

Tantallon Elementary



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School and Community Context

Tantallon Elementary School is a vibrant learning community of over 740 students and staff. Our school is located about 20 kilometres east of downtown Halifax. Our school population has been growing steadily in the last decade, due to the expansion of local subdivisions.

In the summer of 2006, we expanded to two buildings when the junior high school took over the recently vacated Sir John A. Macdonald High School. We currently have 30 homeroom classes, 15 in each building.

Tantallon Elementary is a dual-track school, with the early French Immersion program from primary to Grade 6. This September, our lead class of Grade 6 French Immersion students will enter Five Bridges Junior High School (FBJHS); they will be the first early French Immersion class to attend FBJHS, which currently has a late Immersion program.

As part of Planning for Improvement (PFI), our School Advisory Council (SAC) members were asked for their feedback to complete a School Self-Assessment. They reviewed family and community involvement with the School and Effective Communication indicator. Overall, they felt that the school communicates well with the school community, and that involvement with the school is high, especially in the areas of volunteerism, participation in school activities, and community use of the school. Our SAC members are dedicated to being effective advocates for our school.



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Family and Community Involvement

This year has brought an increase in our school supporting our community and world through planned events such as food drives, collecting donations for Rwanda, and supporting non-profit organizations to name a few. This has been possible due to the support of parents, staff and students.

Parents are always welcome in the school to participate in parent reading, student-led conferences and Literacy Day events.

Safe and Orderly Environment

Tantallon Elementary School is fortunate to have a dedicated and professional staff committed to excellence in teaching and learning. We also have a very involved parent and volunteer community; together, we provide a safe and effective learning environment for our students.

Parents feel strongly that staff treat their children with respect and that our school is a safe place for their children to learn.

Staff feel strongly that their school is a safe place in which to work.

The implementation of Positive Effective Behavioural Supports (PEBS) in September of 2008, has encouraged the celebration of positive and appropriate behaviour, fostering a stronger sense of school 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 2 Board	English Reading Accurately: 87% English Reading Fluently: 60% FI Reading Accurately: 53% FI Reading Fluently: 51%	English Reading Accurately: 74% English Reading Fluently: 67% FI Reading Accurately: 46% FI Reading Fluently: 46%
Grade 3 Provincial	Reading: 91% Writing (Information/Non-fiction) : 96% Writing (Narrative/Fiction) : 98%	Reading: 81% Writing (Information/Non-fiction) : 82% Writing (Narrative/Fiction) : 82%
Grade 5 Board	Reading: 87%	Reading: 81%
Grade 6 Provincial	Reading: 94% Writing: 94%	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: 93%	Mathematics Concepts: 95%
Grade 3 Provincial	Mathematics Concepts: 90%	Mathematics Concepts: 71%
Grade 5 Board	Mathematics Concepts: 95%	Mathematics Concepts: 84%

Classroom Assessment

In September, 2008, we established a common baseline assessment of all French and English Primary students using 'Concepts About Print'. At that time, 78% of our Grade Primary students were successful in achieving 6 or more of the 10 listed tasks.

In September, 2008, we established a common baseline assessment of all English Grade 1 students using 'Concepts About Print'. At that time, 74% of our Grade 1 students were successful in achieving 17 or more of the 24 listed tasks.

For the last four years, our reading records have been measured by reading level, comprehension and fluency. Reading records for all grades: primary (English only) to Grade 6 (English and French Immersion) are collected and graphed 3 times per year to monitor student gains in reading. Our students are reading with accuracy and fluency. This data collection and analysis, along with external literacy assessment data, and teacher observation of student needs in comprehension and analysis of text have helped us to identify our literacy goal on comprehension.

In September, 2009, Primary to Grade 6 teachers will use assessment resources such as the Department of Education (DOE) CAMET, DOE Mathematics Supplementary Resource and common grade level assessments.

Teachers will create and implement common grade level assessments to measure student achievement in number sense. Teachers will establish and engage in regular PLC time with a school-based mathematics coach to discuss data collected through on-going common assessments. Our staff will continue in our development of a shared understanding of how school and classroom-based assessments can be used to inform our teaching practices to improve student learning.



Student Engagement

According to our 2007-08 Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) PFI survey results, parents feel that their child likes school, and that they are actively involved in their child's learning. Students feel that they have fun learning, that they try their best in school, and that their teachers expect this. Strategies to further engage our students in learning include: PEBS care cards and assemblies, IPPs, adaptations, differentiation, enrichment, student self-assessment, star of the week/month, spotlight on reading, Readers' Theatre, motivational certificates, and teaching to multiple intelligences.

