

IT'S ABOUT TIME:

A Study of the Impact of Workload
on Teachers and Students



Background to the Study

The teachers' Provincial Collective Agreement, January 1, 1996 to August 31, 2001, between the Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association (NLSBA), the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (NLTA) contains Schedule P which states:

Memorandum of Understanding Re Workload

The parties to this agreement will conduct a study to gather and analyze data related to activities involved in a teacher's workday/year. The parties agree to participate jointly in the design and conduct of the study. Where the parties concur on the terms of reference of the study, they will share equally in the cost.

While a committee was established in 1999, some months after the signing of this agreement, it was unable to produce a workload study before that agreement expired. The same clause was then included as Schedule M in the collective agreement of September 1, 2001 to August 31, 2004.

A joint committee representing all three parties attempted to facilitate the development of a survey instrument and to coordinate the study without using an external researcher, but this attempt was unsuccessful. During the winter of 2003, the joint committee approached Dr. David Dibbon, a professor in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University, to develop a proposal to conduct a province-wide study on teacher workload. After the proposal was agreed upon, the committee asked for the development of a research plan and diagnostic instruments. This process began in January of 2003 and it was hoped that the research would be conducted before the end of April. However, after reviewing the independently developed instruments and helping in the question refinement stage, two of the parties decided not to participate in the study unless there were further modifications to the instrument and a narrowing in the scope of the study. At that point, the NLTA decided that the study needed to be completed and commissioned the completion of the work by Dr. Dibbon. It is significant to note, however, that neither the survey instruments nor the research methodology was altered as a result of that decision.

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