

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

T H E

# bulletin

Vol. 57/No. 5

May/June 2014

I Remember! I Learn!  
Je me souviens! J'apprends!



EDUCATION WEEK  
OCT 5-11, 2014  
LA SEMAINE D'ÉDUCATION

# *Up Front* from the President

*We are all in the same boat upon a stormy sea, and we owe each other a terrible loyalty.*  
~ G. K. Chesterton

In many ways it's been rough seas this year for all of us. The uncertainty of an unsettled contract, the uncharted waters of a newly amalgamated school board, the excessive demands of an under resourced inclusive education system and the anxiety created by the public debate around public sector pensions have probably left us feeling storm tossed and shaken. What gives me confidence in our ability to weather these turbulent seas, is the tremendous sense of professionalism and loyalty to our students, to our colleagues and to public education we show every day we come to school. In every school or branch I visited this year, teachers not only eloquently stated their concerns on these issues, they also demonstrated a willingness to actively participate in seeking solutions.

Inadequate resourcing of inclusive education still creates the greatest source of professional stress. Teachers and principals confided in me again and again their professional and personal frustration at not being able to adequately address the needs of their students. This is not a simple issue of workload. Teachers feel betrayed by the broken promise of a "needs based formula" that has left them overwhelmed and unable to help their students the way they aspire to.

Amalgamation has proven to have its own set of challenges. Instead of creating efficiencies, amalgamation saddled district personnel with the Herculean task of melding four separate school boards into one. A task not made any easier by the fact that government carved 160 teachers from the school system at the same time. The reduction of administrative units exacerbated the demands placed on principals as many shouldered extra administrative duties caused by the closure of regional offices. The fact is, amalgamation has only worked as well as it has because of the efforts of principals and teachers.

Negotiations have proven to be espe-

cially challenging. At the time of writing this article we have not settled a contract with government and are preparing for a week of talks with the aid of a conciliation officer. Our demands for improved leave provisions to help balance the demands of work with the demands of our personal lives are reasonable. Government's intransigence on leaves, the provision of substitute teachers, and the IRT allocation formula demonstrate a lack of understanding and respect for needs of students and teachers and for the demands of the profession. While government seems quite adept at determining cuts and savings, it seems unable or unwilling to calculate the costs of their proposals on students, teachers, and schools.

Probably one of the most unsettling issues facing us is the public debate around and government's commitment to pension reform. It's inescapable. Anxiety and uncertainty permeate many staff rooms. At times it seems groups like the Newfoundland and Labrador Employers' Council and the St. John's Board of Trade are attempting to gain unfettered access to government's ear and are bent on decimating public sector pension plans.

Tough issues, I know. "Depressing", some of you might be thinking. Maybe not the *Up Front* article you were expecting for the last issue of *The Bulletin* this school year. But we shouldn't be discouraged. We have a skilled negotiating team determined to achieve gains for teachers in the new collective agreement. Some of the most knowledgeable people on pensions already work for you. And to complement our own people we've engaged our own expert actuarial consultant to advise us. You have a veteran provincial executive representing all areas of the province protecting your interests.

And we are not alone in our struggles. We have partners. The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District consults and works collaboratively with us to resolve areas of conflict as the amalgamation process unfolds. The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils support us in advocating for adequate human and

material resources so inclusive education can deliver on the promise of a better education for all students. The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) and our counterparts in the Council of Atlantic Provinces' Teachers Organizations (CAPTO) face similar challenges and are valuable resources in our fight for a just collective agreement and a fair pension plan.

Most of all, we have each other. For me it was our "Contact Your MHA" initiative in early March which testified to the "terrible loyalty" we already give each other and should give us confidence in our ability to survive the stormy seas around us. Not an elaborate campaign by any stretch of the imagination, but the flood of emails and tweets demonstrated to government MHAs that we are united, that we were not going to be pushed around, and that we demand a fairly negotiated contract.

This level of resolve and professionalism was no surprise to me. I witnessed it in the teachers I met throughout our province. Whether it was the Southern Shore, Labrador West, Central Newfoundland, the Northern Peninsula, the North East Avalon, or Coastal Labrador South, teachers are committed to providing the best possible educational experience for their students. But they are also determined to secure the necessary human and material resources they need to achieve the education they envision for their students.

As this school year winds to a close, prepare for a relaxing summer. Enjoy the plans you have made for you and your family. Return in September confident in the knowledge that whatever challenges us next year your commitment and loyalty to your students and to your colleagues will help us weather any storms that blow our way.



# THE bulletin

Lesley-Ann Browne  
Editor

Michelle Lamarche  
Editorial Assistant

John Bishop, Elliott Green, Louise King  
Design • Printing • Distribution

Linda Farrell  
Online Services

The Bulletin is published five times a year during the school year by the Newfoundland & Labrador Teachers' Assn., 3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, A1B 1W1. Tel: 709-726-3223; 1-800-563-3599 Fax: 709-726-4302; 1-877-711-6582 labrowne@nlta.nl.ca www.nlta.nl.ca Follow us on FaceBook and Twitter @NLTeachersAssoc

Unless otherwise indicated, materials used in *The Bulletin* may be reproduced or broadcast without permission. Advertisements and/or notices of resources carried in this publication do not imply recommendation by the Association of the service or product. Advertising inquiries should be directed to: Michelle Lamarche, Ext. 227 mlamarche@nlta.nl.ca

Subscription Rate: \$18 per year. For subscriptions and address changes contact Printing Services, Ext. 249.

Deadlines for material are:  
September/October Issue: September 3  
November/December Issue: November 1

ISSN-1189-9662



Member of the Canadian Educational Press Association, International Association of Business Communicators, and the Canadian Association of Communicators in Education.

Printed on Recycled Paper

## CONTENTS

### Features

- 7 Executive Director's Message**  
*A Challenging Environment*  
by Don Ash
- 8 Benefits & Economic Services**  
*The Collective Bargaining Process*  
by Steve Brooks
- 10 Group Insurance**  
*Long Term Disability Insurance: The Need to Increase Premiums*  
by Perry Downey
- 12 Living Well**  
*Springing into Summer*  
by Gail Carroll
- 14 Hats Off!**  
*O'Donel High School's Joe Santos Wins Health and Safety Educator of the Year Award for 2013*
- 15 School Administrators' Council**  
*Distinguished School Administrator of the Year Award Winner 2013-14*
- 16 Pre-Retirement Seminars 2014**
- 18 NLTA's Financial Information Seminars 2014**

- 20 Tech@Work**  
*Together We Stand: Professional Learning Through TESIC*  
by David Gill
- 22 Autism in the Classroom**  
*Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder*  
by Kendra Lane
- 24 Health Matters**  
*Your Voice and Your Job*
- 26 In the Classroom**  
*B.U.R.P. Can Be a Good Thing*  
by Winston Taylor
- 27 Conne River & Clarenville:**  
*A Cultural Connection*  
by Ian Davidson
- 28 Technology**  
*Transactive Memory & the Cognitive Consequences of Having Information at Our Fingertips*  
by Kevin Andrews

### Departments

Up Front from the President	2
On Location News	4
Resources	31
Calendar	back cover



### NLTA Scholarships

To obtain an application form visit the NLTA website at [www.nlta.nl.ca](http://www.nlta.nl.ca) and click "Forms" or contact the NLTA at:

Tel: 726-3223 or toll free at 1-800-563-3599  
or [mail@nlta.nl.ca](mailto:mail@nlta.nl.ca)

**Application Deadline: July 31, 2014**



PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

# NEWS

ST. JOHN'S

## MDJH raises awareness for epilepsy

Macdonald Drive Junior High (MDJH) in St. John's was turned into a "Positively Purple School" on March 26 to show their support for people who live with seizures. Their goal for the day aligned with the goal this year for Epilepsy NL & Labrador to turn Macdonald Drive Junior High PURPLE to help raise awareness and understanding of epilepsy.

Posters were made by members of the Student Council and there were daily announcements on the P.A. leading up to the day. Students and staff wore purple clothing as well as purple ribbons and tattoos. The Lost & Found box had been decorated and turned into a donation box for gently used clothing. Jars decorated with purple ribbons were placed in each homeroom so that students could make a monetary donation. Donations of clothing and money were accepted at parent/teacher interviews as well.

"Thanks to the generosity of students, staff and parents for a successful day with lots of clothing donated and money to the amount of \$286.15," said Joan McCue, School Counsellor at MDJH. "The day turned into 'teachable moment time' for a number of teachers who answered questions about epilepsy and seizures."



Students at MDJH display posters they designed to help raise awareness for epilepsy.

## Bullying Awareness and Spirit Week at MDJH

For the fifth consecutive year, the students and parents of Macdonald Drive Junior High (MDJH) showed tremendous school spirit in their support of Pink Day.

A partial wall of pink was created in the school's main entrance where students were invited to sign an anti-bullying pledge, offered in both English and French. Above the pledge table, a huge banner made of pink tulle netting reads "WE PLEDGE TO TAKE A STAND AGAINST BULLYING".

Every student received a pink cupcake and the school was a sea of pink! There was a competition on Pink Day as students from each homeroom were encouraged to "Accessorize your Teacher." Joan McCue, School Counsellor at MDJH said, "Needless to say, there were some fancy pink outfits on the go! Most activities were student driven and besides Pink Day, each day was themed and included Rainbow/Pride Day with a lunch time rally and march (a successful first!), Twin Day, Silly Hat Day and the ever popular Pyjama Day."



Students at MDJH participate in Pink Day activities.

During the week, teachers were encouraged to show short videos and have some discussion about bullying awareness. The following were some of the recommended videos (the first two are local): [www.youtube.com/watch?v=k4vUTHdMnEg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k4vUTHdMnEg); <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k4vUTHdMnEg>

[youtu.be/e4Xt8DRM3Uc](https://youtu.be/e4Xt8DRM3Uc); [www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDVkcZAd0p0&list=PL2C289FF2869A29FF&safety\\_mode=true&safe=active&persist\\_safety\\_mode=1](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDVkcZAd0p0&list=PL2C289FF2869A29FF&safety_mode=true&safe=active&persist_safety_mode=1)

What would Spirit Week be without a friendly basketball competition between the students and teachers? "Needless to say, the students came out the winners and the grade seven boys' team ruled the day!" said Ms. McCue. To end the week, students went bowling, skating or to The Works and were treated with a fun show by hypnotist, Gary Summers. "One student who participated in the show will be forever remembered for his love of Batman!" concluded Ms. McCue.

## Volunteer as a Cultural Ambassador at The Rooms

The Rooms is looking for volunteers with traditional skills to knit, split fish, hook rugs and mend nets in their exhibition galleries this July and August one afternoon a week. Training will be provided in mid-June. To volunteer as a Cultural Ambassador, or for more information, please contact Gillian Davidge at 709-757-8109, [gilliandavidge@therooms.ca](mailto:gilliandavidge@therooms.ca).

### CARTWRIGHT

## Henry Gordon Academy raises funds for the Janeway

This year, classes at Henry Gordon Academy in Cartwright came up with some ideas to help raise money for the Janeway Hospital.

The Kindergarten class held an "Art Auction" and bake sale. Students completed artwork which was auctioned off and parents donated items for a bake sale, raising a total of \$600.

The Grade 1 and 2 class had a read-a-thon this year. Each student asked their family and friends to support them, and on the day of the read-a-thon, students wore their pajamas and brought pillows, blankets and stuffed animals from home. They raised over \$1,900 and had a great afternoon reading.

The Grade 3 and 4 class decided that creating bookmarks would be a great fundraising idea. They used their Art classes to design and laminate these bookmarks. Each student had their own bookmarks to sell and brought them home to parents and family members. They raised \$389.25.

The Grade 5 and 6 class came up with Valentine's Day themed Cookie Grams as their fundraiser. They took orders for Cookie Grams, baked heart shaped

chocolate chip cookies and their parents came to school to help deliver them to those who had placed orders. It was great fun and raised a total of \$470. This class has a student who has relied heavily on the Janeway so they know first-hand the importance of the Janeway.