Time to Learn

Our teachers feel they take time to successfully implement the Public School Program to deliver the required curriculum outcomes. Assessment data shows that our Grade 6 students performed very well on reading and writing tasks; 94% met the expectations in the DOE ELA 2008-2009. Eighty-nine percent of our Grade 5 students met or exceeded the reading & writing expectations in the CAT 4 2008-2009. HRSB survey results from 2007-2008 show that both teachers and parents believe that school events focus on curriculum, learning and student achievement.

Professional Development

Teachers will receive school-based, HRSB and DOE professional development (PD) to explore and adopt best practices to teach and assess fluency and comprehension, and to strengthen number sense. Areas of focus:

- fluency lessons, concentrating on intonation, expression and rate
- comprehension lessons concentrating on making connections, questioning, making inferences and synthesizing
- develop common comprehension assessments to share data, to program for individual/differentiated needs, and to share ideas, mini-lessons and instructional strategies
- develop common assessments, progression mapping, a common understanding of number sense from DOE curriculum documents
- develop an understanding of and implement National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Process Standards and three part lessons

Additional School Supports

Our staff is committed to providing the optimum learning environment for all students. We have a strong Student Support Team who assists in developing appropriate learning environments for students. Inclusionary practices also benefit through the support of the team. Our School Planning Team meets weekly to collaborate with teachers on how to best meet the needs of their students.

Our staff includes the following professionals:

- 2 learning center teachers
- 2.5 resource teachers
- comprehensive guidance
- school psychologist
- speech language pathologist
- Reading Recovery teachers
- literacy coach
- mathematics coach
- educational program assistants

APSEA, the IWK and Progress Centre also provide support to our students and staff.



Planning for Improvement

Analysis of our self-assessment data has made it clear that our school has a lot to celebrate. The information that we obtained through our self-assessment has enabled us to determine the strengths of our school and focus on target areas. We have been collecting data in various areas for several years which has been used to inform our practices and enables us to make decisions about professional development and resource purchases that will benefit student learning.

We have determined target areas for improvement. We have engaged in dialogue that determines what has worked well in the past and what we can do to make improvements for the future.

This year we began the process of understanding and

developing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs); discussions focused on the importance of common goals and assessment. We developed a shared understanding of how assessments can be used to inform our teaching practices. Professional development opportunities are available onsite and regionally.

Assessment results from the Department of Education and the Halifax Regional School Board indicate that most of our students consistently achieve better than the board, provincial and (where applicable) national standards.

School Goals

Literacy Goal

We will improve student achievement in reading through development of fluency and comprehension.

Strategies:

- through PLC time and school-based PD with the literacy coach, teachers will develop a common understanding of what fluency is and how it impacts comprehension
- teachers will implement a common reading assessment approach (Grades P-3 English and Grade 3 FI: PM Benchmark; Grades P-3 French: GB Plus Books and liste de livres d'IPLÉ Immersion (Ébauche, December, 2008); Grades 3-6 French: ORR evaluation rapide; and Grades 3-6 French and English: AYR Assessment)
- teachers will use purchased AYR assessment materials appropriate to grade levels -Teachers will use comprehension strategies rubrics (AR for grades P-2 and AYR for grades 3-6) and reading fluency-expression rubric (HRSB for all grades) to assess

- students' reading
- teachers will use explicit teaching models
- teachers will use the daily/ weekly collection of reading and comprehension assessment data to help inform their teaching practice
- teachers will deliver specific comprehension mini-lessons concentrating on making connections, questioning, making inferences and synthesizing
- teachers will establish and engage in regular PLC time to discuss data collected through on-going common assessments
- teachers will work together to develop and deliver literacy cafes to the parent community that will support ongoing comprehension initiatives

Mathematics Goal

We will improve student achievement in number operations through the development of number sense.

Strategies:

- teachers will develop a common understanding of number sense

- and connect it to the teaching of number operations
- P-6 teachers will use assessment resources such as DOE CAMET, DOE Mathematics Supplementary Resource and common grade level assessments, etc.
- teachers will implement a common mathematics assessment approach
- teachers will incorporate the use of NCTM process standards in daily lessons
- teachers will use the three-part lesson model as it applies to the instruction of number operations and number sense
- teachers will use purchased mathematics materials and resources
- teachers will establish and engage in regular PLC time
- teachers will work together to develop and deliver mathematics cafes to the parent community.



Every Student Can Learn. Every School Will Improve.

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