

Smokey Drive Elementary



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School and Community Context

Smokey Drive Elementary (SDES) has served the community of Lower Sackville since February 1978. We offer an English program to 245 students in Grades Primary to 6. Smokey Drive is proud to be a community-oriented school, with tremendous support from our families in terms of academics, volunteers and involvement in school activities. Our community has not experienced the growth that other areas of our Board have and enrollment has declined steadily over the last 10 years. Reduced enrollment has resulted in combined classes, however, due to the Department of Education's guidelines we have been able to keep our class sizes at a reasonable level. The teaching staff has remained stable, with little turnover in staff from year to year, which provides continuity in delivery of curriculum and support of students and families. As a walking school, students have the

option of enrolling in the Excel program or going home over the lunch hour.

In addition to the regular curriculum, students are encouraged to take part in extracurricular activities in music, physical education and school service activities. Our monthly student recognition assemblies recognize students for a variety of achievements both in and out of the classroom. Students at all grade levels also have the opportunity to showcase their talents at these assemblies. Throughout the years, Smokey Drive has taken great pride in supporting community organizations and we have been able to make significant donations to local charities. All members of our school community work together as a team to create a positive and welcoming school environment.



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Family and Community Involvement

Over the past three years, 98% of parents /guardians surveyed agreed that they feel welcomed at our school. The majority of families participate in special events, i.e. family picnic, corn boil, concerts, school trips, Pumpkin Night and fundraisers. Surveys showed that communication between home and school is strong (93%). However, because staff feels a need to improve these results, we are working on other ways to maintain and increase family involvement in curriculum-based activities.

Safe and Orderly Environment

School staff is committed to providing a safe and positive learning environment. Regular fire drills are held and bus safety rules reviewed. Our emergency measures plan has been developed. We work closely with our RCMP liaison to provide safety programs in many areas. Halifax Regional School Board student survey results indicate the majority of students consider their school to be a safe and inviting learning envi-

ronment. A Grade 4-6 school student survey supports the HRSB data: 91% of our students feel that Smokey Drive is a safe place. The Smokey Drive Positive Effective Behavioural Supports (PEBS) matrix identifies appropriate behaviour in the categories of respect for self, others, learning and the environment. Students displaying positive behaviours receive Smokey Smiles, acknowledging their positive actions and attitudes.

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 HRSB Literacy Reading	English Program Accuracy: 87% English Program Fluency: 81%	English Program Accuracy: 74% English Program Fluency: 67%
Grade 3 DOE Literacy	Reading: 87% Writing (Information) : 84% Writing (Narrative) : 94%	Reading: 80% Writing (Information) : 80% Writing (Narrative) : 87%
Grade 5 HRSB Literacy	English Program Reading: 78%	English Program Reading: 82%
Grade 6 DOE Literacy	Reading: 98% Writing: 100%	Reading: 88% Writing: 94%
Mathematics Assessments	School Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations	Board Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations
*Grade 2 HRSB Mathematics	97%	95%
*Grade 3 DOE Mathematics (June 2008)	71%	71%
*Grade 5 HRSB Mathematics	93%	84%

Smokey Drive is pleased to note that the majority of our students are exceeding board results for meeting expectations. Areas of concern within the test results are found in Grade 5 HRSB literacy results, which were slightly below the average for HRSB schools and the Grade 3 Department of Education Math results, which were only one percent below the HRSB norm. Writing, with a focus on main idea, has become an area for improvement within the school Planning for Improvement literacy goal. The majority of Smokey Drive students performed above the HRSB average in mathematical concepts. These areas will continue to be addressed through specific instruction, the use of best practices, professional development for staff and assessment that will inform teaching.

Classroom Assessment

Focus on Main Idea in Writing

May 2009: SDES common assessment results for literacy (main idea) 66% achieved a 3 or 4 on a 4-point rubric. Survey results from 2006-2007 indicated a need to focus on supporting students in their writing with a focus on main idea. Greater emphasis has been placed on the skill of developing main idea when writing. Common grade level assessments for grades primary to 6 were developed to inform instruction and measure growth. These were administered in October 08 and again in May 09 with the intent of using this same assessment tool over a number of years. The data allowed staff to analyze the results and get a baseline for growth in order to identify any future trends. This is our baseline data so growth will be evident in May 2010 when the assessment is completed for a second year.

Focus on Math Number Sense

May 2009: SDES Common Assessment Results: 60% of students achieved a 3 or 4 on a 4 point rubric. In 2006-2007, Smokey Drive's accreditation process and HRSB assessment results identified areas of number sense as needing support. This was addressed by staff through school-based professional development with our math coach and board personnel. Through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) staff developed a common grade level assessment tool to measure growth. This was administered in October 08 and again in May 09 with the intent of using this same assessment tool over a number of years. The data allowed staff to analyze the results and get a baseline for growth in order to identify any future trends. This is our baseline data so measurable growth will be evident in May 2010 when the assessment is completed for a second year.



