

Welcome Back to School!

August 16, 2010

Hello everyone! I would like to welcome you all to the 2010-2011 school year! I look forward to meeting and working with all of our new and returning students, teachers, and parents! Each year brings a new level of excitement and challenge!

We have a few changes in our staffing this year. MaryJane Rasku will be joining the Kindergarten team this year. She will be filling Katelyn Mercer's position as she is taking extended time to stay home with her baby, Charlotte. We have smaller numbers going into grade 1 and therefore we will have three sections this year. Although we have three sections the class size will be about 22, the same as this year. Amy Tessitore will be filling a grade 2 position and Kathy Rutledge will be filling a grade 4 position. I welcome back Liz Hilton to grade 3 who has been out on extended leave. This is welcome news as it will give us smaller class numbers in each of the grades. I was able to adjust Kindergarten schedule to increase the time the children are in school. Kindergarten classes will be 15 minutes longer in the AM and start 15 minutes sooner in the PM. Our times will be 9:00 AM to 11:45 AM and 12:45 PM to 3:30 PM. All other classes, including full-day K will follow the school times of 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM.

As we have done in the past, class lists, by first names only, will be posted the Friday of the 27th. I know how anxious you are to find out who your child's teacher and classmates will be. If you do not want your child's first name listed, please contact the school prior to the 27th.

Open House will be set for August 25th from 10- 11:30 AM. We will have a short meeting in the gym and I will introduce you to the Assistant Principal, Barbara Diamond, and a representative of the PTA. Then we will have a tour of the building so you will be more familiar with your surroundings. I look forward to meeting all of you!

Did you notice any changes to the front of the building? All areas in the front of the building have been painted. The girders, poles and under-hangs in the main foyer and in the Kindergarten entrance have been painted and

look great! We have also updated the nurse, assistant principal, and psychologist's office. You will also notice bright shiny trim around many areas of the building. Of course our classrooms are bright, shiny and very clean! The custodial staff did a fabulous job getting this ready for the staff and students.

This year we will continue our work implementing the curriculum frameworks as outlined by the District and the State. A great deal of planning and revising of math is planned for this year. Professional Development Days will be geared towards the revision of math and the revision and alignment of Science and Social Studies. We will continue our work in English Language Arts and will be mapping the curriculum to enhance the teaching of grammar. This will be a very busy and challenging year for the teachers and the students.

IALAC will continue as we have done in the past. In addition to the school wide themes, we will be focusing on school bus safety, bullying and respect for all in and out of school. Our first theme will be *Friendship*. Please have your child wear their "Dawson Wear" each Friday to show school spirit.

In addition to our IALAC program of developing social skills in our students, all students will be instructed in Second Step. This program will help our students to problem solve, be empathetic to others and anger management.

Displayed in the cafeteria are two new banners. One is on char**ACT**er (is how you ACT) development and another on bullying. A focus of our program is to remind students that they have a responsibility to be respectful of others and to treat their friends as they would want to be treated. You will see and hear more about that as the year progresses.

The front door will continue to be locked. In order to enter the building you will need to ring the buzzer located to the left of the front door. You will be buzzed into the building by office staff. Please be reminded that you will still need to sign in at the front office. Doors will remain locked until 3:30 when students are dismissed. All volunteers must wear a current CORI badge. Please check the date on your badge. If it is not current please fill out the necessary paperwork and send it into the school. It takes at least a month for the paperwork to go through. Parents are not able to participate in field trips or classroom activities without a current CORI badge.

For new students and current students we will continue with our computerized lunch system. After receiving their individual codes students will input this code into a key pad when they buy their lunch. Parents are

encouraged to pay ahead for their child's lunch. Parents can pay a day at a time, weekly, monthly, or even for the entire year. This money is only to purchase lunch or milk, but not for snacks. The cafeteria manager will keep track of the individual accounts and notify you when your child no longer has money in their account. This prepay system avoids the loss of money and IOUs. Please consider this option for your child. All checks should be made out to the School Lunch Program.

