

# Oxford School



- a proud and unique history -

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## School and Community Context

Oxford School has served the Halifax Peninsula for the last 100 years. We offer programming to 350 students from grades primary to 9. Peninsular Halifax has not experienced the growth that other areas of our board have and enrollment in schools on the peninsula has steadily declined over the last 15 years. Our classes average between are 20-25 students. The fact that staff can get to know so many students outside of their own class and that teachers tend to spend many years here provides a built-in support structure for all our students.

We are proud to offer French Immersion from grades 7-9. Our students have the opportunity to participate in instrumental music from grades 4-9 and our physical education program helps to promote a physically active lifestyle to all students.

Oxford School is rich with diver-

sity, not only is there racial and ethnic diversity among our students, but there is also diversity in our interests. To address the many needs of our students, Oxford offers them over 30 extra curricular opportunities in athletics, leadership building, art and culture. For a complete listing, see our school website.

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 our learners and you will see on the last page of this report our plan to improve student achievement.



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## Family and Community Involvement

Last year, 82% of parents/guardians surveyed agreed that they feel welcome at our school. When they are able to help with school activities and events, 87% agree they feel appreciated by our school. Although parents/guardians have indicated they feel welcome and appreciated at Oxford, the survey indicates that Oxford could improve opportunities for parental/guardian involvement. To this end, we are currently working on ways to invite family and community involvement in school activities.

## Safe and Orderly Environment

Our survey results over the past five years have consistently indicated that our students feel safe. We are proud to report that 92% of our students feel that teachers at Oxford School care about them. We believe that this is due to the many programs that we currently offer that promote good behavior in our school, such as Positive Effective Behavior Supports (PEBS), conflict resolution, Safe School Ambassadors Program

and Oxford Pride points. This past year, 95% of our students pointed out that they feel they are treated with respect. Our teachers will continue to learn about effective classroom management and how to promote positive student behavior. Due to student demand, we will be continuing our lunchtime intramural program for elementary and junior high students next 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 Board	English Reading Accurately: 88% English Reading Fluently: 92%	English Reading Accurately: 74% English Reading Fluently: 67%
Grade 3 Provincial	Reading: 85% Writing (Information/Non-fiction) : 90% Writing (Narrative/Fiction) : 95%	Reading: 81% Writing (Information/Non-fiction) : 82% Writing (Narrative/Fiction) : 82%
Grade 5 Board	Reading: 90%	Reading: 81%
Grade 6 Provincial	Reading: 95% Writing: 91%	Reading: 88% Writing: 94%
Grade 8 Board	Reading: 54%	Reading: 81%
Grade 9 Provincial	Reading: 86% Writing: 98%	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: 93%	Mathematics Concepts: 95%
Grade 3 Provincial	Mathematics Concepts: 62%	Mathematics Concepts: 71%
Grade 5 Board	Mathematics Concepts: 100%	Mathematics Concepts: 84%
Grade 8 Board	Mathematics Concepts: 69%	Mathematics Concepts: 72%

We are pleased to report that the majority of Oxford students achieved or exceeded board results in provincial and board-wide assessments. However, Grade 8 literacy and mathematics, Grade 6 writing, Grade 3 mathematics and Grade 2 mathematics results revealed that our students are not at the board level. Our focus will be on improving these scores.

## Classroom Assessment

### Focus on Reading & Writing

During the current school year reading records were conducted on all students. Results from these records were used to address our students' learning in the classroom. In our junior high, all core subject teachers delivered a program focusing on reading strategies. Students were tested prior to the beginning and after the completion of this program. Final test results indicated Oxford students improved their reading strategies, thus improving reading comprehension. In the area of writing, students were continually assessed at each stage in the writing process as they created text for different purposes. The results of these assessments were used to inform instruction and make decisions on specific support or intervention for each of our students.

### Focus on Numeracy

Students were expected to communicate their mathematical thinking using models, pictures, symbols, and words when solving problems in daily math lessons. Classroom assessments for and of learning were incorporated with a focus on implementing strategies for mental math, portfolio/journal writing, technology based math activities, centre/group teaching methods and an infusion of problem based learning experiences. A variety of rubrics were used as assessment tools and teachers differentiated their instruction.



