

Annual Report  
June 2013  
**Kings County Academy**



## Principal's Message

KCA's second year in its new facility is just about under our belts and we have had many successes of which we can be very proud.

Some of the highlights this year include, a strengthening of the relationship and cooperation between the Town Of Kentville and the school, the reestablishment of a fully functioning School Advisory Council, the continuation of our excellent fine arts programs, the start of a community edible garden project, a successful campaign to fundraise for new score-clocks to be installed in our gym, and a very positive student exchange program with a community in Quebec.

The first step in our garden project included the planting of an apple tree in cooperation with the Town of Kentville and guests from Goosnargh Whittingham Whitsuntide Festival in the United Kingdom. We hope to see the expansion of this project in the 2013-14 school year.

The school is looking forward to the completion of field and playground upgrades on the north side of the facility that will provide a wonderful green-space and new playing field for our students to enjoy. Our play area is often one of the most exciting things new students and families look forward to using when they tour the school and we are extremely lucky to have access to these spaces. The hard work and collaboration of our PTA, the school, the community, and the Town of Kentville have made this outdoor space one of the most attractive play spaces I have seen at a school site.

I want to extend my sincerest gratitude to the entire school community for making my first year at KCA a highly engaging and rewarding experience. The staff has been highly supportive and helpful as I have transitioned back into the role of being a school principal. My Vice Principal, Mike Pinard, has been a great partner in helping to manage day to day activities and planning a vision for how we want to continue to make KCA a great school. Last, but not least, you the KCA community have been open and accepting as we have worked to create a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment for students. The school is a great place to work, as I knew it would be. Thank you and I look forward to our continued collaboration in the years to come.

Mike Ouellette, Principal

## Table of Contents

Principal's Message.....	p.1
Student Achievement .....	p. 2
School & Community .....	p. 2
Professional Learning for Staff.....	p. 3
RCH Initiatives .....	p. 3
Safe & Caring Environment.....	p. 4
Student Involvement & Successes ..	p. 5
Parent Group	
(SAC/PTA/HSA) .....	p. 6

## Student Achievement

Each year, our students in grades 3, 6, and 8 participate in provincial assessments meant to measure to what level the each has achieved in the areas of Literacy and Mathematics. The AVRSB and its 43 schools have aimed to improve in each of those areas. The starting point is for each school to determine a literacy and numeracy goal. This process is known as Continuous School Improvement (CSI). Based upon our data, as well as the data from classroom-based assessments, we will be developing 2 student achievement goals in the 2013-14 school year related to Mathematics and Literacy.

This year, our staff focused on developing additional school-based literacy assessment tools that allow us to compare results across our English and French Immersion programs as well as preparing for the implementation of a new mathematics curriculum in grades P-3 next year.

### Provincial and Regional Assessment Snapshot

Assessment	Percentage of KCA Students Meeting Expectations	Average Percentage for all of AVRSB
Grade 8 Math	43%	50%
Grade 6 Elementary Literacy	76%	80%
Grade 6 Elementary Mathematical Literacy	62%	63%
Grade 3 Early Language Literacy	Reading – 71% Writing – 55% (30% were close)	Reading – 73% Writing – 59% (32% were close)
Grade 3 Early Elementary Mathematical Literacy	75%	75%

## School and Community

During the 2012 - 2013 school year, there were approximately 611 students registered in Grades P-8 with 354 English program students and 257 French Immersion students. Our 62 grade primary students had a great start to the year and we are sending off 67 grade students to what we know will be a great start to their Northeast Kings Education Centre as the enter grade 9.

In terms of staff, there were 48 (full-time/part-time) classroom teachers and specialists, 10 Educational Assistants, 2 secretaries, a librarian, 4 custodians, 1 vice-principal, and 1 principal.

Our librarian, Shirley MacNab, is retiring this year and we want to wish her well. She made tremendous contributions to our school and the students we serve. She also had a long history of serving the wider school community in her role as the manager of the Kings County Teacher centre.

Our school provides a variety of supports to meet the growing needs of our students. These include both English and French Immersion programs, a Learning Centre and Behaviour Intervention as part of our Resource department, and a variety of opportunities that we believe are vital to student success such as music, fine art physical education, instrumental band, technology education, family studies, and exploratory activities.

