

Hillside Park Elementary



growing together....it takes a village to raise a child

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School and Community Context

Hillside Park Elementary School has served the community of Lower Sackville since 1951. We offer programming to 214 students from Grades Primary to 6. Our enrollment has declined over the past ten years, but seems to be remaining steady at just past the 200 mark for the past three. We have an enthusiastic staff who go above and beyond to get to know and support students, and who give up their own time to offer a wide range of extracurricular activities. All of our students receive two music and two physical education sessions each week, and we also offer core French to students in Grades 4 through 6, and extended physical education in grades 3 through 6. Our Grade 6 students also have the opportunity to participate in instrumental music.

Students are engaged in many extracurricular activities and are presented with many opportunities

to promote citizenship. Students are actively involved in running our “Green Team” which promotes the responsible care of our school environment and which we hope will be extended to the community at large. We provide opportunities and encourage students to lead active, healthy lifestyles. Many of our students have been involved in the “Go Active Fitness Challenge” for the past four years. Promotion of the arts is a priority here at Hillside. Students are involved in activities such as choir, Town Halls, seasonal concerts and our annual theatre production. Artwork is always proudly displayed throughout the school.

All members of our school community work hard to ensure a positive and welcoming school environment where student success is the focus. Our staff is dedicated to meeting the needs of all of our learners.



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

For the past three years, 90% of parents/guardians surveyed have indicated that they feel welcomed in our school and 82% feel appreciated for their volunteer efforts. However, 49% indicated that they would like more regular contact with teachers regarding student progress. Parent/guardian involvement is very important to us at Hillside. Our motto is “Growing together, it takes a village to raise a child.” To this end, we are currently working on ways to invite family and community participation in school activities.

Safe and Orderly Environment

We are proud of our Positive Effective Behaviour Supports (PEBS) here at Hillside. The majority of our students know the expectations that we have posted in our school matrix and they work hard to follow them. Students are given “Caught Carings” when they show respect for themselves, the environment, others or learning. We have monthly draws as well as a “store” where these can be exchanged for prizes. Students en-

joy seeing the “Caught Caring” tree fill up each month! However, teacher surveys indicate that there are too many interruptions during class time due to minor behavioural incidents. We have been tracking classroom disruptions for the past year and a half. Disruptions are down to an average of three per day. This continues to be an area of concern which will be addressed again this year.

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 HRSB Literacy Reading	English Program Accuracy: 70% English Program Fluency: 67%	English Program Accuracy: 74% English Program Fluency: 67%
Grade 3 DOE Literacy	Reading: 82% Writing (Information) : 79% Writing (Narrative) : 82%	Reading: 80% Writing (Information) : 80% Writing (Narrative) : 87%
Grade 5 HRSB Literacy	English Program Reading: 86%	English Program Reading: 82%
Grade 6 DOE Literacy	Reading: 100% Writing: 100%	Reading: 88% Writing: 94%
Mathematics Assessments	School Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations	Board Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations
*Grade 2 HRSB Mathematics	90%	95%
*Grade 3 DOE Mathematics (June 2008)	69%	71%
*Grade 5 HRSB Mathematics	90%	84%

At Hillside Park we are pleased to report that our students have consistently performed well in writing and math in the HRSB and Department of Education assessments. We are particularly pleased that 100% of our Grade 6 students who wrote the Grade 6 literacy assessment last year, met expectations in all areas. Overall, the majority of our students continue to do well on the board and provincial assessments. However, our classroom assessments indicate that there is more work to be done to meet grade-level expected outcomes in the areas of writing and subtraction. Therefore we will continue to address these areas in our Plan for Improvement (PFI).

Classroom Assessment

We have shown steady improvement in our literacy and math goals since our Planning for Improvement initiatives began. We have conducted school-wide assessments in these areas and have noted improvements each year. Our staff is committed to PFI initiatives and we continue to purchase materials to support these initiatives on a regular basis. Also, many teachers are involved in professional development sessions which support our goals, and are collaborating with our math and literacy coaches on a regular basis.

Teachers worked together in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), with the guidance of our literacy and math coaches, to develop common grade-level assessments and rubrics in primary to six. In writing, the focus is on the organization and development of ideas. In numeracy, the focus is on subtraction. These assessments were administered to our students for the first time in March. At this time, a school average of 66% of students met our goals in writing, and 66% of our students met our goals in math. The assessments were administered again in June. The results of the first assessments were used as our baseline data and informed our ongoing instruction. The results of the June assessments allowed us to evaluate our instructional strategies. These assessments will continue three times a year, in November, March and June, to coincide with our three reporting periods. Teachers will work together to monitor individual student achievement, and adapt instructional strategies to help all students have success. Results will be shared through regular reports to the School Advisory Council (SAC), Parent-Teacher Group (PTG), in newsletters and on our website.