The Grade 9 class held a cake walk which raised a total of \$330.05 for this worthy cause.

When all the fundraising was completed, Henry Gordon Academy had raised \$3,798.19 for the Janeway.

### GRAND FALLS-WINDSOR

## Pi Day at Exploits Valley Intermediate

Math teachers at Exploits Valley Intermediate (EVI) in Grand Falls-Windsor celebrated Pi Day on March 14 with their students with fun-filled math activities. Pi is an irrational number and although the shortened version (3.14) is commonly used, there are an infinite number of digits. Mrs. Krista Simms challenged her grade 7 students to try to remember the first 100 digits of Pi in the correct order.

In the spirit of Pi Day, EVI's Principal John Antle and Vice-Principal Darren Woolridge agreed to allow students to "pie" them in the face if they were successful in reciting all 100 digits. Students were given two weeks to study the digits and seven brave students stood in front of their peers on Pi Day and attempted to recite the digits. All seven put in a great effort and three were successful in reciting all 100 digits without making any mistakes! As seen from the photo, the three girls greatly enjoyed their reward and all the students in Mrs. Simms math class greatly enjoyed watching the administration get "pied".



Exploits Valley High Principal John Antle and Vice-Principal Darren Woolridge get pied, much to the delight of onlooking students.

## CANADA

## CTF national survey: teachers find difficulty meeting needs of all students in classrooms

Results of the largest online survey of teachers ever conducted by the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) reveal that more than nine out of ten teachers cited class composition as a source of work-related stress. More than 8,000 teachers participated in the CTF voluntary survey which set out to inquire about their work-life balance as well as potential sources of stress, both inside and outside the classroom.

"In general, teachers feel they do not have adequate supports and services to address the broad range of special needs in their classrooms," says CTF President Dianne Woloschuk. The CTF findings come a week after the release of the *People for Education* report stating that student-teacher ratios in special education are on the rise while schools have unequal access to supports.

Inside the classroom, 95 per cent of teacher respondents experienced stress because it is harder to find time to meet the individual educational needs of students. Other findings related to stressors include the following:

- three out of four educators cited interruptions to teaching by students;
- 71 per cent listed student absenteeism; and,
- over six out of ten reported challenges in dealing with students' personal or health-related issues.

Lack of time to plan assessments with colleagues was reported as a stressor by 86 per cent of teachers surveyed, while 85 per cent indicated marking and grading as a source of stress. Other stressors include increased administrative-related work and outdated technology.

"Ninety-three per cent of teachers who responded said they felt torn between their teaching and home responsibilities," says CTF President Dianne Woloschuk. "This does not come as a surprise

in light of several teacher organizations workload studies conducted since 2000 showing the average teacher works approximately 53 hours per week."

"Of those teachers who are also parents, 90 per cent of women and 81 per cent of men reported they did not have enough time to spend with their own children. As professionals, teachers' continued commitment to their students' success is coming at the expense of their personal lives," she adds.

Woloschuk says the CTF agrees with the concerns expressed by survey respondents who have identified five major areas for recommended change among 14 examined areas in the survey. These include reducing class sizes, improving support for students with special educational needs, increasing time for planning and preparation, reducing non-teaching demands such as administration and paperwork, and increasing and improving classroom resources such as books and computers. Such changes would help to improve teachers' conditions of professional practice which are closely tied to students' learning environments.

"Like other Canadians, teachers are aware of the importance of balancing their professional practice with their personal lives. However, the factors that affect teachers' working conditions have a very direct effect on our students' learning conditions," concludes Woloschuk.

The Survey on the Quest for Teacher Work-Life Balance was conducted online by the CTF and provincial/territorial teacher organizations across Canada between February 24 and March 26, 2014. Some 8,096 Canadian teachers responded.



NLTA President James Dinn (right) and NLTA Executive Director Don Ash participating at the recent meeting of the Canadian Teachers' Federation in Toronto.

# A Challenging Environment

by DON ASH



**I**t has been a long, cold and snowy school year. Even ski enthusiasts and avid snowmobilers are saying “enough” and are looking forward and hoping for the end of storms and for warmer days.

The environment this year for teachers and the NLTA, with respect to collective agreement negotiations and pensions, has been equally challenging. While we are hoping for and looking forward to reaching a collective agreement and having successful pension discussions, the current forecast does not look promising.

Government has taken an extremely positional approach to negotiations. Gains which teachers are seeking in family related matters and other issues have been met with demands from Government for concessions that would negatively impact teachers and students. The concessions being sought by Government are disproportionate to the gains being sought by teachers. The Association has sought the assistance of a conciliation officer as the next stage in bargaining, with the hope that sensible and reasonable proposals can be obtained from Government. At the time of writing this article, those talks are pending. Should the efforts of the conciliation officer be unsuccessful, the NLTA will place unresolved issues before a conciliation board as one of the final steps prior to teachers considering job action that may be necessary to obtain a fair and reasonable collective agreement.

With regard to pensions, the unfunded liability of the Teachers' Pension Plan has been identified as a major concern for Government, and addressing the unfunded liability has been declared as a priority. Since December 2012, the NLTA has participated in a total of five days of discussions with Government – December 21, 2012, September 11-12 and November 19-20, 2013. Other scheduled dates in January and February were postponed by Government. The NLTA has suggested dates in May and June, but these have not yet been confirmed.

The NLTA shares Government's concern about pension funding and shares Government's commitment to a sustainable defined benefit pension plan for teachers. We are amenable to discussions to address the concerns. In that regard, the NLTA is

utilizing our lawyers and a pension actuary to provide expertise and advice in these discussions that we hope will be collaborative and consultative in nature.

For those teachers unsure of pension terminology, the Teachers' Pension Plan is an employer sponsored defined benefit plan, defined in the sense that the benefit is determined in advance based on a formula involving earnings history, service and age. This is in contrast to a defined contribution plan, like an RRSP, where the benefit is determined solely on contributions plus interest.

The Association will be producing a special edition of *The Bulletin* dedicated to “pensions”. This edition will provide more detailed information to teachers regarding the Teachers' Pension Plan, funding levels and concerns, pension reform initiatives, and the attack on public sector pension plans by some business groups and right wing extremists.

I regret the necessity for pessimism in this forecast, but it is important that, as this school year comes to a close, teachers are informed and prepared for potential challenges that await this coming fall. That being said, just as the weather in Newfoundland and Labrador is difficult to predict and can change in a hurry, so too is the progress of negotiations difficult to predict and subject to rapid change. Let's hope that my forecast is wrong and the environment improves to enable a positive resolution to be achieved on the outstanding collective agreement issues.

Please be assured that the staff of the NLTA are dedicated to working diligently on your behalf in your best interests in the coming months and throughout the summer.

I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your professional successes this year, to thank you for your tireless efforts for students and parents, and to wish you a rejuvenating summer. Let's hope for sun and warmth, and a better forecast!

---

*Don Ash is Executive Director of the NLTA. He can be reached at ext. 224 or [dash@nlta.nl.ca](mailto:dash@nlta.nl.ca).*





# The Collective Bargaining Process

by STEVE BROOKS

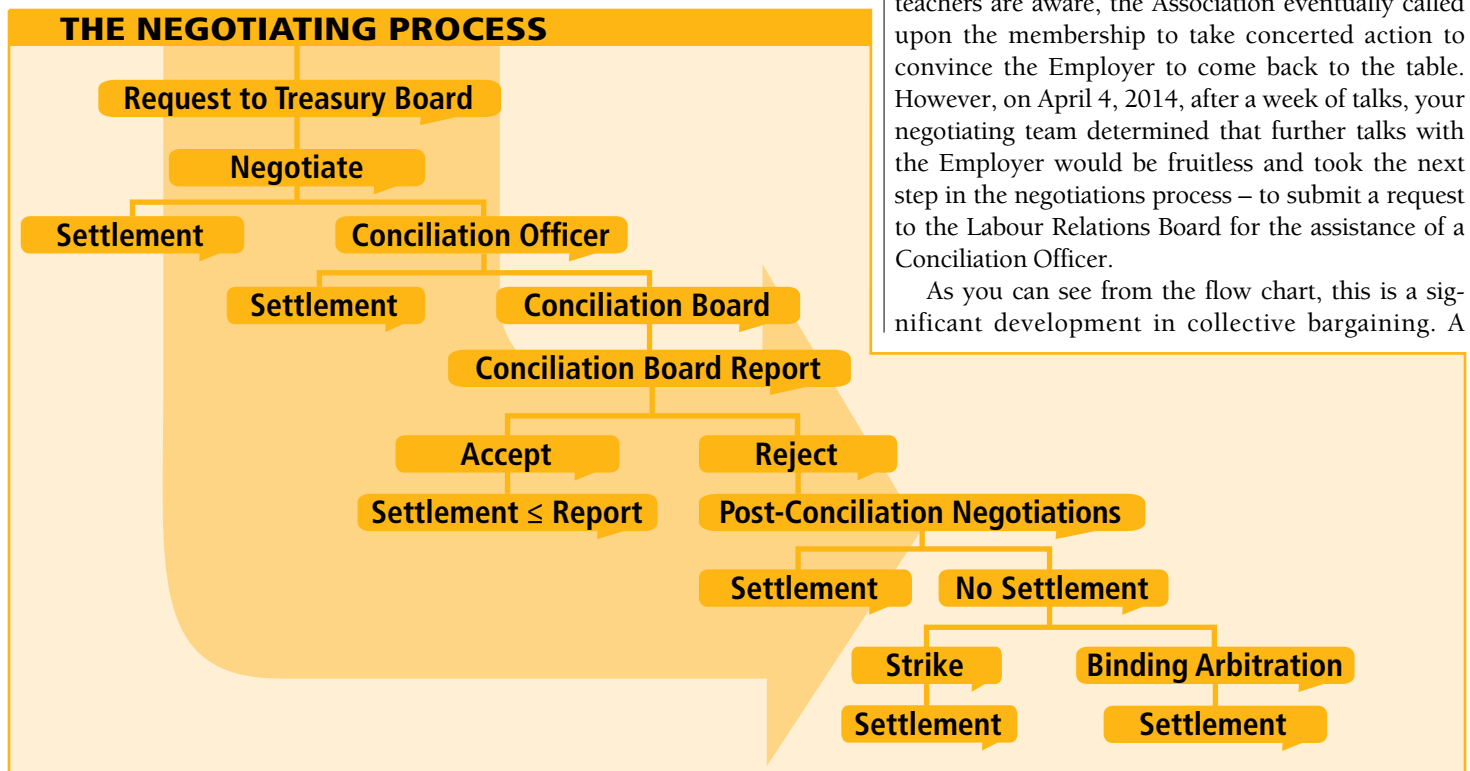
It is not surprising that, in recent months, many teachers have contacted the Association with questions regarding the collective bargaining process. In particular, NLTA members have been interested in learning more about the current round of negotiations between the Association, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association.

The process for collective bargaining for teachers is governed by provincial legislation – the *Teachers' Collective Bargaining Act* ("the Act"). The table below provides a schematic depiction of the process established in the Act, and the information provided in this article on the status of negotiations is current as of the time of writing the article.

The Association served notice to the Employer (as represented by Treasury Board) of its intent to open negotiations on both the Provincial and Labrador West Collective Agreements in March 2012. While negotiations for the Labrador West contract have not yet commenced, the Employer and Association negotiating teams first met in September 2012 to exchange opening proposals for the Provincial contract. Since that time the two sides have met numerous times in an effort to negotiate a tentative collective agreement.

