

# Mount Edward Elementary



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## School and Community Context

Mount Edward Elementary School, built in 1962, is a community based school where all families live within walking distance. It is a member of the Prince Andrew family of schools and is located in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. Our school serves close to 200 students in grades primary to six. Over the last several years, Mount Edward School has been experiencing a trend of declining enrollment. Our school employs 27 staff members including teachers, administration, specialist teachers, resource and learning center teachers, as well as many other support staff. Approximately one-fourth of our student population is racially visible, with a small number of students having English as a second language. Students in our school have opportunities to be engaged in various activities and programs. Violin is offered to students in grades 4 through 6 and students in Grade 6

have the opportunity to participate in instrumental music. Intramurals are offered throughout the year to include all grade levels. Through the Active Healthy Living Grant, students have been able to explore various physical activities outside of the school and benefit from additional physical activity equipment and experiences within our own school setting. Students have a number of occasions to showcase their learning at different events including seasonal concerts, Authors' Night, student showcases, Heritage Fair, celebrations of diverse cultures and school assemblies. School-wide events focus on curriculum, learning and student achievement and encourage and invite involvement of parents, guardians and other members of the school community. Mount Edward School prides itself on its positive and welcoming environment.



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## Family and Community Involvement

For the past three years, 97% of parents/guardians surveyed report feeling welcome at our school. Parents, guardians and community members of our school have a variety of opportunities to attend and participate in school events. Parent-teacher conferences and most school events have been well-attended. Our School Advisory Council, comprised of a diverse group of parents, staff and community members, has had opportunity to provide feedback on a number of school issues.

## Safe and Orderly Environment

Board survey results have consistently indicated over time that Mount Edward School is a safe place to learn and work. We believe this is due to our proactive approach in promoting a safe learning and working environment. Our school actively promotes positive behaviors through modeling of respect and distribution of "Gotchas". Through regular reviews of our Code of Conduct and the behavior matrix students are made

aware of expectations and are recognized for being positive citizens of the school community. Our Bully SMART student leadership team has been instrumental in providing ongoing education in bullying awareness and prevention strategies to their peers. Our school is actively involved in following Positive Effective Behavioural Supports (PEBS) to encourage positive behaviours of students.

## Provincial and Board Assessment Results

Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) students participated in provincial and board-wide assessments. The information gained through these assessments will help us determine our next steps in improving student achievement in literacy and mathematics. Please note that the percentages used throughout this report are rounded to the nearest whole number.

\* French Immersion students completed the assessment in French.

Literacy Assessments	School Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations	Board Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations
Grade 2 HRSB Literacy Reading	English Program Accuracy: 74% English Program Fluency: 79%	English Program Accuracy: 74% English Program Fluency: 67%
Grade 3 DOE Literacy	Reading: 96% Writing (Information) : 87% Writing (Narrative) : 100%	Reading: 80% Writing (Information) : 80% Writing (Narrative) : 87%
Grade 5 HRSB Literacy	English Program Reading: 94%	English Program Reading: 82%
Grade 6 DOE Literacy	Reading: 95% Writing: 100%	Reading: 88% Writing: 94%
Mathematics Assessments	School Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations	Board Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations
*Grade 2 HRSB Mathematics	100%	95%
*Grade 3 DOE Mathematics (June 2008)	73%	71%
*Grade 5 HRSB Mathematics	91%	84%

Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) and Department of Education (DOE) assessments over the past few years indicate that our students are performing well in literacy, with improved student achievement in writing. However, there remains room for improvement in the areas relating to reading and writing of non-fiction. HRSB and DOE assessments in math have consistently shown over time that our students experience the most difficulties in the areas of patterning, operational sense and estimation. The number of students meeting key outcomes in the area of operations has not shown improvement in recent years and therefore, will be the focus of our Planning for Improvement goal in mathematics as we move forward in the upcoming years.

## Classroom Assessment

Staff at our school work collaboratively to ensure consistency between and within grade levels on how we assess student learning. We have been continually engaged in school-based data collection over the last number of years. In language arts, when measuring ideas, organization, and matters of correctness in fiction and non-fiction writing, our data has shown a marked improvement in all grade levels over time. In math, our assessment focus has evolved over time. In the 2006/2007 school year our data reflected how well students communicate their understanding and knowledge of math concepts through written language only. In the 2007/2008 school year our assessment data reflected how well students communicate their understanding and knowledge of math concepts through pictures, concrete models, language, real-world situations and written symbols. Our school-wide data has shown some improvement in these areas. Through the analysis of both classroom and external assessment data, we have been able to further refine our focus in math and have developed a more specific goal in the area of operational concepts. We will track student growth in this area, which will inform us on how best to support student achievement in math.



