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NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION
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Grade 5, Gander Elementary. Teacher - Marcus Adams

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It's been another challenging and rewarding year for the membership and as the 2023–24 school year comes to an end, we hope you can enjoy a much-needed break. Your Association will continue to use all its platforms to highlight the work of the membership and advocate for improvements to the working conditions of members. We have created great momentum this year with our major media campaigns—*Teachers Change Lives* and *Not Okay*. Please continue to share and engage with these important campaigns.



Thank you to all those that have volunteered their time to be part of NLTA committees, Special Interest Councils or at the Branch level, and thank you to all those that have contributed to The Bulletin over this school year.

Enjoy your summer break...see you in September!

Take care,
Jennifer

THE bulletin

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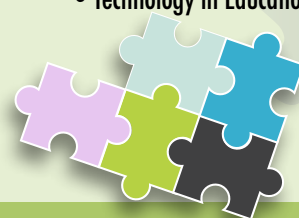
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Opinions, advertisements and/or notices carried in this publication do not imply endorsement or recommendation by the Association.

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WE HAVE 17 NLTA SPECIAL INTEREST COUNCILS

- Council of Special Services (COSS)
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing/Blind and Visually Impaired (DHH/BVI)
- English Language Arts (7-12) Council
- Gender and Sexual Diversity (GSD) Council
- Health Education Council
- Math/Science Council (MSSIC)
- Newfoundland and Labrador Music Educators' Association (NLMEA)
- Newfoundland and Labrador Counsellors' and Psychologists' Association (NLCPA)
- Physical Education Council (PESIC)
- Psychologists in Education (PIE)
- School Administrators' Council (SAC)
- Second Language Council (SLC)
- Small Schools Council
- Social Studies Council
- Speech Language Pathologists (SLP)
- Teacher Librarians Newfoundland Labrador (TLNL)
- Technology in Education Council (TESIC)



UP FRONT WITH THE NLTA PRESIDENT



Colleagues/Friends,

Given that this is my final UP FRONT article for the 2023-2024 school year, let me be the first to thank you for your efforts and to wish you all the best for the well-deserved summer hiatus.

Your commitment to your schools (and most importantly, your students) has been the pivotal factor for all the successes experienced within the school system this year. Your professionalism in the face of widespread pressure and adversity has ensured progress for this province's young people and supported their aspirations for post-secondary and life success. What you have accomplished this year is quite significant given that you have done so on "shoestring" budgets, minimal personnel power and a stressed working dynamic.



The picture above reminds me of the slow, lazy days of summer when things were simple and responsibilities were few. But from a totally different perspective, it led me to ponder on how efforts by this Government to date have been piecemeal at best and do not reflect a willingness to deal with immediate concerns; "kicking the can down the road" (so to speak) with talks of accords, reviews and yet, more reports.

The following pull quote, I strongly believe, can serve us well as it pertains to our personal and professional lives. It can also be used as a plea, once again, to Government to take the necessary steps for meaningful change on the frontlines of our schools. The road ahead will look after itself if that is the approach.

"The best way to take care of the future is to take care of the present moment."

- Thich Nhat Hanh

The summer months have been infamous for allowing educational issues to fall off the table in the media and within the public discourse, only to come flooding back a week or two before the start of a new and exciting school year. The teacher in me looks forward to a fresh start with new faces in September, however, I know that the continual pushing of our people has long-term implications for our collective health and well-being.

My personal invitation to you is to make opportunities to infuse education issues within your discussions with parents, community leaders and certainly at your doors as political hopefuls come knocking looking for your support (most likely in the fall of this year). Press them on their knowledge of educational concerns, but also how they see prioritizing change; let's make education a hot political issue.

As your professional Association, we are continuing to pressure Government to:

- Prioritize public education as a pillar of societal health and well-being.
- Provide sustained attention and demonstrate a vision for education.
- Listen and respond to the voices of your frontline workers.

Our media presence will remain strong and consistent, whether it be related to emerging issues such as violence in schools, the use of emergency supply personnel, or the impact of severe staffing shortages and disruption of school operations on learning. I truly believe that our presence and voice are sought after as issues arise in the media.

We have provided detailed correspondence to the Minister of Education and NLSchools outlining clear pathways to frontline change that have been collected via our connections with our members through key events, such as the Teachers Think Tank.

Our outreach has elicited a recent connection by the Premier with an invitation for immediate collaboration on essential items that will address acute issues and invoke change (addressing shortages, workloads and service delivery challenges). Your NLTA Staff and Provincial Executive are in the process of putting together the essential components and documentation to maximize this opportunity.

Accordingly, the commitment of us all is to be present and "at the table" asking the important questions and demanding answers.

As I head into my last school year as NLTA President, I am as energetic and devoted as ever to being your voice, respecting all of your individual experiences and working for the collective good of our membership. If public education is prioritized in Newfoundland and Labrador, society will be better as a result.

Thank you to our staff for your dedicated service to our membership and our elected leaders for your ongoing commitment to our collective betterment.

All the best for a rejuvenating summer.

Yours in Solidarity,
Trent,

PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL
NEWS

TORBAY

Fire Extinguisher Demonstration

On May 6, 2024, students in Mr. Kevin Martin's Occupational Health and Safety class at Holy Trinity High School participated in their 4th annual fire extinguisher demonstration with the Torbay Volunteer Fire Department.

Students learned how to use a fire extinguisher and extinguished a controlled fire under the guidance of a Fire Prevention Officer.