Student Engagement

At Hillside, we work very hard to promote student engagement. In our most recent student survey, 94% of students in Grades 4 to 6 reported that their teachers challenge them to learn by doing, not just by listening and 79% reported that their teachers challenge them to do better on their schoolwork. Parent surveys indicated that 94% of parents were satisfied with their child's learning in English language arts, and 100% were satisfied with math. We are working to improve student participation in extracurricular activities as less than 50% of students reported being involved in these activities since September.

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 of instructional time. For the past three years, teacher surveys have indicated that student learning is interrupted too often due to disruptive behaviours by students. We have been working on this by having all students who receive minor slips during class time report to the office at lunch for a meeting with administration. While this practice has decreased the number of in class minor slips, disruptions continue to be a concern.

Professional Development

Learning is a lifelong process and our staff is dedicated to continually improving their practice. Our teachers work with our literacy and math coaches regularly to improve and develop teaching strategies. Teachers also completed 15 hours of training last fall on a new math assessment tool called PRIME. Program planning and differentiated instruction have also been a focus of school based professional development (PD) this year. In addition to this, many of our staff are participating in other PD sessions in literacy, math, assessment, Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, first aid and technology. Many of these workshops take place after school hours, and teachers attend these sessions on a volunteer basis.

Additional School Supports

At HPES we have a number of additional school supports provided to improve student achievement:

- English as a Second Language teacher
- Speech-Language pathologist
- Learning Centre teacher
- resource teachers
- math coach
- literacy coach
- guidance counsellor
- school psychologist
- Reading Recovery teacher
- library support specialist
- extended physical education program
- educational program assistants
- public health nurse
- RCMP liaison officer
- DARE program
- behavior support specialist
- APSEA teacher
- PEBS program
- Sackville river association



Planning for Improvement

At Hillside we take great pride in our students' success and accomplishments. We have much to celebrate! However, we know that we can always do better. We are dedicated to demonstrating our continued improvement. The HRSB's Planning for Improvement Process helps us to identify what our students are doing well, and what areas need further attention and improvement.

Our school staff have chosen goals in the areas of literacy, mathematics and student engagement. Our student achievement data over the past few years has indicated that our students could benefit from a focus on writing, specifically in the areas of developing ideas and improving organization. This is an important goal that will impact their ability to succeed in any subject. In mathematics, we

are focusing on improving our students' ability to use and understand operations, specifically in the area of subtraction. Our data has indicated that our students are not confident in this area. In the area of student engagement, our teachers have consistently communicated over the past few years that student learning is interrupted too often due to discipline issues. This obviously affects the level of engagement in our classrooms. This is an area we are working hard on improving, as the engagement of our students in learning is obviously of utmost importance.

Below you will find our school improvement plan. We are working hard to make these goals a reality at Hillside!

School Goals

Literacy Goal

In Grades Primary to 6, students will be involved in daily writing activities to become proficient in the areas of ideas and organization. Some of the strategies that will be used are listed below:

Strategies:

- Teachers will participate in PLCs on a regular basis and develop common assessments to measure progress.
- Teachers will use effective instructional strategies, such as Writer's Workshop, explicit instruction, modeling, and guided and shared writing
- Students will engage in daily writing assignments
- Teachers will meet with the literacy coach and engage in PD opportunities (such as differentiated instruction)

Mathematics Goal

Our students will improve their understanding in the area of operations, with an emphasis on subtraction. Some of the strategies that will be used are listed below:

Strategies:

- Teachers will engage in regular PLC meetings and identify students who are experiencing difficulty through the development of common assessments.
- Teachers will consult with the math coach and engage in PD opportunities (such as differentiated instruction).
- Teachers will use instructional strategies such as: create story problems, solve and create algorithms, and use a variety of different approaches to solve problems, so students will demonstrate a solid understanding of operations.

Student Engagement Goal

We will adopt positive behaviour strategies so that disruptive behaviour in class will decrease, and so that students will spend more time on task in class.

Strategies:

- Staff will continue to implement and fine tune the PEBS program. At the beginning of each school

year we will review the matrix. Classroom teachers will review expected behaviors on a regular basis. Our matrix will be posted throughout the school, on our website, and will be sent home in our September Newsletter. We will continue to expand our reward system, such as, "Caught Caring Cards", "No Minor/Major Behavior draws".

- Our PEBS committee will oversee reward programs and the data collection.



Every Student Can Learn. Every School Will Improve.

Contact Information: 15 Hillside Avenue, Lower Sackville, B4C 1W6

Tel: 902-864-6873 Email: hpes@hrsb.ns.ca Principal: Karla Wolfe