

Portland Estates Elementary School

45 Portland Hills Drive

Dartmouth, NS

Mrs. L. Henman-Poirier, Principal/Directrice
Mrs. J. Broussard, Vice Principal /Directrice Adjointe
Ms. C. Myers, Secretary/Secrtaire

February 2025

February Newsletter 2025

African Heritage Month 2025 –

This year's theme, Legacy in Action: Celebrating Black Brilliance, highlights the achievements and resilience of African Nova Scotians, who have shaped the province's history for more than 400 years.

February is African Heritage month. We are excited to be celebrating African Nova Scotian culture and history with our students. Throughout this month, teachers will be working with students to recognize and celebrate the contributions and achievements of people of African descent. We are thrilled to have the Africa Centre for Arts & Culture Society here on February 14 with the group Djeli Sira and African Dance on February 5 & 6 with Mohammed Durentau. As well Cindy Cain has been in working with the Grade Five classes.

At Portland Estates Elementary, we continue to strive to improve student learning and enable our students to achieve their full potential. Home and School are education partners; please remember to read often with your children and stay involved with their learning. Invite them to talk to you about what they are learning and encourage them to discuss their day. Our newsletters and school website have information and links which you may find useful in supporting your child's learning.

As the year has progressed, there have been an increasing number of students arriving late to school. This causes a disruption to classes for the student who is late as well as for those who are here on time. That said, your help in ensuring that your child arrives at school on time would be greatly appreciated. Students should be at school by 8:50 am so they can hear the announcements and prepare for instruction which starts at 9:00am.

Our teachers continue to work on implementing strategies that promote achievement of our school improvement goals. As always, I encourage you to communicate regularly with your child's classroom teacher to address any questions or concerns.

Students are asked to bring a water bottle to school each day which can be filled up at one of the filling stations in the halls. Please be reminded that we ask that no scented products be brought to school (hand cream, hand sanitizer, etc.). If your child must have such products at school, please ensure that they are scent free.

Well winter is in full swing! We have really been experiencing the cold and snowy weather of winter! The winter months will continue to provide inconsistent weather conditions. Please help us to ensure students are prepared for the outdoors by having them come to school with appropriate gear for outside. We will always monitor the weather and ensure that decisions about sending students outside are made with their safety in mind. Students do go outside for recess and lunch each day (unless it is raining heavily or exceptionally cold), so please make sure your little ones have hats, scarves, mittens/gloves and warm outerwear.

We wish Ms. Laura Gomez-Garcia goodbye as she leaves our Pre-primary program to join the IWK Autism team. We welcome Heather Cox-Harvie to our Pre-primary team in her absence.

Mrs. Henman-Poirier

February is Registration Month!

Important Dates to Remember:

Thursday, February 5- PTO meeting -7pm in the school library

Monday, February 10- Coins for Books Campaign starts- Nifty Nickel Monday – Bring in as many nickels as you can.

Tuesday, February 11- Toonie Tuesday - If as an entire school we collect 200 toonies or \$400 worth of coins the students will be awarded a double recess. **Dress up as your favourite storybook character today as well.**

Second Lockdown Drill

Wednesday, February 12- Whatcha Find in the Couch Wednesday! - Search all those places coins like to hide... between couch cushions, under car seats, in the pockets of those pants you haven't worn for a while!

Staff Appreciation lunch

Thursday, February 13 - Lotsa Loonies Thursday - “I’d Wished I had stayed in Bed with a Good Book” Day – **Wear your PJs** to school and bring your favourite book to read.

Friday, February 14 - Fun Money Friday – Wear “read” for Valentine’s Day and bring in a silly amount of money.

Africa Festival of the Arts and Culture Society Presentation (pm)

February 17- Heritage Day – No School – Nora Bernard Day

February 21 – International Mother Language Day

February 26 – International Pink T-shirt day- **Wear Pink**

March 10-14 – March Break

April 19 – PTO Consignment Sale



Lockdown Drill - On **February 11, 2025**, we will be holding our second Lockdown drill. The safety and security of our students and staff is a top priority for PEES and the HRCE, therefore, we practice a few measures to ensure our school remains a safe place to learn. During a Lockdown, no one enters or exits the building, and everyone stays in a secure location away from doors and windows. Our staff will explain the drill to students beforehand and remind them afterwards that it was just practice. When possible, our police partners join us for Lockdown drills

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Do you have a child who will be starting pre-primary or primary this fall? It’s time to register!

