



COVID-19 enters Nova Scotia schools

The first reported case of COVID-19 in a Nova Scotia public school was announced on November 16, 2020. Since then (at press time on December 9) there have been total of 12 cases discovered at ten schools in HRM and the Valley region.

The first two cases were discovered at Auburn Drive High in Cole Harbour and its feeder school Graham Creighton Junior High. While the cases were announced publicly on a Monday evening, the schools remained open for in-person learning for the next three days, and “enhanced cleaning” did not occur for almost 48 hours after discovery. After a second case was found at Auburn High on November 19, the schools moved to remote learning for a two-week period.

In the summer and fall, the province committed to reducing class sizes and allowing for full physical distancing in the event of community spread. However, instead of increasing safety precautions in school communities where the virus is present, the province has taken a more reactive approach

by closing schools to students for a few days at a time, following a positive test. Teachers have remained in the schools, teaching remotely from their classrooms, unless forced to self-isolate.

NSTU President Paul Wozney has been calling on Education Minister Zach Churchill to do more to protect the safety of students, teachers, school staff and their families. In particular, he had hoped the province would have used \$48 million it received from Ottawa as part of the “Safe return to Class fund” to reduce class sizes, improve ventilation and install hand washing stations. Instead the majority of the money was used to purchase computers for remote learning, along with other initiatives such as evening recreational sports leagues and water bottle filling stations.

In a recent op-ed Wozney said, “Every day for the past three months, almost 150,000 Nova Scotian children and adults (up to 35 at a time) crowd into small poorly ventilated classrooms where masks are not universally required, which also lack proper handwashing

stations. Nowhere else is this tolerated. If you hosted a gathering like this in your home, you’d be fined.”

Wozney says teachers are experiencing burnout under current conditions and the almost nightly reports of COVID-19 cases in schools is placing a strain on families. He says government must take action to ensure the public has full confidence that schools are safe.

“It’s clear the Minister does not understand the extreme anxiety students, teachers, school staff and their families are experiencing right now. People are literally scared to look at their phones for fear they are going to see a COVID notification about their school. Using federal pandemic funding to fix an issue with drinking water that the Minister should have addressed in September is not going to make them feel any safer. Waiting for COVID-19 to enter a school and then closing it, is not the plan families were promised,” Wozney said.

Wozney re-elected as NSTU President Teachers ratify tentative agreement

Paul Wozney was re-elected as President of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union following an online vote of NSTU members on October 27. He defeated Shelburne County teacher Colleen Scott, receiving 81 per cent of the vote.

Prior to first being elected President in 2018, Wozney taught at Charles P. Allen High School in Bedford. Along with his wife, Dr. Lori Wozney, PhD, they are raising three children, all of whom attend public schools in HRCE.

Wozney’s leadership is defined by connection with grassroots members



Continued on page 2

NSTU’s 9,300 public school members endorsed the tentative agreement reached between the Nova Scotia Teachers Union and the provincial government on October 23.

“Our members have voted overwhelmingly in favour of this agreement,” says NSTU president Paul Wozney. “The diligent work of the bargaining team and this vote result indicate it’s a fair and reasonable contract for public school teachers in the province.”

In a province-wide electronic vote held on October 18, 73 per cent of teachers voted 94.2 per cent in favour of the tentative deal. The contract will give teachers a salary increase of 7 per cent over four years, with a 1.5 per cent increase effective August 1, 2019, a 0.5 per cent increase on July 31, 2020, a 1.5 per cent increase on

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people

NSTU appoints new Executive Director

After an extensive and careful search process, Steve Brooks has been named as the Executive Director of the NSTU, effective February 1, 2021.

"I look forward to joining the NSTU and working with the team to help facilitate positive change in the Nova Scotia public education system while ensuring the needs of members are met in an ongoing and timely manner," says Brooks. "Although these are uncertain times, I'm excited to embark on this new challenge."

Since 2008, Brooks has worked for the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (NLTA) where he began as Administrative Officer in Programs and Services before being appointed Assistant Executive Director. Since 2016, he has been the Executive Director of the NLTA.

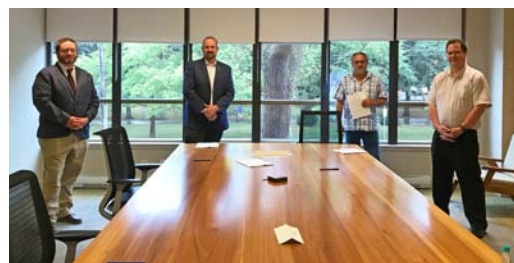
A former district leader, school administrator and teacher, Brooks holds a Masters of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from Memorial University as well as a Bachelor of Education (High School Social Studies and Religious Studies), and a Bachelor of Arts (Political Science). He also has a Certificate in Industrial Relations from Queens University and has completed numerous training programs including Labour Relations Foundations, Negotiation Skills, and Dispute Resolution.

KBRS (Knightsbridge Robertson Surette) lead the executive search for NSTU's personnel committee. The committee put a recommendation forward at the October 16 provincial executive meeting for the hiring of Brooks.



NSTU signs first agreement with IAMAW

NSTU's personnel committee recently signed its first agreement with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW). The IAMAW represents the 10 Executive Staff Officers currently working for the NSTU. Members of NSTU's executive staff team joined the IAMAW during the summer of 2019. This first signing, which took place on August 17, marks the first collective agreement between the Executive Staff represented by IAMAW and the NSTU. Richard Arsenault, Grand Lodge Representative is the chief negotiator for NSTU's executive staff. Executive staff officer, Wally Fiander, was the staff representative on the Executive Staff team. Members of NSTU's professional services staff and support staff are not members of IAMAW.



Shown clockwise from bottom left are: NSTU's second vice-president Shaun Doyle, NSTU president Paul Wozney, IAMAW negotiator Richard Arsenault, and NSTU's Acting Assistant Executive Director Jack MacLeod, a member of the Executive Staff negotiating team.

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and their concerns. "I have worked tirelessly for the past two years to advocate for teachers and students, and to resolve conflicts with Government on major issues like the illegal mistreatment of school-based specialists and realizing a free, fair collective agreement after Government illegally legislated a contract in 2017," says Wozney "The results of this vote again demonstrate the solidarity of nearly 10,000 teachers and their collective will to take the lead in realizing lasting, positive change in our schools and communities. I'm humbled to have the opportunity to continue

this critical work with them."

A total of 5,963 NSTU members voted electronically, 62 per cent of the membership. Wozney's second term officially begins on February 21, 2021. A-Local-by-Local/Regional breakdown of vote results is on page 10.

Candidates running for NSTU president had to declare their intention by February 21, 2020 but due to COVID-19 and the shutdown of schools the official campaigning began on September 2, because the election was postponed. To become president of the NSTU you must win with a majority of votes (50 per cent plus one).



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Huntley Internship celebrates 20th anniversary

The John Huntley Internship, entering its 20th anniversary year, held its first session on November 12 and 13. Because of Covid-19, this is the first time since the fall of 2019 that NSTU members were able to participate in the program. Selected NSTU members learn more about NSTU's programs and services through sessions with NSTU staff and the NSTU president and executive director. NSTU staff from member services, professional development, public relations, the Member Assistance program and NSTU administration participate in the program. Shown (clockwise from the bottom): Theresa Jennings (Dartmouth), a program planning specialist with HRCE; Matthew Moriarity (Dartmouth), an English and History teacher at Prince Andrew High; Kerry Doucette (Colchester-East Hants), an attendance support worker for CCRCE; Joseph MacIsaac (Halifax County), an English 10 and Citizenship 9 teacher at Millwood High; Rachel Creasor (Kings), a resource teacher at Glooscap Elementary; and Joanne Richardson-Landry (Kings) an English teacher at Horton High in Greenwich.



Former NSTU provincial executive member Angela Deagle (Inverness-Richmond), whose term ended on August 1, 2020 was presented with a gift from NSTU president Paul Wozney during the recent meeting of the Strait RRC on November 2.

