

PWS UPDATE

Park West School Newsletter

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REPORT CARDS: All elementary and junior high schools in the Halifax Regional School Board have three terms during the school year and issue report cards at the end of each term (in December, early April, and June 29). Students at Park West School received their 1st term report cards on December 5. Parents are to keep the copy of the report card received. A student/parent **response form** is attached to all report cards at every grade level, except for the final report card of the year. It is meant to provide an opportunity for students and their parents to respond to the report card, encourage students to comment on what they have done well and what they plan to work on next, and encourage parents to comment on their child's achievement. It is also an opportunity for parents to suggest ways we can assist students in their learning, and to ask questions regarding their child's education. Response forms can be completed, signed, and returned to the school for follow up, if necessary. *Please return the signed form in the report card envelope.*

The report card is primarily intended to communicate student achievement to a parent/guardian; providing a summary of learning to date communicated through the *learning profile, grades, and anecdotal comments*. The information on the report card should answer the question "how is my child doing in school?". Report card comments include: areas of strength, areas that need improvement, and suggestions of how to improve. The report card you receive should give you a clear idea of how your child is progressing with the program at his/her grade level. All references to individual achievement and progress will be in relation to the prescribed curriculum outcomes for each subject at his/her grade level. If, after reading your child's report card, you do not have a clear indication of his/her progress, please contact your child's teacher to review the report and clarify any concerns or questions you might have.

Your child's progress is assessed based upon a standard set of goals called "curriculum outcomes" for each subject taught at his/her grade level. For instance, a curriculum outcome for grade three mathematics is: "Students will be expected to use simple fractions to describe situations." All curriculum outcomes are prescribed by the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DOEECD) and used by all schools in our province as a basis for student assessment and evaluation. Curriculum guides for each subject with curriculum outcomes are available to the public through the DOEECD website: <https://sapps.ednet.ns.ca/Cart/index.php?UID=MDVEZWMyMDE3MTQ0NTIzMTQyLjlyNy4xNDluMjU0>

Grades represent academic achievement only. Social development and work habits impact student achievement. They are reported in the Learner Profile, and may also be addressed in anecdotal comments. Grades are based on the evidence of student learning and understanding of the curriculum concepts and skills taught in the classroom. Evidence is collected over time in a variety of ways; including work products, conversations and observations, etc. Grades are assigned based on the **quality** of the learning and understanding (that is: **how well** students understand and apply the skills/concepts of the learning outcomes that have been taught). Parents, and students, are encouraged to focus on the **meaning** of the grades, and not just the grades themselves. **What is most important is the quality of student achievement and that the student is making progress; not how many A's or 90's a student receives.**

Report cards are only one component of the assessment and evaluation process. Teachers at Park West constantly use a variety of strategies to assess and evaluate student progress. Assessment is the process of gathering information on student progress. The information gathered during the ongoing assessment process may include: work samples, test and quiz scores, projects, oral presentations, informal observations (by the teacher), student conferences, portfolios, guided reading assessments, etc. The list goes on! As the information is collected it is evaluated. Evaluation is the process of analyzing, reflecting upon and summarizing the assessment information, and making judgments or decisions based upon the information gathered. The report card you receive for your son or daughter will reflect this process.

Because all students at the same grade level are assessed and evaluated using the same set of standards (i.e. curriculum outcomes) you may have the opportunity to notice some report cards within a certain class, written by the same teacher, to be very similar. Comments, phrases, terms, and descriptions may be similar, or even identical. This is inevitable, despite teachers' efforts to make each student's report card personal and individual. Nevertheless, be assured that teachers have assessed and evaluated your child thoroughly and individually. Statements recorded on the report cards reflect **your** child's progress.

After reading the report card a parent should:

- Understand clearly how your child is doing in that class/subject in relation to the outcomes covered for a specific period of time;
- Understand your child has areas of strength;
- Understand your child has areas of need;

Communication between home and school regarding your child's academic progress should be continuous throughout the school year, and not only occur during scheduled parent-teacher interviews and at report card time. Communication can occur in many ways: telephone calls, notes, e-mails, communication logs, student agendas, class newsletters, school/class websites, students bringing tests home to be signed by parents, personal visits, etc. The report cards are intended to provide you with a more formal, thorough, and personal perspective on how your son or daughter is progressing academically in relation to the prescribed grade level/subject outcomes. Report cards should be combined with all other forms of communication to provide a complete picture of your child's academic progress.

