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2016

**NLTA**  
**Political Action**  
**Handbook**



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## How to Use This Guide

The purpose of this guide is to help the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association and its members become more effective in advocacy and political action. The following pages contain information, guidelines and suggestions on how to set up and/or carry out a political action campaign. If you are interested in becoming more involved in advocacy activities related to teachers or require more information, contact your branch president, provincial executive member or the provincial office at:

726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599  
mail@nlta.nl.ca

The NLTA acknowledges and would like to thank the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta for permission to use excerpts from their publication, "*Turn Up the Heat: Political Action and Advocacy Guide*", September 2004, in the preparation of this publication.

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	5
<b>The Role of the NLTA Branch in Political Action</b> .....	6
<b>Why Get Involved?</b> .....	7
<b>Influencing Government</b> .....	8
<b>How Public Policy is Developed</b> .....	9
Determining Government Priorities .....	9
Assessing Public Support .....	10
<b>Tools and Tactics</b> .....	11
Letters .....	11
• Writing Effective Letters .....	11
Letter Writing Campaigns .....	12
Email .....	13
• Using Email .....	13
Social Media .....	14
Faxes .....	14
Telephone Calls .....	14
• Advantages of Telephone Calls .....	15
• Effective Phone Calls .....	15
Meet with Elected Officials (MHAs, MPs) or Senior Administrators . . .	15
Meeting Your Elected Representatives .....	16
• Preparation .....	16
• The Meeting .....	16
• After the Meeting .....	17
Involve Elected Officials in Local Events .....	17
Attend Government and Political Events .....	17
Monitoring the Legislature .....	17
Members of the House of Assembly .....	18
Formal Presentations .....	18
• Effective Presentations/Briefs .....	19
School Boards and Teachers .....	19
• Why Attend a Board Meeting .....	20
• Hints for School Board Monitoring .....	20
• Why Get Involved in School Trustee Elections .....	21
• Action Checklist .....	22
Media Relations .....	22
Dealing with Media .....	23

## Table of Contents (cont'd)

Using the Traditional News Media . . . . .	23
• Newspaper Ads . . . . .	23
• Phone-in Shows . . . . .	24
Talking to the News Media . . . . .	25
Preparing a News Release . . . . .	26
News Conferences . . . . .	27
Radio and TV Advertising . . . . .	27
Preparing a Public Speech . . . . .	28
Developing Strategic Alliances . . . . .	29
Public Forums and Town Hall Meetings . . . . .	30
• Effective Forums and Town Hall Meetings . . . . .	30
Demonstrations and Special Events . . . . .	30
• Effective Demonstrations . . . . .	31
Petitions . . . . .	31
• Addressee of Petitions . . . . .	32
• Form of Petitions . . . . .	32
• Prayer of Petition . . . . .	32
<b>Preparing for an Election . . . . .</b>	<b>33</b>
• NLTA Policy on Political Parties . . . . .	33
• Election Campaigns . . . . .	33
• Election Questionnaires . . . . .	34
• Conducting Public Forums . . . . .	34
• Public Forums . . . . .	34
<b>Conclusion . . . . .</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Appendix A: Tips for Effective Advocacy . . . . .</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Appendix B: The Role of Lobbying/Lobbying Techniques . . . . .</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Appendix C: NLTA Policy on Political Action . . . . .</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Appendix D: Example of a Petition in the House of Assembly . . . . .</b>	<b>38</b>

## Introduction

The involvement of teachers and the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association in the "political process" can best be accomplished through political action. Political action may take the form of influence or lobbying and employing positive public relations techniques, or it can take the form of a confrontation over specific issues.

The key to political education is making each and every individual understand very clearly how politics affects his/her life. Once people understand and begin to see how political leaders and political decisions profoundly affect their lives, then, and only then, will they want to become active and participate in politics on a continuing basis. There are several things that members who are active in political action can do to make sure that an effective, year-round political education program is carried out at the branch level.

The following pages contain information and guidelines on how to set up and/or carry out a political action campaign. If you require any further information or have questions or comments, please contact the NLTA office at 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599; mail@nlta.nl.ca; www.nlta.nl.ca

## The Role of the NLTA Branch in Political Action

There are times when it is necessary for a branch to think politically and act politically on behalf of teachers and education. In keeping with NLTA Policy, there is a job description and guidelines for a Branch Communications/Political Action Officer. The following are some ideas and examples of the role of the branch and the Branch Communications/Political Action Officer.

1. Establish an ongoing committee. An attempt should be made to ensure representation of all political viewpoints on your committee.
2. A report from the Branch Communications/Political Action Committee should be a regular agenda item at each Branch Executive Meeting.
3. In consultation with your committee, establish a Communications/Political Action program for the year.
4. The expertise of the Branch Communications Officer will be invaluable in organizing media and publicity campaigns. Duplication of efforts can be avoided through liaison. A regular Political Action column in the branch newsletter is useful.
5. Contact the NLTA Communications Officer should you require any assistance. Some basic tasks for the Branch Political Action Officer and Committee are:
  - a) Establish a School Board (Trustees) Monitoring system.
    - Branches should continuously gather information to evaluate Board members. Incumbents are building a record, and it is essential to determine accurately where each school board member stands on issues of importance to teachers.
    - Arrange for someone to attend every school board meeting and to prepare a brief report on the issues considered and their disposition.
  - b) Establish ongoing contact with your MHA(s).
    - Try to arrange, on at least one occasion during the school year, for your Branch Executive to meet with the constituency MHA(s). If there is more than one MHA, meet with them separately unless they are of the same political party.
    - If there are more branches in your electoral district, keep them informed so that the MHA doesn't get conflicting information.
    - Identify at least two branch members who have good contacts with your MHA(s). The idea is to make sure that you can have immediate access to the MHA if needed. These people preferably should be supporters of the MHA.

- Identify at least one branch member who is a member of the local district organization of each major political party. Make a list of all teachers who hold positions on the party executives or who have close, well-known political contacts. Encourage more teachers to get involved in district political associations.
- c) Develop a close liaison with like-minded groups in the community.
    - Teachers should become involved with other groups on behalf of both community development and support for quality education. Groups could include Chambers of Commerce, labour groups, service clubs, PTAs, School Councils, etc.
    - Politics is more than just mechanics. Successful politics is the art of coalition building. This is so for several reasons. Our society is made up of countless groups of people – all of whom, when it comes to politics, have their own particular goals and ideas, interests, and desires. None of these groups by itself, however, is large enough or powerful enough to elect anyone to office. Thus, the branch should maintain a close liaison and good working relationships with other groups in the community.

Your role is an important one. Through your efforts and those of your committee, you can provide a positive view of the teaching profession and develop and maintain a favourable climate between the community and teachers.

## Why Get Involved?

There are many reasons why we should be interested in influencing government.

