

# Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association



## Priorities for 2023-25

Joint Council

March 1-2, 2024

# 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. This continues into January/February 2024.
- A Leadership Seminar for Presidents of all Special Interest Councils (and one other Executive member) was hosted by the NLTA Administrative Staff contact for SICs on November 7-8, 2023.
- 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 professionals. In at least one case, additional allocations have followed.
- During the Fall 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. Several such refusals are still ongoing in January/February 2024.
- On November 8, 2023, the President, Association Staff and teacher members of the School Board/Teacher Liaison Committee met with the employer representatives to discuss a number of issues and concerns, many of which were related to teacher workload.
- On November 20, 2023, the Association was made aware of significant changes that had to be made to the NLESD Assessment and Evaluation Regulations, with the new Guidelines to take effect “immediately”. The nature and timing of the changes would have significant impact on workload for teachers. This was also done without consultation or input from teachers. NLTA staff intervened immediately and, after several conversations with Department of Education officials, implementation of the guidelines was repealed/postponed via a communication from District staff to principals on November 21, 2023. The Association will continue to monitor this issue post-integration and advocate for members on any proposed changes moving forward.
- At their December 2023 meeting, the Teachers’ Pension Plan Joint Sponsor Body considered a proposal to extend (for the current school year) the maximum number of days which a retired teacher can substitute. The proposal was approved and as such,

retirees will be able to substitute beyond the normal maximum for the current school year.

- The Association has worked with M5 to develop a campaign to run in March/April 2024 that highlights the current struggles in the classroom (i.e.: workload, violence, lack of resources). The strategic timing of the campaign is being considered in relation to the Teachers Think Tank, as well as the Provincial Budget and potential (rumoured) call for a Spring 2024 Provincial Election.
- In response to changes to the guidelines for comprehensive assessments which now require lead assessors to complete hearing and vision screeners, Programs and Services staff have filed two ATIPP requests. The report from one of these requests has resulted in the filing of a policy grievance (failure to consult).
- In December 2023, an arbitration challenging an employer hiring decision was concluded. A synopsis of this arbitration will be published in *The Bulletin* once a ruling is made.
- In December 2023, on behalf of the Special Interest Council leadership, Programs and Services staff have lobbied NLSchools and the Department of Education outlining the key challenges facing their members and their key professional learning needs. A meeting with the Assistant Deputy Minister is planned for January 2024.
- Programs and Services staff are assisting the School Administrators' Council in establishing funding guidelines and leave for members to attend the Provincial SAC Conference and the National CAP Conference in Spring 2024.
- The President and Executive Director met with the new Dean of the MUN Faculty of Education on January 10, 2024. Discussion included the topics of recruiting more students to the Faculty and making teacher training programs more easily accessible for interested individuals living in rural/remote areas.
- An Administrative Officer and the Executive Director liaised with the CSFP and the ADM for K-12 Education in December 2023 and January 2024 to assist in supporting efforts to increase staffing levels at Ecole Boreale in HVGB, which is seriously understaffed due to recruitment challenges.
- Programs & Services prepared an article on reporting workplace violence for the January/February 2024 edition of *The Bulletin*.
- An Administrative Officer and Executive Member, Sean Weir, met virtually with Speech Language Pathologists from across the province to address workload concerns and concerns with a lack of clear guidelines and expectations for the work of SLPs. The Administrative Officer will pursue recommendations with Denise King, SS Manager with the DOE during the week of February 19-22, 2024.
- An appeal has been filed (February 2024) with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner in response to an ATIPP request filed with the Department of Health.
- A policy grievance has been filed regarding changes to policy which require NLTA members to administer hearing and vision screeners prior to comprehensive

assessments. A first meeting with ADM, Scott Linehan, has already occurred and a second meeting is scheduled for February 20 in an effort to resolve the matter.

