

# Prince Arthur Junior High



WWW.PAJH.EDNET.NS.CA

## School and Community Context

Prince Arthur Junior High School (PAJH), a Grade 7-9 school, which opened in 1956, serves the community of south Dartmouth. Its feeder schools include: Southdale-North Woodside, Shannon Park, Hawthorn, and South Woodside elementary schools. Our school is primarily a neighbourhood walking school. Our French Immersion students join us from all of Dartmouth.

We offer English and early French Immersion programming to over 400 students. Our students also have the opportunity to participate in family studies/technological education (woodshop) and one of the following fine arts electives: visual arts, instrumental music and music appreciation. Our students receive three physical education classes in our Monday to Friday cycle. There is a school focus on academics, athletics/physical activity, and fine arts. Our school provides a breakfast club

and supervised lunchrooms.

Prince Arthur Junior High is rich with diversity in all its forms. We are a reflection of the larger communities that we serve with fourteen cultures that have self-identified. To meet the needs of this group, we offer over 70 extracurricular activities in a range of areas, including: fine arts, sports teams, leisure activities, math competitions, literacy, leadership, technology, and service activities. Activities occur at lunchtime and after school. For a complete listing, please see our school website.

Our staff is dedicated to meeting the needs of all our learners and to working collaboratively with colleagues, parents and students. We partner with the community to make learning a positive experience for each student. "Together we can make a difference!"



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## Family and Community Involvement

We are pleased to report that 88% of our parents/guardians surveyed agreed that they feel welcome in our school. Also, 83% of our parents report that our school has high academic standards. Our survey showed that 92% of our parents report that our school invites parent/guardian and community involvement. Parents are encouraged to volunteer as chaperones, guest speakers, coaches, event supporters, School Advisory Council (SAC) and by attending parent-teacher meetings and info sessions.

## Safe and Orderly Environment

Our survey results have been consistent in indicating that our students and parents feel PAJH is a safe place to be. We believe that our culture of respect is fostered through our many programs that promote positive behaviour such as Positive Effective Behaviour Supports (PEBS), Peer Helpers, leadership and citizenship activities. Our comprehensive Code of Conduct, which builds upon a foundation of respect, is commu-

nicated to our students and parents through our student agendas and on our website.

One of our school goals focuses on improving understanding of differences, diversity and human rights as a way of fostering respect. Our mentorship program and our many extracurricular activities help us build strong relationships with our students and community.

## 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: 87%	Reading: 81%
Grade 9 Provincial	Reading: 84% 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: 70%	Mathematics Concepts: 72%

## Classroom Assessment

At PAJH, we know that learning is on-going and that all students learn differently. Therefore, we teach and provide on-going assessment opportunities in a variety of ways. Through our classroom assessments and observations, we are able to identify students who need additional supports and recommendations are made to our school planning team for re-allocation of additional resources and services. Within our collaborative teaching teams, conversations focus on strategies and assessments to foster student learning.

### Focus on Literacy

Teachers worked in grade-level teams to review our students' ability in idea development and organization in essay writing and reading for deeper meaning. Three school-wide assessments were conducted this year in English Language Arts in the months of November, March and May. These assessments each had a reading comprehension and writing component that focused on our literacy goals. The results indicated some improvement in reading comprehension, and some improvement in writing, especially in the development of ideas. For example, in writing, 81% of students are meeting the English Language Arts. Although we have seen some improvement, these are both areas that continue to require attention.

### Focus on Numeracy

Our students are expected to communicate their mathematical outcomes thinking using models, pictures, symbols and words when solving math problems. Over the course of the year, our students completed a minimum of three assessments that were the same for everyone within their grade level. Adaptations were incorporated to meet the individual learner's needs. The results were analyzed and used to direct teacher practice to better meet student needs. Results showed that we met our school numeracy goal of having more than 70% of our students successfully meet the grade-level outcomes including computation problems and application of mathematical skills and knowledge.



