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NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION
THE

bulletin

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In this issue of *The Bulletin*, we are proud to feature updates and stories from all facets of the education system—we hear from a teacher just starting her professional journey, a teacher who took a trip of a lifetime to share with teachers a world away, we get a glimpse of the important work of our SICs and learn more about the education research taking place at Memorial University.



Please continue to share the good work happening in your classrooms, schools and communities—we want to hear about it! And if you have someone in your school that you feel the entire membership should get to know, tell us and they could be featured in an upcoming *Interview With...* feature.

Take care,
Jennifer

T H E

bulletin

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UP FRONT WITH THE NLTA PRESIDENT



Morale does not come easily, nor naturally. Respect is felt when the employer and policymakers identify public education as an essential service that requires financial investment, is rooted in long-term objectives, and addresses the needs of the people on the ground. This, combined with our own steadfastness and self-advocacy, will lead to improved morale within our ranks.

Colleagues/Friends,
As we head into the final weeks of 2024, let me be potentially the first to wish you a rejuvenating holiday season that provides the time to re-energize and to reconnect with what matters most to you. We were all required (as usual) to ‘hit the ground running’ in September and surprisingly once again, the holidays are just around the corner. We all know that the lead-up to ‘the season’ creates added pressure (with many stressors being self-imposed) so let’s make every effort to keep an eye on ourselves and certainly our friends and family, ensuring there is ample down time.

As this edition of the Bulletin is going to print around the timing of our provincial election for NLTA President and Vice-President, I would like to commend those members that put their names forward to offer their time and talents to these important leadership positions. To those that have been elected President-Elect and Vice-President Elect, I commit to supportive ‘on-boarding’ through the sharing of information, context, proven strategies and perspectives that will assist you in your duties. In concluding my tenure in July of 2025, I will also make every effort to add value to your Provincial Executive and leadership team, serving one year as Past-President during the 2025-26 school year.

The NLTA proudly serves its members by upholding rights that have been gained at the bargaining table, offering quality and reliable member services, and by pressuring Government when and where possible on issues that impact the personal and professional experiences of us all. We also work in solidarity with our teacher union affiliates across the country through the Canadian Teachers’ Federation and Education International, pushing to advance the cause of public education and to ensure its protection. By doing so, we have built a network of supports, information-sharing and allies that enable us to access essential research and proven practices as we look to maximize our influence in Newfoundland & Labrador.

It would be futile to expect all things of concern to change overnight, however we seek to ‘move the needle’ through each interaction and strategy.

For example, just recently, a face-to-face meeting with the Minister of Education resulted in further advancement of our expectations as they relate to communications and responsibilities of Government.

A.) The Minister formally agreed to monthly meetings with myself and our Executive Director (on a go-forward basis) in order to maintain open lines of dialogue and maximize opportunities for information-sharing that can inform decision-making. This was a request of ours and it is my hope that during the term of the next President these monthly meetings will continue. It should be noted that this does not preclude the daily communications that our Executive Director and staff have with the Deputy Minister and district personnel. We continue to ask the hard questions and hold Government accountable through many means however this provides us with another platform to do so

B.) It was expressed to the Minister and her staff that it is now time for the Department of Education to take the reins of the School Safety Coalition. They have agreed to do so. We expressed the importance of this move to generate inter-agency collaboration and for Government to demonstrate its commitment to safety in our schools. The NLTA completed the preliminary groundwork and has built a strong foundation for this coalition, however we view this as a ‘good faith’ move by both parties. The Minister gave her commitment that all parties within the Coalition would remain, and their perspectives included. The Coalition met on November 20th and all participants were supportive of this decision.

I would be remiss if I did not mention concerns related to recent communications on our Group Insurance plan. I can fully empathize that any decision will impact each member differently and to varying degrees. Our Group Insurance

Managers have a legal and ethical responsibility to manage the fund, ensuring its protection and longevity on your behalf. In the months ahead, I ask that you try to participate in the information sessions and to consider all variables, with the security of our plan as the primary focal point. I truly believe that we need to focus on the issues at hand and avoid generalized commentary, trusting that the managers are provided with the most current information and professional advice to assist them in maximizing coverages and protecting our plan.

I would also like to remind you that our Biennial General Meeting (BGM) is taking place this spring, April 22-25, 2025, in St. John’s. This is the primary decision-making assembly for your Association and your leaders will chart a course for the next two years, electing a new Provincial Executive and providing direction for your leadership team. Please consider stepping forward to offer your voice in representation of your colleagues and our profession.

As we conclude another calendar year and look back at 2024, I would like to thank you for your efforts on the front-lines of our schools bringing forth your best efforts and professionalism. I would also like thank our dedicated staff for your unwavering service and dedication to the well-being of our members.

On behalf of our Provincial Executive, here’s to a healthy and prosperous 2025.

Yours in Solidarity,

Knowing fully that you cannot always see or hear our media presence, a listing (with links) of our media coverage can be viewed on the NLTA website at the following link: <https://www.nlta.nl.ca/nltapresident-trentlangdon-2/>



**Adventure in Learning/
Apprendre: une aventure!**

**Education Week 2025
March 24-28, 2025**

PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL
NEWS

ST. JOHN'S

Province Wide-Vote for NLTA President Candidates' Forum

On November 2, 2024, the Presidential Candidates' Forum took place in St. John's. The candidates had an opportunity to address the Joint Council Assembly and answered questions submitted to the Electoral Committee by members.



Candidates for President for 2025-27 (l-r): Dustin Rideout; Sherri Rose; Dale Lambe; and Sean Weir.



Members of the Electoral Committee (l-r): Jessica Rose; Stephanie Mentions; and Paul Sheppard (Chair).

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Kids Eat Smart Radiothon

The NLTA, a proud sponsor of the Kids Eat Smart Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, participated in the recent Kids Eat Smart Radiothon on October 30, 2024. President Trent Langdon was joined by Vice-President Dale Lambe and Table Officers Colin Short and Sean Weir. The Association

donated \$7,500 to Kids Eat Smart. A total of \$325,037 was raised during the radiothon, which will provide 325,037 breakfasts to school-age children in NL at no cost to families.



NLTA Executive Members Colin Short and Sean Weir work the phones at the 2024 Kids Eat Smart Radiothon.



NLTA President Trent Langdon and Vice-President Dale Lambe at the 2024 Kids Eat Smart Radiothon.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Prime Minister's Awards

The Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence have recognized exceptional elementary and secondary school teachers in all disciplines since 1994, with over 1,800 teachers honoured to date, including a number from this province. The nomination period for the 2025 Prime Minister's Awards is now open. The deadline to nominate an outstanding educator is January 15, 2025. For more information, including the nomination form, visit <https://pmate-pmtee.ised-isde.canada.ca/site/pm-awards-teaching-excellence-stem/en>.

LABRADOR

President Langdon Visits Labrador

President Trent Langdon travelled to the south coast of Labrador in October to visit schools and speak with members. He visited Henry Gordon Academy, Labrador Straits Academy, St. Lewis Academy, Bayside Academy, St. Mary's All-Grade and William Gillett Academy. Trent thanks the Administrators and teachers for the warm welcome and sharing the unique opportunities and challenges associated with teaching in Labrador.



Grade K-3 multigrade class at St. Mary's All Grade School, with Vice-Principal Bonita Rumbolt.



Trent was invited to participate in many school activities.



Beginning teacher Nathan Phillips at William Gillett Academy.



A visit from a future Labrador student, 10-week-old Aurora Dyson-Barney. Her mom, Deidre Barney, is a teacher at Labrador Straits Academy.