From the perspective of the Association's negotiating team, it is unfortunate that the Employer has at times bargained in bad faith and, most recently, has taken an unreasonable, extreme and inflexible position on issues with monetary implications. As teachers are aware, the Association eventually called upon the membership to take concerted action to convince the Employer to come back to the table. However, on April 4, 2014, after a week of talks, your negotiating team determined that further talks with the Employer would be fruitless and took the next step in the negotiations process – to submit a request to the Labour Relations Board for the assistance of a Conciliation Officer.

As you can see from the flow chart, this is a significant development in collective bargaining. A





conciliator has been appointed and the two sides are scheduled to meet with her during the week of May 12-16. We are hopeful that, with the aid of a conciliator, a tentative agreement can be reached and then presented to the membership. Should this occur, Provincial Executive will set a date for a ratification vote, which will provide all teachers the opportunity to express their opinion on the tentative agreement. If the Conciliation Officer is unable to assist the two sides in reaching an agreement, the Association will then request that a Conciliation Board be appointed by order of the Minister of Justice. In accordance with the Act, a Conciliation Board must be constituted within seven days of the order from the Minister.

The role of a Conciliation Board is to provide both the Association and the Employer the opportunity to present their proposals, along with supporting documentation and rationales, to an objective tribunal. The Board will then be charged with writing a report which would include recommendations aimed at settling the impasse between the parties. Following submissions from both sides, the Board has 14 days to report its findings and recommendations. Each party then has 15 days to decide whether to accept or reject the Board report, in its entirety or in part. NLTA Policy requires that teachers be given the opportunity to vote on Conciliation Board recommendations. If both parties accept the recommendations, a tentative agreement should be reached. If only some of the recommendations are accepted, further negotiations may lead to a tentative agreement.

If, after the Conciliation Board has tabled its report and recommendations, the parties remain at an impasse, the Association can request binding arbitration. However, this process requires the consent of both parties and the Association has little confidence that the Employer would agree to binding arbitration as a means of settling a contract dispute. If an impasse persists, then seven days after both parties have responded to the Conciliation Board report, the NLTA would at that time be in a legal position to conduct a strike vote of the membership, and the Employer would be in a legal lockout position. It is important for the membership to understand that the term "strike" is very broadly defined in the Act and includes all forms of coordinated job actions. It does not refer only to the total withdrawal of all work/services.

The Association will continue to keep the membership apprised of ongoing developments in collective agreement negotiations.

Steve Brooks is Assistant Executive Director of the NLTA. He can be reached at ext. 231 or [sbrooks@nlta.nl.ca](mailto:sbrooks@nlta.nl.ca)

## PAID ADVERTISEMENT



# PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

*Kindergarten to Grade 3 and Early Childhood Educators*

**Sign Up Today for our Summer Institute:  
Extending and Engaging Students' Thinking**

Collaborate with colleagues in this two-day professional learning opportunity!

- Engage in meaningful discussions and hands-on/ minds-on learning experiences
- Learn how to support the development of inquiry and problem solving skills while fostering 21st century skills and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) learning
- Explore resources for curriculum planning using Webs of Wonder



**NEW!**

*Two Dates Available*



**August 14 & 15, 2014**  
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
NLESD Conference  
Centre  
40 Strawberry Marsh Rd.  
St. John's, NL

**August 21 & 22, 2014**  
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
NLESD - S.D. Cook  
Building  
4 Fern St.  
Corner Brook, NL

**Fee: \$50**

Includes two days of professional learning and lunch

**Seating is limited - sign up today!**

**[WWW.EXPLOREIDEAPARK.ORG/PROFESSIONALLEARNING.ASPX](http://WWW.EXPLOREIDEAPARK.ORG/PROFESSIONALLEARNING.ASPX)**





## *Long Term Disability Insurance*

# The Need to Increase Premiums

by PERRY DOWNEY

Each year, during the annual renewal process, the NLTA Group Insurance Trustees are tasked with the responsibilities of renewing each of the 14 policies that make up the NLTA Group Insurance Program. The Trustees are responsible for reviewing the coverage available under each of the policies; reviewing the financial statements and claims experiences for each policy; give due consideration to the forecasted trends that are occurring in the industry; and to make the most informed decisions possible that will ensure the viability of the program for the next insurance year. As was electronically reported to you by the NLTA Group Insurance Trustee Chairperson, Sean Weir, in the 2014 Group Insurance Annual Renewal Memo, Trustees agreed to implement changes to the premiums that will be required for certain policies for the 2014-15 insurance year. The changes that were necessary are outlined below. These changes became effective on April 1, 2014:

- A decrease of 13.1% to Basic and Dependent Life premiums;
- A decrease of 8.4% to Post-65 Life premiums;
- A decrease of 8.0% to Family Health premiums;
- An increase of 4.0% to Single Health premiums;
- An increase of 8.0% to Dental premiums; and
- An increase of 12.5% to Long Term Disability premiums.

The premiums required for all remaining policies remain unchanged for the 2014-15 insurance year. The remainder of this article will focus on the need to increase premiums in the Long Term Disability (LTD) Plan.

### **Background:**

#### **Long Term Disability Plan Premium History**

The Long Term Disability (LTD) plan, formerly called Salary Continuance, has been part of the Group Insurance Program for more than 30 years. This plan has been administered by Manulife Financial for that period of time. During the past 10 years, the premium required to fund the plan has remained relatively

stable and unchanged. Prior to the 2002-03 insurance year, the premium required was set at 0.87% of salary. For the 2003-04 to the 2006-07 insurance years, the premium required increased to 1.10% of salary. When the Market Study was completed during the 2007-08 insurance year, the premium was decreased to 0.80% of salary and had remained unchanged through to the 2013-14 insurance year. During the past seven years, there have been a number of premium holidays implemented by Trustees for members of the LTD Plan: 2007-08 – a five month premium holiday; 2009-10 – a four month premium holiday; and 2011-12 – a three month premium holiday. These premium holidays were made possible due to the additional premiums that were collected from members over the years.

During the past two years, however, Trustees have been monitoring trends that have started to occur in the LTD Plan. These trends include: an increase in the number of teachers applying for and being approved to receive LTD benefits; an increase in the duration of time that teachers are in receipt of benefits; and a decrease in the age of first time applicants. As a result of these trends, at the end of the 2012-13 insurance year, the LTD Plan incurred a deficit of approximately \$707,000. This deficit was paid from the Group Insurance Trust Fund, however, Trustees grew increasingly concerned with the premium required to fund the plan. During the most recent renewal, Trustees were informed that for the 2013-14 insurance year, the plan was expected to incur a projected deficit of approximately \$1.1 M. The official financial statement for the 2013-14 LTD Plan will be presented and reviewed by Trustees during their May meeting, however, it has become abundantly clear that the current level of premium charged to the membership is not sufficient to fund the plan and thus an increase in premium is necessary to offset any future deficits. As a result of these analyses, Trustees decided that it was necessary to implement a LTD premium increase of 12.5% for the 2014-15 insurance year, raising the required premium from

the current 0.80% of salary to 0.90% of salary for all participating members. This increase became effective on April 1, 2014. It is also interesting to note that this new rate is still the lowest of all teacher groups in Atlantic Canada and one of the lowest of all teacher groups in Canada.

### Claims Experience for the Period January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2013

As it is stated in the NLTA Group Insurance Program Booklet, Long Term Disability Insurance is “intended to protect the income of an insured member in the event that a medical disability prevents an insured member from performing the duties of their occupation beyond the expiry of paid sick leave.” The medical disability must be determined by a medical doctor, specializing in the field of the illness or injury. It is not sufficient for a general practitioner or a family doctor to provide the medical diagnoses. Confirmation from a specialist is required.

During the period stated above, there were 112 teachers approved for LTD benefits. The average age of the teachers was 43. It's interesting to note that the average age of teachers approved for LTD benefits during the same period for all teacher groups insured by Manulife Financial was 50.

The three leading diagnostic categories of illnesses or injuries during the period were: 1) Mental Health (29.5% of all claims; an 8% increase in claims for the age group 41-50 since the last three year reporting period); 2) Musculoskeletal (19.6% of all claims); and 3) Cancer (13.4% of all claims; a 10% increase in the age group 31-40 since the last three year reporting period). It is also interesting, but devastating to note that approximately 70% of those diagnosed with cancer were female teachers and approximately 70% of the female teachers diagnosed were diagnosed with some form of breast cancer.

The duration of claims for each diagnostic category for the three year period was: 1) Mental Health (43.4 months); 2) Musculoskeletal (17.5 months); and 3) Cancer (23.7 months).

Trustees have reviewed these statistics and there seems to be a correlation between the trends that are happening in the LTD Plan and the changes that were negotiated to sick leave accrual during the 2006 Memorandum of Agreement with the Provincial Government. During negotiations in 2006, all public sector employees agreed to change their sick leave accrual for all new hirers. The result was any teacher hired for the first time in the province after August 31, 2006 would accrue sick leave at a maximum of 12 days per year, with no rebuild clause available similar to that which was in effect prior to that

time. As a result of a fewer sick day accrual benefit, many younger or early career teachers who experienced illness or injury have had to avail of LTD benefits much earlier than teachers in the past. This has often resulted in younger teachers having to avail of Employment Insurance Sick Benefits during the 30 day waiting period required under the LTD Plan before they are entitled to receive their benefits, if approved. It is anticipated that similar trends may continue in the future. Thus, it will be increasingly important for Trustees to continue to monitor all aspects of the LTD Plan to ensure that individuals who are medically disabled from teaching receive their benefits and that sufficient premiums are paid to cover the claims that are approved.

*Perry Downey is an Administrative Officer with the NLTA. He can be reached at ext. 226 or [pdowney@nlta.nl.ca](mailto:pdowney@nlta.nl.ca).*

### PAID ADVERTISEMENT

From  
front gate  
to  
tailgate

For all your lending needs we've got you covered. From a mortgage that gives you 5% Cash Back to use as your downpayment to a pre-approved vehicle loan.

**CREDIT UNION**  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR





# Springing into Summer

by GAIL CARROLL

Summer is quickly approaching. This year we are particularly looking forward to summer after a very long winter.

So, what are you doing to prepare yourself for a wonderful summer break? How many of you took me up on my challenge from the previous article in *The Bulletin* to take better care of yourself? For those of you who did and for those of you who only decided to implement a small change that would promote better wellness and balance in your life, a hearty congratulations! For those of you who haven't taken the challenge yet or who have not read the article entitled *Spring into Wellness* in the March/April issue of *The Bulletin*, the good news is that there is still time. Time to read the article, time to consider my challenge and time to make small incremental changes. Choosing wellness is choosing life and making the quality of yours better. The great news is that with summer approaching now is the time to make some choices that will allow for better wellness and balance in your life. No excuses!

Sometimes the busyness of the school year challenges us to find the time to take care of ourselves. Finding work/life balance can be one of the major challenges we face each and every day. This year, as the school year comes to a close, make a promise and a commitment to yourself to take better care of you. Start with baby steps but, start somewhere.

- Choose one thing that could enhance your health and well being. It might be as simple as deciding to eat breakfast every day as opposed to skipping it.
- Go to bed at a time that allows you to have the best rest.
- Add a little walk to your daily routine to get exercise, fresh air and enjoy the great outdoors.

Robert Brault, in *Stress is a Choice: 10 Rules to Simplify Your Life*, advises us to "Enjoy the little things in life, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things!" So, make a conscious choice to enjoy each and every day this summer whether your plans are to take a longed for trip, just enjoying your garden or sitting outside with a good book. Consciously choose to "be in the moment" and enjoy.

