

THE bulletin

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ADVERTISING OR EXPLOITATION

by [Lesley-Ann Browne](#)

I received a phone call a few weeks ago from a person who was in our province evaluating YNN and its performance in our schools. He asked me for copies of articles I had published in previous issues of The Bulletin. After reviewing the articles he phoned to thank me for providing them. He suggested, however, that perhaps I should make a trip to a school that has signed on with YNN and see how well it is working. He was evaluating the success of YNN for its parent company.

In 1990, Youth News Network (YNN) began approaching schools with an offer: in return for the loan of video/audio equipment and computers, schools would agree to broadcast 2.5 minutes of commercials and 10 minutes of news and current events to all students. At the time, YNN met opposition in various parts of the country and was not able to infiltrate schools. But in 1998, YNN appeared on the scene again and has been working its way into schools ever since.

Who could blame a school for signing on with YNN? I have no doubt that schools are pleased to receive the video and computer equipment. As schools are increasingly underfunded they are becoming less resistant to commercial and corporate initiatives. These corporate initiatives often involve donations of equipment or money in return for an exclusive marketing opportunity.

For years teachers have been fighting for more resources in order to offer their students the best advantages possible. YNN, and many others, have taken advantage of this and have found a means to offer the resources. More resources for schools would be great but the mandatory viewing of commercials and privately prepared news entertainment during school hours is not.

Information from the Canadian Teachers' Federation's recent Environics Poll results show that a majority of Canadians surveyed oppose advertising in the classroom. The poll asked the public to choose which of the following two statements on allowing companies to advertise in public schools most closely represented their point of view: A. Advertising has no place in schools, since school, is a place where children should learn without having products and services promoted, or B. Advertising in schools is perfectly acceptable if it allows schools to receive cash, services or equipment in exchange.

Seven in 10 Canadians surveyed selected statement A and therefore, feel advertising has no place in schools, even if it would allow the school to receive cash, services or equipment in exchange.

The second question polled the 30% of respondents who selected statement B. It asked if they would agree with allowing advertising in schools if it meant requiring students to watch video or computerized commercials and advertising on TV or computers as part of the instructional day. Only seven in 10 of this subgroup agreed. Total opposition, then, to advertising in schools is over 90%. This includes respondents who were immediately opposed, and those opposed if watching television advertising were required as part of the instructional day.

Marketing professionals explain that the classroom is one of the most effective environments in which to target young consumers: the classroom is trusted, attendance is mandatory, the teacher becomes the corporate spokesperson, and the corporate donor receives positive P.R. Many individuals and organizations have expressed their concern and outrage at such blatant commercialization of Canadian classrooms. We should not open the schoolhouse door and expose classrooms and students to the commercial exploitation of education.



ON LOCATION

Provincial / National / International NEWS

BAY BULLS

Safe Schools Program

On February 4, students at St. Patrick's Elementary in Bay Bulls participated in a "Kick-Off Day" for their Safe Schools Program. The day began with a captivating address by Mr. Tom Brophy of Memorial University who spoke on Peer Pressure and Interpersonal Relationships. Throughout the day students were actively involved in a host of activities depicting some aspect of bullying and conflict resolution. The day concluded with a ceremony in which all students pledged to make their school a better place. Mike Edmunds, Principal of St. Patrick's Elementary, said the program will continue for ten weeks with all students receiving instruction in the acquisition of specific skills which will enable them to better resolve their interpersonal conflicts.

Allergy information session for parents

This past February, the School Councils of St. Patrick's Elementary School in Bay Bulls and St. Bernard's School in Witless Bay offered an Information Night on Peanut and Sesame Seed Allergies to parents. "So often these days parents feel overwhelmed, whether it's because their children have one of these allergies or they have a difficult time finding items that are suitable for school lunches," said Mike Edmunds, Principal of St. Patrick's Elementary.

The information session, which took place at St. Patrick's Elementary, was broken down into two parts. Session 1 provided specific information regarding the nature of the allergies and their seriousness for the children who have them. In Session 2, parents were given an extensive list of the food items that could be sent to school. Mr. Edmunds said from this list, and especially from the food display that had been arranged by several parents, all parents left the school feeling they had a lot more choices than they ever had imagined. "From the reaction of the parents it appears as if this type of Parent Night will become an annual event for our schools."

ST. BRIDE'S

School hosts leadership weekend

This past February, the Leadership 3225 class of Fatima Academy in St. Bride's, under the direction of Ms. Pat Dohey, organized and facilitated a leadership weekend for over 70 students from all parts of the Avalon West School District. In the last few days prior to the conference, Mr. Geoffrey Booth, a veteran of such weekends, arrived from the Labrador West School Board to hold a workshop with the facilitators as a final preparation before the weekend began.

"Throughout the weekend the participants enjoyed many fun-filled activities which helped bring out the

leadership skills in all of us," said Ms. Dohey. "From games such as Chain-Reaction to Water Balloon Battleship, all students left with a greater sense of what a leader should be, as well as being a little wet." The weekend was not all games however, as there were four main topics surrounding the weekend's activities Peer Pressure, Communication, Self-Esteem, and Emotional Abuse. According to Ms. Dohey, these topics were met with short plays by the facilitators, followed by group discussions in how, as leaders, we can bring out the positive side in all of us.

"As the closing ceremonies ended and we all began to leave for home, a new sense of being and belonging could be felt throughout the hallowed halls of Fatima," said Ms. Dohey. The weekend ended with all of the participants collecting their "I like because " slips, a perfect finish to a perfect weekend. These slips provided an opportunity for friends to write about friends and each contained a heart-warming thought from an anonymous friend at the conference. "Overall, this weekend was a huge success and hopefully this conference will become an annual event," stated Ms. Dohey.

ST. MARY'S

Teachers recognized during Teacher Appreciation Week

The staff of Dunne Memorial Academy in St. Mary's were truly astounded with the abundance of gratitude bestowed upon them during Teacher Appreciation Week, February 14 to 18. School Council members from Dunne Memorial Academy solicited donations from the very generous businesses and committees in the St. Mary's Bay area in order to show the school staff how much they were appreciated. Each day of the week, members of the School Council provided refreshments during recess which included such luxuries as vegetable platters, soup, chili, fruit, cookies, and a teacher's appreciation cake. In addition, winners were drawn each day for various gift certificates and crafts. As if this wasn't enough, on February 18 the School Council presented the staff with a beautiful framed print to be displayed at the school in recognition of the staff's dedication to the education of the students. The Council also included in this recognition the support staff and bus drivers who are also a vital part of the education system. "A heartfelt thank you goes out to the members of the School Council and all of the citizens who helped make Teacher Appreciation Week 2000 such a tremendous success," said Charlie Dillon, Principal of Dunne Memorial Academy.

POUCH COVE

Celebrating 100th day of school

On February 11, the students and staff of Pouch Cove Elementary celebrated their 100th day of school. There were week-long activities to mark the event, including a reading challenge which saw every class surpass the goal of being the first to read 100 books. The students demonstrated their creativity by making sculptures using 100 items. There were igloos made of 100 marshmallows, reindeer made with 100 tooth picks, cars made with 100 Q-tips and many more. The school also held a snack day and every student brought in 100 pieces of a snack item. "This made for very fun and imaginative Math lessons," said Tracey Hibbs, a Grade 1 teacher at Pouch Cove Elementary. Another successful event was the Workout 100 where all students and teachers had completed 100 exercises by the end of the day. On the 100th day everyone wore 100 items such as necklaces with 100 pieces of cereal, 100 paper clips and shirts with 100 hearts and 100 buttons. "We had a very fun and busy week and we are now all energized for the remainder of our school year!" concluded Ms. Hibbs.