ST. JOHN'S

NLTA Shows Solidarity with CUPW

The NLTA showed solidarity with members of Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), representing postal workers across the province. Members of CUPW have been on strike nationally since November 15, 2024. NLTA President Trent Langdon visited the striking workers at the Kenmount Road strike location in St. John's and offered the support of the membership.





NLTA Group Insurance Program: Understanding the Challenges

by Stefanie Tuff

There has been a lot of attention and concern surrounding the NLTA Group Insurance Program recently, which is understandable considering the issues that Group Insurance Managers are grappling with in relation to the health plan. What has become apparent, based on questions and comments received from members, is that there is some misunderstanding circulating regarding how the Program works, the role of Managers, and the impact of rising prescription drug costs on plan sustainability, despite prior membership communications on this matter. This article attempts to provide some background information and to address the most frequent concerns and questions that have been shared with the President, members of Provincial Executive and NLTA staff since the launch of the Group Insurance Survey in late October 2024.

Background

Access to group insurance is a significant benefit for any collective of employees. Premiums and coverages are generally favourable compared to individual plans because risk is distributed across a large group of policyholders, and it is significant that new members are entitled to enrol without proof of medical insurability. The NLTA program allows for individual and family coverage and includes both active and retired members. The NLTA Group Insurance Program is owned by the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. Members, both active and retired, are the policyholders of the program. Neither government nor Johnson Inc. (transition to belairdirect branding is ongoing) own any part of the Program and therefore, neither of these parties has the authority to alter benefits or coverage.

The NLTA Group Insurance Program is operated and overseen by a seven-member Board of teacher Managers, appointed on an annual basis (with a maximum seven-year term) and answerable to the NLTA Provincial Executive Council. Two Managers are Provincial Executive members, one is a mem-

ber of the Retired Teachers Association of NL, and the remaining Managers are selected by regional representation. Provincial Executive appoints the managers and designates the Chairperson. Managers' mandate and responsibility for overseeing the operation of all aspects of the Group Insurance Program include making decisions on changes to premium rates and/or the benefits that are covered.

When choosing to take on this important role, Managers are required to sign a legal Deed of Trust which outlines their significant fiduciary responsibilities. As fiduciaries, they are bound by a high duty of care to exercise due diligence in making good faith decisions that are in the best interests of their designated beneficiary as opposed to personal interest/gain. For NLTA Group Insurance Managers, the beneficiary is the Group Insurance Program and all of its members as a whole. Managers receive specialized training in trust management and have access to expert insurance industry, actuarial and legal advisors to ensure they can fulfill their fiduciary role appropriately, on behalf of plan members.

Johnson Inc. is hired under contract by Managers as administrator and consultant. Their responsibilities include conducting the business transactions of the Program, as directed by Managers, including payment of claims and collection of premiums. Group Insurance budgets are separate from general NLTA finances, and insurance premiums are not paid to the Association. Just like Teachers' Pension Plan premiums are deducted from salary and remitted to the TPP Corporation, group insurance premiums deducted from salary are ultimately paid (less the costs of running the program) to the individual insurance companies that underwrite the different elements of the Group Insurance Program (health, dental, AD&D, LTD, etc.). Managers make all final decisions on benefits and premiums but have access, through Johnson Inc. staff, to expertise on the various insurance policies and underwriters.

This Program structure for governance and administration is not unique to the NLTA, but it was created by the NLTA sixty years ago, in partnership with Johnson Inc., and was the first of its kind—a program designed and managed by teachers, for teachers. While the specifics of plan design and coverage details vary, this model for the operation of group insurance programs has since been adopted by teacher organizations across Atlantic Canada and other parts of the country.

Who Insures NLTA Members?

Johnson Inc. is not the direct provider of insurance coverage under the various aspects of the NLTA Group Insurance Program. A number of underwriters or insurance companies are contracted to provide coverage under the different plans that make up the Program. For example, Manulife Financial is the current underwriter for the Life, Long Term Disability, and Health and Dental policies. Beneva (formerly SSQ) is the provider for the Critical Illness and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Policies. The performance of these underwriters is evaluated on a regular and ongoing basis, with a comprehensive market study completed every five years. This process involves an in-depth review of all coverages and Managers solicit bids for business from insurance companies. The underwriters are chosen based on the quality and cost of coverage and service levels they can provide for members.

What's Going on with the Health Plan?

Insurance premiums (for all types of coverage) are driven primarily by claims experience—the number of claims paid out and the associated cost of benefits that are covered. For the NLTA health plan, rising prices and usage of prescription medications are the main factors driving increasing costs. As new and specialized expensive drugs are approved to treat more conditions, more members are making claims for more costly prescriptions.

Likely costs and claim volumes are estimated as closely as possible from year to year when Managers set premium rates each spring, but this is not an exact science. If the cost of claims in a fiscal year exceeds the premiums paid, the plan is in deficit and must both make up the shortfall and adjust premiums going forward in order to avoid/minimize future deficits. Conversely, in a year when premiums collected exceed the cost of claims paid, any surplus would go to the Group Insurance Fund and future premiums may be adjusted if claims are anticipated to continue to be lower than previously expected. The Group Insurance Fund can be used to pay off deficits and assist with premium rate mitigation.

Unfortunately, the NLTA health plan has experienced significant deficits in recent years and, based on the continued rising costs of prescription drugs, this trend will continue if no change is made. The crippling costs of prescription drug claims is and has been a growing challenge within the insurance industry in general for a number of years. As noted in the memo sent to all members in advance of and with the recent survey, the Fund paid \$4.1 million to cover the health plan deficit for 2023-24 and will contribute towards rate mitigation in the amount of \$2.6 million this year through health premium subsidies approved by Managers to,

temporarily, lessen the impact of required premium increases. The Fund cannot sustain the recent and current level of annual deficit repayment and premium rate mitigation over the long term, and Managers cannot, in good faith, ignore the likely impact on long-term viability of the plan if premiums become unaffordable and drop out rates increase.

Managers have considered a wide variety of cost containment options to protect the long-term sustainability of the health plan and believe those presented in the survey are the best alternatives available. It is not an exaggeration to say that Managers have agonized over this as they understand and are sensitive to the very personal nature of the issue—the fact is that any changes to health coverage will have varying impacts on members, depending on their circumstances. They are well aware of the claims experience within the health plan, on an individual and group basis; this information is provided to them in detail every year and analyzed closely during the annual premium rate setting process. As outlined in the recent memo and in earlier member communications, Managers have also investigated and implemented other cost containment measures, including restrictions on weight loss drugs. However, industry trends and research show that there is no one category of drug which would, if restricted or eliminated, have sufficient impact on claims experience to address the underlying financial risk to the health plan under the current premiums structure.

What is the Purpose of the Survey?

As fiduciaries, Managers have a legal responsibility to take measures to protect the long-term financial sustainability of the Group Insurance Program. This is not a new development and past Managers have, over the years, had to consider such issues related to plan design—the NLTA health plan did follow a copay model for many years (80/20 and 70/30), up until 1996. By implementing either higher premiums or structural changes for health coverage, Managers are working to ensure that the plan can continue to provide great benefits to all members, active and retired. This has been central to their evaluation of different cost containment options.

This issue was not brought to members' attention suddenly. At last year's renewal, Managers decided to mitigate premium increases using the Group Insurance Fund, and it was clearly communicated to all members at that time that this was intended as a one-time measure and that the Plan would have to implement cost containment measures in the near future: <https://groupinsurance.nlta.ca/memo-re-group-insurance-rate-changes-for-2024-25/>.