## Student Engagement

At Prince Arthur Junior High, our focus is on engaging students in our classrooms and in our many extra-curricular activities. Over 70% of our students participate in one or more extra-curricular activities at school. Eighty-three percent of our students report feeling confident in their ability to learn in English Language Arts, and 75% report confidence in their ability to learn math. One part of engaging the whole child is our focus on developing a healthy lifestyle. We are glad to report that 91% of our students indicated that they learn about living in a healthy way at our school.

## 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. Students receive 60 minutes daily of both mathematics and language arts instruction. As a school we have strategies in place to reduce interruptions to program. Our PEBS and mentorship programs, which focus on respect for learning and positive behaviour, have helped in reducing interruptions. Eighty-five percent of students report following our school's Code of Conduct.

## Professional Development

Student learning is the primary focus and ultimate goal of all we do at Prince Arthur Junior High. We know that teachers who are constantly learning serve as excellent role models for students. At PAJH, our teachers participate in continuous professional development through attendance and presentations at external conferences, through sessions held at our school, through reading of professional journals and by working collaboratively in professional learning communities within their teaching teams.

This year, our school-based PD days focused on designing our school plan for improvement and becoming acquainted with our board's updated Assessment, Evaluation & Communication Student Learning Policy.

## Additional School Supports

Additional supports to education include:

- guidance counsellor
- speech language pathologist
- Learning Centre & resource
- ESL teacher
- severe learning disability teacher
- resource teachers
- junior high support teacher
- African Nova Scotian student support worker
- educational program assistants (EPAs)
- lunch monitors
- math coach
- literacy coach
- literacy support teacher
- library support specialist
- school psychologist
- public health nursing services
- secretary
- African Nova Scotian math support teacher
- staff assigned as mentors to students
- school advisory council (SAC)



# Planning for Improvement

The school community of Prince Arthur Junior High School takes great pride in our students' success. There is much to celebrate here at our school! We also know, however, 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 Planning for Improvement goals for the 2008-2009 school year included literacy, numeracy (mathematics), Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights (RCH) combined with Positive Effective Behaviour Systems (PEBS) and Healthy Active Living. In literacy, we have discovered, from looking at student achievement

data, that our students would benefit from a focus on reading to have a deeper understanding of texts, and on writing to improve organization of ideas. In mathematics, we focused on providing students the opportunity to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to real-world situations. In addition, extra supports were provided to assist students who struggle with mathematics. Our RCH goal involved increasing student understanding of the philosophy of the RCH policy through classroom and school-wide activities. It is our hope that this will result in an increased student respect for difference and diversity. Through our PEBS and Healthy Active Living programs, we promoted the well-being of the whole person.

## School Goals

### Literacy Goal

Our students will improve their ability to read for a deeper understanding of texts, and will improve their ability to develop and organize their ideas in essay writing.

#### Strategies:

- focus on literacy across all subjects
- focus on punctuation, spelling and grammar
- reading and writing workshops
- literacy support
- deliver and assess a balance of basic comprehension and high-order thinking questions

### Numeracy Goal

In mathematics, our students will improve their ability to apply mathematical skills and knowledge to real-world situations.

#### Strategies:

- Provide opportunities for real-world mathematical problem solving
- Use of manipulatives to help students visualize and better understand math concepts
- Offer math enrichment activities

### RCH Goal

Our RCH goal involved increasing student understanding of the philosophy of the RCH policy through classroom and school-wide activities.

#### Strategies:

- provide educational opportunities for students to learn about the RCH policy and philosophy
- establish expectations through our Code of Conduct

### PEBS & Healthy Active Living Goal

Through our PEBS and Healthy Active Living programs, we promoted the well-being of the whole person.

#### Strategies:

- breakfast club program
- knights of the Month (student recognition program)
- health Action Team
- U-Matter Training
- Peer Helping
- clubs, teams, and enrichment activities



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

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