



School Advisory Council Annual Report – June 2022

School	Halifax Central Junior High
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Please list SAC members including names, membership type (i.e., parent, community member, staff), and role (i.e., Chair, Vice Chair).

Kelly Bower, Chair
Jennie Colburn, Secretary
Clare Bilek, Parent Representative
Lorelei Burgess, Community Representative
Pheilm Martin, Teacher Representative
Jack Rainforth, Grade 7 Student Representative
Elly Choi, Grade 8 Student Representative
Michelle Liu, Grade 9 Student Representative
Erica Phillips, Vice Principal
Valerie Meers, Principal

Please describe a summary of work undertaken by the SAC to improve student achievement and school performance.

-Regular review and discussion of Student Success Plan
The following is included in the final SSP report for 2021-2022 that will be submitted to HRCE:

Evidence of Student Growth

What impact/ gains were made related to student achievement and well-being?

Numeracy Goal: Students will improve in their ability to access prior knowledge to problem solve new concepts.

Strategies:(assessment for learning, instruction and learning team focus)

Mathematics teachers will create opportunities for students to reflect on their current understanding of specific math concepts both prior to and following formative assessments.

Throughout the year, students have been provided with opportunities to engage with retrieval practice activities designed to help students become more aware of the math skills they have mastered and the skills that require improved understanding and/or practice in order to become automatic. This practice also encouraged students to reflect on their 'learning journeys' and how their ability to master new topics and methods relies on their understanding of how they learn and what helps them to retain a solid understanding of relevant math skills appropriate to their grade level.

Mathematics teachers will use a constructivist approach to math instruction with an emphasis on providing opportunities for students to engage in challenging, culturally relevant, and novel problem solving situations.

Throughout the year, students have been encouraged to develop their understanding of novel math concepts by engaging in activities that require using current knowledge and problem solving skills to investigate how to solve a new problem. Students have been required to draw, measure, use manipulatives and/or other resources in order to model and understand problems, and to construct solutions.

In their PLC, math teachers will examine ongoing classroom assessments, identify instructional responses that involve open questions so students can become more persistent, patient, creative and collaborative problem solvers.

During PLC time, we have had the pleasure of discussing and reflecting on what 'types of problems' and activities can best promote skills and attitudes associated with being successful math students. Types of problems are not limited to culturally relevant questions, but also consider types of questions that allow the students to showcase their natural skills, bolstering their confidence to get to the next step.

Evidence of Student Growth

What impact/ gains were made related to student achievement and well-being?

Over the past year, students have shown appropriate growth in their understanding of grade level math outcomes. All students have benefitted from frequent retrieval practice and regular homework assignments. Many students have benefitted from participating in math contests that challenge them to extend their problem solving skills while employing previously learned concepts. Struggling students have benefitted from engagement in activities that have been scaffolded to support diverse learning styles and to address gaps in understanding.

SSP Reflection for Literacy - June 2022

Throughout the 2021-2022 school year writing assessments focused on our SSP goals took place across grades. A common rubric was used across grades to maintain the focus of our SSP Literacy Goal on organization, conventions and language use. The data collected from these assessments reinforces our anecdotal evidence and points to the need for continued instruction and focus on conventions and organization.

During daily classroom writing, as well as more formal assessments, we have noticed that attention to detail concerning organization and structure is an area that will require attention moving forward. Particularly in grade 7 and 8 there are gaps in student's learning and understanding of these skills and how to apply them when completing written tasks. Despite direct instruction, many students are unable to transfer this knowledge to other pieces of writing. Similarly, self reflection and assessment seem to be unfamiliar to many students. This is a skill that continues to require development as students can be quick to dismiss finished pieces of writing as "correct" and remain hesitant to return to edit and/or revise. We have seen some success in approaching this task through peer editing vs independent reflection.

Conferencing with students has become more immediate and functional for both teacher and student as we are able to observe "in progress" writing digitally through Google Classroom. Accessing writing digitally allows us to prioritize in-person conferencing to tackle problem areas in the moment. Alternatively, providing a comment on the document, or making direct suggestions concerning conventions or organization seems to have more impact than when the same comments and suggestions are made on a "completed" piece of writing.

Equitable and inclusive opportunities were provided through one to one use of Chromebooks across grade levels. Daily access to digital technologies were beneficial for all students, but particularly those in need of audio and/or speech to text support. Universal access to Google Read and Write has proven to be an asset to all students and has supported learning and self correction around conventions such as spelling and punctuation. Daily access to Chromebooks has highlighted the challenge that some students face around self monitoring internet use and task completion. Overall, the benefits far outweigh these challenges.