**Exercise:** We all hear so much about mindfulness and living in the moment. It has great value. Here is a little exercise for you to enjoy. A number of years ago when working in western Canada and doing some work with Native and Indigenous populations I attended a work retreat where an elder from the native community took us on a "Medicine Walk" to introduce us to mindfulness and meditation. This is an easy one for you to re-create and will give you a great break from marking those final papers and exams and help you get ready to enjoy our wonderful approaching summer. All you have to do is choose to take a walk outside. It can be a long walk or a short walk and you can go by yourself or take someone with you. As you are walking along don't converse with your walking buddy, just breathe the fresh air and notice – no thinking about what you have to do or anything else – just be in the moment. Notice what you see, hear and smell on your walk. Just notice. After your walk, talk with your friend or note to yourself what you saw or noticed. Did you see, hear or notice anything that might be giving you a little message about your life? It doesn't have to be profound. The first time I did this exercise the message I received came from doing the actual exercise itself. The message of course was to take time to slow down and smell the flowers once in a while. What will your message be?

Oprah Winfrey challenges us to question our busyness. "How busy are you? What are you busy at?" Once you've answered these questions, challenge yourself to really look at the purpose this busyness plays in your life. Some of us thrive on being busy. We live in the moment and enjoy each and every minute and activity. We see and enjoy the little things. However, some of us keep super busy because we have developed a habit of busyness and continue this path because we do not know any other way or we have never questioned it.

**Challenge:** "What purpose does the busyness serve in your life?"

- Make some choices about how you will spend your time.
- When time challenged, don't just prioritize; ask yourself the purpose of each item you must attack



and get rid of those that you really do not need to invest time in.

- If there is something on your list that you are avoiding or procrastinating, choose to do that item first as the misery of avoidance can actually take more of your time than completing the task.
- Delegate some tasks to others where you are able and make time for little breaks during the busyness. (Remember this while the madness to complete the school year ensues!)

Mary Engelbreit in *Stress is a Choice: 10 Rules to Simplify Your Life*, once said, "if you don't like something, change it; if you can't change it, change the way you think about it!" That is my next great challenge to each of you. Change the things you can to bring greater wellness and balance into your life. Don't sweat the small stuff or the things you cannot change. We all have our challenges whether it is time, workload or some type of personal or life challenge. Thankfully, taking a good look at ourselves and choosing wellness can be a great launching pad for summer vacation.

Remember, everyday you are in control of your own remote. Make choices that will help you spend time enjoying the great outdoors this summer. Gardening, camping, hanging at the beach...while a dream right now will quickly become a summer reality. Take every minute to enjoy it. Revive your energy, your spirit and you.

Wishing you all rest, relaxation and fun this summer!

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



Slow down and enjoy life. It is not only the scenery you miss by going too fast...you also miss the sense of where you are going and why. (zenhappiness.net)

PAID ADVERTISEMENT




**JOHNSON**  
HOME+AUTO INSURANCE



**\$50,000  
PERSONALIZED  
PRIZE**

**MAKE IT YOURS, WITH JOHNSON.**

Winner chooses prizes up to 50K! To see a full list of prizes visit [johnson.ca/Personalized](http://johnson.ca/Personalized). (Existing policyholders are automatically entered.)

**Call for your home and/or auto insurance quote to enter today.**

**1-855-516-5596** Group ID Code: 61

**MORE WAYS YOU WIN WITH JOHNSON.**

Convenient Payroll Deduction,  
no interest or service charges.



---

Earn AIR MILES® Reward Miles  
with home and auto insurance.



---

Get a MEDOC® Travel Insurance  
quote for another chance to win.  
Call 1-855-734-8519 today.



Home and auto insurance is available through Johnson Inc. a licensed insurance intermediary. Policies are primarily underwritten by Unifund Assurance Company (Unifund). Unifund and Johnson Inc. share common ownership. Eligibility requirements, limitations or exclusions may apply and/or may vary by province or territory. Auto insurance not available in BC, SK and MB. Contest runs from Sept 1, 2013 at 9:00 am (EST) to June 30, 2014 at 5:00 pm (EST). Contest open to NLTA members who are residents of Canada (excluding Quebec and Nunavut). No purchase necessary. Chances of winning depend on the number of entries received. Winner must correctly answer a skill-testing question. For full contest details visit [www.johnson.ca/Personalized](http://www.johnson.ca/Personalized). AIR MILES® reward miles awarded only on regular home and auto insurance policies underwritten by Unifund. At the time the premium is paid, one AIR MILES® reward mile is awarded for each \$20 premium (including taxes). AIR MILES® reward miles are not available in SK, MB or QC.™ Trademarks of AIR MILES International Trading B.V. Used under license by LoyaltyOne, Inc. and Johnson Inc. (for Unifund). MEDOC® is a registered trademark of Johnson Inc. (Johnson). MEDOC is underwritten by Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance Company of Canada (RSA) and administered by Johnson, Johnson and RSA share common ownership. CAT.10.2013



# O'Donel High School's Joe Santos Wins Health and Safety Educator of the Year Award for 2013

Joe Santos is an educator who has demonstrated a commitment to creating a culture of safety for Newfoundland and Labrador youth.

Joe demonstrates real leadership and has been a 'change agent' for students and staff at O'Donel High School in Mount Pearl.

Most recently, Santos was named the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission's (the Commission) Health and Safety Educator of the Year for 2013.

"He has significantly raised the profile of safety and emergency preparedness among teachers and students at O'Donel High School since he has joined our staff four years ago," says Michelle Clemens, Principal. "Joe is actively engaging the entire school community in committing to his vision of what it means for a school to be truly safe."

Santos introduced the Workplace Safety 3220 course to O'Donel, which now in its third year has over 170 students enrolled. "He has high expectations for students and their achievement in this course and they are rising to meet these expectations," says Clemens.

As a certified Red Cross First-Aid and WHMIS instructor, Santos ensures all students in his classes are properly trained and provides instruction to his peers at school district professional development days. He was also instrumental in arranging for the purchase and installation of an AED machine for O'Donel – a first for any school in Newfoundland and Labrador. To ensure that the machine was effective, Santos trained all staff, the school's custodian and evening users of the building.

In 2010, Santos formed a First Responders group at O'Donel, where students provide emergency response capabilities when required. According to Principal Clemens, the team has 30 members, but there are many more who want to be involved. "Joe was a significant participant in the overhaul of our school's crisis management team," explains Principal Clemens, "and has used the health and safety exper-

tise of external speakers, employers and other organizations to promote health and safety education for his students."

In 2013, students from O'Donel participated in the Commission's youth game show: SAFE WORK NL's – *Who Wants to Save a Life?* as well as the annual Young Worker Video/Radio Ad Contest. Santos also works with students who compete in the workplace safety category at Skills Canada competitions.

Together with his students, Santos has helped increase awareness of occupational health and safety and its importance to youth. As winner of the Health and Safety Educator Award, he receives a commemorative plaque and the school receives \$500 to purchase health and safety materials and/or equipment. Past Health and Safety Educator honours have gone to: Fraser Drover of Menihek High School in Labrador City and Robert Smith of Bishops College in St. John's.

To learn more about how you can nominate an esteemed health and safety educator for this award, visit: [www.whscc.nl.ca](http://www.whscc.nl.ca).

*This article, by Kathy Dicks-Peyton in the Winter 2014 issue of "Safework News", has been reprinted with permission from the Workplace Health, Safety & Compensation Commission of Newfoundland and Labrador.*



## *School Administrators' Council* Distinguished School Administrator of the Year Award Winner 2013-14

Each year the School Administrators' Council (SAC) of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association recognizes one of its school administrators with the Distinguished School Administrator of the Year Award. This prestigious award is decided through a rather vigorous application process with applicants being identified in all ten provincial SAC Regions. The SAC Distinguished School Administrator of the Year Award Winner receives a cash award of \$500, a personal plaque and their name engraved on a perpetual plaque which hangs in the recipient's school for a year. The recipient is honoured at the annual SAC Conference. In addition, the winner of the award becomes the SAC provincial nominee for the Canadian Association of Principals' Distinguished Principal of the Year Award.

The 2013-14 recipient of the SAC Distinguished School Administrator of the Year Award is James (Jim) Hibbs. Jim is the Principal of Botwood Collegiate. He is also a Past-President of the Canadian Association of Principals as well as a recipient of the prestigious NLTA Barnes Award.



The accompanying photo shows the 2013-14 SAC Distinguished School Administrator of the Year Award recipient, James Hibbs, receiving the personal plaque from George Tucker (Administrative Officer, NLTA) who presented the annual award at the recent SAC Conference on behalf of the sponsor, Ruby Manuel, a Realtor with EXIT Realty on the Rock. Unfortunately Ruby could not attend the Awards Luncheon due to a work commitment.

*If you are interested in learning more about the SAC Distinguished School Administrator of the Year Award or if you would like to nominate a school administrator colleague for the 2014-15 award, please contact George Tucker, Administrative Officer with the NLTA at [gtucker@nlta.nl.ca](mailto:gtucker@nlta.nl.ca).*

## HATS OFF!

Have you recently won an award or know of a teacher who has been recognized for their contribution to the education of children in Newfoundland and Labrador? If so, we'd like to hear from you. Please send information on the award as well as a profile of the award winner(s) to:

**Lesley-Ann Browne**, Editor, *The Bulletin*  
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association  
3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL A1B 1W1  
Fax: 709-726-4302 or 1-877-711-6582 (toll free)  
E-mail: [labrowne@nlta.nl.ca](mailto:labrowne@nlta.nl.ca)







# Pre-Retirement Seminars 2014

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 2014 in Corner Brook, Grand Falls-Windsor, and three in St. John's. (Please note: consideration will be given to combining seminars if registration numbers are sufficiently low in a particular seminar.) 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 2017 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 at the rate of 80 percent of ferry, taxi, or economy airfare; in the case of airfare, the lesser of excursion (seat sale) or 80 percent of economy airfare will be paid, where excursion (seat sale) fares can be arranged. Receipts shall be required for all reimbursement.
  - iv) no expenses will be paid to participants living or teaching in the community where the seminar is held.
  - v) 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 and Assistant Directors, 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](http://www.nlta.nl.ca)). Click on "Recent Info" on the main page or "Forms" on the members-only website. The NLTA policy will also be mailed to teachers with confirmation of registration.



# 2014 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. 16-17** – Holiday Inn, St. John's

☐ **Oct. 30-31** – Greenwood Inn & Suites, Corner Brook

☐ **Nov. 6-7** – Mt. Peyton Hotel, Grand Falls-Windsor

☐ **Nov. 27-28** – Hampton Inn & Suites, St. John's

☐ **Dec. 4-5** – Holiday Inn, 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 2017) 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](http://www.nlta.nl.ca). Go to Forms and click "P".

**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

# *Important Notice to All Teachers*

## NLTA's Financial Information Seminars

### Fall 2014

For more than 25 years, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association has been providing Pre-Retirement Seminars for teachers across the province who are within two years of retirement. During each of these seminars, teachers have provided feedback and suggestions based on the presentations and information and have indicated that the information provided was very important, very useful and very valuable for all teachers. Many have suggested that the information should have been provided "much earlier in their career" so that they would have had the time to "better plan their financial future and their retirement".

In recent years, there has been an overwhelming increase in the interest of teachers around the province, no matter what stage of their teaching career, to be provided the opportunity to attend a similar seminar and to receive similar information as presented at the Pre-Retirement seminars. As a result of this increased level of interest, the NLTA began sponsoring Financial Information Seminars during the fall of 2010, and the interest has been overwhelming. The NLTA will be holding Financial Information Seminars in the fall of 2014 in Corner Brook and St. John's. The seminars are scheduled to begin at 9:00 a.m. and conclude at 3:30 p.m., with lunch provided. The dates for these seminars are as follows:

- **Saturday, November 1 – Corner Brook (Greenwood Inn & Suites)**
- **Saturday, November 29 – St. John's (Hampton Inn & Suites)**

To find out more information on what will be covered at these seminars, we would encourage you to talk to a teacher who has attended a Pre-Retirement Seminar or a Financial Information Seminar to get their opinion of such seminars. For those who have already attended a Pre-Retirement Seminar in the past, we would encourage you to recommend this seminar to your colleagues.