First and most important is that governments pay attention to issues that constituents and key organizations feel are important. Governments need the support of their “publics” to govern and therefore are influenced by what they hear.

Second, if we do not speak as individuals and as a profession, the only voices heard by governments will be the voices of others and our issues, priorities and potential solutions will not be considered.

Advocacy is defined as “a process or actions intended to bring about change in the attitudes, behaviours, policies, programs, practices, or laws of individuals, groups, institutions or governments.” Teachers are credible, knowledgeable spokespersons for our education system. We must use our credibility and knowledge to ensure that decisions made regarding our education system are made with student and teacher concerns as a priority.

The terms “politics” and “politicians” refer to the art or science of governing. There are no secrets and nothing underhanded about advocacy and influencing governments. It is a legitimate part of the public policy process and a legitimate part of decision making in a democracy.

Political action may take the form of influence or lobbying and employing positive public relations techniques, or it can take the form of a confrontation over specific issues.

Governments and their elected representatives accept that citizens and organized groups will advance their points of view on issues. This process assists governments in their decision making.

To guide teachers and the Association in becoming politically involved, the NLTA has adopted a political action policy statement. It can be found on the NLTA website, [www.nlta.nl.ca](http://www.nlta.nl.ca) and is also included at the end of this booklet (Appendix C). Also included are tips for effective advocacy and the role of lobbying.

## Influencing Government

Whenever entering into advocacy initiatives, there are a number of important principles to keep in mind.

**Be involved for the long term.** Government policy is not made or changed overnight and influencing policy change is a long-term proposition.

**Understand the environment.** Know the existing fiscal, political and social context of the government you wish to influence. Know their issues and challenges.

**Know the desired outcome.** Understand what is trying to be achieved, whether that is to educate, raise awareness or change laws, policies or behaviours.

**Have a strategy.** Plan what is going to be done and how it is going to be done; don't be haphazard or unfocused.

**Be regular and consistent.** Don't just appear sporadically when there is a major issue to deal with. To be an effective advocate one must be a regular advocate.

**Provide productive input.** Recognize positive initiatives and bring forward positive proposals.

**Be courteous and polite.** Do not alienate the people from whom cooperation and support is needed.

**Do not be timid or apologetic.** As citizens of Canada and specifically in Newfoundland and Labrador, everyone has the right to present their views and opinions to their governments.

**Know governments and how they work.** Understand consultation, legislative, budgeting and decision-making processes of the governments or institutions that need to be influenced.

**Know key contacts.** Understand who the individual decision makers are and who will be primary influences of those decision makers in the government or institution that is to be lobbied.

**Find “champions” to further the cause.** Identify individuals within and outside of government and outside of your organization who will “champion” the cause on your behalf.

**Speak with many voices.** Combine efforts with those of other like-minded individuals and organizations, including the use of third-party independent advocates.

**Make it personal.** Wherever possible meet face-to-face and get personal involvement from the individuals within the governments or organizations you are attempting to influence.

**Focus on solutions not problems.** Everybody has problems; try to present specific options to addressing issues rather than focusing on the issues themselves.

**Be certain of the facts.** Nothing diminishes the effectiveness of an advocacy effort faster than basing the case on inaccurate information.

**Use many approaches.** Don't rely on one particular tool or tactic to get the message to the government or organization you are trying to influence.

**Be persistent.** If the approaches being used aren't working then try some different ones. Don't give up. Remember that advocacy is a long-term proposition.

## How Public Policy is Developed

### Determining Government Priorities

Government policy develops and changes through a variety of influences and initiatives which arise from all levels of government. Issues, needs and opportunities are identified by:

- provincial and federal cabinets and municipal councils through reviews of provincial, federal and local needs in the context of

overall government priorities and directions, as well as political party philosophies

- provincial MHAs, federal MPs and municipal councillors through input received from citizens and organizations at the local constituency or ward level
- formal and semi-formal advisory committees, boards and agencies through reviews and citizen input
- government administrators/bureaucrats through program reviews and assessments

Government priorities with respect to what policies and legislation move forward, and which move forward first, are based on:

- overall government philosophy and directions
- commitments made in previous election campaigns
- availability of, or the need for, resources to implement a policy direction
- perceived immediacy of need for action
- perceived degree of public support or desire for action
- timing in the election cycle, for example the most contentious policy decisions are frequently made early in a government's mandate with the last year of a government's mandate tending to avoid controversial decisions
- public/stakeholder pressure
- personal commitment or priorities of elected officials
- sunset clauses in existing legislation that require policy decisions within a specified time frame
- new inventions and discoveries which stimulate policy or program changes
- global economic or social pressures

## Assessing Public Support

Whenever any level of government is developing new policies or legislation it tries to assess public support for that policy or legislation.

Processes used to assess public attitudes and support include:

- informal input received by local MHAs, MPs, or councillors
- recommendations from advisory committees, boards or agencies, including provincial standing policy committees
- formal input received from key stakeholder and special interest organizations (such as NLTA) to cabinet, caucus, standing policy committees, etc.
- recommendations and resolutions from political party conventions and meetings

- public opinion polls
- focus groups of community/provincial residents
- formal consultation processes
- discussion papers, “Green Papers” or “White Papers”
- letters, telephone calls, petitions, etc., to MHAs, MPs and municipal council members

The principal input at the provincial government level often comes from the premier and cabinet ministers, who develop their own perception of what is best for Newfoundland and Labrador and what is politically wise in terms of continued re-election of the party. The options from which they choose are often those presented by senior department officials, with whom ministers are in constant consultation. Similarly, the prime minister and his cabinet greatly influence federal government policy and directions.

Input from interest groups such as the NLTA is a well-respected and influential part of the policy-making process. The NLTA meets regularly with ministers and standing policy committees at the provincial level while the Canadian Teachers' Federation plays that role nationally.

Government caucus (all MHAs or MPs of the governing party) must approve all policy initiatives and legislation. Strong opposition from within caucus or from the Official Opposition may result in further study or outright rejection of a proposal.

While opposition parties have limited direct influence on government policy, they can play an important role in influencing broader public opinion and, ultimately, government policies.

## Tools and Tactics

Each lobbying effort requires a variety of tools and tactics depending on the outcome desired and the audiences to be reached. Tools must be selected and adjusted to reflect the local cultural and social base and be appropriate to the knowledge and education of the audiences.

## Letters

One of the simplest ways to influence government decisions is to write a letter to your MHA and explain what is happening in education.

### Writing Effective Letters:

- Add any additional information as an attachment or enclosure.
- Be brief and to the point. Letters should be no longer than 1-2 pages.

