

EAST ST. MARGARET'S ELEMENTARY

JANUARY 2026



Principal's Message

Dear Families,

I want to take a moment to celebrate the incredible growth and progress our students have made so far this school year.

One area where we are seeing growth is in math. This subject challenges our students to think in new ways and develop important skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, and flexibility.

Flexible thinking—being able to approach a problem from multiple angles—is especially important in math, where there isn't always just one way to find the solution.

The attached document, titled "What Does It Mean to be Fluent With Math Facts?", can support families and caregivers in understanding what math fluency looks like in the elementary grades and how you can support a child's learning.

As we continue through the school year, let's keep encouraging our students to embrace challenges, stay curious, and remember that growth happens through persistence and a willingness to keep trying. Thank you for your continued partnership in supporting our students' growth!

All the best,
Wendi Tekamp
Principal

Mark Your Calendar January 13

Swim to Survive - Grades 3-6

January 20

Swim to Survive - Grades 3-6

January 21

Home & School General Meeting

6 PM - Virtual: [JOIN HERE](#)

January 27

Swim to Survive - Grades 3-6

Family Literacy Day

Family of Schools

In the event of inclement weather, the HRCE may announce closures, delays, or early dismissals based on Families of Schools.

Please note that ESM is in the Bayview Family of Schools.

It's important to always have a plan in place for childcare in the event of any cancellation. Please remember: as a parent or guardian, you always have the choice of whether or not to send your student to school.

Holiday Grand in Hand Grand Prize Winner

Congratulations to the winner of the \$1000 Holiday Grand in Hand, Sue Matthews. Sue's square #26 was drawn at our Holiday Concert on December 10. Thanks to everyone who bought or sold squares for this fundraiser. It was a HUGE success!



Gift Card Tree Raffle Winners

ESM staff drew the winning tickets for our Gift Card Tree Raffle on December 17. Congratulations to our winners - Bruno Lowery and Corey Bowes! Our Grand Prize winner Bruno Lowery took home \$835 in various gift cards, and our second prize winner Corey Bowes took home \$120 in Superstore gift cards.

We'd like to thank everyone who bought tickets in support of this fundraiser! And an extra special thanks to the businesses that donated gift cards to the tree:

- D&M Morash Steeplejacks
- Labour Day Picnic Cafe
- Mezza Lebanese Restaurant
- Neptune Theatre
- Oceanstone Resort & Spa
- Rhubarb Restaurant
- Rinse & Shine
- Ryer & Ryer Lobsters
- Shaw's Landing
- Sou'wester Gift & Restaurant Company

Family Literacy Day

Family Literacy Day is January 27! This year's theme is "Make Mealtime Family Learning Time!" Families can learn together through activities like reading recipes, cooking and sharing stories during meals. Find fun family activities at: FamilyLiteracyDay.ca!



What happens when a school loses power?

Learn more at hrce.ca/families/cancellations
under *Power Outage Information for Families*



Halifax
Regional Centre for Education

ESM Home & School Cafe Holiday Bake Sale

It's official - ESM has a sweet tooth!!! Our Holiday Bake Sale was a resounding success thanks to the support of our ESM Families and Friends. We'd like to thank all of our Home & School bakers for providing yummy treats for the sale, and a special thanks goes to Home & School members Leah Noble and Joan Olivella for organizing the sale. THANK YOU!

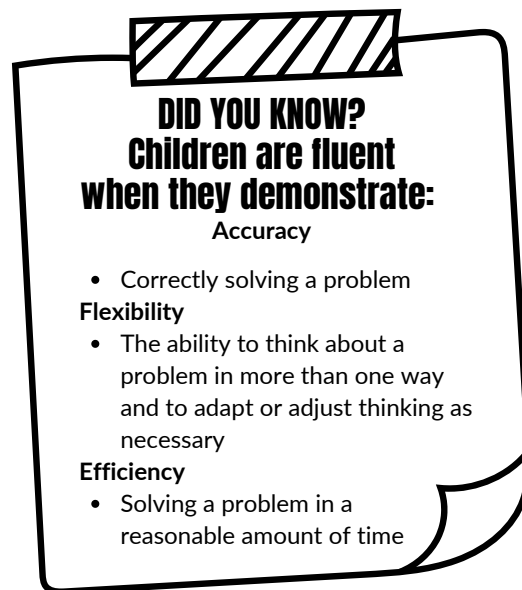
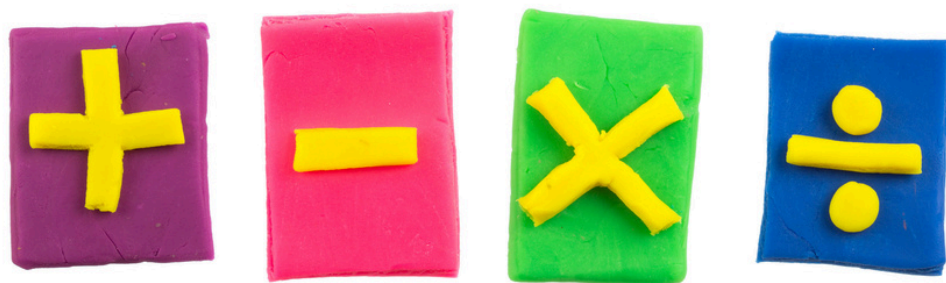
Skating Program - Save the Dates!

Mark your calendars and save the dates! Our popular ESM Family Skating Program is BACK for another year. All students and families at ESM are invited to skate at the St. Margaret's Centre in Upper Tantallon for one hour on the following dates:

- February 6, 2026 - 3:30-4:30 PM
- February 20, 2026 - 3:30-4:30 PM
- March 6, 2026 - 3:30-4:30 PM

Consent forms and further details will be sent home later this month.





What does it mean to be fluent with math facts?

Information for families and caregivers



MYTH: Math today is so different

FACT: While the math itself hasn't changed, the focus of math instruction has shifted to ensure students are actively engaged in developing an understanding of the skills and concepts. Representing concepts using models to develop strategies and exercising critical thinking is a much more effective way to build understanding.



MYTH: Memorization is the best way to master basic facts.

FACT: Children may have memorized basic facts, however, they may not have a strategy to solve the particular fact. Memorized facts can be forgotten, but when a strategy is understood, children hang on to it forever.



MYTH: Children who have memorized the facts won't be challenged.

FACT: The goal is not to memorize facts, but to develop a range of strategies to apply to more complex concepts such as multi-digit computations, decimals and fractions. Developing strategies and an understanding of when to use these appropriately, asks children to think at higher levels.



MYTH: Timed tests help children master facts.

FACT: Timed tests do not assess fluency, only accuracy and efficiency. As well, research tells us that timed tests can lead to the development of anxiety around mathematics.

Questions to support fact fluency conversations with children

- How did you solve it?
- How do you know it is correct?
- Is there another way you could solve it?
- If someone didn't know the answer to ____, how would you help them to figure it out?
- What strategy can you use to find that fact?
- How is ____ like ____? How are they different? (example: How is 2×7 like 4×7 ?)

