

# Cole Harbour District High



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## School and Community Context

Cole Harbour District High School is a semestered, suburban school that serves 1045 students in Grades 10-12 from four distinct communities; Lawrencetown, North Preston, Eastern Passage and Cole Harbour. Our students bring a range of diversities and cultures, and that, paired with our service learning opportunities and student leadership, prepare our students to be better global citizens. The school has a teaching staff of 62 including an administrative staff of four. Over 300 students graduated in June 2010.

Cole Harbour District High School offers courses in a variety of areas including: language, science, math, technology, personal and physical development, fine arts and society. New courses this year include Yoga and Family Studies. Language options include early and late French Immersion, Spanish and English as a Second Language services. Cole Har-

bour is an International Baccalaureate World School. We have a strong cooperative education program which focuses on employment skills and job placement.

We offer additional support to students through our learning centers, resource, academic recovery, Educational Program Assistants, bussing for after-school extra help, and our active library services.

Cole Harbour District High School provides a variety of counselling and services through Student Services/Guidance and our Cavway Health Center. Our school Breakfast Program serves, on average, 100 students daily. There is a high participation rate in the schools' 80+ extra-curricular offerings. Late buses support this participation. Nineteen students sit on Student Council. Transition planning and orientation activities support students in their smooth transition to CHDHS.

## Safe and Orderly Environment

Students feel respected and parents feel our school is a safe place (95% and 90% respectively, Getting to Great 2009-10 HRSB survey). Emergency, evacuation and isolation plans are in place; as well as security cameras, designated areas of refuge, first aid resources, and Threat & Risk Assessment training. Many staff have First Aid and Non-Violent Crisis Intervention certification. Most students know the School's Code of

Conduct and abide by it. We practice Positive Effective Behavioural Support, and the Behavioural matrix is posted in every classroom. Our Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights committee educates and mediates around diversity for both staff and students. Assemblies focus on the theme of respect and cultural understandings. We also have a school nurse, an RCMP liaison officer, and school security.



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## Family and Community Involvement

Many individuals and groups volunteer at, and support our school (ie.coaching, Breakfast Program, the Musical, Safe Grad, and school trips). Our School Advisory Council is active and inclusive of our communities. Our Career Fair and exhibits, and Grade 12 Information Night have broad representation from post-secondary institutions and community agencies. Local businesses support our co-op students and many institutions support responsible lifestyle decision-making (ie.MADD).

## Provincial and Board Assessment Results

HRSB students participated in Nova Scotia examinations (NSE) that are designed by the Nova Scotia Department of Education and administered at the end of each semester in January and June. As with all provincial examinations, the pass mark is 50 percent. The examination counts as 30 percent of the students' final course mark. Classroom assessment makes up the other 70 percent. Please note in the table below that exam results are the percent of students whose results were 50% or higher (% passed) and the course mark is the percent of students whose mark was 50% or higher (% passed). Also note that all percentages used throughout this report are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Assessments	School (%)		Board (%)
	Baseline	2009-10	2009-10
English Exam	84%	88%	91%
English Course	92%	92%	96%
English Communications Exam	92%	81%	74%
English Communications Course	100%	87%	93%
Mathematics Exam	46%	54%	56%
Mathematics Course	85%	83%	86%
Advanced Mathematics Exam	54%	58%	78%
Advanced Mathematics Course	91%	94%	96%

International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme	
Percentage of students that achieved IB diploma .....	87%

Our provincial and board-wide assessments continue to inform our practice in the areas of literacy and math. Not only has this data contributed significantly to the choices we have made in setting goals in order to improve student achievement, but it continues to inform us of areas in need of further teaching interventions in order to best improve student achievement. A focus on text comprehension, as well as fractions operations, continue to be central to our school improvement plan.