Managers decided to survey the membership to assist in their ongoing deliberations around these very difficult but necessary decisions, but it was not, and was not intended to be, a vote. As fiduciaries, they are not permitted to shift their decision-making responsibilities to others, but they will consider the results and feedback from the survey seriously as they carry out their legal responsibility to protect the long-term financial sustainability of the plan and ensure that members, active and retired, continue to have access to benefits.

(Cont'd)

Are Other Plans “Better”?

For individuals, the answer to this question depends very much on personal circumstances. However, when considering what is in the best interests of a group insurance program, as Managers are obligated to do, it is important to understand when you are, or are not, comparing “apples to apples”. There are numerous factors that impact claims experience and premium rates within any group plan, including (but not limited to):

Does the membership include retirees?

As we age, the likelihood of experiencing health issues increases, in general, so the basic fact is that including retired members in any group health plan increases costs, while excluding retirees brings costs down. We all hope to enjoy retirement one day and, in the NLTA health plan, all members, active and retired, have access to the same health coverage for the same premium rates (single or family). A different example would be the group insurance program for teachers in Nova Scotia, overseen by the NSTU, which excludes members from coverage for prescription drugs, the primary driver of claims costs, at age 65. Many private industry group plans do not cover retirees at all or have significantly reduced post-employment benefits.

Does the plan have a restricted drug list or formulary?

Given the impact of drug costs on health plans, many exclude or significantly limit coverage for some of the most expensive, and often life sustaining/altering, prescription medications. With very few exceptions, the NLTA health plan covers all drugs for which a prescription is required. This is similar to the group coverage for federal civil service employees, but they also have an 80/20 co-pay structure. The NL provincial government group insurance health plan does not currently have a co-pay for prescription medication, but coverage is not comparable—that plan has a restricted drug formulary/list, which limits the exposure to claims for the types of very expensive treatments that the NLTA plan covers. Just as an example, three of the most expensive drugs covered by the NLTA health plan (life sustaining—cancer treatment, and life altering—rheumatoid arthritis) are not eligible for coverage, at all, under the NL provincial program. In addition to limiting coverage for those aged 65 and older, the NSTU group health plan also has a restricted drug list.

NLTA Group Insurance Managers also understand, as teachers themselves, that the degree to which the employer contributes to group insurance premiums, while not technically relevant to the claims experience that drives premium rates, does have an impact on how things are perceived and experienced because it unavoidably effects the bottom line of what members pay for coverage. Employer contributions towards group insurance premiums are, for the NLTA and other employee groups, a negotiated benefit, only achievable through collective bargaining. If the NLTA were able to achieve, in future negotiating rounds, an increase in employer contributions to group insurance premiums, this would

undoubtedly be an asset for the plan and a welcome improvement for members. But right now, Managers must establish premiums based on our present reality, and the current and projected costs of the plan, as prepared and projected by their consultants and actuaries.

The trend of employer cost sharing of group insurance premiums for NLTA members relative to overall costs has been decreasing. To describe how this works simply, employer contributions are determined based on the amounts government pays towards premiums for public sector employees covered by government's own group insurance program. Government pays towards NLTA coverage at the same level as they contribute towards employee premiums in their own plan. Because the NLTA health plan provides much better coverage for prescription drugs and paramedical services than the provincial government plan does, their premiums are much lower than ours, which has led to the decline in government's cost-sharing of NLTA premiums over time. In the past couple rounds of bargaining, government has sought to further limit/reduce their obligations to contribute to employee insurance premiums post-retirement (for the entire public sector, not just teachers). NLTA successfully resisted these efforts in the last contract, but it demonstrates that the employer's goals on this may be very much opposed to those of the NLTA when we are back at the table.

To return to a comparator that a number of members have mentioned, in Nova Scotia, government pays the full premium for certain elements of the NSTU group insurance program, including health coverage. This is a negotiated and excellent benefit, which also means that government representatives are part of the NSTU equivalent of our Managers and have a say in what their plan covers, how it is structured, and premium rates. The NSTU health plan does not have a co-pay for prescription medications, but it does, as previously referenced, have a restricted drug list and excludes members from drug coverage at age 65.

So What is Next?

As recently communicated, Managers will continue their work to ensure the NLTA Group Insurance Program remains viable. Managers are considering all options to support the long-term sustainability of the health plan. No decisions have been made and the feedback received through the survey will be considered. Early in 2025, a series of virtual information sessions will be held to discuss the Group Insurance Program and potential changes to the health plan.

In closing I would also add that, while I am not the primary staff person who works with the NLTA Group Insurance Managers, I do attend some of their meetings and can say without reservation that Managers care deeply about the well-being of members, the sustainability of the health plan and the benefits it provides. They take their fiduciary responsibilities seriously. I encourage all members of the NLTA Group Insurance Program to remember that as we move forward.

.....
Stefanie Tuff is the Executive Director of the NLTA.



Working in Solidarity with the Guyana Teachers' Union

by Megan Roome

Traveling abroad to experience education on a global scale has been one of my personal goals for quite some time. It's hard to believe that a little over a year has passed already since I began my application process for Project Overseas 2024. I had initially heard about Project Overseas from a colleague who had participated a few years back. Her experience traveling to Africa really sparked my interest in taking part myself, and I'm so glad I did. The project was equal parts exciting, exhausting, emotional and educational. It's an experience I will carry with me through the rest of my career.

Project Overseas (PO), recently renamed to International Collaboration for Education (ICE), “is a joint endeavour of the CTF/FCE, its provincial and territorial Member Organizations, and partner organizations in developing countries to co-plan and co-deliver professional development workshops for local teachers” (<https://www.ctf-fce.ca/what-we-do/international-development-cooperation/project-overseas/>). Each year the NLTA sponsors one of our members to represent the association by participating in solidarity work

with a host country in either Africa or the Caribbean. My project sent me to Guyana, South America.

I remember sitting at my desk when I received the call from the NLTA, being invited to represent our association on Team Guyana. It would be my first time traveling to South America, let alone working alongside a local teachers' union to plan and deliver professional learning. I was told I could take a few days to think about it before getting back to them with an answer, but without hesitation I accepted. There was no way I was going to turn down this unique and exciting opportunity.

The journey began shortly after the holiday break, with a series of video calls, both with the larger PO group and with our smaller individual teams. My group consisted of 4 educators from across the country, myself, a teacher from Ontario (ETFO), and 2 teachers from the Calgary area (ATA). During those video calls we discussed the goals of our solidarity work and the importance of having a flexible mindset in preparation for our project. Being flexible. That was a major theme that was reiterated during our





small group meetings, CTF video calls and again during our in-person sessions in Ottawa. We had to be open-minded and open to change. Certain aspects of our project would not be known until we arrived in our host country, and of course challenges could arise at any time. Having that message at the forefront and knowing that we would tackle problems as a team really helped me mentally prepare for the project.

After months of meeting in a virtual setting, we all finally got to meet our teams face-to-face in Ottawa. The couple of days we spent together at Carleton University consisted of team building and problem-solving exercises, as well as information on the dos and don'ts of the project. However, those days quickly came to a close and we all started flying out to our host countries. I had done my own research on the history and geography of Guyana to better prepare myself for the environment I would soon find myself in. But nothing could have prepared me for the overwhelming kindness and hospitality of the Guyanese people we met along the way.

We were welcomed at Cheddi Jagan International Airport by the Guyana Teachers' Union (GTU) Vice-President, Mr. Julian Cambridge, who remained by our side throughout the project. While in Georgetown, the capital of Guyana, we also met the President of the GTU, Dr. Mark Lyte, and had an opportunity to discuss the needs of their membership and what the GTU is advocating for with regards to education in Guyana.

