

# Kingswood Elementary School



## Planning For Improvement

May 2012

## Kingswood Elementary School Profile

**K**ingswood Elementary School opened its doors to the semi-rural community of Hammonds Plains South, in September 2005. At present, we offer dual track programming in English and French Immersion to 555 students between Grades Primary and 6. We have 50 staff members, including full-time and part-time employees, who are committed to working as a strong team in support of student achievement. We work in partnership with parents who, like staff, have high expectations for our students. We share a belief that each student should have the supports needed to attain his/her personal best.

Our students benefit from educational experiences offered through exceptional classroom instruction, along with classroom music, physical education, core French (grades 4-6) and instrumental music. Resource, Learning Center and Early Literacy Teaching (ELT) augment our programs. Extracurricular activities include an art club, choir, violin, running club, girls' fitness, cheerleading, drama, intramurals and track and field. We have an active Bully SMART program (student-led anti-violence program), eco-team and health promotion team.

At Kingswood, we highlight and celebrate the values of academic achievement, volunteerism, sportsmanship, citizenship and musicianship. We believe that our school is a great school – we have a committed and collaborative staff, energized students and supportive relationships with our parents and community. These elements blend to ensure that our students meet with success academically, physically and socially. This **Plan For Improvement** answers “The Six Questions” which will outline where we are and how we plan to move forward to improve student achievement.



## Question#1: What are we doing well?

We are very proud of our accomplishments at Kingswood Elementary School. Through the accreditation process that was completed last year we have gained greater insights amidst team work and data collection and as a result, have seen significant achievement in our students' academic performance. As a result of our goals, the students have made great progress in their ability to work through mental math problems. In addition, we have seen a notable improvement in their ability to generate ideas to draw upon in their daily writing.

At Kingswood Elementary, the teachers work in partnership with one another to create and evaluate a variety of assessment tools. Through this effective collaboration among professional peers, various forms of assessment data is utilized to inform our students' learning and to plan instructional strategies. Differentiated teaching practices allow our students to demonstrate the learning that addresses their individual backgrounds, experiences, learning styles, strengths and needs. We believe that our focus on common assessment strategies along with the commitment of our experienced and collegial staff will help us present the PSP in an even more proficient manner.

Based on school board and provincial assessments, our students are consistently scoring above the school board and provincial average in both reading and writing. As a result, the vast majority of parents at Kingswood Elementary feel that they are highly satisfied with their children's learning in Language Arts. Of equal importance, our students also feel that they are competent readers and writers. Our staff is very knowledgeable in their use of technology and utilizes current practices and initiatives in their classrooms. In addition, we have a very supportive and active community that promotes literacy excellence.

At Kingswood we are excelling in many areas of mathematics, especially in the specific topics of mental math and data management. We actively engage our students in the math curriculum in a variety of ways such as open exploration, technology, manipulatives and diverse teaching styles. We are a school that has a great deal of

resources to call upon, not least of which is a staff dedicated to the delivery of utilizing best practice.

It is clear that our students are aware of our high expectations for their learning, as 99% of students surveyed agreed that their teacher always wants them to try to do their best, and 100% said that most days they try their best. Teachers plan lessons to engage students with a variety of learning styles and adaptations and individual program plans are used to allow students to work at a level that supports and challenges their learning abilities. Activities such as: choir, running club, cheerleading, volleyball, and health promotion clubs, ECO and Bully SMART teams, Music IQ and track and field provide additional opportunities for students to be motivated and successful.

Kingswood Elementary is a positive place for students and staff. There exists a sense of welcoming and security that allows for students to learn in a caring environment. We believe it is important that the parents/guardians and staff work together to ensure a consistent and cooperative approach to creating and maintaining an atmosphere that promotes student growth in learning. We are proud to report that 99% of our students feel that their teachers really care about them and all teachers feel that our school is a safe place to work.

As Kingswood Elementary School moves into the years ahead, our partnerships will be vital to our success. We believe that our school is a remarkable school – we have a committed staff, energized students and supportive relationships with our parents and the community. These elements blend to ensure that our students meet with success academically, physically and socially. Still, we all recognize that we can continue to improve and that our plan for improvement is the guiding instrument to make our designs come to fruition.

