

# January 2026 Newsletter



## St. Stephen's Elementary School

3669 Highland Ave., Halifax, NS B3K 4J9

**PRINCIPAL:** David Madgett **VICE-PRINCIPAL:** Nicole Gerrard

**ADMIN. ASSISTANT:** Heather Cosgrove-Smith

### Principal's Message

December certainly kept us on our toes! Between Parent-Teacher Conferences and a very well-attended Evening of Holiday Celebration (and seriously... who did invite the Grinch?;), our school was full of energy, laughter, and festive spirit. Add in spirit days and special moments throughout the month, and we headed into the holidays with full hearts and a well-earned break.

As January arrives, we welcome a brand-new year—and the official return of winter! Please ensure your child(ren) is/are dressed for the weather, as we continue to enjoy outdoor learning and play even when it is wet and/or cold. An extra set of clothes tucked into a backpack is always a great idea. While sleds and Crazy Carpets may be tempting, we ask that these stay at home. We have a class set available for teachers to sign out when weather and conditions allow, so everyone can enjoy safe and supervised winter fun.

Later this month, we are excited to celebrate Family Literacy Day/Week from January 26–30, with the theme "Make Mealtime Family Learning Time." Preparing meals, following recipes, and sharing stories around the table are wonderful ways to build literacy skills together. We look forward to sharing more about this week with families soon.

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy start to 2026, and maybe just enough snow to enjoy it!

Yours in Learning,

Dave Madgett, Principal and Nicole Gerrard, Vice-Principal

### Upcoming Events

#### Thursday, January 1<sup>st</sup>

- New Year's Day
- Kwanzaa Ends

#### Monday, January 5<sup>th</sup>

- First Day Back For Staff & Students...Happy New Year!

#### Tuesday, January 13<sup>th</sup>

- 5:15pm SAC Meeting
- 6:30pm PTA Meeting

#### January 26<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>

- Family Literacy Day

#### Tuesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>

- Family Literacy Day
- Beginning of Family Literacy Week

#### Sunday, February 1<sup>st</sup>

- African Heritage Month Begins
- Registration for PrePrimary/Primary 2026/27 begins

#### Monday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>

- Groundhog Day



### What's New



#### Star Fund

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to each and every person who contributed to supporting students and families through our Star Fund. Your generosity and compassion truly made a meaningful difference. A special thank you to the Canadian Progress Club Halifax Citadel, our incredible PTA, and the many members of our wider community who came together in support of this important initiative. Thanks to your collective efforts, we raised over \$2,100, which

has gone directly toward supporting many families at St. Stephen's Elementary School. These funds helped ensure families had what they needed during what can be a particularly challenging time around the holiday season. We are deeply grateful for your kindness, generosity, and continued support of our school community.

### Lunch Monitors Needed

We are looking for caring and reliable individuals to help support our students during the lunch hour. If you enjoy working with children and being part of a positive school community, we'd love to hear from you! Please contact our secretary, Ms. Heather, at [hcosgrove-smith@hrce.ca](mailto:hcosgrove-smith@hrce.ca) for more information.

### Electronics and Toys



Following the holidays, many children will have received electronic devices such as cell phones and toys for Christmas. Just a reminder that we cannot guarantee the security of these items, so we ask students to please keep these at home. Cell phones are permitted but must be turned off and put away while the student is on the property without exception.

### Family Literacy Day/Literacy Week



Literacy is about much more than reading and writing—it's about communication, connection, and making meaning together. Family Literacy Day and Literacy Week give us a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the important role families play in supporting children's learning every day. Mealtime is a natural and powerful time for learning. Whether families are reading recipes, measuring ingredients, making grocery lists, or sharing stories and conversations around the table, children are building vocabulary, comprehension, and confidence in expressing their ideas. These everyday moments help strengthen language skills while also building relationships and a sense of belonging. More information will follow in the coming weeks.

### African Heritage Month (February 2026)

This year's African Heritage Month provincial theme is "Strength in Unity: Moving Forward with Purpose, Prosperity, Power, and Progress." The theme speaks to the power that comes when African Nova Scotians and people of African descent stand together with a shared sense of direction. It recognizes unity as an active force for change that strengthens communities, advances justice, and creates new opportunities.

### Dressing for Colder Weather



Students go outside to play each day. While factors such as wind, rain, and cold temperatures may affect how long we are outdoors, we make every effort to get students outside daily for fresh air and play. Please ensure your child(ren) come to school dressed for the weather, including a winter jacket, hat, mittens or gloves, warm socks, boots, and snow pants. It is often quite windy, but with proper clothing, students are able to stay warm and comfortable while outdoors. If you need support accessing any of these items, please do not hesitate to reach

out to Mr. Madgett or Ms. Gerrard. We are happy to help. Thank you for helping us keep students safe, comfortable, and ready to enjoy outdoor play throughout the winter months.

### Mabel's Labels PTA Fundraising Campaign



Winter coats, snow pants, hats, mittens, and boots can be a nightmare to keep track of for any family. Mabel's Labels personalized labels and stamps can help you keep track of your child's things! The labels are laundry, dishwasher and microwave safe, and easy to apply. Visit Mabel's Labels at [www.mabelslabels.com](http://www.mabelslabels.com), click "Support a Fundraiser" and type "St. Stephens Elementary School PTA (Halifax)" into the search bar. Place your order, and it will be shipped directly to your home. The PTA receives a 20% commission on orders placed through this fundraiser and the proceeds go to supporting school events. Questions?