

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

T H E

bulletin

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May/June 2017



Enjoy the Summer Break

Up Front

from the President



Nothing counts but pressure, pressure, more pressure, and still more pressure through broad organized aggressive mass action. ~ A. Philip Randolph

I began my first *Up Front* article in September/October 2013 with Martin Luther King Jr.'s words, *Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter*. It is fitting that my final *Up Front* begins with the words of another civil rights and labour union activist.

By now, you have all had an opportunity to read the opening proposals of your Association and the employer. Government's proposals show a level of disrespect for our profession and a lack of understanding of the realities of today's education system that we have not experienced in quite some time. It is easy to conclude that those who authored government's proposals never stepped inside a classroom.

Their proposals attack your rights as teachers and target female teachers and teachers wishing to start families. Make no mistake, government's proposals will erode your working conditions, your rights to due process, and your standard of living.

We cannot afford to remain silent. We must be prepared to use our collective voice and act in solidarity to apply the pressure we need to defend our collective rights.

When I offered myself for the position of NLTA president, I made one simple commitment: to be your voice. That commitment was personal to me, and I would like to believe I have lived up to it. Teacher issues were, are, and will be my issues.

Over the past four years we have done much to raise the profile of education and the voice of teachers, the teaching profession, and our Association. I have referred to these initiatives in previous articles and in my speech to the Biennial General Meeting.

But we must continue to speak to the issues that matter, and we must all share in the responsibility for doing so. That responsibility starts with becoming personally involved in the collective bargaining process. Whatever agreement we eventually vote to

accept will not only affect us for the duration of the agreement, but also has the potential to impact the rest of our teaching career and our lives. We will be living with our next contract for a very long time; we had better make sure it's one we can all live with.

Each of us must take an active role in informing ourselves, by reading updates from the NLTA, by attending meetings or rallies, and by asking questions of our Provincial Executive. We cannot afford to leave it to a few of our colleagues to do this for us. Nor can we afford to be complacent, apathetic, or defeatist. Most of all, we must be ever vigilant against division, because there is much in government's proposals designed to drive wedges between us if we allow it. And always resist efforts by government to drive a wedge between you and your Association's leadership.

On a more personal note, I want to say I will miss this job. I will miss the visits to schools, many of them in small or isolated communities. I have had the privilege to visit parts of this province I would not have otherwise visited. I will miss the conversations with teachers, the debate, the people, the camaraderie. I will miss all of this. Having had the privilege of calling you colleagues, the opportunity to know and work with you, to work on behalf of teachers, and to serve as your President is for me, "the best job I ever had". I am Association proud; I am Union proud.

You've heard the saying, "it takes a village to raise a child". Well, it takes an Association and a family to raise a president.

Thank you to Provincial Executive and branch presidents for your support and the sharing in the decision-making process. Thank you to the many school reps for providing that essential link between the NLTA leadership and the teachers in your schools. Serving as President was made easier because of the incredible staff at the

NLTA building who welcomed me into their family from the beginning. They work tirelessly on your behalf. Thank you to Perry Downey for his years of dedicated service to the teachers of this province and best wishes in his new career.

It would not have been possible to do this job without the involvement of my family. My late brother, Mike, was an enthusiastic supporter and applied his media skills in my first campaigns for Vice-President. My three children Kate, Sarah, and Jamie have actively participated in my elections and have been a source of strength throughout my terms as Vice-President and President. They have always been present when called upon. Their patience and understanding, especially for the times when I have been away from home or preoccupied by NLTA matters, has not gone unnoticed.

Most of all, I want to thank my wife Michelle who picked up the slack of my family obligations and responsibilities and maintained the routines and balance of our home. She's been with me all along the way and has been my biggest promoter. She's been my campaign organizer, events planner, fashion adviser, memory for names and details, partner and love of my life.

To the teachers of our province, thank you for the support you have given me over my four years as President. I want you to know how deeply I appreciated the hospitality and warm welcome I received when I visited your schools and branches. If you support your new president and executive the way you have supported me, our Association will be in good hands and we will continue to be a strong voice for education and a force for change.

THE bulletin

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Johnson Inc. 2017 Scholarship Program Opens April 1st, 2017 Building on our History of Supporting Customers and Communities

This year, Johnson Inc. are pleased to offer 50 scholarships worth \$1000 each to students who have an auto or home policy through Johnson (or their parent/guardian or grandparent), or have a parent or grandparent who is a member/employee of a Johnson sponsor/client group, or who are children and grandchildren of Johnson employees. Students must have completed high school in 2017 and must be beginning post-secondary education this fall.

Applications for the Scholarship Program will be open starting April 1st, 2017. Completed application forms must be submitted by August 31st, 2017 and must contain an official school transcript of final year credits.

For more information, or to apply for a Johnson Inc. scholarship, please call or visit 1.866.544.2673 | johnson.ca/scholarship.

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PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

NEWS

LANSE AU LOUP

Another successful year for PN Unplugged at Labrador Straits Academy

The grade 3-6 students at Labrador Straits Academy in Lanse au Loup thoroughly enjoyed taking part in Participation Nation (PN) Unplugged non-competitive activities every Wednesday afternoon from October 2016 to April 2017...activities that included soccer, ball hockey, basketball, dodge ball, relay activities and games, as well as outdoor activities when weather permitted.

"The students are to be congratulated for their commitment to the program, especially when so many of them were involved in other extra-curricular activities," says Donna O'Brien, an Instructional Resource Teacher at Labrador Straits Academy.

"Congratulations and a big thank you is also extended to Shawna Normore who exemplified strong student leadership and commitment to the program through her volunteer time with us each Wednesday which certainly added to another successful year."



Grades 3-6 participants from Labrador Straits Academy in PN Unplugged.

Labrador Straits Academy students win takeCHARGE NL Energy Efficient contest

Labrador Straits Academy congratulates their Grade 2/3 class on taking one of two top prizes in takeCHARGE NL's Energy Efficient contest. The students designed a poster titled "LSA'S Energy Explorers Want YOU to be Energy Efficient", demonstrating numerous ways you can help make your home more energy efficient. The Grade 3 students wrote acrostic poems about saving energy while the Grade 2s got creative in displaying their energy saving ideas on digital thermostats, CFLs and LEDs. Their prize: \$2,000 customizable electronics for their school plus individual prizes for themselves.



Grade 2/3 class at Labrador Straits Academy display their winning poster.

Elaine Cole, Energy Efficient Advisor with Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, stated, "Your class demonstrated creative and clear messaging on energy efficiency and we enjoyed how you displayed your understanding of the concepts in a variety of ways! Your hard work has paid off." The students were "over-the-top" excited with their win!

SAINT-PIERRE

CDLI students immersed in French culture in Saint-Pierre

From April 26-29, CDLI distance education French students experienced a unique opportunity to be immersed in a French immersion setting in Saint-Pierre. Some 13 distance education French students from six different schools travelled to Saint-Pierre to participate in the Francoforum program with CDLI e-teachers Glenn Cake and Michelle Pittman. These students were all high school French students from across the island ranging from L'Anse-au-Loup to Plum Point to Carmanville and points in between.

Not only did these students meet their CDLI French teachers for the first time face to face, but they also met their peers for the first time in person. Throughout the day's immersion setting, they had an opportunity to work, play and explore together "en français". Students were housed in "pensions" (bed & breakfast) where they enjoyed French cuisine daily.

Each day featured a host of authentic cultural activities in which students were encouraged to interact in French with the locals. "They had ample opportunity to put their second language skills to work in real life, practical and concrete situations," says Glenn Cake, CDLI French E-Teacher.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Giving kids the best start to their day

Many junior high and high school students will be writing exams in the coming weeks and this can be a very stressful time for kids. Many don't sleep properly, their routines are off and for some, they just don't take the time to eat right. Eating breakfast before an exam may be the last thing on their minds.

"It's important that our KES Clubs continue to operate during this time," says Sonya Smith, Director of Communications and Fund Development at Kids Eat Smart Foundation NL. "Ensuring breakfast is ready when students arrive in the morning will go a long way in helping them prepare for their upcoming exams."

Ms. Smith says with students coming and going at different times it's sometimes hard for volunteers to plan for breakfast, especially if they do a traditional sit down style meal. She says this might be the perfect time to try a grab and go breakfast option

– baggies of cheerios, cereal bars or toast, fruit such as apples, grapes, bananas, and of course milk to go is always a good option. "You will help them get through their exams with a full belly and we know how important that is when they write their exams."

"We are so fortunate here in our province to have the care and commitment of such wonderful volunteers. Every school day you prepare and serve over 25,000 nutritious meals for children and youth throughout our province. Many of our volunteers are teachers, principals, and school administrators who arrive early every day to ensure our kids have a nutritious breakfast. On behalf of the Board of Directors of Kids Eat Smart Foundation and the children we serve, we want to extend our sincere appreciation and thanks to each one of you. Enjoy your break and we look forward to working with all of you in the new school year."

For more information regarding Kids Eat Smart Foundation Newfoundland and Labrador visit www.kidseatsmart.ca, call toll free 1-877-722-1996 or follow them on Facebook and Twitter @KidsEatSmartNL.