- Check your spelling and punctuation. In particular, ensure that you have correctly spelled the name of the individual you are writing to.
- Focus the letter on only one issue (two at the most).
- Identify the issues clearly as well as your concern and your recommended course of action.
- Be helpful, polite and courteous. Suggest solutions rather than making threats.
- Compliment wherever possible for good actions that have been taken.
- Write the letter in your own words and personalize it with local facts.
- Personalize, if possible, the relationship with the individual to whom you are writing.
- Request a response to your letter.
- Call or write to follow up if you do not receive a response within three weeks.
- Ask specific questions in the letter to discourage a response by form letter.
- Include contact information such as return address, email address and telephone number.
- Send copies of the letter to the education critics from other political parties, other influential leaders and/or the local news media. However, whenever possible send personalized letters to the other interested parties.
- Keep a copy of the letter.
- Address your letter properly.

## Letter Writing Campaigns

Letter writing campaigns can be an effective part of an advocacy effort as they represent the views of a number of people. Advantages of letter writing campaigns include:

- they are relatively inexpensive
- they provide a visible and permanent record of people's opinions or arguments
- letters can reach people who might otherwise be difficult to reach
- letters can add a degree of formality and importance to an issue
- letter writing campaigns can carry the weight of numbers, especially to elected officials
- letters to the editor are widely read and help guide public opinion

In addition to following the tips for writing individual letters, remember:

- form letters are less effective than personalized letters
- provide basic information or a letter template to the other

participants in the campaign, along with letter writing tips to help them develop their own letters

- have the letters arrive at the target audience over a selected period of time rather than all at once, to create the impression of “ongoing concern” rather than a single lobby effort
- ask every member of your local organization to write a letter and have them ask at least one friend or neighbour to write a letter
- share the responses received to determine whether there is consistency in response and/or whether another round of letters is necessary
- ask writers to send letters to the editor of local newspapers; letters should arrive over a period of time rather than all in one day
- letters should not be written on school stationery or school envelopes should not be used as the orchestration will be glaringly obvious and the impact of the letters significantly reduced

## Email

Email is an increasingly effective way to communicate with elected officials, including MHAs and MPs. It is fast and inexpensive and it is easy to copy or forward messages to a variety of recipients.

If you want to send a general note to government about your concerns, visit the NL Government website at [www.gov.nl.ca](http://www.gov.nl.ca) and click on “Contact Us” . This site is managed by Communications Branch, a division of the Executive Council, in conjunction with the Office of the Chief Information Officer.

### Using Email

Email is not yet viewed with the same respect as letters and thus often carries less influence with the recipient. The volume of email received by elected officials is increasing dramatically and your email messages may be lost in the overall volume of email. In addition, email is often not read personally by the elected official and a member of the office staff usually responds.

To increase effectiveness of email, keep the following in mind:

- email messages should be shorter and more concise than letters
- identify yourself as a constituent when emailing your own MHA or MP since a response is more likely if it is a constituent who is corresponding with the elected official
- include your full name, address and telephone at the bottom
- avoid attaching documents to your message because software is not always compatible
- remember that email systems are not entirely secure

## Social Media

The use of social media is a feature of political and civic engagement. Social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter can be useful in political action campaigns.

Before you can make decisions about which social media to use, you must be clear on your goals and your target audience. When thinking about social media it is critical to specifically define the audience you want to reach. “The general public”, for example, is too vague. The NLTA may have different groups we want to reach. The challenge is figuring out who you really want to reach.

Social media may be low-cost but it does require time. It is important to outline appropriate activity levels and posting frequency as well as specific goals before making the decision to use social media.

Twitter, Facebook and other social media can be highly effective in any political action/communications strategy. Twitter and Facebook can be linked and can be useful for building community or support. Twitter in particular is highly effective in getting quick information and is used to engage followers. Even with the limitation of 140 characters Twitter is an ideal tool to stay informed and drive traffic to Facebook or websites. Using social media can be successful when posting links to news items, research or engaging in conversation on key issues.

## Faxes

Faxes should follow the same approach as letters. The main advantage of faxes is they are faster than mail, while still providing a written record of your comments. They can best be utilized when advocacy must happen quickly due to an imminent decision.

The disadvantage of faxes is that when sent in large numbers they can tie up the fax machine of the recipient and thus be viewed as a nuisance. On the other hand, a very busy fax machine can draw attention to the large volume of comments being received.

## Telephone Calls

Telephone calls are especially useful when time is of the essence. There are two ways to contact your MHA or MP: through the constituency office or their office in the legislature or parliament. However, in many cases you will not get to talk directly to the elected official you are calling. You will often be required to leave your message with a member of the office staff. However, most elected officials keep track of the number of calls on a particular issue and the concerns expressed.

## Advantages of Telephone Calls:

- Inexpensive
- Allow for fast reaction to an issue
- Easy for individuals or large groups of people to do
- You will have personal contact with the individual or organization you wish to influence

## Effective Phone Calls:

- Write down your key points prior to making the call, possibly write out the entire script for your call.
- Share key messages and scripts when recruiting other callers.
- Keep the messages brief and concise.
- Be polite and do not criticize the staff member or receptionist taking your call. Elected officials receive large numbers of telephone calls and cannot possibly take each one personally.
- Leave your name, number and mailing address and request a response to your call.
- Call a number of elected officials, not just your local MP or MHA as the total volume of calls will likely be recorded by government.
- Follow up with a letter if appropriate.

## Meet with Elected Officials (MHAs, MPs) or Senior Administrators

When meeting with an elected official such as an MHA or MP, it is important to remember that they are subject to many influences: their constituents, their party, individuals and groups who may have supported their campaign, and local interest groups who may want their views to be heard in the legislature.

Regular contact and meetings with MHAs or other elected or administrative officials are invaluable. It gives you an idea of their views, concerns, and challenges. Listening, understanding, and empathy for the MHA will help you later when you need their active listening, understanding and empathy on an education issue.

The advantages of meetings are:

- direct personal contact, which then makes it easier to personalize the issue
- the opportunity to ask and respond to questions
- the opportunity to leave behind more detailed information
- the opportunity to have more than one “voice” speaking out on the issue



## Meeting Your Elected Representatives

### Preparation:

- Make an appointment well in advance, at least three weeks ahead.
- Email, mail or fax a letter confirming the time, date and location of the meeting, with whom the MHA or other individual will be meeting (not more than three people) and the topic to be discussed.
- Find out the name, political party affiliation, any special assignments and any pertinent background information about the individual you will be meeting.
- Develop your key messages. Limit messages to one or two (three at most) and determine what you want to accomplish with the meeting.
- Emphasize specific examples and the fact that you are providing evidence of the impact of the issue on teachers and/or students.
- Hold a planning session and determine who will ask questions, who will take notes and who will take the lead in the meeting.
- Prepare the presentation. Gather key documents, questions and answers. Allow time for questions.
- Go armed with facts, figures and best of all, personal examples.
- Be prepared for a shorter meeting than planned. Be ready to make your essential points quickly.