## Classroom Assessment

In-school Reading Comprehension Tests (Gr.10-12, 2009-10) indicate some skills need teaching intervention in order to improve student achievement: multiple choice -test-taking, reading meaning from context, and determining importance. 87% of our students find their English course work useful outside of school compared to 52% in 2008-09. 100% of our teachers say they embed literacy skills in their courses sometimes, usually and always, which is up from 84% in 2008-09 and 61% in 2007-08. (Getting to Great HRSB survey 2009-10). The average score for students in English classes on reading assessments, before explicit reading strategy teaching was 69% and was 77% after direct teaching. Most students answered yes to all of the self-assessment questions, indicating that they believe themselves to be capable readers. For other questions on the Student Self-Assessment, students indicated that making connections when reading, applying what you read to life and other situations, and asking questions of yourself when reading, are all strategies that are used by our students. Data collected, across all subject areas, indicate 124 lessons were implemented which involved the teaching of reading strategies. PLCs reported that they are using all of the reading strategies in their classrooms. In particular, Making Connections, Questioning and Determining Importance were the reading strategies used most frequently across the curriculum and Word Solve, Sample/Gather and Visualization were the reading strategies used least across the curriculum.

In-school Fractions Tests (Gr. 10-12, 2009-10) indicate some skills need teaching intervention in order to improve student achievement: ordering of fractions, multiple choice -test-taking, and attacking multi-level questions. 76% of students (sometimes, usually, or always) responded that they find math school work useful outside of school compared to 82% in 2008-2009. 100% of teachers say they embed math skills in their subject areas sometimes, usually and always, compared to 92% in 2008-2009. (Getting to Great HRSB survey 2009-10).

Student self-assessment of fraction use indicates that our Math students on average, feel somewhat confident about their abilities and learning around fractions. Fraction confidence level: Grade 10 Math students=64% Grade 11 Math students=63% Grade 12 Math students=59% Our aim next year is to improve our Math students' confidence in their ability to work with fractions.

Data from all subject area teachers, except Math, shows fractions were incorporated in 106 lessons. Fraction assessments over the year in Math classes:

- MATH 10 Overall Fraction Achievement Average = 76%
- MATH 11 Overall Fraction Achievement Average = 54%
- MATH 12 Overall Fraction Achievement Average = 77%



## Student Engagement

Annually, about 20% of our students are formally celebrated for academic achievement, and about 100 students are recognized for sports and extracurricular participation, with 68% taking part in extracurricular activities in the past school year. 57% of students claim that they like what they are learning, while 97% want to get good grades. Students say physical and arts education courses are the most engaging. The "What Did You Do In School Today" survey (2010), indicated that our students' sense of belonging at school was only 53%. Teachers continue to support this issue through professional development, conversation and resources.

## Time to Learn

Students are scheduled for 300 minutes of instructional time, with four 75 minute periods a day, receiving the required 110 hours per credit (Time to Learn policy, NS Department of Education). According to the 2009-2010 HRSB survey our students feel announcements over the public address system and friends talking when they shouldn't, account for most learning interruptions. Teachers express in the same 2009-2010 Getting to Great survey, that student learning is interrupted due to announcements over the P.A. and students talking to one another when they shouldn't. We intend to investigate other communication strategies for the transfer of information.

## Professional Development

Our recent professional development has been focused on our school improvement plan goals, our assessment and evaluation policy, diversity education and the Positive Effective Behavioural Support program. We have completed Year 2 of the provincial accreditation process and are now in Year 3. Staff will continue to work in professional learning communities to implement the interventions necessary to realize our math and literacy goals. Our professional development will include, reading comprehension strategies including a common terminology, methods for determining importance in reading, as well as a review of multiple choice test-taking. The use of manipulatives in math operations involving fractions, word problem attack strategies, as well as strategies for approaching multi-level word problems and language issues will be addressed in Math. Formative assessment, differentiated instruction, redressing learning inequities for all students, in particular for our African Nova Scotian and aboriginal students, will be our focus.