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from the nstu president

Applying Our Wins to Our Challenges

We've realized some important wins together since October. On the heels of our settlement on behalf of school-based Specialists, we resumed collective bargaining, reached a tentative agreement and ratified it with 94.2 per cent support. We hired a new Executive Director, Steve Brooks, following an aggressive, comprehensive and robust search process that began in July. And, we reached agreement in principle with Government on a joint process to study, conduct member education and examine recommendations that would improve the long-term funded status of our pension.

It sounds easy to sum it all up like that, but none of us can forget Government illegally imposed a contract in February 2017 after the only province-wide job action and strike by teachers in history. Two unsuccessful searches for Executive Director since 2017 meant this round was make or break for us to find and retain a top candidate. Our pension has been a frequent target for threats by the Premier since 2017. Getting to wins hasn't been easy or straightforward.

So, how did we overcome and experience success together? Through solidarity.

Rather than continue the internal strife that marked 2017, you stood with your leaders in preparing for collective bargaining. You sent your bargaining team to the table armed with a wealth of input so the Premier couldn't claim, again, that the NSTU doesn't understand or speak for its own members.

You elected fresh Provincial leadership that shared your priority for proactivity, transparency and communication. Your votes for President, First Vice President and several Provincial Executive roles installed leadership committed to what matters to you. That group delivered a superb leader in Steve Brooks to support and sustain our union for years to come.

You insisted that addressing pension issues occur within the existing framework rather than through provincial negotiations. You demanded recognition of our joint responsibility in these challenges; that made it possible to convince government that a jointly-established and overseen process was a recipe to constructively address a deeply significant issue to both parties.

We won together.

Solidarity takes many forms: A spirit of unity; shared action; individual members taking the steps within their power to take; exercising our rights; voting; and participating in key processes. Our recent wins exemplify all of these, and offer us a roadmap for facing what might be the single greatest challenge we will ever face in our careers — teaching safely and sustainably during a global pandemic.

The glow of these wins was dimmed by the crushing pressure

Mettons nos victoires au service de nos défis

Ensemble, nous avons remporté d'importantes victoires depuis le mois d'octobre. Dans la foulée de notre accord pour le compte des spécialistes scolaires, nous avons repris les négociations collectives, conclu un accord de principe et nous l'avons ratifié avec 94,2 % de votes en faveur. Nous avons embauché un nouveau directeur général, Steve Brooks, à la suite d'un processus de recrutement intensif, approfondi et énergique qui a débuté en juillet. Et nous sommes parvenus à un accord de principe avec le gouvernement sur un processus conjoint en vue d'étudier et d'envisager des recommandations qui amélioreraient le niveau de capitalisation à long terme de notre régime de pensions et d'éduquer les membres à ce sujet.

Cela semble facile lorsqu'on le résume ainsi, mais aucun d'entre nous ne peut oublier que le gouvernement nous a imposé illégalement une convention collective en février 2017 à la suite de la seule grève des enseignants associée à des moyens de pression à l'échelle de la province de notre histoire. Les deux tentatives de recrutement infructueuses pour pourvoir le poste de directeur général depuis 2017 signifiaient que cette ultime tentative était décisive pour nous en vue de trouver et d'embaucher un candidat de haut niveau. Notre régime de pension est fréquemment la cible de menaces de la part du Premier ministre depuis 2017. Remporter ces victoires n'a pas été facile et n'a pas été simple.

Alors, comment avons-nous surmonté ces difficultés et connu ensemble le succès? Grâce à la solidarité.

Plutôt que de perpétuer les conflits internes qui ont marqué l'année 2017, vous avez soutenu vos dirigeants en vue de préparer les négociations collectives. Vous avez envoyé votre équipe de négociation à la table des négociations armée d'une multitude de suggestions afin que le Premier ministre ne puisse pas prétendre, une fois de plus, que le NSTU ne comprend pas ses propres membres ou ne parle pas en leur nom.

Vous avez élu de nouveaux dirigeants provinciaux qui partagent vos priorités en faveur de mesures proactives, de transparence et de communication. Vous avez voté pour le président, le premier vice-président et plusieurs postes au sein du Comité exécutif provincial, ce qui a permis de mettre en place une équipe de dirigeants dévoués à ce qui vous importe le plus. Ce groupe a recruté un fantastique leader en la personne de Steve Brooks, afin de soutenir et de maintenir notre syndicat pour de nombreuses années.

Vous avez insisté pour que les questions relatives aux pensions soient traitées au sein du cadre existant plutôt que dans le cadre des négociations provinciales. Vous avez exigé la reconnaissance de notre responsabilité commune dans ces défis; cela a permis de convaincre le gouvernement qu'un processus établi et surveillé

of schools re-opening with scant protections and deep limitations. Despite promises of PPE and workplace accommodations for the immunocompromised, PPE continues to sit in closets and members have been told to consider leave without pay instead. While public health restrictions at our grocery stores, hockey rinks and faith communities remain tight, in our classrooms ventilation remains non-existent or poor, masking optional, handwashing unavailable and physical distancing impossible.

Exhaustion and frustration are real. I feel that myself. I doubt very much that any of us has ever worked so long, so hard and so ceaselessly than we have since last March. The pace is grueling.

That said, if ever there was a moment to overcome the learned helplessness of writing to stone-eared MLAs who do nothing but spout canned talking points, or talking to principals and senior administration only to see nothing change — *It's right now.*

I know you are looking for solutions to these legitimate concerns. To realize tangible safety improvements in our classrooms, we must, once again, demonstrate solidarity by exercising our rights under the Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Your school's JOHSC (Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee) and the right to refuse unsafe work are your legal rights under this legislation. Your complaints are heard not by your employer, but by Nova Scotia's Labour Board.

OHS ends up in the hands of people who work outside of our system's culture of control and silencing. Labour Board inspectors are not concerned with optics or messaging; their focus is safety and health. Any direction they provide is legally compelling and time sensitive, and it is not flexible.

The same solidarity that helped us achieve important recent wins can help us achieve pandemic safety improvements through OHS processes. Our OHS rights are the most powerful lever any of us have to address these concerns.

In one metro school, one teacher submitted an OHS complaint regarding loose masking enforcement to their JOHSC. The Labour Board overruled both the principal and RCE administration and insisted on concrete, immediate changes.

We won before against long odds and tough opponents. We can win again, improving safety measures by acting through JOHSC. In this moment, solidarity means the NSTU supporting you and other members at your school to use OHS rights that offer the shortest distance between issue and solution.

Safety is our right, our students' right, and their families' right. It would be amazing if the employer would simply make sure we had it in buckets. But they aren't, and so we can and must act together. At a time of year we often think of others, let's remember how powerful a gift solidarity is to one another and students. We can do this together.

Wishing you a safe, healthy and restful holiday. Loads of care from my family to you and yours,

Paul

conjointement était une bonne solution pour aborder de manière constructive une question extrêmement importante pour les deux parties.

Ensemble, nous avons gagné.

La solidarité se manifeste de multiples manières : un esprit d'unité, des interventions communes, des membres individuels qui prennent les mesures qui sont en leur pouvoir, l'exercice de nos droits, le vote, et la participation à des processus clés. Nos récentes victoires illustrent tout cela et nous offrent une feuille de route pour affronter ce qui est peut-être le plus grand défi de notre carrière : enseigner en toute sécurité et de manière durable durant une pandémie mondiale.

L'éclat de ces victoires a été atténué par la pression écrasante de la réouverture des écoles avec peu de protections et de profondes limitations. En dépit des promesses d'EPI et d'aménagements du lieu de travail pour les personnes immunodéprimées, les EPI restent rangés dans les placards et les membres ont été invités à envisager plutôt un congé sans solde. Tandis que les restrictions imposées par les services de santé publique dans nos épiceries, nos patinoires de hockey et nos communautés religieuses restent très strictes, dans nos salles de classe, la ventilation est inexistante ou insuffisante, le port du masque est facultatif, le lavage des mains impraticable et la distanciation physique impossible.

L'épuisement et la frustration sont réels. Je le ressens moi-même. Je doute fort que qui que ce soit parmi nous n'ait jamais travaillé aussi longtemps, aussi dur et de manière aussi constante que depuis mars dernier. Le rythme est exténuant.