### The Meeting:

- Dress professionally.
- Arrive on time.
- Smile, establish eye contact, keep chit chat to a minimum.
- Explain why you are there, what the issue is and how the MHA, MP or other individual can help.
- Stress why your position is in the public's interest and use personal examples that support the position.
- Avoid jargon. Don't assume the politician has any knowledge of education issues.
- Be direct and forceful but polite.
- Be open and honest.
- Do not dominate the meeting. Let the other person speak or ask questions. This is intended to be an exchange of views.
- Be a good listener. If the MHA or MP supports the issue, ask how he/she could assist you.
- Don't overstay the scheduled length of the meeting unless requested.
- Remember, a short, well-prepared and presented production is more impressive and effective than a longer, rambling one.

### After the Meeting:

- Evaluate the meeting with your colleagues immediately afterwards.
- Make notes and plan to stay in touch.
- Send a follow-up thank you letter, summarizing your discussions and any action or commitments.
- Once initial contact has been made, follow up regularly with information on progress, action or concerns on your area of interest.

## Involve Elected Officials in Local Events

Invite elected officials such as MHAs and senior administrators to events hosted by local or provincial organizations such as Education Week events, symposiums, forums, annual general meetings, local awards/long service ceremonies, social events. This provides opportunity for personal contact and the delivery of your key messages.

These events can also be the opportunity to demonstrate your professionalism and the high value of teachers in the education system and gain support for the profession's positions on education issues.

## Attend Government and Political Events

Participation and attendance at government and political events can raise the profile and credibility of teachers and can provide opportunities for informal advocacy. Possible events include:

- premiers' dinners
- prime ministers' dinners
- political party conventions and annual meetings
- constituency meetings hosted by MHAs
- fund-raising events for elected officials
- throne speeches
- budget presentations
- public consultation sessions hosted by government

The same basic principle is to be at the same places and same events as the decision-makers and those that influence them.

## Monitoring the Legislature

It is important to know what your elected representatives are saying about education. If you disagree or take exception to a statement attributed to him/her, then say so in an email, letter or phone call. If MHAs know that their questions and speeches are being monitored, then there is a good chance that they will weigh more carefully their comments on teachers and/or the Association.

You can follow issues as they are raised in the House by subscribing to Hansard. Subscriptions to Hansard are available through the Office of the Queen's Printer, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Tel: 709-729-3649, fax: 709-729-1900, email: [queensprinter@gov.nl.ca](mailto:queensprinter@gov.nl.ca), website: [www.servicenl.gov.nl.ca/printer](http://www.servicenl.gov.nl.ca/printer). Hansard is also available online at [www.assembly.nl.ca/business/hansard/default.htm](http://www.assembly.nl.ca/business/hansard/default.htm). Many public libraries have this record of House of Assembly proceedings available. During a session of the House, the NLTA attempts to monitor House proceedings, particularly during debate on education-related issues.

The larger newspapers generally report on important issues raised and discussed in the House. If you are alerted by news reports to a discussion on an education-related topic that has occurred in the House, follow up by checking Hansard for that day to see what your MHA had to say on the issue.

## Members of the House of Assembly

Information on Members of the House of Assembly, portfolio or shadow portfolio, posts and committees can be found at [www.gov.nl.ca](http://www.gov.nl.ca). Other contact information is as follows:

### Mailing Address:

Confederation Building  
P.O. Box 8700  
St. John's, NL  
A1B 4J6

### Email:

[info@gov.nl.ca](mailto:info@gov.nl.ca)

## Formal Presentations

At any time in the year there may be issues concerning your branch or the education system in your area on which you wish to present a written statement or submission (e.g., school facilities in the district, teacher allocations and their effect on local school programs, educational funding, etc.). Such a written submission to a formal commission of inquiry or to your local MHA or school board can greatly influence decisions made by these groups. Formal presentations can be somewhat similar to meetings except they are usually with a larger group of individuals, more formal in nature and focus more on the presentation of information than on questions and responses. There is usually less time or opportunity for dialogue. A brief is a written outline of the position being advocated and sets forth the main concerns, solutions and supporting arguments. It is important to determine in advance what you hope to accomplish by submitting the brief or making the presentation.

## Effective Presentations/Briefs:

- Be clear, concise and to the point.
- Ensure in advance that any necessary equipment will be available.
- Use easily understood terminology and avoid technical or education jargon.
- Keep the presentation or brief as short as possible but include all necessary factual information.
- Make sure the brief or presentation is proofread carefully in advance.
- Have additional copies of your brief/presentation and supporting information to leave behind.
- Be prepared to answer any questions that may arise.
- Recruit supporters to attend the presentation if possible.
- Consider inviting the news media to attend the presentation or send them copies of the brief after it is presented.
- Follow up with your audience after the presentation to receive results of government consideration or actions on the issue at hand.

Opportunities for formal presentations or briefs are numerous and include:

- appearances before a provincial standing policy committee
- federal royal commissions
- special Senate committees and standing committees
- round tables and forums as part of formal consultation processes
- national, provincial or local government and opposition caucus meetings
- municipal advisory and regulatory committees and special task forces.

## School Boards and Teachers

Although in the past school board decisions tended to go unnoticed, despite serious ramifications for both teachers and the public there is now a greater awareness of the importance of their decisions among both groups. Consistency in policy and careful thought prior to voting are more likely to occur if board members know that their actions are being observed. Teachers need to be informed of the issues prior to decisions of trustees if they are to influence the decision-making process.

Some of the reasons for monitoring of school board meetings are: school board members are elected (or deemed to be elected); elected persons are responsible to the electorate; and teachers form an important segment of that electorate.

School board members make decisions which affect the educational services in our schools. As NLTA members, part of our mandate is to

promote education and to speak out on educational issues. It may be possible to influence a Board decision if we are cognizant of the possible policy in the early stages of its formulation.

### **Why Attend a Board Meeting**

- The informal mingling with school board members prior to, and following, the meeting provides an opportunity to interchange concerns about education, to be positive about teaching, and to improve teacher image.
- Valuable political contacts can be made with school board members which can be utilized if the branch (or a school) decides to lobby the Board on an issue.
- An inadequate and unequal funding system for our schools results in disparities in the service provided, both provincially and within individual Boards. Teachers can use the monitoring process to alert the branch to any proposed reduction in service or non-implementation of needed new programs, either of which a Board may action (or fail to action) due to fiscal restraint.
- The physical presence of teachers alerts the Board to their interest and probable reaction to current issues being discussed.
- Attendance over a period of time familiarizes teachers with the quality of performance of individual school board members, their interests, concerns and priorities. This knowledge helps teachers to recognize members who will help or hinder specific goals of the branch, the Association, or individual teachers.
- Knowledge about current Board members will help the branch decide on its role in future school board elections.
- It may be possible to get teachers appointed to Board committees.
- Both school board members and teachers may realize that they have common goals and this should result in increased cooperation and friendlier relations between the two groups.

