

Dutch Settlement Elementary



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School and Community Context

Our school is located in a small, rural community where most students travel by bus.

The children demonstrate respect for others and are curious about all aspects of life and school. The students are involved in many artistic and sporting activities at school and with their families. In the past four years, our Positive Effective Behaviour Support initiatives have supported a reduction in discipline issues.

Our parents organize a variety of events throughout the year including family fun night, Christmas bazaar, Christmas dinner, April auction, June jubilee, hot meals and fluoride program. We are pleased to have a very active home and school.

The teachers provide engaging activities that support academic achievement in mathematics and language arts. Teachers are also learners as demonstrated with their

Professional Learning Communities in and out of school. We have a dedicated staff who demonstrate their belief in life long learning by continuing their studies in Master's programs. Teachers continue to provide after school activities including volleyball, table tennis, running, drama, dance, guitar, choir and French club. The positive atmosphere in the building is conducive to a thriving learning environment.

Overall, Dutch Settlement Elementary School (DSES) has a focus on teaching and learning and has a positive climate with few behavioural incidents. Our parents and teachers are dedicated to creating a culture of support for the students at Dutch Settlement School.



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Family and Community Involvement

For the past three years, more than 80% of parents/guardians surveyed agreed that they feel welcome at our school (90% agreed this past year). When they are able to help with school activities and events they feel appreciated by our school staff (80% agree). However, survey results over the last three years have indicated that less than 75% of parents/guardians attend extracurricular events at the school. We will continue to encourage more participation from our community at these events.

Safe and Orderly Environment

Over the past three years considerable time has been spent trying to develop positive and effective behaviour within our school environment. Staff, administration and students created a school behaviour matrix indicating expected behaviours in the areas of respecting self, others, learning and the environment. School surveys indicate that respect for others has been and continues to be an area of strength. All

parents indicated that teachers usually show respect for students, and in turn, staff feel that students treat them with respect. Survey results from students, staff and parents all indicate an increased belief that our school is a safe environment to learn, work and visit.

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 HRSB Literacy Reading	English Program Accuracy: 53% English Program Fluency: 53%	English Program Accuracy: 74% English Program Fluency: 67%
Grade 3 DOE Literacy	Reading: 64% Writing (Information) : 79% Writing (Narrative) : 93%	Reading: 80% Writing (Information) : 80% Writing (Narrative) : 87%
Grade 5 HRSB Literacy	English Program Reading: 74%	English Program Reading: 82%
Grade 6 DOE Literacy	Reading: 67% Writing: 93%	Reading: 88% Writing: 94%
Mathematics Assessments	School Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations	Board Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations
*Grade 2 HRSB Mathematics	100%	95%
*Grade 3 DOE Mathematics (June 2008)	69%	71%
*Grade 5 HRSB Mathematics	75%	84%

Classroom Assessment

Focus on English Language Arts

The teachers at DSES have engaged in a professional learning community in the valley. Through conversations at special grade level meetings, student assessment has been one of the main sources of discussion. As a result, the teachers will improve student achievement by continuing to offer programs such as “Authors in the School”, Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop and Word Study. Even though 79% of parents are satisfied with the school’s efforts to meet their child’s academic needs, teachers will strive to raise the bar.

Focus on Mathematics

Teachers are committed to improving student achievement of students in the area of operations (+, -, x, ÷). Through classroom and external assessments, it is an area that needs attention. With the assistance of the math coach, the teachers have explored a variety of ways to use mental math to solve problems with operations. Students will need to express their solution in a variety of ways including, picture, story (verbal or written), model, graphs, concrete and symbolic representations. Three out of four parents have expressed satisfaction with their child’s learning in math. The teachers will improve this result.



Student Engagement

At our school we have a variety of clubs and teams. Seventy percent of students participate in a sports club, 52% in an art, drama or music club and 27% in activities outside these areas. Our students feel that they have lots of chances to learn by doing things (83%), indicating that they are actively engaged in learning. However, while 84% of our students feel they are given language arts work that is appropriate for their academic needs, only 68% of students feel the same about their math work. Our goal will be to use data to direct our instruction so that students will feel more successful in math.