- On February 9, 2024, the NLTA submitted a pre-Budget submission to the Provincial Government in advance of Budget 2024. The submission, entitled 'It's Not Business as Usual in our Classrooms – and That's Not OK, highlights the concerns and struggles members are facing every day and links investment in education to improvements in health care, the economy, and justice issues. The submission was provided to all members and was shared with the media and general public via social media.
- On February 23, 2024, the Teachers Think Tank event was held virtually. More than 2200 NLTA members completed the questionnaire made available in advance of the virtual event. Over 70 individuals took part and discussed concerns and issues in the public education system and work on solutions to address those issues. Following the event, the President and Minister of Education held a media availability, and government announced some initial initiatives in response to feedback received, including additional student assistant time, PL time for teacher wellness, and a financial grant to assist efforts to support teacher mental health/well-being. A 'What We Heard' document should be available from the Office of Public Engagement in the coming weeks and the NLTA will be actively involved in the next steps of actioning the items discussed during the Think Tank.

## 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

*(See Appendix for updates on recommendations from the Teacher Mental Health and Well-being Ad Hoc Committee)*

- 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 during Fall 2023 and early 2024. 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 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 October 30 and November 2, 2023, two Administrative Officers presented sessions on The Code of Ethics and Legal Issues impacting teachers for Memorial University Faculty of Education students.
- During the Fall of 2023, 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. Several such refusals are still ongoing in January 2024.
- Throughout the Fall of 2023 and January/February 2024, the NLTA had meetings with DOE officials regarding the upcoming Teacher Think Tank event. The Questionnaire, to be sent to members in early 2024, was finalized. The working committee has planned/organized the details of the virtual Think Tank event to be held in early 2024, following the completion of the membership questionnaire. The Think Tank will focus on recruitment and retention, with the ultimate goal of developing an action plan to address areas of concern.
- The second meeting of the School Safety Coalition, initiated by the President, was held at the NLTA office on January 31, 2024. In attendance were: the NLTA President and Executive Director; senior representatives from the departments of Justice and Public Safety, Education, and Health and Community Services; the President 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 and mid November 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 prepared a letter from the President to all 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 President and Executive Director have met with three senators to date (November 2023, December and February 2024) and a further meeting is scheduled for April 2024.
- EAP wrote a wellness article for the November/December 2023 edition of *The Bulletin* on 'The Gift of Soft Eyes During this Holiday Season'.
- One EAP Coordinator completed the Self-Regulation Foundations Certificate Program. Both EAP Coordinators have now completed certification in self-regulation as of November 2023.
- EAP Coordinators provided teacher wellness packages to several schools during Fall 2023 as a resource and support for their PD days during these stressful times.
- The Association received data on student violence/aggression in schools in late December 2023 via ATTIP requests filed with the RNC, RCMP, NLESD and CSFP. Using this information, the Association has worked with M5 to develop a campaign to run in March 2024 that highlights the current struggles in the classroom (i.e.: workload, violence, lack of resources). The strategic timing of the campaign is being considered in relation to the Teachers Think Tank, as well as the Provincial Budget and potential (rumoured) call for a Spring 2024 Provincial Election.
- An NLTA Administrative Officer conducted teacher PL sessions at two central regions schools in November 2023.
- An NLTA Administrative Officer delivered a session on Dealing with Difficult Situations during an Avalon region school PL day in November 2023.
- The Think Tank Questionnaire was distributed to teachers (electronically) for completion beginning in January 2024 and was available for 3 weeks. More than 2200 NLTA members responded. This will be followed by the virtual Think Tank event on February 23, 2024. Participants will include officials from Government (including the Premier and the Minister of

Education), NLTA representatives (including teachers) and other invited guests. The agenda and attended list are under development.