### **Hints for School Board Monitoring**

- Contact the Director (or Chairperson of the School District) suggesting that your branch is interested in attending and asking for meeting dates and copies of agendas. Diplomacy and good P.R. are essential. Neither the Director nor the school board members should feel threatened nor should branch members feel hesitant about getting involved in monitoring. Ask the Director if your group could be introduced to the Board members at the first meeting.
- Choose teachers who are good P.R. persons, can circulate easily among the Board members, can lobby effectively and can analyze

what is happening at Board meetings.

- Keep a file on school boards. Include all information gathered from monitoring. This type of information can be very helpful when assessing which trustees may be helpful to you in achieving your goals. It will also be an asset when election time comes, because you will be prepared with the information in advance.
- The branch president and/or political action representative should arrange to receive the agenda, minutes and any general information pertinent to the school board meeting prior to the board and committee meetings. This material should be given to your monitors.
- It is important to monitor board meetings and committee meetings on a regular basis and record the actions of members. Important decisions are often made in committee meetings, long before the full board meets.
- The monitors should arrive on time, stay for the entire meeting, and, if possible, mingle with those present for a short time after the meeting.
- The monitors should sit in a place where they can command a good view of all the trustees. They may wish to sit in the same place every meeting so people will know who they are and why they are present.
- There are times when the NLTA may wish to “pack the gallery” when certain issues are on the agenda. This can be a very effective strategy but not if it is overused – employ judgement and discretion so that the impact of the action is felt.
- Get to know the local reporters (if any are assigned to the board meetings). They may be interested in covering branch or Association activities.
- After the meeting, do not hesitate to ask trustees their reasons for voting certain ways. However, don’t forget to congratulate them for a forthright comment in debate or in bringing a motion of special interest to the board.
- In conjunction with the monitoring process the branch should consider involving the school board members in, for example, a branch social, Education Week or a planning committee for a professional development day.

### **Why Get Involved in School Trustee Elections**

- Because your class size, your preparation time, your inservicing, your supplies, and your say in curriculum for your school are affected by school board policy and decision.
- Because you know education and have the organizational know-how that candidates need.

- Because things can get worse – good trustees will need help to be re-elected.
- Because some trustees get elected without dealing with the issues. Teachers and others can see that tough issues are addressed during the election.
- Because it's a local election. If you do not speak out and act for education, no one may. Individual trustees speak for themselves – they don't adhere to a party line. Your influence can be felt.
- Because it's your democratic right. Active participation is the backbone of democracy.

### Action Checklist

- Determine your needs and expectations from an election. Be honest about what you would like to achieve. Establish your high priority objectives. Be as specific as possible.
- Evaluate teacher interest and potential support for election action. Realistically assess your resources, in terms of time, people and money.
- Determine from whom you will gain support in the community.
- Decide whether or not the branch should undertake any election activities.
- Decide on the forms of election action to be undertaken.
- Try to determine who will oppose your involvement, from within or outside the branch. Include plans for neutralizing this opposition into your overall strategy.
- Prepare your overall strategy. Draw up a time-line for action, and assign responsibilities for activities.
- Proceed with preparations for each action.

### Media Relations

The media can carry messages to the public and key target audiences and thus influence public opinion and the opinion of governments, institutions and education organizations. Among the media relations activity that can be considered are:

- tweets (other social media)
- news releases
- news backgrounders
- news tip sheets
- news conferences
- letters to the editor
- guest columns and editorials
- editorial board visits
- appearances on radio and TV talk shows

- media interviews
- public service announcements
- paid advertisements

### Dealing with Media

News is more about people and less about trends, things, technology or policies. Therefore, to attract media attention the 'stories told' should focus on people.

News must relate and have an impact on the viewing or reading audience. Therefore "news" provided to the media must be seen to be relevant to people other than teachers.

News is timely and often is tied into some other event or issue, so efforts to attract media attention must also be timely.

Get to know local journalists. Suggest story ideas to them that are not always directly related to teachers. The media will appreciate the fact that a contact does not always seem made for self-serving reasons.

All media, particularly television, favour visual stories. Suggest ways of telling the story visually.

### Using the Traditional News Media

#### Newspaper Ads

Most of the NLTA's newspaper ads are organized and prepared by the NLTA. You may, however, on occasion be involved at the branch level. If so, please take note of the following points and do not hesitate to contact the NLTA Office for assistance.

- Write copy that connects with the immediate, concrete concerns of citizens. Don't focus on issues of interest to teachers only, unless you can show the public that they will benefit from your gain. Ask direct questions. State facts boldly. Use humour to make your point, if the subject is appropriate.
- Keep the message short and punchy. Use an eye-catching slogan or statement, present one or two facts and editorial comment related to the facts, and end with another short punchy statement.
- Use a common phrase or theme through all your ads to give them the strength of repetition.
- Use graphics to attract attention to your ad, but don't become gimmicky. A few well-placed lines are all you need. Use photographs only if they are sharp and make the point.
- See the ad. Will your attention be drawn to it in the corner of a crowded newspaper? Remember, white space is as important as the printed message. Don't overload your space. Make the message easy to read.

- Sequence ads so as to appear in several consecutive issues, or on more than one page of a single issue of the publication.
- Identify your branch as the sponsor of the ad. It will be good publicity.
- Proofread the ad. Then proofread it again before you submit it to the newspaper.
- Ask the editor where your ad will appear in the paper. Push for a prominent spot. Avoid full page ads as they may give the impression that you have a lot of money.

### Phone-In Shows

A phone-in show on one of your issues gives you a chance to go into detail, and get the issues circulating in the community. Talk shows are widely listened to, and will give you a lot of free airtime.

- Phone or write/email local talk show hosts and program managers. Let them know you would like to discuss your issues with them and the public. You might propose a series of discussions over a period of several months. Indicate that teachers in the area are concerned about the subjects, and that you believe the public would also be interested.
- If the program director agrees to the show(s), get your research together and prepare a quick reference file of facts and examples to which you can refer during the show. Practice using your file a few times. Once you are on the air you want to be able to handle calls and questions quickly.
- The president of the branch seems the most obvious choice as the person who should appear on the show, but this need not be so. Choose someone who is knowledgeable on the issue, and who has a good public speaking manner – relaxed and friendly. You may want to use several different people if you are doing several shows. It is always better to have two people from the branch in the studio at one time, so that if one is stuck for an answer, the other can help out.
- Get together with several other teachers and role-play the show. Give an introductory statement on the issue and tell why teachers are concerned about it. Then have the teachers ask questions, be obnoxious, ask irrelevant questions, and ask good tough questions. You'll face all of them during the call-in portion of the show.
- Show up at the studio early and get used to the place. Relax.
- Pre-arrange several phone calls from parents' or teachers' spouses. Make sure your side of the story is told by you, and supported by members of the public. You strengthen your position when support is shown for it from all segments of society.
- Thank the host on the air for taking time for education.

