

Sir Charles Tupper Elementary



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School and Community Context

Sir Charles Tupper School (SCT) has served the urban community of south-west Halifax since September, 1925. We offer programming to 277 students from grades primary to six. Our school population has remained steady over the years and the community connection is strong. Many students spend their entire school experience at Sir Charles Tupper and because of this students get to know each other well. Staff members know most students in the school which provides a built-in support structure for our children. The consistent staff base each year helps to build a strong and collaborative group of educators.

Our students have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of co-curricular activities such as band, choir, violin, cello, running club, intramurals, track and field, leadership club, book club and peer helpers. These help to broaden our students'

lifestyles and enrich their learning. Our students also participate in enrichment clusters, historical fairs and science fairs, student showcases, concerts and musicals. Students fundraise regularly to support local and global non profit organizations.

The monthly calendar of events and the school newsletter give evidence of the array of classroom and school-wide events that communicate and celebrate student achievement. This year our students donated a mural to the Camp Hill Veterans' Memorial Hospital and created the artwork for the Scotia Festival of Music.

Staff, parents and students work together to provide a welcoming, respectful, safe and positive learning environment where students feel they can be successful daily.



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Family and Community Involvement

Almost 100% of our parent/guardian community feel welcomed at our school. When they are able to help with school activities and events, they feel appreciated by our school staff (93%). We are pleased to report parents feel encouraged to participate in all school activities (98%) and feel they are well-informed about many aspects of the school. Parents acknowledge that staff work hard to maintain good relations with parents/guardians (94%).

Safe and Orderly Environment

SCT is a calm and welcoming place for students and staff to achieve their maximum learning. Announcements are made at the beginning of each day and schedules allow for large chunks of uninterrupted instructional time.

Based on evidence from our surveys, the majority of students feel that Sir Charles Tupper offers a safe and inviting learning environment. We believe this is due to many

programs such as anti-bullying workshops, our Leaves of Respect program, peer helpers, the school behaviour matrix as well as students and staff working together to develop individual classroom codes of conduct. Teachers feel that they can deliver their program without interruptions from inappropriate student behaviour which allows for maximum instructional and learning time.

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: 83% English Reading Fluently: 83%	English Reading Accurately: 74% English Reading Fluently: 67%
Grade 3 Provincial	Reading: 97% Writing (Information/Non-fiction) : 89% Writing (Narrative/Fiction) : 86%	Reading: 81% Writing (Information/Non-fiction) : 82% Writing (Narrative/Fiction) : 82%
Grade 5 Board	Reading: 100%	Reading: 81%
Grade 6 Provincial	Reading: 94% Writing: 98%	Reading: 88% Writing: 94%
Math Assessments	School Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations	Board Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations
Grade 2 Board	Mathematics Concepts: 100%	Mathematics Concepts: 95%
Grade 3 Provincial	Mathematics Concepts: 97%	Mathematics Concepts: 71%
Grade 5 Board	Mathematics Concepts: 100%	Mathematics Concepts: 84%

At Sir Charles Tupper, we are pleased to report that our students have consistently performed well in reading and writing in the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) and the Department of Education (DOE) literacy assessments. We have steady upward trends over time indicating that any issues found in terms of literacy instruction are looked at by teachers and corrected in order to improve student achievement. These high scores in writing and reading are a consistent trend for our school. These findings are comparable to the formative assessments and observations teachers use along with daily work, assignments and student conferences to track student achievement.

Our students are performing above the HRSB and DOE average in mathematical concepts. Students are generally strong in mental math, geometry, recalling basic facts, measurement, number sense, patterning, data analysis and probability. Teachers have seen growth over time based on in-class assessments, which take the form of observations, in-class testing, student involvement in math activities and discussions in math. During the past two years, we focused on gathering data in the area of mental math. Our results showed growth in the areas assessed.

Classroom Assessment

Teachers use a variety of strategies to assess learning. Our assessment methods/tools are aligned with curriculum outcomes and instruction in mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA). Student learning is assessed on an ongoing basis. Assessment tools are consistent from classroom to classroom and from grade to grade. Teachers are aware of the general types of assessment tools used in classrooms throughout the school, and share assessment instruments within grade levels and in adjacent grades.

Teachers work in professional learning communities (PLCs) to identify strengths and areas requiring additional instruction in the areas of literacy and mathematics. Recently, in literacy, we have been focussing in the area of writing. We want our students to see themselves as writers and to actively enjoy the entire writing process. Students are involved in common writing assessments using grade specific rubrics designed by staff. These assessment results showed growth in student writing.

We also focused on gathering data in the area of mental math. Emphasis was placed on strategic teaching, mental math strategies and common assessments at each grade level. Again, results showed growth in the areas assessed.