Not Happy With Your Report Card Marks?: Sometimes students (and their parents) are disappointed with marks/grades received on report cards. If this is the case students (and/or their parents) are encouraged to talk to their teachers to find out how they can improve. Teachers can probably provide some beneficial feedback. Our older students should also ask themselves:

- Do I have regular attendance at school? Am I absent a lot?
- Do I arrive **on time** for school every day?
- When I am absent do I take the initiative to meet with my teachers to find out what work was missed? Do I work hard to catch up so I don't fall behind?
- Do I complete homework regularly?
- Do I review notes (concepts, information, facts, etc.) for subjects covered that day, every evening for homework?
- Do I read at home every day?
- Do I ask for extra help from teachers, and attend extra help sessions when offered by teachers?
- Do I study *effectively* for tests and quizzes?
- Am I attentive and focused in class?
- Am I distracted in class by personal cell phone use (i.e. texting)?
- Do I use my time wisely (at school and home)?
- Do I complete **all** homework, projects, and assignments?
- Do I submit to my teachers all completed homework, projects, and assignments **on time** (by the due dates)?

Something to Think About: "If you want it...work for it. It's that simple."

Let's Talk About Student Progress: Parents and Teachers will meet to discuss student progress on **Thursday, December 7** (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.

Come to the Fair: Park West School is having a Scholastic Book Fair in our library just in time for the holiday season. The Book Fair is here until **Thursday, December 7**. The Fair will be open during the day for students and their classes to view and make purchases, as well as any parents who would like to drop by. It will also be open for the afternoon and evening of Parent-Teacher Interview sessions on **December 7**. Books make great gifts (for Hanukkah, Christmas, or anytime!) and promote literacy. All profits from the Book Fair are used to purchase new books for our library.

Songs of Joy: Our elementary Christmas concerts will be held on **December 11 and 12 @ 1:15 PM** in our gymnasium. This year's concerts will feature "songs of joy" celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa. The performance schedule for classes is as follows:

DATE	CLASSES PARTICIPATING
Monday, Dec. 11 @ 1:15 PM	School choir and 1-Griswold, 1-Kostlac, 1-Morine, 2-Griffiths/Labor, 2-Ssebazza, 3-MacDonald
Tuesday, Dec. 12 @ 1:15 PM	School choir and P-Cavanaugh, P-Dorey/Whitehouse, P-Walker, 2-MacIntyre, 2-Webber, 3-McNally, grade 3's in 3/4-Thurston

Concerts will be 45 – 60 minutes in length. Dress rehearsals will be held in the mornings. **Tickets for admission will not be required.** All family members and friends are invited to attend. Our 'storm date' is December 13. Babysitting services are not provided by the school during the concerts. *Children in the audience will be expected to remain in their seats with their parents*, and must not run around the gym or in & out of the doors causing distraction to the audience and performers. Children *will not* be permitted to sit on the floor at the front of the stage. Parking on the school grounds for the concerts will be limited. You must not park in the staff parking lot, or in the traffic loop where "no parking" and "fire lane" signs appear. Visitor parking is available in the lot at the left-hand side of the building and on the streets adjacent to our school. **Doors will not open for audience members until 1:00 PM.**

Turkey & All the Trimmings: In celebration of Hanukkah and Christmas an old-fashioned turkey dinner will be served at our school cafeteria at lunch time on **Wednesday, December 13**. This will be available for purchase to all students registered in our lunch program. Dinner includes: slow roasted turkey, mashed potatoes, homemade stuffing, seasonal vegetables, pan gravy, and a delicious dessert. The price is only **\$9.50**. This special turkey dinner should be ordered in advance (**by December 11**) from the cafeteria. It may also be purchased on the day-of, while quantities last. Students not registered in our lunch program may order this dinner for take-out/take-home. Contact our cafeteria operator, Jane Scrymgeour, in person or by telephone (902-440-7352) between 8:00 AM and 12:45 PM daily to place an order.

Please Make an Appointment: If you wish to meet with a teacher or member of our administrative team (principal or vice principal) you are encouraged to make an appointment, rather than dropping by the school unexpectedly. During the day teachers are almost exclusively engaged with their students; teaching and facilitating learning. Administrators may not be available to meet with you unexpectedly. They may be busy supporting students, teachers, and other staff members. They may have meetings scheduled, or have responsibilities tending to the operation of the school. If you wish to meet with us please contact the school office or directly contact individuals to arrange an appointment to meet. We want to ensure we make time to meet with you to discuss and address your concerns at a mutually convenient time.

Dates to Remember:

December		
5-7	Book Fair (library)	
7	Professional Development (NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS)	morning
7	Parent-Teacher Interviews (afternoon and evening) (NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS)	1:00 -3:30 PM and 5:30 -7:30 PM
11	Christmas Concert #1	1:15 PM
12	Christmas Concert #2	1:15 PM
15	PTA Popcorn Sale (\$1 per bag)	
21	Last day of school before Christmas vacation begins	