- The President wrote to the Minister of Education in January 2024 to initiate advocacy efforts for the establishment of a paid orientation program/sessions for newly hired teachers.
- On November 20, 2023, the Association was made aware of significant changes that had been made to the NLESD Assessment and Evaluation Regulations, with the new Guidelines to take effect “immediately”. The nature and timing of the changes would have significant impact on workload for teachers. This was also done without consultation or input from teachers. NLTA staff intervened immediately and, after several conversations with Department of Education officials, implementation of the guidelines was repealed/postponed via a communication from District staff to principals on November 21, 2023. The Association continues to monitor this issue post-integration and will advocate for members on any proposed changes moving forward.
- The President and Assistant Executive Director met with members of the Churchill Falls Branch in January 2024 to discuss concerns they have with their employer and provide advice/support for addressing these.
- Programs & Services provided articles on reporting workplace violence and the basics of workplace accommodations for the January/February 2024 edition of *The Bulletin*.
- EAP wrote a wellness article for the January/February 2024 edition of *The Bulletin* titled, ‘The Deal on Deep Listening’.
- In conjunction with Bell Let’s Talk Day (January 24, 2024), the Association held a membership prize contest via social media to help raise awareness of the EAP for teachers.
- In response to a severe weather situation in Corner Brook and surrounding areas on January 18, 2024, the Association assigned an Administrative Officer in Programs and Services to be the primary contact to assist concerned members. The Assistant Executive Director and Executive Director brought a number of issues and concerns to the attention of NLSchools officials. The President had several media interviews on January 19, and wrote to the Minister on January 22 to outline concerns and request a full investigation of what occurred and thorough review of relevant employer policies and procedures.
- An Administrative Officer wrote an article for the January/February 2024 edition of *The Bulletin* on the structure of the NLTA Group Insurance Plan.
- EAP provided intervention and wellness supports to school(s) in relation to stress, grief/loss, and trauma during late 2023 and January/February 2024.
- On February 9, 2024, the NLTA submitted a pre-Budget submission to the Provincial Government in advance of Budget 2024. The submission, entitled ‘It’s Not Business as Usual in our Classrooms – and That’s Not OK’, highlights the concerns and struggles members are facing every day and links investment in education to improvements in health care, the

economy, and justice issues. The submission was provided to all members and was shared with the media and general public via social media.

- On February 9, 2024, an administrative officer delivered a school PL session on Life-Work Balance at William Mercer Academy, Dover.
- On February 23, 2024, the Teachers Think Tank event was held virtually. Over 70 individuals took part and discussed concerns and issues in the public education system and work on generating suggested solutions to address those issues. Following the event, the President and Minister of Education held a media availability, and government announced some initial initiatives in response to feedback received, including additional student assistant time, PL time for teacher wellness, and a financial grant to assist efforts to support teacher mental health/well-being. A 'What We Heard' document should be available from the Office of Public Engagement in the coming weeks and the NLTA will be actively involved in the next steps of actioning the items discussed during the Think Tank.
- The NLTA is liaising with the Department of Education on scheduling a meeting of the EAP Coordinating Committee in March 2024 to start the process for filling the new EAP Coordinator position negotiated in the new collective agreement.
- The President, Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director will be meeting with the Dean and other representatives of the MUN Faculty of Education in early March 2024 to discuss the planning of a day for NLTA information/PL sessions for students of the Faculty.



## 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

- NLTA staff had further meetings with NLESD and Government officials in November 2023 as part of ongoing discussions related to payroll. NLESD has a process in place to ensure teachers will be notified when an overpayment occurs and has confirmed that, by default, repayments will be recovered in accordance with the collective agreement (over 12 months) and members will have the opportunity to make alternate arrangements should they wish. Retroactive payments are in the process of being taxed using a “bonus tax method” which will better reflect normal tax amounts that would have been deducted had monies been received on time over several pay periods rather than all at once. Codes have been developed in the payroll system to address retroactive pay scenarios being paid using the bonus tax method automatically going forward. Any new issues that NLTA has brought forward on this have resulted in updates to payroll coding as well.
- Government officials have advised (Fall 2023) that options for a new payroll system to replace TCAS are being explored. In this regard, NLTA continues to stress the importance of including in this project options for members to be able to privately access personal information such as sick leave balances as well as the need for improvements to pay advice information, to make pay statements easier to understand. A letter relating to leave balances is part of the recently (December 2023) ratified collective agreement, in which the parties acknowledge that the Employer is exploring methods in which employees can access their leave accruals.
- The President, Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director met with the Minister of Finance and senior government officials responsible for payroll on February 7, 2024. Areas of progress were acknowledged and government representatives confirmed that work continues on modernizing the Teacher Payroll system, including exploring options for self-service access to leave information and off-cycle pay runs. Concerns around overpayment recovery practices were also discussed. The intention is to hold another update meeting prior to the end of the 2023-24 school year.
- 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 over the Fall 2023 and early 2024 – Administrative Officers are assisting members as necessary while broader system discussions are ongoing.