## Student Engagement

We are doing well in keeping our students engaged. At our school, we have a variety of clubs and teams in which 91% of our students participate. In addition to their participation in sports/clubs, 88% of our students feel that their math and language arts school work is challenging, and 77% of students in elementary feel confident in their abilities in mathematics and language arts. Our students also feel confident about their abilities in most subject areas; however, we need to improve their level of interest at the Grade 7-9 level, particularly in language arts and mathematics.

## Time to Learn

Oxford School follows 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. Our planning for improvement surveys have indicated students feel their learning is frequently interrupted when friends talk to them in class when they shouldn't (61.3%). Our PEBS program, conflict resolution skill training and mentor groups are presently addressing this issue to help reduce this disruption in learning.

## Professional Development

When teachers learn, students learn. All teachers at Oxford are actively involved in professional development on an ongoing basis. Our literacy and math coaches help teachers to incorporate effective teaching strategies. This year our school based professional development days focussed on: designing our School plan for Improvement, acquiring methods for meeting the needs of all students, reviewing and enhancing our Effective Behaviour Supports Program and conflict resolution skills. Professional development for the latter two was acquired in partnership with Saint Mary's University.

## Additional School Supports

At Oxford School we have a number of additional school supports to improve student achievement:

- English as a Second Language teacher
- speech language pathologist
- Learning Centre teacher
- resource teachers
- junior high support teacher
- African Nova Scotian student support worker
- educational program assistants (EPAs)
- lunch monitors
- guidance counsellor
- math coach
- literacy coach
- school psychologist
- teen health centre nurse
- secretary
- Reading Recovery teacher
- library support specialist
- literacy support teacher
- YMCA support worker



# Planning for Improvement

The school community of Oxford School takes great pride in our students success. There is much to celebrate here at Oxford! However, we also know that we can do even better. We are very dedicated to demonstrating our continued improvement. 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.

Our school staff chose goals in the areas of literacy, math, and community involvement. We have discovered from looking at student achievement data that our students could benefit from a focus on writing. We want our students to be better able to organize their thoughts and ideas in written communication. This is an important skill

that will affect their ability to succeed in any subject. In mathematics, we are focusing our school improvement efforts on improving our students' ability to communicate their thinking and understanding, when solving problems. Again, this is a skill that will benefit them no matter what their future holds.

We proudly present Oxford's school improvement plan for your information. You will find details about what teachers will be focusing on with their students in class and also what teachers will be learning themselves (professional development) in order to make the achievement of our school goals a reality for the students of Oxford.

## School Goals

### Math Goal

P-2 Goal: Students will improve their ability to demonstrate their understanding of data management.

3-6 Goal: Students will improve their understanding of the concepts related to number operations with a more direct focus on mental math strategies.

7-9 Goal: Students will improve their understanding of numeracy with a more direct focus on mental math strategies.

#### Strategies:

- investigating data management using real-life/community situations
- exploring operations through daily mental math activities, math centres, and problem of the week
- exploring numeracy through developing strategies in mental math and problem solving
- developing the ability to communicate mathematical knowledge through different representations
- developing best practices in estimation and computation with the support of the Math Coach

- daily informal observations
- student – teacher conferencing
- use of HRSB Cat 2 and school based assessments
- informal student assessment tools such as exit cards, math journals, group collaborations, MART (combination of Math and Art)
- use of student self assessment tools such as the Frayer model, and self reflections
- use of HRSB Cat 4 and school based assessments
- informal assessment tools such as observations, reflections, and student-teacher conferencing
- formal assessments including mental math assessments, math journals, school assessments, and HRSB CAT 4 assessments.

### Literacy Goal

Our students will have greater success in communication. Grades P-2 students will improve their ability to demonstrate active questioning. Grades 3-6 students will be able to create and demonstrate an understand-

ing of the elements of writing (ideas, and content, voice, word choices, sentence fluency and conventions and presentation. Grades 7-9 students will improve their ability to make real world text connections.

#### Strategies:

- modeling, wondering, imagining and questioning
- making connections, visualizing and predicting
- teaching the write traits
- teaching brainstorming skills
- inviting real life authors to discuss their craft with students
- using visual picture cues as story starters
- using reading response journals
- ensuring all experiences have pre and post activities.
- teaching vocabulary enhancement strategies.
- utilizing the workshop model in classrooms
- using data collection from both the HRSB and DOE as a resource to inform instruction.



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

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