We often use the term “family” when describing how we operate at

## Term 3 Literacy and Mathematics Report Card Snapshot

Curriculum Area	Percentage of Students Meeting Most/All of the Outcomes
<b>Grade 3</b>	
Data Management	83.33%
Geometry	84.85%
Measurement	85.19%
Number Sense	82.54%
Patterns and Relationships	89.33%
Reading and Viewing	93.33%
Speaking and Listening	86.67%
Writing and Representing	88.72%
<b>Grade 6</b>	
Data Management	87.18%
Geometry	82.05%
Measurement	95.92%
Number Sense	86.21%
Patterns and Relationships	94.12%
Reading and Viewing	94.12%
Speaking and Listening	78.43%
Writing and Representing	88.24%
<b>Grade 8</b>	
Data Management	96.88%
Geometry	84.13%
Measurement	96.43%
Number Sense	92.19%
Patterns and Relationships	88.89%
Reading and Viewing	93.75%
Speaking and Listening	93.75%
Writing and Representing	78.13%

## Professional Learning for Staff

KCA is involved in a process of Continuous School Improvement (CSI). 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.

During the 2012 school year, we focused on laying the foundations for our CSI goals. With a new mathematics curriculum just around the corner, we decided to await its implementation before specifying a goal and the strategies to support it.

## School & Community (cont'd)

KCA. Many volunteers are a vital part of our team approach. Two great examples are Myrna Harnum and Paige Mosher, who managed our breakfast program each and every day, helping students start their learning with a healthy meal. We have many groups, parents and others who regularly support our Breakfast Program through generous donations. On behalf of all of the students and staff, a huge "thanks" to all of the volunteers who supported this and many other school activities.

As has been mentioned, our school has always had a close relationship with the Town of Kentville. We have shared facilities, offered collaborative programs, and utilized expertise that each was able to offer to the other.

A community group, in memory of Colin MacAskill, helped to fundraise over \$10000 in less than two months to support the purchase and installation of score clocks in our gymnasium. This kind of support is a terrific example of how our community to come together to support the needs of the school.



## **Professional Learning (cont'd)**

We continued to work on previous school success goals related to basic operations and number sense and tested the usefulness of an online mathematics support tool known as IXL at the grade 3 level. In literacy, we decided to focus on matters of correctness in writing. Our French Immersion teachers worked on the development of an assessment tool that would serve their needs, but also allow us to make some student achievement comparisons across programs.

We also engaged in professional learning around school climate and behaviour, RCH inservices related to Race and Poverty, as well as bullying.

We continue to learn to use the new features of PowerSchool and TIENET, two electronic student record systems that are helping to make the storing and sharing of information much easier. Teachers at KCA have made technology a focus of their learning to help in taking advantage of the tools that came with the new school.

Many staff are taking advantage of outside learning opportunities as they pursue master's degrees or other certificates and diplomas to upgrade their knowledge and skills with current research and best practices related to curriculum, technology, assessment and evaluation, special education, counseling, and school leadership. We value the concept the learning is a life-long process and that serving the needs of our students means combining the best of what is tried and true with the most current research about what works in supporting student success.

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

Our school values diversity and works hard to be an inclusive and respectful learning environment. At the start of our CSI process early in the year, we identified that RCH initiatives needed to be a priority based on the results of climate surveys conducted in the spring of 2012. Those surveys indicated that the students and the community were unsure or unaware of the work the school had and was doing to support diverse learners and the school community as a whole.

We identified our own professional learning as a place to start and engaged in inservicing related to understanding issues of race and racism, as well as poverty. This provided staff with a chance to examine the history, causes, and challenges related to these issues and gave them a starting place to examine their own biases as well as those that might exist in curriculum and instructional practices.

## **Safe and Caring Environment**

At KCA, we pride ourselves on being a safe and respectful environment. The foundations for this lie in our PEBS program which emphasizes the teaching and promotion of positive behaviour to all students. Teachers are engaged in effective classroom management practices that create safe, productive classroom environments. As well, in cooperation with our BIRT teacher, board staff, and our core planning team we have developed and implemented targeted supports for students with serious behaviour needs.

Our school has been active in teaching students about bullying, particularly around issues related to the more negative impacts of social media and cyberbullying. Our middle level staff engaged students in lessons about online social responsibility and appropriate use of social media tools.