Cela dit, le moment est venu de surmonter l'impuissance acquise à écrire à des députés à l'oreille dure qui ne font rien d'autre que débiter des points de discussion tout prêts, ou à parler aux directeurs d'école et aux hauts administrateurs sans rien voir changer. *Ce moment est maintenant.*

Je sais que vous cherchez des solutions à ces préoccupations légitimes. Pour améliorer concrètement la sécurité dans nos salles de classe, nous devons, une fois de plus, faire preuve de solidarité en exerçant nos droits en vertu de la *Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act* (loi sur l'hygiène et la sécurité au travail de la Nouvelle-Écosse).

Le comité mixte d'hygiène et de sécurité au travail (CMHST) de votre école et le droit de refuser un travail dangereux font partie de vos droits légaux en vertu de cette loi. Vos plaintes sont reçues non pas par votre employeur, mais par la Labour Board (commission des relations du travail) de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Les questions d'hygiène et de sécurité au travail (HST) se retrouvent entre les mains de personnes qui travaillent en dehors de la culture de contrôle et de silence de notre système. Les inspecteurs de la commission des relations du travail ne se soucient ni de l'optique ni des messages communiqués; ils se concentrent sur l'hygiène et la sécurité. Les directives qu'ils fournissent sont juridiquement contraignantes et leurs délais d'exécution sont précis; en outre, elles ne sont pas flexibles.

La même solidarité qui nous a permis récemment de remporter d'importantes victoires peut nous aider à améliorer l'hygiène et la sécurité en temps de pandémie par le biais des processus d'HST. Nos droits en matière d'HST sont le moyen de pression le plus puissant dont nous disposons pour résoudre ces préoccupations.

Dans une école d'Halifax, un enseignant a déposé une plainte en matière d'HST auprès de son comité mixte d'hygiène et de sécurité au travail concernant l'application trop laxiste du port des masques. La commission des relations du travail a donné tort au directeur de l'école et à l'administration du CRE et a insisté pour que des changements concrets et immédiats soient apportés.

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Teachers, Cut Yourself Some Slack!

by Pamela Langille, Executive Staff Officer, Professional Learning

Strategies for coping with all of the intersecting pressures and stressors that teachers are experiencing are essential, but often difficult to see and do amidst the fog of being overwhelmed and exhausted. Unfortunately, there are many elements in our lives right now that are outside of our control and it is hard to see the end of the road to this pandemic. But there will be an end! This is a long and difficult pandemic, but it is a temporary period of time in our lives and careers. How you live and teach during this pandemic is not the “new normal.” I would argue that this phrase is not helpful and actually elicits feelings of hopelessness and despair, as it suggests there is no end in sight. I have heard many stories of

teachers trying to take all of the typical ways they teach and try and adapt it to being pandemic-friendly. This is not a realistic expectation from others or yourself. You are living and teaching in a state of emergency and eventually, the emergency will end. In a state of emergency, you operate by prioritizing because it’s understood that everything cannot be done. Cut yourself some slack, prioritize and set boundaries, and focus on what you can do. Everyone only has so much to give without receiving. Most of us are familiar with Carol McCloud’s children’s book, *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* It’s more important than ever that you practice self-care and fill your own bucket every day. I appreciate this sounds daunting

and to many, it feels like just one more thing we don’t have time for; however, without practicing self-care, the body has a magnificent way of forcing you to take the time and it doesn’t send you a calendar invite for when it’s convenient for you. Self-care doesn’t require a big plan or an overhaul of your life and habits; it can look like a lot of things and can be as small of a change as carving out ten minutes a day for you to do something that you enjoy. I offer the following self-care activities and practices below in hopes that there is something that appeals to you and prompts you to act today and respond to your self-care needs.

- Virtual coffee/beverage date with a friend
- Listen to music that you find rejuvenating and sing along loud and proud
- Indulge by going to a full-service gas station and relishing those extra few minutes while being waited on
- Go for a walk in the rain
- Tell your pet your darkest thoughts today and notice their reaction – it will be okay!
- Bake or cook something special
- Do a puzzle, colour, or take up another hobby
- Pick or buy fresh flowers
- Write in a journal (e.g. What are you proud of? What advice would you give a friend in the same situation?)
- Go to a virtual museum
- Go for a drive
- Pet your dog or cat/get a pet if you can take on that commitment at this time
- Cuddle up with a loved one (in your social bubble of course ☺)
- Set screen time limits
- Take a nap
- Laugh – Read a joke book or do something you know will make you laugh
- Order in dinner for the night/subscribe to a meal kit delivery service for a week or longer
- Go outside at night and star gaze, and why not wish upon a star while you are at it
- Edit who you follow on social media – if they don’t bring you joy, they’ve got to go!

To help you in your journey of self-care, The Teacher is giving away copies of My Pocket Self-Care which includes “150 enjoyable and accessible activities to help you feel refreshed, refilled, and refocused every day!” For more info, see the following page.

Email your name, home address, and the name of your school with **PL COLUMN GIVEAWAY** in the subject line to theteacher@nstu.ca by **January 21, 2021** to be eligible for the draw.

My Pocket Self-care

My Pocket Self-care: Anytime Activities To Refresh Your Mind by Adams Media provides 150 enjoyable and accessible activities to help you feel refreshed, refilled, and refocused every day. *My Pocket Self-Care* allows you to focus on your own personal needs whether you're at home, at work, or on the go. It provides is a perfect way to practice self-love every day.



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FRESH — Michele Mockler — HRCE

PL Giveaway — Teresa Dowe — CCRCE

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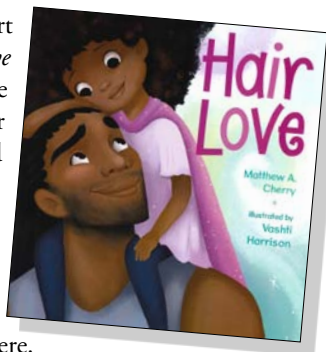
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Email your name, home address, and the name of your school with **FRESH** in the subject line to theteacher@nstu.ca by **January 21, 2021** to be eligible for the draw.

Hair Love

Written by Matthew A. Cherry,
illustrated by Vashti Harrison

Based on the Oscar winning short film of the same name, *Hair Love* is written by Chicago native and former NFL wide receiver Matthew A. Cherry. Published by Kokila, an imprint of Penguin Random House, *Hair Love* is a tender and empowering ode to loving your natural hair, while celebrating the love between daddies and daughters everywhere.



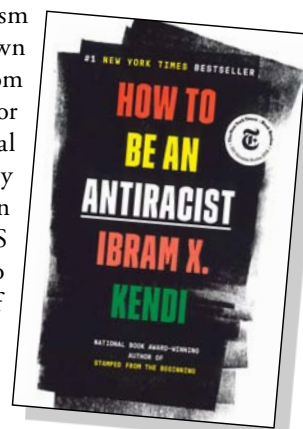
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FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Email your name, home address, and the name of your school with **PL Giveaway** in the subject line to theteacher@nstu.ca by **January 21, 2021** to be eligible for the draw.

How to Be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi

How to Be an Antiracist, a 2019 New York Times Notable Books, is a work of non-fiction by American author and historian Ibram X. Kendi. Published by One World, an imprint of Random House, this book discusses concepts of racism and proposals for anti-racist individual actions and systemic changes. Kendi relates his evolving concept of racism through the events of his own life, including observations from classes he has taught as a professor of history and international relations, and contemporary events such as the O. J. Simpson robbery case and the 2000 US presidential election. He also details the manifestations of racism, like scientific racism and colourism and their connection with demographics of gender, class and sexuality.



EQUITY COMMITTEE BOOK REVIEW

Nova Scotia Teachers Union

Email your name, home address, and the name of your school with **EQUITY** in the subject line to theteacher@nstu.ca by **January 21, 2021** to be eligible for the draw.

A is For Awesome!

Written by Eva Chen, illustrated by Derek Desierto

A is For Awesome! 23 Iconic Women Who Changed the World is an early elementary book published by Feiwel and Friends, an imprint of Macmillan Publishing Group. Written by Instagram superstar Eva Chen, author of *Juno Valentine and the Magical Shoes*, this alphabet board book depicts feminist icons featuring whimsical illustrations by Derek Desierto.



