

February 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

Winter certainly made itself known in January and is showing no signs of letting up! Between the colder temperatures and what has felt like weekly Monday snowfalls, Mother Nature is keeping us on our toes. As a result, some of our Literacy Week activities will spill into early February—but the great news is that the excitement around reading, writing, and learning continues a little longer than planned.

February may be the shortest month of the year, but it is full of meaningful learning opportunities and celebrations. We are proud to recognize African Heritage Month, a time to honour the history, contributions, and excellence of African Nova Scotians and people of African descent. Students will also be buzzing with excitement around the Winter Olympics, cheering on athletes and making connections to perseverance, teamwork, and goal-setting.

This month also includes Valentine's Day, a nice opportunity to focus on kindness and friendship, as well as Lunar New Year, Ramadan and Ash Wednesday, all of which provide rich opportunities for learning about culture, tradition, and community. And of course, we can't forget Groundhog Day, where Shubenacadie Sam had one job and the forces of nature took it away! Is there a precedent throughout folklore that deals with a no-show? I'll leave it to the Grade Primaries to find out for us! 😊

Finally, we would like to welcome Mr. Matthew Pierre who will be taking over 60% of the Grade 6 teaching duties in Grade 6B while Mr. Burns takes on the role of acting Vice-Principal for the remainder of the school year while Ms. Gerrard is on deferred leave.

As always, thank you for your continued support and partnership. We look forward to another engaging and meaningful month of learning together.

Yours in Learning,

Dave Madgett, Principal and Justin Burns, Acting Vice-Principal



Upcoming Events

Sunday, February 1

- African Heritage Month Begins

Monday, February 2

- Groundhog Day
- 2026-27 Registration Opens

Friday, February 6

- Twonie Treat (\$2 Candy Treat)

Tuesday, February 10

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

Thursday, February 12

- Valentine's Day Dance
12:45pm P-3, 1:45pm 4-6
- Pink Triangle Day

Friday, February 13th

- Twonie Treat (\$2 Candy Treat)

Monday, February 16th

- **Heritage Day (School closed)**

Tuesday, February 17th

- Lunar New Year
- Ramadan Begins

Wednesday, February 18th

- Ash Wednesday

Thursday, February 19th

- 7pm PTA Oval Skate

Friday, February 20th

- Twonie Treat (\$2 Candy Treat)

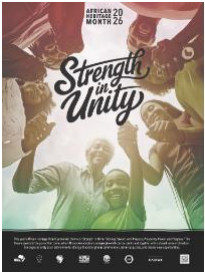
Friday, February 27th

- African Heritage Assembly



What's New

Celebrate African Heritage Month 2026



African Heritage Month in Nova Scotia is a time to recognize and celebrate the rich history, vibrant culture, and lasting contributions of people of African descent in our province. This year's theme, "Strength in Unity – Moving Forward with Purpose, Prosperity, Power and Progress," reminds us of the importance of coming together as a community, learning from one another, and moving forward with shared purpose.

In our schools, African Heritage Month provides meaningful opportunities for students to explore African Nova Scotian histories and experiences, deepen their understanding of our shared past, and reflect on the values of respect, inclusion, and belonging. Through classroom learning, discussions, and activities connected to this year's theme, students are encouraged to appreciate diversity, build empathy, and recognize the strength that comes from unity. These experiences help foster welcoming school communities and inspire students to contribute positively to a more inclusive and equitable future for all.

Looking for ways to recognize and celebrate African Heritage Month?

- Please follow this link from the Black Cultural Centre for a [Calendar of Events this Month](#).
- Visit local heritage sites, such as the [Black Cultural Centre](#), [the Africville Museum](#), and the [Black Loyalist Heritage Centre](#).

February is PrePrimary & Primary Registration Month for the 2026-2027 School Year

Do you have or know a child who will be starting Pre Primary or Primary this fall? It's time to register!

Registration for the 2026-27 school year begins on Monday, February 2. To ensure we have the right staff and supports in place for September, it's important that we gather enrolment numbers now.