MOBILE

Great big excitement

There was a tremendous amount of excitement at Mobile High School on February 9, 2000 when Great Big Sea were at the school to officially present the newly-formed band program with \$10,000 worth of instruments provided by the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Science (CARAS). CARAS has a grant program which provides money to start up new school band programs and help with existing ones in various schools across the country. Mobile High was fortunate enough to be the only recipient in Newfoundland and Labrador and was able to purchase 18 instruments to help begin their new band program.

Members of Great Big Sea presented the instruments to the band students and recounted stories of the importance of music and band programs in their lives growing up. Afterwards they graciously talked to students, signed autographs and posed for pictures. Students, staff and administration were all delighted. Don Walsh, school principal and Mary Brennan, band director, are very thankful to all who attended and especially to CARAS for their generosity.

On February 19, Mobile Central High School hosted and won the Eastern Region Mathematics competition. The competition, which is held four times a year, involves school teams made up of four members from Level I to Level III. The teams are challenged with 10 mathematical problems and a final relay question. The relay consists of four problems where the answer to the first question is needed to solve the second question and so on. Schools involved in this competition included: Holy Heart of Mary High School, Bishops College, Booth Memorial High School, Prince of Wales Collegiate, and Beaconsfield High School in St. John's; O'Donel High School and Mount Pearl Senior High in Mount Pearl; Queen Elizabeth Regional High in Foxtrap; Holy Spirit High School in Manuels; and Mobile Central High School. Questions for the competition are prepared by the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at Memorial University. Mobile won the competition when the team quickly solved a tie-breaking problem against competitors from Beaconsfield and Queen Elizabeth. Mobile's team consisted of Lisa Saunders, Mary Ryan, Beverly Doyle, and Ben Carey.

STEPHENVILLE

Celebrating the new millennium

For the second year in a row, Stephenville Middle School has brought together students and teachers from three separate school systems and four separate schools in an effort to create pride and spirit in the school. "What better way than to have everyone celebrate the new millennium together!" said Dave Warren, Guidance Counsellor at Stephenville Middle School.

The hours of planning by the students, teachers and parents paid off. On January 13 the entire school was decorated with balloons, streamers, banners, posters, time-lines, themes, icicles and lights. Mr. Warren said each class took a section of the school to decorate and it was amazing how well everyone worked together. During the evening a dance was held for the students in the cafeteria, followed by a fireworks display. Mr. Warren wishes to express a special thanks to the parents and Cindy O'Neil, the Communities In School coordinator. "Over a month later, most decorations were still hanging!" he said.

CARBONEAR

Students demonstrate excellence in English and French

In the fall of 1998, 14 Level III students at Carbonear Collegiate enrolled in the inaugural offering of

Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition 4222. This course, designed by Mr. Des Fillier, surveys major concepts in English Literature from the 16th to the 20th Centuries.

The Advanced Placement (AP) program operates under the auspices of The College Board in the United States, the same institution which oversees the development of the SAT. In May of each year students around the world can elect to write very demanding examinations, each composed and subsequently assessed by university professors, in any of dozens of disciplines. Scoring ranges from 1 to 5, from lowest to highest. Most universities in North America offer students who score 4 or 5 on an AP examination either advanced placement or full university credit for a first year university course within the examined discipline. A score of 4 or 5 is only achieved by 10 percent of those students who write the Advanced Placement Literature and Composition examination, world-wide.

Educators at Carbonear Collegiate are proud to announce that of four Level III students who elected to write the 1999 Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition examination, three students scored perfect 5s. In the late fall of 1999, The College Board released statistics covering all examination results, including those for Advanced Placement Literature and Composition. Brian Manning, Assistant Principal at Carbonear Collegiate, said these statistics reveal the true level of the accomplishment of our students. In Newfoundland and Labrador, 90 students wrote this examination. There were four 5s (three of four perfect scores in the province were achieved by students at Carbonear Collegiate) and in all of Atlantic Canada there were six perfect 5s.

Congratulations is extended to students Shalon Butt, Hillary Drover, and Kimberley Hindy. "Their achievement affords them advanced university credit in English and also reflects their commitment to academic excellence, a view shared by their proud educators at Carbonear Collegiate," said Mr. Manning.

Congratulations is also extended to Anna Robinson, a Level II student at Carbonear Collegiate who has been selected to represent the Avalon West School District at a bilingual youth conference to take place for one week in May 2000 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Anna will participate in many youth-centered activities and will be staying with a fellow youth in Winnipeg who will then travel to Harbour Grace to reside with Anna this July.

Anna was chosen based on her academic standing, her extra-curricular involvement, and her ability to function using French as a second language. "The faculty and support staff at Carbonear Collegiate are very proud of Anna and we wish her a bon voyage," said Mr. Manning.

SPANIARD'S BAY

Computers for Schools Program opens new repair depot

On March 10 the Honourable Fred Mifflin, M.P. for Bonavista-Trinity-Conception (on behalf of John Manley, Minister of Industry), the Honourable John Efford, Newfoundland and Labrador's Minister of Fisheries, and Gary Erl of NewTel Communications celebrated the official opening of the new Computers for Schools (CFS) repair depot located at the Avalon West School Board offices in Spaniard's Bay.

"The Computers for Schools Program is a successful example of how we are working together to give our young people the technological edge that they need to compete in the economy of tomorrow," said Mr. Mifflin.

Minister Efford said the Computers for Schools Program is a good example of the importance of government and industry working together for the benefit of our young people. "We must continue to invest in our youth and provide them with the skills needed to compete in today's knowledge-based economy."

Ken Garland, Manager of the Western Avalon region for the Bank of Montreal, presented a donation of 23 computers to the program during the event for schools in the Avalon West School Board district.

Co-founded in 1993 by Industry Canada and the Telephone Pioneers, Computers for Schools increases access to information technology for all Canadians by collecting, refurbishing and delivering donated surplus computers and software to schools and public libraries across Canada. The Program's goal is to place 250,000 computers in classrooms and public libraries by March 31, 2001. To date over 185,000 computers have been delivered to schools and public libraries across the nation, including over 4,000 to schools and libraries in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In this province, the Program is delivered by the Provincial Information Equipment Recycling and Refurbishing Enterprises Inc., a non-profit organization composed of representatives from the Department of Education, Industry Canada, NewTel, the NewTel Pioneers, Operation ONLINE, STEM~Net, NLTA, Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association, and the Public Libraries Board.

For information on the Computers for Schools program in Newfoundland and Labrador, call 709-576-2377 or visit the national web site at www.schoolnet.ca/cfs-ope.

School Councils and Parents

THE SCHOOLS ACT

by [Edward Hancock](#)

A new Schools Act came into being in this Province in December 1997. The NLTA often receives inquiries from teachers relating to provisions of the Act. This article (the third in a series) deals with the provisions of the Act that relate to parents' rights and responsibilities and the sections that deal with School Councils.

Compulsory Attendance

Section 4 (1) of the Act requires compulsory attendance for the entire school year for children who are six years of age or older on December 31 in the school year and younger than 16 years on September 1 in that school year. A parent of a child within the ages for compulsory school enrollment is required to present the child for enrollment in the school (S.15) and is required to ensure that the child attend school unless excused from attendance under the Schools Act (S.16). It is an offence under the Act for a parent to neglect or refuse to enrol his/her child in school or not to make every reasonable effort to ensure that the child attend. It is also an offence for any person to attempt to prevent the attendance of a child at school by way of threat, intimidation or otherwise (S.17).

A conviction under this section of the Schools Act is liable to a fine not exceeding \$500 and/or imprisonment up to three months, and continued contravention of this section can lead to further prosecution with each day's continued contravention constituting a separate offence. There is also a duty to report for any person who has reason to believe that a child who is within the ages for compulsory attendance is not enrolled in school. Such a report is to the Director of the School District (S.18).