## Additional School Supports

Professional personnel serving our students include: a school psychologist, a speech-language pathologist, and a behavioural specialist who all work directly and on a consultation basis with students. We have an English as a Second Language teacher and a Severe Learning Disabilities teacher. We also have a math coach, literacy coach, a public health nurse, and an African-Nova Scotian Student Support Worker. We accessed \$15,000 from the NS Department of Education to support our African Nova Scotian youth in literacy, numeracy and organizational skills. Late buses are available one to two days a week for academic support and for extracurricular participation. This year we invested over \$15,000 in resources for the library. The school has 225 computers and a variety of software and assistive technologies. We offer over 80 extra-curricular activities, (ie. Athletics, Fine Arts, leisure and Leadership).

## Graduation Rates

School Year	Rate
2009-2010	85.8%
Destination after high school	Rate
Community College	26%
University	48%
Other education or training	8%
Join work force	2%
Unknown	17%

# Planning for Improvement

The staff, administration, Planning for Improvement Lead Team, professional learning communities, school board personnel, and the School Advisory Council at Cole Harbour District High School have reviewed our student achievement data and have determined two key areas which will have the most impact on increasing student achievement. Math and literacy have been identified as important areas to target, with a focus on fraction operations and reading comprehension. Teachers at Cole Harbour District High School recognize the need for professional development and collaboration. They are working to improve teaching practice while implementing strategies to address the challenges of student achievement. These focus areas will be addressed by a common, consistent

and cross-curricular approach. The staff at Cole Harbour District High School has worked tirelessly implementing reading and fractions strategies, sharing within Professional Learning Communities, inputting data on MOODLE, and administering and assessing student achievement in the classroom through a variety of tools including staff constructed reading and fractions Pre and Post-Tests. We are committed to continued professional learning community work that focuses on our goals. Research that addresses the challenges of ensuring equity for our students in improving literacy/math skills is essential in making the greatest difference in student achievement.

## School Goals

**Goal 1:** To improve student achievement in literacy with a focus on reading comprehension. Strategies:-All teachers will incorporate reading strategies in their subject areas and English teachers will monitor student progress and identify gaps/challenges in reading comprehension, that impact student success.

- Teachers will employ differentiated instruction in the classroom to meet the needs of all learners and to redress learning inequities in literacy education as it relates to the Race Relations, Cross-cultural Understanding and Human Rights and Learning Policy of the Halifax Regional School Board.
- Teachers in all content areas will develop instructional strategies that will lead to student engagement in their own learning, and self assessment of their own learning needs, as it relates to student success.

Achievement/Implementation data 2009-2010: Reading strategies were reported by all staff to be incorporated in 124 lessons; 7% of these

lessons were in English classes, 10% in Resource and Learning Center classrooms, 18% in Math classes, 20% in Science classes, 21% in Social Studies/ French, and 24% in Fine Arts /Technology classes. The reading strategies Making Connections and Determining Importance were used most by all staff, 83% and 75% of teachers, respectively, reported that they used these strategies this year more than 15 times in their classes. The reading strategies, of word solving, and sampling and gathering were used least by teachers as only 42% reported that they used these 15 times or more this year.

**Goal 2:** To improve student achievement in math with a focus on fraction operations. Strategies:- All teachers will incorporate a sense of fractions in their subject areas and Math teachers will teach fraction operations, monitor student progress and identify gaps/challenges in fraction operations that impact student success.

- Teachers will employ differentiated instruction in the classroom to meet the needs of all learners and to redress learning

inequities in math education as it relates to the Race Relations, Cross-cultural Understanding and Human Rights and Learning Policy of the Halifax Regional School Board.

- Teachers in all content areas will develop instructional strategies that will lead to student engagement in their own learning, and self assessment of their own learning needs, as it relates to student success.

Achievement/Implementation data 2009-2010: Fractions were reported by non-Math teachers to be implemented in 106 lessons; 12% of these lessons were in Resource or Learning Center, 14% in English, 23% in both Science and Fine Arts/Technology, and 28% in Social Studies/ French classes. Achievement data in Fraction use from the Math teachers indicates that our Grade 10 students were achieving, on average, 75% on classroom fraction assessments, Grade 11 students 54%, and Grade 12 students 76%.



**Every Student Can Learn. Every School Will Improve.**

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