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NLTA Staff Changes

New Appointments

The Provincial Executive Council of the NLTA is pleased to announce the appointment of **Darrin Pike** to the position of Administrative Officer – Programs and Services effective April 26, 2017.

Darrin holds a Bachelor of Education and a Bachelor of Science from Memorial University of Newfoundland as well as a Masters Degree in Teaching and Learning. He has an extensive background and experience as a teacher, school administrator, and in District and Department leadership roles. He has held a variety of teaching positions including school Department Head, Vice Principal, Principal, Program Specialist, as well as Assistant Director of Education, Director of Education, and Deputy Minister with two government departments. Since 2013 Darrin had been CEO/Director of Education with the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District.

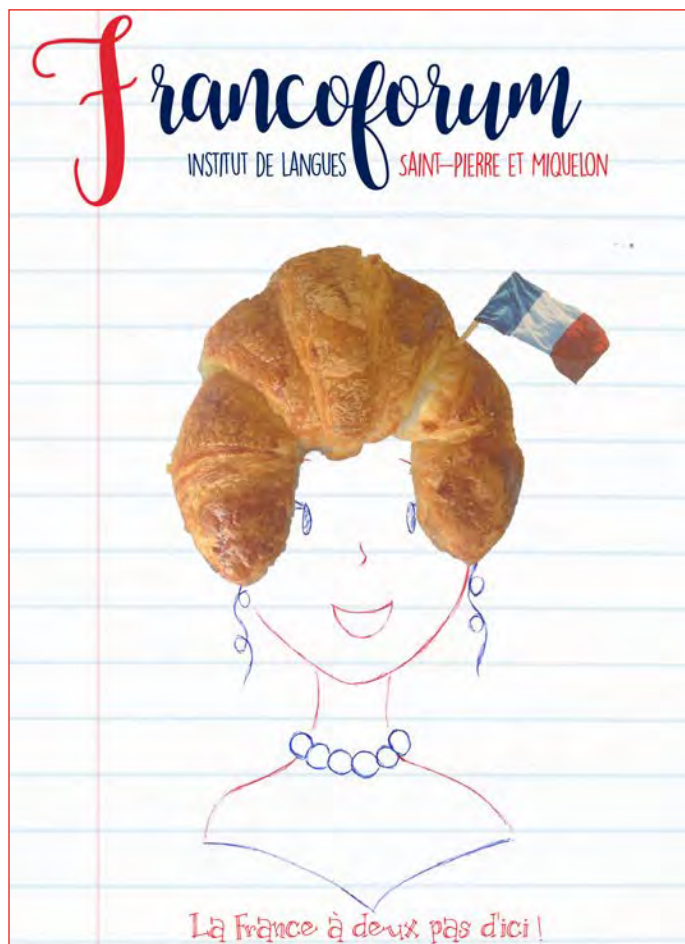
Retirements

The Association would like to extend best wishes to **Perry Downey** on his retirement from the NLTA on April 30, 2017.

Perry taught in Labrador West before joining the NLTA and held positions as mathematics and science teacher, Department Head and a replacement term as Vice-Principal. He had been the Chairperson of the Labrador West Negotiating Team which provided him with expertise that served him well when he joined the NLTA.

Perry began his career at the NLTA in 1997 as an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division (now Programs and Services). At the NLTA, Perry was responsible for the Group Insurance Plan, providing advice and recommendations to the Group Insurance Trustees, pensions, and was best known for his work with the Pre-retirement Seminars and Financial Information sessions. In his role as Administrative Officer he was also responsible for the daily administration of the collective agreements.

We wish Perry much success and happiness in his retirement and future endeavours.



A deux pas de Terre-Neuve, Saint-Pierre est Miquelon, seul territoire français en Amérique du nord est l'endroit idéal pour un séjour en immersion totale dans la langue et la culture française.

Du 12 au 16 juillet 2017, le FRANCOFORUM, institut de langue française, vous propose un **stage pour professeurs de Français Langue Seconde**.

- Des cours pratiques et adaptés à vos besoins seront dispensés.
- De nombreuses visites culturelles (tours guidés, sortie en bateau avec observation des baleines, visites de musées,...) seront organisées.
- Des soirées conviviales à la française (vin / fromage / pâtisseries) seront à partager.

Venez à la rencontre de la population en particulier le 14 juillet, jour de notre fête nationale.

Pour l'occasion l'archipel devient votre salle de classe alors n'hésitez plus !

Tarifs et renseignements sur simple demande au :
011 508 41 24 38 ou lefrancoforum@gmail.com

Des bourses peuvent être attribuées.

Contactez le Département d'Éducation de votre province

KEITH MERCER

"The great teacher teaches from the heart, not the book." Keith Mercer, a dedicated educator for thirty years, will always be remembered as someone who taught from the heart. His passion for lifelong learning, helping others and his ability to instill a love of the outdoors are the qualities that his students and colleagues fondly recalled at his untimely passing in August 2016. Keith was the son of James (a teacher for 38 years) and Susie Mercer. He completed his B.A. (1980), B.Ed. (1982) and M.Ed. (1988) at MUN. After graduation, he taught in Catalina, Green's Harbour, Norman's Cove and finally at Ascension Collegiate, where he retired in 2014.

Throughout his career Keith worked tirelessly to ensure his students were successful. He made geography come alive in the classroom so students could understand and appreciate the nature of the lesson he was teaching. While some students joked that it was easy to get him off topic, Keith chuckled at the fact that while sharing stories of being in the woods or on Pinware River in Labrador, he was able to cover curriculum outcomes in an interesting and meaningful way without anyone even realizing that they were, in fact, learning. It was his creative and personal approach that made "Mr. Mercer, the best Geography teacher, firm but very fair." The respect that students "felt for Mr. Mercer" and directed towards him has been shared with his family on numerous occasions throughout his career. Outside the classroom Keith committed to coaching both the girls' and boys' hockey teams at Ascension. Under his leadership they won numerous Provincial Banners. Keith chaperoned school dances and participated in many student spirit days. His sense of humor and quick wit set him apart from others and his colleagues considered him the life of the party at social gatherings.

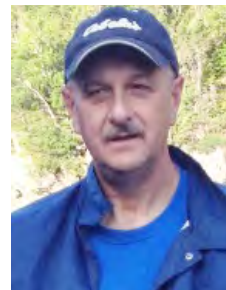
Keith's passion for the outdoors certainly was a trait which allowed him to connect with his students. Stories of his perseverance to catch the big one directly influenced many pupils to never give up. On a personal note, he never missed an opportunity to travel to his "second home", Lanse au Loup, Southern Labrador with his wife Rona (Normore) and their sons Scott and Kyle. Together they would attend the Labrador Bake Apple Festival where Keith enjoyed dancing, singing and frolicking good times. The song, *This is My Home*, by Harry Martin of Cartwright, would often be sung by Keith as he enjoyed many social gatherings with the Normore family and friends. Keith was a great provider for his family, always making sure there was plenty of wood, fish and berries harvested for the winter months.

Even though he didn't like bake apples, he ensured there was always enough. The black flies, hot summer sun or Labrador cold were never obstacles to enjoying salmon fishing, ice fishing, moose hunting and skidooing.

As a father, Keith instilled the value of education and a strong work ethic in his pride and joy, his two sons Scott and Kyle. These values are evident today as Scott is in his final semester of Petroleum Engineering at CONA and Kyle is completing his first year at Ascension Collegiate. As a husband, he loved Rona beyond measure and together they raised their boys to be upstanding citizens, who like their parents, are always ready to lend a hand and put the needs of others above their own. He was devoted to his parents and ensured they were taken care of in their later years. Following his father's death in 2015, Keith ensured that his mom was well cared for. He truly was a great husband, father, son, son-in-law and brother-in-law to his family. He faced his cancer diagnosis with great courage and strength. He never gave up and despite the side effects of his difficult treatments, he still managed to get outside to build a greenhouse and set a garden in the last couple of months before he died.

Keith, you are now in a place where the birds fly high and the caribou roam. You have rambled many places but are finally at Home. A life well lived, but now at rest. As a man and a teacher, you were simply the best.

(Submitted by friends and colleagues Jim Mercer and Kim Welsh, Ascension Collegiate)



Keith Mercer

In Memoriam Submission Guidelines

Submissions to In Memoriam should be a **maximum of 250 to 300 words** and may contain a photo of the deceased. In Memoriams should be submitted within a timely manner – normally within the same school year (if possible) of the death of the teacher. Information may be included on where the deceased lived and taught, their education, accomplishments, community involvement and family information.

It is preferred that all submissions be e-mailed to Lesley-Ann Browne, Editor of *The Bulletin*, at labrowne@nlta.nl.ca. If submitting by mail, please address to: Editor, *The Bulletin*, Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL, A1B 1W1. Submissions may also be faxed to 709-726-4302 or 1-877-711-6582 (toll-free in province). Please be sure to include a contact name, school or business name, mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address.



