

Annual Report
June 2016
Horton High School



Principal's Message

Yet another year has gone by quickly at Horton High School. All in all it has been a very successful year for the 870 students from Grades 9 to 12 who attended HHS during 2015-2016. This year we had 192 students participating in our Graduation Ceremony; congratulations to all graduates on a job well done.

Some highlights of 2015-2016 include, our fourth year as an International Baccalaureate World School, we had 3 students who fulfilled the requirements of the program and thus are Horton's third IB Graduates. Next year we have 29 grade 11 students entering IB and 62 grade 10 students entering Pre-IB, the numbers look promising in the next couple of years. Major highlights of the year include Advanced Music 11 and 12 recitals and the Music Awards Gala. The music department boasted 10 ensembles - instrumental, vocal and strings. We had successful festival performances in both Wolfville and Halifax, as well as 6 concerts throughout the year. This was the first year for our spectacular Drumline, sponsored by Wolfville Audiology Clinic. In April, the school, with collaboration from Edalene Theatre, presented Footloose, the musical. The audiences packed the house to see the students out-do themselves once again! In June, the senior jazz Band performed for the Nova Scotia School Board Association's annual general meeting, at the Old Orchard Inn. Again this year, 160 musicians had an exciting, successful year. 2015-2016 was a tremendous year for Horton Athletics, our athletes captured 8 provincial titles, that number is unheard of at the NSSAF level. Senior Girls D2 Soccer, JV Girls Soccer, Girls Golf, Tier 2 Girls Cheerleading, D1 Girls Basketball, D2 Girls Rugby, the D1 Boys Basketball Team hosted and won the provincial banner in our own gym, packed with fans and Eastlink cameras! The D2 Boys Rugby captured gold at Acadia the same weekend as the girls team did, double gold! Both D2 Girls and Boys Hockey won silver this year, both had one goal games in the provincial final. Some of the other major highlights included math contests, winter carnival, special guest presentations, Respect For Diversity Day, PLAYAS, Horton Healthy Minds, Horton Holiday Hurrah, and humanitarian relief fundraising. These events had a positive effect on the student body and contributed to our positive school culture. We had a Robotics Team travel to Michigan this year, they were very competitive and what a great experience they had, the team hopes to compete again next year.

This year we had two teachers receive prestigious awards, Ms Theresa Pelly received the Lieutenant Governor's Award for Excellence in Teaching, we attended a wonderful ceremony at Government House on June 21st, Ms Natalie MacIssac received the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Teaching, this award was presented at our Graduation Ceremony. Congratulation to two of the many great teachers we have at Horton High School.

Like every other year there will be some changes in staff as two of our experienced teachers are retiring. Congratulations to Mr. Jim Scott and Mr Boyd MacLean on a successful teaching career, they will be missed. Teachers have such a great impact on student learning and personal development, when they leave there is a void left behind. We will move on as we begin the new school year, but things won't be the same without these staff member.

As principal, I would like to thank everyone for another great year; Horton is a special school with great students, staff and community members. Have a relaxing summer and we will meet again in September.

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During the 2015-2016 school year, we focused on the School Performance Goal, we developed and distributed surveys to students, parents and staff, the questions were based on the goal, **By June 2016, there will be an increase in the percentage of students and parents agreeing that Horton High School is a safe, caring, and positive learning environment.** I am very happy to report that 84.3% of students in grades 9-12 responded that Horton High School was a safe environment for them. Four years ago, 58% of students from grades 9-12 agreed that Horton High School was a safe and caring environment. 81% of students either agreed or strongly agreed that teachers provide an appropriate learning environment. 94.9% of parents surveyed agreed that Horton High School was a safe place for their child to learn. 92% of parents agreed Horton High School provides a positive learning environment for their child. Five years ago 70% of parents agreed Horton High School provided a safe and positive learning environment. So as you can see we improved significantly in these areas over the course of the CSI process and we are very proud of that improvement.

Below are the Student Achievement Goals developed and met by the Collaborative Learning Teams.