#### **Important Information Regarding the Seminars**

1. Teachers wishing to attend a seminar **MUST** complete and submit a **2014 Financial Information Seminar Registration Form**. This form is available on the following page and can also be accessed on the NLTA members-only website ([www.nlta.nl.ca](http://www.nlta.nl.ca)) under "Forms".
2. A **MAXIMUM of 30 teacher participants will be accepted at each seminar.**

3. The selection of the participants will occur on a **first-come, first-served registered basis.**
4. The seminars will be conducted by the NLTA Administrative Staff responsible for conducting the Pre-Retirement Seminars. In addition, Johnson Inc. officials will be present at each of the seminars to answer any questions and/or provide any assistance to teachers who wish to discuss and/or make changes to their NLTA Group Insurance Plan coverage.
5. Each participant will receive at the seminar a copy of their Group Insurance Benefit Statement, as well as a copy of their Teacher Pension Benefit Statement. These documents will be reviewed, in detail, during the seminar and very important information regarding both documents will be discussed.
6. Financial Planning officials from the Newfoundland and Labrador Credit Union will also be presenting valuable information and suggestions regarding financial planning and other financial considerations.
7. Some of the topics that will be covered in detail during these seminars include:

#### **1. Pensions and Other Benefits:**

- The Teachers' Pension Plan
  - Accrual and Calculation of Pension Benefits
  - Integration, Pension Indexing, Survivor Benefits, Credit Splitting
  - Transfer and Reciprocal Agreements
- The Importance of Upgrading
- The Government Money Purchase Plan (Substitute Teachers' Pension Plan)
- The Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security
- Severance Pay

#### **2. The NLTA Group Insurance Program**

- Plan Options
- Do I have the proper coverage for me and my family?

#### **3. Financial Planning Considerations**

- Facts and Questions to Consider Regarding Financial Planning
- The Importance of Eliminating Debt Prior to Retirement
- Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) & Tax Free Savings Account (TFSA) – Initial vs. Future Tax Savings
- The Effect of Inflation on Disposable Income
- The Importance of Having a Will
- Steps That You Can Take
- Estate Planning

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO REGISTER IF YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THESE SEMINARS!**

# 2014 Financial Information Seminars

## Registration Form

(please print)

Name: .....

Mailing Address: .....

Postal Code: .....

Home Telephone: .....

Social Insurance Number\*: .....

School Name: .....

School Telephone: .....

E-mail: .....

*\* 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.*

Have you attended a previous financial information session? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please check which session you will be attending:

- ☐ Nov. 1 – Greenwood Inn & Suites, Corner Brook
- ☐ Nov. 29 – Hampton Inn & Suites, St. John's



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](http://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



# Together We Stand Professional Learning Through TESIC

by DAVID GILL

One of the primary goals of TESIC (Technology Education Special Interest Council) is to provide and facilitate professional development and learning for its members. Over the last year and a half and through the work of two consecutive executives, TESIC has developed a vision and strategy for implementing a wide range of sessions that touch almost every aspect of teaching and learning. With the current focus on 21st century learning, it is important for TESIC to share a role in the development of these skills for both teachers and students. District, school, university and industry partnerships, biennial meetings, online support and our upcoming Summer Institute of Technology Integration (SITI) all play a role in our mission to help each other engage in meaningful professional learning that can meet the ever changing needs of our students.

Since partnerships are critically important, one of the first steps in re-vitalizing our professional learning mandate was to partner with the Eastern School District of Newfoundland and Labrador (ESDNL) last year. Through this partnership we arranged to co-sponsor multiple technology integration sessions during the winter and spring of 2013. These sessions were facilitated by TESIC executive members and placed on the district's professional learning calendar. Teachers and district personnel gave very positive feedback from these initial sessions. As a result, TESIC was able to secure a continued partnership with the newly formed Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD) for the winter and spring of 2014. Between February and April of this year, TESIC has co-sponsored four professional learning sessions with NLESD. These sessions were facilitated by TESIC executives/members and included topics on Intermediate Technology Education, Inclusionary Technology Integration, Google Drive, and Cross-Curricular Technology Integration. Once again, these sessions were very well attended and

received. As TESIC and NLESD are both committed to identifying and delivering meaningful technology based professional learning, it is our hope to continue and cultivate this partnership as our term continues into the next two school years.



**Pictured l-r: Chad Stokes, Stephanie Lawlor (participants) and Sonya Burden (facilitator) during TESIC's "Creating an Inclusive Classroom with Technology" PL session at Amalgamated Academy this winter.**

In parallel with our independent district partnerships, we have also had the opportunity to develop ties with industry leaders. During the spring of 2013 and 2014, TESIC has partnered with Apple Canada to host events in conjunction with the Eastern and now Newfoundland and Labrador English School Districts. These events primarily focus on the integration and management of Apple's line of iPad products. As the integration of new devices into curriculum implementation is currently at a premium, our partnership with Apple Canada is significant. Apple Canada brings a great deal of understanding and expertise about the possible innovative uses of its products in the teaching and learning environment. Although TESIC has many connections to industry partners through our biennial meetings, Apple Canada has demonstrated its willingness to work with us during our regular executive term. With this example, TESIC has begun to actively seek out other industry partners that will be



able to share their expertise with our membership in a substantial and meaningful way through the course of the school year.

Another branch of our professional learning strategy has led us in an effort to consolidate our session offerings online. TESIC has moved forward with the creation of a working catalogue of available professional learning sessions that our executive and membership can facilitate at any given time during the year. This catalogue (<http://goo.gl/x8Bu7l>) has been the basis for TESIC to partner with several schools across the province in the delivery of school based professional learning sessions focusing on technology integration. With the help of the NLTA and the School Administrators' Council (SAC) our professional learning catalogue has been circulated throughout the province. During the 2013-14 school year this has resulted in TESIC delivering sessions for individual schools from the Eastern, Central and Western regions of our province. These sessions have been directly facilitated by TESIC executive members and are another area of growing interest. Any administrator looking for a unique professional learning experience on a wide variety of technology integration topics can easily browse our online listings and contact TESIC directly for the logistical details of booking a session for their staff. This is an exciting new venture as we move forward with our professional learning re-vitalization plan. We hope the utilization of our continually growing catalogue becomes a staple of our offerings during the years to come.

As a means of continuing to build our professional learning momentum, we have reached out to the Faculty of Education at Memorial University. Through this new partnership, we have been able to launch our latest professional learning endeavour, TESIC's Summer Institute of Technology Integration (SITI). This three day institute, to be held at the Faculty during the weekend of July 25-27, 2014 has already generated a great deal of interest. Sessions focusing on a wide variety of technology integration and education topics will be facilitated by teachers, faculty, industry experts, and department of education personnel. SITI will be an excellent opportunity for anyone involved in the Newfoundland and Labrador education system to network, share and learn in a relaxed professional setting. This summer will mark the first time our executive has offered an institute of this nature. It is our intention to make this an annual event that becomes one of our professional learning highlights.

Supported professional learning is one of the cornerstones of continued teacher success in any area of teaching and learning. This is especially true in the

areas of technology integration and education as the pace of change can be extremely quick. Feedback from our various professional learning activities has indicated demand for high quality guidance, and support in this area is overwhelming. TESIC has responded to this demand by expanding technology based professional learning offerings through the development of many different partnerships. It is only through these partnerships and a network of dedicated, hardworking TESIC members that we can offer rich and meaningful professional learning. Who are TESIC members? They are the energetic, motivated and intelligent people working every day to make a difference in the lives of their students across our province. Any NLTA member can become a part of TESIC. It's easy to join; just visit [www.tesic.org](http://www.tesic.org) and find the "create a new account" link. It's that simple. As a member you will have access to the most up-to-date information on our current and upcoming professional learning opportunities, and will be connected with your peers across the province. So, as we move forward, remember: we can make a difference, and we do – every day!

*David Gill is Vice-President of the Technology Education Special Interest Council.*

# SITI @ MUN

**July 25 - 27, 2014**

**Faculty of Education, St. John's  
Info at [www.tesic.org](http://www.tesic.org)**



**THE TECHNOLOGY SPECIAL INTEREST COUNCIL'S  
SUMMER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION**



# Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

by KENDRA LANE

On March 27, 2014, the Centre for Disease Control in the United States released 1:68 as the new incidence rate for children diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This alarming new statistic has increased 120% since 2002, when it was 1:150. Without a clear understanding of the cause(s) of ASD, it is more important than ever that educators and health professionals stay informed of best practices and effective teaching approaches for an increasing population of students. This second installment of “Supporting Students with ASD” highlights strategies that help ease ‘the stress of transitions’ and examines behaviors from an autism perspective.

## Use of Language

Although many students with autism may have well-developed language skills, it is important to remember that their use of language is often more rigid than that of their peers. We must use consistent language and be cognizant of the ‘literal’ meaning of our words, particularly when using verbal direction or instruction. It is common for many to make assumptions in conversation that students with ASD do not make, as is the case for words we use on a regular basis that can have several interchangeable meanings. At the end of the school day we may tell our students it is time to go home for the day. For a student with autism who has been told swimming occurs after school, the teacher indicating it is “time to go home” can cause significant stress as this literally means *home*. The student now wonders about the change in his/her plan. It is recommended that assumptions be removed and that we stick to the literal description of what is happening – which in this case would be “school is finished” or “time to leave school”. This limits the literal interpretation of the statement and avoids a potentially stressful miscommunication for the student on the spectrum.

## Concept of Finished

Individuals with ASD often struggle with changes,

including the passage of time and the beginning or ending of an activity. Creating a consistent pattern of ‘finished’ across settings helps students with autism generalize expectations and establish a positive transition routine. Teaching the concept of finished creates a skill that can lead to increased independence. That skill is also a tool that can ease stress and anxiety in escalating situations. For example, providing a consistent folder or box (appropriate to the age and ability of the student) for all completed work, crafts, materials, etc. creates a consistent expectation in *any* environment with the assistance of *any* teacher. The value of the finished routine is the stability and predictability of a recognizable box/folder. This tool helps eliminate inconsistencies among different teachers, classrooms, desks, etc. and it can be implemented with everything from regular assigned seat work to the switching of instruments in music class.

## Behaviour from an Autism Perspective

Some challenging behaviours exhibited by students with autism often appear similar to those of their peers. The key difference, however, is likely to be the student’s motivation. The majority of inappropriate behaviour experienced with this group of students can usually be accounted for by one of the following: *communication frustration, not understanding expectations, problems with perspective-taking, difficulty with transition, sensory responses, and limited problem-solving/generalization*. We must also take into consideration ‘a predisposition to stress’. Students with autism are at a disadvantage in the classroom setting because of a diagnosed social communication deficit and for this reason they are already operating at a higher baseline of stress at any given time. All of us have a “boiling point” but students with autism are more likely to reach that point because they are already coping in a naturally stressful environment. Almost all challenging behaviours for individuals with autism are caused by some aspect of their immediate environment so it is there we should first seek explanations.

Consider the example of a young man who was leaving the classroom without permission, running to the school parking lot and letting air out of car tires. For several days the behaviour team implemented consequences and tracked whose cars he was targeting, attempting to relate it to an interaction the student had with those particular teachers. It was eventually revealed that this young man had recently discovered the calming sensation he felt from air blowing on his face. He was in fact escaping the classroom at potentially stressful times to seek sensory comfort from letting air out of tires. This is an example of how we must be careful to not make assumptions about behaviour that appears a certain way – we must consider the characteristics of ASD first and explore possibilities from an autism perspective.