- Write a thank you letter, note or email to the host after the show and indicate your willingness to return, should he/she wish a follow-up program.
- After the show has been aired, have parents write letters to the editor of the local paper about the issue as well as letters to the program manager thanking him or her for discussing the topic. Encourage another show on education.
- Consult with the NLTA Communications Officer if you need help.

### Talking to the News Media

- Return media calls promptly.
- Decide whether you are indeed the best person to talk to the media or whether it should be another NLTA member, or even another organization.
- Find out in advance who will be interviewing you. Find out their name, who they work for, what their story is about, who else has been or will be interviewed, what the reporter already knows about the issue, when their deadline is and – if it is on radio or television – when it may be broadcast.
- If you agree to be interviewed, set a time and location. You can choose! You do not have to give the interview immediately. Take time to prepare.
- Before the interview, identify two or three main points (key messages).
- Reduce your key messages to simple, clear and if possible, 'colourful' statements (quotable quotes).
- Support your points with simple examples, statistics, etc.
- Prepare some anticipated questions and write out your answers in advance.
- Everything you say can be used. Forget 'off the record' comments.
- Manage the interview as much as possible. Don't be dominated by the questions. What is most important is your answer. Your role is to communicate the information you have identified as your key messages, not just answer questions.
- Don't speculate. If you don't know, it is okay to say so.
- Treat reporters with courtesy and respect. They are doing a job just as you are.
- Be honest. Credibility takes a long time to earn but can be lost in a moment.
- Don't argue with reporters. Simply restate your key messages.
- Give reporters your business card after the interview. This will increase the chances that your name and title will be used correctly.

## Preparing a News Release

News releases are the most commonly used means of alerting the media to a story. They should be:

- **complete and easy to understand.** Do not use jargon or acronyms and answer the key questions of who, what, where, when, why and how. A news release should contain the relevant facts necessary for your point to be understood. It will not necessarily provide detailed background. This can be provided in supporting documents if necessary – a backgrounder or fact sheet – and via interviews.
- **written for the audience.** Your primary audience is the editor or reporter and through them, the general public. Consider first what will stimulate interest by the editor or reporter. Write at the level of your audience.
- **starting with a strong lead.** The lead or first paragraph is the most important piece of the news release. It should include answers to as many of the so-called 5Ws (who, what, where, when, why) as is possible. Decide which of the 5Ws are most important. Include these in your lead paragraph and use the second paragraph to address the remainder. Always include the ‘who’ in the first paragraph. This may be the organization or an individual.
- **supporting the lead.** The remaining paragraphs should provide details that support the statements made in the lead. Communicate information in the news release in the order of importance, going from most important to least important.
- **using quotes.** Quotes by individuals make the release more personal and people-oriented and make it more readable. Most reporters and editors like to use quotes to bring the story closer to their readers.
- **focusing on key messages.** The news release should connect with overall NLTA key messages and themes. Make the connections for the reader.
- **using the standard news release format.** Include headline, release time or “For Immediate Release”, dateline, and contact name and number. Indicate that there are additional pages by using the word “more” centered below the last line on the page. Indicate the end of the release by using “30” centered below the last line of the release. Use double or 1.5 spacing and never end a page in the middle of a paragraph.

## News Conferences

These are called on occasion by the Provincial President of the NLTA. Use them in the branch if local issues warrant, but remember to check with NLTA Head Office first.

News conferences should be called only if your announcement is truly newsworthy. Don’t call one if you don’t have anything significant to say. The media will come once, but not again if you don’t get them a story. Schedule the conference during regular working hours.

Announce the news conference a day or two in advance, and indicate the general topic, the time and place of the conference, and who will be speaking. Don’t go into detail, and don’t give away the story before the conference.

Prepare a news release which summarizes the main points of the statement made by the speaker, and have copies ready for distribution once the speaker begins making his/her statement.

Non-alcoholic refreshments should be provided.

Pick a room that is large enough for reporters and lights, but don’t use an auditorium or any other huge open area.

Provide a photographable background for the speaker, and put up a few props around the room for the camera crews (posters, symbolic props, copies of reports cited, etc.).

Start on time.

Introduce the speaker and indicate that questions may be asked after the statement is read.

End the conference when the questions have been asked.

## Radio and TV Advertising

Generally this is done by NLTA Head Office. If deemed necessary at a local level the following points may be of assistance:

- Radio and TV advertising reaches a large audience. Costs may be higher than print, prohibitively so in larger urban centers, but within reach in rural areas.
- Keep your ad short and to the point. As with other ad forms, work from the listeners’ interests and concerns. Relate them to your concerns.
- Deal with only one issue per ad, and make only one or two points about that issue. You don’t have time to argue, only state your case.
- Keep your language plain and simple. Avoid complex grammatical structure, long sentences, unusual tenses, and complex ideas. Give yourself lots of time for rewrites.

- Tie your spots together with a common theme or slogan.
- Read the copy aloud several times. Check for tongue twisters and stumbling blocks. Is the message clear and concise? Check with others if you have any doubts.
- Carefully time your copy before you send or take it to the station. Don't rush yourself. Have someone listen to you before you send the copy off. You may be speaking faster or slower than you think.
- Don't buy any spots longer than 30 seconds – unless absolutely necessary for the campaign.
- Buy time that will reach the audience you need. You aren't trying to reach students; you want to talk to parents. Book your time well in advance.
- Unless you have a real pro in your branch, avoid fancy effects. Let the local announcer read your ad; he/she is a professional.

## Preparing a Public Speech

Speeches can be used to muster support for teachers. They can be an effective way of presenting your case, and neutralizing opposition.

Approach service clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, and interest groups. Ask whether a local teacher could have a few minutes at a meeting to talk about local education issues.

If there is no interest, or a polite rebuff, leave it. You are more likely to be invited if you know a parent who can plant the idea of a speech on education at one of the meetings.

Once invited, get together research on the issues the branch has identified as high priority matters and prepare a short set of notes.

Include examples and references to the interests of the group you are addressing in your speech.

Try to show the teachers' position is compatible with the general attitudes of the organization you are addressing.

Use personal examples and anecdotes. Avoid generalities and platitudes at all costs.

Discuss concrete problems related to the issue before you discuss solutions. State your case clearly, simply, and with strength. Provide the opposite view, and point out why it is incorrect, or why it is based on views which are fundamentally at odds with the views of the organization to whose members you are speaking.

Use repetitive phrases and key words. Let the audience know where you are in your speech. Build to a conclusion, don't just peter out.

Don't use any education jargon.

Be brief. Find out how much time you have, and aim for a few minutes less than that.

Develop good platform habits.

Type your speech or notes, and write in comments on speaking style, after having practiced the speech two or three times. Underline key words; note where you should pause, etc.