Teachers' Mental Health and Wellbeing during a Pandemic

Louis Robitaille, NSTU Executive Staff Officer, Governance, Policy & Research

Stressed, heightened anxiety, emotionally drained, harassed, burned out—these terms were far too common amongst teachers across the country prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is not new to the profession; decades of research confirm that teaching is a stressful job.¹ Further, teachers experiencing heightened stress levels can lead to lower quality of instruction, poorer student achievement, negative teacher wellbeing and health, burnout, and greater attrition. However, there is research indicating that employing effective stress management techniques can lead to resilient teachers capable of remaining effective despite exterior challenges.²

With this in mind, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE) asked its affiliate members to join in their *Teacher Mental Health Check-in Survey – Pandemic Research*.³ NSTU members answered this survey in significant numbers (958 NSTU responses), with participation across all grade-levels; from classroom teachers, resource, school counselling, consultants, and specialists; representing full-time and term members; of various age, gender, and diversity.

Nova Scotian teachers are fairing about the same as Canadian teachers in general. On the very simple question "How are you feeling today?" 43 per cent of NSTU members answered very unhappy/somewhat unhappy with only 19 per cent answering somewhat happy/very happy. This compares very closely to CTF's 46 per cent very unhappy/somewhat unhappy to 18 per cent somewhat happy/very happy. When asked "How well are you coping with the daily stresses of teaching right now?" 36 per cent of

our members answered not coping at all/barely coping compared to CTF's 37 per cent. With both NSTU members and CTF/FCE members ranking their top three concerns as 1) stress, anxiety, depression, 2) workload, work-life balance, and 3) mental and emotional exhaustion.

What are our members finding the most exhausting? NSTU members report finding it very or severely draining: managing student behaviour and juggling multiple responsibilities 80 per cent; meeting personal and professional expectations 69 per cent; adjusting to new pedagogical practices 51 per cent; time spent on computer or digital devices 48 per cent; and covering classes for absent colleagues 40 per cent.

Sadly, Nova Scotian teachers are finding it difficult to maintain the practices known to improve physical and mental health. With 53 per cent never or infrequently getting sufficient sleep, 31 per cent never or infrequently eating regularly, 56 per cent never or infrequently drinking enough water to stay hydrated, and 57 per cent never or infrequently setting time in their day to be physically active. This bodes poorly for teachers' short- and long-term health.

Though our members are not feeling supported by their employer; 71 per cent not or barely supported by their regional centre for education/school board; and 92 per cent not or barely supported by the Ministry of Education and Early Childhood Development; they are finding support from others. Our members are feeling very or extremely supported by colleagues 68 per cent, friends and family 62 per cent, and by administrators 44 per cent.

AST Professional Development Teacher Resource Grant

The AST annually provides teachers with an opportunity to develop new resources and/or attend Professional Development opportunities. An amount of up to \$500 is made available to our membership.

Criteria/Guidelines

Only current AST members are eligible to apply. The Professional Development activity or learning resources must be related science instruction. A member may receive only one AST grant per year. A summary of the activity as well as copies of receipts must be provided to the AST on completion and you may be asked to present at the following year's conference. Completed application must be received by the AST three (3) weeks prior to the activity. Members who have not received a grant for two years will be given selection preference. Disbursement of the grants is at the discretion of the P.D. Grant Selection Committee.

The URL for the grants is included below:

<http://ast.nstu.ca/grants?c=pd-grant>



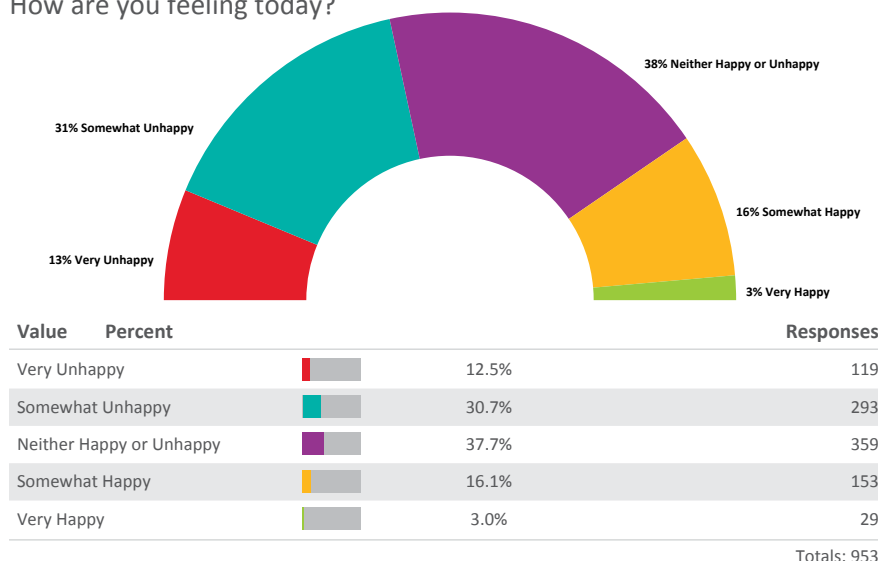
There are resources to help individuals address the issue of workplace mental health. The full report can be found here: <https://vox.ctf-fce.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Doc-13-1-Pandemic-Research-Report-Teacher-Mental-Health-Check-in-Survey.pdf>

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) has developed *Mental Health First Aid*,⁴ which is directed at individuals wishing to increase their mental health literacy and develop skills to better manage potential or emerging mental health problems in themselves or in a family member, friend, or colleague.

The Member Assistance Program of the NSTU provides one-on-one counselling for NSTU members and their families. For more information contact nurse@nstu.ca or phone 1-800-565-6788 and ask to speak with the nurse.

The Resilience® (Employee and Family Assistance Program) provides counselling in-person, by phone, or through a secure online service. For more information call 1-877-955-6788 or for online service go to www.myresilience.com and quote contract #39146.

How are you feeling today?



References:

1. Laura J. Sokal, Lesley G. Eblie Trudel, Jeff C. Babb. "Supporting Teachers in Times of Change: The Job Demands- Resources Model and Teacher Burnout During the COVID-19 Pandemic", *International Journal of Contemporary Education*, Vol. 3, No. 2, October 2020.
2. Patricia A. Jennings, Mark T. Greenberg. "The Prosocial Classroom: Teacher Social and Emotional Competence in Relation to Student and Classroom Outcomes", *Review of Educational Research*, Vol 79, Issue 1, March 2009.
3. Canadian Teachers' Federation. "CTF/FCE Teacher Mental Health Check-in Survey – Pandemic Research Report", November 2020. <https://vox.ctf-fce.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Doc-13-1-Pandemic-Research-Report-Teacher-Mental-Health-Check-in-Survey.pdf>
4. The Mental Health Commission of Canada. "Mental Health First Aid", <https://www.mhfa.ca/en/big-picture>



Stay in Nova Scotia!

Position Available: Various Teaching positions including substitute teachers
 Start Date: Various start dates (Immediately to Sept 2020)
 Location: Indian Brook, Nova Scotia
 (30 minutes south of Truro, 45 minutes north of Halifax on just off Highway 102)

General Description:

Accountable to delivering the required curriculum as set forth by the province and for providing teaching strategies that respect the rights of students of LSK. This position is also responsible to incorporate Mi'kmaq language and culture into the curriculum while recognizing the perspectives of all cultures as well as teaching sensitivity pertaining to student individuality.

We have small class sizes with EA support

Core Competencies:

Provincial Teacher Certification.
 Courses or experience in teaching field.
 Interest in working with an Aboriginal education environment.
 Interest in learning the Mi'kmaq Language and culture.