Based on the information gathered this year, it is evident that the elements of writing previously identified as areas for improvement will continue to be our focus as we move forward.

Student Well-Being Goal: We will improve students' sense of belonging.

Strategies:

School staff will promote the skills, habits, and mindsets that enable self-regulation, interpersonal skills, perseverance, and resilience.

Counselling sessions and schoolwide presentations consistently incorporated and taught mindfulness to the students. Mindfulness allows for self-regulation, interpersonal skills, perseverance, and resilience. Intervention work focused on social and emotional skills, such as healthy boundaries, assertive styles of communication, and personal reflection. Crafts were used for focus and establishing healthy outlets.

School staff will promote strong attachments and relationships, a sense of safety and belonging, and relational trust.

Students gained relational trust by having regular weekly counselling and intervention sessions. Sessions were made optional which allowed the student to have control over themselves, which also promotes belonging by the student knowing this is a two way relationship. Check-ins and time spent in the classroom were also used as a way to connect with students who did not feel the time was right for individual sessions. This presence in the classroom allows students to know the school is a safe place and it also allowed students to gain relationships which is evidenced by students dropping in to counselling and intervention spaces for individual or small-group sessions. The School Counsellor in collaboration with the classroom teachers presented to classes on mental health and belonging for all students throughout the year. Cultural learning opportunities for our students who self-identify from African descent were made available by uniting them bi-weekly with their peers and the African Nova Scotian Support Worker at a neighboring school.

The Principal asked the School Counsellor and the Junior High Intervention Teacher to conduct a wellness survey for all students in the school by grade level. Based on this feedback, the Counsellor and Intervention Teacher organized workshops for the grade nines and sevens to address their concerns. The grade nines indicated that they would benefit from specific information regarding transition to high school. Contact was made with the School Counsellors at Citadel High School and information/Q&A sessions were held with each class. In response to the general sentiment expressed by the grade sevens regarding friendships, the Counsellor and Intervention Teacher organized an afternoon for all the grade seven students. This created new relationships and a further attachment to the school.

School staff will enable healthy development, meet student needs, and address learning barriers.

In every conversation with students, school staff support healthy development and meet student needs. School staff continue to advocate for students when barriers surface by conferencing with

other staff and families and developing plans where appropriate in terms of attendance, behaviour, etc.

-Purchases – stoves for Foods Lab, purchased sub days for grade 8 Provincial Assessment (so teacher can support students on adaptations), new instruments for new course Explore Music, new equipment for Physical Education classes and Band classes, new Chromebooks so the school can provide a one student to one Chromebook ratio

Please list any significant milestones and success stories that the SAC would like to highlight.

-Student Success Plan highlights student success in numeracy, literacy and well-being.
-Banner year for School Sport at Halifax Central (Flag Football, Boys Volleyball, and Track and Field Provincials, we placed 3rd in 400m for girls and 2nd in 100 m for boys)
-Indigenous mural – students creation based on 7 Sacred Teachings of *Wisdom: beaver, Love: eagle, Respect: buffalo, Bravery: bear, Honesty: raven, Humility: wolf, and Truth: turtle.*
-Halifax Central Junior High is a technology rich school with 1:1 student to Chromebook ratio, EAL students have their own iPads for translation purposes, 3D Printer, splats (Pilot school), Micro-bits (class set), Robotics from Brilliant Labs, Codey Rocky

Please describe any related sub-committee work undertaken by SAC members (e.g., School Options Committee).

Statements of Revenues and Expenditures:

Expenditures supporting the school improvement plan (e.g., providing resources to support math and literacy instruction).

2021-2022 School Year SAC Funds were invested in the following:

- Instruments for new course Explore Music (\$1000)
- New equipment for Phys. Ed. Classes (\$1200)
- New instruments for Band (\$400)
- 2 Sub Days to support students on Program Adaptations during the Grade 8 Provincial Assessments (\$400)
- 4 New Chromebooks and chargers to replace old broken ones (\$2000)

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Expenditures supporting policy development and implementation (e.g., supporting and promoting new policies).
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Expenditures covering operational expenses; up to 20 per cent of provincial SAC funding may be used as operational expenses, if necessary, to encourage and support member participation).
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Please return to School Supervisor by Monday, June 20, 2022. Thank you.