## Student Engagement

Our students enjoy coming to school. Most students feel challenged and successful. Students have a broad range of opportunities to express their feelings, skills, ideas and perceptions and learn from others. Students feel that teachers listen to what they have to say and their achievement is celebrated in a variety of ways. This past year all students participated in a heritage fair, authors night, holiday concert, world math day and a number of special activities to promote active healthy living that took place both on and off site. Special performances in the arts further enhanced student engagement in learning outcomes.

## Time to Learn

All schools in the Halifax Regional School Board follow the Time to Learn requirements set by the Department of Education. This means that each core subject has a prescribed number of minutes. At Mount Edward Elementary School teachers' schedules reflect the guidelines set forth by the Department of Education. We have a plan in place to minimize interruptions to student learning. Most announcements occur during organizational times and rarely interfere with instructional and learning time.

## Professional Development

At Mount Edward Elementary School, teachers are actively involved in professional development on an on-going basis in all curriculum areas. Our focus has been on math and literacy as they relate to our school goals. Staff have been engaged in professional learning at staff meetings and school-based professional development days. Much of our focus has been on effective differentiation of instruction so that all students can be successful. We also work collaboratively with our math and literacy coaches for on-going support at our school site. Professional learning communities at our school are comprised of small teams of teachers who work collaboratively and inter-dependently to achieve common goals. Our teachers are engaged in open and ongoing dialogue about best practices in instruction and assessment with a focus on our school-wide goals in literacy and math.

## Additional School Supports

At Mount Edward Elementary School we have a number of additional school supports to improve student achievement:

- English as a second Language Teacher
- speech language Pathologist
- school psychologist
- Learning Centre teacher
- resource teacher
- educational program Assistants (EPAs)
- lunch monitors
- EXCEL before and after School Program
- math coach
- literacy coach
- Reading Recovery teacher
- library support specialist



# Planning for Improvement

The mission of Mount Edward School, as a caring and supportive community, is to ensure that all students are motivated to reach their individual potential academically, emotionally, socially and physically in a safe environment through the combined efforts of teachers, students, parents and the greater community. We believe that all students can be successful. Our students are performing well in many areas of the curriculum and there is much to celebrate with regard to student learning. But we must also strive to continually improve. Through the Halifax Regional School Board's Planning for Improvement process, over the past school year we looked at many aspects of our school to determine how well we are doing. We reviewed various sources of data, including results of student as-

essments and responses to the HRSB survey completed by parents/guardians, teachers and students. Through this process we were able to identify areas of strengths and challenges and determine a clear focus for our school goals. We will continue to focus on writing but have refined our goal to focus specifically on non-fiction writing. This will also help improve students' ability to effectively read informational texts, an essential skill in today's world where various forms of information abound. In mathematics we will focus on understanding the operational concepts of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. A strong understanding of operations will enable students to be successful with other math concepts where they need to apply this knowledge.

## School Goals

### Literacy Goal

Students will demonstrate improved achievement in literacy with a focus on non-fiction writing.

#### Strategies:

- Teachers will engage in professional development with our literacy coach to effectively implement the readers/writers workshop model in daily classroom instruction to meet the needs of all students.
- Teachers will work in groups of similar grade level to establish common expectations for non-fiction writing and its assessment.
- Teachers will develop and implement revised school-wide rubrics to assess student non-fiction writing.
- Teachers will deliver explicit instruction in various types of non-fiction writing according to an overall plan that will include personal writing, writing for a specific purpose and research writing.
- Teachers will use a wide variety of non-fiction texts as models for non-fiction writing in various

subject areas

- Teachers will use examples of specific non-fiction writing tasks so expectations for students are very clear.

### Math Goal

Students will demonstrate improved achievement in math in the area of number operations.

#### Strategies:

- Teachers will engage in professional development with our math coach to learn how to provide effective differentiated instruction to ensure that all students develop a good understanding of operational concepts.
- Teachers will implement daily mental math estimation strategies for operations including explicit teaching, modeled, shared, guided and independent practice and sharing.
- Teachers will work in groups of similar grade levels to develop common criteria and expectations for assessing student operation

sense.

- Teachers will develop and implement revised school-wide rubrics to assess student performance in number operations.
- Teachers will deliver explicit instruction in the use of a variety of concrete manipulatives/materials for number operations and develop strategies for establishing student understanding of the connection between the concrete materials and pencil/paper computations.
- Teachers will provide ample time and opportunity for students to express their understanding of number concepts using pictures, written symbols, concrete models, language and real-world situations.
- Teachers will effectively implement a math workshop model to facilitate student learning of number concepts for all students.



**Every Student Can Learn. Every School Will Improve.**

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