



# INFOSHEET

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Programs and Services

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## NLTA Programs and Services

### Introduction

Programs and Services undertakes the work of the NLTA in the following major areas: Collective Bargaining; Administration of the Collective Agreements (including grievances and arbitrations); Group Insurance; Teachers' Pensions; Professional Development; Employee Assistance Program; Employment Insurance; Teacher Payroll; Workers' Compensation/Injury on Duty; Occupational Health and Safety; Legal Assistance; and Professional Relations/Membership Discipline.

The staff of Programs and Services is comprised of the Assistant Executive Director, six Administrative Officers, two EAP Coordinators and four support staff.

All Administrative Officers share the workload in the total program; however, specific areas of responsibility are assigned to each. Please check the NLTA website for details of those specific responsibilities.

### Collective Agreements

The NLTA administers three Collective Agreements – the Provincial Collective Agreement, the Labrador West Collective Agreement and the Labrador Benefits Agreement.

The preparation of the opening proposals and the negotiation and administration of the Provincial Agreement is an important role of Programs and Services. It is a major task to administer a Collective Agreement, which is subject to interpretation by school boards and teachers throughout this province. It is normal to expect that disagreements will sometimes arise between teachers and their employer over the intended meaning of specific provisions of the Agreement. When that happens, the Programs and Services staff are there to provide advice and assistance to members, including representation in grievance/arbitration procedure to protect the position of teachers.

The Labrador West Agreement is between teachers in Labrador City and Wabush, the Newfoundland and Labrador English School Board and the Conseil Scolaire Francophone. The Agreement is prepared, negotiated and administered by the Labrador West Branch of this Association with the assistance of the Programs and

Services staff. The Provincial Executive provides advice and resources and approves the Labrador West opening package, the composition of the negotiating team and the negotiated agreement.

Programs and Services staff is directly involved in the protection of rights and benefits achieved by teachers, and our first objective must be to defend these rights and benefits whenever and wherever we see them being eroded. Essential to the success of our endeavours is the fostering of a positive, professional and constructive relationship with the school boards and government divisions involved in applying the terms of the Agreement(s). Careful and planned use of the grievance and arbitration provisions strengthens our Collective Agreements.

### Contract Administration

A major component of the work of Programs and Services is to assist teachers with the interpretation and application of the Collective Agreement(s). Staff Officers are available to respond to teacher inquiries concerning the Agreement(s) and to assist teachers with difficulties encountered in the workplace.

Any teacher who feels that s/he has been negatively affected by an alleged violation of the Collective Agreement should contact a Programs and Services Administrative Officer for advice on filing a grievance. The merits of the case will be assessed and an attempt made to resolve the grievance to the teacher's satisfaction. Should a resolution not be found at this stage, the grievance may proceed to arbitration only with the consent of the NLTA. Staff services are provided throughout the grievance/arbitration process.

### Group Insurance

The NLTA Group Insurance Plan, consisting of Life, Accident, Health, Dental, Long-Term Disability, Critical Illness, Long-Term Care and Medical Out-of-Country Travel Health Insurance, is owned by the NLTA and operated through a seven-person Board of Managers appointed by and answerable to the

Provincial Executive. The plan is administered by Johnson Inc. and underwritten by a number of insurance companies. The basic plan consists of A1 – Life, A3 – Accident and B – Health. The provincial government contributes to the cost of premiums for the basic plan options at a level consistent with the government contribution to similar plans for other public sector workers. The Collective Agreements provide for an annual process to determine the exact contribution by government to the basic plan.

When teachers are placed on regular payroll, they are automatically enrolled in the three options of the basic plan. They are also enrolled automatically in the Dental Plan, Critical Illness Plan and, for those under age 60, Long-Term Disability. Enrolment in the voluntary options: A2 – Life, A4 – Accidental, C – Long Term Disability (for other than those mentioned above), Voluntary Critical Illness, LC – Long-Term Care and T – Medical Out of Country is by application. Special insurance packages have been developed for retired teachers and for substitute teachers. Further details on these packages can be obtained from the NLTA office.

