

## Annual Report to the Community

September 2015 – June 2016

# Forest Heights Community School



### A note from the Principal

As the returning principal for the fourth year, I am most proud of the personal and professional commitments teachers make on a daily basis to support our students. Above and beyond the regular curriculum, staff and volunteers make school life more engaging through presentations, special events, and extracurricular activities. During the year we had a Dedication Ceremony for Private Green, a Candidates Forum for the federal election, a presentation from our National Sledge Hockey team, the RCMP presented to students on sexting and human trafficking, our school psychologist and clinical therapist had open workshops for students on anxiety, author Gwyne Dyer spoke to our students, the municipal council held one of their monthly meetings in our new Learning Commons, we had RCH presentations from Lamar Eason, a MADD and Safe Grad presentation in the spring, and we introduced our Discovering Opportunities 9 program at the beginning of the year. In athletics we hosted provincial championships and medaled in many sports. FHCS athletes had the opportunity to compete on various sport teams from September to June. Students also had the opportunity to take part in the Festival of Arts, serve on student council, join the Social Justice group, compete in the Math League, and travel to Quebec City or Italy.

As noted above, FHCS celebrated numerous successes. Moving forward, we also recognize the need to address our areas of challenge and are committed to developing and implementing a strategic and responsive Literacy and Numeracy plan as a collective and collaborative community. Provincial Assessments and the Tell Them From Me Survey will help to assist our school community of staff, students, and families in prioritizing our areas of intervention and focus to support students' success in literacy and numeracy during the coming years.

On behalf of the students and myself I would like to thank all those involved in making school life at FHCS more engaging.

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### Provincial and Board Assessment Results

SSRSB students participate in provincial and board-wide assessments. The information gained through these assessments help teachers determine their next steps in improving student achievement in literacy and mathematics and developing a positive school climate.

Assessments	School Results	Board Results
Board's SELL/EXSELL Reading Assessment (Grade 9)	39%	74%
Board's SELL/EXSELL Writing Assessment (Grade 9)	94%	71%
NSE 10 Reading	65%	73%
NSE 10 Writing	53%	63%
NSE Mathematics 10	42%	50%
NSE Mathematics at Work 10	46%	46%
Tell Them From Me Survey (Grades 9 to 12, 2015)	School Results	Canadian Norm
Positive Sense of Belonging	48%	70%
Intellectual Engagement	47%	44%
Interested and Motivated	32%	26%
Effort (Tries hard to succeed)	58%	66%

FHCS's results for the NSE Mathematics 10 and Mathematics at Work 10 assessments are of serious concern to us. In the next section (over), you will read how the board supported all grade 10 math teachers in 2015-2016.

## Continuous School Improvement and Professional Learning

FHCS teachers met in learning teams during embedded time Wednesdays. The purpose of these meetings is to raise the quality of lesson planning for instruction and assessment practices and allow us to move forward with our *Continuous School Improvement Plan*. These are a few samples of the work our teams accomplish:

- Science teachers looked at ways to increase student engagement in science. Their work was guided by the question: What are students interested in learning with respect this course/curriculum?
- English Department was interested in raising achievement for Grade 10 English students on the English 10 provincial exam.
- Another team looked at ways to prepare students for the transition to post-secondary life as it relates to both academics and life skills.

FHCS teachers also attended conferences that addressed many topics, including autism awareness, yoga in schools, enhancing student communication skills and, response to intervention at work.



In the 2014-2015 school year, Nova Scotia Examinations (NSE's) for grade 10 English, Mathematics, and Mathematics at Work were administered to all students enrolled in these courses. As this was the first official year for the administration of these exams, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development released provincial, board, and school results. The board's baseline results for NSE's for Mathematics 10 and Mathematics at Work 10 were not very good with 50% and 46% respectively. Although FHCS students scored identically on the Mathematics at Work 10 assessment compared to the rest of the board, our results for Mathematics 10 were not satisfactory. The first round of results for mathematics in grade 10 has prompted education personnel at the board level to lead a yearlong professional development initiative for grade 10 math teachers. Several times during the year, grade 10 math teachers met at the board office to help them develop greater clarity around expectations for students at different points throughout the year. They also implemented district-wide common assessments to consistently gather information on where students are at in their learning and to respond with support in a timely manner.

### School Goals

**Goal 1: To reduce the number of students receiving a mid-term grade in a single course below 50%.**

(for the third year in a row the total number of students failing at mid-term has gone down)

**Strategies:** Teachers will...

- Continue to improve the course selection process by starting earlier and again having a course selection fair for incoming grade 10-11-12 students.
- Develop a better understanding of how to plan, modify, and teach LD students.
- Identify struggling students prior to mid-term and provide support.

**Goal 2: The percentage of FHCS students who reported moderate to high levels of anxiety and depression on the TTFM survey will decline. (2015-2016 was a gap year for the TTFM survey)**

**Strategies:** Teachers will...

- Provide anxiety workshops for all grade levels.

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