

Sir John A. Macdonald High



[HTTP://SJA.EDNET.NS.CA](http://SJA.EDNET.NS.CA)

School and Community Context

Sir John A Macdonald High School has an enrollment of 1062 students for the 2012-2013 academic year. The school is located in Upper Tantallon and serves the community of Beechville, Lakeside, Timberlea, Upper Tantallon, Hubbards and the St. Margaret's Bay area. Our staff consists of 1 principal, 2 vice principals and 45 classroom teachers. Our student support consists of 2 guidance counsellors, 1.5 learning center teachers, 2.5 resource teachers, 5.8 educational program assistants (EPA's) a credit recovery program, 1 library support specialist and 2 secretaries. Sir John A Macdonald High School also welcomes 20 to 30 international students each year through the Nova Scotia International Students Program.

We continue to offer our students programs which meet their diverse needs. Students at Sir John A. are offered the full compliment of DOE

courses in both English and French Immersion. Students are also offered Advanced Placement courses at the Grade 12 level. Students who are interested in an education program designed with a combination of high school credits and hands on learning in class and in the workplace can do so through our Options and Opportunities (O2) Program or the Academic Co-Op Program.

We are recognized as a progressive twenty first century school. Students are able to connect their technology to our wireless network. Our teachers are creating lessons with the 21st Century in mind. These lessons are designed to reflect what is relevant in the lives of our students. We are and will continue to be a model for 21st Century pedagogy.



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Family and Community Involvement

SJA is very welcoming and comfortable learning place where parents and students feel welcomed and that they are regularly invited to participate at the school in many ways. Community and family members feel appreciated when they are involved in coaching and volunteering, and parents are encouraged to participate in the learning environment. SJA celebrates student success through academic and extracurricular awards events, a musical production, as well as many fine arts events.

Safe and Orderly Environment

Our school believes that all students can learn and we are committed to improve in areas of challenge. Sir John A Macdonald High School continues to be considered a safe and positive learning environment for our students, teachers and community members.

In a recent HRSB survey, parents and teachers report that they continue to feel safe and welcome at our school. Students are treated with

respect and in turn, treat staff members with respect, as well and feel, overall, that they have at least one adult with whom they can talk.

The majority of our school community feel that bullying and discrimination are not major issues at SJA, and, in fact, students overwhelmingly agree that very rarely are they treated differently due to their culture or race.

Provincial and Board Assessment Results

Advanced Placement (AP) Program	
Total enrollment in AP courses.....	87
% of students who wrote AP exams	98%
% of students who achieved a score of 3 or higher in AP exams.....	57%

There are no provincial or board assessment results to report for this year. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will be implementing new provincial examinations in mathematics and English courses at Grade 10 in the 2013-2014 school year. The 2013-2014 provincial examination results will serve as the new school and board baseline data moving forward.

Classroom Assessment

This year, the administration and staff fulfilled our plan to combine our school improvement plan with teacher's professional growth plan. We supported our 21st Century Literacy goal, all teachers employed their professional growth plans as the main venue for getting at the literacy goal. Because of this, all of our professional development at SJA (and most of our PLC time) focused on engaging 21st century learners in new and exciting ways. Teachers have been learning to incorporate technology into their programs in ways that are meaningful and appropriate. Since our goal focuses on three major pedagogies that support 21st century literacy, our professional development has focused on the workshop model of instruction, Project-based Learning and the Inquiry Model of instruction, as well as how to utilize current technologies such as SmartBoards, multi-function pocket technology and a host of software applications. Having done so, we have noticed some startling statistics that support the idea that our plan to engage 21st century learners in new and exciting ways is moving forward. Looking at the current HRSB Getting To Great Student Survey, and comparing the data from our school to that of the Board wide survey, when asked about technology and its use in classes, students replied overwhelmingly that they were being given opportunities to use the technologies that engage them. Most of the time, regarding the technology use questions, SJA students replied positively and about 10% higher than the HRSB average. Students also report that they are, indeed engaged in their subjects and it is in no small part due to the increased use of technology in the classrooms, accompanied by complimentary teaching methods. When polled, the staff of SJA overwhelmingly responded that we are moving together to accomplish our literacy goal.