## Question #2: What trends do we see in the data?

- Teachers consistently embed literacy skills in all subject areas.
- Grade 3 (ELLA) and grade 6 (ELA) results indicate that 93% of students meet some or all of the expected learning outcomes in reading.
- We have a very supportive, active, and involved community that promotes literacy and mathematics.
- Board and provincial assessments indicate that close to 100% of our students are consistently achieving expectations in writing.
- Parents are highly satisfied with their child's learning in math and language arts.
- Teacher assessment indicates that reading comprehension is the greatest area of concern.
- Teachers increasingly embed math skills into other subject areas.
- In provincial and board assessments, our students consistently achieve above board average in most areas.
- While comparing cohort data, there is a discrepancy in the level of performance between grade 3 and grade 6 in some areas of math.
- Our data indicates that our students' ability to clearly communicate their understanding and thinking process in mathematics is a concern.
- Qualitative and quantitative assessments point to significant improvement in the area of mental math.
- Effective assessment strategies are an integral part of our PFI plan.
- Our school communicates with our community in a variety of ways.
- Parents, students, and staff feel safe in our school.
- Family and community involvement is a noteworthy strength in our school.
- Our administration has a clear vision and makes a positive impact on student achievement.
- Staff works collaboratively to promote high achievement and enthusiasm for learning.

### Question #3: What challenges do we need to address in order to make the greatest difference in student achievement?

Through the school self-assessment process, we have identified literacy and math as the areas of focus which will make the greatest positive difference in our student achievement.

A solid foundation in literacy and numeracy gives students the widest range of choices in school and beyond. When students develop strong reading, writing and math skills early in life, they are less likely to get discouraged and will gain many opportunities for future success.

Kingswood Elementary School is committed to helping students improve their literacy and math skills. We are strongly devoted to giving students the resources and supports they need to reach their greatest potential.

Our literacy data indicates that **reading comprehension** is an area in which we can demonstrate noteworthy growth. This data is gleaned from provincial, board, and classroom assessments. Upwards of 20% of our students do not meet provincial standards in EELA and ELA assessments. In addition, our grade 2 HRSB Reading Assessment results have shown that a significant percentage of our students are experiencing difficulties in accuracy and fluency. Teachers report that inferencing and critical thinking are areas in which we would like to focus. Students develop comprehension using a range of strategies that include asking questions, making inferences, synthesizing ideas, visualizing information, and making connections between the text, the world and their lives. Students who have the opportunities to explore these strategies begin to make better sense of their world.

Based on the evidence, it has also been determined that our students' ability to clearly **communicate their understanding and thinking in mathematics** is a challenge. During PLC and focus group sessions, along with classroom assessment data, it was ascertained that communication of mathematical comprehension was the area in which our students should demonstrate improvement. Communication is an essential part of the mathematical classroom. Students may use verbal language to communicate their thoughts, extend thinking, and understand mathematical concepts. They may also use

written language to explain, reason, and process their thinking of mathematical concepts. Communication is a tool which can help students to form questions or ideas about concepts. Conversations in which mathematical ideas are explored from multiple perspectives help the participants sharpen their thinking and make connections. Students who are involved in discussions in which they justify solutions—especially in the face of disagreement—will gain better mathematical understanding as they work to convince their peers about differing points of view. Such activity also helps students develop a language for expressing mathematical ideas and an appreciation of the need for precision in that language. Students who have opportunities, encouragement, and support for speaking, writing, reading, and listening in mathematics classes reap dual benefits: they communicate to learn mathematics, and they learn to communicate mathematically.

**Question #4: Based on the challenges you identified, what are your goals for student achievement?**

Goal to improve student achievement in Literacy:

- Our students will demonstrate improvement in reading comprehension.

Goal to improve student achievement in Mathematics:

- Our students will improve their ability to clearly communicate their understanding and thinking process in mathematics.

## Question #5: What strategies and data will we use to achieve each goal?

<b>Goal #1: Our students will demonstrate improvement in reading comprehension.</b>	
<b>Strategies to achieve the goal:</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teachers will align the curriculum (with a focus on reading comprehension) across grade levels through curriculum mapping.</li> <li>2. Teachers will develop common classroom assessments of Reading Comprehension and use the resulting data to inform instruction.</li> <li>3. Teachers will employ the Reader’s Workshop approach in daily classroom instruction</li> </ol>	
<b>Professional development to support achievement of the goal:</b>	
<b>Staff will learn (knowledge, skills, and professional practices)?</b>	<b>Learning Environment</b> <b>How will the learning take place (ex. PLCs, PD, time with coach, etc.)?</b>
<p><b>1</b> - Teachers will develop <b>common understanding of grade level expectations</b> in relation to Reading Comprehension. This curriculum alignment process is our initial step in September.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vertical and horizontal PLCs</li> <li>• Support of Literacy Coach PD</li> <li>• Peer Support</li> <li>• Utilize School Based Leadership</li> <li>• Resource – “<i>From the Ground Up</i>” author Sharon Taberski</li> <li>• NS DOE resource “Teaching in Action”</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b> - Teachers will develop <b>best current classroom practices</b> with regard to common assessment and use of the HRSB Reading Comprehension: Understanding, Assessing, Teaching.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using Assessment to inform practice</li> <li>• Comprehension rubrics</li> <li>• What to consider when assessing comprehension.</li> <li>• Teachers will engage in PLCs that will collect and examine student work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entire staff professional development opportunity using the HRSB Reading Comprehension: <i>Understanding, Assessing, Teaching</i> document and the new <i>AYR Assessment Resource</i>. These documents will be used in our school to provide support with reading comprehension understanding.</li> <li>• HRSB Assessment Team</li> <li>• PLC Work</li> </ul>
<p><b>3</b> - Teachers will continue to develop <b>Reader’s Workshop</b> practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini lesson, independent reading, conferring, guided reading, sharing and reflecting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development for the entire staff. This training will be used to develop some common methods and strategies of delivering this type of program. The <i>Teaching in Action</i> and Lucy Calkins resources will be instrumental.</li> <li>• PLC work</li> <li>• Literacy Coach</li> </ul>

