

Annual Report to the Community

September 2013 – June 2014

Chester Area Middle School



A note from the Principal

Last year was very busy for CAMS, filled with many events such as our annual Cougar Prowl, a visit from Lost Boy Jacob Deng, a glow in the dark volleyball tournament that raised funds to support *The Wadeng Wings of Hope*. There were numerous extracurricular activities including various sports, yearbook committee, student council, band and for the first time a Dungeons and Dragons club. Grade Seven students took part in a provincial Math student engagement project that paired them with iPads. The David Armstrong Basketball Tournament raised funds and sent several students to summer camps. In the spring, students, teachers and community members came together to celebrate the unveiling of a student created mural depicting the Mi'kmaq Grand Council Flag. Local, Elder Rose joined in the celebration and conducted the smudging of the mural.

The year 2013-2014 has also earned a place in the history books. It was the last year CAMS would be a Grade Six to Nine school. To commemorate the occasion a separate prom and graduation were held for both Grade Eight and Grade Nine students.

~ Janet Dornan



Data and Results

Schools use data from a variety of sources to identify areas of priority and thus support the creation and commitment to school improvement goals.

Data for Goal 1: Taken from our Tell Them From Me Survey: The data indicates a decline in the percentage of students who value school outcomes, intellectual engagement as well as motivation, as our students grow older. It also suggests an increase in rates of truancy as our students grow older.

Data for Goal 2: The SSRSB has decided to restructure the grade configuration of Chester Area Middle School as well as Forest Heights Community School. This decision has required us to make changes to school practices and traditions as we move forward with a middle school structure and approach.

Professional Learning

Teacher professional learning activities can take on different formats, but they all intend to lead to improving student learning and achievement. Aside from participation in early dismissal collaborative team time, some teachers participated in the following:

- International iPad Summit to develop knowledge and competence in the use of the most current uses of iPads in the classroom;
- The development and implementation of cultural proficiency instructional skills;
- French Second Language teachers mapping and aligning curriculum outcomes, themes and units of study for the middle years.

Continuous School Improvement

The *continuous school improvement* initiative that is now in place in all school districts in Nova Scotia supports the idea that when teachers work together to focus on student learning and achievement, all partners benefit. During the 2013-2014 school year, CAMS teachers participated in *collaborative learning teams*, during 14 early dismissal days. Here is an example of how one teams used this time.

A team of teachers wanted to examine what they could do to meet the diverse learning needs in their classrooms. Their goal was to determine how to meet the needs of *all* students. They knew that with the use of iPads in the classroom and the increase in the variety of apps available to enhance learning, they were on the right track. By adopting a model of *Universal Design for Learning* (a model that focuses on how a single lesson can be diversified to meet the learning needs of all students) and accompanied with the use of appropriate iPad apps can vary creation of final products. Students demonstrated proof of proficiency in reading, writing and problem solving better than they were able to before. All this was accomplished because students had control over the choice of apps that suited them to meet their targets.

School Goals

After close consideration of the strengths and weaknesses in our school, the staff at CAMS agreed to adopt the following two goals as areas of focus for the 2013-2014 school year.

Goal 1: Implement Student Centered Inquiry Based Practices at the grade six and eight levels to increase student engagement.

In order to meet this goal, strategies that were put into place included the use of collaborative learning team time to research, plan and implement Inquiry Based Practices at all grade levels and implement modules at the grade six and eight level.

Goal 2: Creating a Middle School atmosphere that will embrace a positive transition for Grade 8 & 9 students to FHCS. As well as creating a positive atmosphere for the configuration change of grades 6 to 8 at CAMS.

In order to meet this goal, strategies that were put into place included the use of collaborative learning team time to research, plan and implement a middle level school philosophy and best practices.



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