Reporting to Parents

A parent of a student attending a school is entitled to be informed of the student's attendance, behavior and progress and to have access, on request, to annual reports respecting the school and District (S.20). In addition, a parent of a student may request that a teacher or the Director consult with him/her with respect to the student's education program and the teacher or Director is required to comply with that request unless the request is unreasonable in terms of frequency or other circumstances [S.20 (2)]. Thus, the Act allows for a teacher or principal to refuse a request for such meeting if the requests are occurring with unreasonable frequency or if the parent is behaving in an unreasonable (e.g. harassing or disruptive) manner during the meeting. Section 20 (3) permits a teacher or the Director to request that a parent of a student consult with him/her with respect to that student's education program and that parent shall comply with that request.

Liability For Damage

A student and his/her parent(s) are liable for any damage caused by the student to the property of the Board or a Board employee. Section 21 states that "where property of a Board or of an employee is destroyed, damaged or lost by the intentional or negligent act of a student, that student and his or her parents are individually and collectively liable to the Board in respect of the act of that student".

Disruption of School Proceedings

It is a violation under the Schools Act for any person to: disrupt or interrupt the proceedings of a school, School Council or Board; loiter or trespass in a school building or on property owned or used by the Board; canvass, sell or offer to sell goods, services or merchandise to a teacher or a student in a school without the approval of the School Council, and if there is no Council, of the Board.

Right of Appeal

Any decision that is made affecting a student may be appealed by the parent or by the student (if age 19 or

older). A decision made by a teacher may be appealed to the principal and any decision of the principal may be appealed to the Board. Any such appeal must be commenced within 15 days from the date that the parent or student is informed of the decision leading to the appeal. The Board's decision on such an appeal shall be final (S.22). This appeal process does not apply to expulsion decisions made under Section 37 of the Act, which has its own appeal process.

School Councils

Section 25 requires the principal of the school to establish a School Council for the school. The Council is to consist of between eight and 15 members including: the principal; no fewer than two and no more than four teachers elected by teachers from among the teachers of the school; no fewer than three and no more than six parents elected by parents from among parents of students in the school; and no fewer than two and no more than four representatives of the community appointed by the other School Council members.

A parent of a student in a school who is also a teacher in that school is not eligible to be elected to the School Council as a parent representative. Further, in a school where senior high courses are taught, at least one student elected by students in those courses shall be a member of the School Council as well.

The term of office for School Council members is three years, with a maximum of two three-year terms being permissible.

If a principal is unable to establish a School Council in accordance with the provisions of the Act, he/she shall report same in writing to the Director. If the School Board is satisfied that every reasonable effort has been made to establish the School Council, may exempt the school from the obligation to have a School Council or may approve a School Council with a different composition than that required by the Act.

Functions of School Councils

The purpose of a School Council is to develop, encourage and promote policies, practices and activities to enhance the quality of school programs and the levels of student achievement in the school (S.26).

The functions of a School Council are to: represent the educational interests of the school; advise on the quality of teaching and learning in the school; facilitate parent and community involvement in teaching and learning in the school; and advise the board on matters of concern to the school and the community.

The School Council shall: approve, for recommendation to the board, a plan for improving teaching and learning in the school; support and promote the plan approved by the board for improving teaching and learning in the school; approve and monitor activities for the raising of funds for the school; consider information respecting performance standards in the school; assist in the system of monitoring and evaluating standards in the school; monitor the implementation of recommendations in reports on the performance of the school; conduct meetings with parents and members of the community on matters within its responsibility under this section; ensure that the principal's annual report on the school is available to members of the public; communicate concerns respecting board policies and practices to the board.

The School Board is required to enter into a protocol agreement with each School Council which is to serve as a guide and reference for School Council operations. This protocol will provide further detail on the functions and operations of the Council. In addition, the Board may, with the consent of the School Council, delegate further responsibilities to the School Council in addition to those set out above. Section 26 (8) requires that the School Council operate in accordance with the by-laws of the Board.

In addition to providing for the duties of principals and teachers and for student rights and responsibilities, the Schools Act bestows certain rights and places certain responsibilities on parents. In addition, it provides a formal basis for parent input into the operations of the school through the School Council. It is worthwhile

for teachers to be aware of these rights and obligations, especially as they interact with teachers carrying out their own duties.

This was the third article in the series on the Schools Act. The final article in the next issue of The Bulletin will deal with the duties and powers of School Boards and School District Directors along with some miscellaneous provisions of the Act. Questions concerning any provision of the Act should be addressed to Administrative Staff in the Benefits and Economic Services Division at the NLTA office.

Edward Hancock is Assistant Executive Director responsible for the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

A Look Ahead

PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINARS

by [Don Ash](#)

During the Fall of 1999, NLTA hosted seven Pre-Retirement Seminars one each in Stephenville, Corner Brook, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, and three in St. John's. These seminars were held in accordance with Association policy as part of its overall program of pre-retirement counselling, and were attended by 414 teacher participants and 174 spouses.

Information sessions dealt with topics such as the Teachers' Pension Plan, Severance Pay, NLTA Group Insurance, Psychological Preparation for Retirement, Financial and Estate Planning and the Canada Pension Plan. As well, time was set aside for individual counselling of prospective retirees by the various consultants.

From all reports, the seminars were regarded as quite successful. Notwithstanding this however, there have been a number of recommendations for improvement and our plans for the Fall of 2000 will try to incorporate those various suggestions. Preparation is already under way to hold seven seminars during October, November and early December 2000 in Stephenville, Corner Brook, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, and three in St. John's.

The sessions will be two days in duration. The program begins with registration from 9:00 to 9:30 a.m. on Day One. The first agenda item begins at 9:30 a.m. with the afternoon session concluding at approximately 3:30 p.m. On that first evening, there is also a 7:00 p.m. session devoted to Psychological Preparation for Retirement, which runs for approximately two hours.

Day Two of the seminar commences at 9:00 a.m. and concludes at approximately 3:30 p.m. Leave is provided for two days, with pay, in accordance with the Collective Agreements.

The full text of the NLTA Policy on Pre-Retirement Seminars, as it has been amended over the past few years, is contained on the following page; prospective retirees are urged to read closely these policy provisions and be aware of their application. The registration form for attendance at the 2000 seminars can be found on page 14. Potential participants are reminded that, in order to attend, they must register for a particular seminar. Only those teachers eligible to retire during or before the school year 2002-2003 will be eligible to attend. Furthermore, registration must be received at the NLTA Office at least four weeks in advance in order to ensure approval of attendance. Given the increasing numbers of teachers eligible to retire, we must adhere strictly to the requirement for early registration. As a result, the Association will reserve the right to refuse acceptance of registration forms at any particular seminar if the registration has not been received at the NLTA office in accordance with Association policy.

It is the responsibility of the individual participant to make arrangements for hotel accommodations, should any be required. When you contact the hotel in question, please reference the fact that you are attending an NLTA function and this should provide a reduced rate which is available to persons travelling on Association related business. Note that accommodation expenses are the responsibility of the teacher.

In order to ensure that seminar participants are able to gain maximum advantage from the presentations, it is our intention to make every effort to keep the seminars to a reasonable size. This means, in effect, that we reserve the right to limit the number of people who will be granted access, depending on the physical facilities available at each site. Consequently, it is imperative that teachers plan ahead and register early in the event that registrations have to be taken on a first-come-first-served basis.