Tip: Before you begin, make sure you have the following documents in electronic form (image, PDF or Word document):

- Proof of identity/age with one of the following: birth certificate, passport, immigration papers, or legal adoption papers if you are new to the HRCE
- Proof of home address with one of the following: a recently dated official government or utility document with your current address that includes your name and date, such as water bill, power bill, internet bill, home fuel bill, a tax receipt, property assessment, a mortgage contract or a residential lease agreement

Visit the [HRCE website](#) for more information and to enrol your child today through PowerSchool Enrollment!

Don't have a child to register? Maybe you know someone who does! Please help us spread the word and pass this information on to friends, neighbours or relatives who will be looking to register for the fall.

Lego Club is Getting Underway



Thank you to everyone who signed up. There is always lots of demand for Lego Club so we will be creating a schedule to make sure everyone has a turn. We will send this home this week. Happy Building! Also, if you have or know someone who has any Lego looking for a new home, we would be happy to take it off their hands!

Dressing for Colder Weather

We continue to have students coming to school unprepared for the colder weather. Please insist that your child(ren) come to school with a winter jacket, hat, mittens/gloves, socks, boots and snow pants. If you need any support getting any of these items, please let Mr. Madgett/ Mr. Burns know. **Please check the forecast in the morning and ensure your child(ren) come to school dressed for the weather.**

Slow down in school zones

With snow banks getting higher and roads getting narrower in the neighbourhood we want to ensure our students' and families' safety, here are a few reminders for drivers navigating school zones.



- Follow school zone speed limits whenever children are present. This always applies, not just during school hours.
- Be prepared to stop for a school bus at any time.
- Remember to stop whenever you approach a stopped school bus with its red lights flashing, regardless of the direction of travel or which lane the bus is in.
- Give yourself extra time during your morning commute.
- Always watch for pedestrians. There are more kids walking, riding, and getting dropped off in school zones.
- Always obey crossing guards.
- Avoid distractions while driving.

Annual SSES PTA Oval Skate

Calling all skaters! Warm up to winter by meeting your fellow school friends at the Emera Oval for an ice skate on Thursday, February 19th, at 7pm. Bring your skates, gloves and CSA



approved multi-impact hockey helmet. Need gear? Rent for free at the oval (bring valid photo identification). Students must be supervised by parents / guardians (no student drop-offs). Look for SSES PTA volunteers on the benches for a drink and treat. There are buses on Robie Street from our neighborhood to Quinpool Rd, which is a short walk to the oval at Halifax North Common (corner of North Park St and Cogswell St). There is also parking around the commons or adjacent side streets.

Mabel's Labels PTA Fundraising Campaign



One of the ways we reduce the size of our lost and found is being able to identify who the piece of clothing belongs to. Mabel's Labels personalized labels and stamps can help you and our school staff keep track of your child's things (i.e. black or navy-blue snow pants)! The labels are laundry, dishwasher and microwave safe, and easy to apply. Visit Mabel's Labels at 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.

Thriving Offline: How Delaying Smartphones Can Help Kids Flourish

Thriving Offline: How Delaying Smartphones Can Help Kids Flourish, a free community event hosted by Unplugged Canada at St. Margaret's Bay Elementary, is available both in person and virtually.

Designed for caregivers and educators, this session will explore how early smartphone and social media use impacts children's development and the latest research, practical strategies, safer alternatives, and age-appropriate boundaries to support healthy childhoods.

Join us! Thriving Offline: How Delaying Smartphones Can Help Kids Flourish

- Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.
- St. Margaret's Bay Elementary - 24 Ridgewood Dr, Head of St Margaret's Bay, NS
- Please register for in-person or virtual [here](#).

UPCOMING FREE EVENT!

Thriving Offline:

How Delaying Smartphones Can Help Kids Flourish



When: Tuesday, February 24th @ 6:30pm ADT
Where: St. Margaret's Bay Elementary, NS
(Virtual Zoom option available)
Register: [UnpluggedNSThrivingOffline.eventbrite.ca](https://unpluggedNSThrivingOffline.eventbrite.ca)
Connect with other parents in our supportive community!

Two Truths & AI

Two Truths & AI is a free, interactive activity from Common Sense Education that helps students learn how to tell the difference between real and AI-generated content. Through guided examples, students practice asking good questions and thinking critically about what they see online. This resource can also be a helpful way for parents and caregivers to build their own understanding of AI and media literacy alongside their children. Learn more [here](#).