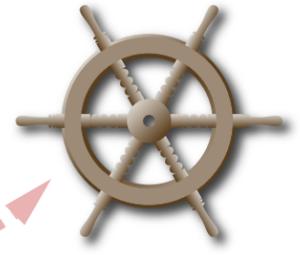




# Charting Your Course FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



## Meaningful Learning through Relevant Professional Development

by Adela Njie, Executive Staff Officer, Professional Development

Welcome back from what I hope was a restful and energizing summer. Summer is an important time for growth. During summer, nature comes to life with foliage and flowers, and humans come to life as we celebrate the season. Beaches, barbecues, picnics and quality family time rejuvenate us and bring us joy. This quality time we give ourselves during the summer prepares us to meet the changing demands that we face when school reopens in September. Our students who have also grown physically and mentally, will also be looking forward to seeing and reconnecting with their special teachers. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your tireless work and devotion year after year in the ever-changing landscape of education.

I am grateful for the opportunity to work as Executive Staff Officer, Professional Development for one year while Betty-Jean Aucoin is on sabbatical leave. I thank her for her continued encouragement and support of quality education.

As a new member of the team, I facilitated some sessions at the Leadership Skills Development Institute which took place at St. Francis Xavier University from August 19 to 21. This event brought to light the remarkable quality and magnitude of skills that teachers possess. Our collective skills are matched to no other profession. This quote by Henry Adams culminates it all. "A teacher affects eternity: She/he can never tell where her/his influence stops."

Annual Conference Day 2015. These volunteers have generously given their time, energy, and effort in making this Annual Conference one of purposeful learning. I thank them for their commitment towards organizing Professional Development Conferences that move our learning forward. The Conference this year has been planned by our office under the leadership of Betty-Jean Aucoin in her role as Executive Staff Officer, Professional Development, and the various partners and professional associations. The planning for this Annual Conference that started early in January is now coming to fruition. The conference will enhance quality education and as a result support student achievement.

This year our conferences have speakers and presenters who come from diverse backgrounds and bring a wealth of experiences. Some are homegrown (residents of Nova Scotia) Phil Comeau, Sylvia Paris, and Scott Boyd, to name a few, and others are nationally or internationally renowned in the field of education.

Phil Comeau is a film and television director and scriptwriter, born in Nova Scotia and he will be joining the Association des enseignants acadiens (AEA). He has directed numerous award-winning drama and documentary films and television series in over 20 countries. His films and TV episodes have been broadcast on over 70 networks worldwide. His films and TV series have received over 40 awards at

Sylvia Paris is a guest speaker at the Nova Scotia Language Teachers Association/ Association des enseignant(e)s de langues de la Nouvelle Écosse (NSLTA/AELNE) conference.

Sylvia Paris is a consultant for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. She meets with youth and educators in school boards throughout the province to promote cultural proficiency and multicultural education; monitors and researches racial issues; and works to improve the information available in the school system. Through government's Racial Equity Policy, she helps to ensure that policies within the education system are respectful of all aspects of diversity, with a particular focus on African Nova Scotians, Mi'kmaq and immigrant communities. She also works with organizations that seek to support women, such as the African Canadian Women in the Public Service Network and the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre and African Nova Scotian communities (such as the Nova Scotia Home for Coloured Children and the Black Educators Association).

Deborah Graham joins the Family Studies Teachers Association (FSTA). She is a Professor at St. Francis Xavier University where she has taught courses in assessment, literacy, principles and practices of teaching, sociology, inclusive practices and content literacy at the BED level, and literacy, program development and various other courses at the MEd level. Prior to joining the faculty at StFX she was a public school teacher and regional administrator for 30 years. Her research interests include teacher stories, resiliency, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in teaching and learning and the critical role of conversation in enhancing teacher professional knowledge. Her presentation will focus on the critical role of stories in our lives as teachers; how they forge connections and promote humanism and empathy on a variety of levels.

Primary Elementary Teachers Association (PETA) also welcomes back Alfie Kohn. Due to the overwhelming response another day with Alfie Kohn is being offered. Last year he talked about the limits of traditional academic practices (curriculum, assessment, pedagogy); this year he will help participants move beyond the traditional in the non-academic parts of school: social, moral, behavioural issues—what it means to help

kids become good people as well as good learners with his session: *Beyond Threats and Bribes: Why Control of the Classroom can Never be our Goal.*

Dr. Esther E. Enns will speak at the Social Studies Teachers Association. (SSTA). She is a professor of applied linguistics and intercultural education at Saint Mary's University. She focuses on experiential learning and teacher development. She is also responsible for various projects involving cultural change in the learning environment, including the Safe and Respectful Saint Mary's initiative. She served as Dean of Arts for 12 years, and in that role she promoted international education and advocated for the importance of liberal education for all students. For 20 years she was a professor at the University of Calgary where she established the Language Research Centre for the advancement of language education that was built on a close collaboration with the Alberta Teachers' Association and Alberta Education. In 1998 she was named a 3M Teaching Fellow in recognition of teaching excellence and educational leadership, and currently serves as Chair of the National Council of 3M Teaching Fellows.

Unfortunately we are not able to name all the keynote speakers and presenters. Nonetheless, we wanted to share with you the abundance of knowledge that this conference will afford us.

I cannot express enough the impact that professional development and other learning opportunities have impacted my practice. I hope that this conference equips us with the tools and knowledge to help students reach their full potential. Once again thank you, merci and jerejeff, to all our dedicated volunteers for making our NSTU Annual Conference a continued success.

Be sure to log on to our NSTU Online Conference Registration and begin to preview the conference that best suits your professional needs. Registration opened on September 4 and closes October 9. As you all know the Professional Associations endeavour to provide you with meaningful and practical professional development sessions and this year in no exception. Wishing you a year of continued success in personal and professional growth, and lifelong learning.



Executive Staff Officer Adela Njie is shown facilitating a workshop at NSTU's Annual Leadership Skills Development Institute.

On October 23, the NSTU Annual Conference Day will provide teachers with a variety of PD opportunities. This year the volunteers of the 22 professional associations, are again at the helm of our Professional Development Day - NSTU

festivals in North America and Europe. He is also a Member of the Order of Canada recipient for his contributions to Acadian film and television in Nova Scotia, and for his promotion of Acadian culture across Canada.

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