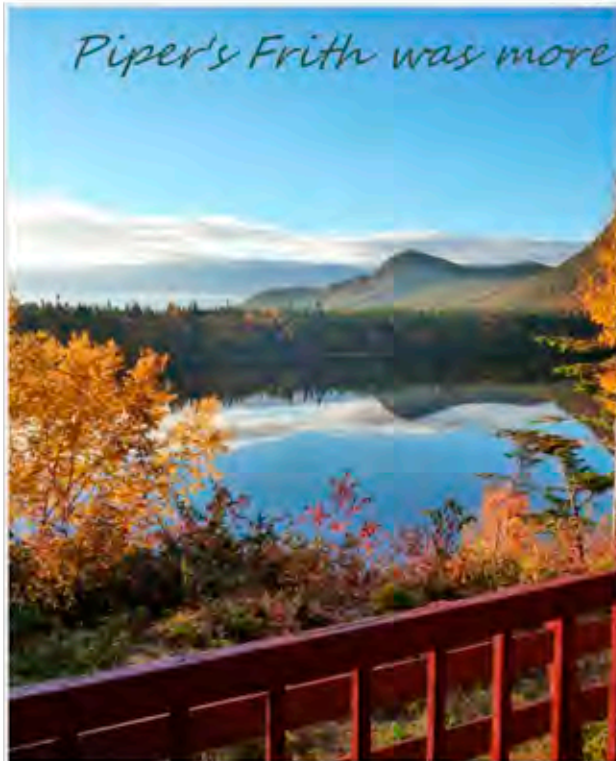
'Routine' is very powerful and should not be overlooked in autism behaviour management. Some individuals with autism are so sensitive to routine that just one incident can create a pattern that remains intact, even though changes to antecedents or consequences are made. The power of routine is always relevant and any attempt to change behaviour should be an attempt to replace an old routine with a new one.

### Conclusion

Every individual with autism is unique; identifying universal teaching strategies that work for all individuals with ASD is impossible. We can understand the common characteristics of autism, or the "culture of autism", and try our very best to provide 'scaffolding' for the challenges these students face, and more importantly, discover and capitalize on their strengths.

Please watch for "Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders" in the next issue. It will discuss practical strategies to help get students started on the right foot at the beginning of a new school year!

Kendra Lane is Manager, Programs & Services, with the Autism Society, Newfoundland & Labrador. 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 kthornhill@autism.nf.net.



*Piper's Frith was more than I imagined ...  
I feel so inspired.*

### Piper's Frith: Writing at Kilmory Resort October 20-25, 2014

Join mentors **Don McKay, Jessica Grant & Gerard Collins** for group workshops and one-on-one explorations of your creative work. Social evenings and a spectacular setting enhance this intense experience.

**Piper's Frith** happens at Kilmory Resort, nestled in the Piper's Hole River Valley amidst the wildness of Newfoundland's Burin Peninsula.

The cost of **\$738** includes all program fees, meals, five nights' accommodations and events.



Learn more and apply –  
[www.literaryartsnl.com](http://www.literaryartsnl.com)

*feel so inspired*



The Literary Arts Foundation is grateful for support from Piper's Department Stores, the Newfoundland & Labrador Teachers' Association and the Government of Newfoundland Labrador Department of Tourism, Culture & Recreation.



# Your Voice and Your Job

## The Plight of Teachers

**T**oday's teachers face a major challenge – how to be effective facilitators of learning while overcoming the environmental “hazards” to adequate vocal performance. Furthermore, teachers have to cope with stresses created by population explosions, expectations of students, parents, society, as well as political and administrative fluctuations. As teachers, you have to perform, explain, justify, intervene, negotiate, emote, repress ... all in a day's work. You may often feel that every activity demands your vocal input.

Since it is difficult to be a teacher without a voice, you must plan your curriculum with vocal health in mind. You must avoid using your voice to command attention, assess the vocal hazards in your environment; rally for the best possible speaking conditions; and maybe even use electronic amplification when competing noises cannot be suppressed. Perhaps vocal health programs should be incorporated into the teaching curriculum!

Your job may demand that you talk or sing extensively. Sometimes this may be under high stress, in unhealthy postures, and often in noisy areas or rooms with very poor acoustic features. Such working conditions can result in constant muscle tension in the face, neck, breathing equipment, and voice-box. The end result – voice strain, hoarseness, and voice breaks. In other words; frustration! The harder you try and the more you worry about your voice, the worse it may become.

Fixing the problem may require that you take a complete environmental inventory, adjust your workspace and noise interference as much as possible, and change the way you respond vocally to do your job. This may sound incredibly overwhelming and it is important to break it down into small changes.

## Vocal Hygiene

Just as we take time to care for our bodies, it is important to take time to care for our vocal chords. Your voice needs rest periods like any other body part does. Would you spend your entire day dancing or running without training to prepare for a marathon? Of course not! Would you stretch and rest to recover from the muscle fatigue and cramps after-

wards? It would be wise! Since our speech equipment is made up of so many body parts, it is not surprising that it gets “tired” and “uncooperative” when we demand vocal marathon performances. A full day of using one's voice in the classroom is much the same as running a marathon! You need to prepare and warm-up the muscles and keep them in top shape by instilling good vocal hygiene habits.

It is important to keep your vocal cords well hydrated. Often we do not drink enough water during the day and we have waited too long once we feel thirsty. Aim to drink 8-10 cups of water a day to help keep your throat and vocal cords hydrated and lubricated. Furthermore, avoid yelling or throat clearing whenever possible as this creates stress on the vocal cords and leads to damage causing voice loss.

Some other vocal hygiene tips include avoiding smoking, eliminating or reducing alcohol and caffeine intake, and taking vocal “naps” of complete voice rest to give the muscles and tissue a break. It is also important to engage in proper breathing techniques known as diaphragmatic breathing to ensure efficient use of the musculature and prevent muscle tension in the head and neck areas.

## Acoustic Environment

If your job involves gaining people's attention to demonstrate or explain a point, your voice will thank you if you find non-vocal ways to alert and silence your listeners. This will enable you to avoid competing with noise while you impart your knowledge. Bells, whistles, clapping, hand signals, lights on-off, music ... have all been used successfully to signal to an “audience” that you need their undivided attention and silence.

*A poor acoustic environment is the insidious enemy of the voice: large spaces, echoes and environmental noise are common culprits. Your ear monitors, and the poor attention of an audience may alert you to the fact that your message is not coming through “loud and clear”. This realization inevitably makes you strain to hear your own voice.*

If you cannot hear your voice well using a normal conversational level, you will need some electronic help to amplify the sound. This means you should use a personal amplification system that is adequate



for your vocal projection needs. The system should be powerful enough to compensate for room size and acoustics (the larger the room and the poorer the acoustics, the more power you will need). The system should have a monitoring device that provides you with immediate information about how well the amplifier is doing its job. If you can hear your voice message coming back clearly to you from the speakers, your volume gain is adequate and you will stop straining to be heard.

### Posture Pointers

The work environment can be full of hazards to healthy posture. The position of your telephone, computer screen, keyboard, desk, chair or reading materials relative to your body parts will influence how you sit, stand, and work. You may often find yourself in awkward positions which pull your head back, stick your chin out, twist your neck, raise your shoulders, curve your back, or slouch.

*If your computer screen is higher than eye level, you may correct for this by straining your chin forward to direct your eyes upward; if your keyboard sits high on your desk, you may pull your fingers up from your shoulders to type; if you need your glasses to read, but must peer above them to see in the distance, you may pull your head back on your neck and strain your neck forward to look beyond your reading material.*

Since your speech equipment lives in your body, healthy posture is a prerequisite to healthy voice production. Healthy posture allows for efficient breathing and voice production.

It has been estimated that approximately 50% of teachers may experience some form of voice disorder at some point in their career. This can have detrimental effects on one's career if it is not identified and treated early. Adequate vocal hygiene practices as well as modifying environmental factors are key ingredients to having a healthy voice.

Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) and Audiologists (AUD) care about communication and your vocal health. They are employed by your school board and regional health authorities as well as in private practices. These professionals can provide you with a wealth of knowledge about communication and hearing. Please go to [www.nlaslpa.ca](http://www.nlaslpa.ca) for more information about how to contact an SLP/AUD in your area.

*This article was prepared by the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (NLASLPA). NLASLPA is a non-for-profit association which represents over 100 SLPs and AUDs in Newfoundland and Labrador.*

## PESIC Conference 2014

September 18–20, 2014

Memorial University – St. John's Campus  
School of Human Kinetics and Recreation



### Keynote Speaker

**Terry Kelly, C.M., B.A., D.C.L., D.F.A.**

Terry Kelly's passion for life has gained him international recognition as an award-winning singer/songwriter, a renowned motivational speaker, an accomplished athlete, and a consummate entertainer. This Newfoundland native has released seven full-length recordings, resulting in seven East Coast Music Awards and nominations for Canadian Country Music Awards and a JUNO. He is most recognized for his inspirational song "A Pittance of Time".

Appointed to the Order of Canada, Terry is a recipient of the King Clancy Award and has Honorary Doctorates in Civil Laws and Fine Arts from University of Kings College and Saint Mary's University. In the athletic field, Terry has distinguished himself as the third blind person in the world to run the mile in under five minutes.

Terry's motivational presentations are based on his own life experiences and the challenges he has overcome – and have inspired students, parents, teachers, government and corporate employees throughout North America.

### Registration Rates

#### Conference Member Rate:

- \$180.00 Early Bird rate if registered by June 19, 2014
- \$200.00 Conference rate if registered by September 5, 2014
- \$250.00 Conference Rate for registration after September 6, 2014

**Conference Non Member Rate:** \$250.00

Rooms at Holiday Inn reserved under "PESIC" for \$149.95 per night. Rooms held until August 18, 2014. Call (709) 722-0506 to book.

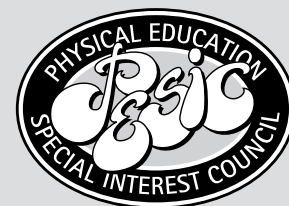
### Awards 2013-2014

- Award of Honor
- District Physical Educator of the Year (one per district)
- PHE Canada Dr. Andy Anderson Young Professional Award
- PESIC Student Award
- PHE Canada PETE Award – Newfoundland & Labrador

Application forms can be requested from Awards Chairperson [lukeneville@esdnl.ca](mailto:lukeneville@esdnl.ca) or found on PESIC's website <http://pesic.weebly.com>.

Check us out on Twitter @PESICNL

**Deadline: June 27, 2014**





# B.U.R.P. Can Be a Good Thing!

by WINSTON TAYLOR

According to a 2007 Canadian Council on Learning report entitled *State of Learning in Canada: No Time for Complacency*, “The difference in the reading levels was more significant, with girls scoring an average of 32 points higher than boys,” and “males have a higher rate of language and learning difficulties.” Heather Godden, a Teacher Librarian and President of the Teacher Librarians Newfoundland Labrador Special Interest Council (TLNL), developed a Boys Undercover Reading Program (B.U.R.P.) designed to provide an opportunity for boys to engage in a reading program to improve achievement in English Language Arts. Developed in 2007, B.U.R.P. has found its way to St. Andrew’s Elementary School in St. John’s with the help and guidance of Ms. Godden. For the past couple of years boys from St. Andrew’s in grades 3-6 have been provided the opportunity to give input into the content of books and magazines they find of interest to them. Throughout the school year, boys only come to the Resource Centre to spend time reading and relating with their peers on the material selected. Grade 3 boys are paired with Grade 5 boys and Grade 4 boys are paired with Grade 6 boys for one 30-minute session each week. Currently we are looking to increase this to two 30-minute sessions each week to meet the demand. The girls remain behind with the classroom teacher where they too have the opportunity to engage in a variety of activities with their classroom teacher.

One of the stumbling blocks when implementing B.U.R.P. was garnering the funds to purchase books and magazines to be used for the program. These resources are separate from the regular learning resource inventory and the boys really feel special knowing that, as an undercover boys reading club, they have something they feel is personal for them alone. The second area of need was a place to store the materials during the program’s down time. A book cart to house the books and magazines for the reading program would resolve the issue and when-

ever the boys’ scheduled reading time was due, the cart housing the books would be rolled out and the boys would have every opportunity to browse and select a book or magazine. The boys also realize that the entire inventory of the resource centre books and magazines are available for their enjoyment. Once the reading session is complete, the B.U.R.P. books and magazines are placed back on the cart, covered and rolled away until the next scheduled meeting. The boys really enjoy the undercover aspect of being part of a secretive group permitted to see what is hidden on the cart and knowing that they are the only group to get access to the material each week.