Having the services of a guidance counselor has also provided tremendous support to ensuring we have a safe and supportive environment for students. Through both individual sessions and small group work, we were able to help many students (and their families) deal with peer conflict, mental health issues, and behaviour challenges. This support will continue in the coming year.

## **RCH (cont'd)**

We also made student learning a priority. With support from our student support worker, Tracey Clements-McNish, students learned about the history of Africville and made strong connections between its history and that of our local African Nova Scotian and Acadian communities. Jude Gerrard, AVRSB's Mi'kmaq Services Specialist provided both historical and cultural learning experiences for students in our upper elementary and middle level classrooms. Concrete Roots visited the school, as did Young Neptune Theatre Company. Both provided rich cultural experiences for students and engaged them in a better understanding of issues related to bullying and racism.

## **Student Involvement and Successes**

KCA students are heavily involved in many academic, leadership, artistic, and athletic activities that demonstrate their commitment to success both in and out of the classroom.

Our KODIAK team provides leadership around extra-curricular activities and school climate, helping to organize events like our "Wear Pink Day" and our new RESPECT campaign. They play key roles in winter carnival, in welcoming guests to our school, and providing input to staff and school administration and how we can improve the school to make it an engaging place to learn.

We have a large number of student athletes involved in cross-country, running club, volleyball, basketball, badminton, soccer, and track and field.

We had a fantastic Robotics team that won events at both the regional and provincial level. We had success at Fais Aux Question and also had a student move on to the National Science Fair.

In the arts, we have very successful instrumental and jazz bands, as well as a grade 3-5 choir that is a family and community favorite at our concerts.

All in all, it was a very successful year for student co-curricular and extra-curricular involvement.

## **Safe and Caring Environment (cont'd)**

Having the services of a guidance counselor has also provided tremendous support to ensuring we have a safe and supportive environment for students. Through both individual sessions and small group work, we were able to help many students (and their families) deal with peer conflict, mental health issues, and behaviour challenges. This support will continue in the coming year.

Students were also active in providing leadership towards a positive school climate. Our KODIAK team plays a primary role in setting up and leading education campaigns around bullying and respect through events like our "Wear Pink Day". On our last week of school they helped to kick-off our 2013-14 school campaign related to promoting respect in our communities.

Promoting a positive school climate will continue to be a priority for our school and our staff as we engage in professional learning and implement new initiatives through our Continuous School Improvement process.

## **Parental Involvement - School Advisory Council**

This year, our SAC began the process of getting re-engaged in school activities. Its mandate is to provide input and support to the success of the school. We had the election of a full committee with representatives from staff, the community, and parents. Students from the KODIAK team will begin sitting on the council in 2013-14 to represent students at KCA. We examined issues related to staffing, classroom configurations, the ongoing geo-thermal well systems rehabilitation, and had a presentation from our guidance counselor on how our guidance program works and how we support students and families in our school in cooperation with outside agencies.

In the 2013-14 school year, we will be revising and finalising new Terms of Reference, updating a document that is nearly 15 years old. We will also be bringing in more guest speakers to provide information on topics that may be of interest to staff and families. We will also continue to provide feedback to the school success planning process as the school works to promote a positive school climate and enhance student achievement.

Please free to attend our meetings. They are open to the public and are held every third Tuesday at 7 PM, following our PTA meetings.

## **Parental Involvement – Parent Teacher Association**

KCA's PTA has been heavily engaged in a number of significant fundraising activities this year. The final touches were put on the playground facility with the installment of the basketball court and the completion of the brick walkway. This was a very significant undertaking and could not have been completed with the full cooperation of the community, the school, and the Town of Kentville.

We had a successful Ford Drive One for Your School event in cooperation with Valley Ford, along with a number of smaller fundraising events. Spring Fling was another terrific success. Our main focus now that the playground is completed is to look at the installation of a new sign at the front of the school to support effective communication with families and the community. As well, we are also helping to support the purchase and installation of the new score clocks in the gym in cooperation with a community fundraising effort. The community garden will also become a major undertaking and we will continue to be involved as it gets underway in the fall.

Please come out and join us at our meetings held every third Tuesday at 6 PM, just prior to our SAC meetings. We are an important link between the school and families and we would welcome new volunteers and new voices as we look to support the school and its children in the coming months and years.