Professional Learning for Staff

Horton High School is involved in the Continuous School Improvement (CSI) process. It is our responsibility as teachers to continuously analyze our work and to continue to improve so that we can provide meaningful learning experiences to all of our students. We organize our professional learning time to ensure that the time is used wisely in order to have the most positive impact on student achievement and school culture at Horton

Student Achievement Goals:

1. By June 2015 the percentage of students attempting the level three questions of the AVRSM Math Assessments will increase (Math PLC).
2. To increase scientific literacy by achieving an increase in the performance of laboratory assessments (Science PLC)
3. Improve the academic averages by working toward making the evaluation process more clear and easily understood by all students (Physical Education PLC)
4. By June 2015, we will increase student achievement by helping students approach learning with greater ownership indicated by an increase in the percentage of assignments submitted on time English PLC).

5. By June 2015, improve the average results of JHLA students from year to year in Social Studies courses (Social Studies PLC).
6. By June 2015 Increase student achievement in both workplace and laboratory safety practices and in classroom safety assessments (Technology PLC).

School Performance Priorities:

1. Providing a safe environment for all students.
2. RCH: Educating faculty and staff on First Nations Culture

Student Achievement

Each year, our students in Math 10, Math At Work 10, and English 10 participate in Provincial assessments designed to measure how well students are meeting outcomes in those courses. Once again this year I am very pleased to report that our student results continue to be strong with impressive mark differentials. The Math 10 average for 2015-2016 was 73.7%. Congratulations to our students and teachers for continuing the high academic performance we possess at Horton High School.

Teaching staff meet in Collaborative Learning Teams on early dismissals to analyze data so teachers can make informed decisions on how to proceed in the future. The Math CLT has worked very hard in developing a goal that will increase student achievement in Mathematics. The goal they chose is "By June 2015 the percentage of students attempting the level three questions of the AVRSB Math Assessments will increase." As a result of the work around this goal we see increases in student achievement results.

School and Community

During the 2015 - 2016 school year, there were approximately 870 students registered in Grades 9-12. There were 49 teachers, 11 Educational Assistants, 3.5 secretaries, 2 daytime custodians 1 building

manager, 2 maintenance staff, 2.5 Vice- Principals and 1 Principal. We are very proud of our 192 Grade 12 graduating students who had an excellent year; we wish them all the best in their future.

Horton students have many programs and courses to choose from. Student learning needs are a priority for us and thus we offer Options and Opportunities, Career Access, Academic Courses, Advanced Courses, Open Courses, International Baccalaureate, Learning Center, BIRT, French Immersion, Business Technology and Fine Arts.

I am very pleased to say that we have continued a great partnership with Acadia University. We offer each other our state of the art facilities in times of need, Acadia sponsors sporting events and teams, and we accept many student teachers from them.



Race Relations, Cross Cultural Awareness and Human Rights (RCH) Initiatives

Horton High School is a diverse environment; we house students of many ethnicities, backgrounds and religions. Personal choices of sexual orientation are respected by all. We demonstrate that we are accepting of differences and everyone is welcome, which creates the positive school culture and learning environment we are well-known for. One of the most important aspects of a positive climate is social justice; it is our philosophy and students and staff work hard to maintain this ideal, we work well together to foster respect for each other.

We continue to build on our RCH initiatives. We invite speakers to come and present to our students and staff; they bring a solid message for students to think about and act upon. We create committees so that students can become involved in RCH related events and we organize clubs so students can explore their personal interests in social justice. The AVRSB provides us with a Student Support Worker and Native Student Advisor to support our students; this has proved to be a great program for our students of African and/or Aboriginal descent. Below is a detailed list of some of our RCH initiatives.

Phillip Riteman talked to students about Human Rights.
El Jones spoke to students about racism.
We had Respect For Diversity Day.
Horton Environment Club
Student Support Worker and Native Student Advisor classroom presentations.
Mental Wellness Week, End the Stigma.
We showed school-wide videos on Homophobia and recognize "Day of Silence"

We celebrated Mi'Kmaq History Month and African Heritage Month.