A Holy Trinity High School Occupational Health and Safety student extinguishes a controlled fire alongside Fire Prevention Officer Ray Clarke.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

2024 Newfoundland and Labrador Science Fairs Big Success



Science Team NL (Eastern region): Mackenzie Wishart, Alpita Patro, Orpa Halader, Olumoroti Adegboyega, Ghena Alwaznee and Sophia Zhang.

Science Team NL (Labrador, Western, Central region)



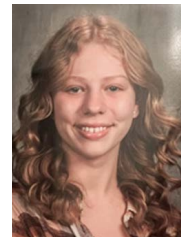
Jonathon Anstey



Charlotte Burry



Lucas Baldwin



Jaeden Hayley



Gargi Kaushal



Jordan Montague

Congratulations to all students who competed in two provincial science fairs held in March– the 2024 Cenovus Energy Eastern Newfoundland Science and Technology Fair and the 5th annual Labrador, Western and Central Newfoundland Virtual Fair. Between the two fairs, there were a total of 175 students, with 141 projects competing for medals, prizes, scholarships, special awards and a place on Science Team NL. Students from both regions were named to the 2024 Science Team NL and will represent the province at the 2024 Canada Wide Science Fair (CWSF) in Ottawa, Ontario from May 25 to June 1. More information on this year's fairs can be found at www.nlsciencefairs.ca.

ST. JOHN'S

NLTA Supports the Janeway Telethon Foundation Fundraiser

On June 1, 2024, the Janeway Children's Miracle Network Telethon took place and included an NLTA sponsored corporate hour, in which several NLTA members served as volunteers. President Trent Langdon presented a cheque in the amount of \$18,846.74–money collected during the NLTA Janeway Day in the Schools. Every year, NLTA Janeway Day in the Schools provides an opportunity

ON LOCATION

for children in this province to help other children. Since 1986, students and teachers have donated more than \$1,284,000 to The Janeway Children's Health and Rehabilitation Centre.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND
LABRADOR TEACHERS'
ASSOCIATION & JANEWAY CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

CHANGE LIVES EVERYDAY
DONATION

\$18,846.74



LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

Legacy of Leadership Award Recipient

Congratulations to Steve Brooks, former NLTA Executive Director, on receiving a Faculty of Education Legacy of Leadership Award.



The awards were established in **Steve Brooks** 2022 during the 100 year celebration of the Faculty, recognizing and honouring those who have led significant and sustained initiatives to improve the educational system in NL. These awards are presented annually to one individual who has contributed to the K-12 school system and one individual who has contributed to the public post-secondary/higher education system.

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Points for Clarification: Collective Bargaining

by Stefanie Tuff

As we near the end of another school year, I wanted to take this opportunity to address a couple of topics that have come up over the past number of months related to collective agreement negotiations. These are certainly not unusual queries in a bargaining year. Hopefully, these comments will provide some clarity on questions that tend to re-surface.

What's in a Name?

From time to time, there are comments and questions from members as to whether the NLTA is an association or a union.

The answer is, it's both.

Pursuant to provincial legislation, the NLTA is both a professional association (*Teachers' Association Act*) and a union (*Teachers' Collective Bargaining Act*). This reality is not unique to Newfoundland and Labrador—the majority of provincial teacher organizations across Canada have a similar dual role embedded in their structures, which is not always evident from their names. For example, the Manitoba Teachers' Society, the Alberta Teachers' Association, the PEI Teachers' Federation, the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union, etc...

The NLTA is both a professional association and a union.

Collective bargaining, the day-to-day administration of collective agreements and representation of members in labour relations matters do make up an important and significant portion of the work of the NLTA. However, the role and responsibilities of the Association also include (but are not limited to): promoting the cause of education; sharing the collective experience advice of teachers; stimulating interest in education; supporting means for improving the knowledge and skill of teachers; elevating the profession; and providing advice, assistance and legal protection to members in relation to their professional duties.

The two “sides” of the NLTA—union and association—are complementary, each supporting the work of the other. The legislated responsibility to promote the profession and speak publicly on education matters validates our efforts, through negotiations and other advocacy, to achieve the change and investment in public education that is needed to improve our K-12 system. When the NLTA says that the working conditions for teachers ARE the learning conditions for students, there is integrity and legitimacy to this statement that is grounded in the blended voice of a professional association and union comprised of certified teachers.

You Have to Read the Fine Print

It is not unusual for NLTA members to keep abreast of what is happening with teacher collective agreements in other provinces. The Association does this regularly, with the other Atlantic provinces typically being closest comparators. However, it is important to understand that, when it comes to rules that govern collective bargaining, there are often jurisdictional differences based on provincial legislation, which means we are not always comparing “apples to apples” when considering the processes and strategies of other groups.

For example, the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union (NSTU) recently held a strike vote before reaching a tentative agreement this year. A mandate for a job action can be an effective tool in negotiations. However, when and at what point during the collective bargaining process a union is legally able to conduct a strike vote, or take job action, is governed by legislation. For the NLTA, under the *Teachers' Collective Bargaining Act*, this cannot happen until **after** a conciliation board has been appointed and at least seven days have passed since both parties have decided whether or not to accept the conciliation board's report. In this context, it is important to understand that conciliation board reports, while not binding, typically become publicly accessible and can therefore influence public opinion and support

for teachers. The provincial law governing NSTU's bargaining is different. Under the Nova Scotia legislation, the NSTU is legally able to conduct a strike vote **before** seeking the appointment of a conciliation board and receiving its report.

