

Millwood High



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School and Community Context

Millwood High School was first opened in 1986 to serve the needs of an expanding population base in the Beaver Bank, Lucasville and the Upper, Middle and Lower Sackville areas. Our student population has remained steady at approximately 650 students for the past five years. One of the benefits of this small population is that our class sizes tend to be relatively small, and our staff gets to know the students well.

Millwood offers an impressive number of programs and extracurricular activities. Of particular note in our school programming has been the recent addition of several advanced placement (AP) courses. Currently, Millwood is offering AP English, Chemistry, Physics and Biology and in 2009-10, we will add Calculus to the list. AP courses are equal to first year university classes, and can be credited towards a student's degree.

We also offer advanced Art 12 and Yoga 11, a course whose popularity has grown to 5 sections for 2009-10. These courses are complemented by a strong Co-operative Education program and the recent addition of the Options and Opportunities program. Also, Millwood has a strong French Immersion program, several physical education courses, and a variety of fine arts credits including drama, visual art, a new dance program and a vibrant music program.

We are proud of our school and what our students are able to accomplish within its walls. As we move forward with our plan to improve, we look forward to continuing to serve the needs of this community and its learners.

Go Knights go!



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Family and Community Involvement

Millwood activities are strongly supported in the community. This is easy to see when the school hosts a performance or sports event. In addition, the data from the "Getting to Great" survey indicated that parents/guardians felt they were welcome at our school (89.7%) and that concerns they raised were dealt with effectively (79%).

This year only a small number of parent/guardian surveys were returned and we will work hard next year to increase that number.

Safe and Orderly Environment

According to our survey, the majority of Millwood students feel that they are treated with as much respect as other students (74%) and that bullying was seldom an issue (91%) at the school. However, the two most identified issues that students felt interrupted their learning were both tied to the behaviour of others. Sixty-three percent of students indicated that the major reason their learning was interrupted was "friends talk-

ing to me when they shouldn't" and 52.7% said "student discipline" was a key factor.

Our teachers will continue to work to improve the environment at Millwood through the many initiatives underway at the school that support students struggling with academic and personal challenges.

Provincial Assessment Results

Nova Scotia examinations (NSE) in Mathematics 12, Advanced Mathematics 12, English 12 and English/Communications 12 are designed and administered by the Nova Scotia Department of Education. These examinations are administered at the end of each semester in January and June. As with all provincial examinations, the pass mark is 50 percent. The examination counts as 30 percent of the students' final course mark. Classroom assessment makes up the other 70 percent. Please note that the percentages used throughout this report are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Assessment	School Results: Percentage of students who had an exam mark of 50% or above	Board Results: Percentage of students who had an exam mark of 50% or above	School Results: Percentage of students who had a course mark of 50% or above	Board Results: Percentage of students who had a course mark of 50% or above
Grade 12 DOE Nova Scotia Exam: Mathematics	35%	45%	64%	83%
Grade 12 DOE Nova Scotia Exam: Advanced Mathematics	56%	62%	88%	93%
Grade 12 DOE Nova Scotia Exam: English	93%	94%	97%	97%
Grade 12 DOE Nova Scotia Exam: English Communications	74%	88%	74%	95%

Advanced Placement (AP) Program	
Total enrollment in AP courses in our school	52
Percentage of students who wrote AP exams in our school	98%
Percentage of students who achieved a score of 3 or higher in AP exams in our school.	43%

Millwood High introduced the international Advanced Placement program in 2006-07 offering AP Chemistry. Since then, and based on student demand, the program has expanded to include AP English, Physics, Biology, and Calculus. In 2008-09, 35 students chose to enrol in one or more AP courses. In May, students wrote an external exam that was administered world-wide for each course. Exam scores are reported on a 5-point scale as follows:

- 5 Extremely well qualified*
- 4 Well qualified*
- 3 Qualified*
- 2 Possibly qualified*
- 1 No recommendation**

During 2008-09, 52 exams were written, and 43% of these resulted in scores of 3 or higher. We are pleased that most Grade 12 AP students received scholarships from various universities; however, we would like to work at increasing the number of students who are AP qualified. We look forward to continued growth in this exciting and challenging program.

Classroom Assessment

Our focus on school climate, literacy, and numeracy over the past two years, has resulted in some exciting news for Millwood. Our data shows that there was a 22% decrease in failures in semester one of 2008-09 compared to semester one of 2007-08!

When we looked at our literacy data, it was noted that 64% of the students who wrote the most recent Junior High Literacy Assessment did not score in the satisfactory range for reading and understanding non-fiction texts. These texts include magazine articles and text books. We chose to focus on this part of our literacy goal for 2008-09. Students throughout the school began using literacy tools in all their classes, from English to Social Studies, Math to Chemistry. Even the music and physical education teachers were talking literacy! We soon saw positive results in Grade 11 and 12 (an increase of 8-10%) and are working on achieving the same improvement with our Grade 10 students. We are very happy to report that our efforts were reflected on the Grade 12 Provincial English exam written in January. Ninety-one percent of our students scored satisfactory or higher in the non-fiction reading section!

The math department has continued focusing on students in the Math 10 program. There was an overall improvement of 4% in student averages from 2nd semester of 2007-08 to 1st semester of 2008-09. We will continue focusing specifically on a lack of success for our students in the areas of word problems and problem solving.



