

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association



Priorities for 2023-25

Provincial Executive

October 20-21, 2023

Priority #1: Workload Concerns

Goal: To improve the working conditions of teachers generally and to address individual teacher workload concerns

- Programs and Services are receiving and responding to a high volume of calls/emails from members about workload concerns (teaching assignments, classes “over cap”, duty schedules, etc.) during Fall 2023. Staff are assisting and in many cases, subsequent contacts were made with District officials to advocate on behalf of the members involved.
- On September 22-23, 2023 the President and Assistant Executive Director attended SAC Provincial Executive/Regional Presidents meeting in Grand Falls. A number of topics were discussed including administrator and teacher workload, recruitment and retention of administrators and professional learning for administrators.
- On October 4, 2023 an Administrative Officer assisted in the delivery of an information session for MUN Education students on becoming an Emergency Supply teacher.
- On October 5, 2023 an Administrative Officer met with the presidents of all Special Interest Councils to discuss the importance initiatives Councils may undertake to support teachers.
- A Leadership Seminar has been scheduled for November 7-8, 2023 for members of the Executives of Special Interest Councils.
- On October 2-3, 2023 Administrative Officers Darlene Johnson and Bob Johnston hosted CAPTTO PD Officers in St. John’s.
- Programs and Services staff have assisted numerous teachers during Fall 2023 in drafting correspondence re: class size and composition and inadequate resources that prevent them from effectively delivering curriculum and ensuring a safe and effective teaching and learning environment despite their best efforts as caring and competent professions. In at least one case, additional allocations have followed.
- During the first month and half of 2023-24, Administrative Officers have assisted teachers with exercising the right to refuse unsafe work under OHS legislation. Members have been provided with advice and support regarding violence in the classroom, rights, responsibilities, and options.
- On September 25, 2023 the NLTA Fall campaign for “Invest in our Kids” was relaunched. The “Hidden Reality” television commercial was used as well as social media assets that highlighted the need for more recruitment and retention initiatives in schools throughout the province and the negative impact of teacher shortages on teaching and learning.
- On October 5, 2023 the NLTA social media campaign #HiddenRealityNL was relaunched, using actual quotes from members to highlight the reality in schools. The timing of the campaign coincided with World Teachers’ Day and to raise awareness and increase

pressure on government leading into the resumption of negotiations and the reopening of the House of Assembly for the Fall session.

Priority #2: Membership Well-Being and Protection

Goal: To promote and improve supports for teacher health and wellness, including teacher mental health and well-being

- EAP wrote a wellness article for the September/October 2023 Bulletin on 'The Sound of Silence'.
- EAP Coordinators are completing self-directed learning through virtual attendance at the 2023 Suicide Prevention Summit from the Mental Health Academy.
- The volume of teachers requiring EAP support and intervention continues to grow. More than 1 in 7 teachers under NLESD are currently accessing EAP supports. Due to the continued growth of mental health referrals to the EAP for Teachers program, EAP has had to significantly reduce the number of workshops provided in schools. There are ongoing requests and a need for more wellness workshops in schools throughout the province.
- Programs and Services staff wrote an article for the first edition of the Bulletin for 2023-24 advising caution/careful consideration when it comes to volunteering for extra-curricular activities and to be cognizant of not taking on an extra-curricular workload that would cause them stress.
- Programs and Services staff assisted/advised several members who expressed concern about the "Kids in the Know" training during early Fall 2023. The Association has since been granted representation at the provincial table for consultation on subsequent roll out plans for this program in K-9 that will take place over the next 2 years.
- On September 20, 2023 President Trent Langdon and an Administrative Officer represented the NLTA at a 'No Space For Hate' rally/counter-protest in St. John's. The rally was organized by community groups in response to local and national anti-2SLGBTQIA+ events taking place the same day. President Langdon spoke at the rally and reiterated the Association's support for programming intended to promote safe & inclusive teaching and learning environments for all members of our school communities.
- The President attended the announcement of the first provincial "Well-Being Week" in September 2023 and EAP Coordinators prepared a supportive message and reminder of EAP services that was emailed to all members early in that week.
- EAP Coordinators prepared a supportive message and reminder of EAP services that was emailed to members on World Mental Health Day (October 10, 2023).
- An Administrative Officer wrote an article for the September/October 2023 Bulletin on workplace violence and options for dealing with such situations, including a reminder of the NLTA online Violent Incident Tracking Form.
- During the first month and half of 2023-24, Administrative Officers have assisted teachers with exercising the right to refuse unsafe work under OHS legislation. Members have been

provided with advice and support regarding violence in the classroom, rights, responsibilities, and options.

