

## **SCHOOL COMMUNITY CONTEXT**

Mount Pleasant Elementary School dates from 1893. The original building was located at the corner of Broadway and Kingsway in East Vancouver on the site that is now occupied by Kingsgate Mall. In 1972, a new school was opened at the present site, one block north of the original site and adjacent to Guelph Park.

Mount Pleasant Elementary School is a two-storey structure that is fully accessible to wheelchairs. Within the building there are twelve teaching areas in an open-plan layout in addition to three enclosed classrooms. A large gym, lunchroom, library resource centre, and computer lab offer added space for school-community programming.

Mount Pleasant Elementary School is an inner-city elementary school of 225 Kindergarten to grade seven students of which thirty-three percent receive English as a Second Language instruction. Our kindergarten provides full day instruction to all students. There is a multi-ethnic composition of students at Mount Pleasant, with the major population groups being Pilipino, Chinese, Vietnamese, Eastern European, and First Nations. In total, there are twenty-five different languages spoken by our students.

Mount Pleasant Elementary philosophy and objectives are consistent with those of the Ministry of Education and the Vancouver School Board. Given the designation of “neighborhood” school Mount Pleasant Elementary aims to create an inclusive learning environment that recognizes each student’s strengths, gifts and talents and provides students with opportunities for continuous progress and instruction based on individual needs. School personnel focus on integrated, multi-level collaborative planning to offer optimal learning possibilities, through early intervention programs in language, social skills, and emotional development. The school’s literacy foci are supported by the VBE’s Literacy Innovation Project, Reading Recovery and Early Intervention Project.

The school’s Resource Team provides additional in-class learning support, small group support and focused “IEP” support for individual students. The Resource Team works collaboratively with enrolling teachers on assessment and evaluation of students and programs. There is a strong emphasis on multicultural programs, individual reading programs, special needs programs, computer literacy programs, and physical education programs. Mount Pleasant emphasizes the development of lifelong learning and stresses parent and community involvement, co-operation among agencies, participation of citizens, and utilization of local resources.

With the Ministry of Education / VBE designation of “Inner City” school, Mount Pleasant has the additional support of an Inner City Project Team. The Principal and Project Teacher provide leadership for a team that includes a Youth and Family Worker, Neighbourhood Worker, Primary Staff Assistant, First Nation Student Support Worker, part-time area counselor and part-time speech and language pathologist. Mount Pleasant Elementary is further supported by a Community of Schools Team. This team consists of a literacy teacher, youth and family worker, and a program coordinator. A non-VSB employee who also regularly contributes to this team is our community health nurse. The inner city team provides support to students and families, especially those children who

are at high risk of critical academic delay or socio-emotional trauma most often associated with poverty, transience, family dysfunction and/or conflict. Six student support assistants (SSW's) help meet the needs of 25 of our children who have designated special needs.

Mount Pleasant Elementary is one of four "KidSafe Program" schools. KidSafe provides a safe haven for children at risk during school vacations. Over 200 inner-city students, approximately 60 from Mount Pleasant, participate in this program during each vacation. KidSafe has an independent Board of Directors that administers the program in participation with V.S.B. staff that includes participating school principals and a paid program coordinator.

Students, staff and visitors experience Mount Pleasant as a warm, inclusive, safe, engaging and productive learning environment. There is an active Parent Advisory Council which meets every month. There is strong support for school initiatives and the school is seen to provide vital service to the community. A large number of parent and community volunteers assist in school.

The staff work together to create a safe and caring environment at the school, with an emphasis on involving parents as partners. People are encouraged to feel at home and welcome. Mount Pleasant has become a safe haven for children and their families. This is so, even before and after school hours, with between 60-80 extra-curricular activities offered to students as an alternative to "being on the streets." A daily breakfast program is provided through a generous donation of the CIBC Wood Gundy organization. Pre and post school daycare is available within the school in partnership with the YMCA and Kimount Boys and Girls Club.

[Steve Agabob](#)