This is a significant difference in relation to the stage of negotiations at which this tool can be used. Decisions made by a negotiating team are always made in a specific context with consideration of the various factors at play during a particular round of bargaining. For the NLTA, this must include an assessment of what a conciliation board report would be likely to recommend in comparison to the offer on the table before the Association would be in a legal position to conduct a strike vote.

There are other differences and variations that impact teacher collective bargaining processes across the country. Some provinces (for example, Alberta and British Columbia) have provincial and local agreements, with certain matters dealt with in province-wide negotiations for all members, while other issues are addressed in local contracts covering specific groups/regions. Teachers in some jurisdictions (Prince Edward Island, for example) do not have the right to strike and are subject to binding arbitration if a negotiated agreement cannot be reached through bargaining. These realities are an integral part of the context in which different teacher organizations make their decisions. It doesn't mean it's not useful to consider what is happening elsewhere, but it is equally important to understand that the "rules of the game" are not always the same.

In closing...

There are many challenges remaining and much work for the NLTA that is ongoing and that lies ahead. Lobbying, advocacy, representation of members, and supports for professional learning carry on during and in between rounds of bargaining.

NLTA members are no doubt looking forward to a well-deserved break—I wish you all an enjoyable and revitalizing summer. Please know that the Association's efforts to improve teaching and learning conditions in our province will continue.

Stefanie Tuff is Executive Director of the NLTA.



**TACKLING RACISM,
EMBRACING DIVERSITY**
**LUTTER CONTRE LE RACISME,
ADOPTER LA DIVERSITÉ**

PROJET

- M** Motivating Motiver
- E** Equity Équité
- D** Diversity Diversité
- I** Inclusion Inclusion
- A** Anti-racism Antiracisme

PROJECT

FOR GRADES 7-12 STUDENTS

Learn about multimedia and create a positive 'MEDIA' message

POUR LES ÉLÈVES DE 7-12 ANNÉE

Apprenez-en davantage sur différents supports multimédia et créez un message 'MEDIA' positif



**CONTACT
INFORMATION**

sharingourcultures.com/media
info@sharingourcultures.com





Teaching Assignments and Consultation – What Does it Mean?

by Ian Crewe

It's that time of year again when planning for a new school year is in full swing. As that process unfolds, there are certain provisions of the Collective Agreements that teachers and school administrators need to be aware of and keep in mind.

Article 29 of the Provincial Collective Agreement provides, in part, as follows:

29.01 (a) *There shall be consultation at the local level between teachers and their principals in determining the allocation to teachers of curricular and non-curricular duties. The workload of teachers will be distributed in a **fair and equitable** manner, and the process will involve, but not be limited to, consideration of numbers of students, number of course preparations, number of teacher preparation periods, nature of courses taught, characteristics of students taught, administrative duties required, and multi-grade/course teaching situations.*

(b) ***Every effort shall be made** to determine a teacher's curricular duties for the coming school year prior to the last day of the current school year.*

(c) *Notwithstanding Clause 29.01 (b), **every effort shall be made** to ensure that the consultation for the coming school year referred to in Clause 29.01 (a) between teachers and their principals shall occur not later than the first scheduled instructional day. [Emphasis added]*

School administrators have a clear obligation to consult with teachers in determining teaching assignments (curricular duties) and other aspects of teachers' work responsibilities, such as supervision schedules (non-curricular duties). To be in compliance with these provisions, this consultation should commence in the spring of each school year since "every effort" must be made to: determine teaching assignments for the new school year prior to the end of the current school year; and, to ensure the consultation with teachers occurs prior to the start of instruction.

So, what does "consultation" mean? According to the Encarta Dictionary, it is "a discussion aimed at ascertaining opinions or reaching an agreement." Language in a collective agreement should be interpreted and applied in a meaningful and purposive manner; hence, the method of consultation in place at a school must be more than a pro forma process or routine that is "just for show." As well, "every effort" is strong contract language, indicative of the importance that should be placed on teachers having an opportunity to provide input that will be given meaningful consideration when decisions are made. Teachers' rights to timely consultation on and notification of their assigned duties for a school year are substantive ones that must be respected. That being said, consultation does not necessarily have to look the same in every school. Schools are busy and dynamic workplaces and there are many different and legitimate practices in place that may be well suited to their respective contexts. Principals should ask themselves: do teachers at my school have a real opportunity to express their opinions and preferenc-



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

es and will this information be taken into account when decisions are made? If the answer is “yes” on both counts, then you are on the right path.

Teachers must understand that the right to consultation and timely decisions does not mean that everyone is entitled to their preferred teaching assignment. No teacher owns a particular teaching assignment since, as per Clause 7.02, they receive tenure as “a teacher” with their employer. School principals have a responsibility to ensure that curricular responsibilities are determined in keeping with the best interests of students and the programs that must be delivered. Teaching assignments can be subject to change for various reasons, such as staff redundancies and changing student programming needs. However, as set out above, school principals must carry out their responsibilities in this regard in a manner that leads to a fair and equitable result. The best evidence of true and meaningful consultation and reasoned decision-making would be an administrator’s ability to demonstrate fairness and equity in assignments and schedules and provide a clear and legitimate rationale for their decisions, including a logical explanation as to why a teacher’s request or preference could or could not be accommodated.