Teachers Not Afforded Proper Consultation Prior to Changes Being Made to Their Teaching Assignment

NL Arbitration Ruling

by STEVE BROOKS

On April 27, 2017 the NLTA received the most recent ruling regarding a grievance that the Association referred to Arbitration. This particular grievance dealt with the issue of principal/teacher consultations when determining teaching assignments. The arbitrator found in favour of the Association.

Clause 29.01 of the Provincial Collective Agreement states:

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

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

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

It is understood that the responsibility for determining teaching assignments, in consultation with teachers, is held by the school principal. It is also understood that it is the school district (Employer) that is responsible for answering to any grievances arising from that process. The Provincial Agreement requires principals to engage in a consultative process with teachers regarding teaching assignments.

The issue for resolution in this dispute was whether the Employer properly assigned the teaching duties of two teachers for the instructional year 2016-17 following an alleged failure by the principal to appropriately consult with the teachers in May 2016 prior to making changes to the teaching assignments they held at that time. The fundamental

question for the arbitration panel was whether the teachers were afforded proper consultation prior to the decision being made to change their teaching assignments for the coming school year.

In 2015, prior to the facts of this case, Stefanie Tuff, on behalf of the Association, wrote an article outlining how Clause 29.01 should be addressed by school administrators. In that article she states: *The best evidence of true and meaningful consultation and reasoned decision making would be an administrator's ability to demonstrate fairness and equity in assignments and schedules and provide a clear and legitimate rationale for his/her decisions, including a logical explanation as to why a teacher's request or preference could or could not be accommodated.*

The arbitration board relied heavily on this article as the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District had reviewed the article in advance of publication and had agreed with its content. In reviewing Clause 29.01 and Ms. Tuff's article, the arbitrators found that the Clause itself does not define what consultation means. It simply states that consultation is an obligation. The arbitrators noted:

It is interesting to note that the subsequent sentence in that Clause uses the expression 'fair and equitable', but in relation to workload, not assignments:

The workload of teachers will be distributed in a fair and equitable manner, and the process will involve, but not be limited to, consideration of numbers of students, number of course preparations, number of teacher preparation periods, nature of courses taught, characteristics of students taught, administrative duties required, and multi-grade/course teaching situations. This dispute is about assignments, not workload.

The arbitrators were also referred to jurisprudence on this issue and cited the case, L.C.A.F v. Lakeland College including the following description of what consultation means:

In summary, a consultation should involve a bilateral interaction by parties informed of each other's position where each has the opportunity to give and receive infor-

mation. This definition is as much founded in common sense as in dictionaries or learned judicial writings and would seem unlikely to cause discomfort to anyone charged with consulting before making an important decision, especially those responsible for administering an educational institution. (para. 36-38)

The arbitration panel went on to acknowledge that teacher consultation as anticipated by Clause 29.01(a) must happen within a compressed and very tight timeframe.

Many activities are happening including determining enrollment based on the best available information, seeking input from all teachers, determining the programming requirements as set out by the District, considering the skill sets of the permanent teachers within the school, establishing an achievable teaching schedule, awaiting Government's budget and cap sizes for classroom, and a myriad of other pieces of information.

Having considered this reality, the arbitrators made it quite clear that the Employer cannot use a lack of time as an argument for violating the Agreement. "The Provincial Agreement has mandated a consultation and therefore it must take place."

After considering all of the facts of this case it was determined that the essential ingredients of any consultation, as extracted from the Tuff article and other jurisprudence, are:

- a) the active participation of the teacher, i.e., "a discussion" or "bilateral interaction";
- b) full consideration of the teacher's input by the administration before a decision is made, i.e., that the teacher's input will be "taken into account when the decisions are made"; and
- c) a decision explained, i.e., that "legitimate rationale" must be given for the decision based on programming considerations for "the best interests of students and the programs that must be delivered".

These are not successive steps in any consultation, but key ingredients which must be found if the requirements of Clause 29.01(a) and the Tuff article are to be met.

The arbitrators also referenced an earlier NLTA/NLESD grievance settlement agreement which had been made "with prejudice" and as "precedent setting." That settlement outlined the legitimate reasons that might exist for needing to change a teacher's teaching assignment. They stated in the award:

The contents of paragraph 5 of the MOS (with two words added here to clarify what is the clear intention of the words chosen) state:

"Should it be determined through this process [of consultation] that conditions (i.e., staff redundancy and/or reassignment, loss of teaching unit(s), program requirements) at [the school] necessitate a change..."

The 'conditions' leading to change in that paragraph are simply an amplification of what the Parties have already agreed to in the Tuff article.

As such, the reasons that should be brought forth as necessitating a change in a teacher's assignment are limited to staff redundancies, loss of teaching units and program requirements.

In this particular case the teachers have been provided with a new consultation process, with the starting point being their teaching assignments prior to the 2016-17 change, to be conducted by an impartial body arrived at through discussion with the NLESD and the NLTA.

This is an important arbitration as it establishes definitive language regarding teachers' rights under Clause 29.01 of the Provincial Collective Agreement. Some key points that school administrators and teachers should be aware of are:

1. Clause 29.01 consultation must be real and meaningful and contain the following elements:
 - a) the active participation of the teacher, i.e., "a discussion" or "bilateral interaction";
 - b) full consideration of the teacher's input by the administration before a decision is made, i.e., that the teacher's input will be "taken into account when the decisions are made"; and
 - c) a decision explained, i.e., that "legitimate rationale" must be given for the decision based on programming considerations for "the best interests of students and the programs that must be delivered".
2. Explanations of a decision to make changes to a teacher's teaching assignment in the absence of the above will not meet the standard now established for Clause 29.01.
3. Changes to teaching assignments are due to necessity arising from redundancies, loss of teaching units, programming needs. Changes cannot be made on an arbitrary basis.
4. While teachers do not "own" their specific teaching assignments, the process outlined above clearly establishes that changing teaching assignments is not simply at the discretion of the school administration.

Steve Brooks is Executive Director of the NLTA,
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Making Choices for Work/Life Balance Something to Consider Before You Volunteer

by STEFANIE TUFF

Balancing work commitments and personal responsibilities can be difficult at the best of times. Sometimes it feels like there is simply not enough time in the day to do everything that is expected of us. Submissions from teachers during preparations for the ongoing round of collective bargaining paint a clear picture of workload demands that continue to increase and intensify. So, as another school year draws to a close, there is an opportunity to reflect on the year that has passed with a view to exercising the discretion teachers have to set personal priorities and professional limits for September 2017.

“At no time should a teacher feel compelled to volunteer their time except as a result of their own personal or professional interest.”

As all teachers know, there are many opportunities to volunteer your time in the workplace. Teachers volunteer as coaches, tutors and chaperones, they volunteer their time to serve on school and district committees, and they volunteer as organizers for school functions such as graduations and concerts. Some teachers even take on added professional responsibilities voluntarily, stepping up for roles such as lead teachers, unofficial (and uncompensated) “department heads” for student support services or technology, alternate format materials advisors, and athletic directors.

Teachers volunteer their time for both personal and professional reasons. For some, volunteering brings them a deep level of personal satisfaction; for others, they do so out of a sense of professional responsibility. Whatever the reason, and whatever

the role, teacher volunteerism is always worthwhile and helps to improve the school culture. Clauses 29.02, 29.05 and 29.07 of the Provincial Collective Agreement (Clauses 17.02, 17.05 and 17.07 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement) protect the rights of teachers to volunteer and to choose not to volunteer, giving teachers the ability to make choices in relation to balancing the demands of their work and personal lives:

29.02 It is agreed that extra-curricular activities are a desirable part of a well-rounded education. It is also agreed that the principal and staff of each school will determine the extra-curricular activities to be provided in their school. Notwithstanding this, a teacher's participation in any extra-curricular activity requires that teacher's consent.

29.05 No teacher shall be required to be present for school duties on Saturday or Sunday.

29.07 A teacher's participation on a school-based or board-based committee requires that teacher's consent.

It is very important that teachers understand their rights in this regard. The employer may have policies requiring the establishment of school committees, the presence of teacher chaperones, or the availability of additional tutoring for students; however, this does not mean that a teacher can be directed to serve on a committee, accompany students outside the regular work day, or provide additional tutoring sessions after school or on the weekend. No teacher can be required to participate in extracurricular activities, or to be a member of school or district based committees. Coaching a school team, supervising a school dance, or serving on a school development team are all voluntary for teachers, regardless of their teaching assignment. At no time should a teacher feel compelled to volunteer their time except as a result of their own personal or professional interest.

As well, teachers who voluntarily take on additional responsibilities in their schools as lead teachers, “department heads” for student support services or technology, alternate format materials advisors, and athletic directors should be aware that the NLTA has repeatedly attempted to negotiate compensation and protection for these types of positions in past rounds of collective bargaining. Repeatedly, the employer has refused. The employer will never be motivated to properly compensate or protect individual teachers for administrative work they are prepared to take on voluntarily without compensation or protection.