Time to Learn

DSES follows the Time to Learn requirements outlined by the Department of Education. This is a shared responsibility between the staff and the principal. Administration works with staff to schedule specialist subjects (music, French and physical education) and to facilitate 1 hour blocks of time for math and language arts and 5 minutes a day for mental math. According to survey results, most teachers indicate that teaching time is rarely interrupted due to non-instructional activities and we have shown improvement in this area. Overall, teachers also indicate that student discipline does not cause classroom interruptions.

Professional Development

Teachers will use the expertise of the math and literacy coaches to support best practices in both mathematics and language arts. Teachers will use professional development days to focus on math strategies surrounding operations. Teachers will plan to attend conferences that support math and literacy goals. Administration will support teachers with PD when it is offered by the Board. Administration will encourage and support teachers who would like to attend conferences outside the board (province). Teachers will share information, materials and practices that they successfully implement in their classrooms with other teachers, as a part of regular staff meetings. Teachers will also engage in Professional Learning Communities. Administration will support teachers with classroom practices supporting the goals of literacy and mathematics.

Additional School Supports

Additional school supports to achieve student learning:

- speech language pathologist
- resource teacher
- educational assistant
- lunch monitors
- community volunteers
- roots of empathy
- volunteers
- transportation support
- health nurse
- Reading Recovery
- school psychologist
- literacy coach
- librarian
- math coach
- extra-curricular activities
- breakfast program
- lunch program
- fluoride treatment
- special functions: (family fun night, June Jubilee, big cove, work days, student talent show, music concert)



Planning for Improvement

The plan for Dutch Settlement Elementary School was developed by all the teachers at the school. The staff was separated into three teams and began to address both the teaching and learning of literacy and mathematics. They asked themselves the questions: “What are we doing right and how do we identify areas that need attention?”

The first step by each of the teams was to reflect on classroom practice and investigate “best practices”. Each teacher had to reflect on their own teaching and student learning in the classroom. It was evident that external results such as the Grade 2 literacy and math, Grade 3 math, Grade 5 literacy and math along with the Grade 6 literacy did not provide enough information about each student. Each teacher must use a wider variety of assessment tools

to provide more data and determine a better picture of the strengths and concerns of students. Staff at DSES began to use the EXCEL workshops which were offered after school to collect, display, interpret and manipulate data. Some teachers enrolled in university classes that focused on using data. The staff at DSES is committed to improving the achievement levels of students and will continue to incorporate strategies from the school plan to improve learning. Teachers will be reassessing and examining the accreditation goals and strategies throughout the fall and will share any changes with the community as they become available.

School Goals

Mathematics Goal

We will improve student math achievement in the area of operations from primary to six.

Strategies:

- Teachers will engage in a conversation of the best practices of teaching and learning mathematics.
- Teachers will implement a pre and post test to determine areas of strength and challenges.
- Teachers will continue to implement mental math strategies on a daily basis.
- Teachers will implement the three part lesson model (teacher as facilitator - students are actively engaged in solving problems &/or investigations).
- Teachers will value and incorporate a variety of approaches to solving problems with multiple representations including pictures, graphs, models, stories (oral and written), concrete forms, charts, and symbols.
- Teachers will use classroom assessment and external results,

when appropriate to inform their instruction.

- Teachers will collectively develop a list of common resources that can be included in a student math kit appropriate to each grade.
- Teachers will utilize a variety of common assessments that will show what a student knows and is able to do. These will incorporate a variety of concrete material.
- Teachers will participate in a Math Café at least twice a year.

Literacy Goal

We will improve student achievement in reading with a focus on fluency and accuracy in grades P-3 and comprehension in grades 4-6.

Strategies:

- Teachers will continue to collect and track a variety of data for all students, including reading records and Concepts About Print (CAP)
- Partnerships with parents will be developed to involve parents with student learning and reading.
- Teachers will implement a readers’ workshop model (mini

lesson, practice, share) to engage students in reading workshop daily.

- Mini lesson to focus on explicit comprehension strategies including retelling, determining importance, questioning, making connections, and visualizing.
- Teachers will incorporate a comprehension rubric to regularly assess student reading comprehension.
- Teachers will use classroom assessment and external assessment results to inform their instruction.
- The literacy coach in consultation with the administration will acquire new resources and upgrade older resources to support literacy.
- Teachers will actively incorporate daily independent reading and student conferencing within their classrooms.
- Teachers will use the HRSB rubric to identify fluent reading and provide students with examples in fluency regularly.



Every Student Can Learn. Every School Will Improve.

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