

# Mount Edward Elementary



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## School and Community Context

Mount Edward Elementary School, built in 1962, is a community-based school where most 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 more than 180 students in Grades Primary to 6. Over the last several years, Mount Edward School has been experiencing a trend of declining enrollment. Our school staff includes teachers, administration, specialist teachers, resource and Learning Center teachers, as well as many other support staff. Students in our school have opportunities to be engaged in various activities and programs. Cello was offered for the first time this past year to Grade 4 students and students in Grade 6 have the opportunity to participate in instrumental music. Intramurals are offered to all grade levels. With the support of the Board's health

promotion team we were able to continue with the Playground Activity Leaders program. Trained students in Grades 5 and 6 lead play activities for students in Grades 1 through 3. 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 five years, over 90% 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

Current Board survey results show 100% of teachers and over 99% of parents/guardians feel that Mt. Edward School is a safe place to learn and work. Over 95% of students feel that their teacher really cares about them. We believe this is due to our proactive approach in promoting a safe learning and working environment. Our school is actively involved in following Positive Effective Behavioural Supports (PEBS) to

encourage appropriate behaviours. Positive behaviors are promoted through modelling of respect and problem solving, as well as distribution of "Gotchas". Through regular reviews of our code of conduct students are made aware of expectations and are recognized for being positive citizens of the school community. The school's behaviour matrix communicates very clear and concise expectations.

## Provincial and Board Assessment Results

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 results below indicate the percentage of students who met expectations on the assessments. Also note that all percentages used throughout this report are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Literacy Assessments	School (%)		Board (%)
	Baseline	2010-11	2010-11
<b>Grade 2 Board</b>			
English Reading Accurately	74%	93%	71%
English Reading Fluently	79%	80%	62%
<b>Grade 3 Provincial</b>			
Reading	96%	92%	80%
Writing (Information/Non-fiction)	87%	96%	84%
Writing (Narrative/Fiction)	91%	96%	75%
<b>Grade 5 Board</b>			
Reading	94%	88%	85%
Writing-Ideas	58%	54%	63%
Writing-Organization/Correctness	58%	67%	58%
<b>Grade 6 Provincial</b>			
Reading	95%	79%	86%
Writing	100%	95%	90%
Math Assessments	School (%)		Board (%)
	Baseline	2010-11	2010-11
<b>Grade 2 Board</b>			
Mathematics Concepts	100%	100%	97%
<b>Grade 3 Provincial</b>			
Mathematics Concepts	73%	93%	73%
<b>Grade 5 Board</b>			
Communicating Math Thinking	21%	58%	58%
Mathematics Concepts	91%	84%	85%
Problem Solving	29%	46%	59%
<b>Grade 6 Provincial</b>			
Mathematics Concepts	71%	50%	62%

Board and Provincial assessments continue to indicate that our students are performing well in reading and writing. Data reflects marked improvement in non-fiction writing, the focus of our literacy goal. Assessments in math have consistently shown over time that our students experience the most difficulties in the areas of operational sense, estimation, problem solving and communicating their understanding in math. Significant gains are noted in the area of problem solving and communication.

## Classroom Assessment

Staff at our school work collaboratively to ensure consistency between and within grade levels on how we assess student learning. Teachers meet to discuss and assess student work together and are regularly engaged in collecting school-based data to inform our practice and progress. 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. School-wide assessments in non-fiction writing this past year have indicated continued progress in this area. There has been an overall increase of 4% of students scoring a 3 or 4 on the 4-point rubric used for assessment of this area. Results compare progress at the end of Term 2 this year with results at the same time last year. We will continue to collect a wide range of data next year to inform our progress and inform our next strategic steps.

Through the analysis of both classroom and external assessment data over the last few years our focus in math was developed into a more specific goal in the area of operational concepts. This past year teachers have been continuing to use teacher-developed common assessments to track progress in this area and have been collaborating to establish greater consistency in expectations in number operations across the grade levels. These assessments provide us with information as to how to best support student achievement in this area of mathematics and respond accordingly. We are beginning to see some positive gains in the area of number operations. Our school-wide assessments show an overall increase of 3% of students scoring a 3 or 4 on the rubric that measures progress in this area, with the most significant gains occurring in grades Primary to 4. When comparing the progress of cohorts of students, students in Grade 1 to 4 show a substantial improvement, with an average increase of 26% of students scoring a 3 or 4 on the 4-point rubric. We will continue to track progress in this area as we move forward with this school math goal.



## Student Engagement

Our students enjoy coming to school. Student learning is further enhanced through engagement in a number of activities and events. This past year students participated in a Spotlight on Learning Night, holiday concert and a variety of assemblies that included Student of the Month, Remembrance Day and the earthquake in Japan. Stand up Against Bullying Day was an active celebration of peace and all students enjoyed performances in the arts that focused on other cultures. A number of activities to promote active healthy living took place both on and off site, including our annual walk-a-thon, skating at the Canada Games Oval and Canada Sports Day.

## 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. We have concentrated on job-embedded learning with teachers working collaboratively with our math and literacy coaches and their own colleagues. Much of our focus has been on effective differentiation of instruction so that all students can be successful. Professional learning communities at our school are comprised of small teams of teachers who work collaboratively and interdependently 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:

- math coach
- literacy coach
- Reading Recovery teacher
- learning center teacher
- resource teacher
- library support specialist
- educational program assistants (EPAs)
- school social worker
- community police liaison officer
- speech language pathologist
- school psychologist
- lunch monitors
- EXCEL before and after school program
- Safe Schools



# 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. As part of the Halifax Regional School Board's Planning for Improvement process, we have been engaged in year two of implementation of our school's goals in literacy and math. With a well-developed focus having been established on non-fiction writing

and the understanding and application of the operational concepts of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, we have been implementing specific strategies towards improving student achievement in those areas. Results from classroom and school-wide data, combined with larger scale assessments of the Department of Education and the Halifax Regional School Board have been measuring our progress along the way and will continue to inform our next steps in the process as we move forward with these important goals.

## 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.
- Teachers will work in groups to establish common expectations for non-fiction writing and its assessment.
- Teachers will continue to use 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.
- 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 use common 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.
- Teachers will work together to implement of variety of tools to effectively assess students' understanding of operational concepts



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

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