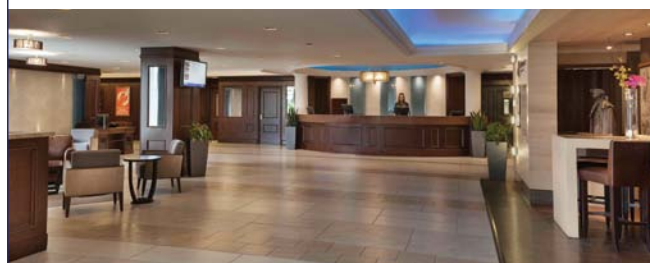
Please apply with resume, cover letter, Child Abuse Registry Check, Police Vulnerability Check, and three professional references (include phone & email with each reference) to:

Email employmentapplication@sipeknekatik.ca
 or koller@sipeknekatik.ca (principal) for position details
 Mail/drop off: 522 Church Street, Indian Brook, NS B0N 1W0
 (902)236-3041
www.lskschool.ca or www.sipeknekatik.ca



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THE BARRINGTON HOTEL

www.thebarringtonhotel.ca • 833.357.8155

SPECIAL NSTU LEISURE RATE

Hotel Halifax and The Barrington Hotel are pleased to extend a special leisure rate to Nova Scotia Teachers Union until April 30, 2021. This package includes a Standard Guest Room with Complimentary Parking for a special rate starting at \$85/night plus 2% levy and 15% tax (based on availability).

In order to book this special limited rate please call 902-425-6700 (Hotel Halifax), 902-429-7410 (The Barrington Hotel) or 1 833-357-8155 and quote "NSTU Leisure Rate" rate or use the link below;

NSTU Halifax direct link: <https://reservations.travelclick.com/108084?RatePlanId=3532963> – no access code required

NSTU Barrington direct link: <https://reservations.travelclick.com/108025?RatePlanId=3546305> – no access code required



Poll Results Report for NSTU Presidential Election

Result by Local

Local	Region	Colleen Scott	Paul Wozney	Total	Eligible Voters	% of Voter Turnout
Annapolis	Valley	26	68	94	158	59.49%
Antigonish	Strait	27	118	145	201	72.14%
APSEA	APSEA	7	23	30	96	31.25%
Cape Breton	CD-Victoria	57	443	500	662	75.53%
Colchester-East Hants	Chignecto	77	428	505	787	64.17%
CSANE	CSANE	181	193	374	528	70.83%
Cumberland	Chignecto	39	152	191	297	64.31%
Dartmouth	Halifax	48	331	379	722	52.49%
Digby	Tri-County	26	59	85	113	75.22%
Guysborough	Strait	5	50	55	62	88.71%
Halifax City	Halifax	70	526	596	1050	56.76%
Halifax County	Halifax	150	1119	1269	2104	60.31%
Hants West	Valley	31	80	111	178	62.36%
Inverness	Strait	31	92	123	182	67.58%
Kings	Valley	104	287	391	624	62.66%
Lunenburg County	South Shore	32	216	248	418	59.33%
Northside-Victoria	CD-Victoria	39	157	196	265	73.96%
Pictou	Chignecto	40	216	256	426	60.09%
Queens	South Shore	15	61	76	92	82.61%
Richmond	Strait	22	34	56	60	93.33%
Shelburne	Tri-County	47	57	104	133	78.20%
Yarmouth	Tri-County	65	85	150	242	61.98%

Result by Region

Region	Colleen Scott	Paul Wozney	Total	Eligible Voters	% of Voter Turnout
CD-Victoria	96	600	696	927	75.08%
Chignecto	156	796	952	1510	63.05%
CSANF	181	193	374	528	70.83%
Halifax	208	1976	2244	3876	57.89%
South Shore	47	277	324	510	63.53%
Strait	85	294	379	505	75.05%
Tri-County	138	201	339	488	69.47%
Valley	161	435	596	960	62.08%
APSEA	7	23	30	96	31.25%

Active Reserve

Region	Colleen Scott	Paul Wozney	Total	Eligible Voters	% of Voter Turnout
Active Reserve	8	21	29	93	31.18%

Vote Summary

Total votes cast: 5963

Total eligible voters: 9493

Percentage turnout: 62.81%

Final Results

Answers	Votes	Percentage
Colleen Scott	1147	19.24%
Paul Wozney	4816	80.76%



Poll Results Report for Teachers' Provincial Agreement Ratification Vote

Result by Local

Local	Region	Accept	Reject	Total	Eligible Voters	% of Voter Turnout
Annapolis	Valley	129	2	131	158	82.91%
Antigonish	Strait	152	0	152	198	76.77%
Cape Breton	CB-Victoria	488	44	532	655	81.22%
Colchester-East Hants	Chignecto	512	38	550	751	73.24%
CSANE	CSANE	409	7	416	519	80.15%
Cumberland	Chignecto	194	5	199	294	67.69%
Dartmouth	Halifax	399	18	417	699	59.66%
Digby	Tri-County	78	6	84	105	80.00%
Guysborough	Strait	53	0	53	62	85.48%
Halifax City	Halifax	643	66	709	969	73.17%
Halifax County	Halifax	1306	116	1422	1996	71.24%
Hants West	Valley	130	7	137	175	78.29%
Inverness	Strait	120	7	127	180	70.56%
Kings	Valley	436	22	458	593	77.23%
Lunenburg County	South Shore	266	14	280	418	66.99%
Northside-Victoria	CB-Victoria	209	10	219	265	82.64%
Pictou	Chignecto	301	5	306	425	72.00%
Queens	South Shore	66	0	66	85	77.65%
Richmond	Strait	41	4	45	60	75.00%
Shelburne	Tri-County	115	2	117	126	92.06%
Yarmouth	Tri-County	170	8	178	235	75.74%

Result by Region

Region	Accept	Reject	Total	Eligible Voters	% of Voter Turnout
CB-Victoria	697	54	751	920	81.63%
Chignecto	1007	48	1055	1470	71.77%
CSANE	409	7	416	519	80.15%
Halifax	2348	200	2548	3664	69.54%
South Shore	332	14	346	503	68.79%
Strait	366	11	377	500	75.40%
Tri-County	363	16	379	466	81.33%
Valley	695	31	726	926	78.40%

Active Reserve

Region	Accept	Reject	Total	Eligible Voters	% of Voter Turnout
Active Reserve	12	5	17	68	25.00%

Vote Summary

Total votes cast: 6615

Total eligible voters: 9036

Percentage turnout: 73.21%

Final Results

Answers	Votes	Percentage
Accept	6229	94.16%
Reject	386	5.84%

NSTU SENATOR SERIES OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



Our Collective Responsibility: A Conversation on Anti-Black Racism *with* Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard



Thursday, January 7th from 6:30-7:30

Pre-registration will be required and the session will be
held on Zoom

More information to follow

<https://nstu.ca/nstu-members/professional-development/nstu-programs-services/nstu-senator-series-of-professional-learning>

The Honourable Wanda Thomas Bernard,
PhD, C.M., O.N.S.
Senator – Nova Scotia (East Preston)

Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard is the first African Nova Scotian woman to be appointed to the Senate of Canada, representing the province of Nova Scotia and her hometown of East Preston. Senator Bernard champions issues impacting African Canadians and people living with disabilities. She is particularly invested in human rights, employment equity, and mental health. Through her involvement in community projects, her social work career, her time with Dalhousie School of Social Work, and now her work in the Senate, Senator Bernard has maintained a deep dedication to social justice and racial justice. Senator Bernard advocates for reparations for the historic and continued anti-Black racism impacting the lives of African Canadians in her work.



If you are a Canadian
Elementary or Secondary Education
Worker

who is interested in issues related to
mental health at work, we would like to
invite you to participate in our
Healthy Professional Worker Study!



1 of 7
Case studies

There are two ways to participate:

1) a 15-20 min online survey -> go to <https://bit.ly/3nk2gBf>

2) an 45-60 min interview -> email hpw@uottawa.ca

OR **BOTH** (interview participants will receive a \$20 honorarium)

- We are exploring the mental health experiences of professional workers, and how these are affected by their personal, work and family lives.
- You may have decided to remain at work, or you may have opted to leave work.