We have Mi'Kmaq Day at Horton, we invite Glooscap First Nation representatives

We have a student led Gay Straight Alliance Student led policy on Transgender Education

We had numerous fundraisers for the less fortunate in other countries.

Best Friends For Lunch group
Project Unify

We participated in the Horton Holiday Hurrah to collect food for the Food Bank.

We offer African Canadian Studies 11.

We offer English 12 African Heritage.

Mi'Kmaq Studies 10.

We hosted another African Youth Talent Night.

We hosted a presentation on humanitarianism through the Red Cross.

We had Ret' General Romeo Dallaire present on Weapons of War.

Terry Kelly presented on "We Can Do Anything"

The O2 classes were active members of the Habitat For Humanity initiative.

Our Principal is an active member of the AVRSB/Glooscap First Nations Education Committee initiative.

Staff participated in a Cultural Proficiency In-service.

Within the Continuous School Improvement initiative our staff identified one RCH Priority for the next few years; staff would like to learn more about the First Nation Culture.

Safe and Caring Environment

With the technological age becoming more complex and more difficult for teens to deal with this year we decided to organize assemblies on Internet safety, our liaison officer presented to our grade 9 students in the PC, she also visited classrooms for a discussion on the dangers of Internet 'creeps'.

In order to have and maintain a safe and caring environment students and staff must work together in conjunction with parents and community members to maintain the already positive school culture Horton possesses. Bullying and harassment cases

are dealt with through student discipline, but positive messages are delivered to students through posters around the school, through student leadership and assemblies. Students remind each other of our social justice philosophy and teach each other to be respectful to everyone.

2015-2016 saw the implementation of our Chromebook initiative, the biggest 1:1 program in the Maritimes. Back in September we held a workshop for students on being Responsible Digital Citizens. We distributed the Chromebooks in October and started the Google Classroom phase. Teachers created classrooms for their students, this was beneficial in many ways, students were engaged in the curriculum and were able to complete work while they were out of school. It was a successful transition from all accounts. We did get some negative feedback about screen time and a few parents commented that their child watched videos instead of doing school work, this initiative was not intended for 'play time', it was created to keep students in touch with their school work and provide a better educational experience. Some students require supervision and direction while others are independent and use the Chromebooks in the way they were intended.

Administrators and teachers use PEBS in their daily interactions with students, the PEBS matrix is in plain view for students to refer to on a daily basis, some teachers use rewards in their classrooms for positive behaviours and academic improvement. Administrators use a rewards system with students who can demonstrate improvement in behaviour and respect.

Right now we are working toward our status as a welcoming school for the International Student Program at the AVRSB. Each year we welcome approximately 30 International Students, they all enjoy spending a semester or year at Horton, many are sad to leave in June. These students add to our positive school culture, they get involved in activities and teams throughout the year, their presence adds to an already diverse population.

Student Involvement and Successes

Horton High is a technological school. We have smart boards in every classroom, a ratio of 1 to 1 in terms of Chromebooks, each teacher has an Ipad for instructional uses in the classroom, there are Ipads for student use in certain courses, and some teachers have class sets of laptops and note books for student use. Each year teachers submit technological ideas to our Technology Refresh Committee who make decisions on whether those requests are beneficial for students. Every teacher is required to have an extensive webpage so students can access information they may have missed or just need to review from the daily lesson. Teachers also maintain a Google Classroom, which is another way to communicate with students while they are away from school. Teachers maintain a grade book of assessments, students and parents can access their cumulative marks from a computer through the portals, which is a great communication tool for all stakeholders. Our students have access to their own wifi network; they can connect to it with any handheld device at any time of the day

Horton is a great school in terms of academic achievement; it is well known for its tremendous music, drama and art programs, our sports teams are the talk among other schools in terms of provincial tournaments. A high percentage of our students are involved in music, drama or art; many of the students are high achievers, together these things are what make Horton a great place to be and learn. There are so many extracurricular opportunities and clubs for students to participate in; students have a real advantage when they enrol at Horton.

