

Fairview Junior High



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School and Community Context

Constructed in 1972 Ecole Fairview Junior High school has been serving the families of the Fairview area for thirty seven years. Presently we are offering programming in both English and French Immersion to the families of Fairview as well as the students of the Clayton Park and Park West communities. We presently house 427 students, but like many areas of peninsular Halifax our student population has experienced a decline in recent years. The demographics of our student population have changed considerably. As our community boundaries expanded, the diversity of our student population did as well. We now have students from a wide range of cultural, ethnic and racial backgrounds. To accommodate our diverse population we offer English as a Second Language and actively promote respect for all.

We offer our students a variety

of educational opportunities both in and outside of the classroom. In addition, our students also receive programming in physical education, technology education, family studies, French, personal development and fine arts, including both instrumental music and art.

Outside the classroom our students have opportunities to pursue and develop an interest in areas such as school athletics, intramural sports, student leadership, drama, art club, choir, multicultural activities and a variety of other choices.

Staff and students are very proud of our school and work extremely hard to develop and maintain an atmosphere that is safe, caring and built on mutual respect.



Contents

School & Community Context	1
Family & Community Involvement	1
Safe & Orderly Environment	1
Assessment Results	2
Student Engagement	3
Professional Development	3
Time to Learn	3
Additional School Supports	3
Planning for Improvement	4

Family and Community Involvement

Our most recent parent survey results tell us that parents feel welcome at our school and that parents are encouraged to get involved. Ninety percent of our parents/guardians feel welcome at our school and eighty per cent feel that our school welcomes and encourages them to become involved as part of our school community. Parents however, do feel that their efforts to help out have not been recognized or appreciated. We will work to improve this in the future.

Safe and Orderly Environment

Our survey results have indicated a dramatic improvement in parent and student attitudes toward the learning environment. Two years ago only 66% of our parents felt that Fairview Junior High was a safe place for their children to learn. In our most recent surveys 95% of our parents now feel that our school is a safe place for their children to learn. Student feedback has seen a similar improvement in this area with 88% now believing

that our school is a safe place compared to 78% who felt that way just two years ago. We believe our efforts in this area are making a difference and we will continue to promote a safe and respectful learning environment through the many programs we have put in place.

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: 85%	Reading: 81%
Grade 9 Provincial	Reading: 85% Writing: 94%	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: 80%	Mathematics Concepts: 72%

Grade 8 and nine students of Fairview Junior High participated in both Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) and Department of Education mathematics and literacy assessments during the 2008 -2009 school year. The results of these assessments will assist us with our planning for improvement. We are very pleased with our results in both math and literacy. In the area of literacy we have exceeded the results for the board as a whole with 85% of our students meeting expectations. In the area of writing we were slightly below the board result but still had 94% of our students meeting the expectations. In mathematics we again exceeded the board results and had 80% of our students meeting the expectations. These are great results for our school and may well be reflective of the efforts our teachers have put into improving teaching strategies. They may also be an indication that the work that is being carried out with Literacy support to our students who are having difficulties is starting to show dividends. The work of our math and literacy coaches have had a lot to do with the results our students are having as well.

Classroom Assessment

As a school entering the Planning for Improvement process we spent a great deal of time over the last two years preparing for our review in June 09. As part of our preparation we reviewed many sources of data including classroom data. Teachers' assessment records, observations of student learning and samples of students writing mirrored the results from our other data sources such as the HRSB assessments and the Department of Education literacy assessments.

Focus on Writing:

Classroom data and student writing samples have shown us that writing needs to be a school-wide focus for our students, particularly in the area of organization and ideas. Gathering classroom data is a source that we need to expand upon. Our work the last two years reinforced the need for us to develop common assessments across the grade levels. Common assessments will give us base-line data so that we are able to continually monitor student progress. Along with our common assessments we are putting together a common grade-level rubric for evaluation purposes.

Focus on Fractions.

As with our writing goal we will be developing common assessments and a grade-level mathematics rubric for all grade levels. Our overall board and provincial assessment results reflect that the majority of our students are meeting expectations in mathematics but also show fractions as being a challenge for our students. Our mathematics teachers have confirmed this with classroom assessment results. Teachers in the other subject areas have also observed and noted the inability of many of our students to be able to apply fractions when necessary in areas such as science, social studies, technology education, etc.



