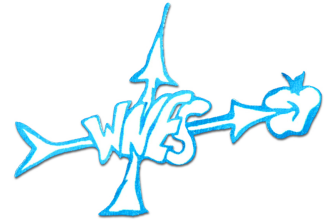


# Annual Report to the Community

September 2013 – June 2014

## West Northfield Elementary School



### A note from the Principal

West Northfield Elementary School is a vibrant, welcoming learning community with a population of approximately 145 students. The school has a strong, dedicated staff and a very supportive family/volunteer group. Together, we offer a variety of extra-curricular activities including a drama club, sports teams, games clubs, Green team, run club, etc.

WNES has embraced the goals chosen for our students. If you walk into any classroom, you will see PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Skills) lessons taking place and hear the language associated with managing emotions and resolving conflicts responsibly. During our monthly assemblies, you will hear students reading a chosen piece of writing to us.

In small groups, you will see teachers discussing writing rubrics, math journals or perhaps technology to support writing instruction. You can read about this and more in our weekly newsletters!



~ Mary Chisholm

### Data and Results

#### Anxiety

The results of our student survey on Anxiety, collected in the fall and again in May, gave us insights on how students are feeling about anxiety. We also discovered using that more and more, they are using *PATHS* and *MindUP* strategies to manage anxiety.

#### Writing

Data from our SELL and ExSELL writing assessments was collected for the last 3 years and analyzed at each grade level and by cohorts of students moving from one grade level to the next. We have seen a slight increase in the percentage of students meeting expectations by cohort in about 75% of the groups of students.

### Professional Learning

Teachers collaborated with one another and with Misty Nauss, our PATHS coordinator, to deliver the PATHS program and learn about mindfulness and the MindUp program

Support staff met regularly to participate in a book study around peer relationships in children. The purpose of this study was to introduce recommended best practices in working with our students.

Stephen Jamieson, our school district's literacy mentor, helped teachers familiarize themselves with a school-wide writing map to plan their year. Teachers were also involved in shared assessment experiences.

Embedded Time was invaluable in according time for professional development to happen.

## Continuous School Improvement

Continuous School Improvement is a process whereby a school team identifies areas of focus for a set amount of time to improve student development and student learning. The choice of focus for a particular school must originate from data indicating a specific need for change in order to elicit positive change. The time line set to achieve chosen goals must keep stakeholders true to the target goal, and must also be flexible as learning is organic. West Northfield used data from the Tell Them From Me surveys, provincial tests and from the school board's SELL/ExSELL data to choose goals for our students. We also considered students' writing samples (Gr P-6) and conducted an in-house survey to gather specific information on what our students are concerned about. We set a timeline of June 2015 for both goals; Reducing student anxiety and improving student writing.

Having students re-do the Anxiety survey in June, and looking at our year-end SELL/ExSELL writing assessments was an advantage. We learned students report to be less anxious in certain situations, however we have further work to do perfecting skills for managing healthy relationships with others. In terms of our writing focus, we look forward to beginning in September with the Writing Map in place to organize writing instruction for Grades P-6 for the school year. We also have plans to have students engage more in self-assessment practices using the writing rubric.

### School Goals

Anxiety in children is on the rise in today's society. In 2012, a group of staff members chose to research Anxiety in children as part of their *Professional Learning Community* time. They worked closely with Mrs. Wentzell, our Guidance Counsellor, to learn more about this phenomenon. When choosing a climate and culture goal for our school last year, we opted to wait for the results from our student, staff and parent surveys to choose a worthwhile goal. We found out that 19% of students in Grades 4-6 had moderate to high levels of anxiety. The Canadian norm for these grades is 16%. The results are prevalent for girls especially; 27% of the girls had moderate to high levels of anxiety – and the Canadian norm for girls is 20%. We agreed that striving to reduce student anxiety was a relevant and timely goal for WNES.



When identifying an academic goal, we referred to data from several sources. Relative to Language Arts instruction, we recognized the LLI program and its strength as a method of early identification of students needing support or “a boost” in literacy. We acknowledged the general solid support needed for children as they learn to read. However, we noted there was less support in place for writing strategies. SELL/ExSELL and provincial ELLA data from the 2011-2012 year confirmed that there was a gap between reading and writing achievement at our school. We decided to make writing instruction a focus to improve on the number of students who meet expectations in their writing.

**West Northfield Elementary School**

**<http://www.wnes.ednet.ns.ca/>**

**6 Victoria Acres Drive**

**West Northfield, Nova Scotia**

**B4V 5C7**

**(902) 541-8220**