The NLTA continues to receive calls from teachers seeking clarification on the issue of volunteer responsibilities. Many teachers claim they no longer have time to volunteer due to increasing demands and intensification of their workload. Clause 29.01 of the Provincial Collective Agreement (Labrador West Clause 17.01) requires that principals consult with teachers regarding the assignment of curricular and non-curricular duties. The school district is responsible for ensuring that every effort is made to ensure this consultation is completed by the first instructional day of the new school year. While this clause does not address extra-curricular activities, committee work, or other voluntary roles, if you have volunteered in the past and have decided that you do not wish to continue in the coming school year, this consultation period may be a good time to inform your principal of this decision. A teacher cannot be penalized for exercising their right not to volunteer.

If a teacher has questions regarding which roles form part of their professional obligations and which are volunteer activities, they should contact an NLTA Programs and Services Administrative Officer.

Stefanie Tuff is Assistant Executive Director of the NLTA, stuff@nlta.nl.ca



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ARTICLE 22: The Three-Week Pay Period Gap

Teachers who have come into the profession in the past six years may be surprised to learn that this coming August 2017, they will experience a three-week gap between pay periods. Teachers who have been in the system prior to 2012 (the last time the three-week gap occurred), know the importance of financially preparing for that extra week. The last pay period for the current 2016-17 school year will occur on Thursday, August 17, 2017. The first pay period of the 2017-18 school year will be Thursday, September 7, 2017.

In the 1988-90 Collective Agreement teachers agreed through collective bargaining to change the method by which they receive their pay. Prior to the 1980s, teachers were paid semi-monthly with payment made on the 15th and last day of each month. The new method of calculating payment allowed teachers to be paid bi-weekly, with the exception being those years in which there would be 27 pay periods.

Clause 22.01(a) of both the Provincial Collective Agreement and the Labrador West Collective Agreement and Clause 22.02(a) of the Provincial Collective Agreement and Clause 22.02 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement read as follows:

22.01(a): Annual salary and where possible allowances shall be paid in twenty-six (26) equal installments. In a school year in which payment in accordance with Clause 22.02 would yield twenty-seven (27) pay periods, the final pay period in August will be eliminated and each pay period in the subsequent school year will occur one (1) week earlier.

22.02(a): Teachers shall be paid by direct deposit every second Thursday. If a holiday falls on Thursday, teachers will be paid on the last teaching day prior to that Thursday. If a holiday falls on Thursday during the months of July and August, teachers will be paid on the last banking day prior to that Thursday.

22.02: Teachers shall be paid by direct deposit every second Thursday. If a bank holiday falls on Thursday, teachers will be paid on the last banking day prior to that Thursday.

The two questions most often asked by teachers when the three-week gap occurs is **why does it occur** and **how often will it occur?**

Why?

Teachers have agreed, through collective bargaining, to have their salaries paid in 26 equal installments, as per the clauses referenced above. These 26 intervals of 14 days only account for 364 days, resulting in a missing day each year and two days in a leap year. These missing days eventually accumulate on the calendar, creating a year in which there would be 27 pay periods. Rather than having a teacher's salary divided into 27 equal pay periods in those years, resulting in a net loss in bi-weekly pay of approximately 3.7 percent, it was considered better to negotiate an alternative. The alternative was that the final pay period in August would be eliminated and that each pay period for the subsequent school year would be advanced one week earlier. This has resulted in the situation where teachers actually begin receiving payment prior to the first day of classes in some school years.

How Often?

In a regular 365 day year, the first pay period in September occurs one day earlier each year. This means that it would normally take seven years for the 27 pay period situation to repeat itself. However, when we consider the impact of a leap year every four years, it means that the cycle repeats itself every five or six years depending on when the leap year occurs. The next time the cycle will repeat itself will be August 2023.

Over the years teachers have repeatedly expressed concerns about the inconvenience and hardship the three-week gap creates. A committee was established following the signing of the 2012-16 collective agreement for the purpose of conducting a review of the current method of payment for teachers and making recommendations regarding possible ways of eliminating the three-week gap in pay periods that occurs periodically for teachers. To date, these efforts have not resulted in changes to the current provisions.

If you have any questions regarding the three-week pay period gap, please contact an Administrative Officer in Programs and Services with the NLTA.

AUGUST 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17 PAY PERIOD	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31 PAY PERIOD ELIMINATED		

SEPTEMBER 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 PAY PERIOD	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Packing/Moving Instructional Materials

Every year, some teachers are faced with moving from one classroom to another, whether due to school closures and reconfigurations, or because of internal changes within their schools, such as a change in grade level assignment or renovations, etc. The purpose of the following is to advise NLTA members regarding their responsibilities in these circumstances.

Teachers can be required to do the following during the normal workday:

- Identify items to be packed and moved by other staff;
- Pack instructional materials in their classroom/work area.

Teachers cannot be required to pack instructional materials outside the normal workday. Some teachers may choose to do so, but this cannot be required.

As well, teachers cannot be required to move packed boxes, clean classrooms or pack items that they are not physically able to lift/move safely. It is important for teachers to be aware of this as a workplace injury or accident could result in a teacher having to avail of Workers' Compensation benefits.

If a teacher feels they have been asked or directed to do something that is unsafe, they should report this to their school Occupational Health and Safety Committee, and contact an NLTA Administrative Officer in Programs and Services for further advice and assistance.

Teachers are responsible for their own personal effects.

Teachers should not feel or allow themselves to be pressured to ensure items are packed for shipment or storage if they have not been given adequate time to do so. As always, the best response, if asked if packing will be completed, is to say that you will do the best you can with the time provided.

Any members who require further information or advice in such matters should contact the NLTA.





Pre-Retirement Seminars 2017

Teachers within two years of retirement eligibility should register for one of the NLTA's five Pre-Retirement Seminars scheduled to be held in the fall of 2017 in Corner Brook, Grand Falls-Windsor, and three in St. John's. These seminars are held in accordance with Association policy as part of its overall program of pre-retirement counselling. Clause 18.12 of the Provincial Collective Agreement and Clause 29.12 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement provide two days paid leave to attend these seminars.

Information sessions will deal with topics such as the Teachers' Pension Plan, Severance Pay, Employment Insurance, NLTA Group Insurance, Financial and Estate Planning and the Canada Pension Plan. As well, time is available for individual counselling of prospective retirees by the various consultants.

Things You Should Know About Attending

- Potential participants must register with the NLTA for a particular seminar and apply to their Board office for leave.
- Only those teachers eligible to retire during or before June 2020 will be eligible to attend.
- Registration should be received at the NLTA Office at least four weeks in advance to ensure approval of attendance.
- The Association reserves the right to refuse acceptance of registration at any particular seminar if the registration forms have not been received at the NLTA office in accordance with Association policy.
- It is the responsibility of the individual participant to make arrangements and pay for hotel accommodations, should any be required. Please reference that you are attending an NLTA function and the hotel should provide a reduced rate which is available to the NLTA.
- 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 to the seminar closest to the place of residence. In the event that a teacher requests and is accepted to attend a seminar other than the closest seminar, the participant shall only be reimbursed the amount applicable for travel to the closest seminar.
 - ii) payment for private vehicle shall be at the rate which is 15% of the average cost of self-serve regular gasoline as determined on the first day of each fiscal quarter for the return trip from residence to seminar site.
 - iii) travel via public conveyance shall be reimbursed for 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) a partner is welcome to accompany the participating teacher to the pre-retirement seminar, but no expenses will be covered.
- All other expenses, such as meals, accommodation and child care, are the responsibility of the participating teacher.
- Expenses will be provided for one pre-retirement seminar only and a teacher participant shall be permitted to attend one seminar only. (Notwithstanding this, a teacher may attend a second seminar as a partner.)
- Teachers must attend the seminar location closest to their place of residence, except in cases where the mode, cost or availability of transportation necessitates otherwise.
- Directors, Assistant Directors, Senior Education Officers and partners, are welcome to attend one pre-retirement seminar, but no expenses will be paid in accordance with this policy.

Given the large number of teachers eligible to retire, 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.

NOTE: The full text of the NLTA Policy on Pre-Retirement Seminars and the registration form can also be found on the NLTA website (www.nlta.nl.ca). Go to Programs and Services and then Pre-Retirement Seminars. The NLTA policy will also be mailed to teachers with confirmation of registration.

2017 PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINAR

REGISTRATION FORM

Name

Mailing Address

Postal Code

Home Telephone

Social Insurance Number*

School Name

School Telephone

Email

*** By providing your SIN you are authorizing the NLTA to request your pension information from the NL Department of Finance. This information will be used for NLTA internal purposes only.**

Please check which session you will be attending:

☐ **Oct. 19-20** – Mt. Peyton Hotel, Grand Falls-Windsor

☐ **Oct. 26-27** – Hampton Inn & Suites, St. John's

☐ **Nov. 2-3** – Hampton Inn & Suites, St. John's

☐ **Nov. 16-17** – Greenwood Inn & Suites, Corner Brook

☐ **Dec. 7-8** – Hampton Inn & Suites, St. John's

Will your partner be attending? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name of partner (if attending)

Earliest eligibility date for pension

Have you attended a previous pre-retirement seminar?

☐ Yes ☐ No

- Note:**
- Teachers within two years of retirement (on or before June 2020) are eligible to attend.
 - All participants must pre-register.
 - You will receive confirmation prior to seminar.
 - Travel costs will be paid according to policy and only to the nearest seminar.
 - Teachers are advised to bring a calculator.