In the end, it may not be possible to please everyone all the time and sometimes tough decisions have to be made. However, a good faith and timely approach to meaningful consultation and a reasonable and fair decision-making process can go a long way in building and maintaining a respectful working environment for all NLTA members.

Ian Crewe is Assistant Executive Director of the NLTA.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The NLTA will award **six scholarships** to dependents of active, retired, disabled or deceased members of the NLTA. The award will be made upon completion of secondary school and through application to the NLTA. Scholarships are valued at \$1,000 and are awarded based on the criteria used by the Department of Education for the selection of provincial scholarship recipients.

To obtain an application form visit the NLTA website at www.nlta.ca and click “Forms” or contact the NLTA at mail@nlta.ca.

Application Deadline: July 31, 2024



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Canada 

Special Interest Councils Come Together for Innovation Conference

Submitted by TLNL, MSSIC and TESIC.

On Friday, May 3, over 100 participants enjoyed the Innovate to Educate Conference at MUN's Signal Hill Campus. The conference was a beautiful example of the success capable through collaboration and shared vision. Presented as a joint effort from the Teacher Librarians Newfoundland and Labrador (TLNL), the Math-Science Special Interest Council (MSSIC) and the Technology in Education Special Interest Council (TESIC), the conference sought to bring teachers together physically for a full-day of professional learning. The councils helped support the cost of travel for teachers coming from all over Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure the opportunity was available for those who wished to attend.

The conference saw a wide range of topics with presentations ranging in scope and grade level. The opening presentation from techNL began the



conference by shining a light on the importance and potential of building technical and practical skills for students in our province. The opportunities discussed beyond the classroom helped teachers see the potential impact of bringing modern pedagogy to the forefront of our education.

Discussions focused on bringing new approaches to the classroom with high expectations of student success at the forefront. Various presentations on bringing design elements into the classroom, both physically and digitally, aimed at empowering teachers to allow their students more active participation in the direction of their learning with the goal of creating more independent learners.

The councils would like to thank our members, presenters, participants, sponsors, venue and catering for the success of this conference.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST



The NLTA **COSS** Special Interest Council is looking for expressions of interest from 12 of its members who will be interested in a professional learning opportunity: Train the Trainer; PATHs Program. Those interested must be willing to provide training to COSS members.

A member will be selected from each region: Avalon, Western, Vista Central, Burin, Labrador, and Northern Peninsula.

COSS will pay the registration fee for the selected members.

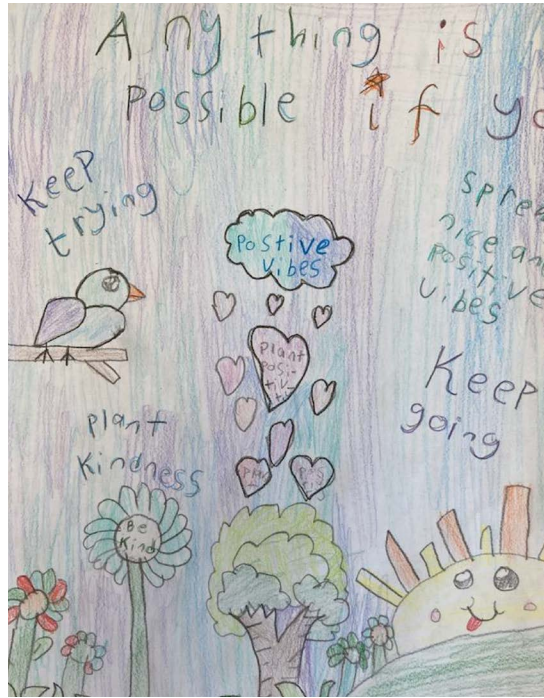
Criteria for selecting the participants:

1. Must be an active COSS member
2. Special Education Degree/Masters
3. Individuals selected must agree to be a trainer for their region during professional learning days and/or approved Professional Learning time by NLSchools
4. Must currently be in an IRT role

Those interested can email COSS@mynlta.ca. The deadline for submissions will be **June 7, 2024**.



Abigail England, Grade 5, Indian River Academy



David Blake, Grade 3, Bay Roberts Primary, Mrs. Badcock



Hannah Bown, Grade 3, Phoenix Academy



Abigail Fontaine, Grade 2, Fortune Bay Academy



Adam Squires, Grade 6, Leary's Brook Junior High



EDUCATION WEEK 2024 Spring Art Contest Honourable Mentions

- **Abigail ENGLAND**, Grade 5, Indian River Academy
- **Adam SQUIRES**, Grade 6, Leary's Brook Junior High
- **David BLAKE**, Grade 3, Bay Roberts Primary
- **Hannah BOWN**, Grade 3, Phoenix Academy
- **Abigail FONTAINE**, Grade 2, Fortune Bay Academy





Autism Society NL

The Importance of Neurodiversity-Affirming Practices in Our Schools and Communities

by Leah Farrell

As we have learned from the Neurodiversity Movement, neurodiversity is the natural variation in human brain function and behaviour that should be celebrated and not pathologized. As we learn more about neurodiversity, we must understand how to create neurodiversity-affirming spaces that support and accommodate the diverse neurological needs of individuals within our communities.

Neurodiversity-affirming spaces are environments that prioritize accessibility and inclusion, while recognizing that each individual has different sensory-processing abilities, cognitive styles and neurodivergences without trying to “correct” them. Accommodating each individual may sound like a tall order considering that each person’s needs may be different, but in reality, creating safe spaces is easier than we think and can also benefit a classroom or workplace as a whole.