### **Teachers' Pensions**

In the 2014-15 school year, the NLTA and Government reached agreement on pension reform, entering into a Joint Sponsorship Agreement. The legislation enabling joint trusteeship of the Teachers' Pension Plan and creation of the Teachers' Pension Plan Corporation was passed in the June 2015 session of the House of Assembly.

An important element of our pension program is pre-retirement counselling for teachers who are less than two years from retirement. Pre-retirement seminars are held each fall in major centers across the province. The sessions provide counselling on such things as Association benefits to retired teachers, Employment Insurance, the Canada Pension Plan and financial planning. Paid leave for these seminars is provided under the Collective Agreements, and some expenses for the retiring teacher are paid by the Association.

### **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

The EAP is a confidential, professional assistance program, designed to enable teachers to resolve issues affecting their personal lives that may also impact on their professional lives. The program includes two components: (a) assessment referral for counselling and follow up, which targets problem issues and provides suggestions for resolving issues and (b) health and wellness promotion, which is designed to help teachers prepare for anticipated change and encourage lifestyle behaviours which enhance overall health and well-being.

### **Employment Insurance**

Our involvement with Employment Insurance is as follows: (a) interpreting and explaining the Employment Insurance Act and Regulations for teachers; (b) reporting to teachers when changes occur in the Employment Insurance Act or Regulations; (c) acting with legal counsel, on behalf of teachers preparing appeals; and (d) preparing policy statements for the Executive on the Employment Insurance Act and Regulations as they apply to teachers.

### **Teacher Payroll**

Our involvement with Teacher Payroll falls mainly into the following three categories:

(a) interceding on behalf of teachers who feel that they have been incorrectly paid; (b) maintaining a liaison with Department officials on the interpretation of articles in our Collective Agreements; and (c) meeting with payroll officials and Johnson Inc. to monitor insurance deductions, and general meetings to discuss changes needed in the payroll computer programs. Space is available on pay stubs for messages to teachers.

### **Legal Assistance**

The Association offers a program of legal assistance, administered by Programs and Services, for teachers who are NLTA members. The Legal Assistance Policy covers procedures, policies and appeals and applies to arbitration cases and other problems that arise as a result of a member's role as a teacher. All requests for legal assistance must be initiated through and approved by Programs and Services staff. Legal assistance provided in accordance with the policy refers to the legal services of the law firm retained by the Association.

### **Workers' Compensation/Injury on Duty**

When a teacher is injured in the course of duty, s/he is entitled to benefits in accordance with the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act. Administrative Staff in Programs and Services are available to assist teachers in the interpretation of the Act and Regulations and to help them navigate the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation procedures as necessary.

A partial top-up to Workers' Compensation benefits is available to teachers with LTD insurance who have experienced "lost time from work" accidents.

### **Professional Relations/Membership Discipline**

Members' professional interactions with colleagues are governed by the NLTA Code of Ethics. In situations where there are difficulties in working together professionally and the members' efforts to resolve the difficulties have been unsuccessful, a request to the NLTA office leads to an investigation

and, if possible, assistance in resolving the matter. Where allegations of unprofessional conduct are made against a member, procedures may be initiated under the NLTA disciplinary procedure.

### **Special Interest Councils**

The NLTA has twelve Special Interest Councils (SICs): Health, Math/Science, Music, NF & Labrador Counsellors' and Psychologists' Association, Physical Education, School Administrators, Second Languages (Le Conseil des langue secondes), Small Schools, Special Services, Speech-Language Pathologists, Teacher-Librarians NL and Technology Education.

Councils serve the particular interests of the groups they represent and advise the Association on recommended policy or positions on areas related to their special interest. They also provide excellent professional development opportunities.

### **Contact Conference**

The Conference on New Techniques and Classroom Teaching (CONTACT) is a joint project of the teacher associations of the Atlantic provinces: Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (NLTA), Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU), New Brunswick Teachers' Association (NBTA) and Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation (PEITF). CONTACT is held in August each year and is hosted by each province on a rotating basis. Application is made in the spring, and a delegation is selected by the Professional Issues Committee. The costs of participation are partially subsidized.

