

# Elizabeth Sutherland



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## School and Community Context

Elizabeth Sutherland School (ESS) has served the community of Spryfield since the late 1950s. The school was expanded in 1982 and now serves 314 students from Grades Primary to 9 with French Immersion offered in grades 7-9. The range of grade levels in our school allows for collaboration between age and grade levels in art, environmental projects and writing activities and provides many opportunities for students to take on leadership roles.

Our students have the opportunity to participate in various clubs, teams and activities in the arts, sciences and athletics. Students can participate in the music strings program and band. We have an elementary choir and many students participated in our school musical, *Annie*, in April 2009.

ESS organizes sports teams in all major events and these teams have achieved much success. Many

students also participate in extra-curricular sports clubs. We have an enhanced physical education program and many "Healthy Schools" initiatives to encourage students to lead physically active and healthy lifestyles.

Our students enjoy the many resources offered by the community on class trips to places such as the Captain William Spry Centre (Library and Wave Pool), Bowlarama and the Dingle. We have also ventured to places such as Tim Horton's Camp, Ski Martock, Ski Wentworth and the Grade 9 trip to Montreal and Quebec City. All members of our school community work hard to ensure a positive, welcoming and inclusive school environment. Our staff is dedicated to meeting the needs of all of our learners. On the last page of this report is our school plan to improve student achievement.



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## Family and Community Involvement

ESS has many community volunteers that contribute to everyday school life in activities such as dental health, baking, canteen, PTA, SAC, class trips, and Spring Fling. Based on this year's survey results, 89% of parents feel welcome at Elizabeth Sutherland and 86% feel that they have a good relationship with their child's teacher. Teachers will continue to work to increase contact with parents outside of reports and parent teacher nights.

## Safe and Orderly Environment

At ESS, the environment is welcoming and safe. Our students enjoy attending school and feel respect towards others, regardless of their differences. Our survey results indicate that 91% of students feel their teachers care about them. Parents also feel that the school environment is safe. Over 97% of parents feel school is safe most days and 97% of parents also feel that staff treat students with respect.

We have programs that support our efforts to have a safe school such as Peace Pals. Students have indicated that they feel learning is interrupted because of behaviour issues. Positive Effective Behaviour Supports (PEBS) and the Second Step program will be implemented next year to help promote more positive student behaviour.

## 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: 67% English Reading Fluently: 47%	English Reading Accurately: 74% English Reading Fluently: 67%
Grade 3 Provincial	Reading: 89% Writing (Information/Non-fiction) : 84% Writing (Narrative/Fiction) : 79%	Reading: 81% Writing (Information/Non-fiction) : 82% Writing (Narrative/Fiction) : 82%
Grade 5 Board	Reading: 57%	Reading: 81%
Grade 6 Provincial	Reading: 72% Writing: 96%	Reading: 88% Writing: 94%
Grade 8 Board	Reading: 83%	Reading: 81%
Grade 9 Provincial	Reading: 86% Writing: 95%	Reading: 84% Writing: 96%
Math Assessments	School Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations	Board Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations
Grade 2 Board	Mathematics Concepts: 100%	Mathematics Concepts: 95%
Grade 3 Provincial	Mathematics Concepts: 46%	Mathematics Concepts: 71%
Grade 5 Board	Mathematics Concepts: 73%	Mathematics Concepts: 84%
Grade 8 Board	Mathematics Concepts: 66%	Mathematics Concepts: 72%

At Elizabeth Sutherland School students performed well in literacy assessments from Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) and Department of Education (DOE). In the DOE Literacy reading portion of the assessment, a greater number of our Grade 3 and Grade 9 students met the expectations compared to the school board as a whole. Our Grade 3, Grade 6 and Grade 9 students also scored very high on the writing portion of the DOE Literacy assessment.

Although many of our scores were close to the overall school board results, there are a few areas where students did not perform as well as we would have hoped. With the exception of the Grade 2 HRSB math assessment, our Grade 3, 5 and 8 results were lower than the percentage of students meeting expectations in the board.

Teachers will continue to work on reading comprehension and fluency. The results from this year's HRSB and DOE assessments are consistent with the previous assessment results.

## Classroom Assessment

### Focus on Literacy

Teachers worked in Professional Learning Community (PLC) groupings to create and review common assessments which allowed the collection of baseline data which will be used to monitor student growth.

