

# Annual Report to the Community

September 2013 – June 2014

## Aspotogan Consolidated Elementary School



### A note from the Principal

This thirteenth year in our school's history was witness to many changes. To begin, this was my first year as administrator at this school. We also had a new administrative assistant, Ms. Armstrong who joined us after Christmas. Several retirements also opened positions for five new teachers to join our staff.



As we strive to make our school an exciting and engaging place to learn, we keep some traditions but also acknowledge that new people bring new ideas. Our *Continuous School Improvement Plan* goals, (math and school climate) were a primary focus for our School Advisory Council and our teachers. We believe student learning and experiences have also been enhanced through the increased use of technology in all classrooms and the Multi-media Center equipped with newer computers. Our generous Home & School helped fund the purchase of iPads for student use throughout the school. Thanks to all for your continued commitment and support.

~ Paula Baker

### Data and Results

Schools are spending more time than ever examining student achievement data to assess their areas of strength and weaknesses. One example is the use of results from the *Tell Them From Me* student survey to highlight such strengths and weaknesses.

On survey questions that related to "students who are interested and motivated in their learning", 65% of students in our school indicated they were interested and motivated. 79% were girls and 54% were boys. The Canadian norm for girls is 77 % and for boys is 71%. This comparison, especially for boys, informs us that we can work harder to improve.

Although our students generally do well in mathematics achievement, we are striving to help all students aim for higher levels of achievement.

### Professional Learning

Teachers at Aspotogan Consolidated are involved in various professional learning opportunities. With the introduction of the new Primary to Grade 3 mathematics curriculum, the examination of teaching and assessment practices was a priority during collaborative learning time as well as workshops school based professional development days and staff meetings.

When teachers met during their regular embedded time, they also focused on technology goals for students. This focus allowed teachers to further develop their knowledge and skills in the most current use of iPad technology. Teachers are now using *Mimio* boards more frequently and all our students are using the school's iPads to enhance learning and engagement.

## Continuous School Improvement

Our Continuous School Improvement Plan was a center of focus in 2013-2014. As, our Primary to Grade 3 teachers worked with a new curriculum in mathematics, a big change for them and their student was in the reduced amount of outcomes at each grade level. New curriculum maps and provincial yearly plans supported teachers during this year of change.

Students at each grade level (with the exception of Primary) wrote a pre-assessment in mathematics last fall. Teachers used this information to inform their teaching and identify needs of individual students. In the spring, students wrote a follow-up post-test. Student results are passed on to the next year's teacher and provide them with a greater understanding of each student's mastery of essential mathematics concepts.

Another area of focus in our school was to identify strategies that address student anxiety and student's feeling of safety. Barb Cochrane and Catherine Rahey (from the school board office) led our staff in *Zones of Regulation* training. In turn, teachers introduced concepts and strategies gained from this level of training to their students.

Two teachers also received training in *Mindfulness* education; they started teaching strategies related to this approach for students to incorporate in their relationships with people at and outside school. Every month we also recognize character traits by celebrating a "Student of the Month". We also hold monthly assemblies to highlight the great work that the students have accomplished. Grade 5 students are invited to be "ACES Ambassadors" as they lead assemblies, give tours of our building, teach younger students, etc.

### School Goals

Student achievement in mathematics and engagement will continue to be priority goal areas at ACES until the spring of 2016. These priorities are translated into two goal statements that read as follows:

*Goal 1: By 2016, our students will demonstrate improvement in attaining higher performance levels as measured by the Nova Scotia Mathematics 4 Assessment.*

*Goal 2: Students at ACES will show an increase in interest and motivation in their learning as measured in the TTFM survey.*



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