NLTA Policy on Pre-Retirement Seminars

1. The NLTA will make provision for an ongoing program of pre-retirement counselling through the involvement of Benefits and Economic Services staff in branch workshops, branch meetings, and small group sessions as requested. Elements of the Benefits and Economic Services program relating to retirement planning will be communicated through the use of the NLTA Bulletin, Infosheets, and special publications.
2. The NLTA will provide a special program of pre-retirement counselling to teachers in the form of annual pre-retirement seminars. Only those teachers who are eligible to retire within two years of the expiry of the school year in which the seminars are held will be permitted to attend. Exceptions will be allowed in the case of teachers required to retire on disability pensions.
3. Pre-retirement seminars will be planned each year by the Benefits and Economic Services Division. The location and number of seminars will be determined on the basis of Association policy as determined from time to time by the Provincial Executive Council.
4. Expenses will be paid (or not paid) for teachers and spouses who attend the pre-retirement seminars in accordance with the following stipulations:
 - (a) No meal expenses will be paid during travel to and from or at the seminar itself.
 - (b) No accommodation expenses will be paid during travel to and from or at the seminar itself.
 - (c) No child care expenses will be paid for seminar participants during travel to and from or at the seminar itself.
 - (d) Travel expenses shall be reimbursed in accordance with the following provisions:
 - i. Participants shall be reimbursed the lesser of travel by private vehicle or public transportation.
 - ii. Payment for private vehicle shall be at the rate of 6.4¢ per kilometre for the return trip from residence to seminar site.
 - iii. Travel by public conveyance shall be reimbursed at the rate of 80 percent of ferry, taxi, or economy airfare; in the case of airfare, the lesser of excursion (seat sale) or 80 percent of economy airfare will be paid, where excursion (seat sale) fares can be arranged. Receipts shall be required for all reimbursement.
 - iv. No expenses will be paid to participants living or teaching in the community where the seminar is held.
 - v. The participating teacher and spouse are expected to travel in the same private vehicle and, consequently, only one claim will be entertained for car meterage.
 - (e) Any reception(s) held during the pre-retirement seminars will be on a cash basis only.
5. Expenses for the spouse of the retiring teacher shall be provided in accordance with Association policy as stipulated in Section G (Pre-Retirement Counselling).
6. Expenses will be provided for one pre-retirement seminar only per teacher participant. A teacher participant shall be permitted to attend one seminar only. (Notwithstanding this, a teacher may attend a second seminar as a spouse.)
7. Teachers attending a pre-retirement seminar must attend the seminar location closest to their place of residence, except in cases where the mode, cost or availability of transportation necessitates otherwise. Such determination will be made by the Benefits and Economic Services Division.
8. Directors and Assistant Directors, and spouses, are welcome to attend one pre-retirement seminar, but no expenses will be paid in accordance with this policy.

9. All participants, in order to attend, must register for a particular seminar. Registration must be received at the NLTA office at least four (4) weeks in advance in order to ensure approval of attendance.

10. The funding mechanism and program content for pre-retirement seminars will be reviewed annually by the Benefits and Economic Services Committee with recommendations being made to Executive as required.

FINANCING A YEAR OF DEFERRED SALARY LEAVE

by [Don Ash](#)

The Administrative Officers in the Benefits and Economic Services Division are often asked what the "difference is" in take-home pay while on Deferred Salary. We are reluctant to provide specific financial advice to members because each individual's financial situation is different and all financial matters are subject to change. However, we attempt to provide teachers with as much information as possible to help make informed decisions.

The following comparison of net salary under full salary and the various Deferred Salary options are rough calculations and for illustration purposes only. Each individual teacher's situation will be different. The salaries are those that will be in effect as of November 2000. Taxes deducted vary for each teacher and they are rough approximations based on information provided by Teacher Payroll. EI and CPP deductions are based on 2000 formulae. Any further questions on the Deferred Salary Leave Plan should be directed to Administrative Officers in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of NLTA at 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599.

Full Salary

	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary Scale
Salary	43,283	50,133	56,716
Estimated Tax	9,841	12,539	15,084
Estimated EI	936	936	936
Estimated CPP	1,330	1,330	1,330
NLTA Fees	433	501	567
Pension Deduction	3,679	4,261	4,820
Estimated Net*	27,064	30,566	33,979

* Estimated Net does not include an individual's insurances and deductions. (All calculations are for illustration purposes only.)

2/3 Deferred Salary

	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary Scale
Salary	28,855	33,422	37,810
Estimated Tax	4,865	6,040	7,758
Estimated EI	693	802	907
Estimated CPP	989	1,169	1,329
NLTA Fees	289	334	378
Pension Deduction	3,679	4,261	4,820
Estimated Net*	18,340	20,816	22,618

* Estimated Net does not include an individual's insurances and deductions. (All calculations are for illustration purposes only.)

3/4 Deferred Salary

	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary
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			Scale
Salary	32,462	37,600	42,537
Estimated Tax	5,742	7,587	9,486
Estimated EI	779	902	936
Estimated CPP	1,129	1,330	1,330
NLTA Fees	289	334	378
Pension Deduction	3,679	4,261	4,820
Estimated Net*	20,808	23,144	25,540

* Estimated Net does not include an individual's insurances and deductions. (All calculations are for illustration purposes only.)

4/5 Deferred Salary

	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary Scale
Salary	34,626	40,106	45,372
Estimated Tax	6,555	8,618	10,557
Estimated EI	831	936	936
Estimated CPP	1,214	1,330	1,330
NLTA Fees	346	401	455
Pension Deduction	3,679	4,261	4,820
Estimated Net*	22,001	24,560	27,274

* Estimated Net does not include an individual's insurances and deductions. (All calculations are for illustration purposes only.)

A teacher does not pay EI premiums during the year of leave.

NLTA GROUP INSURANCE

by [Don Ash](#)

The 1990's was a challenging decade for the Group Insurance Program and its Trustees. The stability of the early 90's when teacher premiums in Life, AD & D and Salary Continuance options were significantly reduced and Health and Dental premiums were stabilized, was replaced by deficits and significant premium increases in the latter part of the decade (see the following table). A major Group Insurance Review was conducted in 1995/96 and the entire program was analyzed with all insurance options going to market tender. This process of major review and tendering will be repeated in 2000/2001.

PREMIUM CHANGES IN GROUP INSURANCE (Monthly Deductions)										
Cost-Shared					Non Cost-Shared					
	A1- Life	A3- AD&D	B - Health		B2-Dental		C- SalCon	A4-Vol &D&D		A2/A5- Vol Life
	€ \$1,000	€ \$1,000					\$/ 100	\$/ \$10,000		\$/ \$10,000
			Single	Family	Single	Family		Single	Family	
1999/2000	7.25	0.6	15.36	42.94	17.20	34.56	0.74	0.20	0.28	0.29- 3.21*
1998/1999	6.30	0.6	14.20	39.66	16.38	32.90	0.62	0.20	0.28	0.29- 3.21
1997/1998	5.25	0.6	11.00	30.60	12.56	25.24	0.62	0.20	0.28	0.29- 3.21
1996/1997	5.25	0.6	11.00	30.60	12.56	25.24	0.62	0.20	0.28	0.29- 3.21
1995/1996	5.25	0.6	11.00	30.60	11.24	22.58	0.85	0.28	0.43	0.29- 3.21
1994/1995	5.25	0.6	11.00	30.60	11.24	22.58	0.85	0.28	0.43	0.60- 8.80
1993/1994	5.25	0.6	11.00	30.60	11.24	22.58	0.85	0.28	0.43	0.60- 8.80
1992/1993	6.5	1.4	11.42	31.88	11.24	22.58	0.85	0.28	0.43	0.60- 8.80
1991/1992	6.5	1.4	10.48	29.18	9.60	19.30	0.85	0.28	0.43	0.60- 8.80
1990/1991	6.5	1.5	9.52	26.52	8.34	16.78	0.85	0.30	0.45	0.60- 8.80
% change from 1990 to 1999	11.5% increase	40% increase	62% increase		106% increase		13% increase	33% increase		33%-50% increase

*39% increase in Voluntary Life paid from the NLTA Trust Fund and this increase not passed on to teachers.

Catastrophic experience in the Life Insurance program, and rapidly escalating health and dental claims

created major deficits in many of our options in the latter 1990's. Trustees made deficit payments of almost \$2 million from the Group Insurance Trust Fund and are saddled with approximately \$1.5 million of remaining past deficits. To close the decade, two consecutive years of significant premium increases in many options were necessary to decrease the likelihood of further deficits occurring and to prevent placing the Group Insurance Program in jeopardy.

