

PWS UPDATE

Park West School Newsletter

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February 8, 2018

PLEASE!!!! Parent/Guardian drivers: DO NOT park in the traffic loop in the “no parking” zones and DO NOT park in the Fire Lanes on our school property. No exceptions. We are TRYING to minimize traffic congestion AND keep our students (your children) safe. We are seeking the assistance of HRM Police and HRM Parking Enforcement. Tickets may be issued without notice (with fines).

Speed Limit on PWS School Grounds: 15 km/hr

Black History Month – Educate, Unite, Celebrate Community: Every year, for the month of February, Canadians are invited to participate in **Black History / African Heritage** Month festivities and events that honour the legacy of Canadians of African and Caribbean descent, past and present. Canadians take this time to celebrate the many achievements and contributions of black Canadians who, throughout history, have done so much to make Canada the culturally diverse, compassionate and prosperous nation it is today. During Black History Month, Canadians can gain insight into the experiences of black Canadians and their vital role in the community. 2018 marks the 22nd anniversary since Black History Month was first officially celebrated by the Government of Canada. The month-long celebration was formally recognized following a motion introduced in the House of Commons in December 1995 by the first black Canadian woman elected to Parliament, the Honourable Jean Augustine. The motion was carried unanimously by the House of Commons in December 1995 and the Government of Canada officially celebrated Black History Month for the first time in 1996. In honour of this 22nd anniversary, the Government of Canada will recognize this important milestone through its events and promotional materials, including its educational poster (several are on display here at Park West). Black History Month will highlight key milestones and courageous accomplishments of those who helped shape Canada’s black history. We recognize contributions and moments from early settlement, the abolition of slavery, the Underground Railroad, and notable black Canadians in all fields who have played defining roles in Canada’s history. Lots will be happening at our school and in our classrooms this month to honour and celebrate Canadians of African descent and their contributions to the rich diversity of our country.

African Heritage in Nova Scotia: The 2018 African Heritage Month theme “**Educate, Unite, Celebrate Community**” will honour and pay homage to African Nova Scotians and their long legacy of uniting a passion that has provided a base to educate and celebrate an important part of Nova Scotia’s culture and heritage. The theme embraces education and encourages all Nova Scotians with the desire to educate themselves about African Nova Scotian history. Together, we can unite and ignite the culture and heritage we share as a community as we observe the United Nations’ International Decade for People of African Descent from 2015-2024. This observation focuses on three pillars: Recognition, Justice, Development. Nova Scotia has over 50 historic African Nova Scotian communities, dating back over 400 years. These communities have a unique and rich legacy of resistance, resilience, and triumph that needs to be shared with all Nova Scotia. It is for this reason we must *Educate, Unite, and Celebrate* during African Heritage Month, and beyond.

Registration for 2018-2019 School Year: We’re getting ready to prepare for the next school year already! Registration for students entering grade primary in September 2018 is being held during the **month of February**. New primary students must be five years old on or before December 31, 2018, 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 Mr. Cobean (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.

Special Joint Meeting: A special joint meeting of our SAC (School Advisory Council) and PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) will be held here at Park West School on **Wednesday, February 21, at 6:00 PM** in the school cafeteria. Last fall the Nova Scotia Government commissioned Dr. Avis Glaze to review, report, and make recommendations regarding the education administrative model currently utilized to operate the schools in our province. Dr. Glaze publicly presented her report (titled *Raise the Bar: A Coherent and Responsive Education Administrative System for Nova Scotia*) last week; which includes 22 recommendations for change. These recommendation will have a significant impact on the education system of Nova Scotia. The Government responded to her report, and has identified 11 of the recommendations for immediate implementation. These include elimination of most elected school boards. The stated intent of the provincial government in making these changes is to ensure our school system focuses on student learning and achievement. The purpose of this special joint meeting is to review and discuss the report (with a focus on the recommendations), and to conduct a question & answer session. All members of the Park West School Community are invited to attend. The meeting will be hosted by Mr. Craig Poirier (PTA Chair), Ms. Karen Saweczko (SAC Chair), and Mr. Carter (PWS principal).

PTA Pancake Day: **Tuesday, February 13** is Pancake Day! Consider going to **The Lower Deck** (Clayton Park Plaza, near McDonald’s) for a family pancake dinner between 11:00 AM and 8:00 PM. \$5.00 from every pancake meal sold will be donated to Park West School to support teaching and learning. Thank you to Gary Mitchell and his staff at The Lower Deck for supporting Park West School.

Happy Chinese/Lunar New Year: Many people of Asian descent will be celebrating Chinese or Lunar New Year beginning on **February 16**. Chinese New Year is the longest and most important festivity in the Chinese calendar. The origin of Chinese New Year is itself centuries old and gains significance because of several myths and traditions. Chinese New Year is celebrated in China and in countries and territories with significant Chinese and/or Asian populations, including Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Mauritius, Philippines, and also in Chinatowns elsewhere. Chinese New Year is considered a major holiday for the Chinese and has had influence on the Lunar New Year celebrations of its geographic neighbours. Within China, regional customs and traditions concerning the celebration of the Chinese New Year vary widely. People will pour out their money to buy presents, decorations, material, food, and clothing. It is also traditional for every family to thoroughly cleanse the house, in order to sweep away any ill-fortune and to make way for good incoming luck. Windows and doors will be decorated with red colour paper-cuts and couplets with popular themes of "good fortune" or "happiness", "wealth", and "longevity." On the Eve of Chinese New Year, supper is a feast with families. Food will include such items as pigs, ducks, chicken and sweet delicacies. The family will end the night with firecrackers. Early the next morning children will greet their parents by wishing them a healthy and happy new year, and receive money in red paper envelopes. The Chinese New Year tradition is to reconcile, forget all grudges and sincerely wish peace and happiness for everyone. According to the traditional Chinese calendar 2018 is the **year of the dog**. At **Park West School** we will be observing and celebrating Chinese / Lunar New Year in a variety of ways...with decorations, class presentations and activities. On Friday, February 16, **students celebrating Chinese/Lunar New Year are invited to dress in their traditional festive clothing. Other students may wish to wear red and/or gold on that day in honour of the occasion.** Park West School wishes all families celebrating Chinese / Lunar New Year a happy holiday.

