

Halifax Regional School Board

Focus on Learning: Early Literacy Support Year End Report 2016-2017

Purpose

To provide the Committee of the Whole with an overview of the progress of students supported through the Early Literacy Support model in 2016-2017.

Background

The mission of the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) is to *provide a high quality education for every student every day*. To support this mission, the Early Literacy Support framework recognizes that there are multiple layers of instructional support intended to guide our children in developing and sustaining effective literacy skills. The first layer of support for all children is quality classroom instruction. The second layer is short term intervention provided by Early Literacy Support or Reading Recovery. A third layer of support is provided to students who need more long term intervention through resource support.

Early Literacy Support is a short term intervention that supports students in grades primary through 3 in both French Immersion and English programs. Support consists of daily lessons of 30-45 minutes targeting reading, writing and oral language development through small group or one on one instruction. Support is provided in grades primary through 2 by an Early Literacy Support teacher and in grade 3 by the resource teacher. Teachers provide support to students during one or more of the three blocks of Early Literacy Support scheduled over the year: block 1 (September – November), block 2 (December – March) and block 3 (March – June). Selection criteria for support is dependent on grade level and program of study.

All Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) elementary schools are allocated staffing for Early Literacy Support through targeted funding from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) and the HRSB general fund.

Content

Early Literacy Support

During the 2016-2017 school year, 2013 English program students and 500 French Immersion program students from grades primary through 3 received Early Literacy Support. This represents 16-17% of the total P-3 population. Students are assessed at the beginning of the support block, at the end of the support block and at the end of the school year. The overall results for Early Literacy Support show that almost all students demonstrated growth in their literacy development.

In both English and French Immersion, the proportion of students of African descent who received Early Literacy Support is greater than the overall grade P-3 population. Results disaggregated by Aboriginal Identity are not presented due to the small sample size.

English Program

- A total of 287 primary students received support. On entry, 80% of students selected for support were not yet reading published texts; at year end this decreased to 15% of students who were not yet reading published texts.
- A total of 982 grade one students received Early Literacy Support. At the end of their respective support block, 54% of the students were reading at or above expectations, while 47% met or exceeded expectations at year-end.
- A total of 289 grade two students received Early Literacy Support. At the end of support, 222 of these students (77%) were reading at or above expectation, while 225 (79%) met expectations at the end of year.

- A total of 455 grade three students received Early Literacy Support. At the end of support, 382 of these students (84%) were reading at or above grade-level expectation, while 293 (65%) met or exceeded expectations at the end of year.
- A total of 259 students of African descent received support in grades primary to 3. At year end, 52% of students of African descent were meeting or exceeding year-end expectations compared to 55% of all other English program students receiving support.

French Immersion Program

- A total of 219 grade one students received Early Literacy Support. At the end of support, 147 of these students (67%) were reading at or above expectation, while 135 (64%) met expectations at the end of year.
- A total of 152 grade two students received Early Literacy Support. At the end of support, 96 of the selected students (64%) were reading at or above expectation and 94 students (65%) met or exceeded expectations at year end.
- A total of 126 grade three students received Early Literacy Support. At the end of support, 104 students (83%) were reading at or above grade-level expectation, while 94 (76%) met or exceeded expectations at the end of year.
- A total of 64 students of African descent received support in grades primary to 3. At year end, 55% were meeting or exceeding year-end expectations compared to 69% of all other French Immersion program students receiving support.

Highlighting Improvement in Results

- Overall, we see a 6% increase in the percentage of students (English program) who received Early Literacy Support who met provincial benchmarks at year end compared to the previous year.
- In French Immersion, there was a 5% increase overall in the percentage of students who received Early Literacy Support who met the provincial benchmarks at year end compared to the previous year.
- In particular, there was notable improvement in both English and French Immersion year end results for both grade one and grade two students.
- For students of African descent who received Early Literacy Support, there were notable improvements in the percentage who met year end benchmarks compared to the previous year. We see an increase of 13% more African descent students meeting year end benchmarks in both English and French Immersion program. In comparison, non-African descent students increased 5 and 6% in English and French Immersion, respectively. This represents a closing of the gap in results between our African descent students and their non-African descent peers.

Cost

N/A

Funding

A combination of targeted funding and general fund

Timeline

On-going

Appendix

N/A

Recommendations

It is recommended the Committee of the Whole receive the Early Literacy Support Report for information.

Communications

AUDIENCE	RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE
Committee of the Whole	Alison King	December 13, 2017

Contact

For further information, please contact Alison King, Director, Program and Student Services at aking@hrsb.ca or 464-2000 ext. 2567