

# PWS UPDATE

## Park West School Newsletter

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**March 23, 2017**

**Receive the PWS Update electronically!** You can receive the PWS Update electronically via e-mail. If you wish to be among the first to receive the latest editions of our school newsletters by having it sent to your e-mail address simply e-mail your request to Mr. Carter at [dcarter@hrsb.ns.ca](mailto:dcarter@hrsb.ns.ca) The PWS Update is published **approximately every two weeks**.

**Let's Talk About Student Progress:** Parents and Teachers will meet to discuss student progress on **Thursday, April 6** (1:00 – 3:30 pm & 5:30 – 7:30 pm). There will be no school for students on that day. During the morning teachers will be engaged in professional development. Teachers, including specialists (French, music, band, resource, phys. ed., guidance, learning centre, EAL, etc.), will be available to meet with you to discuss your child's progress. **Elementary** teachers will meet in their classrooms with parents by appointment. Parents of elementary students have the opportunity to request appointment times with their child's teacher. To accommodate all parents most appointments will be for ten minutes each. **Junior High** teachers will meet with parents in the gymnasium on a first-come/first-served basis. Jr. High parents are encouraged to take advantage of the availability of afternoon meeting times when possible, as the evening tends to be busier. If more time is required to discuss your child's progress then a longer appointment can be made for another time. We look forward to seeing you. Information (including appointment request forms) will be sent home with elementary students on March 28.

**Registration for 2017-2018 School Year:** We're getting ready to prepare for the next school year already! Registration for students entering grade primary in September 2017 is happening now. New primary students must be five years old on or before December 31, 2017, and **live within our school boundaries**. Parents must provide a birth certificate, N.S. health card number, and proof of address (egs. utility bill, lease/rental agreement) when registering. Registration can be done at the school office Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 3:30 pm. Contact Ms. Johnston or Ms. Landers (our admin assistants in the school office) or Ms. Aucoin (our Guidance Counselor) at 457-7800 for more information or to make an appointment. Please pass the word around the community so everyone gets registered on time. Our staffing allotment for next year depends on the number of students registered. **PLEASE NOTE:** only students who live within the Park West School boundaries are eligible to attend this school. As our school and class sizes continue to grow we will be monitoring this situation VERY carefully. If any of our students are found to be living outside our boundaries it may be necessary for them to leave Park West and register at the school serving the neighbourhood in which they live. Parents may apply to have out-of-area students attend Park West by first registering at their neighbourhood school, obtaining an HRSB "Out-of-Area" form from that school, and submitting the completed form to Park West on or after April 1, 2017, at 8:00 am. Decisions regarding acceptance of out-of-area students at Park West for the 2017-2018 school year will not be made until the end of June.

**Planning a Vacation During the School Year?:** The school year in Nova Scotia is 195 days. Students who are absent for any of those days must have legitimate excuses (such as illness, medical appointments, family emergencies, etc.). That time is needed in classrooms to cover the outcomes for all subjects at each particular grade level. Students must be assessed so that we can evaluate if they have met the outcomes covered. Meaningful learning and assessing occurs in the classrooms of Park West School continuously; right up until the last day of school in June. When our students are absent for extended periods of time it may negatively impact on their academic progress. They miss class instruction, interaction with teachers and peers, collaborative learning opportunities, experiential learning, activities, assessment opportunities, discussion, exploration, and many opportunities to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways (not just on paper). These experiences and opportunities cannot be replaced by worksheets and homework packages. Assessment and evaluation by teachers cannot occur if they are not present at school. Parents should be aware that their son/daughter will be missing significant learning and assessment opportunities during an extended absence from school. This may impact on his/her academic progress and the marks on his/her report card. For non-medically related situations teachers are not able to (nor are they responsible to) provide packages of assignments and homework in advance of an extended vacation. It will be the responsibility of the student to catch up on assignments missed upon his/her return (if he/she returns before the end of the school year). It is not possible to issue report cards early or for grade nine students to write end-of-year exams early. We discourage parents removing their children from school for extended periods of time for vacations.

**Professional Development is Key:** More than two decades ago the school year in Nova Scotia was increased from 190 to 195 days. One reason for this change was to accommodate in-servicing and professional development for teachers without costing students valuable instructional time. Professional development is critical for teachers in their efforts to provide the best learning opportunities for students. According to recent data, teachers in Nova Scotia do more than 65 hours of PD per year (much of it during weekends, evenings, and summer months), while the school calendar allows for only 25 hours. Unfortunately, parents are not always aware of the benefits that professional development of teachers, and support staff, provides to students. Some would support that all PD activities occur during the summer months. The fact is, most new initiatives are introduced at the beginning of a school year, while others are introduced during the year. For teachers to make

appropriate assessments and enhance the teaching of these initiatives, it is necessary to support the teaching and learning with in-servicing at strategic moments in time. Educational programs, strategies, resources, philosophies, and initiatives continue to change at a rapid pace. Teachers must keep abreast of the evolution.