Registration for the 2025-26 school year begins on February 3. 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 (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 or a mortgage contract); and

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.



Math games at home – Did you know that students at PEES learn and practice Fact/computational fluency skills and strategies to build their recall of math facts for 30 minutes each day? One way they do this is by playing games to reinforce their learned strategies. Playing math games at home is a great way to reinforce math concepts that students learn at school. The YouTube channel MMMathMania has many videos of math games that can be played using paper, dice, and/or playing cards. Check out the channel by searching MMMathMania on YouTube.

Celebrate African Heritage Month 2025

African Heritage Month in Nova Scotia, celebrated each February, honours the contributions of African Nova Scotians.

This year's theme, Legacy in Action: Celebrating Black Brilliance, highlights the achievements and resilience of African Nova Scotians, who have shaped the province's history for more than 400 years.

In schools, recognizing African Heritage Month is crucial for promoting cultural awareness and inclusion. It fosters understanding of the diverse cultural landscape of Nova Scotia, empowering African Nova Scotian students by reflecting their history and heritage in their classrooms. Highlighting their achievements serves as a source of inspiration.

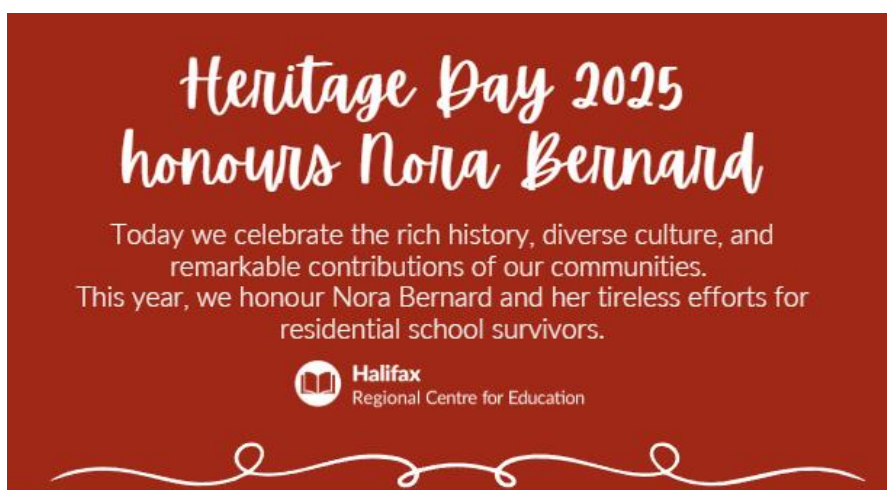
African Heritage Month 2025 is an opportunity to educate, inspire, and celebrate the richness of African heritage in Nova Scotia every day.

