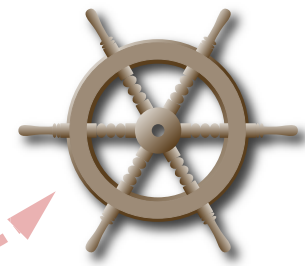


Charting Your Course FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



NSSCA Celebrates 50 Years!

by Janice Graham-Migel, PhD, School Guidance Counsellor, Ridgecliff Middle School

The Nova Scotia School Counsellors Association (NSSCA) reached a milestone in 2016 when it celebrated 50 years as a professional association of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. The following is an excerpt from a document in the NSTU archives, outlining the origin of NSSCA:

At Truro in 1966, the Nova Scotia School Counsellors' Association had its official inception. From its beginning, the Association has continued to develop as a professional organization.

One of the objectives of the Constitution is "to formulate professional standards and principles." In April 1969, a committee was formed "to make a study for the purpose of establishing a statement of the philosophy of school counselling and a code of ethics for school counsellors." This same committee subsequently was authorized to form a code for presentation to the members in 1971. Simultaneously, the Colchester-East Hants Area Group had been requested to make a study and to report on the role of the school counsellor. Both finalized reports were adopted at the annual meeting in April, 1971.

At this time, the Cape Breton Area Group were empowered by the members to engage in a study of the functions of the school counsellor. Broad guidelines of the duties of the school counsellor had been established in the Education Act of 1967. Now, it was felt that more specific functions were necessary. After two years, this report was adopted in April, 1973.

Thus within four years, the Association had formed its own Code of Ethics, defined the role of the school counsellor, and delineated specific functions of the school counsellor. These articles, together with the By-Laws and Constitution, form the foundation of the present Nova Scotia School Counsellors' Association.

The 50th Anniversary Celebration was held at the Prince George Hotel on Thursday, October 27, practicing and retired school counsellors had an opportunity to get together and celebrate 50 successful years of a professional association that supports the work of school counsellors in Nova Scotia. Thank you to Martia MacLean and Tina Kennedy-Lohnes for the work they did in organizing the 50th Anniversary Celebration.



Retired school counsellors enjoy festivities at the NSSCA 50th Anniversary Celebration. Left to Right: Garnet Patterson, Hector Muise, Verne Lowe, Bonnie Steeves, Sue Hannem, Teri Cochrane.



The 2016 NSSCA provincial conference was held at the World Trade and Convention Centre on October 28 with the theme, *B O U N C E: Believing Our Unique iNtrinsic Caregiving Energy*. The conference, which concentrated on an integrated approach to health, wellness, and resilience of caregivers in education (body, mind, and spirit), included keynotes by Robert Wright, Dr. Michael Ungar, as well as concurrent sessions by Vince MacDonald, Dr. Ashwani Kumar, Michael Belgrave, and Shawna Shiers. Thank you to Wade Van Snick and Andrew Gosney for chairing another successful conference.

At the 2016 Annual General Meeting there was an election of officers for several two-year positions. The following is the new NSSCA Executive for 2016-2017:

Martia MacLean (President)
Janice Graham-Migel (Past President)
Tina Kennedy-Lohnes (Vice President)
Wade Van Snick (Treasurer)
Andrew Gosney (Secretary)
Janet Baxter (Director)
Ann Lambe (Director)
Amanda Marchand (Director)

According to the NSSCA Constitution, the mandate of the association is (1) to improve professional practice by increasing member knowledge and understanding; (2) to designate ideas, trends and new developments; (3) to provide information to the NSTU Professional Associations Coordination Committee and the NSTU Curriculum Committee; and (4) to advise the Provincial Executive on matters

affecting NSTU Professional Associations (NSSCA Constitution, 2008).

The school counselling profession has seen many changes over the years in Nova Scotia. One of the major changes was a shift from "position to program" with the initiation of the Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Program in 1996. This program supports the personal, social, educational, and career development of students in Grades Primary to 12. As stated in the program guide, "The Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Program is a central component within a school's learning environment. It provides for the integration of guidance and counselling services into a comprehensive model that crosses the curricula to address student needs through well-defined learning outcomes." (Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2002, p. v). The scope of practice for school counsellors has also changed over the years due to Power School, TIENET, and the implementation of the Nova Scotia Guidelines for School Counselling Records and Standards of Practice.

Serving on the NSSCA Executive provides a great opportunity to network with school counsellors across the province and support the school counselling profession in Nova Scotia. The Executive meets a minimum of three times a year to develop supports for school counsellors that include, but are not limited to, professional development opportunities at the annual provincial conference; a professional learning community (PLC) through the NSSCA Moodle; newsletters, websites, and professional publications; review of applications for bursary and honorary membership in NSSCA; collaboration with school boards and the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development; and networking with other professional associations such as the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) and the Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists (NSCCT).

The NSSCA continues to be an active and productive professional association of the NSTU. Best wishes to NSSCA for another successful 50 years!

Janice Graham-Migel is a School Counsellor with the Halifax Regional School Board. Over the years, she served as Director, Vice President, and President of NSSCA.

