A note from Administration

We are presently ending our second year of our Continuous School Improvement (CSI) plan. This flexible model of improvement allows schools to gather data from a variety of sources and create school goals and strategies to directly impact learning in the classroom. Although we are the largest school within the South Shore Regional School Board, we are now faced with the struggles associated with declining enrolments. We are challenged to offer the variety of programs we had in the past to meet the needs of our students. Our enrolment will be under 700 for 2015/2016. It is projected to continue to decline. The population has been as high as over 1000 students in the past. The school is being renovated to accommodate 900 students.

We surveyed students and staff to obtain data regarding proposed changes to Park View through the Additions & Alterations (A&A) process. In particular, we were asking about “changes to improve learning” for students and teachers. The data was collated and presented to decision makers for consideration. We are excited about the proposed changes for our facility and thank you all for your patience and support.

Please visit our school website (pvec.ednet.ns.ca) and/or follow us on Twitter (Park View@PVECPanthers)

Gordon Walters, Principal; Heather Foote, Vice-Principal; John Doucette, Vice-Principal

Data and Results

Today, forward-thinking schools across the country are employing data-driven decision making techniques not only to analyze where student achievement is currently, but also to support students along the way in their learning. One such example at PVEC exists within the mathematics department with a focus on determining the level of usage of the Math Study support area. Data was compiled over several months according to several categories.

- Student usage by class
- Usage by course grade level
- Usage by course level
- Student usage by month
- Student usage by class size

Gathering and analyzing data from multiple perspectives allows service providers and decision makers to have in front of them a more complete picture. The results of this study are reported in Continuous School Improvement (side 2).

Professional Learning

Professional Learning occurs throughout the year at PVEC. On designated PD days, teachers examine survey data as well as other data sources: report cards, absenteeism reports, documented adaptations, IPP’s, and provincial assessments. This work assists teachers in tracking their journey toward meeting their school improvement goals. Teachers in the Social Studies department participated in a unique ongoing training opportunity. They spent a day at Grand Pré with Dr. Jonathan Fowler, Anthropology Department at Saint Mary’s University, working on archaeological digs at that site. This was the first of two days of training in preparation for taking students from PVEC to participate in this hands-on research opportunity in 2015-2016. Great ways to engage our students through purposeful work!
### Continuous School Improvement

Student engagement in mathematics, as many subjects, is difficult to assess but some indicators can be measured as indirect markers. One of these measures can be the amount of time spent by the student seeking extra assistance in mathematics, either through Math Study during regular class time or supplementary extra help at lunch, or before or after school. This of course is not perfect, many highly engaged students do not require extra teacher contact beyond the classroom, or may only need it on a casual basis. Furthermore, other engaged students may be unable to take advantage of extra help due to time constraints or other commitments. That being said, our mathematics department has collated data from Math Study and its extra help offerings as a department. This data includes students who voluntarily spend personal time to engage further in the mathematics curriculum. There are exceptions, but the vast majority of hours spent by students are of their own will, motivated by a desire to higher academic success. This is undoubtedly a clear measure of engagement on behalf of the student.

Of course, the data are indicators of engagement only for students for whom Math Study is an option. Overall, it was found that the high number of student usage hours is a clear indicator of the solid engagement among PVEC students toward success in mathematics.

### School Goals

The teaching staff at PVEC agreed to work on two goals for school improvement this year:

**Goal 1:** To increase the use of technology to improve student learning and achievement.

**Goal 2:** To increase student engagement to improve learning achievement.

For each goal, we included several strategies that represent action steps designed to help staff work toward reaching the goals individually, within their respective departments, but especially with their students. As an example, strategies for our technology goal include:

- Teachers will examine and implement different uses of technology to enhance learning.
- Teachers will assist students in choosing appropriate technology to accomplish assigned tasks.
- Teachers will refer to the SAMR model to monitor the integration of technology into the learning experiences of all students.

In preparation for our renovation project, due to start during the summer of 2015, we saw this year as a great opportunity to take stock. We decided to assess how our existing technology is being used by students and teachers as well as introduce some new technology to engage students. Such usage included: use of SMART Boards to make presentations and exploration of new material more interactive, continued use of various software/apps in multiple departments, as well as the continued use of technology to conduct investigations and research. We are also increasing our use of technology to support students with learning disabilities. Teachers and students have increased access to iPads to enhance classroom learning opportunities. All teachers have laptops!