Please submit registration form to:

Melanie Jaster

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association

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

Fax: 709-726-4302; 1-877-711-6582 (toll free)

or submit online at www.nlta.nl.ca. Go to "Forms".

NOTE: As space is limited, registrations will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis.

FOR NLTA OFFICE USE ONLY		
Date Received	Confirmation Sent	Information Package Sent



Employment Insurance

What You Need to Know from the Past Two Federal Budgets

by IAN CREWE

Many teachers avail of employment insurance benefits at some point in their careers. Both the 2016 and 2017 Federal Budgets proposed a number of important changes to the Employment Insurance program. Given the potential importance to teachers of some changes, teachers should ensure that they follow the progress of these matters carefully. The Association will provide further information to members as it becomes available.

Duration of Benefits for Teachers on Parental Leave – In the 2017 Federal Budget, it was announced that parental leave and benefits would be extended from 12 months to 18 months. It is important to note that the rate for those who select this option would be reduced from 55% (over 12 months) to 33% (over 18 months). It is also important to note that the current Collective Bargaining Agreement (Article 17: Maternity/Adoption/Parental Leave) has not yet been modified to reflect the changes that have been made federally when it comes to seniority accrual and leave time from the District. Teachers considering the 18 month option and who are wondering about how these items may affect them are encouraged to contact an administrative officer at the NLTA.

Qualifying Hours – Prior to the summer of 2016, new entrants and re-entrants to the labour market were required to accumulate at least 910 hours of insurable employment before being eligible for EI regular benefits. Budget 2016 amended the rules to eliminate the higher EI eligibility requirements that restrict access for new entrants and re-entrants to the labour market. With these changes, new entrants and re-entrants now have to meet the same eligibility requirements as other claimants in the region where they live, instead of a higher standard. In Newfoundland and Labrador, depending on where a teacher resides, they would currently be required to have worked between 420 and 595 hours (53 and 75 teaching days) to qualify.

Waiting Period – Effective January 2017, the wait period required to start receiving benefits was reduced from 2 weeks to 1 week. It is important to note that while the wait period decreased, the number of weeks of benefits did not increase and would essentially mean that benefits would likely expire a week earlier than they previously would have.

Working While on Claim – Under the Working While on Claim pilot project, claimants can keep 50 cents of their EI benefits for every dollar they earn, up to a maximum of 90 per cent of the weekly insurable earnings used to calculate their EI benefit amount. Budget 2016 proposed extension of this pilot project until August 2018. As well, in certain circumstances, claimants will be able to have the rules of an earlier pilot (introduced in 2005) applied to their claims.

Job Search Requirements – In 2012, changes were made to the EI program to specify the type of jobs that unemployed workers are expected to search for and accept. For some claimants, this has meant having to accept work at lower rates of pay and with longer commuting times. Budget 2016 proposed to reverse those changes that strictly define the job search responsibilities of unemployed workers; however, claimants will still need to conduct job search activities and accept suitable employment while on EI.

Teachers who have questions regarding the Employment Insurance Program, or who wish to challenge a decision relating to Employment Insurance, are encouraged to contact an NLTA Administrative Officer (Programs and Services) for advice. The NLTA will represent a teacher at the appeal if the case is valid in the opinion of the Association.

Can Teachers Collect EI Benefits During Summer Holidays?

The end of another school year will soon be upon us. At that time of year the following question often arises: Can teachers collect Employment Insurance (EI) benefits during the summer holidays? The Employment Insurance Regulations state that, in general, teachers are not eligible to receive EI benefits during the “non-teaching periods” (Christmas, Easter break, July and August) unless they fall within one of three exceptions, which are:

1. if the teacher's contract of employment for teaching has terminated;
2. if the teacher was working on a casual or substitute basis; or
3. if the teacher qualifies for EI benefits on the basis of employment in an occupation other than teaching.

Since they have no termination of contract, teachers in permanent positions are not eligible to collect regular EI benefits when school is not in session (unless they have sufficient insurable hours from employment other than teaching). Substitute teachers would generally qualify under the second exception.

Replacement or term contract teachers may be eligible for EI during the summer in certain circumstances. This issue has been the subject of many EI appeals over the years and was ultimately brought to the Federal Court of Appeal by the NLTA in a case that was heard in June of 2002. The case in question involved a teacher who had been hired in a replacement position for the 1998-99 school year. Just before the last day of school, the teacher accepted another full-year term contract for 1999-2000. The teacher applied for, but was denied EI benefits for July and August of 1999. His appeal to the Board of Referees was successful but the EI Commission appealed to the Umpire and the decision was reversed. The Federal Court of Appeal upheld the Umpire's decision. This issue is not unique to Newfoundland and Labrador and a number of similar cases from Alberta resulted in a similar decision from the Federal Court of Appeal.

The Federal Court of Appeal decisions are legal precedents and the application of these decisions has had the following impact: teachers who finish a term

contract at the end of a school year may be eligible for EI regular benefits during the summer, but their entitlement ends as soon as they accept a position (term or permanent) for the following school year. For example, a teacher who has a term contract for the 2016-17 school year applies for EI benefits at the end of June. On August 1, she is offered and accepts another term contract for the 2017-18 school year. This teacher would therefore only be eligible for EI benefits for the month of July as she would be disqualified as of the date of acceptance of the new contract. It is the teacher's responsibility to advise Service Canada once she has a new contract – failure to do so may result in an overpayment of benefits for which Service Canada can seek reimbursement. It is also prudent for substitute teachers with replacement contracts in the previous school year to advise Service Canada of contracts starting in September.

Of course, like other employees, teachers must meet the normal eligibility requirements in order to receive regular EI benefits: they must have the necessary insurable hours of employment and must be available for work. Teachers in receipt of regular EI benefits must be able to demonstrate that they are ready, willing and able to work and are conducting an active job search. Those who restrict their job search to teaching positions only during the summer, when such work is not available, may be disqualified and/or have to repay benefits received.

In addition to regular EI benefits (those available to someone who is unemployed), there are also four categories of special benefits: sickness, compassionate care, parents of critically ill children, maternity and parental. There are separate eligibility requirements for special benefits and teachers would not normally be eligible for sickness benefits during the non-teaching periods. However, teachers may be able to claim maternity, parental, compassionate care or parents of critically ill children benefits during the summer months, as well as the Christmas and Easter breaks.

Ian Crewe is an Administrative Officer in Programs and Services at the NLTA, icrew@nlta.nl.ca



Curriculum Reform – the BC Story

by DARRIN PIKE

The education system in British Columbia has been in the news recently and there have been concerns about how collective bargaining and other education issues have unfolded in that province; however, this past September a new curriculum for K-9 came into full implementation. The changes reflect the technology-rich world we live in today and places an enhanced focus on the development of 21st Century Learning Skills, deep understanding and application of knowledge. The curriculum redesign allows for greater flexibility for teachers and more time for students to explore things that interest them. At its core is a strong focus on literacy (reading and writing) and numeracy which is similar to the focus of schools in Newfoundland and Labrador. This has been complemented by what British Columbia calls their core competencies – communication, thinking and personal and social competency. *Core competencies are sets of intellectual, personal, and social and emotional proficiencies that all students need to develop in order to engage in deep learning and life-long learning.*

What is different about their curriculum redesign may not be evident until you delve deeper.



The curriculum design has a foundation based on what they call a Concept-based, Competency-driven Curriculum. Put another way, it is a focus on the big ideas and concepts. The Competency-driven part centres on developing the skills for deeper, more transferable learning. This is really important as it focuses teachers on the critical core concepts that promote deeper learning, flexible approaches and student exploration. Real life problems and project-based activities to actively engage students are key elements to the redesigned curriculum.

The curriculum is based on a “Know-Do-Understand” model. Three elements, the Content (Know), Curricular Competencies (Do), and Big Ideas (Understand) all work together to support deeper learning. The “Know” details the content students will know, the “Do” are the skills students need to acquire, and the “Understand” are the concepts which are the essential generalizations and principles, and the key concepts important in an area of learning. It clearly focuses the curriculum on the concepts and skills that will best position students for success in the future. Many teachers in our province have been able to do this within our current curriculum but reported conflict to cover the content outcomes. BC’s model seems to support everyone (students, parents, and teachers) to understand what is most important; to ensure students have deep understanding of the key concepts, have gained the essential learning skills and know the base of content. It ensures the content does not overwhelm the instructional time because the most important learnings remain most important. Deep understanding of fundamental concepts and learning skills dominate and there is time for students and teachers to explore passions in creative and engaging ways.

Jim Iker, president, BC Teachers’ Federation, says, “The BCTF has been very supportive of the collaborative process involved in developing B.C.’s new curriculum and we are very proud of the hard work more than 100 of our members put into the redesign teams. The new curricula are streamlined and

flexible – qualities teachers will appreciate – while remaining rigorous and engaging for students.”