- While some permanent teachers have 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.
- Two Administrative Officers attended CAPTTO Economic Welfare meetings in in Halifax in February 2024. Discussion topics included legal updates on issues of teachers harassment, ongoing arbitrations in the region on workplace violence and the impact of AI.
- The Administrative Officer responsible for Group Insurance completed The Advanced Trust Management Course (ATMS A) in Fall 2023.
- All five Pre-Retirement Seminars were held in Deer Lake, Gander and three in St. John's over the Fall 2023.
- Programs and Services staff provided a Financial Wellness presentation at the Conception Bay South Branch on November 8, 2023.
- Three Branch Leadership sessions were held through the months of October and November 2023. Sessions were held in St. John's (October 13-14), Corner Brook (October 27-28) and Grand Falls (November 3-4). All sessions were well attended and well received.
- 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 professionals. 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. Several such refusals are still ongoing in January 2024.
- Administrative Officers are assisting and representing a number of teachers in complex discipline investigations during Fall 2023 and early 2024.
- 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 October to ensure that the exemption cited to prevent release of other materials was properly applied. The exemption due to ongoing law enforcement matters was upheld by the OIPC but this file remains active as of February 2024. Further disclosure will be sought once law enforcement matters have concluded.
- An Administrative Officer attended the annual meeting of la CAFÉ, la Conférence des Associations francophones d'éducation, on November 12-14, 2023. La CAFÉ represents francophone teacher organizations across the country. As part of the session, staff outlined the priorities of the NLTA and presented an overview of French first language education in the province.

- An Administrative Officer attended a virtual meeting of the CTF Francophone Symposium with francophone liaison counterparts as part of CTF initiatives in French First Language Education on November 16, 2023. A second meeting is scheduled for May 2024.
- An Administrative Officer prepared an article for the November/December 2023 edition of *The Bulletin* to assist members in accurately estimating retirement income.
- Throughout the month of November 2023, the negotiating process intensified significantly. On November 9, 2023, the Negotiating Team, after 36 combined passes with the employer/government, came to the conclusion that they had reached a point in the process where no better deal could be reached without teachers facing job action. On November 17, 2023, a formal recommendation was made to Provincial Executive in a special meeting that the tentative agreement be put to the membership for a vote. This recommendation was subsequently accepted/passed by Provincial Executive. On November 18, 2023, a special Joint Council meeting was held to present Joint Council with the details of the Tentative Agreement and Joint Council subsequently voted on the wording of the ballot for the December 5-7 ratification vote. Several sessions (in person and virtual, all well-attended) were held to provide members with information regarding the Tentative Agreement and to respond to their questions.
- A new Provincial Collective Agreement was ratified on December 7, 2023. A total of 5211 members (72% of eligible voters) voted with 76% voting to accept the contract. An update was sent to members in early January 2024 regarding timing of signing and implementation in relation to pay matters.
- The 2022-26 Provincial Collective Agreement was signed as of February 1, 2024. A detailed summary of changes was sent to all members on February 12, 2024 and is accessible on the NLTA website.
- In preparation for Labrador Benefits Agreement negotiations, the Association is exploring providers and cost for conducting a cost-of-living analysis for the various regions of Labrador, with the goal of cost-sharing such a project with the other unions covered by this agreement.
- Education Week 2024 will be held March 17-22 with the theme Planting Positivity/Semer la Positivité. The week will include a social media contest for members and schools, an art contest for grades K-6 and a proclamation signing with the Minister of Education. Teachers will be provided with items for their students/classes and the NLTA is partnering with School Sport NL again this year for Dart Outdoors as well as Agriculture in the Classroom to provide relevant resources for the week.
- Administrative Officers communicated with CSFP staff in early 2024 to ensure appropriate provision of benefits for substitute and replacement teachers.
- Programs & Services provided articles on reporting workplace violence, the basics of workplace accommodations and the DSLP for the January/February 2024 edition of *The Bulletin*.

