

Seaside Elementary



[HTTP://SEASIDE.EDNET.NS.CA](http://seaside.ednet.ns.ca)

School and Community Context

Seaside Elementary School is located in Eastern Passage, Nova Scotia. Upon the opening of Eastern Passage Educational Centre in 1999 for grades seven to nine our building was designated as an elementary school and renamed Seaside Elementary in the year 2000. Land was purchased adjacent to the school and developed into a playground and play field to accommodate younger students. Seaside is a dual track school that receives students from Tallahassee and Ocean View Elementary. We have a population of 329 students from Eastern Passage, Shearwater and Cow Bay. Enrollment has been in constant flux and now appears to be on the increase. Student learning takes place in 13 classrooms, as well as a Learning Centre, a resource room, a guidance room, a core French room, a computer lab, a large gymnasium and a superb library that boasts a collection of over 7000 books. A

variety of activities are offered to extend student learning: instrumental music, choir, chess and running clubs, track and field, ECO team, energy team and intramurals.

Seaside is a unique school in that it is composed of only grades four, five and six, with our entire population ranging in age from nine to 12 years. This atypical configuration results in a short turn around time at the school. Students are in attendance a maximum of three years if they are in the French Immersion program or two years for English program before transitioning to junior high. This requires a high level of transition planning to accommodate students on their arrival and departure each year. Seaside Elementary has a very dedicated, caring and energetic staff of over 50 personnel who work hard to create the conditions to optimize student learning!



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Family and Community Involvement

Contributions of over 100 Seaside supporters are celebrated each year. All volunteers indicated that they feel appreciated by the school staff and 94% of parents reported they feel welcome in our school. Opportunities are provided to our parents/guardians through PTO, SAC, breakfast program, library, book fair, chaperones, in-class support and school events such as: Living Wax Museum, ice cream social, Halloween Howl, Ancient Egyptian Museum, curriculum night and parent-teacher Interviews.

Safe and Orderly Environment

Seaside Elementary School strives to provide a safe and caring climate. The first month of school all members of the school community are immersed in the philosophy of Positive Effective Behavioural Supports (PEBS). PEBS focuses on respect, responsibility and rights of self, others and learning. Teachers explicitly instruct behavioral expectations in all learning/play areas. Students engage in lessons about empathy, honesty,

respect for differences and the courage to speak up. Stand Up to Bullying Day kicks off a week of instruction on teasing, harassment, bullying, gossip and resolving conflict. Survey findings indicate 97% of parents believe that Seaside is a safe place for their child. Most of our students say that their teacher really cares about them and 86% of students pointed out that they have at least one adult they can talk to when needed.

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 5 Board	Reading: 77%	Reading: 81%
Grade 6 Provincial	Reading: 82% Writing: 93%	Reading: 88% Writing: 94%
Math Assessments	School Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations	Board Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations
Grade 5 Board	Mathematics Concepts: 76%	Mathematics Concepts: 84%

We have made significant progress in recent years. 2003 results indicate 73% of our Grade 6 students met the expectations in writing. This year 93% of our students met or exceeded expectations. This closely reflects the board results. Data reveals a slight decline in reading and are lower than the Board scores. This is being addressed by our school goal to increase students' reading comprehension.

Results from the Grade 5 HRSB math assessment are slightly below that of the board. Number sense and patterns are noted strengths but our students need to gain proficiency in estimation and operations.

Classroom Assessment

We are committed to the continuous monitoring of student learning. We have established the practice of teachers meeting on a weekly basis to determine what they want students to know, set the criteria for assessment and discuss what they will do when students do not meet expectations. Grade-level teams decide on common criteria that will provide information on how well students are learning. Classroom assessments are created, administered and examined by teachers to determine if students meet the outcomes. This information guides teachers on how to adjust instruction for improved student learning.

Teachers continually work together with literacy and math coaches and Resource teachers to make a plan of action to meet the identified needs of our learners.

Focus on reading:

Our focus was the explicit teaching of the reading comprehension strategies, specifically the elements of retelling. A four point scoring guide was used to measure students' ability to retell fictional text.

Baseline data collected in the Fall showed that 58% of our English program students and 65% of our French Immersion program students could successfully retell text. All students moved forward in this goal. In the spring 87% of English program students and 89% of French Immersion program students could successfully retell text. The solid improvement noted specifically in retelling main ideas, sequencing, and supporting details, is attributed to the explicit instruction and embedding of professional learning by teachers in their daily practices.

Focus on Math:

In math, we focused on improving our students' ability to communicate their thinking when solving problems. A four point scoring guide was used as a criteria to measure improvement. The baseline data collected in the fall indicated 57% of students could communicate their mathematical thinking. Math journals were introduced and students were instructed on how to use pictures, models, symbols and words to communicate their thinking. Journal entries were examined periodically and decisions were made on what corrective intervention was required to foster continued improvement. We are pleased to report 77% met the established criteria at year end. These findings are evidence of the impact that explicit instruction and the use of math journals as well as professional learning had on student learning in mathematics.



