



Where Everyone is
A Star

2015-16 Report to the Community

Ian Forsyth Elementary School

| Provincial Assessments | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| | School (%) | Board (%) |
| | 2015-16 | 2015-16 |
| Literacy Assessments | | |
| Grade 3 Provincial | | |
| Reading | 58% | 69% |
| Writing - Ideas | 73% | 76% |
| Writing - Organization | 61% | 62% |
| Writing - Language Use | 61% | 66% |
| Writing - Conventions | 40% | 52% |
| Grade 6 Provincial | | |
| Reading | 71% | 76% |
| Writing - Ideas | 86% | 82% |
| Writing - Organization | 76% | 68% |
| Writing - Language Use | 81% | 72% |
| Writing - Conventions | 65% | 65% |
| Math Assessments | | |
| Grade 4 Provincial | | |
| Mathematics | 65% | 78% |
| Grade 6 Provincial | | |
| Mathematics | 64% | 72% |

The staff of Ian Forsyth Elementary School is committed to creating a positive learning environment where we strive to close the achievement gap for our students. This year we collaborated with school board personnel to do an extensive review of our provincial and classroom-based assessment data to develop a Student Success Plan. Over the next few years we will pay particular attention to improving students' achievement in two major areas: reading accuracy, fluency and comprehension, and communicating students' mathematical understanding and thinking in the area of number sense.

Each year our students participate in provincial assessments; this year's results are reported in the table above. The information from these formal assessments, as well as that obtained from daily classroom-based assessments, is reviewed to determine the extent of learning that has taken place and to identify areas requiring additional attention. We are very pleased with our students' progress this year. Not only has growth been demonstrated in every area as compared to last year's assessments, the majority of our results are quite comparable to the levels of achievement of students across the Halifax Regional School Board. We are particularly proud of our grade six students whose achievement in writing was not only equal to the board results, but surpassed them in three areas! These are certainly results worth celebrating!

To support continued performance with provincial and classroom-based assessments, teachers at grades 2, 3 and 5 carried out an in-depth review of our students' achievement

with the provincial assessments, analysing our students' performance on each test item. They developed action plans to address identified areas for growth. Teachers are also explicitly teaching students how to take formal assessments. By providing experience with different types of questions, presenting information in formats similar to the tests, and teaching them how to work through the assessments, our students are not surprised when presented with the tests and are less anxious or stressed, which helps them to better show what they know.

These assessment results also served to identify areas for support that would be of benefit to our learners; our students and staff were afforded many supports this year. We continued to provide Early Literacy Support in the form of individual and small group instruction to students in grades primary to three who were on the cusp of becoming independent readers. We were very pleased to continue to be among a select group of elementary schools in our board to offer the Reading Recovery program to support grade one students who demonstrated the greatest struggles with learning to read. We were fortunate to receive the assistance of a grade three math support teacher for six months to provide specialized math support for students who had yet to consolidate their learning to make well-developed connections in math. The successes of students receiving these targeted interventions indicate we are moving in a positive direction.

Teachers continued to meet weekly in their Professional Learning Communities to discuss curriculum, instruction, assessment and to collaboratively plan strategies to best meet the learning needs of their students. To support continued growth in writing achievement, teachers have strengthened their understanding of assessing writing in relation to the curriculum outcomes, are better able to track student progress over time and to use this information to plan instruction. In reading, teachers used grade one assessment data to identify areas for instruction and particular strategies for intervention. All classroom teachers worked with board-based staff to deepen students' understanding of mathematics concepts by improving the quality of the questions they ask before, during and after problem solving. As part of their on-going professional development, the majority of our teachers worked with math and/or literacy coaches to enhance their instruction, assessment and planning practices.

A significant focus of our professional development has concentrated on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy which aims to enhance relationships between students and teachers with a view to increasing student engagement with learning. We adopted a school-wide practice of expressing daily lesson outcomes in student friendly "I Can" statements that clearly communicate the expected learning targets.

In 2016-2017, the staff of IFES will focus on our long-term goals in reading and number sense, to realize our commitment to helping each of our students to reach their full academic potential.