



2015-16 Community Report for John W. MacLeod Fleming Tower Elementary School

Provincial Assessments		
	School (%) 2015-16	Board (%) 2015-16
<u>Literacy Assessments</u>		
Grade 3 Provincial		
Reading	52%	69%
Writing - Ideas	74%	76%
Writing - Organization	52%	62%
Writing - Language Use	48%	66%
Writing - Conventions	36%	52%
Grade 6 Provincial		
Reading	80%	76%
Writing - Ideas	98%	82%
Writing - Organization	87%	68%
Writing - Language Use	87%	72%
Writing - Conventions	89%	65%
<u>Math Assessments</u>		
Grade 4 Provincial		
Mathematics	93%	78%
Grade 6 Provincial		
Mathematics	72%	72%

J W MacLeod Fleming Tower School continues to be a thriving elementary school of 416 students in Halifax located just off the Purcell's Cove Road with an additional site one block away on Randolph Street. We are a dual track school offering both English and French Immersion programs to students throughout the Purcell's Cove and Central Spryfield communities. Visitors and families (86% of surveyed parents) are welcomed into the school and we benefit from an involved parent community. Our students enjoy coming to school and 96% of students surveyed feel their teacher really cares and they have lots of opportunities to engage in active learning. Our teachers work together to problem solve student learning challenges and to celebrate their successes.

In 2015-2016 we completed the fourth year of implementation for our 4 year Student Success Plan (SSP). Teachers, in consultation with board support staff and our parent community, have identified a literacy goal and a math goal as areas for improvement. In literacy we want to improve reading comprehension by helping students to develop reading strategies to problem solve when things break down. Our lower elementary students (P-3) struggle to gain those early reading skills but with a focus on early intervention students are making gains. As seen in the chart above 52% of our grade 3 English students met expectations in reading at the beginning

of grade 3 and 83%% of students in grade 3 French Immersion met expectations. Our students need lots of early intervention at the P-3 levels in order to build a solid foundation in their early literacy skills.

This year, teachers worked together in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and with literacy coaches to look at assessment information and to plan instruction to meet the needs of their learners. The focus of instruction is to help students monitor their own reading by asking: does it look right, sound right and make sense? Students received daily explicit instruction through the Early Literacy Support (ELS) Program and through daily reading support with their classroom teacher and the resource teacher to improve reading skills. Our classroom data shows that on average 69% (English) and 82% (French Immersion) P-3 students met grade level benchmarks by the end of the year. This demonstrates that through explicit small group instruction, our students can improve but it takes lots of practice both at school and at home. Each year approximately 10% of our lower elementary French Immersion students transfer to the English program requiring intensive reading support in English. This really impacts on the level of support needed in grades 1-3.

In 2012-2013 grade 3 provincial data shows that 68% of students met expectations in reading. The same students showed 80% meeting expectations in reading on the grade 6 provincial assessment in 2015-2016. Over the past several years with early intervention and good teaching practice in the classroom our students continue to make gains each year throughout P-6.

Teachers have learned several things over the past 3 years. They realize that Early Literacy Support needs to be 2-3 blocks for more success for our students. Also, that explicit small group instruction based on assessment, needs to happen in all P-3 classes every day. Teachers working collaboratively through their PLCs helps to problem solve student learning challenges and direct instruction. Teachers really benefit from having coaches in their classroom to develop best practice.

In math we want to improve our student's ability to problem solve and clearly communicate their thinking and understanding. The grade 4 provincial data shows 93% of our students meeting expectations however only 72% of students meeting expectations in grade 6. Teachers have focused on improving math skills at the grade 5 and 6 levels throughout the year. Teachers are working towards building a more consistent approach to problem solving across grades P-6, including more open ended questions that enable them to meet the needs of the wide range of learners in their classroom. With the implementation of the new provincial math curriculum, teachers have been engaged in examining teaching strategies and learning new ones. Classrooms have been infused with new resources and teachers are finding they are able to spend more time on weaker skills and build a stronger foundation in areas such as fact knowledge. Throughout 2016-17 we will continue to help parents gain a better understanding of math learning and how they can support student learning.

As a school community, the staff and parents work hard to promote problem solving within a safe and caring environment. We believe in the importance of strengthening relationships so that the students are engaged in their own learning and are able to succeed in our challenging

and ever changing world.