When we specifically think of neurodiversity-affirming spaces within schools, it is important to consider **sensory needs**, **clear communication**, **respect** and **empowerment**, for students, teachers and administrators alike.

When making a space more **sensory-friendly**, we are ultimately questioning if everyone has a place to work where they feel comfortable. Considering ambient light, sounds and smells, as well as alternative seating, can quickly transform a space. We can ask: Is there a way to incorporate natural light or lamps instead of overhead fluorescent lighting? Is the space scent-free? Can I reduce visual clutter? Are there options like rocking chairs, bean bag chairs or balls to promote self-regulation while learning?

When considering **communication** for neurodiversity-affirming spaces, it is important to first understand the “Double Empathy Problem” (Milton, 2012) that challenges the traditional view that difficulties in social interactions lie solely within some deficit of the autistic individual. This concept

argues that, instead, the misunderstandings and breakdown in communication are from a mutual lack of understanding between both the neurodivergent and neurotypical individuals. The differences in both parties in their understanding of social cues and norms, processing sensory input, and expressing emotions are what lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding.

We can ask: Does this person want or need just the high-level points of these instructions or the nitty-gritty details? Does this student do better with face-to-face communication or written? Does support with setting up a schedule and planned follow-up help this individual’s executive functioning?

To create a neurodiversity-affirming space in a classroom and workplace, **time** also needs to be considered. Setting an expectation related to time (i.e. “This question will take you 2 minutes to complete”) can cause stress and, ultimately, limit one’s ability to complete the task. When considering time, we can ask: Has appropriate time for tasks been accounted for? Is the expectation around a timed experience realistic based on this individual’s sensory profile? Have we given appropriate time for reflection?

Respect within neurodiversity-affirming spaces looks like a normalization of neurodivergent characteristics and emphasizes celebrating and valuing the unique strengths, perspectives, and contributions that they bring to our schools and communities.

Spaces that are unsafe or not affirming for autistics increase the chances of masking, which can lead to depression, anxiety, exhaustion, loss of identity and even suicidal thoughts.

To ensure that we are respecting the neurodivergent experience, we can ask: Do we safely promote stimming? Do I believe in the experiences of my autistic student or coworker? Are we viewing this individual with a strengths-based approach? Do we support therapies that are also respectful and neurodiversity-affirming?

Finally, when we are looking to create authentically neurodiversity-affirming spaces, we need to ensure that **empowerment** is prioritized. Centering autistic voices and perspectives, especially within their own experiences at school or work, is key, and supporting self-advocacy and autonomy is one way to ensure a safe place.

Self-advocacy and autonomy entails empowering individuals to feel comfortable in identifying and effectively communicating their needs. This may involve actions such as requesting a sensory break in an overwhelming environment, declining participation in activities or seeking assistance when confronted with difficult tasks. By offering opportunities to develop their self-advocacy skills, we provide them with invaluable tools for navigating social situations, while maintaining a strong sense of identity and confidence in themselves (Fors, 2024, para. 11).

When wondering if we are empowering the autistic individuals we teach and work with, we can ask: Am I giving this individual a choice? Am I asking for consent before touching their body? Have I created an environment where they can voice their concerns in whatever communication mode they are comfortable with? Have I centered an appropriate representation of autistic individuals?

In conclusion, embracing neurodiversity-affirming spaces in schools and workplaces doesn't take a lot of work but does require a commitment to making sure we are consistently asking ourselves the right questions. As long as we understand and believe the core principles of neurodiversity-affirming

practices, ask ourselves questions about sensory needs, communication, respect and empowerment, and center the voices, opinions and experiences of the autistic community we teach and work with, we are on the right track for creating spaces for all of us to feel safe and seen.

References

- Roberts, Julie (2022, April 24) *Neurodiversity-Affirming Therapy: Positions, Therapy Goals, and Best Practices*. Therapist Neurodiversity Collective. <https://therapistndc.org/neurodiversity-affirming-therapy/>
- Milton D. (2012). *On the ontological status of autism: The 'double empathy problem'*. *Disability and Society*, 27(3), 883–887.
- Fors, Alison (2024, February 15) *Making the Shift to Neurodiversity-affirming Practice* <https://allisonfors.com/neurodiversity-affirming-practice/>

Leah Farrell is the Advocacy Manager for the Autism Society of Newfoundland & Labrador.



Neurodiversity – affirming practices are based on a set of core principles that recognize the value of neurodivergences such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia and others (Neuroaffirming Practice, n.d. para. 11). These principles are:

- Respect for Neurodiversity
- Inclusivity and Accessibility
- Strengths-Based Approach
- Self-Autonomy
- Social Model of Disability
- Collaborative Partnerships
- Holistic Well-Being
- Life-Long Learning and Growth
- Challenging Stigma
- Cultural Competency
- Evidence-Based Practice





Summers Almost Here... What Now?!

by Lori Hewitt

As we quickly approach the end of another busy school year, it is time to look forward to longer days, warmer temperatures and summer holidays. Summer offers the opportunity to relax, rejuvenate and recharge. It is a time to shift gears, unwind, and take advantage of the unstructured moments spread out in front of us. And yet, while you may be anticipating the freedom and excitement that a holiday break can bring, you may also be struggling with the transition to these less structured days. If you are, you are not alone.