Heritage Day in Nova Scotia: Thanks to the vision and persistence of the Honourable Diana Whalen (former MLA for Clayton Park West, Deputy Minister of Nova Scotia, and Justice Minister of Nova Scotia) we now have a new holiday (and long weekend) in February. According to Ms. Whalen, a statutory holiday offers more than just a day off. "It's a genuine day when families get together and I think it's very hard to measure how wonderful that is for individuals and their families and communities. I think there's a sense of well-being that comes from a holiday and this is the time to have one," she said. Under new legislation introduced by the government in December 2013 the new holiday, called "Heritage Day", is observed the third Monday of February. Our first Heritage Day was celebrated last year (2015) honouring human rights pioneer Viola Desmond. The new holiday provides an opportunity to recognize a different significant figure or event in Nova Scotia's culture and history every year. This year **Mona Louise Parsons** is being honoured. Mona Louise Parsons (Feb. 17, 1901 – Nov. 28, 1976) was born in Middleton, Nova Scotia. She was a Canadian actress (a Ziegfried chorus girl in the Ziegfried Follies Revues in New York City), a teacher, a nurse, and member of an informal resistance network in the Netherlands from 1940-1941 during the Nazi occupation. She became the only Canadian female civilian to be imprisoned by the Nazis, and one of the first – and few – women to be tried by a Nazi military tribunal in the Netherlands. She received a commendation for her bravery in helping Allied airmen evade capture from both Great Britain and the United States. In honour of "Mona Louise Parsons Heritage Day" Park West School will be closed on **Monday, February 19th**.

The Maple Leaf Forever: Flag Day, officially named **National Flag of Canada Day**, is observed annually on February 15, commemorating the inauguration of the flag of Canada on that date in 1965. The day is marked by flying the flag, occasional public ceremonies, and educational programs in schools. It is not a public holiday, although there has been discussion about creating one. The flag, designed by George Stanley, was proclaimed by Queen Elizabeth II on January 28, 1965, and took effect "upon, from and after" February 15. "*National Flag of Canada Day is a time to celebrate the shared values and traditions that are fundamental to our identity as Canadians. This symbol of freedom, democracy, and human rights reminds us of how truly fortunate we are as Canadians to live in this vast and beautiful country.*"

Practicing to be Safe: The safety and security of our students and staff is a top priority for Park West School and the Halifax Regional School Board. In recent years we have been implementing a number of measures as part of a comprehensive plan aimed at ensuring our school remains a safe place. One of the procedures schools have been employing is a **lock down drill**. During a lock down regular school operations are suspended. All exterior doors are locked, and no one is permitted to enter or leave the building. Classroom doors are secured, and teachers and students remain out-of-sight inside classrooms until instructed by school administration to resume their activities. Students are isolated within the school when circumstances make it safer to stay in the classroom rather than evacuate the building. Just as we prepare our students to properly respond to a fire drill, they also need to be aware of the proper response during a lock down drill. Another drill we practice is **hold & secure**. During a hold & secure situation all exterior doors to our facility are locked; no one is permitted to enter or exit. Our regular routine continues within classrooms. This type of drill is initiated if there is a safety concern for our students within our school neighbourhood. These drills should be treated with the same level of importance as fire drills. School staff will be discussing the importance of these procedures with students prior to running the drills. We will also take time after the drills to remind them that it was only a practice and there was no danger. Please take the time to speak with your son/daughter about these procedures and reinforce their importance. We practice these drills to ensure our school remains a safe place for teaching and learning. A lock down drill will be held at Park West School during the week of **February 12 – 16**.

Keep Your Head Warm: Limited edition "Park West School" wool toques (in our school colours) are now for sale. They are \$10.00 each. They fit adults and children. Purchase them from our school office (cash or cheque) **while supplies last**.

Dates to Remember:

February		
1-28	Registration month – register new primary students for the 2018-2019 school year	
1-28	African Heritage Month	
13	PTA Pancake Dinner fundraiser @ The Lower Deck	11 AM – 8 PM
14	PTA Valentine's Lollipop fundraiser	
15	Junior High Dance (\$6.00 admission)	6:30 – 8:30 PM
15	Junior High Ski Club (trip #2 to Martock)	Evening
16	Chinese / Lunar New Year	
19	"Mona Louise Parsons" Heritage Day (provincial holiday – schools closed)	
21	Special Joint Meeting of SAC and PTA	
23	PTA Popcorn sale (\$1 a bag)	6:00 PM
26	Grade 9 Trip Payment #4 due (\$210.00)	