Student Engagement

Students at SCT are engaged in all aspects of school life. The majority of our students are involved in co-curricular activities such as choir, peer helpers, intramurals etc. In addition to the participation in sports and other clubs, 80% of our students feel that their math and English language arts school work is just right for their learning level. Our students also feel confident in most subject areas, especially in reading and writing, and 88% of our students feel that they are good at math.

Time to Learn

All schools in the Halifax Regional School Board follow the Time To Learn requirements set by the DOE. This means that each course or subject has a required or recommended number of minutes. Teachers carefully schedule learning activities to ensure appropriate time and emphasis is given to each subject discipline, and time to learn is given priority in the scheduling of specialists subjects. Interruptions to learning are minimized and all claims on classroom time are carefully evaluated in terms of their contribution to desired learning. Teachers plan learning activities based on the prescribed learning outcomes and prepare year-long plans.

Professional Development

When teachers learn, students learn and at Sir Charles Tupper teachers are always learning. Professional development occurs weekly with our professional learning communities and planning for improvement committees. Monthly staff meetings have a professional development component focusing on outcomes mandated by the Public School Program and the school improvement goals set for the current year. Key committees within the school are chaired by teachers, who report to the entire school on the work of their committees. Our school administrators regularly communicate about regional and provincial leadership opportunities by forwarding all materials pertaining to teacher professional development (PD) events and leadership opportunities. This year our PD days with staff focused on designing our School Improvement Plan (SIP), our PEBS matrix and the new focus on spelling strategies.

Additional School Supports

- Reading Recovery teacher
- resource teacher
- Learning Centre teacher
- Speech-Language pathologist
- educational program Assistants
- literacy coach
- math coach
- secretary
- library specialist
- lunch monitors
- English second language (ESL) teacher
- school psychologist
- behaviour specialist
- autism team specialists
- social worker
- access to occupational therapy
- assistive tech specialists
- computer support specialist
- operations staff
- EXCEL
- PTA
- SAC



Planning for Improvement

Year one of the Planning for Improvement (PFI) process at our school has certainly allowed for a common understanding of the entire process by all staff, school community and School Advisory Council (SAC) members. We have engaged in a culture of inquiry, collected and used data to guide our plan, to inform classroom instruction and to improve student achievement. We have involved the school community and SAC in our PFI process, and communicated regularly about student achievement. The entire staff along with SAC members completed the School Self-Assessment. We structured our committees so that each targeted area in our SIP has a corresponding committee with responsibilities for implementing the agreed strategies, tracking progress, and evaluating impact on student

learning. Each of these committees is chaired by a teacher-leader. The chairs of each committee are also members of the Planning for Improvement team, thereby ensuring effective communication and linkages among the different working groups within the school. In addition, two of the four members of the Planning for Improvement team are members of the School Advisory Council. By organizing our Planning for Improvement leadership in this way, we are confident that comments, concerns, questions, and suggestions from teachers and the School Advisory Council will be heard and brought to the table for discussion.

School Goals

Math Goal

To improve student's ability to problem solve when working with number operations so that they can clearly communicate their understanding and thinking process.

Strategies:

Teachers will use PLC time to focus on the common understanding of operational processes at each grade level. Teachers will focus on the development of writing performance tasks and sample learning experiences which will allow students to represent ideas in various forms. Teachers will continue to implement the three read strategy as a part of their instruction. Teachers will create bins of thinking tools and math journals for each classroom that will give children at each grade level the opportunity to communicate their understanding and thinking process. The journals will also allow teachers the opportunity to easily track students' growth over time. Teachers will enlist mentoring support from the math coach, school math leader, other colleagues and also participate in PD that will support them in their teaching. Teachers at each grade level use PLCs

time to create common assessments and common math rubrics.

There is a wealth of professional material in our resource room. Teachers understand the importance of using the same math language from primary to Grade 6. Math word walls are also featured in classrooms. There is an abundance of math manipulatives in each classroom and children are comfortable using them at all levels. Teachers have the "three read strategy" posted in their rooms and use it when working on problem solving activities. We are strong at identifying and providing support for children who struggle with math concepts.

Literacy Goal

To improve student achievement in literacy by focusing on reading comprehension and critical thinking in non-fiction genre.

Strategies:

Teachers will continue to use professional literacy resources using Reader's Workshop. Teachers will enlist mentoring support from literacy coach, resource teacher, and network with their colleagues. Teachers will use their PLC time to collaborate on

grade specific curriculum literacy outcomes, literacy activities and materials, and develop common assessments to support this goal. Teachers will participate in PD that increases their expertise in this area. Teachers will add to their understanding and expertise in effective instruction for increased student comprehension. Teachers will gain a greater understanding of literacy outcomes from P-6. Teachers will gain a common understanding of comprehension strategies in non-fiction genre, and use consistent terminology. Teachers will continue to learn how to develop and use common effective assessments, such as, checklists, rubrics and self-assessments.

In closing, we had an exciting educational year at Sir Charles Tupper and we look forward to another great year of learning.



Every Student Can Learn. Every School Will Improve.

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