We are interested in both situations.



www.HealthyProfWork.com



**WE ARE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN HOW
GENDER AFFECTS THESE EXPERIENCES**

This study has received ethics approval from the Universities of Ottawa, British Columbia, Laval, Manitoba, McGill, Nipissing, Waterloo, Saint Mary's, Toronto, Victoria and Carleton, Dalhousie, Memorial, Queen's, Simon Fraser and Western Universities

resources

Celebrating Canadian Women in Leadership

Dancing Backwards Society, a non-profit organization has developed a school program promoting gender equality, gender parity in governance and leadership and good citizenship.

This free, interactive, bilingual (French and English) online course for teachers for Grades 5 and up, can be found at www.dancingbackwards.ca. The program is fully downloadable, with eight lesson plans, videos, activities and a final project outline where students discover, document and celebrate women political role models. Dancing Backwards satisfies various Ministry curriculum criteria across the country in Social Studies, English, History, Government and Arts Education.

Neptune Theatre School Holidays Season Resources

Neptune Theatre School knows teachers are dealing with A LOT right now and want to you know about three things happening that might help/support you:

- 1) Dickens' A Christmas Carol is available in a TourCo Digital School package. Share with all classrooms virtually through private links. There is also an interview video, Zoom Q&A option, Study Guide and activity sheets. All this to help the next 2 weeks fly by! neptunetheatre.com/tourco or email school@neptunetheatre.com to book.
- 2) Directing on Zoom with Ann-Marie Kerr. This is a great opportunity to learn how to present work by your students. Brainstorm, ask questions, gain resources.
- 3) Teaching on Zoom with Laura Caswell. Caswell and her team have been running Zoom classes since May and have gathered a bunch of useful tools, games, resources and facilitation techniques that will serve you should you need to make the switch.

For either of these workshops go to neptunetheatre.com/adults and click on the Masterclass button.

Feel free to reach Laura Caswell (She/Her), Director of Education at Neptune Theatre at (902) 429-7300 x255 or lcaswell@neptunetheatre.com.



The deadline for the March issue of The Teacher is February 22

Contact Nancy at 902-477-5621 or theteacher@nstu.ca

Suite de 5

Nous avons déjà remporté des victoires contre toute attente et contre des adversaires coriaces. Nous pouvons gagner à nouveau et améliorer les mesures de protection en agissant par le biais du CMHST. En ce moment, la solidarité signifie que le NSTU vous appuie, vous et les autres membres de votre école, pour revendiquer vos droits en matière d'HST, car ils ouvrent la voie la plus directe entre le problème et la solution.

La sécurité est notre droit, le droit de nos élèves et le droit

de leurs familles. Ce serait fantastique si l'employeur s'assurait simplement que notre sécurité est pleinement garantie. Mais ce n'est pas le cas, et par conséquent, nous pouvons et devons agir ensemble. À une époque de l'année où nous pensons souvent aux autres, rappelons-nous à quel point la solidarité est un don puissant pour nos collègues et pour nos élèves. Ensemble, nous pouvons y parvenir.

Je vous souhaite des vacances sécuritaires, saines et reposantes. Ma famille se soucie sincèrement de vous et des vôtres.

Paul

notices

ATYA seeking members for its executive

The ATYA (Association of Teachers of Young Adolescence), a professional association of the NSTU is currently recruiting to fill two positions on its executive, Treasurer and President.


The committee meets in September, November, February and April to plan its annual conference, and the night before the conference at Riverside Education Centre in Milford. The four face-to-face meetings are held at the Hotel Halifax from 7-10 pm on Friday nights. Room, parking, meals and mileage are covered by the NSTU.

Please email Dawn Chapman (interim president and current conference registrar) directly at adchapman@nstu.ca as soon as possible, if you're interested in one of these positions.

executive highlights

October 16, 2020

- Approved a recommendation the NSTU offer the recommended candidate the Executive Director position effective February 1, 2021;
- Approved Table Officers' Report;
- Approved a recommendation that the NSTU donate \$1,000 through the CTF/FCE in solidarity with the teachers syndicate of Lebanon and the public primary school teachers league in Lebanon through the EI solidarity fund;
- Selected names for the November 2020 session of the John Huntley Memorial Internship Program;
- Approved a recommendation that Allan MacLean be appointed to serve on the Teachers' Pension Plan Trustee Inc. Board of Directors for a second 3-year term effective January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2023;
- Selected Drew Fournier, Halifax County, to serve as the Chair of the Equity Committee;
- Selected Byron Butt to serve as the South Shore representative on the Governance & Policy Committee;
- Approved a recommendation that the Hotel Halifax and the Barrington Hotel be selected as the NSTU Business Hotel Contract for 2021-2023;
- Approved amendments to Operational Procedure 8 – Election Procedures effective November 1, 2020;
- Approved a recommendation that the NSTU participate in CTF's survey on Teacher Mental Health being conducted October 2020.
- Approved a recommendation that Annual Council 2022 be held at the Westin NS;
- Ratified the 2020 Digby Local Constitution;
- Approved a process that Professional Associations be directed to use with regards to the adoption of their 2020-2021 Budget;
- Approved a process that Professional Associations be directed to use with regards to the election of Executive Members;
- Approved a process that Professional Associations be directed to use with regards to submitting Resolutions for consideration at Annual Council 2021;
- Ratified the 2020 Yarmouth Local Constitution;
- Approved a recommendation that the NSTU suspend webmail service to PSAANS members until an affiliation agreement between the NSTU and PSAANS can be reached, or an arrangement in which PSAANS pays the NSTU for services rendered, retroactive to the date Bill 72 received Royal Assent.




Delmore "Buddy" Daye
Learning Institute
Excellence in Africentric Education & Research

The 2021 African Nova Scotian History Challenges

Entries accepted from October 21, 2020 to February 12, 2021

Awards include bursaries totalling \$3,000.00, prizes and gifts.



NSTU Preferred Pricing

30% OFF

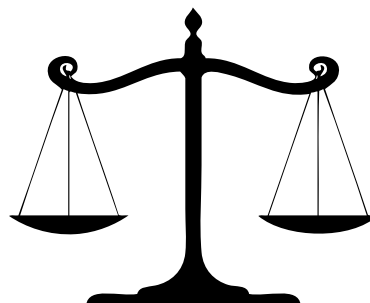
YOUR Will and
Enduring Power of Attorney



ANDERSON SINCLAIR NS DIVISION

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Email: bbalcom@andsinc.com



executive highlights

November 22, 2020

- Approved the following resolution be forwarded to Annual Council 2021:
BE IT RESOLVED that the NSTU create a new, full time executive staff position to be filled by a racially visible candidate effective August 1, 2021, with a job description/scope of practice to be co-developed with racially visible members;
- Approved a recommendation that the NSTU conduct and fund a series of virtual consultation sessions with racially visible members to collect input to determine the scope of a proposed new executive staff role to be filled by a racially visible candidate, with a report back to the February 2021 Provincial Executive meeting.

December 4, 2020

- Approved the Table Officers' Report;
- Approved the updated SIP&P;
- Elected the following Provincial Executive members to serve as liaisons on NSTU Standing & Administrative Committees:
Yolanda Aubrecht – Curriculum Committee
Yolanda Aubrecht and Shaun Doyle – Nominating Committee
- Approved a recommendation that the NSTU participate in a Multi-University – Mental Health Survey;
- Filed 2019-2020 Year End Reports for NSTU Committees;
- Ratified the 2020 Cumberland Local Constitution;
- Approved amendments to the Strait RRC Constitution;
- Ratified the 2020 Guysborough County Local Constitution;
- Approved a recommendation that the term for the Antigonish Local Treasurer be extended by one year, commencing August 1, 2020 and ending July 31, 2021;
- Approved amendments to Operational Procedure 3 – Committees of the NSTU – General Terms of Reference;
- Approved amendments to Operational Procedure 4 – Committees – Standing Committees of the Provincial Executive;
- Approved amendments to Operational Procedure 6 – Boards, Foundations, and Trustees of the NSTU;
- Approved amendments to Operational Procedure 21 – Negotiations;
- Referred a Resolution to the Provincial Economic Welfare Committee;
- Approved a recommendation that the Professional Development Committee consider online learning as an eligible option for the Out-of-Province Grant for the 2020-2021 school year.



COVID has changed the way we teach



Have a great idea for your classroom or school?

Need funding to make it happen?