- Discussions have commenced (September-October, 2023) with DOE officials regarding establishing a Think Tank on teacher retention and recruitment. This was first raised in a meeting between the President and Minister of Education, along with the Executive Director and Deputy Minister, on September 14, 2023. The Executive Director had follow-up meetings with DOE officials on September 21 and October 5. While still in very early stages, a planning meeting between NLTA, NLESD and DOE representatives is scheduled for October 17, 2023.
- The first meeting of the School Safety Coalition, initiated by the President, was held at the NLTA offices on September 28, 2023. In attendance were: the NLTA President and Executive Director; the Minister of Justice and Public Safety and the Minister of Education; the Executive Director of the Federation of School Councils; representatives from the RNC and RCMP, Relationships First and the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development.
- In late August 2023, the NLTA was consulted and provided feedback to the DOE on proposed adjustments to current NLESD policy intended to reflect the integration of the District into the DOE. While all the proposed changes are, at this stage, technical in nature (for example, changes in titles, etc.), NLTA flagged policies on secure schools and lockdown procedures for more substantive review and consultation moving forward.
- The Association is preparing a letter from the President to NL senators in Ottawa to advocate for support of the CTF proposed amendment to the Criminal Code for language to replace section 43 in the event that the current provision is repealed in response to a recommendation from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report. NLTA has also provided CTF with relevant information on NL cases and opinions from our legal counsel in support of these efforts.
- The Assistant Executive Director and an Administrative Officer attended a training session on the use of Naloxone kits in incidents of known/suspected opioid overdose on September 14, 2023, along with a number of NLESD management staff. The NLESD has not made any decisions regarding providing the kits in schools, and the Association continues to monitor this matter closely, including consulting with legal counsel as needed.

Priority #3: Collective Bargaining and Services for Members

Goal: To continue to provide exceptional representation and supports to members, including through collective bargaining and other programs and services

- On August 9th, 2023 the Negotiating Team had a 1-day session with the Employer during which the Association presented its most recent pass. The next session of negotiations took place from October 11-13, inclusive.
- On August 29, 2023 the President, Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director met with Department and District officials, including the Minister of Finance and Superintendent Terry Hall, to discuss past issues/concerns with payroll and the plan moving forward. It was agreed that a subsequent meeting would be held in January to debrief how changes made during the Fall have improved things or if further measures might be required. A follow-up meeting was held with the Assistant Executive Director, the Comptroller for Government Payroll and Payroll Liaison Officers at the District and Department to discuss the plan.
- Programs and Services staff assisted members with a number of payroll questions/issues during September 2023, the majority of which have been resolved. However, payroll issues have continued to arise in October – Administrative Officers are assisting members as necessary while broader system discussions are ongoing.
- While some permanent teachers have already received their guidance allowances on time (September 2023) due to NLTA advocacy/grievances over the past few years, some issues do remain. Employer officials have been advised that, in the absence of addressing these issues in a timely manner, the policy grievance and appropriate individual grievances will proceed to arbitration this year.
- In early September 2023, the Association sent a survey to members requesting information about the impact of substitute shortages and vacant positions during the 2022-23 school year. Response rates were good, information is being used as appropriate in bargaining, and anecdotal submissions have been used in the updated #hiddenreality social media campaign content.
- The Assistant Executive Director and Administrative Officer, Miriam Sheppard, attended CAPTTO Economic Welfare meetings in Prince Edward Island September 18-19, 2023. The focus of discussion was on current bargaining in the Atlantic region.
- On September 22-23, 2023, the Assistant Executive Director and the President attended SAC Provincial Executive/Regional Presidents meeting in Grand Falls. A number of topics were

discussed including administrator and teacher workload, recruitment and retention of administrators and professional learning for administrators.

- The Administrative Officer responsible for Group Insurance completed The Advanced Trust Management Course (ATMS A).
- The first of five Pre-Retirement Seminars was held in Deer Lake on September 28-29, 2023.
- A Mid-Career Financial Information Seminar is scheduled in Labrador West Branch for Oct. 21, 2023 in Labrador City.
- The first of three Branch Leadership Seminars was held on October 13-14 in St. John's.
- Programs and Services staff have assisted numerous teachers during Fall 2023 in drafting correspondence re: class size and composition and inadequate resources that prevent them from effectively delivering curriculum and ensuring a safe and effective teaching and learning environment despite their best efforts as caring and competent professions. In at least one case, additional allocations have followed.
- In early Fall 2023, Programs and Services have assisted and are working with teachers in situations where the right to refuse unsafe work is being considered or exercised. Staff have provided advice on incidents of violence in the classroom, rights, responsibilities, and options.
- Administrative Officers are assisting and representing a number of teachers in complex discipline investigations.
- ATIPP requests for information related to violent incidents at two schools were submitted in 2022-23. Some disclosure has been received in September 2023 but the NLTA filed for a review by the OIPC in early October to ensure that the exemption cited to prevent release of other materials was properly applied.

