



Benefits and Services of the Canadian Teachers' Federation to the Teachers of Newfoundland and Labrador



At the NLTA's Biennial General Meeting in 2007, the following resolution was carried:

"That the NLTA provide to the membership a list of benefits and services being provided by the Canadian Teachers' Federation."

The information that follows is being provided in response to this resolution.

About the CTF

The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) is a national federation of teacher organizations throughout Canada. Its mandate is exclusively dedicated to the economic and professional well-being of teachers in Canada and the promotion of public education. CTF provides information and support to provincial/territorial teacher organizations and is the national voice of teachers to address key issues of concern to teachers and students.

The Canadian Teachers' Federation raises the profile of, and promotes, the teaching profession consistent with the "objectives" of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. This is done through its activities with coalition networks and membership in national organizations, its lobbying of Federal Government departments and agencies, and its provision of a national media presence on education and teacher-related issues.

CTF is governed by a Board of Directors which is comprised of the Presidents and General Secretaries (Executive Directors) of all of its member organizations. The Presidents are the voting members of the Board.

The NLTA has been a member of CTF since 1950; one year after Newfoundland joined the Canadian Confederation, and has consistently played an active role in CTF affairs since that time. Five NLTA Presidents have been elected as President of CTF (Sherburne McCurdy 1961-62; Brother A. F. Brennan 1969-70; Len Williams 1977-78; Brian Shortall 1983-85; and Winston Carter 2005-07). Our participation and representation has served the NLTA well on the national education scene, in having its voice heard on critical education issues and in availing of the services and programs provided by CTF.

The current per capita fee for membership in CTF is \$24.80 per teacher member per year. That is, for less than \$1.00 per pay period for each teacher, the NLTA is able to avail of the staff, the expertise and the representation on national issues which CTF provides, and to be a participating voice in decisions affecting teachers throughout the country.

The CTF carries out its work under five major areas:

- Advocacy at the national level on issues relevant to the cause of public education;
- National clearing house for education research and knowledge sharing;
- Collection, analysis and reporting on trends in education;
- Support, advocacy and tools that strengthen Members' collective bargaining capacity; and
- International exchange and volunteer opportunities through Project Overseas and other international programs.

CTF Vision... is that every child in Canada will have access to a strong, quality, publicly-funded education system equal to or better than any other education system in the world.

CTF Mission... is to be the unified voice of teacher organizations in Canada to advance the cause of public education, the state of the teaching profession, and freedom to learn.

Benefits to the NLTA

All of the programs, services and activities of the CTF provide direct benefits to member organizations and through them to their teacher members. The following are just some of the benefits for the NLTA and for the teachers of this province:

- The CTF is a national resource to the NLTA on teacher/educational matters and a statistical clearing house for national/provincial information. Through CTF, the NLTA has access to teacher-specific national research and regular updates and notices from across the country including legal decisions, EI rulings and comparison documents on teacher pension plans, teacher salaries, collective agreement provisions, etc. This is a wealth of information of critical importance to the NLTA's Benefits and Economic Services programs, including contract negotiations.
- The CTF provides information and strategies on collective bargaining across Canada. Pan-Canadian comparative research is conducted on teacher salaries, benefits and working conditions. The CTF has developed current and historical comparative tools for indepth analysis of economic indicators, government income and expenditures, government debt load, Consumer Price Index, and other indices. The CTF has co-hosted, with other member organizations, special conferences on teacher collective bargaining.
- Contract information from other teacher organizations is available through the CTF. Access to all CTF member collective agreements across the country is available via an electronic database. This contract language is critical for the NLTA in developing proposals to bring to the bargaining table.
- There are many issues that affect education and teachers which transcend provincial jurisdictions. CTF ensures that teachers and teacher organizations have a united voice on such topics and issues as French language education, aboriginal education, copyright, employment insurance, child poverty, youth criminal justice issues, and education as an international tradable commodity.
- CTF is a channel through which to lobby the Federal government on issues affecting teachers. Specifically, through CTF we are able to jointly lobby the Federal government on such topics as the impact of federal pension legislation on teachers, including RRSP limits, pension splitting, CPP, and severance roll-over room. Other topics include Employment Insurance legislation, tax deductibility for purchase of teacher items, copyright legislation, and legislative changes to the Criminal Code related to Section 43. The CTF has intervened in the Supreme Court of Canada case where a coalition of groups unsuccessfully tried to strike down Section 43 which protects teachers from frivolous legal action. Without the collective voice of CTF, the NLTA would have little impact on these issues at the national level.
- The Francophone Services Division of CTF is an invaluable support to the NLTA as we draw upon research, resources and the network of CTF francophone liaison officers to provide information and services to the teachers in our five francophone schools scattered throughout the province. Without CTF we would either not be able to reach out to this minority group of our members or we would only be able to do so at great financial cost. The francophone teachers can be a part of national research, avail of free resources for students, teachers and parents, and generally feel less isolated because of their connections to colleagues across the country.
- In the area of teacher supply and demand CTF maintains up-to-date demographic information on the Canadian public education system including numbers and characteristics of students and teachers, carries out ongoing research on supply and demand/recruitment and retention of teachers, and analysis and reports on graduates from teacher training institutes.
- In the area of accountability the CTF has developed and is promoting alternatives to standardized testing. CTF has developed two brochures on learning and assessment – “Ask the Teacher About Learning and Assessment”, and “Teachers Know About Learning and Assessment” which provide information for both teachers and parents on how learning is best assessed.

