at solving problems in a variety of ways.



Student Engagement

We promote a positive learning climate in which success is celebrated on a daily basis. Our students (92%) are actively involved in teams and/or extra-curricular activities. In addition to participating in clubs and sports, 85% of students feel that they have many chances to learn by doing, not just listening to their teacher's lesson. As well, 77% of our students feel the work they do in language arts and math is challenging, yet understandable. Partnering with our literacy and math coaches, we have been learning how to increase student engagement. Although many of our students feel confident in their abilities in writing (85%), we are working to increase the interest in math (81%).

Time to Learn

Guidelines are created by the Department of Education. Administration ensures that these guidelines are met by all grade levels. The minimum number of minutes per grade level are fulfilled and all available time is reflected in our priority program areas (math and literacy). We continue to focus our efforts on increasing time on task by minimizing interruptions to student learning; curtailing announcements and having parents wait in designated areas so that no visitors appear at the classroom doors. We are also in the process of implementing a 'Lates Policy' that we hope will help curb the number of students who arrive late for class regularly.

Professional Development

When teachers learn, students learn. DDES teachers are actively involved in professional development throughout the calendar year. Each fall, staff set two or three professional goals that are directly related to our school goals. Our professional development (workshops) take place during and after school hours. We draw on the expertise of both our literacy and math coaches as well curriculum leaders on staff. The coaches work directly in classrooms coaching and collaborating with teachers. This year in particular our teachers have begun to implement a problem based approach to teaching math where students independently work through problems using a variety of strategies. Half of our teachers and EPAs were trained on a computer program called Classroom Suite. This program promotes student engagement in language arts and math. Our teachers are using the Writer's Workshop approach to engage students in the writing process. Our teachers see themselves as lifelong learners and endeavour to pass this on to their students.

Additional School Supports

The following additional supports were in place this year to support our students in their learning journey:

- VIP reading program (pr-3)
- volunteers who read regularly with many of our students
- literacy and math coaches
- Psychologist/Speech pathologist
- extra help and/or homework clubs available to students in grades 3 to 6
- behavioral support team who supported 4 of our students directly and several others indirectly
- 2 in-school mentors from big Brothers/Sisters
- YMCA outreach worker
- breakfast program
- student clubs: chess, board games, extracurricular teams etc.



Planning for Improvement

Our school community takes great pride in our students' success. We strive to build a learning community that is inclusive of all of our students. Like other schools, we have many strengths but also recognize that there are areas in which we need to improve so that our students will grow as learners.

In 2009-10 we were in the fourth year of our planning for improvement journey. As part of this process, we regularly and systematically collect data and use it in our classrooms to choose the best practices possible to move our students towards success. This data, especially classroom information, helps us to identify what our students are doing well and what areas need further attention and improvement. To this end, each year we update our school's

plan to reflect and address the needs of our students. Our plan focuses on the areas of literacy (writing), math (problem solving with a focus on number and operations) and school climate. Classroom data shows that our students are getting better at being able to solve math problems and to communicate their thinking in productive ways. Our children are learning to make connections with real world math and use the skills they are developing to express and clarify their thoughts in writing as well. Through classroom teaching, high expectations for behavior and real life practice, our students are continuing to learn more proactive and positive ways of resolving conflict. We continue to see positive changes with the implementation of PEBS (Positive Effective Behavioral Supports).

School Goals

Literacy Goal

By June 2010, we will see an annual increase of 5% in the number of students who achieve a score of three or higher on a four point writing rubric.

Strategies:

- Create a framework using the English Language Arts writing outcomes and writing developmental charts to make grade level benchmarks with specific outcomes.
- use our grade level scoring guide and evaluate during PLC time
- collect data three times per year
- Provide professional development that will support our students' learning.
- Writer's Workshop implementation, grades P-3.
- We will continue to implement Writer's Workshop.

Math Goal

By June 2010, we will see an annual increase of 5% in the number of students who achieve a 4 or higher on a 5 point problem solving/communication rubric.

Strategies:

- Teachers will have a common understanding of the various aspects of problem solving
- We will use a problem solving base model in classroom instruction
- We will engage in PD related to math story structures and 3 part lesson model for the four operations.
- We will meet in professional learning communities (PLC's) to discuss levels of questioning and to come to a common understanding of problem solving.
- Staff will continue to use a common assessment scoring guide to gather data and inform our teaching practices.
- We will use the scoring guide with on-going classroom assessment.
- We will discuss assessment and gather exemplars to share with students to improve achievement
- We will continue to give grade level common assessment in the winter and spring.

School Climate Goal

By 2010, we will see an increase of 10% of teachers planning and learning together to improve student behaviour and academic achievement.

Strategies:

- We will focus PLC time on collecting and analyzing data from ongoing assessment to inform practice.
- Establish and follow designated guidelines and set team goals.
- Schedule at least one half hour of PLC time a week.
- Our math coach and literacy coach will continue to work with staff on a regular basis to provide guidance to our teams.
- To continue to successfully implement the PEBS program that will positively impact student behavior and increase teacher-student contact time.
- Use a school mascot to promote the values and behaviours outlined in the PEBS Matrix.
- Use office referral form to suit our needs.



Every Student Can Learn. Every School Will Improve.

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