Our stay in Georgetown was short-lived and we were soon traveling again to our project location, a smaller community in Region 7 at the crossroads of the Mazaruni and Essequibo rivers. We traveled by van for a couple of hours to the town of Parika where we boarded a water taxi headed for our final destination of Bartica.

We met up with our co-tutors and members of the Ministry of Education of Region 7 at Bartica Secondary School where we would spend the next two weeks delivering professional learning. We organized our materials and resources and planned our first few lessons in anticipation of meeting our participants the following day. It was very impressive to see how closely the GTU and the Ministry of Education worked together to ensure that this project was the best it could be for the teachers of Region 7.

Fresh on the heels of a strike, participants arrived from all over Region 7. Some coming from very remote areas needed to fly, drive, take a boat or walk to get to our location. Some teachers were completely new to the profession, while others had years of experience. Our goal was to ensure the workshops were engaging and practical so that all participants could bring valuable practices back to their classroom and colleagues. We explored assessment and evaluation, differentiated instruction, educational leadership and classroom management. We shared cultural exchanges, celebrated a mini Canada Day, and explored the local area. We created bonds and memories that will last a lifetime. I hope that the participants took as much away from the experience as I did.

Throughout the two weeks we spent with the Guyanese teachers, both co-tutors and participants, I found through conversation that even though we come from very different cultural and geographical backgrounds, we share similar struggles and dreams when it comes to education. When the local teachers talked about lack of educational and human resources, the challenges of teaching in isolated rural communities, the cost of living and how that impacts education, class sizes, student engagement, language barriers, etc., I could empathize with them and draw parallels to the struggles of our membership in Newfoundland and Labrador.

It was bittersweet to say our goodbyes. It was an exhausting couple of weeks working through long, hot and humid days. However, I was also starting to feel at home in Bartica. We had established our routines, the streets and local businesses were all familiar, as were the friendly faces who greeted us every day. I will continue to miss the amazing people, food, and nature of Guyana and want to express my sincere thanks to the NLTA and CTF for providing me with this life-changing opportunity. I hope that one day I'll get the chance to take part in another project. Until then, I strongly encourage anyone interested to apply. You won't regret it!



Successful PESIC Conference

On October 4, the Physical Education Special Interest Council (PESIC) hosted a conference at the Powerplex with a focus on professional learning for Newfoundland and Labrador teachers and Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) Physical Education and Education students. PESIC represents, speaks for and provides supports for all physical educators in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador under the auspices of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (NLTA). The conference boasted over 100 attendees from across the province focusing on "teachers as learners" with the goal of bringing some fresh ideas on physical education planning and delivery back to their respective schools. In addition to the formalized learning, teachers had ample opportunity to network, talk shop, and catch up with colleagues new and old.

The conference kicked off with a keynote address from the accomplished and insightful TA Loeffler from MUN's School of

Human Kinetics and Recreation with a focus on problem solving, increasing accessibility, and simply finding a way to get people active. She provided numerous examples and methods, both simple and complex, on how we can approach and tackle barriers to physical activity. The day continued with sessions delivered from fellow teachers, out-of-province speakers, and provincial partners. Many thanks to Gopher Sport, Schools Sports NL/Participation Nation, Jays Care Foundation, and Omnikin for their support and providing door prizes for teachers to bring back to their schools.

At the conclusion of the conference, PESIC hosted the Annual General Meeting and election of executive members which was highlighted by the election of a new president, Meagan Careen, and several new executive members. If you are a Physical Education teacher in Newfoundland and Labrador and would like to become a member of PESIC, please contact PESIC President, meagancareen@nlschools.ca.



INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION FOR EDUCATION (ICE) 2025

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS IS December 20, 2024

International Collaboration for Education (formerly Project Overseas) is sponsored by the Canadian Teachers' Federation and its affiliates to assist teachers in developing countries upgrade their teaching qualifications. Each year the NLTA sponsors one member to participate in this program.

Completed applications should be mailed, faxed or emailed to:

Melissa Coady, Administrative Assistant, Programs & Services

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association

3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL A1B 1W1

Fax: 726-4302 or 1-877-711-6582; Email: mcoady@nlta.ca

More information can be found here:

<https://www.nlta.nl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/ICE-Advertisement.pdf>





Ceremony of Induction into the Teaching Profession Address from A Faculty of Education Graduate

by Danica Dean

The following speech was delivered by Danica Dean at the MUN Induction Ceremony into the Teaching Profession on October 17, 2024

If you had to ask me if I could see myself working as a teacher a year ago, I would have likely said no. Not because I thought that I wasn't cut out for it, or that it would be too stressful, I simply just could not see myself being anything but a student, which is all I had known for the last number of years. I am now lucky to be currently working full-time as a junior high French teacher here in the St John's metro area, and I cannot see myself in any other way. The bonds that I have made with my students, seeing them succeed, be inquisitive, and overall having such an impact on their lives, has shown me that I have chosen the right profession for me.

It feels like only yesterday that we started our education program and now, to be standing here today feels surreal. During our time as a class, we bonded over the stress of assignments, the nerves surrounding our internships, and the search for jobs post-graduation. However, we must recognize that our bond goes much deeper than this. We have shared many jokes, Friday mornings with Ed and his music, a warm greeting from Maurice in the TLC, and various social events that bonded us together as a group. For those of us in French and Tech, we also shared the most upbeat French methods course with Jacqui and the humor of Dr. Gill and Gonzo in the shop. These are the memories of our program that we will take with us into our teaching careers. I can only hope that we can have the same impact on our students as our professors have had on us.

These memories encapsulate what my time in the Education Faculty has meant to me. The support of fellow classmates, even over the most minor topics, has taught me that we work best as a team. The same can be said when looking at how we can approach our careers, "how can we, a team of staff, work best for our students. What can we do to support them and guide them? What can we do to foster

a caring learning environment, where our students' social and emotional learning needs are met?" If my Education degree has taught me anything, it is that we work better as a collective group.

Following our Education Gala in August, I made a post on Facebook—as we all do in the digital age—and concluded it by saying "I have been so lucky to have met such great people throughout the last 16 months of my B.Ed degree, and I can't wait to see them do amazing things." As class president, I had the opportunity to meet and talk with everyone in our program quite frequently and I know that the above statement stands true. I was lucky to complete my degree with a passionate group of educators who will make a change, who will be a role model, and who will do phenomenal things for their students.

In our profession, I hope to bring energy, passion and a student-first mindset. I want to create a positive environment for my students, where they are not afraid of thinking outside of the box and contributing to the conversation, which is so important to me as a French teacher, as all of us French teachers know that "language starts a l'oral". Although I have only been a teacher for a month, I can already see my students being more confident in their abilities and being comfortable with making mistakes and learning from them. One of the most rewarding interactions I have had with one of my students was them coming up to me in the hallway and saying "Miss by, I feels a lot more confident in French and I loves French class now because you makes it fun". Bringing energy, passion, and a desire for my students to succeed in my classroom is the reason why my students feel this way.

To conclude, all of us would not be here today without the people that supported us throughout our degrees. Our friends, family, partners, and whoever else was there for you during our studies, play a pivotal role in the teachers that we will be, and I speak this from my own experience. My view going into teaching has been shaped by my mom. My mom

is currently an active volunteer with Figure Skating at the provincial and national level, and her famous saying is "It's all about the skaters; what's best for the skaters". As I enter the next chapter of my life, I hope to take this saying and enter my classroom thinking "It's all about the students; what's best for the students". Thank you.

