

James M. Hill Memorial High School



Positive Learning Environment Plan 2014-2015

Mission Statement

James M. Hill Memorial High School will pursue EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING through an inclusive offering of academic, technological and extra-curricular endeavors

Goals

1. Create spaces to encourage and foster positive social interaction.
2. Reduce the number of suspensions.
3. Develop a system for academic and behavioral tracking.
4. To create a school to work transition strategy.
5. To enhance the physical education programming with the addition of metabolic conditioning for all students.
6. To create student leadership groups within the school to consult on matters of concern.

Standard Statement

1. The positive Learning Environment Policy assures support in creating and maintaining positive learning and working conditions. The Education Act clearly states that "It is the duty of the pupil to contribute to a safe and positive learning environment... and comply with all school policies. "As well, it is the duty of the teachers to identify and implement learning and evaluation strategies that foster a positive learning environment aimed at helping each pupil achieve prescribed learning outcomes."
2. The Education Act states "it is the duty of the pupil to be responsible for his or her conduct at school and while on the way to and from school... respect the rights of others. "Likewise, teachers must be "exemplifying and encouraging in each pupil the values of truth, justice, compassion and respect for all persons."
3. The Education Act states, "The parent of a pupil has the right to reasonable consultation with the pupil's teacher or the principal of the school the pupil attends with respect to the education of the pupil."

Positive Learning Environment Plan **James M Hill Memorial High School**

1. Positive Spaces

James M. Hill has much space that is underutilized. We are in the process of developing safe spaces and spaces that promote positive social interaction between our students. There are several facets to this aspect of the JMH PLEP plan – in various states of completion. One thing remains constant throughout these efforts; the need for places that marginal students can call their own. Several of these initiatives have already borne fruit in that some of students who have issues with belonging have already taken to some of these spaces even though they are not yet complete.

Learning Commons: The learning commons refers to a suite of connected spaces including the library and adjacent common areas. The library portion of the Learning Commons has been completed, for the most part). Attention still needs to be paid to the maintenance of the wireless network that exists within this space as it is frequently non-functional. The wireless environment is arguably one of the more important aspects of the Learning Commons. We continue to work with IS to resolve this issue.

Breakfast Café: JMH has partnered with Sobeys to provide a breakfast program for students. Breakfast program grants, donations from Alumni and community members as well as contributions from staff members and student council provide a continental breakfast to all students who wish to avail themselves of the program between 8:00am and 8:25am each day. The café is a 24 seat, self-serve environment which has been established with help from the District Office maintenance department and our own industrial technology department. Since it's relocation to the café setting, the breakfast program has increased from 10-12 students per day to over 70 students each morning.

Breakfast Bistro: Located outside the doors of the Sobeys Breakfast Café is the new Breakfast Bistro. Because of the high traffic in the breakfast café, there is the need for additional seating. This is being addressed again with the help of Sobeys who provided us with seating for another 20 students at café style tables. Plans are in the works to make this space even more attractive for positive social interactions. Overhead shade sails have already been installed and, over Christmas, the wall will be fitted with a graphic depicting a turn of the century downtown street. There will be artificial foliage, street lamps and a fence around the bistro to give it an outdoor feel.

Student Lounge: The student lounge is as it has been since the school opened in 1973. It is an example of another space that could be utilized better as a place for students to interact socially or even to work independently or in groups. The plan for this area is to re surface the seats in a forest green colour and to close off the top with a railing and

more foliage and street lamps. The area in the middle facing the courtyard will be fitted with additional seating.

*It should be noted that most of the items are moveable so that special occasions may still make use of the space for other purposes.

2. Behavior and Academic Tracking

One of the difficulties in dealing with discipline and academic issues in a high school is that many teachers work with the same students. Often it is very difficult to know what problems exist for students from one class to another. Likewise it is difficult to know if they struggle in all classes or only a few. Teachers may not know what strategies have been tried by others and if/how the administration has been involved. Finally, when making decisions regarding referrals to the office, ESST, Guidance or Resource, it is often difficult to know what interventions have already been tried to date.

A database will be developed wherein teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, and EST-Rs can indicate what interventions from the pyramid of interventions have been attempted, by whom, in response to what and the net impact the interventions have had on student behavior or performance.

The database will be created in conjunction with staff through an exercise of screening the pyramid of interventions and streamlining the options to the most common and effective.

A series of referral forms will also be created to enable all involved the ability to refer students to ESST, admin, guidance or resource.

Staff will keep track of behavioral and academic interventions. When referrals are made, the appropriate group will consult the database for information germane to deciding on a course of action.

3. School to Work Transition

Generally speaking, schools do a fairly good job of managing the transition to post-secondary education. Guidance counselors spend an inordinate amount of time making sure deadlines are met etc.

Students who are headed directly to the workplace are not as easily categorized and therefore have access to less preparation and guidance.