Transitioning into summer mode can be difficult and stepping away can be challenging. Teaching is more than a profession; it is who you are, and the task of shifting gears may not be as easy as it seems. In fact, it is probably more difficult now than it has ever been. Teaching is a highly stressful profession. Recent NLTA research shows the average stress levels during the school year reported by teachers on a scale from one (not at all stressed) to ten (extremely stressed) was nine. High-stress concerns and the impact on teacher wellness have been reiterated time and time again. The Teachers Think Tank highlighted that many of you are working regularly in crisis mode, which makes the shift to summer break all that more difficult. In EAP we hear this on a regular basis.

Do any of these comments resonate with you?

- I feel rootless. I am happy to have a break, but I am also feeling something else as I let go of each school year.
- During the school months my partner and I share parenting responsibilities, but during the summer I'm responsible for everything... because I'm "not working" – it's like I have whiplash for the first few weeks.
- By the time I learn how to let go of the crazy high energy I had to expend during the school year, I'm having to gear up again for the fall – there is no quality downtime. I just don't know how to relax.
- It's hard to say to a non-teacher, "I'm feeling off

because I don't have to work for 12 weeks." Or "I'm feeling down because I don't know what to do with myself all day." They just don't understand.

- Most of my social connections are with other teachers – during the summer I feel a little lost, anxious and alone.
- I just don't know how to create a balance with more time. I don't know where to begin with the things that have been put off all school year. Shouldn't I just be enjoying my summer break?

It is hard to give voice to these concerns, and some of you have expressed surprise that you are not alone in them. No wonder you may be struggling to adjust!

We find meaning, value and purpose in the work we do, and we sometimes define ourselves based on our vocational role. While busy, hectic and stressful, the routine you experience from September to June may still provide you with clarity, comfort, familiarity and function. When this is no longer the format of your day, your sense of purpose can become hazy.

So how do you shift and adjust from "school year you" to "summer you"? It starts by recognizing that the thoughts and feelings you may be experiencing are not unique to you but are a secondary hazard of the work. We've established that change can be hard, but the good news is, that hard is doable – you do hard every day. Once we acknowledge this and recognize we are not alone in its impact, it opens up space to breathe and move from our emotional brain to our rational brain, where we can better access the tools we need to develop a plan of action.

But first, it is important to check in with yourself. Being honest with where you are on your mental wellness barometer can help you in reaching out for extra support. It can set you up for success in developing and implementing your "summer to do" action plan.

Christian van Nieuwerburgh, a Professor of Coaching and Positive Psychology at the University of East London, states that when creating a well-being plan, teachers should consider what they need to

sustain their mental wellness. Here are five questions that may be helpful to ask yourself when developing your own well-being action plan.

1. What are the things that boost my well-being?

- This will be unique to you. Perhaps you love the outdoors and being outside for some time each day will help re-energize you.

2. When am I going to have some downtime?

- It's important to build that time in. Having committed downtime during the school year will lead to an easier transition to embracing downtime activities during the summer months.

3. What am I doing to nourish myself during challenging times?

- If you know there's going to be challenging times ahead, recognize that resilience is going to be called for. Having a strategy already in place to provide comfort can pre-emptively address upcoming stress.

4. Am I achieving what's important?

- What's truly important to a person can be lost in their day-to-day work. Identify what's most important to you beyond your workday and write it down. It is sometimes hard to access this information when you're in stress overload.

5. What am I looking forward to?

- Looking forward to things is helpful to a teacher's mental health. Think about what you can feel optimistic about, even if it is weeks away. Preparing for upcoming changes and developing a plan to fill your time with meaningful activities may be helpful.

Check in with yourself regularly as your mental wellness barometer can shift monthly, weekly, and even daily.

Remember, if you're struggling with adjusting from full-time teaching to full-time summer break, you're not alone. If you feel you could use additional support in any area of your personal wellness, please feel free to reach out to your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). We're always here to help.

Lori Hewitt is a Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for Teachers. For confidential assistance contact Lori Hewitt (733-3242), lhewitt@nlta.ca or Kenda Riggs (733-3265), kriggs@nlta.ca.

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3 THINGS

Three things that may assist you in having a more productive and empowered summer:

- **Do some journaling and set a summer intention** – Write down an intention or journal the direction you want your summer to move in.
- **Start a morning routine to set the tone for your day** – This may include gratitude journaling, mindfulness practice, and some kind of exercise. Spending even 5-10 minutes on each of these activities will help.
- **Create a daily or weekly schedule** – By developing a schedule, you ensure you create places in your days and weeks for those special things you want to focus on. For example, make a list of meaningful activities and pick at least one a week to do. By the end of the summer, you'll have been able to experience lots of different little adventures that keep you excited. Small steps in the direction of your goals will add up to big results.



For more information:

Contact one of our EAP Coordinators:

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1 – 800 – 563 – 3599 (in-province)

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RANDY RODGERS (JUNE 24, 1951 – MARCH 26, 2024)

Passed away at home unexpectedly from natural causes in La Crete, Alberta on Tuesday, March 26, 2024. Charles Randolph Rodgers (Randy) was in his 72nd year. Randy is predeceased by his parents, Alice and Earl Rodgers, as well as brothers Wayne, Paul and Earl. Left with loving memories are his sister Diane Jennings (Gary) of Peoria, Arizona, and brothers Gordon (Joy) of the Philippines, and Adrian (Emily) of New Albany, Ohio. Randy leaves behind many nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends both near and far including the staff and students of Buffalo Head Prairie School, where Randy was teaching at the time of his passing, and the many families of La Crete; a community he loved so much.