**What's For Supper?** The Park West School PTA will be having a *Spaghetti Dinner* fundraiser at The Lower Deck (278 Lacewood Drive, Clayton Park) on **Sunday, March 26th, 3:00 pm - 9:00 pm**. Prices: \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for kids (kid's meal includes pop). All proceeds are being generously donated to the Park West PTA to support teaching and learning at our school. A big thank you to Gary Mitchell at The Lower Deck for supporting our school.

**School Crosswalk Program:** Resumes are currently being accepted from interested persons for regular part-time crosswalk guard positions in all parts of HRM. Crosswalk Guards are responsible for providing a safe and secure crosswalk for elementary children at designated school crosswalks in HRM. Please send your resume to woodrowp@halifax.ca or call 902-490-5168 for more information.

**EXCEL Registration Information for 2017-2018:** Families who are interested in registering their children in EXCEL's recreation program for the 2017/2018 school year are encouraged to mark the following important dates on your calendars:

- April 24th - Beginning at 8:00 am current participants of the 2016/2017 EXCEL program may submit an application for the coming school year via the online application system; by email; or by fax. On April 18th Account Holders of current participants will receive an email containing their user name and password providing them exclusive access to the online application system. Current participant families that have additional siblings that will be registering for the first time with EXCEL are eligible to register all children in their family during this early registration period.
- May 1st - General Registration begins for all EXCEL Before and/or After school programs at 8:00 am on May 1st. Applications may be submitted via the online system or the EXCEL office at 25 Alfred Street, Dartmouth. Individuals paying by Pre-Authorized Payment, MasterCard or Visa ONLY may register on-line. Go to <https://secure.hrsb.ns.ca/excel> to access.

We encourage parents to submit their applications in a timely manner to ensure the greatest opportunity for entry into the program as demand often exceeds capacity. Applications will be accepted on a first-received, first-accepted basis. (Priority is not given to Before & After participants over After only.) Full-time participation (5 days/week) is required. Please see the EXCEL pages on the HRSB website for more information on registration and the program.

**Teaching Your Child Emotional Agility** (by KJ Dell'Antonia – *The New York Times*): It's hard to see a child unhappy. Whether a child is crying over the death of a pet or the popping of a balloon, our instinct is to make it better, fast. That's where too many parents get it wrong, says psychologist Susan David, author of the book "Emotional Agility." Helping a child feel happy again may offer immediate relief for parent and child, but it doesn't help a child in the long term. **"How children navigate their emotional world is critical to lifelong success,"** she said. Research shows that when teachers help preschoolers learn to manage their feelings in the classroom, those children become better problem solvers when faced with an emotional situation, and are better able to engage in learning tasks. In teenagers, "emotional intelligence", or the ability to recognize and manage emotions, is associated with an increased ability to cope with stressful situations and greater self-esteem. Some research suggests that a lack of emotional intelligence can be used to predict symptoms of depression and anxiety. Emotional skills, said Dr. David, are the bedrock qualities like grit and resilience. But instead of allowing a child to fully experience a negative emotion, parents often respond with what Dr. David describes as *emotional helicoptering*. "We step into the child's emotional space," she said, with our platitudes, advice, and ideas. Many common parental strategies, like minimizing either the emotion or the underlying problem or rushing to the rescue, fail to help a child learn how to help herself.

**We Have a New Website:** You are encouraged to visit our new and improved school website at [www.pws.hrsb.ca](http://www.pws.hrsb.ca) Once there you'll find lots of useful information about our school and its operations. On the homepage you'll find: **Daily Announcements; What's New; Upcoming Events;** and our **Twitter** feed. Click on the **"OUR SCHOOL"** tab for **General Information** (our visions and goals; cafeteria menu and order information; and our diversity); **Policies and Procedures** (homework; assemblies; late students; winter weather; and more); **News** (the current newsletter and past issues); **School Resources** (EXCEL childcare....and more); **School Advisory Council; For Students;** and **For Parents** (including Grade 9 Trip; Safe Arrival; PTA; Volunteering; Class Trips; Registration; etc.). Other tabs on the homepage include: **Calendars; Staff Directory; and Contact Us.**

**Dates to Remember:**

March		
31	Term 2 Report Cards go home	
31	PTA Popcorn Day (\$1 a bag)	
April		
6	Professional Development (morning); Parent – Teacher Interviews (afternoon and evening)	- no school for students All day
14	Good Friday (no school for students)	
17	Easter Monday (no school for students)	
19	SAC and PTA Meetings	6:00 / 7:00 pm