Danica Dean is a recent graduate of the Bachelor of Education (Intermediate/Secondary) program at Memorial University of NL and is currently teaching at Juniper Ridge Intermediate.

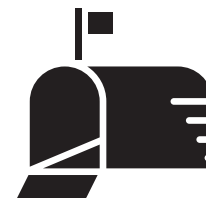
Dates to Remember

December 2024

- Dec. 9-13 Province-Wide Vote for NLTA Vice-President
- Dec. 19 **Deadline:** PD Fund Applications

January 2025

- Jan. 16 **Deadline:** PD Fund Applications
- Jan. 30 Table Officers Meeting
- Jan. 31 **Deadline:** Barnes, Bancroft, Allan Bishop and Special Recognition Nominations
- Jan. 31- Feb. 2 Provincial Executive Meeting



NOTICE

Due to the ongoing Canadian Union of Postal Workers Strike, we are unable to mail *The Bulletin*. This issue is digital only.



Kids Eat Smart Foundation NL Radiothon Thank You For Your Support

by Celina Stoyles



It is with gratitude that we thank you for the positive, direct impact you are having on the lives of school age children in Newfoundland and Labrador.

At Kids Eat Smart Foundation NL, our breakfast clubs serve over 47,000+ meals in our 277 Kids Eat Smart Clubs in Newfoundland and Labrador, every school day, and this is a monumental task!

We can only accomplish this with the generosity of our Principals, Club Coordinators, Teachers, Administration, and staff who volunteer to help our children learn, grow and be their very best.

It is through your unwavering support and dedication that we continue to always find a way to serve and provide the essential support to our breakfast clubs in our schools.

We are grateful for the continued support of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association for your ongoing commitment to our program who help to provide stability for continued growth.

Together, with your support, we ensure every school age child and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador has access to food at school, at no cost to families, ensuring our children start their school days well-nourished and ready to learn—creating opportunities for a stronger, brighter future.

On behalf of the children who have food at school because of you, we thank you.

Sincerely,

Celina Stoyles
Executive Director

Are You Thinking About Retiring?

INFORMATION YOU NEED TO KNOW

Under the *Teachers' Pensions Act*, a teacher is eligible for pension benefit:

- (a) At age 60, with at least five years of pensionable service.
Note: teachers who retire **prior to age 60** with between 5 and 24 years of pensionable service will not be eligible for a pension until the month following their 62nd birthday.
- (b) At age 55 or after, with at least 25 years of pensionable service.
- (c) After completing 30 years of worked service* (or 29.5 years by June), regardless of age.
- (d) After completing 29 years of worked service (or 28.5 years by June) and at least 30 years of pensionable service. Pension will be reduced based on the number of months a teacher will be retired prior to reaching age 55. Reduction ceases after age 55.
- (e) At age 55, with between 5 and 24.4 years of pension service, an actuarially reduced pension can be payable.

(*worked service refers to all pensionable service, except university study buy-back that was purchased prior to 1991.)

Regardless of which retirement eligibility trigger applies, **pension is only payable in the month following resignation and application for a pension.** For example, a teacher who retires effective June 30 and a teacher who retires effective June 5 will both be eligible to start receiving a pension in July. This holds true no matter when or in which month a teacher chooses to retire.

Access to Pension Estimator

Teachers have access to a pension estimator by logging into myPENSION available on the Teachers' Pension Plan Corporation website at www.tppcnl.ca.

Checklist for Retiring Teachers

The following checklist is designed to assist teachers as they participate and plan for this upcoming life phase change.

- Apply to the NLTA to attend a pre-retirement seminar up to two years prior to your year of retirement;
- Confirm the eligible date of your retirement with the TPPC at the pre-retirement seminar or by contacting the TPPC directly at memberservices@tppcnl.ca.
- Submit your resignation to your employer (**do not** resign until eligibility has been confirmed): one month notice is required if retirement is to occur anytime prior to Christmas; three months notice (March 31 if retiring June 30) is required if retirement is to occur after Christmas. If you are retiring at the end of the school year, it's imperative that you submit your resignation and paperwork before the end of June. Otherwise, you will not be eligible for your

pension until at least **August 1**. Applications can no longer be backdated. This is a Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) regulation.

- Apply with the TPPC for pension by completing and submitting the appropriate "Teachers' Pension" application and "Direct Deposit" form prior to the effective date of your resignation.
- If you still have funds in the substitute pension plan, call Canada Life at 1-800-724-3402 to access these funds.
- Apply for severance pay (if applicable) by completing the "Severance Payment Request" form.
- Most of your current Group Insurance benefits will automatically continue through deductions on your pension cheques. Long Term Disability and the \$10,000 Basic Critical Illness benefit, however, will terminate at retirement. Your current Basic Group Life and Accident Insurance coverage of two times annual earnings will reduce to two times annual pension. If you would like to convert your Group Life Insurance coverage that is being lost (reduced) to an individual Life Insurance program, make certain to contact Johnson Inc. to arrange to do so within 31 days of retirement/reduction of coverage to avoid the necessity of a medical application/underwriting. For further details please consult the Group Insurance website at groupinsurance.nlta.ca or contact Johnson Inc. at 1-800-563-1528
- Consider joining the Retired Teachers' Association by completing the application form at <https://www.nlta.nl.ca/rtanl-membership-form/>.
- Consider seeking personal financial advice regarding financial decisions related to retirement.
- Keep your mind active and your body healthy. Enjoy life!

Changes Effective Upon Retirement

- NLTA Membership status changes from Active Membership to Life or Associate Membership.
- Access to the services and benefits of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) terminates.
- Basic Life Insurance coverage reduces to twice annual pension from twice annual salary (provided coverage is maintained and premiums paid); coverage terminates at age 65 and is replaced by a members only \$15,000 benefit after age 65.
- Basic Critical Illness Insurance terminates.
- Eligibility for EI ceases (unless a person becomes a "re-established worker" or is on a forced medical retirement).

Any questions or comments can be directed to Deana Hatcher, Administrative Officer in Programs and Services at the NLTA at dhatcher@nlta.ca, Tel: 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 270.



Teacher Wellness: Prioritizing Self-Care for New Teachers

by Nancy Ivany



The rewards of teaching are immense and becoming a new teacher can be an exciting and fulfilling time. It is important however, for new educators to be aware of the unique challenges they face as they navigate the complexities of classroom management, curriculum development, building relationships with students, families and colleagues and constant adaptation to many social and emotional demands. Teachers report one of the highest rates of occupational stress and burnout compared with other professions (Taylor, Wanying Zhou, Boyle, Funk & DeNeve, 2024). In the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, 78% of teachers report the demands of their work has negatively impacted their mental health and wellbeing and 17.5% have considered leaving the teaching profession permanently (Teachers Think Tank, February 2024). New teachers are particularly susceptible to professional burnout, as 30% leave the teaching profession within the first five years of employment (Kutsyuruba, Godden & Tregunna, 2014). Prioritizing self care and well-being can help new teachers enhance their resilience, improve their job performance, and stay mentally sharp and emotionally balanced. Improved wellness and self-care can not only help to protect the next generation of educators, but also infuse students, schools and the broader educational community with positive social, emotional, cognitive and physical health benefits.