The NLTA Group Insurance Plan provides a program of Group Insurance coverage to both current and retired teachers which includes Basic Life, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Health, Dental, and Disability Insurance options. The plan is owned by the NLTA and operated by a seven-person Board of Teacher Trustees who are responsible for all aspects of the insurance options offered to members, including responsibility for insuring that the coverage provided meets the needs of members of the plan. Johnson Incorporated has been hired by Trustees as an independent third party administrator that functions as claims processor, plan administrator, consultant, and broker to various insurance underwriters.

The Group Insurance Plan is in essence a cooperative. Members of the plan contribute a monthly premium which is used to provide insurance benefit to those members who meet eligibility requirements. In the Life, Health, Dental, and Long Term Disability (Salary Continuance) options, surpluses of premiums over claims are refunded to the plan and deficits are charged to the plan based on claims experience in these options. Government cost-shares premiums 50/50 in only the Basic Life, AD & D, and Health Plan options for active and retired teachers, but not substitute teachers.

What can we expect for Group Insurance in the first decade of the new millennium?

We are witnessing increased demands for services from our teacher members. Teachers are seeking more and better coverage under the Health and Dental Plans. The explosion of new and expensive drugs coming on the market is expected to continue to drive claims, and subsequently premiums, higher. Government has indicated an unwillingness to participate in cost-shared improvements or increased coverage in the Health Plan and does not cost-share premiums in the Dental Plan. As our members age and longevity increases, there will be an increase in the usage of prescription drugs to aid and maintain high quality of life which will drive premiums even higher to maintain the higher claims costs. In Life Insurance, the last two years have been the worst years for the sheer number of teacher deaths. The increase in median age of insured members will undoubtedly require higher premiums to cover the insurance payouts expected. It is small comfort that these cost trends are not unique to teachers but common to Group Insurance Plans throughout North America.

While recent premium increases are expected to lessen the likelihood of deficits for 1999/2000, it is clear that further premium increases will be necessary in the foreseeable future in order to maintain current benefits and coverage in Life, Health and Dental Insurance. Trustees will continue their efforts to meet the insurance needs of the members at the lowest possible premiums. The NLTA Group Insurance Plan will continue to offer its members an extensive program at competitive rates and the NLTA will continue to seek increased Government contributions to the Insurance Plan.

Any comments or questions can be addressed to Don Ash, Administrative Officer, Benefits and Economic Services Division and Staff Consultant to Group Insurance Trustees, or [Ted Murphy](#), Chairperson of Group Insurance Trustees.

OFF-DUTY CONDUCT

by [Lloyd Hobbs](#)

Your Association frequently receives enquiries from members concerning issues related to freedom of expression and off-duty conduct. These issues are often presented in relation to the employer's right to restrict an employee's actions or to discipline in relation to an employee's actions outside the work environment while off duty.

With the parameters of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, one would expect that teachers should be given the same rights as any other member of the Canadian society. However, repeatedly in court and arbitration rulings, this has not proven to be the case.

While speaking at a conference of the Canadian Association for the Practical Study of Law in Education in Toronto in April 1999, the Honourable Mr. Justice Peter DeCarteret Cory of the Supreme Court of Canada addressed the principle of Freedom of Expression as it relates to teachers. He referenced two well publicized cases –; Keegstra and Ross –; teachers accused of promoting hatred and racism. While the actions of one of these individuals was totally outside the school setting, the Supreme Court, because of the extreme nature of the action, connected it to the teacher's ability to teach.

The comments of the Supreme Court Justices set a benchmark by which teachers' actions are evaluated. Justice Cory highlighted two statements of the court ruling:

- 1) The conduct of a teacher bears directly upon the community's perception of the ability of the teacher to fulfill such a position of trust and influence and upon the community's confidence in the public school system as a whole.
- 2) Teachers are seen by the community to be the medium for the educational message and because of the community position they occupy, they are not able to choose which hat they will wear on what occasion.

In a paper entitled "Limitation on Teachers' Freedom of Expression Outside the Classroom", Roy C. Filion Q.C. and Cheryl V. Ravis examined discipline for off-duty conduct and arbitration rulings in Ontario. In the case of a teacher convicted of an indictable offense –; possession of stolen property –; Filion and Ravis reference the arbitrator's comments on this offense in relation to the Ontario Education Act:

"... while the legislation does not require teachers to be saints, it does indicate the need for a higher standard of conduct than that required of other employees."

"... such high standards are not uncommon in the profession nor is it uncommon that a failure to achieve them will result in a loss of professional status or employment."

The examples used in this analysis may be considered at the extreme edge of unacceptable behaviour –; promoting hatred and racism and conviction of indictable offenses. However, it is possible that any off-duty behaviour that is considered unacceptable for a teacher may become the subject of discipline by the employer.

Clause 10.01 of the Provincial Collective Agreement states, "Subject to Clause 12.01(b), no teacher shall be suspended, dismissed or otherwise disciplined except for just cause". The exception referenced in 12.01(b) is the termination of a probationary teacher's contract for reasons of incompetency or unsuitability. Any teacher who is subjected to discipline will be given assistance in grieving such discipline upon request to the Association. However, attention must be drawn to the words "except for just cause". It is these words that we often find ourselves disputing at grievance meetings and at arbitrations.

While the onus of proof rests with an employer in a discipline case, teachers should be aware of some cautionary principles:

1. The actions of teachers come under closer scrutiny by the courts and society than do the actions of many other occupations.
2. Some may find it difficult to distinguish between teachers' actions as private individuals and actions as professional teachers.
3. Teachers' public actions and statements on educational issues are frequently associated with their role as teachers, not as parents or as private citizens. This can lead to employer claims of insubordination.
4. In cases of criminal matters, the more serious the charge of the teacher's action, and in particular if it is against children, the more serious the potential and severity of discipline.

The NLTA advises its members to examine their actions in relation to any potential disciplinary action which might result based upon the fact that they are teachers. If there are questions which you would like answered, or if there is ever the need for assistance in dealing with disciplinary action, please contact an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division.

Lloyd Hobbs is an Administrative Officer, Benefits and Economic Services Division, with the NLTA.



THINKING ABOUT RETIREMENT?

Over 400 of our teachers are eligible for retirement in June 2000, and some 1,000 teachers are considering retirement over the next few years. The following checklist was designed to assist teachers as they anticipate and plan for this upcoming life phase change.

Checklist for Retiring Teachers

- Apply to 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 Pensions Division,. Tel: 709-729-3931/3932, Fax: 709-729-2070 (DO NOT resign until eligibility has been confirmed).
- Apply for Teachers' Pension by completing the appropriate "Teachers' Pension" application.
- Submit your resignation to School Board: one month notice is required if retirement is to occur before Christmas; three months notice (March 31) is required if retirement is to occur after Christmas.
- Apply for Severance Pay by completing the "Severance Payment Request" form from Teacher Payroll.
- Confirm/consult with Johnson Incorporated on Group Insurance coverage, Tel: 1-800-563-1528.
- Consider joining the Retired Teachers' Association by completing the application form and submitting it to the Pensions Division.
- Consider seeking personal financial advice regarding financial decisions related to retirement.
- Keep your mind active and your body healthy. Enjoy life!

Please note the following 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) and is further reduced at age 65.
- 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 an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of NLTA.

CAN OUR SCHOOLS DO MORE?

by [Wayne Noseworthy](#)

It was with a sense of revulsion, once again, that I read an article in the March 5 edition of The Telegram which documented the tragic shooting of a first grade school girl by a six-year-old classmate in Michigan. An official with the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility was quoted as declaring that, "By the time [troubled children] get to us, it is too late". Indeed so!

