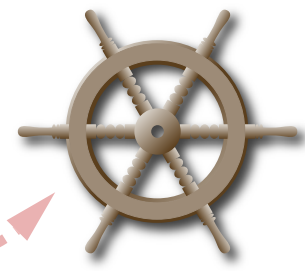


# Charting Your Course FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



## The NSTU Professional Association Conference Day Charts the Course for Collaborative Professionalism

*Paul Syme, seconded NSTU Executive Staff Officer, Professional Development.*

In his letter to members at our annual Professional Association Conference Day NSTU President, Paul Wozney, writes, “Today exemplifies what Andy Hargreaves points to as teachers being the drivers of their professional development, not the driven. Professional Associations plan and present a vast range of workshops and draw unique guests and leaders to meet NSTU members right where they teach.” These points echo Dan Pink’s findings on what drives us, that is the promise of autonomy, mastery, and purpose. Each of these 20 autonomous bodies extend an array of workshops and seminars that collectively aim to offer every teacher

open to evolution, and structured. Conversely, if the PLC or CLT is forced, feigned, or too informal the collective will lose components essential to its success. CP aims to fashion a culture of mutual support towards student-centred professional development that removes teachers from a culture of submission, exclusion, and self-imposed isolation. Collaborative professionals form learning communities where priorities and targets are explored through structures that ensure equitable voice and have everyone contribute and offer criticism in an atmosphere of trust and support. For CP’s to work, teachers need legitimate and shared purpose, precision,

focussed around improving the lives of students and the efficacy of our practice. With this culture extended to our professional development structures in our schools, the Nova Scotia teaching experience may continue to be a beacon of excellence for other jurisdictions to admire and imitate.

### Works Cited:

- Hargreaves, A., & O’Connor, M. T. (2018). *Collaborative professionalism: When teaching together means learning for all*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, a SAGE Company.
- Hargreaves, A., & O’Connor, M. T. (2018). *CSE Seminar Series, April 2018*. “Leading collaborative professionalism”. Melbourne: Centre for Strategic Education.
- Pink, D. H. (2010). *Drive the surprising truth about what motivates us*. Edinburgh: Canongate.

### ALSO, Liberating Structures:

In contemplation of collaborative professionalism’s need for functional structures that dynamically address an array of situations, explore the app, *Liberating Structures*. It is full of searchable approaches to collective brainstorming, analyzing, sharing, supporting and strategizing. Ideal for PLCs and enhancing student engagement. Download for your smart device or visit <http://www.liberatingstructures.com/>

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*NSTU President Paul Wozney presents at ATENS conference.*

something new and purposeful that affirm, deepen and seed new practices and conversations. This single day establishes and strengthens learning communities beyond school walls and regions, inspires approaches to learning and teaching, while reminding teachers that we are professional educators — not technocratic purveyors of someone else’s curriculum. As someone who has participated in this event for twenty-one years among being a participant, workshop leader, and organizer I have consistently left the day feeling refreshed, informed, and often transformed.

While Hargreaves’ message on professional autonomy is not groundbreaking, choosing him as a reference may prove timely as he coauthored a text and program practiced by Ontario teachers on *Collaborative Professionalism* — an approach Nova Scotia teachers will hear a lot about in the coming months and years. At its core, Hargreaves and O’Connor shares, “collaborative professionalism is about how teachers and other educators transform teaching and learning together to work with all students to develop fulfilling lives of meaning, purpose and success. It is evidence-informed, but not data-driven, and involves deep and sometimes demanding dialogue, candid but constructive feedback, and continuous collaborative inquiry.” (CSE, 2018, p. 3) Collaborative Professionalism (CP) differs from much of what we have seen in our professional learning communities (PLC’s), collaborative learning teams (CLT’s) or student success plans (SSPs). It is not top down, data driven nor contrived. To be CP the composition needs to be teacher driven, flexible,

and positivity.

Having a long tradition in Nova Scotia of an Annual Professional Association Conference Day, guided by the driving principles of autonomy, mastery, and purpose provides an archetype for how collaborative professionalism can work in our schools. Teachers, by nature are self-critical and driven to improve their practice at every turn. Teachers find motivation and support in fruitful collaborations, especially when

