

Welcome Back to School!

Hello everyone! I would like to welcome you all to the 2009-2010 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!

This year we have a new half-time kindergarten teacher, Michelle Wilkinson and a new school psychologist. Sadly, Elizabeth Petrasovic, our school psychologist moved back to New York to join her husband who began a new job there. I am in the process of interviewing and filling this position. As you know Marilyn Stewart retired this year and Kathy Morrissey will be moving to grade two. Deb Nickerson is reassigned to grade three. Liz Hilton has been granted an extended leave and will not be returning this year.

This year we will move forward with the implementation of the Literacy Initiative. We will be focusing on the implementation of Writer's Workshop K-5. In addition we will be implementing Foundations in grades K-2. We will be continuing to implement RTI. This is better known as *Response to Intervention*. Grade 3 will be participating in a gifted and talented study in math through the University of Connecticut. This study will offer us an exciting opportunity to explore *What Works in Gifted Education* under the direction of Dr. Joseph Renzulli developed by The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented. More information about this program will be shared with you at a later time.

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 a parent volunteer to serve on SIMCO, (School Improvement Council). I would like to thank John Maher for volunteering for the last three years. He also participated on the Parent Advisory Board and the being the computer wizard for our online school survey. Being a part of the committee gives you the opportunity to help develop school goals and school plan. 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. I will also be looking for a community member and a teacher volunteer. This past spring our school participated in a School Satisfaction Survey. Although not as many parents participated as the Council would have liked the results will provide us with some insight into areas that we can address this year. I will share those results with you later in the fall for you to review.

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.

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.

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 and respect for all in and out of school. Our first theme will be *Friendship*.

I would like to thank the PTA for their very generous gift to enrich our music program. The PTA has given us an electronic piano. This piano will be an asset to our school and to your child's music experience.

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 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 2, 2009!

Yours in *IALAC*,

Patricia A. Scales, Principal