I am in need of two parent volunteers to serve on SIMCO, (School Improvement Council). I would like to thank Brian Szymanski and Melissa Mott for volunteering for the last three years. Your voice is important to help guide our goals for school improvement. If you are interested please contact me at the school. We meet once a month on the third Tuesday from 7-8:30 PM in the school library. This past spring our school participated in a School Satisfaction Survey. Results of the survey are on the school website.

I have a few very important reminders. In the event of an early release, delayed opening, or other event, it is VERY important that we have current phone numbers and accurate early release plans in place. We make every effort to contact you to advise you of the dismissal, and to follow the plan that you provide to us in the fall. It is extremely important to have current and up-to-date information to ensure that your child gets home safely or if we need to contact you for another school related matter. The early release plan should be reviewed with your child, and updated as necessary.

If you choose to drive their child to school and use the front entrance, you are reminded that you must park the car in the parking lot and walk your child across the driveway. There are many cars and busses using the driveway and parking lot. Is very dangerous for the child to cross the driveway alone and despite the fact that we do have someone monitoring the parking lot, we want to be sure that we take every precaution in keeping your child safe. If at all possible, please use the drop-off at the rear of the building. Although it takes a few extra minutes, it will ensure your child's safety and eliminate additional traffic in the front of the building.

If you choose to pick up your child at the end of the day, I am requesting that you use the rear door pick-up. This ensures a smooth end of day dismissal from the office area. Please be sure that you follow the drop-off and dismissal guidelines posted on our website. And PLEASE be sure that your name is CLEARLY visible for the staff to see and ensure a smooth end of the day dismissal.

I will continue to communicate with you through a variety of methods. I will provide you with a monthly newsletter of school news and upcoming events. As you know we are all trying to "go green." In an effort to save on printing, and paper I will also be posting the newsletter on the school website. I will also post a school calendar each month to keep you abreast of school functions.

On the first day of school, September 1, I will greet each bus and welcome the children. Students in 1 and 2 will go to the cafeteria to meet their teachers. In grade 1, Ms. McQuade, Mrs. Bemenek, and Mrs. Librandi will meet their students then proceed to their classrooms. Grade 2 students will be met in the cafeteria to meet Ms. Morrissey, Ms. Tessitore, Mrs. Lagerstrom, and Ms. Lizewski. Kindergarten students will be come to school with their parents at 9:15 and go to the Kindergarten rooms through the Kindergarten entrance. After a short time parents will leave and the children will remain and go home by their pre-arranged transportation at 11:45. PM Kindergarten students will come to school with their parents at 12:45 and after a short time parents will leave and students will remain and go home with their end of day pre-arranged transportation.

Grade 3 and 4 students will go directly to the gym to meet their their teachers, Mrs. Larson, Mrs. Koziol, Mrs. Helfrick, and Mrs. Rutledge.

Grade 5 students will go to their classrooms to meet Mrs. Comeau, Mrs. St. Germain, Mrs. Horton, and Ms. Warner.

Any student who is dropped off at the back of the building in 1 and 2 will be escorted to the cafeteria. Parent and other support staff will be readily available to direct any new or late student to their classrooms or to meet their teacher in any of the designated areas.

In order to keep traffic in the front of the building to a minimum on the first day of school, parents are asked to park their cars in the Dawson pool area and walk across the street to the school. Thank you very much for cooperation in this important safety matter.

I would like to thank all the parents, teachers, support staff, and community members who spent so much time getting our school ready by copying, landscaping and other time consuming activities. Our children are truly fortunate to be in a school where the school community is committed to the education and well-being of all the children at Dawson School. A school is as strong as those that stand behind it. I look forward to another year as we work together in the tradition of providing educational excellence that

Dawson is known for. I am proud to be the principal of such a community of learners, parents, and staff.

I hope to see you all at our grade level curriculum nights and of course the annual Fall Festival!

Should you have any concerns or issues that may come up during the year, please do not hesitate to call me.

Enjoy the last few weeks of summer and I will see you all on September 1, 2010!

Yours in *IALAC*,

Patricia A. Scales, Principal