Make sure your speech pages are clearly numbered and in proper order before you begin.

Be careful not to speak too quickly. Pause. Check that you are breathing easily.

Speak loudly. Be sure people can hear you before you begin.

Don't read your text. Practice it until you are familiar with it, and then use it as a guide.

Look around the room as you speak. Make eye contact to emphasize points.

End on time, and clearly. The audience should know you have finished, and should know what it is that you want them to do, having heard your speech.

If you are answering questions, don't be flustered if you don't know an answer. Promise to get the answer, and do so as quickly as possible.

Put yourself in the place of a member of the audience, and ask yourself questions before you give the speech. You might want to try presenting it to a friend, to get his/her response, and questions.

If you know members of the club or organization, you might ask one or two to ask specific questions, to help break the ice once your speech is over.

Follow up with a letter of thanks.

## Develop Strategic Alliances

The building of coalitions, networks and alliances of like-minded individuals and organizations is an essential part of any government relations or advocacy strategy, usually undertaken as one element of an overall campaign.

The ability to present your side of the issue with many voices, faces and interests will add to the strength of your voice.

The building of networks and alliances begins in the analysis of the issue and analysis of potential target audiences, when possible allies are identified. Some tips for effective network building include:

- identify potential allies as early as possible
- communicate regularly and frequently among partners
- build consensus on goals, approaches, objectives and tactics
- ensure understanding and agreement on the decision-making process
- ensure everyone has a role to play
- ensure everyone receives appropriate recognition for their participation
- be responsive to unique organizational needs, priorities and sensitivities

## Public Forums and Town Hall Meetings

Forums and town hall meetings provide the opportunity for an issue to be discussed and debated publicly, sometimes involving the attendance of the parties who are the target of the advocacy effort. These events also provide the opportunity for media coverage of an issue.

Forums tend to focus more on discussion of an issue among a panel of experts while town hall meetings focus more on hearing the voices of the general public.

### Effective Forums and Town Hall Meetings:

- Select a date as far in advance as possible.
- Select a location and facility that will be adequate and appropriate to accommodate the anticipated attendance.
- Decide on a format and ensure that all participants understand the format in advance.
- Provide written invitations and agendas to guest speakers or presenters.
- Make sure that the date, location and topic are well publicized.
- Ensure that participants are aware of who else will be participating.
- Select a strong moderator who will be able to control timing, topic and format in a neutral manner even in the heat of contentious debate.
- Start on time and end on time.
- Tell the audience the rules at the beginning of the session and stick to them.
- Allow adequate time for questions.
- Invite the media.

## Demonstrations and Special Events

Demonstrations, marches, mass gatherings or rallies can be an effective means of pressuring a government, institution or organization. They are not stand-alone advocacy efforts however and must be part of a broader overall plan. They require significant time and resources to effectively plan and implement and can sometimes be costly.

### Effective Demonstrations:

- Determine in advance the specific target and objective of the demonstration.
- Determine the number of demonstrators required to make a significant impact.
- Recruit participants far in advance of the event.
- Ensure that the required logistical supports are in place for the demonstration including transportation for participants, food, public address systems and signage.
- Acquire any necessary approvals or permits well in advance.
- Select speakers who will be able to make an emotional and factual connection with the participants.
- Use high profile, well-known speakers if possible.
- Ensure physical security arrangements for participants, passers-by and property.
- Invite news media and ensure spokespersons are available to do interviews.
- Arrange for cleanup of the demonstration site after the event.

Demonstrations have been both effective and ineffective and have attracted both community support and hostile backlash. The methods and results depend on many factors, including the persons participating in the demonstration, the issues, the timing, the community and the media. Whether your branch engages in or supports demonstrations will depend upon your evaluation of these factors. Demonstrations alone rarely right wrongs and accomplish total goals. However, as part of a larger process of political action they may help. A demonstration must be cleared with the Provincial Executive Council of the NLTA.

## Petitions

A petition is a request made by at least three citizens seeking the assistance of the House of Assembly in addressing a perceived public grievance.

Petitions must follow certain form and content requirements to be considered acceptable by the House of Assembly. Any petition that does not follow the established guidelines, as outlined below, may be rejected.

For further information on the correct procedures for petitions, go to [www.assembly.nl.ca/business/default.htm](http://www.assembly.nl.ca/business/default.htm) and click “petitions” or contact the Office of the Clerk of the House of Assembly, Tel: 709-729-3405 or email: [clerkHOA@gov.nl.ca](mailto:clerkHOA@gov.nl.ca). (See Appendix D for example.)



## Addressee of Petitions

The following guidelines apply with respect to the Addressee of the petition:

- All petitions are to be addressed to the House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Petitions cannot be addressed to Government or government departments directly. However, they can call on the House to request that Government address the matter (See guidelines below on “Prayer of Petition” for further information). If a petition is addressed to Government or a government department, it must be presented there and not to the House of Assembly.
- All petitions must relate to matters within provincial jurisdiction.

## Form of Petitions

All petitions to the House of Assembly must be written in English, or be accompanied by a translation. They must also include the following:

- A heading which identifies it as a petition and indicates that it is addressed to the House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- A statement which identifies the reason(s) for the petition or the statement of grievance.
- A statement which identifies the petitioners – those who have signed the document.
- A request, called the “prayer”, which outlines the action petitioners wish to see taken in response to the statement of grievance (see “Prayer of Petition” below for further guidelines).
- The signatures and addresses of the petitioners. A least three signatures must be included on the page containing the prayer of petition.

## Prayer of Petition

It is important to ensure that the prayer of a petition is worded properly so that it is considered acceptable. The prayer is the “remedy” to the alleged grievance that has been previously outlined in the petition. All petitions presented to the House of Assembly must contain a prayer that is clear, temperate and respectful.

The following should be followed when developing the prayer of petition:

- The prayer of petition must request action that is within the powers of the House of Assembly.
- The prayer must be addressed to the House of Assembly, and call upon the House to take specific action.  
“The undersigned, your Petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to...”

- The prayer cannot be addressed to Government directly, but can urge the House to request Government to address the matter to which the petition relates. For example:  
“We the undersigned, your Petitioners, humbly pray and call upon the House of Assembly to urge Government to...”
- It is recommended that the prayer appear on each page when the petition consists of more than one sheet of signatures and addresses, so that petitioners are made fully aware of the nature of the document they are supporting.

## Preparing for an Election

### NLTA Policy on Political Parties

The Political Action policy of NLTA states that the NLTA will not align with any political party. We will, however, get involved in elections to try and ensure that persons elected have a commitment to the goals of our Association (i.e. the promotion of education). Teachers are encouraged to get involved with the party of their choice and to promote the nomination of good candidates.

Teachers play a major role in determining the candidates that the political parties will run in a general election. Teachers have been active in attending and voting at nomination meetings, in campaigning and in running as candidates.