Viac and Fraser (2020) define teacher well-being as how a teacher responds to "the cognitive, emotional, health and social conditions pertaining to their work and profession" (p.2) but simply defined, well being is a state of happiness, being comfortable, healthy and content with life (Jarden & Roache, 2023). Personal well-being impacts working relationships with colleagues and students, as well as classroom management, teaching behavior and student outcomes. Teachers who experience positive well-being build good relationships with others. Conversely, teachers who struggle with well-being often prefer to not connect with others, find it difficult

to overcome daily unexpected obstacles and/or stress, feel without purpose or that their life is out of their control (Dreer, 2023). Extended periods of chronic stress, exposure to secondary trauma and feelings of negative well being can lead to burnout which presents as "a state of chronic stress that leads to physical and emotional exhaustion, cynicism, detachment, and feelings of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment" (Haberman, 2004). In Newfoundland and Labrador over 86% of teachers reported experiencing symptoms of burnout at some point in their career (Teachers Think Tank, February 2024). It is worthy to note, new teachers face higher levels of burnout than experienced teachers because of idealism, lack of experience, support, training and resources, and feelings of a disconnect between the work they expected and the practical realities of their new career (Taylor et. al. 2024). Therefore, they need to pay close attention to their mental health and wellbeing.

Several interventions can be implemented by new teachers to reduce the risk of burnout. These can be separated into individually focused interventions or organizational directed solutions (Simone, 2022). Organizational directed solutions can come from administrators or Department Heads to reduce first year teachers' workload and enhance teamwork under the guidance of mentors or lead teachers to prevent working in isolation. Individual focused interventions can be learned and include reflection, emotional competence, social/emotional interventions, self compassion, addressing perfectionism, gratitude, thankfulness and self-care. Practical self care for new teachers to avoid burnout includes investment in mental, physical and emotional health on a regular basis. Such as:

1. Prioritize Physical Health:

- Get enough sleep: Aim for 7-8 hours of quality sleep each night to recharge your body and mind.
- Eat nutritious meals: Fuel your body with healthy foods to maintain energy levels and sup-

port cognitive function.

- Exercise regularly: Engage in physical activity that you enjoy, such as walking, yoga, or dancing. Exercise not only improves physical health but also reduces stress and boosts mood.

2. Practice Mindfulness and Stress Management:

- Mindfulness techniques: Incorporate mindfulness practices like meditation or deep breathing into your daily routine to reduce stress and increase focus.
- Time management: Use effective time management strategies to prioritize tasks and avoid feeling overwhelmed.
- Seek support: Don't hesitate to reach out to colleagues, mentors, or counsellors for support and guidance.

3. Cultivate Hobbies and Interests:

- Pursue hobbies and interests outside of teaching to recharge and reduce stress.
- Spend time with loved ones: Connect with friends and family to maintain strong social relationships and emotional well-being.

4. Take Breaks:

- Schedule short breaks throughout the day to rest and recharge.
- Create a designated workspace at home to minimize distractions and avoid checking/reading emails during personal/family time.
- Take advantage of professional development opportunities to learn new skills and connect with other educators.

5. Practice Self-Compassion:

- Be kind to yourself and avoid self-criticism.
- Celebrate your accomplishments, no matter how small.
- Learn from mistakes and setbacks as opportunities for growth.

It is also important to be aware of setting healthy boundaries as a new teacher and recognize these boundaries come in many forms and change over time as our circumstances and relationships shift and grow (Baylis, 2024). Setting boundaries with students may include such things as monitoring your self-disclosures or feelings about colleagues; being empathetic but also direct as you refer appropriate disclosures about trauma, abuse, self-harm, etc. to the trained professionals in your school. Setting appropriate boundaries with students prevents role confusion, builds trust, fosters student independence, shows students how to respect boundaries outside of the school setting and finally ensures professionalism and avoids burnout (Baylis, 2024).

To encourage positive well being it is important to monitor stress levels and boundary setting behaviors, however, it is also important to navigate new colleagues, students and administration in a professional and healthy manner. Frommert (2024), advises new teachers when settling into a new school setting:

1. Monitor and reflect on how you feel with colleagues and choose mentors who you can trust.
2. Effectively communicate—be clear and use “I” statements.
3. Learn and respect others’ boundaries.
4. Ask questions, ask for help, ask for support and collaborate with others
5. Set realistic goals and prioritize tasks.
6. Limit work when at home and set boundaries for checking, sending and answering emails/text messages.

7. Take breaks and eat throughout the school day.

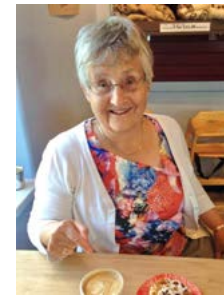
Self care done well requires new teachers to acknowledge their need for wellness and self-preservation. Focusing on self care and well-being also requires daily practice and personal reflection that results in not only enhanced resilience and improved job performance, but creating mentally sharp and emotionally balanced educators who infuse students, schools and the broader educational community with positive social, emotional, cognitive and physical health benefits. Please reach out to your Employee Assistance Program for additional help and support in prioritizing your personal self care journey.

Nancy Ivany is a Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for Teachers. For confidential assistance contact Nancy Ivany at (709) 733-3269, nivany@eapnlteachers.ca or Lori Hewitt at (709) 733-3242, lhewitt@eapnlteachers.ca.

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JANE BUSSEY, DECEMBER 8, 1948 – AUGUST 4, 2024



Jane Bussey

It is with great sadness that the family of the late Jane A. Bussey announce her passing at the James Paton Memorial Reginal Health Centre, Gander on Sunday August 4, 2024 at the age of 75 years.

She was predeceased by her parents Cyril & Isobel Rowsell.

She leaves to mourn with fond and loving memories her husband Maxwell; daughters: Christina Oake (Glenn) of Botwood, Heather Evans (Jason) of St. Johns; grandsons: Andrew Oake and Benjamin & Thomas Evans.

Jane was born and raised in Gander, NL. She met her husband, Max, while they were both students at Memorial University. Having graduated with a BSW, they moved to Marystown, then late Twillingate became home.

Jane had a fulfilling career, first as a Social Worker and then a job she loved—teaching. She was a lifetime Girl Guide member. She enjoyed travelling, music, reading, knitting, having coffee with friends and especially her three grandsons. She will be missed by all.



Jeanie Dyke

JEANIE DYKE, FEBRUARY 22, 1970 - NOVEMBER 6, 2024

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Jeanie Dyke (née Boland) on November 6th, 2024 at James Paton Memorial Regional Health Center.

Leaving to mourn her husband Darren, daughters Cassidy (Nick) and Amy, dad Hiram (Sheila), grandfather Gordon, siblings Michelle (Mike), Hiram (Cassie), Ashley (John), and Shauna (Steve), parents-in-law Gerald and Louise, brothers-in-law Jamie (Lori) and Sheldon (Jessica), nieces and nephews Josh, Chase, Lynnae, Hiram Ray, Joelle, Breeleigh, Reya, Amelia, Abby, Matthew, Lily, Gracie, Liam, Amber, and great-nephew Roen. Also sharing the loss are a large circle of aunts, uncles, and cousins along with many coworkers, students, friends, and fur babies.

Jeanie was a beautiful person, inside and out. Even as a young girl, she had a heart of gold and always took care of everyone. She wanted to rescue every animal and was the best big sister. She was incredibly supportive of everyone's accomplish-

(cont'd on page 18)

It pays to be a member!