Student Engagement

At Millwood, we remain committed to engaging all learners. According to our survey, we are doing well when it comes to keeping our students actively involved. Students indicated that they felt most confident in their abilities in arts, technology and physical education courses, followed closely by English courses. Engagement in extra curricular activities was low, however, with only 30% of our students indicating that they were involved in a school club or team. This may be because between 30% and 40% of our students indicated having a part time job.

Time to Learn

Millwood's schedule is carefully aligned to the Time to Learn document but there are sometimes disruptions during the day. Students indicated in the survey that discipline was the main interruption to their learning. Our Positive Effective Behavioural Supports (PEBS) committee is actively working on this challenge. School announcements and visitors at the classroom door were also mentioned as possible disruptions. We keep announcements to a minimum by only doing them once a day and hallway traffic is limited by the vigilance of duty teachers. Students indicated that these two areas were seldom cause for interruption to their learning.

Professional Development

At Millwood, we are firm believers in the idea that students learn and succeed when their teachers are also learners. To this end, each teacher has created a personal growth plan and has been working on improving their teaching throughout the school year. Our staff has also been active in creating professional learning communities where teachers meet with colleagues to discuss ideas about what works in their classrooms. Topics have ranged from classroom management to running a science fair to developing a resource bank of word problems for Math 10 and beyond.

This year our staff also received profession development on teaching comprehension strategies for reading and writing in all subjects as well as dealing with bullying and harassment in the classroom.

Additional School Supports

Millwood offers a full range of supports for students who are having academic or personal difficulties. These include:

- the guidance office
- the youth health center
- the African Nova Scotian support worker
- the Millwood intervention and support team (MIST) for students struggling with mental health and drug related issues
- our grade intervention program (GRIP) which provides time for students to complete missed assignments and receive extra help; the program expanded to include in-class support and a credit recovery program
- this past spring, we held a health and wellness conference for Grade 10 students

Graduation Rates

School Year	Rate
2008-2009	87.4%
Destination after high school	Rate
Community College	15%
University	32%
Other education or training	14%
Join work force	29%
Unknown	9%

Planning for Improvement

During the process of creating the accreditation plan for Millwood High, the staff decided to identify goals related to school climate, literacy, and numeracy. The climate data revealed that there were significant behaviours related to drug use and defiance. We worked hard at establishing support systems and procedures to reduce these behaviours. We have not witnessed a significant decrease in incidents related to defiance or drug use, but we plan to build on support and interventions already in place.

Our literacy goal centers on reading comprehension, critical response, and writing. The focus for 2008-09 was on comprehension of information texts. Data from semester one of 2008-09 indicated that 61% of the Grade 12s scored above the target of 70% in the comprehension

component of the Nova Scotia Exam. We saw positive gains in comprehension among Grade 11 students from one semester to the next in classroom assessment; however, Grade 10 students' scores were down 14% from one semester to the next. We are going to collect more data related to comprehension to inform teacher practice and student learning.

Our numeracy goal focused on improving achievement among students in Math 10 with a particular emphasis on problem solving. We did see a 4% gain in overall averages from the final semester of 2007-08 to the first semester of 2008-09. Unfortunately, the rate of success (79%) remained the same for those two semesters. We plan to improve in this area.

School Goals

Climate Goal

We will have a reduction of 15% of defiance and drug related behaviors as measured through incident tracking. Strategies include:

- Staff continued with a proactive approach to school discipline
- Students received PEBS training in September
- Staff also continued the work of the Millwood Extracurricular Review Committee (MERC), which requires students to maintain passing grades, good attendance, and respectful behavior in order to participate in activities.
- Millwood Intervention and Support Team (MIST) also continued monitoring and supporting students with mental health and drug related challenges.
- We expanded the Grade Intervention Program (GRIP) to include in-class support and a credit recovery program.
- This spring, we held a Health and Wellness conference for all Grade 10 students.

Literacy Goal

By the year 2010 our students will have a 15% increase in their literacy skills with a focus on comprehension, critical response, and writing. Strategies include:

- A focus on comprehension of information texts. As a staff we devoted two PD days to teaching strategies and assessment tools for comprehension in all subjects.
- Our literacy coordinator spent a half day with each department at the school reviewing subject specific comprehension strategies for teachers to incorporate into their practice.
- In addition to the Junior High Literacy Assessment (JHLA), we also identified the Nova Scotia Exam (NSE) exam in English as an important source of comprehension data. Beginning in 2009-10, we'll be able to compare the results from the JHLA and the NSE exams for the same students, giving us a clear before and after snapshot of students' growth during their time at the school.
- French Immersion teachers

worked to establish a baseline for their Grade 10 students with respect to literacy in French.

Numeracy Goal

As measured by final marks, there will be a 10% increase (from 60% to 66%) in student achievement in academic Math 11 (MAT11) by 2010. Strategies include:

- All MAT10 teachers gave formal assessments to their students within the first 2 weeks of the semester to assess prior knowledge and skills. From these assessments, at risk students were identified and given extra help.
- Word problems and problem solving were identified as areas of challenge so the Math department worked on a resource bank of problems.
- Five members of the department attended a 3 day workshop on lesson analysis and rich problem solving.



Every Student Can Learn. Every School Will Improve.

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