Student Engagement

Teachers work hard to create conditions where students feel like they belong and are engaged in meaningful relevant learning experiences. Survey data shows 91% of our students like school and most agree that they have a chance to learn by doing things not just listening to the teacher. Ninety-one percent of parents feel their child likes going to school most of the time. Ninety-eight percent of students indicate teachers want them to try to do their best, and 97% of parents say that their child is challenged to work to their full potential.

Time to Learn

Seaside adheres to the Time to Learn requirements as established by the Department of Education. Language arts instruction is 90 minutes daily. French Immersion classes have an additional 45 minutes of English language arts instruction. Math instruction is 60 minutes a day, five of which is devoted to mental math. We are aware of the need to limit the number of interruptions during the instructional day.

Professional Development

When teachers learn, students learn. Our teachers value the opportunity to engage in professional learning that supports our school goals. One hundred percent of teachers say that school-wide professional development (PD) supports the work we do in our Planning for Improvement (PFI) plan. Math and literacy coaches instruct, model and guide teachers in best practices for math and literacy. Teachers meet after school to extend their knowledge and skills through sessions on increasing reading comprehension, effective spelling instruction, and teaching and assessment of math.

A powerful strategy for improving student achievement at Seaside is PLCs. Small groups of teachers meet weekly to view data and use knowledge and skills they have learned to refine their instructional practices and share solutions that effectively address emerging student needs.

Additional School Supports

Seaside students have the opportunity to be provided with a number of supports to improve their achievement.

- resource
- learning center
- library support specialist
- guidance counsellor
- math coach
- literacy coach
- educational program assistant (EPA)
- school psychologist
- speech language pathologist
- behavioural specialist
- lunch monitors
- secretary
- caretaker
- assistive technology
- autism team
- program planning team
- school planning team
- IWK occupational therapy
- enrichment
- RCMP liaison officer



Planning for Improvement

Great things happen every day at Seaside, however we know that we can always improve. In-depth examination of math and literacy data from the Department of Education (DOE), HRSB, Seaside and both feeder schools have led to decisions about our PFI goals. A noted decline in the number of students meeting expectations in reading as well as a review of oral reading records confirm that students experience difficulty in understanding what they are reading. These findings have led to our literacy goal.

Information gathered on our students performance in math indicate that slightly more than 50% find it challenging to successfully communicate their thinking and learning in math, especially if it is a problem that requires more than one step to reach a solution. One hundred percent of

teachers have indicated they have a clear vision of what actions will make a positive impact for our learners in math and literacy.

We believe our PFI plan holds the promise to help move our students forward in increasing their reading comprehension and in gaining a greater proficiency in communicating their thinking and learning in math. For a detailed copy of our plan for improvement visit our school website at

<http://seaside.ednet.ns.ca>

School Goals

Literacy Goal

To improve student achievement in comprehension strategies, specifically their ability to understand text at their level.

Strategies:

- provide explicit instruction of comprehension strategies using gradual release of responsibility model and give opportunities to students to practice the strategies.
- provide descriptive feedback to students
- establish baseline data of student reading comprehension
- create a plan of how and when comprehension strategies will be taught at each grade level
- offer PD in areas of need that emerge from examining the data
- utilize the literacy coach to model best practices in classrooms and to deliver professional development and Giving Everyone More Support sessions.
- collaboratively develop mini-lessons to effectively teach the comprehension strategies
- purchase the National Geographic

Non-fiction Reading and Writing Workshop for each grade level

- purchase additional relevant resources that support the implementation of comprehension strategies
- offer parent workshops to support parents with student learning at home
- display posters of comprehension strategies in all classrooms

Mathematics Goal

To improve student achievement in communicating learning and thinking in mathematics.

Strategies:

- explicitly teach students the five representations (pictorial, concrete, symbolic, verbal, and contextual) through a problem-based approach.
- instruct students how to communicate their learning and thinking in problem-solving.
- provide students with exemplars.
- implement the use of math journals
- compile an inventory of resources

that support effective teaching of best practices in mathematics

- develop rubrics and common assessments to acquire a baseline, with help from the math coordinator.
- examine data regularly to inform instruction
- offer PD in areas of need that emerge from examining the data
- utilize the math coach to model best practices in classrooms and to deliver professional development and Giving Everyone More Support sessions
- purchase materials that support instruction of problem-solving and communicating mathematical thinking
- offer parent workshops to support parents with student learning at home.



Every Student Can Learn. Every School Will Improve.

Contact Information: 1881 Caldwell Road, Eastern Passage, B3G 1J3

Tel: 902-465-7600 Email: seaside@hrsb.ns.ca Principal: Louise Henman-Poirier