



## **ECOLE MERIDIAN HEIGHTS SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN RESULTS REPORT 2020-2021**

### **Development Plan Participants:**

- EMHS Administrative Team
  - Mr. S. Patras, Principal
  - Ms. H. Huisman, Assistant Principal
  - Ms. R. Pirot, Assistant Principal
- EMHS Teaching Staff
- Critical Friends
  - Ecole Broxton Park School Administrative Team
- EMHS School Council
  - Review - December (2020) Council Meeting
- Parkland School Division Director of Instructional Services - Katherine Mann

### **Primary Focus Element: Student Growth and Achievement**

*“Student Growth and Achievement refers to the variety of educational programs, experiences and strategies by which students meet their learning needs, interests and aspirations, and progress towards learning outcomes, centered on academic achievement, well-being and intellectual engagement.” (Parkland School Division Annual Education Plan, 2020-2021)*

*Students achieve prescribed provincial learning outcomes, demonstrating foundational skills, and strengths in literacy and numeracy.*

### **Why Student Growth and Achievement as a Focus at Ecole Meridian Heights School?**

Shaye Patras, Principal, examined data from several sources including Provincial Achievement Tests, Accountability Pillar, MiPi data, Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) data and GB+ data identifying trends, areas of strength and areas for further growth for students and staff at Ecole Meridian Heights School.

This data was then reviewed by Assistant Principals, Mme Roni Pirot and Ms. Heather Huisman with further dialogue and questions to be explored. The information was then presented to a representative group of teachers from EMHS in a focus group.

EMHS Focus Group Members:

- Shaye Patras - Principal
- Marcel Turcotte - Jr. High French Immersion Teacher
- Avril Letourneau - Jr. High French Immersion Teacher
- Lindsay McCulloch - Jr. High English Teacher
- Erin Starling - Early Years English Teacher
- Lisa Lalonde - Early Years French Immersion Teacher and Literacy Lead Teacher
- Christine Patterson - Early Years English Teacher
- Emily Lebritton - Early Years French Teacher

Examination of this data demonstrated concerns in literacy and numeracy achievement of our students. A general trend in numeracy identified through the Math Intervention Programming Instrument (MiPi) showed an increase in students not achieving grade level outcomes as data was examined from grades 2-9. While there were exceptions to this trend, it was necessary to acknowledge this.

In addition, reviewing Provincial Achievement Test (PATs) Results from previous years the data also indicated that achievement on these tests has been in decline since 2017. Some of the relevant information is outlined below.

- 61.9% of students in grade 6 achieved the acceptable standard on the French Language Arts PAT in 2019. This represents the fourth consecutive year of decline on this assessment with 96.7% reaching the standard in 2016, 65.7% in 2017 and 65.9% in 2018. In addition, over the same time period the number of students achieving the Standard of Excellence declined each year from 13.3% in 2016 to 0% in 2019.
- 58.8% of students in grade 6 achieved the acceptable standard on the Mathematics PAT in 2016, with that number decreasing to 47.4% in 2017, increasing to 73.1% in 2018 and once again decreasing to 44.1% in 2019.
- 86.7% students, parents and staff indicated that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the Quality of Education at Ecole Meridian Heights School in 2021. This represented a 4.3% increase from the previous year and a 4.4% increase over the previous 3 year average.
- 92% of students in grade 9 achieved the acceptable standard on the French Language Arts PAT, representing a slight decline from the previous years result of 92.3%, but remaining in line with the previous 3 year average of 93%
- 60% of students in grade 9 achieved the acceptable standard on the Mathematics 9 PAT in 2019. While this represents a slight decline from the previous year of 62.9% the 15.6% of students who achieved the standard of excellence represents the highest level in the previous four years.

- With only minor exemptions, Math Intervention Programming Instrument (MiPi) data from October 2020 indicated a steady decrease in the number of students achieving below grade level as we examined the data for grades 2-9
- Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) Literacy Assessment results from October 2020 also indicated that 56% of students in grades 2-9 were reading below grade level, with only 24% reading at or above grade level

Based on the data gathered in October 2020, staff at Ecole Meridian Heights School took several steps to support student learning in Literacy and Numeracy. Among the strategies implemented were:

- **Creation of a Literacy Lead Teaching position** - Mme Lisa Lalonde served as a teacher resource to support the pedagogy of teachers and learning/achievement of students. Amongst her many achievements in that year, Mme Lalonde was able to:
  - create a database of literacy scores on F&P and GB+ and was able to access student teachers from Faculte St. Jean to support Ecole Meridian Heights School teachers by completing F&P and GB+ assessments on all students (grades 1-9).
  - work with numerous individual teachers addressing their professional growth goals for Literacy
  - work with grade 5 teachers to create literacy strategy groups to support reading comprehension
- **Intervention Support** - several teachers within our school were provided with time embedded within their schedule to support students struggling in literacy and numeracy. Those teachers worked collaboratively with their colleagues to identify areas for growth for students and targeted small group instruction accordingly. Often this meant reteaching lessons to small groups of students using a different method or supporting students by identifying and building background skills and knowledge.
- **Creation of a Teacher Focus Group** - this team of teachers met bi-monthly to discuss new instructional strategies and resources they were exploring and implementing within their classrooms. Teachers were charged with identifying an instructional practice, implementing the practice, gathering evidence of student learning and reporting back to the group.
- **Classroom Assistants** - leveraging the skills and energy of our grade 7-9 students in their CTF (Option) classes through "Classroom Assistants", our Jr. High students worked under the direction of the classroom teacher to support literacy and numeracy for early years students. Often this could be reading 1:1 with students or supporting basic math fact skills with students. (*note: due to COVID restrictions, including cohorting, this strategy was not able to be implemented as intended*).