Then apply for a PDAF grant!

Next deadlines: February 1, April 1 & June 1.
Receive up to \$5,000 for innovative and unique program development.
More details at <https://nstu.ca/nstu-members/professional-development/grants-opportunities/program-development-assistance-fund-pda>





NOTICE OF REGIONAL PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE ELECTIONS

Spring 2021

A. Background:

NSTU By-Law Article I – Membership sub-article 2 defines eligibility to hold office:

The rights of Active Membership shall include, but not necessarily be limited to the right to vote and hold office at the local and provincial level.

NSTU By-Law Article II – The Council sub-article 1 defines the Provincial Executive as:

The Executive of the Council as described in the Teaching Profession Act shall be the Provincial Executive.

NSTU By-Law Article III – The Provincial Executive sub-article 1 outlines the composition of the Provincial Executive as:

Composition

- (a) *The composition of the Provincial Executive shall be: the President, the First Vice-President, the Immediate Past-President, and twenty-one (21) Regional Members.*
- (b) *The number of Regional Members and the regions from which they shall be elected are as follows:*

(i) Annapolis/Hants West/Kings	2 Members
(ii) Antigonish/Guysborough	1 Member
(iii) Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA)	1 Member
(iv) Cape Breton Industrial	2 Members
(v) Colchester/East Hants	1 Member
(vi) Conseil syndical acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse (CSANE)	2 Members
(vii) Cumberland	1 Member
(viii) Dartmouth	1 Member
(ix) Digby/Shelburne/Yarmouth	2 Members
(x) Halifax City	2 Members
(xi) Halifax County	2 Members
(xii) Inverness/Richmond	1 Member
(xiii) Lunenburg County/Queens	1 Member
(xiv) Northside Victoria	1 Member
(xv) Pictou	1 Member

- (c) *A Provincial Executive Member must be an Active Member of the NSTU.*

- (d) *A Provincial Executive Member shall not concurrently hold office at the Local, Regional, or Professional Association Level.*

NSTU By-Law Article III – The Provincial Executive sub-article 8 outlines the duties of the Provincial Executive as:

The Provincial Executive functions in the name of Council between sessions; it shall perform its duties in a manner that is consistent with the will of Council as expressed through resolutions passed by Council. In addition, the Provincial Executive shall carry out duties imposed specifically by the Teaching Profession Act, these By-Laws, Standing Orders, and Operational Procedures. The Provincial Executive will have, but not necessarily be limited to, carrying out the following duties:

- (i) *appoint and dismiss an Executive Director and such other paid employees of the Union as it may deem necessary and determine their duties, remuneration, and terms of employment, including bonding;*
- (ii) *provide suitable offices and equipment for carrying on the work of the NSTU;*
- (iii) *direct and supervise the business, property, and affairs of the NSTU between Council meetings, and all decisions that are deemed policy by the Provincial Executive shall be forwarded to the upcoming Council as resolutions;*
- (iv) *determine the place and date and make arrangements for workshops and special Council meetings;*
- (v) *issue a post-Council press release;*
- (vi) *provide assistance with organizing Locals, Regional Representative Councils, and Professional Associations;*
- (vii) *shall ratify constitutions of Locals, Regional Representative Councils, and Professional Associations by following regulations outlined in the NSTU Operational Procedures;*
- (viii) *determine the boundaries of the Locals;*
- (ix) *publish a magazine or other official publications;*
- (x) *cause the books and accounts of the Council to be audited annually by a chartered accountant and cause the report of the auditor to be submitted to Council;*
- (xi) *have the power to convene an emergency meeting of a Local or a meeting of the NSTU Members in a given area; and,*
- (xii) *is empowered to exercise on behalf of the Union, as the Provincial Executive deems advisable from time-to-time, the powers of the Union under the Teachers' Pension Act and report thereon to the Council at the next following meeting of the Council.*

B. Regional Elections to be Held Spring 2021:

Regions Holding Elections	Number of Members to be Elected
Annapolis/Hants West/Kings	1 Member
Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA)	1 Member
Cape Breton Industrial	1 Member
Cumberland	1 Member
Conseil syndical acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse (CSANE)	1 Member
Digby/Shelburne/Yarmouth	1 Member
Halifax City	1 Member
Halifax County	1 Member
Northside Victoria	1 Member
Pictou	1 Member

C. Procedure and Timeline of Election Process:

NSTU Operational Procedure 8 – Election Procedures sub-section B outlines the voting procedures for Regional Provincial Executive Members as:

I. Notice of Pending Election

- a. Notice of all pending Regional Provincial Executive elections shall be posted on the NSTU website and advertised in an issue of *The Teacher* at least thirty (30) days prior to the closing of nominations. **(for Spring 2021 this means Monday, January 25, 2021)**
- b. Notice of a pending Regional Provincial Executive election shall be sent to NSTU leaders (Local President(s), RRC Chair (if applicable), and Provincial Executive Member(s)) from within the boundaries of the region as defined in NSTU By-Laws Article III – The Provincial Executive at least thirty (30) days prior to the closing of nominations. **(for Spring 2021 this means Monday, January 25, 2021)**
- c. Notice shall include the process for nominations.

II. Nominations

- a. Nominations for the office of Regional Provincial Executive shall be submitted on the official Nomination Form.
- b. The official Nomination Form may be found on the NSTU website.
- c. Individuals may nominate themselves.
- d. A candidate's Nomination Form must be completed and returned to the Executive Director or designate

no later than 4:00 p.m. on the last Friday of February **(the closing of nominations)**. **(for Spring 2021 this means Friday, February 26, 2020)**

- e. In the event that no nominations are received in a given region, the close of nominations shall be extended by two (2) weeks, and notice shall be sent to NSTU leaders from within the boundaries of the region. **(for Spring 2021 this means Friday, March 12, 2021)**

III. Voting Day

- a. The voting day shall be the third Wednesday in April. **(for Spring 2021 this means Wednesday, April 21, 2021)**

D. Nominations:

The official Nomination Form is submitted online at: <https://nstu.ca/the-nstu/communications/online-forms/provincial-executive-nomination-form>. Confirmation of receipt of the Nomination Form will be emailed to the Candidate upon submission. Candidates will be contacted soon after the close of nominations regarding election procedures.

E. Contact Person:

For further information regarding the 2021 Regional Provincial Executive Elections, contact Louis Robitaille Executive Staff Officer Research, Governance, and Policy at lrobitaille@staff.nstu.ca or 1-800-565-6788 (local 902-477-5621).

Kings Local New Member Session

The Kings Local held a session for new members on October 14 at the Kai Wing restaurant in Coldbrook. Facilitated by professional learning executive staff officer Miguëlle Légère, this session provides information on the many programs and services offered to teachers by the NSTU.



Shown (front row): Lindsay Burns, a third year teacher Grade 4 and 5 Core French teacher at Glooscap and Port Williams Elementary School; Kings Local president Laura McCulley; and Abby Bastock, a first year Grade Primary teacher at St. Mary's Elementary School. Middle row: provincial executive member Jo-Leigh MacPhee (Annapolis-Hants West-Kings); staff officer Miguëlle Légère; and Shane MacDow a first-year school counsellor at Kingston & District School. Back Row: Kings Local's vice-president professional development Jacinda Hatton, first vice-president Joanne-Richardson Landry, and treasurer Tabitha Durling.



Manulife Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)

Hello Fellow Plan Members,

It's hard to believe the holidays are just around the corner and 2020 is coming to an end. Trying to describe 2020 would be nearly impossible and we know we will all be happy to start a new year with a clean slate. The NSTU Group Insurance Trustees want to extend the most sincere thank you to each and every one of you for all of your hard work and dedication this year. The example you have set for all of your students showcasing how to make the most out of a challenging situation has been truly remarkable and you should all be very proud of yourselves.

We are thrilled to end the year with some very positive news and changes to your Group Insurance Total Care Medical Plan. As a result of negotiations, the new Teachers' Provincial Agreement will include the following enhancements to your benefits:

1. Introducing 80% coverage for Continuous Glucose Monitor (CGM) System
2. Introducing 80% coverage for cochlear implant upgrades, parts and accessories
3. Increasing coverage for maintenance of prosthetic and other appliances to \$200 in any consecutive 12 month period
4. Increasing hearing aid benefit to \$750 in any 36 consecutive month period.