### Focus on Math

Teachers worked within PLC groupings to create common assessment tools that were used to gather baseline data on problem solving and communication (at the elementary level) and understanding of fractions (at the junior high level). This baseline data will be used to help assess student progress.



## Student Engagement

At our school, we have a variety of clubs, teams and extra-curricular activities in which many of our students participate. Survey results indicate that 74% of our elementary students feel that they try their best in school because they like what they are learning. Junior high students also feel confident about their abilities in most subject areas and 95% want to get good grades. We need to improve the level of interest of junior high students so that more students like what they are learning.

## 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 course or subject has a required or recommended number of minutes. Elizabeth Sutherland School's class timetables all meet the DOE guidelines. Students and teachers agree that student learning is interrupted by non-instructional activities such as announcements. We will continue to work on ways to reduce non-essential interruptions to student learning.

## Professional Development

Teachers at Elizabeth Sutherland School are actively engaged in board-based and school-level professional development on an ongoing basis. Our literacy and math coaches are involved in supporting classroom teachers to incorporate effective teaching strategies, modelling lessons and curriculum mapping.

All teachers attended school-based professional development in the areas of assessment, spelling, the Second Step program and also on our Planning for Improvement plan. All teachers have also been involved in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) which focused on math and literacy common assessments and gathering baseline data.

## Additional School Supports

The following support personnel assist in improving student achievement at ESS:

- junior high support teacher
- academic support
- learning strategies class
- Safe Schools
- school nurse
- author visits
- resource teachers
- Learning Centre teacher
- guidance counsellor
- educational program assistants
- social worker
- arts express coordinator
- lunch monitors
- speech language pathologist
- school psychologist
- literacy coaches
- math coach
- library support specialist
- literacy support teacher
- secretary
- Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA)
- community liaison worker



# Planning for Improvement

Elizabeth Sutherland School takes pride in our students' success and we strive to recognize these achievements as much as possible. However, we also know that we can do even better. We are committed to continuing to improve. The Halifax Regional School Board's Planning for Improvement process helps us to identify what our students are doing well and what areas need further attention and improvement.

Through our self-assessment report, various challenges were identified for ESS. We have chosen to focus on math and literacy in order to increase our students' competencies in those areas. Specifically, in literacy we have decided to focus on accuracy (reading words correctly), fluency (improving flow of reading) and comprehension (under-

standing) through all grades, with a concentration on text features in grades 7-9. Our math goal in P-6 will focus on problem solving and communication of mathematical understanding. In grades 7-9, our math goal targets fraction use and application (real-life situations), specifically in the areas of algebraic and number operations. These are skills that our students will benefit from no matter what their future holds.

In order to make the goals a reality, teachers will be focusing on specific strategies in class and participating in learning themselves (professional development). In the "School Goals" section below, you will find details about the strategies and professional development that we will be implementing as we work towards our goals.

## School Goals

### Literacy (P- 9) Goal

To improve student achievement in reading by increasing the level of accuracy, fluency and comprehension (with a focus on text features in grades 7-9).

#### Strategies:

- gather baseline data
- implement the Reader's Workshop model
- mini-lessons targeting accuracy, fluency, comprehension and text features
- collaboration, co-teaching and professional development with literacy coaches
- provide students with multiple opportunities to read fiction and non-fiction texts across subject areas
- continually assess students in the areas listed above.

### Math (P- 6) Goal

To improve student achievement in math using problem solving strategies to investigate and communicate mathematical concepts.

#### Strategies:

- gather baseline data in the form of

- a common assessment
- collaboration, co-teaching and professional development with math coach
- teachers will model the problem solving process, application to real-life situations and mathematical thinking using models, pictures, symbols and words to solve problems
- students will complete sample problem solving tasks three times per year.

### Math (7- 9) Goal

Students will show improvement in their ability to identify, represent and compute fractions in a variety of ways, focusing on fractions within algebraic and number operations (+, -, x, ÷).

#### Strategies:

- gather baseline data in the form of a common assessment
- collaboration, co-teaching and professional development with math coach
- teachers will model fractions using models, pictures, symbols and words

- mental math lessons on operations with fractions
- incorporate fractions into each math unit, whenever possible, especially in algebra
- students will complete sample assessment tasks three times per year.



**Every Student Can Learn. Every School Will Improve.**

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