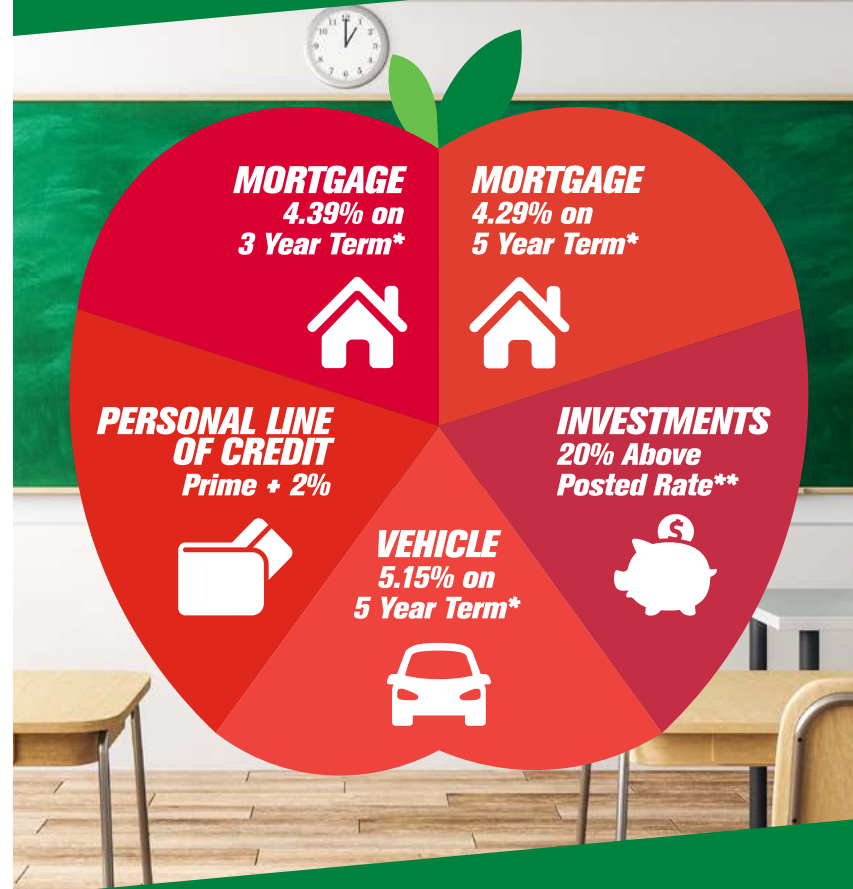
NLTA members can receive exclusive home and car insurance savings and enhanced coverages.



belairdirect.
car and home insurance

Certain conditions, eligibility requirements, limitations and exclusions apply to all offers. Visit belairdirect.com for more details. Offers may change without notice. We offer car insurance and home insurance in Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island and home insurance only in British Columbia. © 2024, Belair Insurance Company Inc. All rights reserved.

TEACHERS CARE PACKAGE



As a teacher, you care for your students. We at NLCU applaud all that you do, so consider this bundle of special offers a “Care Package” of sorts. You can benefit from any one or all of these special rates.



*Rates are subject to change. Certain conditions apply.
**Up to a maximum of 0.40%

IN MEMORIAM

ments and never missed an opportunity to show up for her family. She was also immensely proud of her husband and two daughters. She didn't want the spotlight on herself but would beam with pride watching those she loved shine.

Jeanie's other passion in life was teaching. She spent the majority of her career as the Instructional Resource Teacher at William Mercer Academy where she was devoted to her students and selflessly gave whatever she could to make sure everyone was cared for and included. Her classroom was dubbed Mustang Manor and she was affectionately referred to as its Queen. Jeanie's room was always filled with students who loved and appreciated her and she greeted each one with a kind, welcoming smile. Her door was always open, not only to the students she taught, but to everyone. She was genuine, patient, caring, compassionate and respectful; a consummate professional in all situations. She left a lasting impact on every person she met and every student she taught. She brought warmth and kindness wherever she went and she'll be greatly missed by



NLTA CHRISTMAS HOURS

Please be advised that the NLTA building will be **CLOSED** from:

**December 23rd TO
January 5th
(inclusive)**

to allow staff to enjoy the holiday season

**The office will reopen
on January 6th, 2025.**

MORNING WATCH

How Inuit Educators in Nunatsiavut are Cultivating Teacher Leadership Through Learning and Challenging Educational Norms

by Shannon D., Moore, S., Tullock, S., Lane, J., Pottle, C., Andersen, O., & Dicker, D. (2024)

Redrafted from a larger article Moore, S., Tullock, S., Lane, J., Pottle, C., Dicker, S., Andersen, O., and Dicker, D. (2024). *Nurturing Inuit Education and Teacher Leadership in Nunatsiavut*, *The Morning Watch Journal of Educational and Social Policy Analysis*, Spring 2024 (See <https://journals.library.mun.ca/index.php/mwatch/index>)

Introduction

Teacher leadership is a term we know all too well. Several educators in Nunatsiavut, northern Labrador's Inuit region, are taking it to a whole new level by being culturally responsive with their teaching methods and creative with tailoring the curriculum to better connect with and engage their students. These educators are champions of Inuit knowledge, fostering leadership and nurturing a generation that values both modern education and traditional practices. They are not just imparting knowledge; they are leading the charge for educational reform. This brief article is but a glimpse into the detailed case study issued in Memorial University of Newfoundland's Morning Watch journal. This submission explores teacher leadership in Nunatsiavut, highlighting how Inuit educators improve academic success and create culturally relevant paths for future generations.

The Journey Toward Reconciliation

It is important to recognize that schools are at varying stages in understanding and integrating Indigenous culture into the curriculum. Each community's journey is unique.

Educators who participate in cultural initiatives help take meaningful steps toward awareness and reconciliation. Continuous engagement with Indigenous cultures leads to significant progress in creating inclusive educational environments. When you bring cultural knowledge into the provincial curriculum, it allows you to honour Indigenous groups, it shows that you are open to change, and most importantly, that you are willing to learn alongside your students. Teachers can adopt a



Main students putting up tent with Jens Haven Principal

facilitative approach to learning, engaging students in collaborative projects. For instance, if students are in a biology course learning about anatomy, a teacher might facilitate an opportunity to meet with a local hunter and watch as they butcher their seal. This promotes active participation, making students more invested in their learning about identity and heritage.

The Importance of Representation

Representation in the classroom is crucial for Indigenous students. When students see educators who share the same cultural background and understand their life experiences, it fosters a sense of belonging. This connection builds trust, making students feel valued and respected. Educators who have grown up in these environments provide insights that cannot be found in textbooks. Their firsthand knowledge allows them to connect deeply with students and their families. This localized approach fosters meaningful learning where students see their identities reflected. For example, Inuktitut can be used to teach concepts like counting or measurement. By applying local contexts such as hunting and fishing, math becomes more relatable. Imagine a classroom where students learn to measure the length of fish they catch while hearing Inuktitut being spoken about the process from someone they know in their community. This

practical application not only makes math meaningful but also solidifies students' ties to their cultural identity.

Understanding the Challenges in Inuit Education

Western education systems often fail to incorporate Indigenous knowledge causing a cultural disconnect and could lead to disengagement among students. The Inuit view of education emphasizes community, connectivity, and identity. In addition, there is a serious teacher shortage. Despite the rising demand, many remote communities struggle to find educators. It is near impossible to find educators who are equipped with the necessary knowledge to teach in remote communities as well as understand Inuit culture. With this in mind, culturally relevant teacher preparation programs can help bridge this gap and empower more people in these areas to pursue teaching careers.

Cultural teachers, known for their expertise in language and traditional practices, are crucial in this process. This not only preserves cultural knowledge but also enriches the curriculum. Many cultural educators lack formal university degrees, which limits their recognition as certified teachers. This situation reflects a larger issue of colonization, where Inuit culture has historically been undervalued. Such marginalization sends a troubling message: that cultural knowledge is less important than formal qualifications. This perspective not only undermines the authority of Inuit educators but also jeopardizes the transmission of cultural identity to future generations.