- Programs & Services are assisting members with a number of workplace accommodations as of January/February 2024.
- Three Beginning Teachers' Conferences have been held, one on December 2-3, 2023, in St. John's, one on January 13-14, 2024, in Deer Lake and a third on February 10-11 in Goose Bay.
- A Mid-Career all day Financial Information Seminar is scheduled for Clarenbridge branch on April 27, 2024.
- A Mid-Career all day Financial Information Seminar is scheduled for Exploits Valley branch on May 11, 2024.
- Programs and Services staff provided a Financial Wellness presentation in person to Waterford Valley Branch on January 24, 2024.
- Programs and Services staff provided a Financial Wellness presentation at Mount Pearl Senior High on February 2, 2024.
- Programs and Services staff are providing a Financial Wellness presentation at St. Peter's Primary on March 1, 2024.
- Programs and Services staff are providing a Financial Wellness presentation at Riverwood Academy on March 8, 2024.
- After intervention by an Administrative Officer, a standing calculation inconsistency with the seniority list has been rectified.
- Two Administrative Officers attended CAPTTO PL meetings in Halifax on January 23 and 24, 2024.
- An Administrative Officer has engaged with the New Brunswick Teacher's Association to avail of professional learning being delivered by experts in the field of progressive discipline. A decision will then be made on whether to engage the School Administrator's Council in future learning opportunities with this group in March 2024.
- The Assistant Executive Director and an Administrative Officer met with HR officials from NLSchools in an effort to clarify the parameters used by NLSchools in the consideration of equivalency.
- An Administrative Officer met with the School Administrators' Council on February 5, 2024, to assist with planning for a provincial conference in April 2024 and to help facilitate attendance at the Canadian Association of Principals conference in May 2024.
- February 8, 2024 – the President and Assistant Executive Director visited Juniper Ridge Academy in light of a recent school tragedy that occurred. Follow up communication and support has been ongoing with several staff at that school in relation to that particular tragedy.
- February 11-17, 2024, was Teacher Appreciation Week. As in previous years, the NLTA held a social media contest and asked for posts about the great work of teachers. Four schools were randomly chosen to win a prize.

- February 14, 2024, was Janeway Day in Schools. In the event of a weather closure, schools were encouraged to hold Janeway Day on an alternate date. Since 1986, students and teachers have donated more than \$1.2 million to The Janeway Children's Health and Rehabilitation Centre.
- As of the end of February 2024, NLTA staff continue to receive and respond to a high volume of contact from the membership re a wide variety of issues (eg. workload, discipline/allegations investigations, matters leading to potential grievance, etc.)