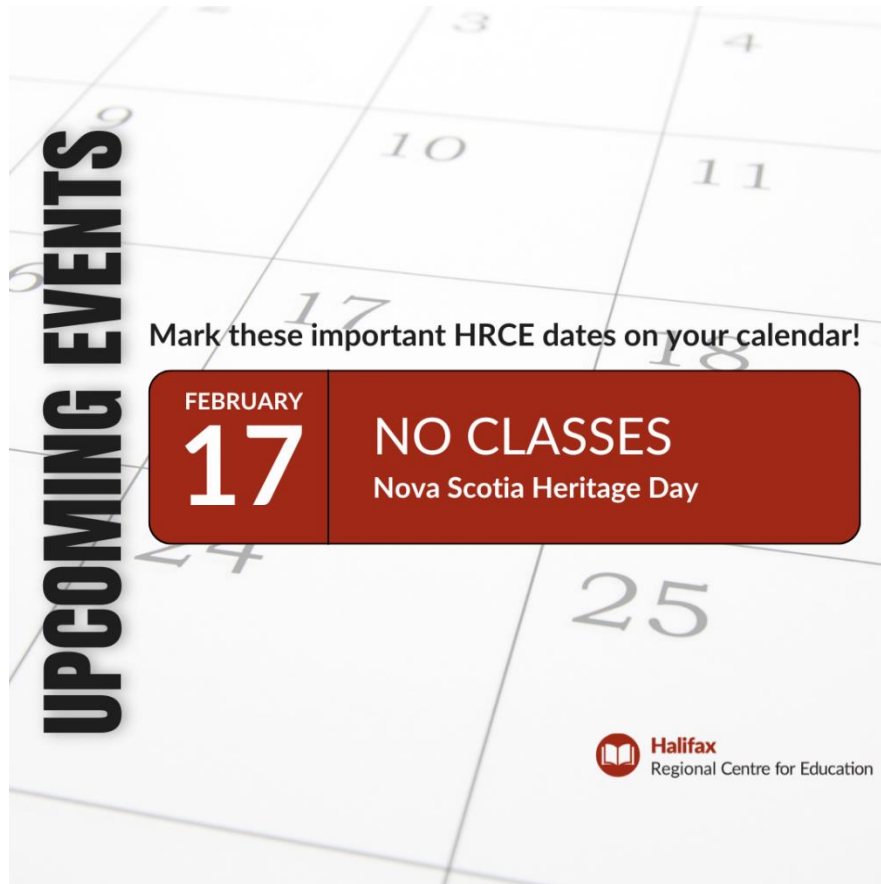


Reminder: February 17 is Heritage Day

Heritage Day 2025 honours the late Nora Madeline Bernard. From Millbrook First Nation, she was a Mi'kmaq activist who fought for her community and First Nations people across Canada.

Ms. Bernard played a key role in getting justice, recognition, and compensation for survivors of the Canadian Indian Residential School system. As a survivor of the system herself, she founded and became president of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School Association in 1987. She then started a class-action lawsuit for the survivors, which inspired others across the country to do the same, leading to the largest class-action lawsuit in Canadian history.





Literacy Development for Your Child (Primary to Grade 6)

Are you curious about your child's literacy development? A new page of information on HRCE.ca helps to break down development for children from grades Primary to 6 as they learn to read and write.

Learn more [here](#).






Raise a Reader

Family Literacy Week provided us with an ideal opportunity to communicate with you, our students' families, about the importance of at-home reading and engaging with children in literacy-related activities.

To support you in your at-home reading journey, we are sharing a simple infographic with tips for families, as well as links to useful resources for caregivers.



At-home reading tips for caregivers

-  **Look at your child's books** with them. Discuss the pictures and build vocabulary by talking about new words.
-  **Talk with your child about their books.** Ask questions about the story and encourage your child to ask their own questions.
-  **Make reading aloud a regular part of your routine** – just 15 minutes each day can make a big difference in raising a reader.
-  **Discuss examples that help them relate** to what they're reading. Connect the story to your child's world.
-  **Connect with your child's teacher** for more suggestions on how to support reading at home.



Supporting reading at home can be rewarding, but also challenging. Students may excel at reading, but some may require extra support, whether it be extra practice, or trying different

strategies to help address a learning disability. There are various resources online where parents can access tools to help their child decode words, build fluency and encourage active reading overall. All About Reading not only provides resources to support decoding strategies, but also provides parents with a readiness checklist so that they can see what level their child is at. Raz-Kids has levelled readers and is a program that is familiar to a lot of primary aged students. Some will have an account through school, but individual annual memberships are also available for purchase. Teach Your Monster to Read is a game that focuses on sounds and words to support early readers and is available as an app on Android and Apple devices.

Red Means Stop! School Bus Safety Reminder

HRCE has recorded numerous school bus stop-arm violations in Halifax Regional Municipality since the beginning of the school year. This means that motorists have failed to stop for a bus when its red lights were flashing and the stop sign was extended or when students are loading or offloading. This poses a serious risk to children and families who may be crossing the road to enter or exit the bus. Drivers may also face a fine and demerit points if caught by police.

Help us spread the word to remind drivers (including cyclists) that it is illegal to drive past a school bus when they see its red lights flashing and stop-arm extended.

Drivers must slow down and prepare to stop in all directions when they see flashing lights – either amber or red in colour – on a school bus. This means the bus is planning to stop or may have already.

Here are some safety tips from Safety Services Nova Scotia to keep in mind when waiting for or exiting the bus:

- Stand back from the edge of the road.
- Line up in single file when you see the bus coming.
- Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop.
- Walk, never run.
- Make sure the bus driver sees you if you are crossing the road. Take 10 giant steps in front of the bus before crossing.
- Wait for the bus driver to signal that it is okay to cross.
- Always look both ways before crossing the road and listen for traffic.
- Never cross the road from behind the bus.



100th Day of School – During the month of February, we will be celebrating our 100th day of school. We will be celebrating 100 Day by completing activities and playing games using the number 100.

Pink Shirt Day - National Anti-bullying Pink Shirt Day is the Day of Pink on February 26th where we stand up against bullying and discrimination. A day to stand up for kindness. Where we work together and treat others with dignity and respect. Working together we can make sure that Primrose is a safe learning and working space for everyone.