Student Engagement

Students at SJA are motivated to do well in school, according to the recent HRSB student survey. Students feel they are being challenged by their classes but not overwhelmed, and are confident in their abilities to do well in those classes. Teachers are offering many opportunities for students to work independently and in groups, and, as part of our 21st Century literacy focus, are incorporating engaging and appropriate technologies and teaching methods to further engage students. Students are given multiple opportunities and a variety of engaging ways to meet not only the outcomes of their classes, but also the realities of a world increasingly focused on technology.

Time to Learn

Students and staff continue to share the expectation that students should be engaged in learning while in class. In order to accomplish this, we continued with a plan to limit announcements, and this year all announcements have been reviewed daily to cut back on repeating a message or reading it prematurely. We responded to students and teachers who find the pace of some semestered courses to be too fast by offering a combination of Semestered and Year-long courses. Though we believed that the slower pace would lead to an increase in achievement, the strain of taking several classes at a time negated any potential gain. Net year we will return to semestered classes only.

Professional Development

This year teachers at Sir John A. concluded common Professional Growth Plans that reflected the need to change our pedagogy to align with our Twenty First Century Literacy Goal. As a school we focused all of our Professional Development opportunities exploring creative ways to become twenty First Century Teachers. PLC time, staff meetings, PD days and PD Sub days for teachers were all aimed at improving teachers' pedagogy and technical abilities. We looked at incorporating a number of websites, softwares and social media, as well as various hardwares introduced to the school.

Our Getting To Great Survey shows SJA students working in groups, learning by doing and using digital tools to find, communicate, collaborate, create, publish, analyze and problem solve 10-15% higher than the Board average, a clear indication that our plan has been successful. Staff and administration are comfortable with the successes we have experienced due to PD focused on our school's goals.

Additional School Supports

Sir John A Macdonald High is fortunate to have a variety of personnel who work as additional supports to improve student achievement:

- Learning Centre teachers
- educational program assistants
- resource teachers
- teen health centre nurse
- guidance counsellors
- social worker and psychologist
- English second language (ESL) teachers
- library support specialist
- peer tutors
- RCMP liaison officer
- academic support room/ credit recovery teachers
- School Advisory Council
- student services consultant
- technology support services
- parent volunteers
- african N.S. student support worker
- parents as career coaches

Graduation Rates

School Year	Rate
2012-2013	82.8%
Destination after high school	Rate
Community College	18%
University	57%
Other education or training	4%
Join work force	12%
Unknown	10%

Continuous School Improvement

This year, staff continued to support fractions concepts and our new 21st Century Literacy Goal. We collected data about what teachers were doing to support the goals and data about how students were performing in relation to those goals. Overall, both Math teachers and content teachers have been supporting the goal when the course outcomes warrant. Math teachers continue to focus on fractions concepts and continue to support "Fundamental Fridays" where basic skills are reinforced in Math classes at the end of each week. Students appear to be responding well to the process in the advanced Math classes. Math teachers are analysing our Math Goal to see how we can change it to reflect the Twenty First Century Model of Teaching and Learning.

All teachers have focused on 21st Century pedagogy. In a recent teacher survey 98% of teachers said that they were embracing 21st Century technology and pedagogy. 95% said that they were allowing students to use their pocket technology for educational reasons in their classrooms.

We have focused a lot of energy creating activities that help students meet outcomes that reflect skills most valued in the 21st century. These skills include finding, validating, communicating, collaborating, analyzing, synthesizing, problem solving, leveraging and publishing their learning. The role of our teachers has moved from "givers of information" to "facilitators of learning". We show and help students create knowledge and understanding from the vast amounts of information available to them.

School Goals

Mathematics Goal

A new Mathematics goal will be developed by the Math team, in collaboration with content teachers, in the new school year. It will focus on student-centred pedagogies rich in technology.

Literacy Goal

To improve students' 21st Century Literacy Skills. Proficiency in these skills includes:

Collaboratively addressing problems through the appropriate use of technology, by finding, validating, synthesizing, contextualizing and leveraging relevant and appropriate information, and then communicating and publishing a solution and reflecting on that solution and the process of creating it.



Every Student Can Learn. Every School Will Improve.

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