Student Engagement

The majority of our students are actively engaged in academics and extracurricular activities. At FJHS we have a variety of clubs and teams which approximately 58% of our students participate in. Eighty-three percent of our students feel confident in their abilities in both math and language arts. Our student surveys also show that students have confidence in their teachers and are comfortable to ask questions and take part in class discussion. However, our student surveys also tell us that we need to take steps to improve the level of interest in student learning in the area of social studies across all grade levels.

Time to Learn

Schools within the province of N.S. follow the Time to Learn document from the Department of Education. This document outlines the required or recommended number of instructional minutes students are to receive in each subject area. Our time table is constructed so that all students receive the number of minutes as outlined by the Department of Education. To further increase the time dedicated to learning we have made reducing interruptions to teaching time a priority. We have taken numerous steps to reduce both internal and external interruptions to our instructional time. This will continue to be a priority for us next year.

Professional Development

On-going professional development (PD) is key to improving instruction and other teaching practices. On a yearly basis all teachers, in consultation with school administration, develop a personal professional growth plan which is intended to assist them in laying out a plan for their own professional growth in support of our school and board initiatives. In addition to their own professional growth plans teachers take part in professional development directly related to our school improvement plan and in support of the initiatives set down for our board. Over the last year our teachers have gone through rigorous PD in the areas of math and literacy across all subject areas. We have math and literacy coaches who work with staff on a weekly basis to improve teaching practices. All staff have received PD around effective assessment and evaluation. We are currently building professional development using the concept of professional learning communities, where staff have the opportunity to share and explore best practices.

Additional School Supports

Fairview Junior High has many additional supports that may be made available to assist with student achievement:

- resource
- speech language pathologist
- learning center teacher
- junior high support teacher
- educational program assistants
- guidance counsellor
- math coach
- literacy coach
- school psychologist
- social worker
- literacy support teacher
- severe learning disability teacher
- English as a Second Language teacher
- behavioral specialist
- autism specialist support
- teachers web pages
- teachers extra help sessions



Planning for Improvement

Our school community is extremely proud of the success of our students and their accomplishments. We have a great deal to celebrate here at Fairview Junior High but are already planning for improvement over the coming years. Staff, parents and students dedicated a great deal of time this year to analysing data and gathering feedback on what we are doing well as a school and where the challenges lie for us as we move forward with our School Improvement Plan.

Over the last two years we have dedicated a lot of our efforts to making our school a better place. For example, we have seen a dramatic improvement in our school climate and all members of our school community now find our school to be a welcoming and safe place. We have im-

proved the time for learning. We now have a student leadership group which is growing yearly. We have reassigned class allocations and altered time tables to increase the time dedicated to learning. Although we have spent time on improving student achievement it is now time for us to make it our number one priority. All members of our school community, in particular our teachers, have contributed an enormous amount of time and effort to the development of our plan. Our new plan has set goals in the area of literacy and mathematics. In the area of literacy we will be concentrating on organizations and ideas as part of the writing process. In mathematics we will focus our efforts in the area of fractions.

School Goals

Mathematics Goal

Fairview Junior High will improve achievement in numeracy in the area of fractions.

Strategies:

- Teachers will implement the use of scheduled PLC times to share teaching strategies and resources, to analyze data and align evaluation practices, to develop common assessments and to discuss trends in data to inform teaching practices.
- Teachers will develop and administer common baseline formative assessments and collect data to inform math instruction
- Strategy #3 : Teachers will develop a plan to target the fractional needs at each grade level through curriculum mapping and alignment and by incorporating fractions into mental math activities and problem solving questions. Fractions will also be incorporated for use across the other subject areas.

Literacy Goal

Fairview Junior High will demonstrate increased student achievement in literacy, specifically in the areas of organization and ideas as part of the writing process.

Strategies:

- Through the work in PLCs teachers will develop curriculum mapping and alignment..
- English language arts/French language arts (ELA/FLA) teachers will develop and conduct common assessments of student writing using a common grade level rubric.
- ELA/FLA teachers will incorporate Writers Workshop as part of their teaching strategies
- All subject teachers will include a variety of forms of writing in their curriculum with a focus on ideas and organization.



Every Student Can Learn. Every School Will Improve.

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