The Telegram article went on to say that a "get tough" approach is not really the answer with problem kids, but much earlier intervention. In the case at hand, the young boy who killed his classmate came from an extremely dysfunctional home background and presented a recipe for disaster. One of the conclusions reached in this sad tale by an official with the Kellogg Youth Initiative Partnerships, was that "the first level of responsibility lies with the school". I think not!

We are fortunate in this country, and particularly so in our own province, that the level of extreme violence referred to above is rarely, if ever, seen in our schools. But the responsibility to prevent such catastrophes does not rest with our teachers –; whether they be administrators, guidance counselors, or homeroom teachers –; and it is certainly not the prime responsibility of our schools or district offices. Our schooling system does have a responsibility to provide a safe and nurturing environment where young people can feel secure as they realize the objectives of our educational programs. The teaching profession of this province does an outstanding job in accomplishing this goal, many times in very trying circumstances. Unfortunately, in the past few months, many within our profession in different parts of Newfoundland and Labrador, have been called upon to offer consolation and general support to students and colleagues alike in the wake of some very difficult human tragedies. To the credit of all involved, the extended school family has provided an environment of support in very difficult circumstances.

However, our primary function as educators is to teach our young people. The more we are distracted from that fundamental goal by factors beyond our control, the more we are compromised in the teacher/learning process; in that circumstance, our children are short changed and our teachers –; of every description –; are prevented from doing their best.

At the time of writing this article, the Ministerial Panel is, hopefully, putting the finishing touches on its report with respect to Educational Delivery in the Classroom.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association has made a comprehensive submission to the Panel and in so doing has addressed the critical issues of programming, delivery, resourcing and support services. It is essential that the Panel give heed to what we, and our partners in the educational community, have said about the needs throughout the system and the means for improvement. Assuming that the Panel will make forward-thinking recommendations, and being optimistic that government will act on those recommendations in a meaningful fashion, we have to believe that things will get better.

With the Ministerial Panel as a backdrop, I return to my opening question, "Can our schools do more?". In the current context, the answer to that question, fundamentally, is "no". Our system and, in particular, our administrative and teaching force, are stretched to the breaking point. The expectations from all quarters of society are more than the system can bear. The responsibilities that have been downloaded to the school level are disproportionate with the personnel and the physical and financial resources available.

The school cannot take the place of the family. It should not be expected to assume that burden. Teachers are not equipped, nor should they be expected, to assume the role of social workers. The working day of a

teacher is already over-burdened with a multitude of tasks and responsibilities that were never intended to occupy the true realm of teaching.

The general membership of NLTA would say that rationality and reasonable expectation must be brought to the schooling process. Those in authority and in control of the province's revenues must recognize the need to supply resources commensurate with the requirements being placed on teaching professionals at every level throughout the system. If society expects schools to do more than that which they can barely cope with at present, very fundamental changes must be made in how we organize schooling, provide resources to the schools, and define a mandate for schooling in general.

In the Spring of 1999, the NLTA assumed the lead role in advocating that fundamental changes be made, by government and school boards, as to how teaching units are allocated to the schools and to how those same schools are to be physically and financially supported. The response by government was to establish the Ministerial Panel, co-chaired by Drs. Len Williams and Ron Sparkes, whose mandate it was to look at the key elements related to educational delivery in the classroom. We sincerely hope that the Panel members will bring new perspectives and far-reaching recommendations that will challenge government to find new and more substantial means of supporting the schooling process and allowing our schools to perform the job that they were intended for in the first place.

The teachers of Newfoundland and Labrador always recognize that nothing is so good that it cannot be improved. However, continued improvement can only be realized if education is recognized as a community enterprise which requires strong team effort and adequate resourcing.

Wayne Noseworthy is Executive Director with the NLTA.

DSYLEXIA PART III

by Dr. Catherine G. Penney

Dennis did not know his letters when he started Grade 2 in spite of having been taught repeatedly by his teachers and his mother. In the reading lessons, Dennis' tutor would write "cat", "fat", "hat", and "sat" on the blackboard, tell Dennis what the words were and then test him. When Dennis learned the first set of words, he was given another set of words to learn, for example "Ed", "red", "bed", and "sled". A third set of four words ("Sam", "Pam", "ham", and "jam") might then be taught. At the end of the lesson, the tutor would select three or four words from the different groups, write them on the blackboard and ask Dennis to read them. Dennis would guess all the words he had learned during the lesson: "Ham, jam, fat, cat, bed, hat, sled." He might guess one or two words correctly.

Dennis' tutor observed that Dennis would learn the words by associating the place where the word was written with what the word said. Four words were written on the board and Dennis practiced these words until he was correct on all of them. If the tutor erased the words and wrote them in a different order, Dennis had to learn the words all over again.

Dennis at seven years of age has not reached the Phonetic Cue Word Identification stage of reading. He still does not understand the Alphabetic Principle that letters stand for sounds in words. He might be able to read "Ed" but only because it is the only word in the list to have two letters. If the tutor wrote "It", Dennis is likely to guess that the word is "Ed". When looking at a word and trying to guess what it is, Dennis is attending to the wrong cues. He is not paying attention to the letters and the sounds in the words. He does not understand what the letters stand for.

A clever experiment shows how non-alphabetic readers attend to the wrong information. A researcher tried to teach young children to read the words "pig", "hat", "bed" and "car" by showing them the word printed on a card and saying the word aloud. The word "pig" had a thumbprint mark on the card. When shown the word with the thumbprint, the children were remarkably good at remembering which word it was. But then the researchers tricked the children by changing the word that went with the thumbprint. The child who saw "car" printed on the card with the thumbprint was likely to say the word was "pig".

Pre-alphabetic readers like Dennis try to discover what distinguishes one word from another. They learn that the short word is "Ed", the long word is "Cinderella", the word with the thumbprint says "pig", and the word in the upper right corner of the blackboard is "car". This is Visual Cue Word Identification Stage in which the child "reads" the name of a toy or cereal by looking at the brand logo, but this is not true reading. The children associate words with the context the package containing the cereal, the sign for the restaurant, or the thumbprint. The children do not understand that the letters tell you how to say the word. Children later in the Visual Cue stage start to notice which words have few letters and which words have many letters, words that begin with B and words that begin with S. The child who pays attention to the initial letters of words and the initial sounds will make associations between the two. This is the beginning of the alphabetic principle and the Phonetic Cue Word Identification stage.

At age 18 Sarah can read 202 of the 250 most frequent words in print, but she makes errors on very simple words. She has some grasp of the Alphabetic Principle as her errors have some letters and sounds in common with the target word. For example, Sarah read "were" as "Where" and "than" as "them". But her knowledge of letter-sound associations is sketchy and applied inconsistently. When reading isolated words, she read "said" as "ask" and "already" as "reading"; on a nonsense word reading test she read "fay" as "fall" and "shab" as "sleeb". Sarah is in the very early Phonetic Cue stage, but is having great difficulty learning

the complex letter-sound patterns of English. She is not able to read simple children's books for pleasure.

Brian is familiar with the basic letter-sound patterns and can read and understand the material for his high school courses. He has attained the level of Controlled Word Recognition for most words and is reasonably successful at sounding out new words he encounters in his science course. He can do this because he likes science and has a good vocabulary. When he encounters an unfamiliar word in print, he uses his limited knowledge about pronouncing letter sequences and remembers what had been taught in school. Brian may have achieved Automatic Word Recognition of highly frequent words, but this is not true for most words. When reading aloud he skips over some words or word endings, substitutes words with similar appearance or meaning, and reads words in the wrong order.