We are confident all of these changes will support you and your family's needs and we are very proud that we have been able to further enhance this best-in-class benefits offering.

In the coming weeks, there will be more information regarding the effective dates of these changes and how to begin the processing of claims.

In addition to the enhancement to the Total Care Medical Plan, we are also happy to share with you some changes to our Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP). Our partner, Manulife Financial, has launched a new and improved interactive online platform making it easier to get the support you need, when you need it, in a way that works best for you!

However, this updated experience means that the Resilience® platform and brand you are accustomed to will no longer be active and you will be redirected to the updated platform — ***Manulife Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)***.

All of the previous benefits and support tools of Resilience® will remain in place, however the new ***Manulife Employee and Family Assistance Program*** will provide you with even more programs and make it easier to use to support you when you need it.

Manulife continues to partner with Homewood Health leveraging this easy to use online platform which offers:

- A modern user-friendly platform, accessible through any device, including Homewood Health™'s mobile app*
- Easy access to content, such as eLearning, articles, videos and podcasts on a wide range of topics, based on your profile and interests
- 24/7 live chat with Homewood Health™ counsellors
- E-counselling and E-therapy

Gaining access to this abundance of support and information is easy. Simply visit the ***Manulife Employee and Family Assistance Program*** website at www.manulifeefap.com and register using **Contract # 39146**. Once you have registered via the website, you can then download the Homewood E-App in all mobile application platforms.

***Make sure to create an account on the EFAP website platform (www.manulifeefap.com) first before downloading the mobile app.**

If you had previously registered and had an account through Resilience®, you will be redirected to the updated platform and be required to re-register by way of the steps above.


If you have any questions you can contact the Manulife Employee and Family Assistance Program toll-free – 24 hours, seven days a week – English: 1-877-955-NSTU (6788) or in French: 1-514-875-0720.

You can find more information on all of the above by visiting the NSTU Group Insurance Trust website at www.nstuinsurance.ca

We once again want to thank all of you everything that you do. Although this holiday season may be much different than any one we have experienced in the past, we wish you all a very safe and happy Holiday season.

Take care,

Your NSTU Group Insurance Trustees

A black dog, possibly a Labrador Retriever, is shown in profile, looking up at a chalkboard. The chalkboard has a wooden frame and contains the text "Educators, thank you for all you do." written in white chalk. The background is a solid purple color.

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Cape Breton District Local's rep retreat focuses on teacher wellness

The Cape Breton District Local held its annual retreat for its NSTU representatives at the Holiday Inn in Sydney on October 23 and 24.

Presentations focused on teacher wellness, rep responsibilities and teaching during a pandemic.

NSTU counsellor Sandra Murray's *Teacher Wellness* workshop centred around burnout and suffering vicarious trauma. "With the threat of COVID-19 teachers are dealing with a present trauma, not an imagined "what if" event," she says. She points out that teachers are asked to be flexible and adaptable all the time. "But add the threat of COVID-19, and workplace stressors quickly become something that cannot be sustained without negative physiological and psychological consequences."

She says that just being removed from the stressor, like the school day ending doesn't mean the emotion or anxiety is complete. "It's not just the pandemic during the school day," she continues.

"We need to be able to create space to allow our emotions to go through a cycle," says Murray. She outlined the seven strategies from the book *Burnout* by Emily and Amelia Nagoski as practical suggestions in cycling through emotions and therefore helping to alleviate burnout.

Seven Strategies to complete an emotion cycle.

1. Physical Activity – For example dancing, tensing muscles and then letting go
2. Breathing – Breathing in deeply, holding, and then a long slow breath out
3. Positive social interactions – tell your body you are safe – Connect with someone who feels like "home"
4. Laughter – Belly Laugh – Reminisce with someone about a belly laugh



NSTU counsellor Sandra Murray presented a workshop on Teacher Wellness



Shown seated: Lindsay Ross (Sydney Academy), Lisa MacIntosh (Sydney River Elementary School), and Carol Ann MacMaster, and Leigh Anne Baker (Cusack Elementary School). Standing: provincial executive member John White, Cape Breton District Local president Peter Murphy, executive staff officer Miguëlle L  g  re, Derek Bailey (Glace Bay High School) and CBDL's vice-president of professional Development Dawn Spracklin.

situation that you experienced and it brings that memory right into the present

5. Affection – 20 seconds – hugging until body relaxed
6. A good cry – allow yourself to complete – sometimes we are afraid to cry – A tip – Be mindful of the sensation of the cry – tears going down cheek, etc., this will assist in stopping the feeding of the reason for crying
7. Creative expression – Art, Music, Writing, Journal writing. “Your body will tell you when the cycle is complete—like after a good cry or a good hug,” she adds.

Executive staff officer Miguëlle L  g  re outlined responsibilities of NSTU reps—teachers who provide support to colleagues—providing valuable information for their important role. Through her *Teaching in a Pandemic* presentation, Executive staff officer Stacy Samson outlined important aspects of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, including the right to refuse work, and contractual avenues for teachers under the regional and provincial agreements with respect to school safety during a pandemic.



Executive Staff officer Stacy Samson presents to the CBDL about Teaching in a Pandemic

continued from page 1

August 1, 2020, a 0.5 per cent increase on July 31, 2021, a 1.5 per cent increase on August 1, 2021, and 1.5 per cent increase on August 1, 2022. The contract will expire on July 31, 2023.

The agreement also includes an increase to the amount of time teachers are given for marking and preparation. Effective August 1, 2021, teachers will have a minimum of 12.5 per cent of instructional time for marking and preparation averaged over the school year. “This represents a 25 per cent an increase in prep time for our members,” says Wozney. “Teachers haven’t seen any increase in marking and prep time for 50 years and this will help to decrease the ongoing demands on teachers’ time.”

Due to COVID-19, the NSTU hosted Tentative Agreement telephone town hall meetings, which took place November 2, 4 & 5, so teachers could learn more about the tentative agreement in advance of the vote. The previous teachers’ contract which was imposed through Bill 75 on February 21, 2017 expired on July 31, 2019.

A Local-by-Local/Regional breakdown of the vote results is found on page 11.



NSTUs provincial executive met on October 26 to hear details of the tentative agreement.

The deadline for the January/February issue of The Teacher is January 20

Contact Nancy at 902-477-5621 or theteacher@nstu.ca



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Refer to website for application deadlines



In lieu of printing holiday cards this year, the NSTU has chosen to support the African Nova Scotian Freedom School. The first of its kind in Nova Scotia, the ANS Freedom School teaches Black youth about Black struggle, resistance, and activism, to help guide them "towards leadership and into community service." Launched in August 2020, its free sessions for Black youth aged 12 to 18 teach about the Black Lives Matter movement and the long history of African Nova Scotian activism. It was co-founded and is facilitated by public school educators Malik Adams, Venessa Brooks, Kim Cain, Karen Hudson and Wendie Poitras Wilson, social worker Marsha Hudson-Ash, NSCC faculty member Rashida Symonds, and professor and lawyer Rachel Zellars. For more info: <https://freedomschoolsns.wixsite.com/ansfs>.

May you stay safe and healthy over this holiday season.



classifieds

Classified rates are \$2.00 for the first 15 words and 25¢ per additional word upon presentation of a professional number.

Non-members pay \$6.00 for the first 15 words and 25¢ per additional word.

To book, call Nancy Day at 1-800-565-6788 or email theteacher@nstu.ca

Permanent HRCE Physical Education teacher looking to do an exchange with a teacher in the CBVRC for 2020-2021. Permanent exchange possible. Please contact: hrcpe14@outlook.com



Teaching and administrative opportunities in the Nova Scotia International Programs

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For a list of opportunities see:

www.internationalprograms.ednet.ns.ca

From Out of Province to online

This school year, the NSTU will consider online learning as an eligible option for the Out of Province grant.

Application forms can be found at:
<https://nstu.ca/nstu-members/professional-development/grants-opportunities/study-and-research-grants>