### **Developing Successful Schools Institute**

This leadership institute is held annually in July at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick. Like CONTACT, DSS is a joint project of NLTA, NSTU, PEITF and NBTA. The NB Department of Education is also a sponsor for this event. The costs of participation are partially subsidized.

### **Educational Leave**

Under Article 20 of the Provincial Collective Agreement teachers can apply for and may receive paid (80%) educational leave. Programs and Services staff advise teachers both before and following on the application and selection process and, along with a member of Provincial Executive, are part of the provincial committee that decides upon recipients for leave. They also represent teacher concerns and intercede on behalf of teachers to ensure proper protocols are followed in the awarding of leaves.

### **Teacher Certification**

Programs and Services staff, along with a member of Provincial Executive, serve on the provincial Teacher Certification Committee to represent the teacher voice in the establishment of standards for the profession. Staff also liaise with the Registrar for Teacher Certification on behalf of teachers who have concerns about their professional certification.

### **Support for Beginning Teachers**

The NLTA supports beginning teachers as they make the transition from preservice education to entering the profession. The Association is often involved in district orientation sessions held in the summer or early fall. Also, when possible, the NLTA holds a conference for teachers in their first year of teaching. The agenda is specific to the expressed needs of the novice teacher.

### **Teachers Talking to Teachers Program**

The Teachers Talking to Teachers Program provides an opportunity for teachers to share expertise and innovative practice with colleagues. The program subsidizes expenses for teachers to travel within Newfoundland and Labrador to provide professional development to colleagues. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis.

### **Teachers' Professional Development Fund**

This NLTA fund supports professional development initiatives by individuals. Teachers identify an area of personal professional interest which they wish to pursue through an out-of-province (or in-province between Labrador and the island) professional development session. An application process requires prior approval and applications are due on the third Thursday of each month during September to June.

### **Centennial Funds and Awards**

Centennial Funds and Awards support continuing professional development. There are specific guidelines associated with each award and application. The deadline for the Centennial Study Award is on or before March 31. The International Conference Presenter and the Educational Research Awards are considered on an ongoing basis dependent on the availability of funds.

### **Johnson Bursaries**

Johnson Bursaries are awarded to teachers enrolled in studies full time at the undergraduate or graduate level. Applications are due on April 1. A total of \$2,000 is available and dependent on the number of awards, the value varies.

## **Project Overseas**

Project Overseas is a joint endeavour by the Canadian Teachers' Federation and its members to give professional assistance to fellow teachers in developing countries. The deadline for applications to the NLTA is November 10. Project Overseas operates as a summer project, usually for two-three weeks in July.

## **Workshops and Seminars**

Staff design and deliver sessions on a variety of identified needs at the school, district and provincial level. The following is a list of some of the workshops that are available:

- Achieving Goals
- Addressing Change and Challenging Situations
- Assessment Practices (using the latest research on assessment of/for/as learning)
- Effective Strategies for Classroom Instruction
- Student Motivation/Engagement
- Differentiated Instruction
- Classroom Organization & Management/Cooperative Discipline
- Safety in the Workplace
- Staff Dynamics and Working Effectively as a Team/Maximizing Your Potential
- Personal/Professional Balance
- Creating and Maintaining a Respectful Workplace
- Having Essential Conversations
- Time/Energy Management
- Violence in the Workplace: Preventing and Responding
- Effective Use of Technology in Teaching
- Retirement Planning
- Financial Wellness
- Professional Relations and Managing Conflict in the Workplace
- Social Media: Protecting Yourself and Your Students
- Legal Issues in Education
- Professionalism and The Code of Ethics
- Knowing Your Collective Agreement
- Dealing with Abuse/Harassment

Additional workshops are developed and offered on demand in consultation with schools and school districts.

Certaines des formations sont aussi disponibles en français.