Brian's knowledge of letter-sound associations is incomplete as shown by his performance on a test of reading nonsense words. He took three tries before reading "straced" correctly and could not read words like "adjex", and "knoink". Brian's spelling is often bizarre but a reasonable phonetic approximation of the correct spelling: "ambiguous" spelled as "embigus", "neighbourhood" spelled as "naborhood", and "institution" spelled "instushun". Brian has not mastered spelling rules and patterns. Instead he has learned how some sounds are spelled and uses that limited spelling knowledge even when it is not appropriate. Brian, like other dyslexic students, does not know the correct pronunciation of some words, and actually spells the words the way he pronounces them ("instushun" or "neuculas", for example). In people without dyslexia, learning to spell influences how words are pronounced. (Do you say "often" with or without the "t" sounds? Would you agree that "dressed" rhymes with "best"?) Dyslexics, in contrast, sometimes know neither the correct spelling, nor the correct pronunciation.

Dennis, at eight years of age, has failed to progress into the Phonetic Cue stage of reading; Susan, 10 years older than Dennis, has reached the Phonetic Cue stage, but has not progressed very far in that stage; Brian has progressed well into the Controlled Word Recognition stage but does not seem to have developed automatic word recognition and is a terrible speller. The underlying problem in all three students is the inability to learn the complex relationships between spelling patterns of English and the pronunciation of words. This inability applies to both reading and spelling.

Dr. Catherine Penney is a Professor with the Department of Psychology at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

WHO ARE THE "PROBLEM KIDS"?

by [Anny Schaefer](#)

Many teachers will say that one of the hardest parts of their job is dealing with disruptions caused by children with behaviour problems. Whether their actions are labelled as disruptive, antisocial, aggressive, or conduct disorder, certain children take up an inordinate amount of teachers' and other students' time. One teacher has described how two such students –; one with a special needs designation of moderate behaviour disorder and the other not designated –; took up most of her time, leaving the other 26 children in the classroom "overlooked because they do not 'rock the boat'". If my class size were increased, that would simply mean that even more students would be neglected." (BCTF, Education Funding Brief, 1997)

A recent analysis of data from Human Resources Development Canada and Statistics Canada's National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) sheds some light on family factors that may predispose children to engage in disruptive behaviours. Kathryn Stevenson's article in the Winter 1999 issue of *Canadian Social Trends* titled "Family characteristics of problem kids", focuses only on information collected in 1994-1995 on 8- to 11-year-old children. As more data is collected over time, it should be possible to see what patterns emerge as these children enter adolescence.

While there is much speculation that teens who engage in criminal activity often exhibited behaviour problems when younger, many children outgrow these behaviours. Obviously not all children with conduct disorder will engage in a life of crime, and not all criminals displayed conduct problems as children. However, the data now available may suggest what types of programs at the family level are most likely to be effective to help children, teachers, and families in the shorter run.

Conduct disorder in this study is "characterized by either physical or indirect aggression against persons or property, or a severe violation of societal norms." Children are designated as having conduct disorder if they score in the highest 10% of a scale developed for the NLSCY. Using this criterion, about 20% of 8- to 11-year olds are identified as having conduct disorder.

More boys (26%) fall into the category than girls (13%). Parenting style is the single most important factor associated with conduct disorder. For instance, ineffective parenting practices are characterized by a parent who is "often annoyed with child, telling child he/she is bad or not as good as others." Almost two-thirds (63%) of children whose parents very often use this style exhibit conduct disorder, compared to 4% of children whose parents use this style rarely. Holding constant the effects of other variables –; such as socioeconomic status (SES), lone-parent status, number of siblings, mother's age at birth of child, and mother's work status –; children of parents who very often used an ineffective parenting style were 36 times more likely to have conduct disorder than those whose parents used it rarely.

It should be noted, however, that the data clearly indicates that other factors are at work, beyond those accounted for in the study. For example, while 38% of children whose parents rarely use a consistent parenting style exhibit conduct disorder, the same applies to 16% of children whose parents are consistent very often. By the same token, 27% of those whose parents rarely use a positive parenting style have conduct disorder, yet 14% of those whose parents are very often positive manifest the same problem. When all other factors are held constant, the mother's work status (full-time, part-time, or not in paid workforce) has no significant impact on the occurrence of conduct disorder in children. Similarly, birth to a teenage mother was not significant when other factors such as low income were accounted for; however, conduct disorder was significantly lower among women who were at least 30 when the child was born than among children born to women in their 20s.

Number of parents in household is also significant. A child with a lone parent is twice as likely to have conduct disorder as a child with two parents. And a child with lower socioeconomic status (SES) is twice as likely as a child with higher SES to exhibit conduct disorder, probably because of factors such as opportunities to participate in various activities, and neighbourhood resources including peer groups. SES includes parental education, job status, and income.

Number of siblings also matters. A child with two or more siblings is 2.6 times more likely to exhibit aggressive tendencies than an only child.

What are the policy implications of this research for schools and communities? Programs to teach parenting skills could improve parenting styles. Parents could be supported in the community through drop-in programs and high-quality daycare, accessible no matter what their income level or work status. The federal government could reinstate social assistance and education transfers to the provinces, cut severely in the last few budgets. Lone parents who are not attached to the workforce could be encouraged to continue their education through incentives such as on-campus support, daycare, and mentors. Many programs are already in place, but clearly not enough is being done.

Anny Schaefer is a research analyst with the British Columbia Teachers' Federation. She can be reached by e-mail at aschaefer@bctf.bc.ca.

Froude Avenue Community Centre

THE KETTLE'S ON

by Ed Wade

Last night the kids saw the St. John's Maple Leafs play at the Stadium and this morning their animated conversation portrays the highlights of the game –; the food, the plays, the autographs. They discuss too, their homework, school concerns, upcoming events and the weekend at the Mall. In the midst of their chatter they choose what they want for breakfast –; cereal, toast or waffles, juice, hot chocolate or milk. Sound like your house? It could be. The difference is that there are up to 25 children here –; at a community centre in St. John's.

The Froude Avenue Community Centre, for a number of years now, has been providing breakfast to the children in the area. Whether it's toast or cereal, milk or juice, breakfast is always accompanied by good company. Feeding children means more than serving them food. For many, it means giving them your ear and your time. It means noticing a new hairstyle or colour, commenting on having their homework done, noting their new coat or taste in music. A "good luck with your test" brings a new light to their eye as they head out the door. It also provides a jump-start for a conversation the next morning.

The doors of the Centre open at 7:30 a.m. and the last child leaves at 8:30 to head off to the two area schools. The up to 25 children who come for breakfast enjoy the food and enjoy socializing with their friends. They have the opportunity to share, to speak, to listen and to be heard. For some who bring frustrations with them from home, they have the opportunity to leave the Centre with a full stomach and ready to start the day at school in a much more positive way. Breakfast time here is a true "community circle".

Over the time of my involvement with the breakfast program, I have seen children grow in attitude and in maturity. I have seen the volunteers who work with them alter their attitude towards young children and teens. I have heard comments from the schools on the difference in the attitude of the children as they arrive at school in the morning. There are many positive spinoffs associated with the breakfast program. Is it easy to operate a breakfast program? No! I'm sure that Bev would rather sleep in some mornings than get up to walk to the Centre. I'm sure also that the volunteers would sometimes rather snuggle in than be at the Centre for the first arrivals at 7:30 a.m. But, come they do, five mornings a week –; no matter what the weather!

It's not cheap either. It costs a lot of money to provide breakfast every day for 25 children. We appreciate the financial assistance of The School Children's Food Foundation in setting up the program and who continue to assist us.

There are those in society who are cynical about giving "something for nothing" and ask what children learn from receiving a free breakfast. They learn: to say please and thank you; to be appreciative of adults; to make appropriate choices for their first meal of the day; to be sociable with their peers and adults; responsibility for leaving their eating area as clean as when they arrived.

Is a breakfast program worthwhile? Is it feasible? Is it beneficial? Yes on all counts.