**Data sources:**

<b>What data will you collect?</b>	<b>When will you collect the data?</b>	<b>Who will be responsible for collecting the data?</b>
HRSB Grade 2 literacy assessment	October 2012	HRSB
Grade level annual common assessment	On-going per term and June	Teaching staff
Grade 3 Reading, Writing (DOE)	October 2012	DOE
Grade 6 Reading, Writing, Math (DOE)	October 2012	DOE
HRSB Getting to Great Student Survey	March/April 2013	HRSB
PLC Notes re common assessment	September to June	School Administration
Principal Walkthrough Feedback	On-going/ September to June	Principal

**Goal #2: Our students will improve their ability to clearly communicate their understanding and thinking process in mathematics.**

**Strategies to achieve the goal:**

- 1.) Teachers will develop a common understanding of the expectations for communication in mathematics at their own grade level and from Primary to Grade 6.
- 2.) Teachers will develop common understanding of balanced classroom assessments and use the resulting data to inform instruction.
- 3.) Teachers will utilize problem-based lessons in their classroom instruction on a regular basis.

**Professional development to support achievement of the goal:**

**Staff will learn (knowledge, skills, and professional practices)?**

**Learning Environment**

**How will the learning take place (ex. PLCs, PD, time with coach, etc.)?**

**1** - Teachers will develop a **common understanding of grade level expectations** in relation to our mathematics goal re. Math Communication for their own grade and for Primary to Grade 6. This is our initial step in September.

- Vertical and Horizontal PLCs
- Curriculum Guide
- Van de Walle Resources
- Support of Math Coach
- PD on Communication in Mathematics

**2** - Teachers will develop their understanding and use of effective strategies for gathering evidence of student achievement through **balanced classroom assessment** in mathematics.

- Teachers will engage in effective Professional Learning Communities that collect and examine student work.
- Teachers will respond to their classroom assessment data discussed in PLCs through effective instructional strategies.
- Teachers will become familiar with the HRSB Mathematics Common Assessment document.

- Entire staff professional development opportunity using the HRSB Mathematics Common Assessment document PLC Work
- HRSB Assessment Team
- HRSB Mathematics Team
- PLC Work

**3** - Teachers will continue to develop their understanding of a **problem solving** approach to teaching mathematics, through regular implementation of problem solving lessons.

- Entire staff professional development opportunity based upon strategies presented in John A. Van De Walle's text, *Teaching Student-Centered Mathematics*
- PLC Work
- Mathematics Coach

**Data sources:**

<b>What data will you collect?</b>	<b>When will you collect the data?</b>	<b>Who will be responsible for collecting the data?</b>
DOE Grade 4 Mathematics Assessment	Fall 2013	DOE
DOE Grade 6 Mathematics Assessment	Fall 2012, 2013	DOE
Grade level Common Assessment	On-going	Teaching Staff
HRSB Getting To Great Student Survey	March/April 2013	HRSB
PLC Notes	September to June	School Administration
Principal Walkthrough Feedback	On-going	Principal

**Question #6: How will you involve the SAC, the parents, the students, and the wider community?**

- School Advisory Council & Parent/School Association will be kept informed through the monthly principal's report and any assessment results will be shared accordingly.
- Informing school community of our PFI during curriculum night.
- We will communicate to the school community our progress toward our goals via newsletters, web sites, assemblies, etc.
- Our school will host and facilitate math and literacy nights that involve our wider school community.
- The SAC & PSA will encourage community sponsorship to support literacy and math initiatives.
- Volunteers will be invited to assist staff with the achievement of our goals.