In order to better prepare for the realities of the workforce JMH will enter into a partnership with Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour (PETL) to create and staff an employment transition center accessible to all students, but particularly those whose career path may not include college or university. The services this center will provide will include:

- Exposure to career opportunities within the City of Miramichi and throughout the province of NB. A major focus being – keeping our students in the province and encouraging student that there are opportunities for them to have successful careers here.
- Creating partnerships with various organizations and businesses, thus allowing for experienced professionals to come into our school to present job market information and facilitate mock interviews. This will allow students to have firsthand experience with best practices on how to interview successfully, as well as, having their resumes critiqued.
- A job board will be created in the workroom to provide opportunities to students who are in search of part-time employment. This will also be expanded to social media.
- The mentor will be in consultation with local businesses on a regular basis to keep this current.
- A career expo will be held in the Spring of 2015 showcasing various professions.
- Career services will be available to all students from a trained career counselor from PETL (3 hours/week)
- The career transition mentor will assist students in the creation of resumes and cover letters, as well as, successfully search for jobs electronically and apply via the web.
- Students will use career cruising and other interest inventories to help choose a career path that suits them based on their skills and likes/dislikes.
- The mentor will partner with classroom teachers on the world of work.
- The mentor will be in consultation with the NBTAP association helping to coordinate and facilitate apprenticeships. Students will be provided with information on how to become involved with NBTAP and the benefits therein. Other apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities will also be investigated.
- The mentor will maintain contact with in school guidance personnel for referrals, transition planning, etc.

4. Inclusion

One of the problems at school is including all students in different activities throughout the year. Some students have difficulties getting involved while other students need an increase in peer interaction.

- Part of the NBACL (New Brunswick Association of Community Living) is a program called “best buddies”. This program is being used at many schools in the province including FHS, MVHS and BHS. With the program, many students who do not get much peer interaction throughout the year are buddied up with volunteer students to take part in different activities including arts and crafts, walks, games, dance parties, open gyms, community involvement, etc.
- This program can take place once a week, every three days, or whatever works for everyone involved.
- The student volunteers would use this program for volunteer hours for leadership, their resume, and most importantly contribute to school spirit and overall acceptance and inclusion of all students.

5. Making ESST Meetings/Teams More Efficient

Some of the difficulties with the ESST structure have to do with the procedures and framework of the team, a lack of collaboration with all staff members and knowing how to use the date and monitor the outcome of the interventions. Meeting times, although consistent, do not have an agenda of items to be covered is not always readily available. Many staff members are unaware of the role that the Education Support Services Team play in inclusive education and the data collected is not always universally shared.

The ESST team will establish a framework that supports teachers and students in the new inclusionary model. The team will set norms for team meetings; establish smaller teams including an administrator, resource teacher and guidance to deal with a targeted group of students. This will allow for the larger EST team to meet on larger, systemic issues.

Collaboration will improve with teachers and the ESST by sharing ideas and strategies by presenting at staff meetings, having smaller grade meetings, and increasing the number of members that presently sit on the team to include Vice Principals, teachers, SPR's, guidance, etc.

A protocol will be developed wherein teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, and EST-Rs can share, explain and monitor Data in order for the system to be more effective and to meet the needs of our school.

6. Authentic Learning

One of the roles of a school is to better prepare students to be contributing citizens and productive members of the community. We need to help students make the link between the classroom and the world outside school. Traditional methods of teaching and learning do not always give students the skills to transition, and relevant connections between their life as students and their lives outside the school environment (both during their school years and post-graduation). In order to afford our students with more authentic learning experiences, we will provide opportunities for our students to contribute to their community, while learning new skills or applying acquired skills:

- **Culinary Catering:** There is a growing demand within the district for catering. We are expanding our services to create a new restaurant space where students can obtain food-service industry experience. Industrial Arts students will be tasked with creating the space.
- **Music Practice Rooms:** Student from the Industrial classes planned and constructed acoustical sound panels and cork flooring to create a much safer, sound-conscious and practice-friendly environment.
- **Public Performances:** From the Coffee House to the Concert Hall and Variety Shows, as well as performing for Miramichi's senior community, our students get to share the joy of music.
- **New recording space** in the Music Dept: Students will compose and record and publish original compositions.
- **Employment Training:** JMH has partnered with numerous businesses throughout the city in a great Co-op program. Students encounter a job interview, and lots of real life experience by working 175 hours. It often translates into employment down the road.
- **Skilled Trades:** Many of our students are taking experiences to the workplace and vice-versa, as they come back and share experiences with the class. Students in the automotive shop change tires, do oil changes and other general maintenance procedures that they might use either in employment or for personal use. Industrial classes take orders from the community, basically acting as contractors (budgeting, planning and construction) and they often are able to reuse and recycle items that might otherwise find their way into the landfill.

- **Cross Curricular Connections:** Industrial courses provide students with an opportunity to see the connections between other courses (eg: Math, Science) and the “real world”. They often answer the question of “why do I need to know this?”
- **Community Connections:** Explore the possibility of creating a museum within JMH in partnership with Local Historians, to create ways to live and share our history.
- **Citizenship:** Through activities such as Trick-or-Eat, Mr. JMH, Walk for Water, and Skype sessions, Interact/World Issues students link themselves to the world and provide awareness and support on a global level.
- **Wellness:** In a province where physical activity has become a focus, our physical education program is able to offer authentic learning experiences. With the assistance of a alumni, the new metabolic conditioning lab encourages students to exercise in way that mimic the movements of daily life. Outdoor Pursuits classes encourage students to enjoy the natural beauty of our province.

7. Maker Space

ASDN has partnered with Brilliant Labs to create a Maker Space at James M. Hill. The point of the Maker Space is to provide students with a means to extend learning through:

- **intense, meaningful, problem solving, and creativity**
- **developing social responsibilities deeper penetrative learning, collaboration and innovation**

The Maker Space makes this possible by providing a huge array of tools and technology to students and teachers to design and produce through tinkering. The Maker Space is an exceptional opportunity for exploring the highest orders of Bloom’s Taxonomy.

J M Hill will investigate the incorporation of the Maker Space into the curriculum. Teachers will be given the opportunity to collaborate and work together to find projects or tasks that cross curricular boundaries, using the Maker Space, that harness the energy creativity and technical process of our students.