Randy was born on June 24, 1951, and was always up for a good time. As a graduate of the MUN Music program, Randy was a valued chorister with many singing groups including Cantus Vocum. Randy genuinely cared for the people he met on his life's

journey and really listened to the stories they shared; he had a special warmth and an amazing ability to easily chat. He was a man of great faith and made a conscious effort to demonstrate love, compassion, and respect to everyone he met. Many of his chance encounters resulted in lasting friendships.

Randy dearly loved his life work and taught for 44 years! Retiring from Vanier Elementary in June 2006 as a classroom and music teacher, he began his second career with the Fort Vermillion School Division. Randy loved all aspects of education but mostly, Randy loved working with children. He made them feel special and accepted and they knew he believed in them. When opportunities presented, Randy made a point of keeping in touch with the young lives he touched. He supported their efforts with wisdom and advice, kindness, and generosity. Randy believed in the power of education and the importance of giving back. As per Randy's request, a scholarship has been established at Buffalo Head School in his memory.



Randy Rodgers



BREAKFAST. The most important meal of **their** day.

Our Kids Eat Smart Breakfast Clubs serve over 46,000+ meals every school day in our 276 Kids Eat Smart Clubs throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, at no cost to our children or their families.

This is accomplished through the generosity of our partners and donors, and the dedication of our principals, club coordinators, teachers, staff, and volunteers who ensure that healthy, nutritious food is available for children every school day.

We know that in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1 in 4 children under the age of 18 live in a food insecure home and go to school hungry.

Breakfast is the most important meal of **their** day. It provides many benefits to our school age children – it helps them concentrate, provides energy and fuel for their day, and keeps them healthy and strong, so they can learn, grow, and be their very best.

It is through your continued generosity and commitment to the children of Newfoundland and Labrador that together we ensure access to breakfast at school, for every child, every school day.

Together, we are making a difference, and we thank you for your continued support throughout this school year. A healthier today is a smarter tomorrow.

If you would like more information, visit our website at www.kidseatSMART.ca, or contact Celina Stoyles, Executive Director directly, at (877) 722-1996 or email cstoyles@kidseatSMART.ca.



CONGRATULATIONS!

As we approach the end of another academic year, there are some of you who will not be returning to the classroom next school year because you will be retiring. The Retired Teachers' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (RTANL) would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on reaching this important milestone and to wish you a long, healthy, and happy retirement.

The RTANL would also like to welcome you into our group of over 5,600 fellow retirees scattered throughout the Province and beyond. Please consider becoming a member to enjoy our social activities and stay in touch by completing the Membership Application Form which was included with your package during the Pre-Retirement Seminar. For your convenience, this form can also be downloaded or completed online from the main page of our website: www.nlta.nl.ca/rtanl.

There is life after retirement, but you have to make it! Good luck.

In Memoriam Submission Guidelines

Submissions to In Memoriam should be a **maximum of 250 to 300 words** and may contain a photo of the deceased. In Memoriams should be submitted within a timely manner – normally within the same school year (if possible) of the death of the teacher.

Please submit to: Noah Sheppard, Editorial Assistant, *The Bulletin*, nsheppard@nlta.ca, Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association.

Please be sure to include a contact name, mailing address, telephone number and email address.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

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Two scholarships of **\$3,000** each.
Applications available at nlcu.com
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Ceremony of Induction into the Teaching Profession

Congratulations to Us

by Augusta Harris

The following is a speech given by Augusta Harris, a recent graduate of the Faculty of Education at Memorial University, at the MUN Induction Ceremony into the Teaching Profession on May 31, 2024.

Good afternoon to you all — esteemed Faculty of Education; President of NLTA, Trent Langdon; Dean of the Faculty of Education, Dr. Pamela Osmond-Johnson; proud loved ones; and most importantly, dear graduates.

It is with immense joy and pride that I stand before you today on this momentous occasion. Today, we gather to celebrate the last two years of hard work, dedication and perseverance. Today, we honor our achievements, our resilience, the journey that has brought us to this day and this defining moment: our teacher induction and later today, our convocation.

My fellow graduates, the morning we started this program together, we stood in a talking circle, where our eyes met, each one of us facing each other at the same time, complete strangers... soon to be a community. We were told that talking circle pedagogy is known for creating wholeness and I truly believe we connected as a whole on this journey of learning together. Thank you to Memorial University and our treasured professors for teaching us the importance of relationships, connection and learning, by giving us this deep experience of interconnectedness. We stood in that circle, and it set the foundation of what our class would become — a place where everyone had their turn to speak. We found our voices as future educators. In that space, our voices were heard in a respectful way. We experienced the impact of a community of learning, and our learning atmosphere as a class became a rich source of strengthened interactions and identities.

As we sit here, let's take a moment to reflect on the journey that brought us here. Today will go very fast, as the past years have. Let's think about the late

nights spent reading and writing, the lesson plans, the group projects that tested our patience, the friendships that were forged under all that pressure, and the challenges we overcame together. Each step, each struggle and each success has shaped us into the people and teachers we are today.

We must also take this time to express our deepest gratitude to those who have supported us along the way. To the parents and families who provided unwavering support, to the professors and mentors who imparted knowledge, wisdom and advice, and to the friends who stood by us through thick and thin — we thank you. Your encouragement and belief in us has been instrumental in reaching this milestone.

