

# John Martin Junior High



WWW.JOHNMARTIN.EDNET.NS.CA

## School and Community Context

John Martin Junior High school is located in North Dartmouth. It is a Grade 7 - 9 school. Students feed into our school from John MacNeil, Harbourview, and Shannon Park Schools. We have approximately 242 students who attend our school. There are 30 staff members who work at John Martin. Our teachers are young and enthusiastic. Our teachers work hard to stay current in their teaching strategies. At John Martin Jr. High School we care about our students! Caring means that we share in making classroom rules! Caring means we deliver the curriculum in an exciting way! Our school is a community of diverse learners and our staff strive to meet the needs of all students. We offer programs after school for students interested in drama, music, competitive and recreation sports, and informal social time. Despite all this, we are always looking for new ways to engage stu-

dents in our school life beyond the classroom and the local community. We are excited about our new community sign outside our school. This sign should help us to better communicate with the people of North Dartmouth.

We also invite community members to view our webpage [jmjh@hrsb.ns.ca](mailto:jmjh@hrsb.ns.ca) and our monthly newsletter housed on that webpage.



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## Family and Community Involvement

This year we have hosted the community with a variety of events such as band concerts, parent teacher, curriculum night/ice cream social, drama productions, SAC, holiday dinner, pancake breakfast, book fair, and our school closing ceremonies. We have a variety of community partnerships such as our involvement with the United Way, community police, and our local politicians. Our monthly newsletters are also an excellent communication tool and invite parents to engage with their children's learning.

## Safe and Orderly Environment

At John Martin, the slogan "we respect ourselves and others" greets you at the front door. Staff strive to create safe and respectful classrooms, which allow students to take risks in their learning. At our school, we have created a variety of student spaces. We have a games room for the students, a courtyard with basketball, a library, and a theatre room.

We care about student success and recognize when students are

achieving with positive phone calls to parents, award recognition, and a celebration of student success each year. Teachers meet with students and their families to identify learning and social needs that can we can address through our school support. We strive to create a safe and inviting environment for our students to succeed.

## 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: 61%	Reading: 81%
Grade 9 Provincial	Reading: 69% Writing: 90%	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: 40%	Mathematics Concepts: 72%

At John Martin students participate in a variety of academic assessments. Over the past few years we have been tracking our school's performance on these assessments and have seen an exciting trend. In mathematics, we have seen growth in all areas. In literacy we have seen growth and continued success. The provincial and board-based assessments are used as part of a collection of data that includes our class room assessments and common assessment. It is with all this information in mind that we look for ways to improve student achievement at John Martin. We look forward to increased student achievement on these assessments next year.

## Classroom Assessment

At John Martin we care about success of our students. Our teachers provide a variety styles of assessment for students to demonstrate the outcomes covered in each classroom. Teachers work together to develop their assessment tools. Students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning. We try to balance between three types of assessments: assessment "of" learning where we use tests, quizzes and assignments to establish what students have learned; assessment "as" learning where students are involved in assessing their own learning; finally, we use short assignments, student feedback, pre -quizzes to help teachers guide student learning in the most effective ways. This is called assessment "for" learning.

As a school, we have placed a focus on increasing student achievement. All teachers at John Martin Junior High provide a communication plan of assessment to parents of all students, within which include some of the following assessment methods: quizzes, tests, self-assessment, portfolio writing, assignments, book talks, projects, and class involvement.



## Student Engagement

Student engagement and success has been fostered in a variety of ways: staff mapped lessons in English language arts (ELA) and math to ensure consistency and to increase student success; data with respect to student achievement in the areas of ELA and math were used to guide teaching and learning experiences. Student achievement is recognized via positive participation assemblies, student of the month awards, and academic awards. We have now begun to purchase smart boards.

## Time to Learn

At John Martin, we have been creative with respect to the time to learn strategy. One hour blocks dedicated to literacy and math have proven beneficial. In addition, student movement from class to class has been significantly reduced, and such transitions have been taught and reinforced to ensure instructional time is maximized. Effort to reduce interruptions to instructional time has been and continues to be a focus; for example, few to no school-wide announcements are made during instructional time.

## Professional Development

At John Martin Jr. High School, we care about our students! Caring means that we remain current in the understanding and delivery of our programs! Remaining current means that we determine our students' needs, we set goals to meet those needs, and we continue to develop ourselves as teachers in the areas we teach. It is expected that all of us take part in learning. Our staff takes part in professional development sessions at the school board. We also hold after school sessions in order to learn from guest speakers and fellow staff members about ways to improve our teaching. We work with math and literacy coaches in our school who lead professional development through team teaching with our staff. Many of our staff members are enrolled in Master's level study at university in order to better serve our students. For us to improve as a school, all of us must be a part of the learning.

## Additional School Supports

At John Martin, we have a number of supports in place to ensure that students find success at our school. Our staff include an African Nova Scotia support worker, a Mi'kmaq support worker, and a student support teacher. We have the support of the board based behaviour support team, a guidance counsellor, resource and learning center teachers and literacy teachers who are here to assist students. We also have a math and a literacy coach who work with our staff to support student achievement. We have invested in technology and books that support students in the classroom. We have also offered a wide variety of extracurricular activities. At John Martin we care about students, so we ensure that they have everything they need to succeed.



## Planning for Improvement

At John Martin, we have been working hard to ensure that student achievement is increasing. We care about our students and we want them to succeed. We believe that every student will learn and that our school will improve. In 2008 -2009 we started work on a five year plan to improve literacy and math. We collected data from teachers, from students and from the board-based assessments and surveys. We used this data to examine our areas of strength and need. We found that while we had some areas of higher student achievement, we needed to target other areas for improvement. It is through this that we created our school plan for improvement. We set goals that target student achievement in problem solving and writing. We have put in place resources that will allow staff to focus their profes-

sional development in these areas. We have created school-based teams that will track our progress and seek out ways to improve student learning. Over the next five year period we will be checking frequently to ensure we are moving in a positive direction. We have a plan and we know that we can achieve our goals as we move forward together as a Professional Learning Community.

## School Goals

At John Martin we have been continually working to improve our school. Through this process we have identified two areas of focus for our school. Over the next five years we will be targeting these areas with professional development for our staff, focused teaching for our students. We will be monitoring our progress with specific assessments. We, at John Martin, are working toward the improvement of mathematics and literacy achievement at our school.

In mathematics, we are targeting problem solving. We have set a goal to improve student achievement in the area of problem solving. We believe that this goal will help students make a connection between classroom material and the real world. We also believe that problem-based learning will improve student achievement in all areas of learning.

We will be using a variety of lessons to teach students methods for approaching problem solving. We will be teaching students to use common strategies when solving problems. We will be teaching students how to assess their own problem solving ability and how to track their own progress.

In literacy, we are targeting the area of writing. Our goal for literacy is to increase student achievement in writing with a focus on organization. We believe that this goal will allow students to improve their written communication. We will teach students how to structure and organize their writing. We will engage students in daily writing. We will be teaching students that writing is a part of all subject areas. We will teach students strategies that will improve both their reading and writing.

In order to assess our progress we will be using the Grade 8 board-based achievement tests. To keep a closer look at our progress, we will be using a school-based common assessment to track student achievement. We have developed teams of teachers who are responsible for ensuring that student achievement increases. As a school team we have chosen these goals and are working together to achieve them. We can do it!



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

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