Priority #4: Retention, Recruitment and Resourcing

Goal: To address teacher retention and recruitment challenges and proper resourcing of public education through advocating for effective and appropriate Government/employer action and investment, and through promoting the teaching profession and public education

- On August 7, 2023 the Labrador West Recruitment and Retention Committee (as per the Labrador West Collective Agreement) met via Zoom. In attendance for the Association were the Executive Director and the Labrador West Branch President. The main focus for discussion was planning for focus groups to be conducted in follow up to the member survey carried out last year.
- On September 15, 2023 the Assistant Executive Director facilitated a session with 90 secondary pre-service teachers at Memorial University, expressing/highlighting the significance of becoming a teacher and specifically encouraging students to stay/teach in Newfoundland and Labrador upon completion of the degree.
- On September 20, the Executive Director and Assistant Director had a meeting with the Director of CSFP to discuss the emergency staffing situation currently being experienced at two of the five schools for the district. Subsequent discussions with the Director and Assistant Deputy Minister for the DOE followed in late September/early October to provide feedback and brainstorm ideas to help improve things.
- On September 22-23, 2023 the Assistant Executive Director and the President attended SAC Provincial Executive/Regional Presidents meeting in Grand Falls. A number of topics were discussed including administrator and teacher workload, recruitment and retention of administrators and professional learning for administrators.
- Discussions have commenced (September-October, 2023) with DOE officials regarding establishing a Think Tank on teacher retention and recruitment. This was first raised in a meeting between the President and Minister of Education, along with the Executive Director and Deputy Minister, on September 14, 2023. The Executive Director had follow-up meetings with DOE officials on September 21 and October 5. While still in the very early stages, a planning meeting between NLTA, NLESD and DOE representatives is scheduled for October 17, 2023.
- Programs and Services staff assisted members experiencing issues getting approved on the substitute list in early Fall 2023.

- Recruitment, retention and resourcing issues continue to be a consideration in bargaining.
- An Administrative Officer met with Assistant Deputy Minister to discuss the importance of supporting new teachers. A two-day conference to support Beginning Teachers has been scheduled for November 14-15, 2023.
- On September 25, 2023 the Fall campaign for Invest in our Kids was relaunched. The Hidden Reality television commercial was used as well as social media assets that highlighted the need for more recruitment and retention initiatives in schools throughout the province.
- On October 5, 2023 the NLTA social media campaign #HiddenRealityNL was relaunched, using actual quotes from members to highlight the reality in schools. The timing of the campaign coincided with World Teachers' Day and to raise awareness and increase pressure on government leading into the resumption of negotiations and the reopening of the House of Assembly for the Fall session.
- On October 5, 2023, World Teachers' Day, the Council of Atlantic Provinces and Territory Teachers' Organizations (CAPTTO) issued a joint statement calling on governments and education entities to fulfill their obligation of ensuring that every classroom in every school is provided with adequate resources to meet the complicated and diverse needs of all students. The statement was issued to media and shared on social media by provincial teacher organizations in NL, NS, NB, PEI and Nunavut.
- Production of the next Teachers Change Lives story is underway during Fall 2023. This campaign continues to be a key component of NLTA efforts to both promote the profession and encourage those who are considering becoming teachers.
- The next Teacher Induction Ceremony for new MUN Faculty of Education graduates will take place on October 19, 2023.

Priority #5: Advocacy on and Response to Government Initiatives

Goal: To take actions, through meaningful consultation and advocacy efforts, to ensure that the development and implementation of Government policy, reports and decisions that impact public education are informed by and in keeping with NLTA objectives and the interests of members

- On August 3rd, 2023 the Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director met with the Deputy Minister for Education Transformation to discuss what early plans for this portfolio. There was an assurance that as the plan is unveiled and implemented, NLTA will be consulted and invited to partner where appropriate. NLTA representatives stressed the point that new initiatives cannot be expected to be successful in the absence of adequate human resources in schools.
- In late August 2023, the NLTA was consulted and provided feedback to the DOE on proposed adjustments to current NLESD policy intended to reflect the integration of the District into the DOE. While all the proposed changes are, at this stage, technical in nature (for example, changes in titles, etc.), NLTA flagged policies on secure schools and lockdown procedures for more substantive review and consultation moving forward.
- Programs and Services staff assisted/advised several members who expressed concern about the “Kids in the Know” training during early Fall 2023. The Association has since been granted representation at the provincial table for consultation on subsequent roll out plans for this program in K-9 that will take place over the next 2 years.
- On September 25, the Fall campaign for Invest in our Kids was relaunched. The Hidden Reality television commercial was used as well as social media assets that highlighted the need for more recruitment and retention initiatives in schools throughout the province.
- On October 5, 2023 the NLTA social media campaign #HiddenRealityNL was relaunched, using actual quotes from members to highlight the reality in schools. The timing of the campaign coincided with World Teachers’ Day and to raise awareness and increase pressure on government leading into the resumption of negotiations and the reopening of the House of Assembly for the Fall session.
- The President and Executive Director participated in a teleconference meeting with DOE officials on September 25, 2023 in advance of the release of the September monthly update on the NLESD integration.
- Discussions have commenced (September-October, 2023) with DOE officials regarding establishing a Think Tank on teacher retention and recruitment. This was first raised in a meeting between the President and Minister of Education, along with the Executive Director

and Deputy Minister, on September 14, 2023. The Executive Director had follow-up meetings with DOE officials on September 21 and October 5. While still in very early stages, a planning meeting between NLTA, NLESD and DOE representatives is scheduled for October 17, 2023.

- The Executive Director has requested a meeting with the Deputy Minister to discuss the legislative agenda for the Fall 2023 sitting of the House of Assembly.