Horton prides itself on having a positive school culture. Visitors, community members and parents comment on how welcoming the staff and students are, they talk about the positive feelings they get when they enter the building, this can only be possible if staff and students work together to create and maintain that type of atmosphere.

Student council is very active at Horton. It has a long tradition of student leadership and initiative, each year a new student council is chosen by the students and each year they do a great job making the school a welcoming place to be; they organize dances, winter carnival, variety shows and fun days. The students really benefit from the leadership skills of the council.

This year we had a committee of teachers, students and health professionals organize Horton Mental Wellness Week. This initiative focussed on increasing information on mental health resources and mental health literacy as well as decreasing stigma and discrimination. All students participated in workshops led by approximately ten community mental health stakeholders. Our student/staff committee conducted pre and post surveys to measure improvements in stigma and attitudes held towards persons with mental health disorders. It was a huge success. This year we added a t-shirt campaign to End The Stigma, all 868 students were given a green shirt to wear on two days during the week, it got lots of publicity in our community and even in Halifax, when a gentleman who suffers from mental illness approached one of our students wearing the t-shirt and commented on how great it was to know there were people out there raising awareness and trying to help the cause.

Best Friends For Lunch continued many successes again this year, and a new group emerged from BFFL with an Athletics focus, Project Unify, a basketball team that included students with disabilities and without disabilities, some of our D1 girls and boys basketball stars took our special needs children under their wing and taught them skills. Soon Special Olympics heard about Project Unify and inquired, before long we were on CBC news, in the local

newspapers and things soared from there. Athletes, parents and teachers were interviewed by Special Olympics representatives about what Project Unify meant to our school, and our community. Teams from Central Kings and Middleton High School came to Horton for exhibition games, expanding the program to two other schools, our hope is that it continues to grow next year. None of this could have been possible without two student leaders, grade 12 students, Jacob Gordon and Emily MacArthur. Their idea created a great feeling of inclusion in our school, it helped break down barriers and made our special needs students confident to try new things. It was very satisfying to see so many students and parents in the gymnasium watching as these students ran up and down the court. Parents were overwhelmed with what they were seeing, there wasn't a dry eye in the stands, students cheered loudly and proudly. Jacob and Emily were recipients of the Nova Scotia Lieutenant Governor's Respectful Citizenship Award for their work with Project Unify. Another Horton student won the same award for her work as an International Student Ambassador, Mollie Symons works very hard to make Horton International Students feel welcome, she is also involved in Me To We and Respect for Diversity. We are very proud of these student leaders, to read more about these prestigious awards, click the link, <http://antibullying.novascotia.ca/ns-lieutenant-governors-respectful-citizenship-award>

This year our Options and Opportunities students participated in a school to school exchange with students from LeRoy Saskatchewan, LeRoy is a tiny rural farming community with a community school of just over 200 students from P-12. This was an outstanding educational experience for all students and staff involved. Ms. Theresa Pelly, Ms. Krista Campbell, Mr. Don Beck and parent, Mr. Ken White chaperoned the trip. Our students were welcomed into the lives of the students from LeRoy, they were treated like royalty while there. This was a perfect example of creating positive, lasting relationships with people who live outside of our community, from the reports I received, there were many tears shed when our students and chaperoned departed from LeRoy, these students spend two weeks with each other, one week at Horton and one at LeRoy.

Parent Group (SAC, Parent -Teacher Association, Home & School Association)

The Horton parents are excellent contributors to our school culture. They are very supportive and are active in many ways. The Band Parent Association is a group of dedicated parents who take tremendous pride in the music program. Our sports parents are also a tremendous group; they work hard organizing and managing tournaments and team trips, they spend endless hours travelling with our athletes, bringing them to events and practices.

This year's safe grad parents held many meetings to get that event planned for the students, it was a huge success!

On any given night of the week one can walk through the doors at Horton and see parents in the gym, foyer, or music department; their dedication and involvement in the school is greatly appreciated.