The B.C. support plan included:

- learning sessions for teachers at the provincial and local levels
- webinars, videos and district-level teams in place so teachers can learn first-hand what is working in the classroom
- extra time set aside throughout the three years so districts and teacher associations can collaborate on training for teachers
- dedication of two existing professional days to the new curriculum in 2016-17 and 2017-18.

As our province begins a process with the Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes, the BC model is certainly worth looking at to see what lessons can be learned. It is essential to determine what outcomes (learnings) are the key concepts and competency skills needed for 21st Century learners. Resisting the temptations to create an extensive list of content outcomes was the key to redesign in British Columbia, along with a strong partnership with teachers in the development of the new curriculum and establishing a significant professional development plan.

Darrin Pike is an Administrative Officer in Programs and Services with the NLTA, dpike@nlta.nl.ca

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Understanding and Overcoming Fear

by JUDY BERANGER

Often people mistakenly believe that unpleasant emotional states such as fear and anxiety “just happen to me” and that we have little or no control over their presence, intensity or duration. A more accurate depiction is that how I choose to think about my fear largely determines how much of my emotional resources it consumes. Choosing to focus on worry and repeated, negative thinking can escalate fear and anxiety to new heights, potentially with devastating results. It can further create unclear reasoning and induce a fight or flight response. Caught up in fear-based thinking, we are more likely to lash out at others. How can learning about fear help us understand and come to grips with our own fears? What strategies can help us to tame our fears and allow us to make the most out of our personal resources?

Expressions of fear arise from endless situations:

- *I know my administrator has a problem with me. Every time I am around her I feel afraid and break out in a sweat. I don't send her good vibes and she doesn't send me good vibes either.*
- *I am sick and tired of being the only one who ends up caring for our parents. My other siblings say I am a teacher and have more time than they do. I fear I will say something to them that I will regret.*
- *I was shocked to find out my partner was seeing someone for over a year. We are getting help now but I am too afraid to trust him again.*
- *A student swore at me and threatened me last year. I still go in fear and panic mode when I see her.*

Fear is defined as the emotional response to danger, whether imagined or real, and the subsequent biological or physical responses that can result. What underscores fear in all its permutations is the feeling that we won't be all right. We can lessen these feelings by understanding our biological reactions, learning how to minimize them, and even retrain them. Larry Dossey, author of *One Mind*, says that “nature has endowed us with healthy fears – e.g., the lion in the bush (fight or flight) – but most fears in modern life are unhealthy, often destructive and prevent us from achieving our greatest potential.”

Our temperament, family culture and life experiences all influence how we create, interpret and process our fears. Psychiatrist Mark Goulston says that self-defeating behaviors occur when we fail to learn the lessons that life tries to teach us. Self-defeating actions are coping mechanisms that begin as an attempt to make ourselves feel better and often have their roots in childhood experience. Experts suggest that as few as two life shocks in succession can propel us into a life of fear. The first shock destroys our sense of safety and trustworthiness/loyalty while the second imprints a “this might happen again” attitude. If unchecked or unchallenged by reason, we may adopt fear-based language that can grow stronger. Without appropriate help, the debilitating impact on our body and soul can be worse than what had first happened to us! Goulston believes we can change these actions from self-defeating to life-enhancing. Difficult though it may be, we can change the internal conversations from self-defeating to life-enhancing.

Types of Fear

Intense fear that is out of proportion to the danger that it may cause, is called a phobia. The literature suggests phobias affect about ten percent of adults. Cell biologist Bruce Lipton tells us chronic fears that result in stress can undermine health and lead to disease and death. M.D. Lissa Rankin says that stress is fear, anxiety, and worry dressed up in more socially acceptable clothing. Rankin says that “80 percent of visits to the doctor are believed to be stress related.”

Phobias include: agoraphobia (fear of crowds, open spaces, and travel); social phobia (fear of humiliation and embarrassment); nostophobia (fear of a specific illness, fear of death); common like phobias (animals, insects, heights, airplanes, enclosure, germs, open or closed spaces). Martin Seligman suggests close to one-half of phobia cases begin with a traumatic incident in childhood while others appear to emerge unexpectedly and without explanation in adolescence or early adulthood. Fear can be helpful as a natural response to danger, but when self-created such as the fear of

failure or rejection, of being out of control, being different or being lonely can cause havoc on our body. You may fear love because you fear being rejected; fear sharing your thoughts or feelings in case you appear wrong; and fear trusting because you are dominated by self-doubt and insecurity.

What to do...strategies for harnessing your fear

There are numerous strategies aimed at calming our system by encouraging endorphins to take over from a body releasing fear-inducing hormone like cortisol. They include:

- Literally working your fear, gain an understanding of its origins and impact on your life. Taking on fear in this way will stimulate commitment to this task and allow you to make healthier choices based on your growing wisdom.
- Focus on your breathing. Breathing calms the sympathetic nervous system, our “fight-flight” response and oxygenates the brain. Perceived threats such as non-appreciative bosses, students, parents, colleagues and others who act disrespectful or belligerent can mean that we don’t turn off the flight-flight response. Instead, the stress chemicals and hormones in our body become elevated and persistently present. Physical signs of this include a tight neck, bunched-up shoulders, shallow breathing, a tight chest, and a tension headache.
- Do physical movements to raise the release of endorphins and overall confidence. Clean your living spaces, run/walk, yoga, meditation, tai chi, stretching will all work. This uses the adrenaline energy, and helps with calming emotions while reducing the amount of toxins building up in muscles.
- Commit to a growth mindset. Think about what worked to move from a traumatic incident in the past. Repeat what worked while adding new strategies.
- Imagine the best scenarios. Monitor worry – chronic worriers tend to misuse their imaginations to the extent that upcoming events feel like catastrophes waiting to happen.
- Monitor emotions, what pushes our buttons, how we act and react to others, evaluate whether we want to adjust the behavior. An emotional trigger could be as simple/complex as hearing the wind on a rainy night – finding it “creepy” as it triggers bad memories.
- Use “the thinking brain” by scaling our fear from 1-10 with 10 being most horrific to 1 being totally relaxed. This will dilute the emotion and begin to calm you down.
- Learn to reduce conflict by naming and managing it. Find constructive ways to cope while gently asserting yourself.
- Visualize – imagine seeing yourself in a situation you were dreading. See yourself being calm, composed, cool, and comfortable and things going well. Practicing this starts to recondition your mind to feel calmer while giving you the energy to act confident.
- Increase your intake of foods that are high in tryptophan such as bananas, nuts, sesame seeds, soy, oats, cheese, and natural peanut butter. Tryptophan helps boost your brain’s calm mood.
- Consider your diet and drink plenty of water. Sugar and caffeine are culprits in fueling your flight or fight responses.
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation – the body responds to fear by tightening muscles to prepare you to run. This tension can cause muscle aches, fatigue and headaches – progressive muscle relaxation helps relieve the muscle tension. In a comfortable position, sitting or lying down, take a few deep breaths while letting your body go as limp as possible. Begin by tightening the muscles in your toes... hold to a count of ten... then relax. Enjoy the relief of tension melting. Do the same by flexing your foot muscles, and move slowly through your entire body: calves, legs, stomach, back, neck, jaw, face, contracting and releasing each area.
- Studies have shown that emotion is contagious. Be mindful of what you are letting rub off on you.
- Have a relaxing bath or shower – physical warmth is very soothing and helps relieve stress.
- Joyce Schwarz suggests the GRABS formula: show gratitude, release judgements, acknowledge progress, ask for guidance, believe in your possibilities and share your bounty.
- Move from being reflexive and impulsive to reflective and thoughtful. Grow awareness to every part of your body.

A teacher recently told me that facing her fear has allowed her to act from inner wisdom rather than acting from protection only. Our thoughts, beliefs, personalities and attitudes have a profound influence on the maintenance of fear and anxiety. As author Katherine Paterson once said, “To fear is one thing. To let fear grab you by the tail and swing you around is another.” Author Max Lucado reminds us that fear will always knock at our door, just don’t invite it in for dinner and for heaven’s sake, don’t offer it a bed for the night!

Judy Beranger is a Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for Teachers. For confidential assistance contact Judy (ext. 265), jmberanger@nlta.nl.ca or Gail Carroll (ext. 242), gmc Carroll@nlta.nl.ca.



NL Teachers Receive Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence 2016-17

Two teachers from Newfoundland and Labrador have been recognized by the Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence.

Kristy Boland, a Math, Physics, Chemistry, and Social Studies teacher at Belanger Memorial School in Doyles and **John Walsh**, a Science and Biology teacher at Waterford Valley High School in St. John's each have been awarded a Prime Minister's Award Certificate of Achievement.



Kristy Boland

Kristy Boland

Fun educational opportunities define Kristy's approach. She uses humor, music and new trends to engage students and pique their interest in even the most abstract ideas. Kristy demonstrates first-hand the importance of believing in yourself and respects each and every student's voice.

Kristy organizes, celebrates and engages all of her students in Mole Day celebrations. Activities include pledging allegiance to the Mole, competitive games, Molympics, special foods, crafts, technology challenges and much more.

Based on her high rates of student achievement scores, Kristy's innovative teaching strategies have been filmed by the Department of Education for circulation throughout the province.