### Then What?

With the implementation of these, and other strategies in the 2020-2021 school year we have made several observations based on our current 2021-2022 baseline report.

With the absence of PAT results for 2020-2021 we examined Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) and GB+ results for our students as measures of literacy achievement, as well as MiPi results as a measure of numeracy and were able to make several observations:

- Overall achievement on Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) remained as an area for continued focus. While some gains in achievement were observed in particular grades, significant and ongoing efforts and interventions are required to see greater gains in English literacy. We saw an increase in 2021 to 50% of students reading at or above grade level from the previous level of 45% in 2020.
- Overall achievement on GB+ increased slightly from October 2020 and October 2021 with 28% of students achieving at or above grade level in October 2021 as compared with 26% achieving at or above grade level in 2020. Of importance to note is that due to online learning in 2020 only 278 students were able to be assessed as compared to 507 students assessed in October 2021.
- MiPi results indicate concerns in numeracy similar to those in literacy. When comparing the achievement of individual cohorts from October 2020 to October 2021 the trend indicates an increase in the percentage of students who “require attention” as outlined in the chart below:

*\*the chart has been structured so that the cohort of 2020 can be traced to 2021 by looking across in the same row*

| 2020 % of students who require attention | 2021 % of students who require attention |
|--|--|
|  | Gr 2 - 18.9                              |
| Gr 2 - 22.8                              | Gr 3 - 25                                |
| Gr 3 - 34                                | Gr 4 - 48.3                              |
| Gr 4 - 57.1                              | Gr 5 - 55.6                              |
| Gr 5 - 40                                | Gr 6 - 44.1                              |
| Gr 6 - 55.7                              | Gr 7 - 81.8                              |
| Gr 7 - 64.6                              | Gr 8 - 61.9                              |
| Gr 8 - 69.4                              | Gr 9 - 84.9                              |
| Gr 9 - 52.9                              |  |

- MiPi results indicate higher percentages of students who are requiring support in middle years than early years. As content becomes more challenging and mathematical concepts can become more abstract in middle years, students’ achievement has decreased. It is very likely that trying to teach these mathematical skills and concepts in an online format (for the first time for teachers) was not as successful as we would have hoped.

## Considerations:

Despite the significant efforts of students, staff and parents, literacy and numeracy achievement continues to be a necessary focus at Ecole Meridian Heights School. Several factors contributed to the lower than expected levels of achievement for students at Ecole Meridian Heights School during the 2020-2021 school year.

- Establishing Online learning programs for French Immersion and English Program Students.
  - Working together with 4 other schools to create online classes for students in Kindergarten through grade 9 in our English program presented several challenges. Teachers for these online learners worked out of multiple schools and supported learners from several schools, including Ecole Meridian Heights School.
  - Working collaboratively with Ecole Broxton Park School to provide online programming for our French Immersion students posed significant challenges. The entire premise of providing an “Immersion” experience in a virtual format is representative of one of the many unique challenges education during a pandemic has thrust upon us.
  - While staff acknowledged the need to be agile during the 2020-2021 school year, students transitioning between in person and online learning programs throughout the year led to staff, students and parents all trying to provide consistency and cohesive programming for students to support learning.
  
- Literacy achievement for French Immersion students in grades 3-6
  - French Immersion students do not begin to study English Language Arts until grade 3
  - Research has shown that French immersion students can be achieving in the English language at the same level as their peers in the English language stream by the end of grade 6. With this in mind, it would be expected that students in a French Immersion program in grades 3-6 would be achieving below their same age peers in an English program until the end of grade 6. This is important to consider as those students would be classified as achieving “Below grade level” on a Fountas and Pinnell Assessment

## Lessons Learned at EMHS

In examining data, achievement and growth from the previous year there has been much that we have learned at Ecole Meridian Heights School.

- It is difficult, if not impossible to replicate an “Immersion” environment in an online learning format. Students in early years are likely to be more significantly impacted by the challenges of this learning environment in the upcoming years as they do not necessarily have the foundational language skills that their middle years peers do.

- The creation of a Literacy Lead Teacher has, without question, been a benefit to our students and staff. With that said, similar to other new positions that have been created in our field in previous years (e.g. Learning Coaches, Collaborative Teaching Partners) it can take years for the full benefits of this type of position to be realized. Supporting teachers to develop their instructional pedagogy is critical work but not superficial work. As such, it takes trust, time and collaboration. I am excited to see the continued growth of our teacher's skills in the upcoming years.
- COVID protocols resulted in several intervention supports typically in place to have to be put to the wayside during the previous school year. Parent reading volunteers, Classroom Assistants (a CTF in which our Gr 7-9 students support the literacy and numeracy growth of early years students), grouping students according to common areas of lagging skills etc. are just a few of the intervention structures that were not able to be utilized in the previous school year.
- With the inability to utilize interventions as previously outlined in a COVID context, it will be imperative that the staff at EMHS find alternate interventions both within the classroom as Tier 2 and 3 interventions in a "pull out" format.
- Of the hundreds of students that were enrolled in our online learning classes at times throughout the 2020-2021 school year, only a very small handful have continued their learning in that format in the current year. Additionally, when French Immersion parents were surveyed in the Spring of 2021 as to their interest in the potential for an online French Immersion program in the 2021-2022 school year, only 8 parents from Kindergarten - grade 9 indicated any level of interest in this learning format as an option. It is evident that parents and students recognized the challenges posed in this structure.