Today is not just a day of celebration; it is a day of transition. As we are inducted by our teachers' union today, we are entering into a new chapter of our lives. It is a chapter filled with endless possibilities, opportunities, and perhaps, as with all transitions, a few uncertainties. But remember, it is also a chapter that we have the power to make our own. I am certain the last two years have prepared us to be ready for whatever we may encounter as teachers. Imagine me — the one who could barely get my PowerPoints presented — giving this speech today! We are teachers now. We have the certificates and pins, and this afternoon, we will have Memorial University Bachelor of Education degrees. We have the hearts of teachers, but we knew that when we started the Education program two years ago. We now have the minds to match and the recognition to prove it.

The world we are about to re-enter as teachers is rapidly changing. It is a world that demands innovation, resilience and adaptability. As graduates, we are equipped with the tools and knowledge to face these challenges head-on. Embrace change, seek out new experiences and never stop learning. Your education has given you a solid foundation, but it is your passion and curiosity that will drive you forward.

As you embark on your careers, remember the values that have been instilled in us during our time here. Strive for excellence but also strive to make a difference. Use your talents and skills to contribute to society, to uplift those around you and to create a better world. The last two years have prepared us to be educators who will look not only at the academics of students but at the opportunity to enrich the lives of children.

Today is our day. It is a testament to the hard work, determination and dreams we have. As we all step out into the world with our new titles, let's hold our heads high and walk with confidence, knowing that we did what it took to get through that challenging and demanding transition from student to teacher. The future is ours to shape, and I have no doubt that we will all achieve great things and inspire great things.

So, with that, I say congratulations to us — the newest teacher inductees of Newfoundland and Labrador. Thank you to Memorial University, Faculty of Education, you have helped light the way for us to embark on this new chapter of our lives. May this chapter be a journey filled with endless possibilities, daily joy and fulfillment. Outside our circle but never without it, may we forever be interconnected in our shared journey of learning and growth tied together with that invisible string. Let's, as they say, go forth and make our mark on the world. We did it!

Augusta Harris is a proud Newfoundlander who grew up in Carbonear. After completing her first degree at Memorial, Augusta moved to Nova Scotia where she worked as a counsellor in group homes supporting individuals with intellectual and physical differences. After 14 years of at-home parenting, she returned to employment, finding joy and growth with NLSchools as a TLA. This work inspired her to return to Memorial to complete her education degree.

In the Fall, Augusta plans on returning to Memorial to complete a special education degree, seeking to deepen her knowledge and skills in how to make education successful for all learners.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

NLSCHOOLS SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

For approval to the NLSchools substitute lists for the upcoming 2024–25 school year, all actively employed substitutes/temporary/casual employees and all employees that are on an approved leave of absence from NLSchools at the end of the 2023–24 school year, are required to submit a Criminal Offence Declaration form dated within 12 months of application.

The Criminal Offence declaration is available in Section 10 of each teacher's online profile. This is a written declaration on the NLSchools profile to be prepared by the teacher, disclosing any charges and convictions for criminal offences, if applicable, under the Criminal Code of Canada and provincial legislation, since last submitting a Criminal Record Check or Criminal Offence Declaration to the employer, up to and including the date of the declaration.

For new teachers, teachers who did not seek approval for the substitute list in 2023–24, or anyone who has terminated employment with the employer and are planning to substitute in 2024–25, they are required to provide a new Criminal Record Check, as well as a Vulnerable Sector Check completed by the RNC or RCMP dated within six months of application to the substitute list. Due to the overwhelming volume of requests to the RNC and RCMP regarding Criminal Record and Vulnerable Sector Checks, it is recommended to apply early to avoid delays. Once obtained, teachers will need to upload their Criminal Record and Vulnerable Sector Checks to their online NLSchools profile and mail the original to the regional HR office.

Those applying to the substitute list are also required to complete online training modules prior to starting work.

It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure the necessary steps are completed in their substitute application. If documentation is missing, the teacher will not be approved until it is provided. If further clarification is required, please visit www.nlschools.ca.

The NLTA *Bulletin* and MUN-Ed *Morning Watch Journal* Teacher Leadership. Share your story.

All teachers are leaders. In almost every school, teachers and administrators work with each other to create an exciting learning environment for students. In many cases, there are examples of teachers or groups of teachers who are leaders of leaders—teacher leaders that students turn to for support, advice, and insight. We want to highlight and celebrate those teacher leaders.

The NLTA *Bulletin* and the Faculty of Education's *Morning Watch Journal of Educational and Social Policy Analysis* are partnering for a special issue of our publications, celebrating the *Morning Watch's* 50 years of publication, by focusing on *Teacher Leadership in Schools*.

To all teachers in the province and all faculty education members, we invite you to share your story, the story of colleagues, and their influence in your schools as an example of the crucial role of teacher

leadership in driving positive change in our schools.

Examples of teacher leadership stories can include:

- The significance of teacher leadership in fostering professional growth and development in your school.
- How your school empowers teachers to take on leadership roles within their schools and district(s).
- Real-life examples of successful teacher-led initiatives and their impact on student outcomes.
- Opportunities and challenges in promoting a culture of teacher leadership.

Whether you are an experienced educator or just starting your journey in teaching, your insights and experiences are invaluable. Let's unite to inspire and support one another in our pursuit of excellence in education.



MEMBERS

Have a Question
or Concern?



Contact the NLTA

Call 709-726-3223 or
1-877-711-6582
(toll-free in the province)

Email: mail@nlta.ca



NLTA SUMMER HOURS

June 24 - September 1

Monday to Thursday

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Friday

8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