Kristy initiated, organized and moderated the school's first Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) and Lego League clubs – she even had a huge fish tank delivered to the school to test the ROV underwater.

Kristy does so many great things for our students that it is hard to focus on just a few. She does it because she wants to, not because it's an obligation. Students appreciate her, parents love her and teachers are grateful to have her on staff. (Colleague)



John Walsh

John Walsh

Hands on is the way learning usually goes down in John's classroom. But he also believes that teaching students how to study a subject once they have the content to study is vitally important to success. As his school's go-to technology wiz, John provides countless resources to students and colleagues alike – always working to make learning accessible and inclusive.

John initiated the school's Vegetable Garden Program – recruiting students, clearing land and helping plant and maintain beds. The harvested produce is later donated to the school's Soup Kitchen Program.

Building on the garden program's success, John also initiated a composting program that involves both academics and pervasive needs classes. Material for the compost bin comes from the Soup Kitchen Program and is later used as fertilizer in the vegetable gardens.

John regularly reaches out to the broader community to bring context to his lessons. He has invited speakers from the Conservation Corps of Newfoundland and Labrador, partnering with the Canadian Space Agency on their Neutrino Detection Project and Tomatosphere program.

John Walsh is a brilliant educator who is dedicated to school improvement. He works tirelessly to ensure that all students and staff are able to access the technologies needed to enhance our lessons and to make the school function smoothly. (Colleague)

The Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence honour outstanding and innovative elementary and secondary school teachers in all disciplines for their remarkable educational achievements and for their commitment to preparing their students for a digital and innovation-based economy.

The Certificate of Achievement award includes a cash prize of \$1,000 that may be used for professional development, equipment, resource materials, website development, teaching aids or other tools that improve teaching and student learning. Each recipient receives a pin, as well as a letter and a certificate signed by the Prime Minister.

Information for this article was provided by the Government of Canada.

Witnessing History in the Making

by BEVERLEY PARK



There are times in one's life when there is a sense of having lived through or witnessed history in the making. Depending on your age you will relate to some or all of those: the assassination of John F. Kennedy, 9-11 and the planes flying into New York's twin towers, the shootings on Canada's Parliament Hill. Sadly, all of these examples are violent political actions meant to challenge or weaken democracy. Sadly, I can remember them all.

However, most recently, on March 8, 2017, International Women's Day, with an NLTA colleague, a member of Provincial Executive, Jeanne Williams, I was witness to an event which has the potential to strengthen democracy in Canada. The Canadian Teachers' Federation partnered with EQUAL VOICE, an organization dedicated to having greater (equal) representation of women in government, to sponsor "Daughters of the Vote". This initiative brought 338 young women, aged 18-23, to Ottawa. Each of them represented one of the federal ridings of our Canadian Parliament, the House of Commons. Following a series of meetings with politicians and senior government officials over a two-day period came the culminating event where each of the young women took her seat in the riding she represented in the House of Commons.

The "daughters" proved to be knowledgeable and articulate as they talked about the issues faced by Canadians from every region of the country. Some chose to highlight generic issues such as election reform. Others, for example, Lianna Rice, a young Inuk woman from the Labrador riding, spoke of their personal experience. For Ms. Rice, her all-too-familiarity with suicide and the lack of mental health resources in her community gave her a strong voice which she used with great passion in advocating for much-needed government intervention and support in that area.

The House that day was addressed by the Honorable Kim Campbell, Canada's first female Prime Minister, along with current leaders of all elected political par-

ties, including Prime Minister Trudeau. While their star power and their messages obviously garnered much attention, those who shone even brighter were the young women seated in the House as they spoke out, challenged, advocated, pled for their causes, our causes.

I witnessed this from the gallery along with other teachers from across the country who had been selected by CTF to help facilitate the preliminary events.

I was proud to be a Canadian, proud to be a teacher, proud to be a woman. As was said frequently during the event, the future of our country is promising. The daughters' voices have been heard. I firmly believe that in the years to come when more women, more young people take their rightful place in that House as elected members, we will look back on March 8, 2017 as a day in history, a turning point. I was proud and privileged to be there.

Beverley Park is Senior Administrative Officer in Programs and Services at the NLTA, bpark@nlta.nl.ca



Young women, representing every federal riding in the country, stand in the House of Commons in Ottawa during "Daughters of the Vote" during International Women's Day on March 8, 2017.



Using Apps as Visual Tools

by KENDRA LANE

Most of us are becoming more comfortable with our smart devices and better understanding the new reality: there truly is an app for everything! Even if you narrow a search to apps that can help those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), hundreds of options are presented. Some of the most popular apps involve those focused on communication tools, schedules, reward tracking, sensory stimulation, self-regulation, and social story creation. In this article, I will highlight just a few basic, easy-to-use apps that families and professionals find helpful with daily learning of those on the spectrum.

There are several considerations before deciding to use a tablet or other technological device to assist student structure and learning. Many children, even the very young, have had exposure to tablets and technology and, for students on the spectrum, we may be disrupting previously established routines and expectations around the use of a device. While this is not prohibitive, it is very important to consider the individual student and that any change in expectation may take some time and strategizing to convert from leisure activity to learning tool. For some students, the fact that there is an established, positive association with the device will make the introduction easier but for others it may, in fact, make it harder. Most apps are catchy, interactive, and fun to use by design, which assists in the ease of their introduction.

Another consideration is the student's ability to interact with the device. While most students are familiar with touch screen technology, it still may be new to some, and a general cause and effect understanding of tapping and swiping is required for many of the interactive apps. Some great introductory apps to build understanding of interactivity with a touch screen include *Pocket Pond*, *Finger Painting with Sounds*, *Sea Creatures*, *Heat Pad*, and *Bubble Popper*. However, not all apps require students' interaction; some can be used simply as a visual tool for support and information.

The following tools are used in diverse ways to support students on the spectrum. Here I highlight app versions of each, allowing you to explore ways of implementing these strategies.

Visual Schedules

We provide visual schedules to help students with autism handle the stress of transition and change throughout their day. The importance of an individualized and/or easily accessed schedule is related to its role as a stress reduction tool when transitions involve a shift in attention, expectations, social and physical environment, etc. A schedule is a tool that teaches flexibility and should never create additional stress for a student. If it does create stress, the schedule should be re-evaluated in terms of the type, format, style, length, and motivational impact for the individual student and his/her needs.

Check out the *First Then Schedule HD* and *Choiceworks Calendar* apps for students who need pictures in their schedules. These apps can be personalized through several features and provide ways for students to make choices, have control over parts of their schedule and check off completed tasks, all of which can be very motivating for student use.

Visual Representations of Time

Another popular tool in supporting students on the spectrum is a visual timer. Individuals on the spectrum can have difficulty with the concept of time, including pacing themselves; anticipating or avoiding transition; and staying on task. One of the simplest ways to help students overcome these challenges is to provide a visual representation of the time required on or before a specific task. I recommend exploring *Children's Countdown* and *Time Timer* apps as great tools to do this. The first allows the placement of a picture "behind" the timer so that it gradually becomes more visible and relates the timer directly to what is coming next while the latter is more like the classic timer devices.

Social Stories

Many students on the spectrum benefit from story-based interventions, where expectations or sequences of events are presented visually in the form of a story. They aim to increase understanding of events, particularly those which may be novel, confusing, or stressful to a student. The most popular story-based intervention is Social Stories™ and for more

information about creating a Social Story please visit www.carolgraysocialstories.com.

There are many apps designed to facilitate the creation of social stories but Pictello is highly recommended by families and professionals. This app is easy to use and personalize with your own pictures, audio recording, text to speech, and word-by-word text highlighting.

One of the main advantages of finding digital tools like the ones listed above is the consistency and predictability provided for students on the spectrum. Teachers, therapists, adults, peers, and family members communicate expectations and instructions differently and this can be one of the most challenging aspects of the educational environment for our students. When a tool can be used consistently in different classrooms, subjects, locations, and even with homework, additional stress is removed and students may put more of their energy towards the task at hand. Please explore many of the apps targeted at the needs of students on the spectrum and share the ones you find effective with your colleagues! We all continue to learn alongside our students each day.

To learn more about supporting students with ASD in the classroom, become a member of Autism Society, NL and/or join its mailing list by visiting the website. Join ASNL and the Geneva Centre Training Institute on Monday, November 6, 2017 for *A Running Start to Success: Essential Teaching Strategies for Individuals with Autism*. This workshop will cover the unique learning styles of individuals with ASD, functional skill building, using structure to enhance learning, teaching choice-making skills, communication strategies, social scripts, relaxation strategies, and self-management techniques. For more information and registration details, please visit www.autism.nf.net or contact info@autism.nf.net.

Kendra Lane is Manager, Programs & Services, with the Autism Society, NL. She is a certified TEACCH Practitioner and is completing her graduate work in providing training and education around Autism Spectrum Disorders. Kendra can be contacted at 709-722-2803 or klane@autism.nf.net.



A Running Start to Success: Essential Teaching Strategies for Individuals with Autism

**at Holiday Inn, St. John's
Monday, November 6, 2017**

Learn about:

- Teaching strategies essential for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD);
- How to implement them in different environments.

