

Dartmouth High School

Community Report 2015-2016

PART 1 - June 2016

June 2016 marks the end of “year two” in the five year cycle with respect to our Student Success Plan (SSP). During the 2014 -2015 school year, the staff worked together diligently to identify potential areas for improvement to increase student achievement and to close the educational gap as reported by the Halifax Regional School Board. Working together in collaborative groups and as a staff in its entirety, the staff looked at a variety of data sources to narrow our focus. This work led to the development of three goals aimed at promoting teacher professional development.

Staff, with input from students and other members of our school community, identified a need to focus on the following three areas: formative assessment, critical thinking, and school climate. Our formative assessment and critical thinking goals were finalized in June 2015; however, our school climate goal was finalized in the Fall of 2015.

Over the course of the 2015 – 2016 school year, staff worked in professional learning communities facilitated by the SSP team to develop instructional strategies to support the implementation of each goal. These broad-based strategies were implemented in the various subject areas. They will be examined, re-evaluated, and adjusted during year three and year four of our Student Success Plan as we learn which strategies work for our students, and which ones need to be altered to better meet the needs of students at Dartmouth High School.

SSP goals are as follows:

Critical Thinking: Teachers will provide regular opportunities for critical thinking within a supportive learning environment as measured by student surveys teacher surveys and student focus group data.

Formative Assessment: Teachers will embed formative assessment in their classroom as measured by student surveys teacher surveys and student focus group data.

School Climate: To improve school climate through increased student engagement and relationship building.

Strategies for year two of our SSP plan :

Critical Thinking: Teachers will teach and model critical thinking strategies; teachers will implement culturally responsive teaching practices; teachers will integrate student centered use of technology; and teachers will emphasize inquiry-based learning to allow students to be actively involved in solving authentic problems.

Formative Assessment: Teachers will provide students with clear learning targets for every lesson; teachers will purposefully plan discussions, tasks, and activities that effectively elicit evidence of learning, and teachers will provide students with regular effective descriptive feedback that moves learning forward.

School Climate: Have clear communication of expectations between all members of the school community, and take advantage of existing opportunities to strengthen relationships inside and outside

the classroom; challenge ourselves to identify/ create opportunities to build new ones.

Each of these strategies will look different in every classroom, and DHS staff has been working hard to figure out what these mean for each teacher's own unique group of students. Teachers were provided with time on each Professional Development (PD) day to explore a different aspect of our school's SSP plan. Teachers spent time examining data from last years "Getting to Great Survey" (comparing results to previous years), and had conversations around the meaning of those results and potential next-steps in affecting change. We explored the use of critical thinking circles, effective teaching strategies and how to create classroom environments that foster risk-taking. We also spent time engaging in conversation around culturally relevant pedagogy.

In addition to meeting as a large group on PD days, teachers met weekly in a Collaborative Learning Group (CLG). SSP goals were often discussed at these sessions with respect to what was already being done, what could be done differently, and how it could be done more effectively. These conversations focused around improving student engagement and achievement, and provided opportunities for teachers to discuss how strategies could be utilized in specific content areas.

Each classroom is different, each course unique, but there are common strategies that teachers can use to help students move their learning forward. As this school year comes to an end, teachers are already reflecting on what changes need to be done for next year as we strive to better meet the needs of our students, and provide a high quality education for every student every day.

PART 2 – October 23, 2016

Provincial Assessments		
	School (%)	Board (%)
	2015-16	2015-16
<u>Literacy Assessments</u>		
Grade 10 Provincial		
Reading	77%	78%
Writing - Ideas	65%	69%
Writing - Organization	62%	65%
Writing - Language Use	61%	65%
Writing - Conventions	61%	60%
<u>Math Assessments</u>		
Grade 10 Provincial		
Mathematics	52%	72%
Mathematics At Work	41%	54%

Literacy

Though some of the results are closely aligned with those of the board, we recognize that further work is required to increase student achievement in all areas of our literacy program. Reading appears to be our greatest strength, however, there is a decrease in writing conventions compared to last year, but it is slightly above the Board's average. Recognizing that all aspects of literacy can be embedded in all subject areas, the plan, moving forward is to use these results to inform our instructional practices, while focusing on the implementation of instructional strategies to support our school goals.

Math

As indicated above, there is a decrease in academic performance in our math assessment this year. We have used this information to discuss looking at more effective ways to prepare students so that there is less disconnect between ability and performance. Our math teachers will continue to work collaboratively to narrow down what aspects of the provincial assessment needs greater attention in terms of content, language and/or communication of knowledge. Sporadic attendances continue to be a barrier to success for some of our math students. It is anticipated that our continued focus on relationship building and the reboot of the PEBS mentorship program will help to promote attendance and engagement. The math team has talked about the need to be more explicit around assessment practices to convince students of the importance of setting higher expectations for themselves. This work begins now!

Graduation Rates	
School Year	Rate
2015-16	96%
Destination after High School	Rate
Community College	20%
University	46%
Other Education or Training	4%
Join Workforce	7%
Unknown	18%

We are pleased with our graduation rate and the combined rate of students pursuing a post-secondary education or other education or training. We are curious about the unknown data and will work with student services to see if there is more than can be done to decrease this number.