Student Engagement

Results show a large number of students at Smokey Drive School are participating in extracurricular activities (96%), with many engaged in more than one activity. This helps promote an active life style through physical activity and also an appreciation of fine arts and cultural diversity. In addition, 89% of students feel that their math and language arts areas of study are challenging yet attainable. Because only 65% of students indicated that they enjoyed the selected materials in language arts and math we are currently working on strategies to enhance their interest levels.

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. The survey results show that 23% of staff feel that student discipline interrupts student learning. This year with the implementation of our PEBS matrix there has been a noticeable decrease in interruptions as a result of discipline issues during instructional time. SDES will continue to support student learning through this and other effective measures.

Professional Development

Staff at Smokey Drive actively seek professional development in order to support student learning.

Smokey Drive staff take time to work and learn together to reach agreement on expectations for students and to apply best practices in order to help students learn and support the schools goals. We are achieving this through weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings, ongoing mentoring by the literacy and math coaches and enrollment in professional development through the board initiatives.

Currently, staff who have access to outside learning opportunities (conferences, summer institutes, master's level courses) share their knowledge that relates to Smokey Drive School's improvement goals. This year staff members have been trained and are implementing our PEBS matrix.

Additional School Supports

At Smokey Drive, we have a number of additional services to support and improve student achievement for success.

- resource teacher
- learning center teacher
- educational program assistants
- Reading Recovery teacher
- enhanced physical education
- library support
- speech language pathologist specialist
- school psychologist
- behavior specialist
- public health nurse
- occupational therapist
- math coach
- literacy coach
- RCMP liaison officer
- assistive technology
- IT specialist
- IWK autism team



Planning for Improvement

We are very proud of the academic accomplishments and success of our students, which they display on a daily basis. However we also recognize the importance of identifying areas for improvement in student learning and developing strategies to help our students further improve their skills. The HRSB Planning for Improvement model provides a process for addressing these needs.

Our school staff has chosen goals in the areas of math, literacy and social development. After analysis of student achievement data, we determined students would benefit from a focus on writing, specifically targeting the trait of main idea. In math we are focusing our school improvement on developing a better understanding of number sense concepts, which is the foundation for all math learn-

ing. Our final goal addresses the importance of having a safe and positive learning environment for all students in our school.

Our school staff is committed to the success of our goals and will work together with students and community to further improve learning in math and literacy and to foster a positive learning environment.

School Goals

Math Goal

Students will show an improvement in their number sense skills.

Strategies:

- Teachers will continue to refer to documents outlining the natural progression of number sense outcomes.
- Teachers will continue to use rubrics and common assessment tools to determine students' learning in number sense.
- Grade level common assessments were administered October 2008 to inform our instruction for the year in number sense.
- Grade level common assessments were administered in May 2009 for data collection.
- We continue to communicate with parents about supporting their child's math learning through school newsletters. Math Night was held Apr. 15/09. Each grade level demonstrated a variety of number sense activities.
- Teachers will target fractions within the number sense outcome.
- Teachers will continue to use

math resources provided by HRSB and the DOE to support student learning.

Literacy Goal

Students will show improvement in their writing skills, specifically with main idea.

Strategies:

- Teachers will provide a variety of experiences and opportunities for students to learn and apply writing skills.
- Teachers will provide a minimum daily writing activity of 15 minutes across the curriculum.
- Provide other opportunities for writing experiences (eg. creative writing, journal writing, story response, math journals, recording observations, etc.).
- Teachers will model writing strategies/traits.
- Teachers will provide opportunities for editing.
- Teachers will target specific writing strategies to improve student writing.
- Teachers will use the Write Traits program, Miriam Trehearne guide

and Ralph Fletcher's Notebook as a weekly resource.

- Teachers will use Unit 1 Write Traits, as a resource, to reinforce the 'main ideas/supporting details' strategy.
- Teachers will provide opportunities for editing.

Safe Schools Goal

We will achieve an increase in the percentage of students who agree that our school is a safe and positive learning environment.

Strategies:

- Staff and students will develop a school wide Code of Conduct to be implemented at Smokey Drive.
- Smokey Drive staff will prepare to implement Positive Effective Behaviour Supports (PEBS) program.
- Staff will engage students in leadership opportunities that demonstrate positive behaviour and achievement.

Our school staff is committed to the success of our goals and working together as a team with the students and community.



Every Student Can Learn. Every School Will Improve.

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