### Election Campaigns

Elections provide unique opportunities to influence federal, provincial and municipal government policies. During election campaigns candidates for office are much more open to hear the ideas and concerns of constituents and to make commitments for future action. Some activities you can undertake during an election campaign are:

- invite candidates to forums, debates and town hall meetings to discuss your issue
- write to political leaders and request their position on your issue
- send letters and emails to candidates urging specific positions
- attend candidate public meetings and ask questions or provide comments
- monitor political party and individual candidate websites/blogs/tweets etc. and urge them to post their position on your issue
- send surveys to political party leaders to complete regarding their parties’ position on your issue
- arrange meetings with local candidates regarding your issue
- use media relations tools to highlight party/candidate positions on your issue and their responses to your questions

## Election Questionnaires

Election campaigns are designed to persuade voters through emotional appeals on one or two issues rather than clear stands on a variety of policy areas. Questionnaires are sent to candidates as a means of discovering their views on several issues. They are one of the most common forms of election involvements, and are often prepared and published by local newspapers.

The Association generally prepares a questionnaire for each party leader. However, a branch may wish to question its local candidates on local issues to determine candidates' specific views and intentions; to determine candidates' general attitude towards teachers and school; and to provide teachers with a means of deciding how to vote.

## Conducting Public Forums

Forums gather together interested citizens to hear the views of candidates. In urban areas they are poorly attended and tend to attract only those already committed to one candidate. In rural areas turnout is better, and more useful understanding of candidates' positions may be gained. Forums may be for teachers only or for the general public.

### Public Forums:

- provide teachers and the public a chance to see and hear the candidates first hand;
- provide an opportunity to question candidates;
- provide a chance for media coverage of educational issues;
- encourage citizens to vote;
- get opposing views together to present their cases;
- give exposure to our educational concerns.

## Conclusion

The key to political education is making each and every individual understand very clearly how politics affects his/her life. Once people understand and begin to see how political leaders and political decisions profoundly affect their lives, then, and only then, will they want to become active and participate in politics on a continuing basis. NLTA members who are active in political action can make sure that an effective, year-round political education program is carried out at the branch level.

If you require any further information or have questions or comments on any information contained in this guide, please contact the NLTA office.

## Appendix A

### Tips for Effective Advocacy

The success of lobbying, advocacy or government relations efforts depends largely on effective communications.

- Examine each issue from all perspectives. Study and understand opposing views as well as your own.
- Understand both the strengths and weaknesses of your position.
- Define an acceptable outcome for the issue(s).
- Seek to go beyond the “single interest lobby” by widening support for your proposals.
- Offer proposals for “solutions” rather than outlining additional problems that need to be solved.
- Indicate how the proposals you are making would help or respond to the needs/priorities of those you are seeking to influence.
- Identify the key persons that you have to influence. They are sometimes not the people you might expect.
- Evaluate and determine the most appropriate timing for your efforts to be successful. Be prepared to reposition your ideas to take advantage of a new development or circumstance.
- Keep the lines of communication open. Burning bridges is rarely a good idea.

## Appendix B

### The Role of Lobbying

- to convince a decision maker of the merits of a certain course of action
- to provide the decision maker with information that they may not have
- to outline a problem to the decision maker and propose a solution
- to go on record with a point of view, information and a desired outcome
- to exercise a right to be heard
- to collect useful information about the decision maker, their views and attitudes
- to clarify the decision maker's positions
- to undertake a step viewed as necessary by members and allies
- to lay the groundwork for further political action
- to generate media interest
- to build on relationships with allies

## Lobbying Techniques

Lobbying isn't about persuading people to do something. It is about giving the right people the right information at the right time.

The NLTA uses various techniques and activities to advocate and/or lobby for teachers and education issues. Some of these include:

- Analysis of the issue.
- Decisions are made as to what the NLTA wants to achieve and who can help.
- Establishing the objectives.
- Conduct a stakeholder analysis. Determine who can influence or make decisions (Premier, Minister, MHA, school district).
- Develop the strategy (if required).
- Plan the activities which can include:
  - letter to stakeholder
  - email to stakeholder
  - phone call to stakeholder
  - meeting with stakeholder
  - letters to the editor
  - opinion pieces
  - media interviews
  - radio call-in shows
  - encourage membership involvement
  - reaching out to other organizations
  - use of social media (twitter)
  - consistent communication on topic
- Identify and mobilize required resources.
- Monitor and evaluate progress.

The NLTA differentiates between those issues which are subject to the grievance/arbitration process and those issues that are of concern to teachers and influence education.

The NLTA revisits and revises these steps/activities throughout the implementation as successful advocacy and lobbying do not proceed in straight lines and rarely unfold according to plan.

## Appendix C

### E. Political Action

1. Subject to NLTA By-Laws, the Association supports the right of each of its members to participate in the democratic process of our society, to be active in any political party of his/her choice, and to seek and hold public office.
2. The Association will maintain a position of independence from specific political party affiliations.
3. The Association will seek avenues of making representations, both formally and informally, to all political parties and other interest groups.
4. The Association will strive to keep its members and the community fully informed on educational development and issues and the policy of the Association with respect to these.
5. Specifically, the Association will:
  - a) normally employ the influence approach in political action as opposed to that of confrontation;
  - b) work within the political system to influence decisions affecting education and teachers, both locally and provincially;
  - c) seek to influence the educational policies of political organizations when appropriate and possible;
  - d) seek to influence the educational policies of other organizations;
  - e) maintain contact with all major political parties;
  - f) organize teachers for political action activities and plan programmes for educating teachers in the political process;
  - g) be prepared to take a stand on issues which directly affect students and the learning climate in schools;
  - h) monitor the proceedings of the legislature and provide information on educational issues to both government and opposition legislators and to members of the Association.
6. At the local level the Association will work through the branch structure to:
  - a) actively encourage branches to undertake political education programmes and action programmes at the local level;
  - b) provide assistance and advice to branches undertaking political involvement programmes at the local level;
  - c) permit branches to speak publicly on local issues of concern to them, in particular, at the school board and provincial levels, after having determined that their statements are not in conflict with that of Association policy. [Mar/3-4&6/83]

# Appendix D

## PETITION

To the Honourable House of Assembly of the Province of  
Newfoundland and Labrador in Parliament Assembled

The Petition of the undersigned residents

HUMBLY SHEWETH

Whereas \_\_\_\_\_  
(State the reason(s) for the Petition)

\_\_\_\_\_

Whereas \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Whereas \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Whereupon the undersigned, your Petitioners, humbly pray and  
call upon the House of Assembly to

\_\_\_\_\_

(The prayer expresses the request of the Petitioners)

\_\_\_\_\_

AND as in duty bound your Petitioners will ever pray.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Please Print)	Address	Signature