This workshop will include:

- understanding the unique learning styles of individuals with ASD;
- functional skill building;
- using structure to enhance learning;
- teaching choice-making skills;
- communication strategies;
- social scripts;
- relaxation strategies, and
- self-management techniques.

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VISIT www.autism.nf.net for more info
CONTACT info@autism.nf.net or 722-2803



Mobile Devices — Friend or Foe?

by PATRICK WELLS, RENEE BOYCE, LISA GREGORY,
JEFF LOCKE, SANDY HALLERAN & MATTHEW WOODLAND

Many teachers in our technologically controlled world report that mobile phones are an educational problem. Mobile devices (MDs) are changing our students, our schools, and our society. The National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) refers to MDs as “disruptive technologies”, and many educators experience management issues associated with the divided attention caused by MDs. Teacher frustrations are understandable. The MD companies, driven by profits, are doing their best to condition users to use their engaging apps in every spare moment; texting, gaming, and social media are the biggest culprits.

The good news is that teachers can also engage the students and exploit MDs for research and data collection. Our group, the Science 1206 teachers of Holy Spirit High School, wanted our students to experience this higher level engagement and investigated the use of MDs for science activities. We believe, as constructivists, that collecting data while experiencing natural phenomenon has great value for students learning science. As a professional learning community, we investigated MDs and apps used to collect data.

Vernier LabQuest 2

Our research group examined how new Vernier products connect with MDs. Our school possesses Vernier data collection probe ware and our department invested in the new LabQuest2 (LQ2). The LQ2 is a wireless MD which connects to the majority of existing probes found in NLESD schools (Merlan Scientific Ltd. – www.merlan.ca/vernier). Continued innovations by Vernier, such as Vernier Go Wireless® sensors, allow students to collect data using any wireless MD.

Ruben Puentedura developed a model to evaluate the use of MDs (a video link is found in the reference section). The SAMR model qualifies how student MD use can reach various levels within Bloom’s Taxonomy (Figure 1). This model was quite useful in the determination of the effectiveness of the LQ2 as an MD.

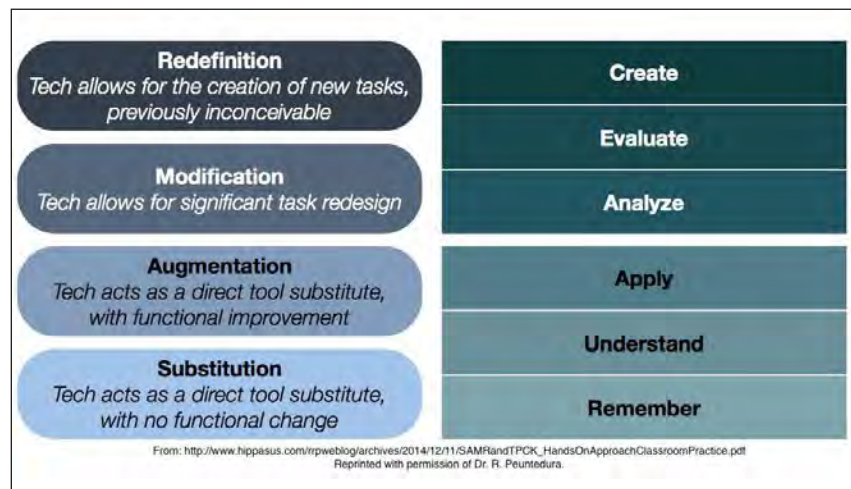
The Project

The first stage of the project was teacher professional development (PD). Three sessions were used to develop teacher LQ2 proficiency. Next, as experienced users, our group collaborated to develop new activities that would address Science 1206 outcomes. Over the course of the research period the teachers of the project developed eight different activities (available on Google Drive). They also wrote guided reflections which included an examination of their pedagogical goals, assessed the use of the LQ2 during activities, and qualification of the importance of activities within science teaching. For the present, we will review the enhancement offered by the LQ2 and address the importance of activities conducted while teaching science.

Using MDs and the LQ2

One theme which arose from the teacher reflections was the quality of the engagement offered by the LQ2. This device is itself an MD, with a touch screen and wireless capabilities, and allowed users to collect high-quality data within the lab setting. The LQ2 also

Figure 1



communicated with student MDs enabling them to initiate data collection and conduct data analysis. Students would change their investigations in real time, sampling rates, units, and even probes, depending on the data collection needs of the experiment. The analysis capabilities of the LQ2 allows for easy export of datasets to Google Drive and reduces the need for paper, ticker tapes, and crowding around a computer monitor. Many of the lab applications of the LQ2 were determined to be “Redefinition” by the SAMR model, and as a result, the learning reached the highest levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy.

Teachers recognized the LQ2 as a vital component to interactive labs and activities in Science 1206. Our modified investigations act as student inquiry frameworks for determining water quality, the acceleration due to gravity, and albedo of different colours. Student inquiry increases student engagement, motivation, and promotes collaborative group work (for more details read Banchi & Bell, 2008, static.nsta.org/files/sc0810_26.pdf). Students reviewed collected LQ2 data on their MDs and built their scientific knowledge based on their experiences. When students would modify or create procedures, they demonstrated creating and evaluating, the highest levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy.

New Directions

To learn about Vernier, visit the Merlan site, start browsing and watching the videos that review these products. We believe LQ2 and Vernier technology use, in a student inquiry model, is a positive use of MDs, beneficial to all stakeholders involved with science investigations.

We acknowledge the support of Holy Spirit High School, the NLESD, and the NLTA Centennial Fund for supporting this teacher research.

Patrick Wells is Science Department Head at Holy Spirit High School in Conception Bay South. Renee Boyce, Lisa Gregory, Jeff Locke, Sandy Halleran and Matthew Woodland are teachers in the Science Department at Holy Spirit High. This article is a summary of the research conducted by the Science 1206 teachers of Holy Spirit High as part of the Centennial Fund grant.

References

- Video Introduction to the SAMR Model
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- Banchi, H., & Bell, R. (2008). The many levels of inquiry. *Science and Children*, 46(2), 26-29.



Professional Learning Sessions

*for Kindergarten to Grade 3
and Early Childhood Educators*

Summer Institute: Inquiry and Technological Problem Solving as Contexts for Numeracy

Register for this professional learning session to engage in meaningful discussions and practise effective learning strategies that support program planning in early science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education!



Mark Your Calendars!

St. John's:
August 22, 2017 (English)

August 23, 2017 (French)

Gander: August 24, 2017

Corner Brook: August 29, 2017

Happy Valley-Goose Bay:
August 31, 2017

For information on registration and fees, visit

exploreideapark.org/PL

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NEWS & EVENTS

MUSIC SPECIAL INTEREST COUNCIL RESONATE 2017

October 27, 2017

Holiday Inn, St. John's. More information to follow.

TESIC BGM 2017

November 16-17, 2017

Holiday Inn, St. John's. The theme for TESIC's BGM 2017 will be *G Suite for Education* with the majority of slated sessions to focus on its practical use in the NL classroom. The event will offer professional learning for both beginner and advanced users, from checking your mail to scripting Google Webapps. Look for more information in the coming months.

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PRINCIPALS (CAP) 2018 CONFERENCE

May 15-18, 2018

Delta Hotel, St. John's. The NLTA School Administrators' Council is hosting CAP 2018. Theme: *Navigating Uncharted Waters: Keeping An Even Keel*. Further information: www.capnl2018.ca or @CAPNL2018.

Dates to Remember

June 2017

June 9-10 NLTA Provincial Executive Meeting

June 15 **Deadline:** Notice by Board of acceptance/rejection of Deferred Salary Leave requests

June 15 **Deadline:** PD Fund applications

July 2017

July 31 **Deadline:** NLTA Scholarship Applications

NLTA Summer Hours

June 27 - September 1

Monday to Thursday
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

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



School Rep Seminars

Coming in Fall 2017

A series of School Representative Seminars will take place in October/November 2017. Nine groupings of branches have been arranged and three seminars are offered each fall on a rotating basis. Schools will have the opportunity for representatives to attend every three years. School Representatives will receive specific information directly from the NLTA office.

Group 1 – Gander

October 20-21, 2017 – Albatross Hotel, Gander

Branches Attending: Fogo Island, Ganova, Hamilton Sound, Notre Dame, Trinity-Deadman's Bay

Group 2 – Goose Bay

October 27-28, 2017 – Hotel North 2, Goose Bay

Branches Attending: Churchill Falls, Coastal Labrador South, Labrador West, Lake Melville, Nutak Labradorimi

Group 3 – St. John's/Avalon

November 3-4, 2017 – Capital Hotel, St. John's

Branches Attending: Baccalieu, Bay Roberts, Carbonear, Marconi, Placentia, Upper Trinity South

NLTA SCHOLARSHIPS



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

To obtain an application form visit the NLTA website at www.nlta.nl.ca and click "Forms" or contact the NLTA at **726-3223** or toll free at **1-800-563-3599**

or mail@nlta.nl.ca

Application Deadline: July 31, 2017