## 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

- The Labrador West Recruitment and Retention Committee (as per the Labrador West Collective Agreement) met via Zoom in August 2023. 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. Subsequently, the Department initiated the Teachers Think Tank and ongoing work related to NLESD integration has created some challenges in moving this forward. The Association continues to prioritize a Labrador West focus within efforts to address recruitment and retention with a view to moving forward early in 2024. The Committee met most recently on January 23, 2024, with further details on focus groups, etc. expected to be confirmed in early March.
- Throughout the Fall of 2023 and January/February 2024, the NLTA had meetings with DOE officials regarding the upcoming Teacher Think Tank event. The Questionnaire, to be sent to members in early 2024, was finalized. The working committee has planned/organized the details of the virtual Think Tank event to be held in early 2024, following the completion of the membership questionnaire. The Think Tank will focus on recruitment and retention, with the ultimate goal of developing an action plan to address areas of concern.
- Recruitment, retention and resourcing issues continued to be a consideration in bargaining during Fall 2023. A number of provisions were negotiated as a result (e.g. committee, isolation pay improvements, changes to hiring process.)
- The NLTA, a proud sponsor of the Kids Eat Smart Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, participated in the recent KES Radiothon on November 8, 2023. President Trent Langdon was joined by Executive Members Angela Dawe and Lynette Snook. NLTA sponsorship of KES is publicly acknowledged and part of efforts to promote the profession.
- On October 11, 2023, the Teachers Change Lives campaign was recognized at ICE Awards in Halifax. The ICE Awards celebrate creative excellence in Atlantic Canada. Atlantic Business Magazine organizes the annual awards show to recognize the best in advertising, design, digital, and creativity, inspiring the highest creative bar possible. TCL won Gold and Silver in

three categories: Public Service – Digital, Public Service - Integrated Campaign and Public Service - TV/Broadcast Campaign.

- On November 20, 2023, the latest Teachers Change Lives story was released, featuring Lindsay Hellings, a teacher at Amos Comenius Memorial School in Hopedale. Lindsay taught herself braille to help teach her visually impaired student how to read. One of our videos for this campaign is offered with descriptive video for people with vision loss. The campaign ran for four weeks on TV, in cinema and on social media. Responses have been very positive.
- The most recent Teacher Induction Ceremony for new MUN Faculty of Education graduates was held on October 19, 2023. The next one will take place in Spring 2024.
- The Think Tank Questionnaire was distributed to teachers (electronically) for completion beginning in January 2024 and was available for 3 weeks. More than 2200 NLTA members responded. This will be followed by the virtual Think Tank event on February 23, 2024. Participants will include officials from Government (including the Premier and the Minister of Education), NLTA representatives (including teachers) and other invited guests. The agenda and attended list are under development.
- Three Beginning Teachers' Conferences have been held, one on December 2-3, 2023, in St. John's, one on January 13-14, 2024, in Deer Lake and a third in Goose Bay on February 10-11, 2024.
- Production of the next Teachers Change Lives story is complete, with launch planned for March/April 2024. This campaign continues to be a key component of NLTA efforts to both promote the profession and encourage those who are considering becoming teachers.
- February 11-18, 2024 was Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week, sponsored by the Canadian Home and School Federation. The Association held a social media contest during that week, encouraging teachers, school communities and students to post the good work happening in schools by teachers.
- The President and Executive Director met with the new Dean of the MUN Faculty of Education on January 10, 2024. Discussion included the topics of recruiting more students to the Faculty and making teacher training programs more easily accessible for interested individuals living in rural/remote areas.
- The Teacher Certification Committee met on January 18, 2024 at the NLTA offices. Discussions included the importance of potential changes to regulations that would improve/enhance certification upgrade options. Discussions between staff and Teacher Certification are ongoing.
- On February 23, 2024, the Teachers Think Tank event was held virtually. More than 2200 NLTA members completed the questionnaire made available in advance of the virtual event. Over 70 individuals took part and discussed concerns and issues in the public education

system and work on solutions to address those issues. Following the event, the President and Minister of Education held a media availability and government announced some initial initiatives in response to feedback received, including additional student assistant time, PL time for teacher wellness, and a financial grant to assist efforts to support teacher mental health/well-being. A 'What We Heard' document should be available from the Office of Public Engagement in the coming weeks and the NLTA will be actively involved in the next steps of actioning the items discussed during the Think Tank.