Don't Be Late! – It is important that students arrive to school on time. Students should arrive at school between **8:40- 8:50 am**. If your child is late due to an appointment, please call the school at 902-433-7100 or send in a note.



Lunch Monitors Needed! We are always in need of lunch monitors- whether you can work one day per week or all five. This is a paid position, and it can lead to other employment opportunities within our Regional Centre. Please contact Ms. Broussard at 902-433-7100 or email JBroussard@hrce.ca.

Inclement Weather

The Halifax Regional Centre for Education takes great care when making the decision to cancel schools and/or busses in the event of severe or inclement weather. Decisions on school closures and/or bus cancellations are posted on the board's website at www.hrce.ca , on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/HRCE_NS](https://twitter.com/HRCE_NS), recorded at 902-464-INFO (4636) and communicated to all local radio stations. Families can also receive notice of school and bus cancellations by e-mail or text message by following the link on the front page (left side) of the HRCE website. The weather in Nova Scotia is unpredictable so it's always a good idea for families to have a back-up plan for child care when school is cancelled. To learn more about the process on how decisions regarding closures and cancellations are made, visit: <https://www.hrce.ca/about-our-schools/parents/inclement-weather>.

Delayed Opening due to Inclement Weather -If weather conditions warrant, the Halifax Regional Centre for Education could implement a delayed opening. Delayed openings would be considered when a severe weather event has concluded but snow clearing or other operations require additional time. Delayed opening may also be considered when the physical plant is experiencing an issue such as a power outage or loss of water and additional time is required to prepare the school to open. If this was to occur, school and preprimary would be delayed by two hours. At Portland Estates school, this means school would start at **11:00 am**. If the Special Needs Bus is operating, the expectation will be that students are picked up two hours later than their regularly assigned time pending any weather-related delays. Our lunch, afternoon schedule and dismissal times will remain at their regularly scheduled times. The Excel program will be cancelled for the morning only.

Breakfast Program- The Breakfast Program at PEES is up and running. Breakfast to Go is available to students everyday of the week. All homeroom classes have Breakfast snack bins so food is available to all students throughout the day. We thank Mrs. Graham and Mrs. Hartlin for keeping our bins stocked daily.

Power Outages – The HRCE has a Power Outage Protocol. Power Outages are inevitable and when they occur they do not mean an early dismissal, often the schools remain open until Power is restored. For Portland Estates Elementary School it means that once our Emergency lighting goes (shortly after the thirty minute mark), we have lanterns posted in the main washrooms on both floor. **Our Public Address system (PA) is unavailable as well as our telephone system so do not try to contact the school instead please monitor the situation on the HRCE website or Twitter feed.** The HRCE central office will send out an Alert email if they decide to close school early and staff will contact parents/guardians using their own personal devices if possible.

HRCE Wind Chill Protocol

If the wind chill is... then...

0°C to -20°C We take care in deciding whether it is appropriate to send students outside

-21°C to -27°C- We seriously consider whether it is appropriate to send students outside below

-27°C – We do not send students outside

SafeArrival by SchoolMessenger

A Way for Families to Report Student Absences

One of our greatest priorities is ensuring all students arrive to school safely each day.

Parents/guardians of students who attend our school have the option to report their child's absence in advance using a toll-free number, the PowerSchool Parent Portal or an app!

SchoolMessenger SafeArrival – an absence management system that improves student safety and makes it easy for families to inform their child's school if they will be away – powers all three of these options.

If your child will be absent, please let us know by using one of the following methods:

Toll-Free Number

Call 1-833-582-6940 to report an absence using an automated system.

PowerSchool Parent Portal

Log into <https://sishrsb.ednet.ns.ca/public/> and access the SchoolMessenger website to report an absence.

SchoolMessenger App

Download the SchoolMessenger app for Android and iOS devices and sign up using your PowerSchool username (full email address).

For more information about reporting your child's absence and a list of frequently asked questions, visit: <https://www.hrce.ca/safearrival>

Lockdown Drill – Our second lockdown drill of the year is Lockdown drill of the year. As a reminder, a Lockdown is used when there is an immediate threat to a school. During a Lockdown, no one enters or exits the building, and everyone stays in a secure location away from doors and windows. Our staff will explain the drill to students beforehand and remind them afterwards that it was just practice. When possible, our police partners join us for Lockdown drills