On behalf of the children we serve I want to thank: Bob, who made this program possible; Bev, Rose, Lorraine and Cindy, who provide volunteer assistance on a daily basis; The School Children's Food Foundation and their sponsors who provide the financial assistance to run the program.

We occasionally receive visitors and among them we have been pleased to welcome the Honourable Joan Marie Aylward, members of the St. John's Maple Leafs Foundation, school principals and student nurses. We invite anyone to come see the program in operation. Have a cup of tea or coffee and visit with the children as they enjoy their breakfast. You may just get a little more out of your day.

Yes, the kettle is on at the Froude Avenue Community Centre!

Ed Wade is Literacy Coordinator at the Froude Avenue Community Centre in St. John's.



Editor's Choice

for Resources on the Web

Check out these web sites

www.stemnet.nf.ca/cvwm

A virtual memorabilia collection dedicated to the individuals whose names are commemorated in the Newfoundland Book of Remembrance. If you have pictures or memorabilia of someone who was a casualty of the First or Second World War and whose name is commemorated in the Newfoundland Book of Remembrance, contact STEM~Net to have it added to this site.

www.key.ca

"Knowledge of the Environment for Youth" (KEY) contains teaching and materials from the KEY network for teachers to download. The resources and lesson plans are easy to access and there is also a section containing information on upcoming conferences for teachers.

www.pch.gc.ca/affiche-poster

This site contains information about the Canada Day Poster Challenge 2000. Brought to us by Heritage Canada, this site contains information and an activity guide for educators, community groups, and others who will encourage young Canadians to explore what makes Canada the best place to be for the 21st Century. Details of how to get involved in the contest are explained throughout the site.

www.bullying.org

This site is a project for kids by kids with the main message that being bullied and teased is not their fault and that they can do something about it. Youth can contribute their personal reflections, poems, music, drawings, photographs and even films. The site lists resources and other web sites on the topic of bullying and is a project of IEARN-Canada (www.iearn-canada.org).

Daily Meaning

Counternarratives of Teachers' Work

At first glance Daily Meaning appears to be just another book about teachers, but it is in actual fact much more. The introduction of the book states "This collection is about what it means to teach in North America at the end of the twentieth century" and the counternarratives from teachers are stories of "revelation rather than celebration."

The authors write of the "fears, frustrations, despair, weariness, insights, and resilient hope" they experience as they try to make daily meaning of their work with children, colleagues, parents and administrators. Their stories, while emotionally charged, are not rants. They are "political acts of care and resistance through which the authors attempt to make visible and open to scrutiny the work that they do and the conditions in which they attempt to do this work."

Daily Meaning provides a rare glimpse into the reality of teaching. In ten chapters written with a personal essay style, teachers reveal the often "unrecognized truths of professional lives wrought with frustration, exhaustion, heartache, and still some hope." The stories are real and powerful. "Few books exist that take us so deeply into the everyday thoughts, dreams, fears, and struggles of teachers."

Published and distributed by Bendall Books Educational Publishers, Daily Meaning is available in local bookstores for \$22 (Canada) or by mail. If ordering by mail, please pre-pay by cheque or money order. Single copy prices are \$28 (includes shipping and applicable taxes). Send your order to Bendall Books Educational Publishers, P.O. Box 115, Mill Bay, BC, V0R 2P0, Tel: 250-743-2946, Fax: 250-743-2910, email: bendallbooks@islandnet.com, web site: www.islandnet.com/bendallbooks.

CALENDAR

OF UPCOMING EVENTS



Art Conference

May 18-19, 2000

Airport Plaza Inn, St. John's. Contact Cindy Wheeler, Tel: 709-655-2022, Fax: 709-655-2037, e-mail: cwheeler@stemnet.nf.ca.

Program Specialists SIC Conference

May 24-26, 2000

Grand Falls-Windsor. Contact Christine Cole or Wayne Hallett, Tel: 709-489-2168, Fax: 709-489-2543, e-mail: ctcole@stemnet.nf.ca or whallett@stemnet.nf.ca.

NLTA Modern Languages Council and Canadian Assn of Second Language Teachers Conference

June 2, 2000

The Battery Hotel and Suites, St. John's. The Modern Languages Council encourages all second language teachers to take part in this day. A detailed agenda and list of workshops will be forwarded to all French Program Specialists as soon as possible. This is an opportunity for teachers of Core French and French Immersion at all grade levels to spend a professional development day together before the end of the school year, meet the CASLT directors who will be joining us for the day and participate in sessions which focus on our current programs. For information contact Susan Forward, CASLT, Tel: 709-753-6453, Fax: 709-753-8527, e-mail: sforward@stemnet.nf.ca. **Note: The Modern Languages Council Biannual General Meeting and Election of Executive will also take place at this event.**

Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers Summer Institute

July 2-14, 2000

Montreal, Quebec. The theme for the Summer Institute for the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers will be Intégrer langue, matières et multimédias en pédagogie immersive. For further information contact Claire Bélanger, Tel: 514-278-2842, Fax: 514-278-5983, e-mail: clairebe@total.net.

New Frontiers, New Traditions

July 6-8, 2000

St. John's. Join colleagues in a national conference whose aims encompass the development of interest of girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), the recruitment of young women into STEM career paths, and the retention and leadership of women in these fields by ensuring their career objectives are met. The event, 8th in a series of national conferences, is being organized by Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) Newfoundland and Labrador Chapter and Memorial University's Chair for Women in Science and Engineering. For information check www.mun.ca/cwse, or contact Carolyn J. Emerson, Conference Chair, Tel: 709-737-7960, e-mail: emerson@engr.mun.ca.

Lethbridge - Morley's Siding Come Home Year

July 15-23, 2000

The Lethbridge - Morley's Siding Come Home Year Committee extends an invitation to all current and former teachers of the area to return for Come Home Year celebrations. A special evening is being planned in your honour. Contact Wayne Dawe, Tel: 709-467-2250, e-mail: wdawe@stemnet.nf.ca, or Lori Murphy, Tel: 709-467-9702, e-mail: lmurphy@stemnet.nf.ca.

Cook's Harbour Come Home Year

July 30 - August 6, 2000

The Cook's Harbour Come Home Year Committee would like to extend an invitation to all former teachers to the community of Cook's Harbour to come join in the festivities. For further information contact any one of the following: Juanita Taylor, Tel: 709-452-3104; Bernadette Warren, Tel: 709-249-4591; Melva Short, Tel: 709-249-3031.

North Atlantic Forum 2000

September 24-27, 2000

Corner Brook. North Atlantic Forum 2000 is the second in a series of international conferences examining innovative approaches to economic development at the community, regional and national levels around the periphery of the North Atlantic. Sponsored by Memorial University of Newfoundland and College of the North Atlantic, the conference will explore the relationship between economic development and the themes of local governance, organized labour, education and training. For further information contact Harvey Weir, Executive Director of Continuing Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Tel: 709-737-7921; Fax: 709-737-7941; e-mail: hweir@stemnet.nf.ca.

Eastern Horizons Conference

October 19-22, 2000

Hotel Newfoundland, St. John's. Co-sponsored by the NLTA Learning Resources Council and the St. John's Branch of the Children's Literature Roundtable. This conference will be a celebration of Canadian children's and young adult literature featuring presentations by a variety of Canadian authors, illustrators and educators, highlighting some of the best literature from across the country. Contact Heather Myers, Children's Librarian, A.C. Hunter Public Library, St. John's, Tel: 709-737-3317.

School Counsellors Association of NF (SCAN) Conference

October 26-27, 2000

Contact Wade Prior, Tel: 709-279-2870, Fax: 709-279-2177.

READ Reading, English and Drama Conference

Fall 2000 (tentative)

Holiday Inn, St. John's. Contact Brian Vardy, Tel: 709-579-4107, Ext. 236.

Note: Contact the Professional Development Division at the NLTA for any changes or additions to NLTA Special Interest Council workshops/conferences.