

Dental Program Update

John Brant Public School

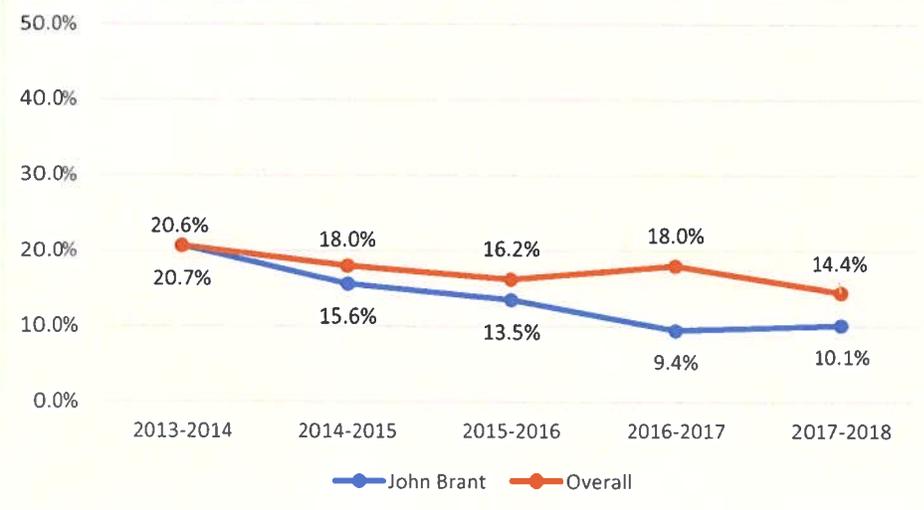
(Previously Crystal Beach Public School)

Dental cavities are the most common chronic disease of children aged 5 to 18 years old. Though children will eventually lose their baby teeth, they play an important role in a child's development. Primary teeth give shape to a child's face and help guide emerging permanent teeth into their correct position. Untreated tooth decay is progressive and the resulting pain can interfere with a child's eating, speech and concentration, impacting their long-term health, educational achievements, self-esteem and overall success.

In Niagara, Public Health registered dental hygienists and certified dental assistants visit every elementary school each year to provide dental screening in JK, SK, grades 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8. Approximately 24,000 students are screened each year. Based on these screening rates, in 2013 Public Health identified that dental cavities rates were still unacceptably high amongst elementary-aged students, despite access to various publicly available preventive and treatment services. The data also showed that dental cavities were increasing with younger grades (not just grade 2), and that focusing just on screening was not making a large impact. Furthermore, risk of dental cavities was higher in some schools, based on where students live and other sociodemographic considerations.

To help support dental health, 12 schools across Niagara region were identified to receive universal screening (all students) and enhanced preventive services (such as fluoride, sealants and scaling), via the services of the mobile dental clinic. Over five years, dental cavities and other dental health indicators were monitored to assess the impact of the services offered. The program commenced September 2013, and concluded in June 2018. Your school was chosen to be part of this program. The following graphs display the impact of the program in your school, as compared to the average of all 12 schools that were part of the program.

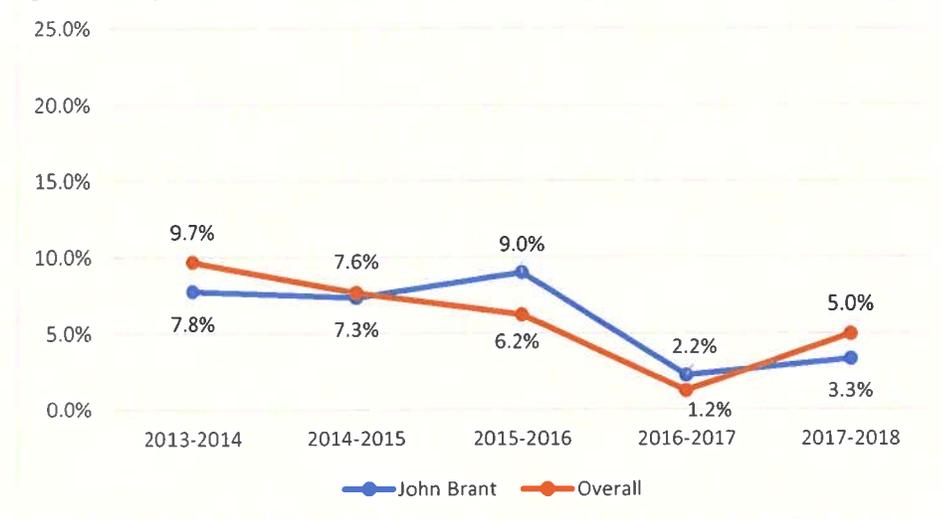
Figure 1: Proportion of children with active decay (2013/14 to 2017/18)



In 2013/14, active decay rates were over 20%. However, active decay rates did decrease substantially by the end of the 2017/18 school year.

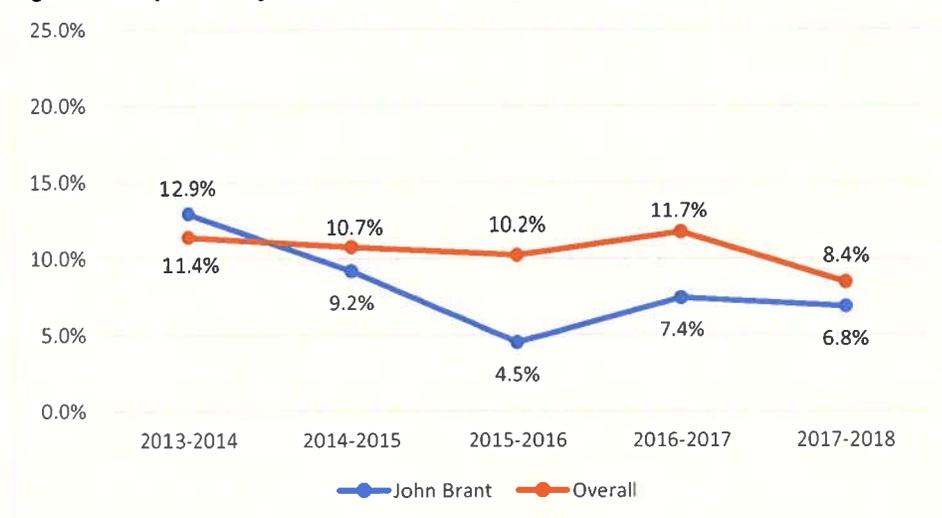
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Figure 2: Proportion of children needing critical urgent care (2013/14 to 2017/18)



Children with urgent conditions (CUCs) indicates the severity of dental health issues. These students may present with large cavities, pain, infection and trauma that require immediate clinical treatment.

Figure 3: Proportion of children with non-urgent decay (2013/14 to 2017/18)



Children with non-urgent decay (NUs) do not require immediate dental care. These students may present with small dental cavities and/or broken fillings. High rates of NUs can reduce reduced urgent conditions with preventive measures.

Some schools may still have the mobile dental clinic coming to the school. However, if this is not the case for your school, there are still many opportunities to continue building on the great progress your school has made regarding students' oral health concerns. A few avenues to explore include:

- Public Health programs and services (Healthy Smiles Ontario, preventive clinics, etc.)
- Role modeling from teachers and peers (involving parent councils, etc.)
- Environmental and/or policy (access to water fountains, less access to sugar-sweetened drinks etc.)

For more information on how Public Health can support your school please contact your school nurse or Tara Wincott, Health Promoter at 905-688-8248 Ext. 7471 or email at tara.wincott@niagararegion.ca.