This would not have been possible of course without the help of the partnership of Ms. Godden and TLNL, Rotary St. John’s, the NLTA and the St. John’s Ice Caps Foundation. This partnership provided schools the opportunity to enter a contest where schools could win a B.U.R.P. cart and the funds needed to purchase books and magazines to be used with their boys. Our school was very fortunate to be one of the winners of this contest for 2013 and our boys are so excited to now have a new cart and new material to choose from as they eagerly await their scheduled time to come to the resource centre and spend time with their peers through the medium of text. A program such as B.U.R.P. made this a reality for my boys and has turned them onto reading and relating with their friends. Ms. Godden’s program has undoubtedly turned my boys on to reading and with the help of the TLNL, in partnership with Rotary St. John’s, the NLTA and the Ice Caps, our school is certainly the benefactor. I strongly encourage schools to think about implementing a program such as B.U.R.P. with their boys and I can safely say you will not be disappointed. Clearly B.U.R.P. can be a good thing.

Winston Taylor is Physical Education/LRT/System Admin at St. Andrew’s Elementary School in St. John’s.



*Conne River & Clarenville*

# A Cultural Connection

by IAN DAVIDSON

Newfoundland and Labrador Studies is a popular course at Clarenville High School. When we decided to offer it to our grade 10 students five years ago, I leapt at the opportunity to teach it. One of the most interesting components of the inservice for this course was getting a chance to hear Rod Jeddore and Craig Benoit from Conne River speak about their distinct school, language and culture. Following this experience I was determined to get my class invited to the annual mini powwow hosted by St. Anne's school or *Se't A'newey Kina'mation 'kuom* in the Mi'kmaq language. In May of 2012, this goal was successfully achieved and we had the experience of a lifetime.

While getting invited to the mini powwow was a major task in itself, paying for a field trip of this magnitude was also challenging. Thankfully, the Department of Education fully funded our excursion via a "Cultural Connections" grant. We encourage everyone who has an interest in traveling within the province for cultural reasons to explore this grant program. The next big challenge was actually getting to Conne River...however, both myself and the students all agreed that the road was bumpy and long but worth it in the end! We decided to leave the evening before and take the bus to Bay d'Espoir where we stayed in a hotel for the night. The next morning we were up bright and early to arrive at the school for the mini powwow. From the minute we pulled into the parking lot we were made to feel welcome and they were so excited to see us. Once inside the school we were given a tour and the students were introduced to each other, then the fun began.

The first activity was a scavenger hunt where the students from Conne River and Clarenville were paired up to explore the town. The students from Conne River took great pride in showing us around their beautiful community. Once everyone returned to the school an hour later, we realized fast friendships had already been formed. The next activity was

Mi'kmaq language lessons. This was a unique experience for us and we learned to say several keywords in Mi'kmaq which we were encouraged to repeat throughout the day. Following our language class, we were brought to the gym where we learned about various animals of spiritual importance to the people of Conne River via a visual activity. Students were again mixed in groups and completed this activity until lunch. Everyone agreed we had an interesting morning but the afternoon would turn out to be amazing.

When we arrived in the gymnasium after lunch, it seemed like the whole community was present. The people, especially the children, were dressed beautifully. The colors of their powwow regalia were so vivid and designed with individual (sometimes unique) flair. I will never forget one little girl who had a beautiful traditional outfit with a Dora the Explorer patch sewn on the back. The demonstrations of tribal drumming by elders and students (drumming is an extracurricular activity at St. Anne's School) was haunting, courageous and unforgettable. My students couldn't believe how hard they worked drumming and how perfectly they kept rhythm with each other. A particular highlight for me was being asked to be an honorary flag bearer in the opening procession, an honor rarely given to somebody who is not a Mi'kmaq. They knew how interested we were in their culture and how hard we had worked to make this opportunity happen; this is how they said thank you. Following the drumming and the flag procession we were introduced to several different types of native dancing. Invariably, educators have special memories from their careers and one of mine will definitely be seeing my students (even the *super cool* ones) giving in and dancing in Conne River that May afternoon...it was incredible.

To close, we believe that everyone should visit Conne River and make an effort to learn more about the Mi'kmaq culture. For my NL Studies students it was an amazing opportunity to do something so very different from what they do every day within the confines of their own province. My students learned that while cultural differences certainly do exist, many similarities were also present and lasting friendships were formed on our trip to Conne River.

---

*Ian Davidson is Principal of Clarenville High School.*



# Transactive Memory & the Cognitive Consequences of Having Information at Our Fingertips

by KEVIN ANDREWS

In a development that would have seemed extraordinary just over a decade ago, many of us have constant access to information. If we need to find out the score of a ball game, learn how to perform a complicated statistical test, or simply remember the name of the actress in the classic movie we are viewing, we need only turn to our laptops, tablets, or smartphones and we can find the answers immediately. It has become so commonplace to look up the answer to any question the moment it occurs that it can feel like going through withdrawal when we can't find out something immediately. We are seldom offline unless by choice, and it is hard to remember how we found information before the Internet became a ubiquitous presence in our lives. The Internet, with its search engines such as Google and databases such as IMDB and the information stored there, has become an external memory source that we can access at any time.

## Proponents of Transactive Memory and the Google Effect

Transactive memory has been around as long as humans have communicated. We've always relied on experts within our group (which used to be other humans) and, with the invention of the printing press, stored information in books. In those cases, we had to remember only who or what held the information. Storing information externally is nothing particularly novel, even before the advent of computers. In any long term relationship, a team work environment, or other ongoing group, people typically develop a group or transactive memory; a combination of memory stores held directly by individuals and the memory stores they can access because they know someone who knows that information.

## The Experiments – Is Google Making Students Stupid?

In an experiment that would be the first of its kind, Dr. Betsy Sparrow from Columbia University, togeth-

er with Jenny Liu from the University of Wisconsin and Daniel Wegner, set out to determine if there was any cognitive consequences to using computers and the Internet for memory retrieval. First, Sparrow showed that when students are faced with hard questions, they naturally think about computers showing a strong correlation between the notion that students feel that computers and Internet search engines are instinctively connected to the concept of missing knowledge. She also noticed that when students were faced with a gap in knowledge, they were primed to turn to the computer to rectify the situation.

In her experiment Sparrow recruited 46 students and asked them a series of trivia questions. Afterwards, they saw a list of words written in different colours and had to name the colours in question. Sparrow also noted that generally people take longer to do this if the word captures their attention because they find it more difficult to ignore its meaning and focus on its colour. Sparrow found that after seeing questions they couldn't answer, the volunteers' reaction times were indeed slower if they saw computer-related words ('Google', 'browser', 'internet') than unrelated ones ('telephone', 'paper', 'pencil'). Next, Sparrow asked 60 students to read 40 trivia statements (such as "an ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain") and type them into a computer. Later, they had to write down as many of the statements as they could.

She found that the students remembered fewer facts if they were told that the computer would save their work, than if they thought their words would be erased. If they knew they could look up the statements later, most students apparently didn't make the effort to remember them. Based on this observation we can conclude that since search engines are continually available to us, we may often be in a state of not feeling we need to encode the information internally. When we need it, we will look it up.

Sparrow repeated the trivia experiment with 28 students but this time, after typing in every statement, they were told that their entry had been saved, saved



in a specific folder, or erased. Later, they saw 30 statements, half of which matched the earlier ones, and half of which had been subtly altered. When asked if the statements were exactly what they had read, the students were worse at spotting the changes if they thought their words had been saved somewhere. As before, having information on tap obviated the need to memorize it. However, when asked if the statements were saved or erased, the students were better at identifying the ones that had been saved than the ones that had been erased. If they thought that information would be accessible later, they were worse at remembering the actual trivia, but better at remembering whether it would be accessible. It is also interesting to note that most of the students in this experiment even remembered where the statements were stored more accurately than the statements themselves.

In a final experiment, Sparrow replayed the trivia game with 34 students, who expected all the statements to be saved into one of several generic folders, named 'Facts', 'Items', 'Info' and so on. When they were asked to write down as many of the statements as possible, most only remembered a quarter of them. But when Sparrow prompted them with vague identifiers (such as, "What folder was the statement about the ostrich saved in?"), most students remembered the location of half of the statements. Based on these observations we can conclude that when people expect information to remain continuously available (such as we expect with Internet access), we are more likely to remember where to find it than we are to remember the details of the item.

### The Verdict – Is the Internet Wrecking Our Memory?

It is important to keep in mind that in many situations no single person feels the need to know and remember everything because we can rely on others to fill in the gaps where necessary. We store information through our social connections as well as in our brains. The same thing happens with reference books. A person may not remember all the facts and stories in my book shelf but will have a good idea of where to find any particular tidbit. The Internet, specifically search engines and social networking sites seems to have become this same type of external memory.

One can only deduce that Sparrow's results suggest that processes of human memory are adapting to the advent of new computing and communication technology. Just as we learn through transactive memory who knows what in our families and offices, we are learning what the computer "knows" and when we should attend to where we have stored information in our computer-based memories. We are becoming

(cont'd. on page 30)

## Language and Literacy Cohort in Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

The Curriculum Teaching and Learning Studies program invites Master of Education applicants to join a Language and Literacy cohort. This new approach recognizes that intentional learning communities nurture authentic relationships amongst peers and professors and deeper engagement with course content.

**Location:** Courses will be offered online.

**Duration:** This eight-semester program, designed for part-time students, will begin in Spring 2015 and will be completed by the end of Fall 2017.

**Format:** Students will follow a prescribed schedule of courses comprised of eight core courses and two electives.

**Course Descriptions** can be viewed at: [www.mun.ca/educ/grad/Course\\_Descriptions.pdf](http://www.mun.ca/educ/grad/Course_Descriptions.pdf)

**If you are interested in joining this cohort please send an email to [gradeduc@mun.ca](mailto:gradeduc@mun.ca) with the subject line "L&L cohort" by August 15th, 2014.**



## School Representative Seminars Coming in Fall 2014

A series of School Representative Seminars will take place as a continuation of the ongoing triennial program in Fall 2014. School Representatives will receive specific information directly from the NLTA office.

### Group 1 – Plum Point

October 3-4, 2014 – Plum Point Motel, Plum Point

**Branches Attending:** Aurora, Belle Mer, Bremco, Ingornachoix, Northern Light

### Group 2 – Clarenville

October 17-18, 2014 – Clarenville Inn, Clarenville

**Branches Attending:** Burin-Marystown, Clarenbridge, Granforline, Landfall, Rushoon-Terrenceville, Trinity, T. Bay

### Group 3 – Deer Lake

November 14-15, 2014 – Holiday Inn Express, Deer Lake

**Branches Attending:** Baie Verte Peninsula, Deer Lake, Long Range, Table Mountain, Taylor's Brook

---

**“The experience of losing our Internet connection becomes more and more like losing a friend.”**

---

ing symbiotic with our computer tools, growing into interconnected systems that remember less by knowing information than by knowing where the information can be found. And perhaps even this is changing. The act of finding information is becoming ever easier as searching becomes a central part of our software. Gmail, for example, is structured around searching rather than folders. Everything from folders to Flickr photos can be tagged to make them easier to find. Rather than remembering where we've saved a piece of information, we may end up remembering the sorts of keywords that will allow us to find a forgotten fact. As our technology changes, so do we. Are we better or worse off for it? Sparrow's work is hardly going to end a debate that has raged for millennia. Socrates himself feared that the advent of that most dastardly of technologies – the written word – would weaken our memories to our mental detriment. Similar concerns were raised at the advent of newspapers, mass education, the gramophone, and the printing press. Media technology scares are not new. With that in mind, Sparrow's research points out that it may be no more than nostalgia at this point, however, to wish we were less dependent on our gadgets. We have become dependent on them to the same degree we are dependent on all the knowledge we gain from our friends and coworkers – and lose if they are out of touch. The experience of losing our Internet connection becomes more and more like losing a friend. We must remain plugged in to know what Google knows.