- CTF has been working with the National Alliance for Children and Youth to actively promote government action to improve the health and well-being of Canadian children and youth.
- Membership in the CTF provides opportunities for the President, Executive Director and other NLTA professional staff to meet and liaise with their counterparts to discuss teacher issues of common concern and participate in decisions for action at the national level. As well, equal representation is provided on the CTF Board of Directors which is recognized as the voice of teachers in Canada.
- Representation and voice on teacher issues at the national and international level is provided through CTF and Education International. The CTF is a member of Education International and is committed to the millennium development goals of Education for All.
- The NLTA has regularly been represented on CTF committees and work groups such as those on Employment Insurance, Pensions, Diversity and Human Rights, Accountability, and Cyberbullying. This experience is invaluable for the staff persons and executive members involved and provides direct NLTA input into the development of the national position on behalf of teachers.
- Through CTF the NLTA receives support from other organizations when matters of local concern arise. This would include press releases from CTF and its member organizations supporting the NLTA's position on matters of wrongful discipline, unfair negotiating tactics and similar topics.
- National issues are brought to our attention via news releases, a communications email group, and direct contact with CTF staff. This is helpful when issues across the country may affect us or we may be contacted on the issue by local or national media. National media and reporters are put in touch with us for local stories or for local input on a national story.
- CTF provides regular access to numerous publications including:
 - An Invitation to Success in French First Language Parents;
 - E-Links;
 - Economic & Member Services Bulletins;
 - Economic & Member Services Notes;
 - Seeing the Rainbow –
Gay-Straight Student Alliance Handbook
 - PD Perspectives;
 - Challenging Silence, Challenging Censorship
 - Many Voices, Many Journeys: An Anthology of Stories by Aboriginal Teacher;
 - Together Report outlining CTF's international programs and activities; and
 - CTF Annual Report highlighting CTF's programs and activities for the past year.
- In addition, CTF produces a number of pamphlets for teachers and for the public which we can distribute or from which we can develop our own "local" version.
- The education polls carried out by CTF are very useful for within-province analysis and serve to supplement any local polls/surveys. For example, the CTF National Issues in Education Poll is the largest public opinion poll on education in the country. Conducted every second year, it provides information on trends in the public's views on key, ongoing issues and informs the policy and advocacy direction for CTF and member organizations on current and emerging issues.
- The NLTA has access to the CTF Teachers' Defense Fund if needed. This includes the funding of such things as legal costs incurred in addressing issues concerned with Section 43 of the Criminal Code and issues related to copyright legislation.

- Through CTF's International Programs Division, the NLTA can make a contribution to education and social development beyond our borders. Project Overseas, the John Thompson Leadership Program and the Teachers' Action for Girls (Uganda) Project are just some of the examples where we have played a role. Whereas some teacher organizations can independently sponsor these projects, without CTF our participation would be greatly limited.
- Through CTF, teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador can be a part of national or international campaigns such as World Teachers' Day, Media Awareness, Green Street and National Media Education Week. CTF provides resources, web links and promotion at little or no cost to teachers and schools.
- CTF's analysis of the Federal Budget is always helpful, particularly in those areas of the budget which impact education.
- CTF provides articles and other pertinent information for *The Bulletin* on education issues, projects, and general interest stories.
- Other initiatives by the CTF include working to increase teacher access to information on young offenders; advocate for reversals of cuts in funding to women's groups and Status of Women Canada, Skills and Literacy Programs, and the Court Challenges Program; promoting a greater awareness of the effects of domestic violence and sexual abuse on children and females; and developing partnerships in the promotion of bargaining rights as human rights.

Conclusion

Quite simply, and especially for the smaller teacher organizations like the NLTA, if CTF did not exist, we would have to create it. For our organization, it is essential that we join forces with other teacher organizations in order to achieve the maximum effectiveness for our members. The Federation provides representatives of provincial and territorial teacher organizations with regular opportunities to exchange views and strategies, share information, cultivate alliances in the interest of improving teachers' professional lives and working conditions, and represent the interests of education and teachers on the national scene and at home. In addition, through CTF's own programs and services, it provides important research and information that is critical for the NLTA's services to, and representation for, its own members. CTF also serves as the representative voice of teachers at the national level on issues that directly affect teachers and public education.

This document is intended as a brief outline of the role of CTF and the benefits of NLTA's membership in this national federation of teacher organizations. Further information on specific CTF programs is available from the NLTA office.