The need for professional development tailored to Inuit educators is critical. Although many are supported by their communities, access to quality training programs remains limited. Without effective professional development, aspiring teachers and leaders may struggle to find their footing. Supporting teacher leadership is more than just about individuals; it's about creating an environment where culturally relevant education can flourish. This requires ongoing investment and advocacy aimed at ensuring Inuit educators' voices are heard.

The Importance of Teacher Leadership

It is through these educators' passion for their culture, language, and fellow Inuit that they are taking on leadership roles and adjusting curriculum to be responsive to their students' needs. What might have been lacking when they reflect on their own schooling experiences propels them to do better for

the next generation. It is important to acknowledge the old adage, it takes a community to raise a child, as teaching children takes a community. These educational leaders are taking it upon themselves to incorporate Inuit culture and values and create a sense of community by working together towards the common goal of passing on knowledge and revitalizing Inuktitut. Language plays a crucial role in fostering an inclusive educational experience. While becoming fluent in Inuktitut may be a challenge for non-Inuit teachers, there are creative ways to bring Inuktitut into the classroom. For instance, Inuit students and staff can lead "word of the day" activities, promoting language learning and cultural exchange. This empowerment encourages students and staff to engage with and respect Inuktitut, enhancing the overall classroom and school environment.



Nain students making model kayak

Inuit Teachers as Cultural Leaders

Inuit teachers have a crucial role in bridging cultural gaps within classrooms. They do more than convey information; they advocate for the integration of Inuit culture into lesson plans which allow them to create an environment where academic success and cultural pride coexist. For example, a teacher might integrate Inuit stories that convey essential life lessons into language arts. This not only teaches literacy skills but also helps students connect with their heritage. With their deep-rooted understanding of Inuit values, history, and traditions, Inuit teachers have a profound impact that goes beyond the classroom. For instance, when they teach students about the significance of the Inuktitut language, they not only introduce new vocabulary but also convey the stories and cultural practices tied to those words.



Nunatsiavut colleagues: Sarah Townley, Ola Andersen, Colleen Pottle, Doris Dicker, and Shannon Dicker



University of the Arctic Verdde Indigenous Education Thematic Network - Labrador visiting Sami University Colleagues in Kautokeino (Northern Sami: Guovdageaidnu) Norway.

Note: The lead author on this Bulletin article is Shannon Dicker, a Program Specialist for Inuit Education based out of Jens Haven Memorial School. She works with the 5 schools on the Nunatsiavut region (north coast of Labrador). She also reports to both NL Schools office in Goose Bay and to Nunatsiavut Government as part of her role.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

COLLEEN GALGAY
Candidate for NLTA Vice-President 2025-2027

BIOGRAPHY

Colleen Galgay has spent 28 years working in a variety of roles within the education system. She has served on numerous boards and committees which has helped develop her strong leadership and collaboration skills.

- Safe and Inclusive Schools Itinerant
- English as Additional Language Itinerant
- Grade One and Two Classroom Teacher
- Association for New Canadians
- Osaka Women's College, Osaka, Japan

NLTA AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 2014 - 2024 Member of the St. John's Centre NLTA Branch
- 2018 - 2020 Member of the St. John's Centre Branch Executive
- 2023 - 2024 Mental Health Care and Treatment Review Board
- 2018 - 2021 St. John's Transportation Commission (Metrobus)
- 2015 - 2016 Member of Equal Voice NL
- 2014 - 2017 Elected Representative for Memorial University's Board of Regents
- 2015 - 2017 Chair of the Governance Committee
- 2014 - 2017 Member of the Campus Planning and Development Committee
- 2000 - 2003 Royal St. John's Regatta Committee Member

ELECTION PRIORITIES

Now, more than ever, our public education system needs a strong, collective voice as we fight for a well resourced K-12 system for all teachers and students. As your NLTA Vice-President for 2025-2027, I will commit to ensuring that all teachers voices are heard. I have a wide perspective on all educational issues and I will be responsive to your needs.

MY PRIORITIES INCLUDE:

- Teacher morale and wellness
- Safety for all members of our school community
- Discussions regarding the Inclusion Model and ways to improve it
- Smaller class sizes based on composition and need
- Teacher recruitment and retention
- Improvement of Professional Learning for teachers

Çe serait un honneur et un privilège de vous représenter en tant que vice-présidente.

On December 9-13, 2024
Vote for COLLEEN GALGAY



FACEBOOK:
Colleen Galgay for NLTA Vice-President 2025-2027
EMAIL:
colleengalgay@gmail.com

PAID ADVERTISEMENT



NLTA Winter Art Contest

Thank you to all the teachers and students who participated in our 2024 Winter Art Contest. We asked students in Grades 5-12 to show you what this season means to them and once again this year we are impressed with the creativity! The Bulletin cover

image was designed by **Andrew Peddle**, a Grade 8 student of teacher Mr. Todd Fry at **Villanova Junior High**, CBS. Below are honourable mentions.



Maci Goodyear, Grade 6, Brookside Intermediate



Noah Suley, Grade 11, Labrador Straits Academy



Knox Collier, Grade 5, École C.C. Loughlin School



Oscar Pritchett, Grade 10, Smallwood Academy



Kendra Clarke, Grade 9, Pearce Junior High School



Serah Lijo, Grade 7, King Academy



Ava Noseworthy, Grade 12, MSB Regional Academy

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Save Energy to WIN \$2,500 in Chapters Gift Cards

Get your students thinking energy efficiency with the takeCHARGE School Contest!

CONTEST DETAILS
To Enter: Create a short video, book, song, poster, artwork or another medium of your choosing about saving energy. Get Creative!

<p>Grades K-6 Prize: Chapters Gift Cards - Valued \$2,500 for your class. Deadline: Friday, January 31, 2025 by 4 PM</p>	<p>Grades 7-12 Prize: Chapters Gift Cards - Valued \$500/student* and \$500 for your school. Deadline: Friday, February 28, 2025 by 4 PM</p>
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*Up to 4 students per entry.
 Visit TakeChargeNL.ca for contest details.

takeCHARGE | TakeChargeNL.ca

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ANNOUNCING NLTA PRESIDENT-ELECT DALE LAMBE



NEW NLTA PRESIDENT ELECTED

Dale Lambe has been declared elected as President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association for 2025-27 after a province-wide electronic vote. He begins his two-year term of office on August 1, 2025.

The vote for NLTA President took place during the week of November 25-29, 2024.

VOTE FOR NLTA VICE-PRESIDENT

The vote for NLTA Vice-President will take place **December 9-13, 2024**, and will use a ranked electronic ballot system. The electronic ballots will be sent to all eligible voters via email. For more information related to the Province-Wide Election, please visit <https://www.nlta.nl.ca/province-wide-vote-for-president-and-vice-president-2024/>.



COLLEEN GALGAY
FLATROCK
(MEMBER OF ST. JOHN'S
CENTRE BRANCH)



STEVE PENNEY
PARADISE
(MEMBER OF ST. JOHN'S
CENTRE BRANCH)



SHELDON SLANEY
DUNVILLE
(MEMBER OF PLACENTIA
BRANCH)



SEAN WEIR
PORT HOPE SIMPSON
(MEMBER OF COASTAL
LABRADOR SOUTH BRANCH)

The remaining members of the 2025-27 Provincial Executive Council will be elected by the delegates to the NLTA Biennial General Meeting to be held in 2025.