#### **Further Implications of Living in the Digital Age**

What is of interest in Dr. Sparrow's study is the way it reveals the bounded nature of memory. Although we like to think of our cortical hard drive as infinite in capacity, it's actually pretty constrained, which is why we're always looking for ways to not remember stuff. If we know that a fact is only a Google away, then we're not going to waste precious synaptic space on it. Better to let a server remember. I think it's also worth pointing out that, although we've been romanticizing human memory ever since Socrates, our recall is profoundly flawed. Every time we recall a memory we also remake it, subtly tweaking the neuronal details. (This is why the more we remember something, the less accurate the memory becomes.) Although we like to think of our memories as being immutable impressions, somehow separate from the act of remembering them, they aren't. A memory is only as real as the last time you remembered it.

And this is where the Internet comes in. One of the virtues of transactive memory is that it acts like a fact-checker, helping ensure we don't forget. In this sense, instinctually wanting to Google information – to not

entrust trivia to the brain – is a perfectly healthy 21st century impulse. I don't think it's a sign that technology is rotting our cortex – I think it shows that we're wise enough to outsource a skill we're not very good at. While the web enables all sorts of other biases – it lets us filter news, for instance, to confirm what we already believe – the use of the web as a vessel of transactive memory is mostly virtuous. We save hard drive space for what matters, while at the same time improving the accuracy of recall.

#### **How the Internet is Changing Our Brains**

The Internet is no doubt changing modern society. It has profoundly altered how we gather information, consume news, carry out war, and create and foster social bonds. But is it altering our brains? A growing number of scientists think so, and studies are providing data to show it. What remains to be seen is whether the changes are good or bad, and whether the brain is, as one neuroscientist believes, undergoing unprecedented evolution. Texting and instant messaging, social networking sites and the Internet in general can certainly be said to distract people from other tasks. But what researchers are worrying more about are the plastic brains of teens and young adults who are now growing up with all this, the “digital natives” as they're being called. There is a fear that these technologies are infantilising the brain into the state of small children who are attracted by buzzing noises and bright lights, who have a small attention span and who live for the moment.

#### **Evolution of a New Human Brain?**

Meanwhile, much more research needs to be done to determine if social networking sites, and the Internet in general, are good or bad for children and teens, or neither. Studies going back to the late 1990s have flip-flopped on this as often as new social networking sites pop up. For now, there are only hints and indications that all this change may indeed lead to young brains that work differently than those of previous generations. Whether this is good or bad is still up for debate. What we do know for sure is that evidence is indeed mounting to support the idea that students rely more today on the Internet and technology to interact with each other rather than taking the time to develop face-to-face personal relationships with others.

---

*Kevin is currently a technology teacher and system administrator/webmaster at Mount Pearl Intermediate. He is an avid blogger on current digital trends and long-time CEO of a website design business. You can find him on Twitter @kevinandrews or follow his blog at <http://www.thedigitalteacher.ca>*

# RESOURCES

## LOOKING FOR LGBTQ RESOURCES? LOOK NO FURTHER THAN OUR WEBSITE!

Dealing with issues of gender and sexuality is something not every teacher feels equipped to do. To assist, the NLTA Equity Issues in Education Committee regularly reviews resources which they feel will assist teachers in developing their knowledge of the topic and provide tools – including lesson plans. Most recently the group looked at *The Gender Spectrum: What Educators Need to Know* and is highly recommending this book. A quick look at the Table of Contents below will indicate the broad range of topics addressed and its practicality.

### What Every Educator Needs to Know

- Gender, Self, and Society
- Common Beliefs about Gender
- Inclusive Beliefs about Gender
- Top Five Reasons to Create Gender Inclusive Schools
- Gender Inclusive Schools Benefit All Students
- Student Safety & Acceptance
- Myths and Facts about Gender
- Cross Cultural Perceptions of Gender
- Two Spirit: Past, Present & Future

### Educational Leadership

- The Legal Obligations of Educational Administrators
- School Climate Assessment
- Creating a Gender Inclusive School Culture
- Model School Policy Regarding Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students
- Responding to Concerns about Gender Inclusivity

### Classroom Strategies

- The Role of the Classroom Teacher
- Ideas for Thinking Outside the Gender Binary
- Gender Roles and Play in the Primary Classroom
- Language Dos and Don'ts

- Use of Story to Challenge Gender Stereotypes
- Discussions about Gender with Primary/Intermediate Students
- Discussions about Gender with Secondary Students

### Lesson Plans

- What is a Family?
- Jobs in the Home
- Fairy Tales and Gender Roles
- “The Boy Who Wanted to be a Dancer”
- Building Allies for Gender Non-Conforming Students
- The Gender Pyramid
- Reader Response Reflection Journals
- Examining Novels for Gender Bias
- “No Bikini”
- Vocabulary for Thinking Critically about Gender
- “When I Was a Boy”
- First Nations’ Perspectives of Gender
- Intersex Conditions

### Appendices

- Recommended Resources Featuring Gender Diversity
- Glossary
- Endnotes

This, along with other teacher-recommended resources, are listed on the NLTA website ([www.nlta.nl.ca](http://www.nlta.nl.ca)) in a special section designated for materials related to LGBTQ. Log in to the “Members Only” section of the site to access WEB RESOURCES from the button on the right and you’ll find it in the alphabetical list under “L” for LGBTQ. And...If you know of a book, video, website or other resource you feel would be of use, please let us know!

## NUMBERS AND STORIES: USING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE TO TEACH NUMBER SENSE

Corwin Press announces the release of *Numbers and Stories: Using Children's Literature to Teach Number Sense*, written by an internationally respected math

consultant, Rita Janes and a language arts specialist, Elizabeth Strong. Both Rita and Elizabeth are well known teachers in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

This indispensable K-2 resource is a surefire way to build number sense and literacy skills at the same time.

Rita and Elizabeth weave together the standards for mathematics outlined in Canadian Provincial Curriculum Guides, along with the Common Core Math and ELA standards and practices, supporting teachers and parents as they combine children's literature with meaningful mathematical learning experiences. Key features include: overview of theory and practice related to children's learning of mathematics in a context that reflects their lived world; 22 interactive, research-based lessons based on children's literature with detailed instructional suggestions and problem-solving tasks to develop number sense; high-quality children's literature selections; reflection and discussion questions and prompts for both teachers and children; children's work pages and formative assessment tools.

The takeaway message is that children enjoy mathematics when it is presented in a context they can relate to, when it is connected to their lived world, and when they can integrate its content, processes, and skills with other curriculum areas. *Numbers and Stories: Using Children's Literature to Teach Number Sense* should be read, used, and read again. By pairing the books children love with the number skills and understandings they are building, they get a rock-solid foundation for future learning. This is a must-have resource for educators everywhere because it provides instructional strategies and problem solving tasks that motivate students to learn and enjoy mathematics.

The paperback book is available at [www.corwin.com](http://www.corwin.com), as well as [amazon.ca](http://amazon.ca).

Contact information: [ritajanes@nf.sympatico.ca](mailto:ritajanes@nf.sympatico.ca), 709-722-3860 and/or [estrong@mun.ca](mailto:estrong@mun.ca), 709-739-9962.





#### DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS

July 7-10, 2014

Mount Allison University, Sackville, NB. Theme: *Cognitive Coaching for Educational Leaders*. Further information and a registration form can be found on the NLTA website ([www.nlta.nl.ca](http://www.nlta.nl.ca)) under "Professional Development Opportunities". For more information contact: George Tucker, NLTA at 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 245.

#### ALL THINGS MARINE

July 14-18, 2014

St. Andrews, NB. All Things Marine is a cross curricula maritime institute open to teachers and friends. Join us as we explore the unique and diverse environment of the Bay of Fundy. What we catch and collect is what we will study! The all-inclusive course fee of \$670 includes: 4 night dorm accommodations, meals, boat and lab fees, admissions, and taxes. You just need to find your way to the Huntsman in St. Andrews. For more information visit [www.huntsmanmarine.ca](http://www.huntsmanmarine.ca) or call (506) 529-1200.

#### SUMMER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

July 25-27, 2014

St. John's Campus, Faculty of Education. TESIC and Memorial University's Faculty of Education are excited to announce our most recent Professional Learning opportunity: The Summer Institute of Technology Integration (SITI) – a technology education and integration conference like no other. During this three day event, practical classroom oriented PL sessions will be delivered on a wide range of technology related topics that cut across the curriculum. This will be a unique opportunity to network with a large cross-section of NL educational stakeholders. Sessions focusing on the integration of mobile computing devices (iPads/Tablets/Phones), assistive technology, inclusive integration of technology, Google Apps for Education, technology education, latest research trends, and more will be available in one, two or three hour blocks. Pre-registration for this event is now open at <http://goo.gl/RLTfvN>

#### PESIC CONFERENCE 2014

September 18-20, 2014

School of Human Kinetics and Recreation, St. John's Campus, Memorial University. Theme: *Making Connections through Physical Education*. Keynote Speaker: Terry Kelly. Member Registration Rates: Early Bird Rate – \$180 (by June 19); Conference Rate – \$200 (by September 5); Conference Rate – \$250 (after September 6); Conference Non-Member Rate – \$250. Rooms at Holiday Inn reserved under "PESIC" for \$149.95 per night. Rooms held until August 18. Call 709-722-0506 to book. To become a member of PESIC visit [pesic.weebly.com](http://pesic.weebly.com) and follow the instructions. Conference registration details will be available on PESIC's website in the near future.

#### COSS WORKSHOP: THE EFFECTIVE AND SUCCESSFUL TEACHER: THE KEY TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

September 28-30, 2014  
Holy Heart Theatre, St. John's.

#### NLCPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND AGM 2014

October 15-17, 2014

Capital Hotel, St. John's. Featuring renowned speaker and bestselling author Dr. Gabor Maté. For more information contact Peggy Hann, NLCPA, [peggyhann@esdnl.ca](mailto:peggyhann@esdnl.ca).

#### NLCPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND AGM 2015

October 21-23, 2015

Capital Hotel, St. John's. Featuring renowned psychologist Dr. Danie Beaulieu, founder and president of Académie Impact in Lac-Bauport, Quebec. For more information contact Angie Wilmott, NLCPA, [angiewilmott@ncsd.ca](mailto:angiewilmott@ncsd.ca).

**NLTA**

**Summer Hours**

**June 30 - August 29**  
**Monday to Thursday**  
**8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**  
**Friday**  
**8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

## 2014 Province-Wide Vote Deadlines

### October 2, 2014

- All nominations for Office of President/Vice-President must be postmarked by this date for publication in Election issue of **The Bulletin**.
- Photograph, biographical sketch and election statement of nominees for the Office of President/Vice-President must be postmarked by this date for publication in Election issue of **The Bulletin**.

### October 28, 2014

Deadline for mailing election posters to schools.

### November 2, 2014

- Mailing of Election issue of **The Bulletin**.
- Final deadline for receipt of nominations for offices of President and Vice-President.

### December 2, 2014

Province-wide vote for the election of President and Vice-President.

### December 16, 2014

Run-off ballot for the election of President and Vice-President (if required).

## Dates to Remember

### June 2014

- Jun 13-14 Provincial Executive Meeting  
 Jun 15 **Deadline:** Notification by board of acceptance/rejection of Deferred Salary Leave requests  
 Jun 19 **Deadline:** PD Fund applications

### July 2014

- July 31 **Deadline:** NLTA Scholarship applications