## 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

- The Executive Director met with the Deputy Minister for Education Transformation on November 8, 2023. The DM has a team of three individuals working with him. An advisory committee for transformation will be established and will include the NLTA Executive Director. Further detail is expected in early 2024.
- The first meeting of the advisory committee for Education Transformation was held on February 1, 2024. During discussions, the Executive Director stressed the importance of adequate human resourcing to the success of current programs and any new initiatives. A call for expressions of interest from teachers to serve on working groups is expected to go out in March 2024.
- In late August and mid-November 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.
- The President and Executive Director have participated in a teleconference meeting with DOE officials in September, October, November 2023 and January 2024, in advance of the release of the monthly updates on the NLESD integration.
- Throughout the Fall of 2023 and January/February 2024, the NLTA had meetings with DOE officials regarding the upcoming Teacher Think Tank event. The Questionnaire, to be sent to members in early 2024, was finalized. The working committee has planned/organized the details of the virtual Think Tank event to be held in early 2024, following the completion of the membership questionnaire. The Think Tank will focus on recruitment and retention, with the ultimate goal of developing an action plan to address areas of concern.
- The Association has worked with M5 to develop a campaign to run in March/April 2024 that highlights the current struggles in the classroom (i.e.: workload, violence, lack of resources).

The strategic timing of the campaign is being considered in relation to the Teachers Think Tank, as well as the Provincial Budget and potential (rumoured) call for a Spring 2024 Provincial Election.

- In response to changes to the guidelines for comprehensive assessments which now require lead assessors to complete hearing and vision screeners, Programs and Services staff have filed two ATIPP requests. The report from one of these requests has resulted in the filing of a policy grievance (failure to consult).
- The Think Tank Questionnaire was distributed to teachers (electronically) for completion beginning in January 2024 and was available for 3 weeks. More than 2200 NLTA members responded. This will be followed by the virtual Think Tank event on February 23, 2024. Participants will include officials from Government (including the Premier and the Minister of Education), NLTA representatives (including teachers) and other invited guests. The agenda and attended list are under development.
- The recently ratified Collective Agreement (2022-2026) contains a provision requiring an Advisory Committee established within 120 days of the signing of this Agreement for the purpose of considering the appropriateness and feasibility of implementing recommendations from the Teacher Allocation Review Committee Report, released October 14, 2022. Discussions with the Department of Education have been initiated to commence the work of this committee.
- The Teacher Certification Committee met on January 18, 2024, at the NLTA offices. Discussions included the importance of potential changes to regulations that would improve/enhance certification upgrade options. Discussions between staff and Teacher Certification are ongoing.
- On February 9, 2024, the NLTA submitted a pre-Budget submission to the Provincial Government in advance of Budget 2024. The submission, entitled 'It's Not Business as Usual in our Classrooms – and That's Not OK, highlights the concerns and struggles members are facing every day and links investment in education to improvements in health care, the economy, and justice issues. The submission was provided to all members and was shared with the media and general public via social media.
- During the month of February (leading up to February 23, 2024), a great deal of work was put into preparation for the Teacher Think Tank event. Encouragement of the membership to fill out the online questionnaire associated with the event resulted in over 2200 respondents. On February 23, 2024, the Teachers Think Tank event was held virtually. Over 70 individuals took part and discussed concerns and issues in the public education system and work on solutions to address those issues. Following the event, the President and Minister of Education held a media availability and government announced some initial initiatives in response to feedback received, including additional student assistant time, PL time for teacher wellness and a financial grant to assist efforts to support teacher mental

health/well-being. A 'What We Heard' document should be available from the Office of Public Engagement in the coming weeks and the NLTA will be actively involved in the next steps of actioning the items discussed during the Think Tank.

- The Association issued a media statement immediately following the announcement by the Department of Education of the Education Accord NL. The President and Executive Director had an initial meeting with the Deputy Minister and one of the chairpersons for the Accord, Dr. Anne Burke, on January 31, 2024. The critical significance of teacher working conditions on teaching and learning in K-12 public education was stressed during the meeting. Copies of previous Association submissions to past reviews were provided, as well as recent data from NLTA members surveys on teacher workload and mental health/well-being.