

Eric Graves Memorial Junior High
2015-16 Community Report

Provincial Assessments		
	School (%) 2015-16	Board (%) 2015-16
<u>Literacy Assessments</u>		
Grade 8 Provincial		
Reading	84%	76%
Writing - Ideas	98%	91%
Writing - Organization	86%	80%
Writing - Language Use	93%	82%
Writing - Conventions	77%	70%
<u>Math Assessments</u>		
Grade 8 Provincial		
Mathematics	81%	63%

This was year one in our Student Support Planning (SSP) process which meant we spent much of our focus sifting through data to identify where our strengths and challenges lie in order to set goals that will be the basis of where teacher learning will take place over the next five years. We studied provincial, board, and school-based assessment data to determine how our students are doing in math in literacy. While analyzing this data our teachers were able to determine areas which required further focus. Literacy pointed to organization in writing and math recognized problem solving with the prime focus being how students communicating their answers. The breakdown of this data can be found in our School's Self-Assessment document at <http://www.egmjh.ednet.ns.ca/>.

As a way to provide more clarity, our Literacy and Math Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) developed and administered common assessments to our students focusing on the themes identified above. The information provided by the common assessment confirmed that organization in writing and problem solving and communication will be the main focus of our goals.

We drafted our goals and sent them to the HRSB SSP Leader for her feedback. Based on the feedback, minor revisions were made throughout the document; however, it was also suggested we broaden the scope of our literacy goal. Our goal was then expanded to include organization, generating ideas, and language usage in writing. Our math goal was determined to be high leverage goal and was approved.

Once we determined our goals for student achievement we then needed to look at our teaching practices. Much of this information came from our Getting to Great surveys. While looking at the survey data we kept our school goals in mind. This teaching practices self-assessment was broken down into sections and we were required respond to 10 questions for each section (11 for math) focusing on assessment, instructional strategies, differentiation, and cultural competency. The responses to these questions helped us develop strategies to improve teacher practice. Once we developed our strategies, we were invited by the HRSB SSP Lead Team to the board office for support while we created action steps to implement the instructional strategies.

A full report of our plan including goals, strategies, and action steps can be found at <http://www.egmjh.ednet.ns.ca/>. This report provides a detailed outline of the professional development/learning that will take place with our staff over the next five years. Our professional development days and PLCs will be guided by what has been documented in this plan. We will be analyzing data each year to monitor the effectiveness of our school SSP plan.

During the May 13, 2016 professional development day we began to implement the first steps of our plan. Our math PLC focused on the “Notice and Wonder” strategy from the problem solving text *Powerful Problem Solving*. This strategy helps students learn how to ask appropriate questions in order to understand information and to arrive at reasonable answers. This will be a strategy implemented by the math teachers in the Fall of 2016.

Our Literacy PLC looked at how to use samples to engage writers. This strategy looks at good writing and allows students to determine the criteria of effective writing. The purpose is to take the criteria and then apply it to their own on writing. Again, this will be a strategy used in our English Language Arts classrooms in the Fall of 2016.

A key piece to student improvement is the effective use of assessment strategies. Because of this, it was important to embed assessment practices within our plan. One of our first tasks has been to establish a consistent 1-4 School-Wide Evaluation Rubric based on the achievement levels determined by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. We have spent much of our professional development this year establishing this rubric. This will provide us with the framework for what each achievement level means in any subject. We want to ensure all students know what is required to receive a 4 on any and all outcomes. This learning process has created many rich conversations around how to effectively assess our students and we feel our staff has grown in this area.

We are very excited about our SSP plan. We look forward to the great professional learning opportunities for our staff and we are especially excited about the impact this plan will have on student achievement and learning.

Math Assessment Results

The data table above represents the percentage of students who met the expectation of the Grade 8 provincial math assessment. The expectation is defined as what students should know and be able to do on their own at the end of grade 8. The data indicates 81% of Grade 8 students at Eric Graves Memorial Junior High were at or above the provincial expectation as compared to the Halifax Regional School Board average of 63%. We are very proud of this result; however, we acknowledge 19% of our students did not meet the expectation of the provincial assessment. We will be analyzing and reflecting upon the assessment results in more depth to continue to meet the needs of all students. This work has already begun in our Math Professional Learning Community (PLC).

Literacy Assessment Results

The 2015-2016 Grade 8 RWM assessment data indicates that students at Eric Graves are doing extremely well in both reading and writing. In writing, the percentage of students achieving at or above the provincial expectation is consistently higher than the overall HRSB results in all four strands of writing scored on the assessment. Impressively, 98% of students met, or were above the expectations, in representing ideas in their writing. The other percentages – 86% in organization, 93% in language use, and 77% in conventions—although not as high, are still very respectable scores and higher than the HRSB averages. In reading, 84% percent of students were at or above provincial expectations, compared to 76% HRSB average. These results are very impressive; however, our goal is to always be improving. The Literacy PLC is exploring ways for our students to enhance the organizational skills in their writing and to improve writing conventions.