



Evangeline Middle School's Tree of Hope Featured in NSTU's Holiday Message

The NSTU filmed its annual holiday greeting on November 25 at Evangeline Middle School (EMS) in New Minas. Students, teachers, staff, and NSTU President Peter Day participated in the day-long shoot, which highlighted the school's long-running *Tree of Hope* program.

For more than 25 years, the *Tree of Hope* has supported local charities—including Chrysalis House and the Kids Action Program—while also assisting families within the EMS school community.

"The *Tree of Hope* reminds students, and all of us, that helping others doesn't require grand gestures. Sometimes the smallest act can light the way for someone feeling unseen," says NSTU President Peter Day.

Students in the *Tree of Hope* Exploratory and Leadership Team lead the campaign, organizing candy cane sales, donation drives, bake sales, and school-wide fundraisers over an eight-week period. The *Tree of Hope* is decorated with student-made ornaments that represent donations of \$10 to \$25 from members of the school and the wider community.

"Donations can be made anonymously or in someone's

name, and our goal is always to fill the tree with as many ornaments as possible—a true reflection of generosity, caring, and community spirit," says Freda Larade, Grade 7 Immersion teacher and lead for the *Tree of Hope* Exploratory.

Continued on page 5



NSTU to Appear at Provincial Standing Committee on Human Resources

On January 6, NSTU President Peter Day will appear before the Provincial Standing Committee on Human Resources to discuss ongoing challenges related to teacher recruitment and retention in Nova Scotia.

Day says he welcomes the opportunity to share solutions aimed at alleviating the teacher shortage that has affected all regions of the province in recent years. While the province has focused considerable attention on increasing recruitment, particularly by fast-tracking teacher certification, he argues that improving retention must be a central part of addressing the issue. The shortage of specialists, including school counsellors, behavioural specialists, school psychologists, and speech-language pathologists, has also made classrooms more complex, further exacerbating the shortage.

"Studies show that one-third of new teachers are leaving the

Continued on page 5

Holiday Hours

Nova Scotia Teachers Union

Closed from December 24, 2025 to January 2, 2026

belairdirect

Open Wednesday, December 24 (till 12:30 pm), Monday, December 29 (regular hours), Tuesday, December 30, (regular hours), Wednesday, December 31, 2025 (12:30 pm)

Closed Thursday, December 25, and Friday, December 26, 2025 and Thursday, January 1, 2026

Reopens Friday, January 2, 2026



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[NSTeachersUnion](https://www.instagram.com/NSTeachersUnion)



<http://www.youtube.com/nstuwebcast>

people

Status of Women Committee plans conference

NSTU's Status of Women held its first meeting of the school year on October 10. This committee's mandate includes advising the provincial executive on ways of enhancing the status of women in the teaching profession and society. This includes developing policy recommendations to support policies of the employer that are relevant to women's issues; providing advice on the content, delivery, and design of status of women programs; and advising on how to promote opportunities for networking, leadership, and professional development for women members. At this meeting the committee started planning for its biennial conference which will take place April 17 and 18, 2026.



Clockwise from the left: Committee Chair Leigh-Anne Rizzo-Baker (Cape Breton District), Bernice MacNeil (Cape Breton District), provincial executive liaison Jemita Buchanan, Cindy Ng-Ivanhoff (Halifax County), NSTU staff liaison Wendie Wilson, Viviane Abdallah (Dartmouth) and Jen Bradley (Digby). Missing: Danielle LeBlanc (Kings)

Professional Development Committee

Pictured are members of the Professional Development Committee at its first meeting of the school year on November 3. This program committee reviews and develops policies and programs designed to enhance teachers' professional effectiveness and support educational advancement through research in Nova Scotia classrooms. It also administers the NSTU's Educational Research Awards, Travel Fellowship, Conference Grants, and Full-Time Study Grants, and makes recommendations on the selection of recipients to the provincial executive. At this meeting, the committee were reviewing applications for this school year.



Seated: Lauren Slaunwhite (Kings), Sarah Baldwin-Penny, Chair (Queens), Pauline Seymour (Richmond), and Sarah Slauenwhite (Digby). Standing: Jason Jennings (Halifax County), staff liaison Amanda O'Regan-Marchand and provincial executive liaison Janet O'Brien (Antigonish). Missing: Bernice Stewart (Pictou)

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Submission deadlines for 2025-2026:

ISSUE	DEADLINE
September	September 3
October	October 10
December	December 5
Jan/Feb	January 23
March	March 6
April	April 10
May	May 15
June	June 19

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MEWHSWC Committee

The Member Services, Health & Safety, and Working Conditions Committee held its first meeting of the school year on October 3. This NSTU program committee identifies potential bargaining items and prepares background information to support negotiations. It monitors trends and developments in teacher bargaining across Canada, reviews economic forecasts, considers Council resolutions, and examines the outcomes of recent contract negotiations. The committee also studies issues related to occupational health and safety for members and educational worksites and reports its findings to the Provincial Executive.



Seated: Heather Campbell (Inverness), Denise Stone (Yarmouth), Ryan Locke (Halifax City), NSTU president Peter Day and Heather Hiscock (Annapolis). Standing: staff liaison Elizabeth Thomas, provincial executive liaison Chad Warren (Yarmouth), first vice-president Jo-Leigh MacPhee and Mike Jamieson (Dartmouth).

Season's Greetings

We would like to extend warm wishes for a happy, healthy holiday season to our valued members and their families.

From the NSTU President



Kindness, Connection and Hope

As autumn settled across Nova Scotia and classrooms filled with all the familiar energy of the school year, another annual tradition took root, one that reminds us of the strength, passion, and professionalism within our system.

At the end of October, teachers and specialists from across the province gathered for conferences and professional learning events organized by our NSTU Professional Associations. This long-standing tradition continues to be the highest participation event within our union every year. It reflects what we know to be true, educators are lifelong learners who are always striving to grow in practice, deepen understanding, and better support the students we serve.

Our 21 Professional Associations work tirelessly behind the scenes to plan, develop, and deliver exceptional learning opportunities. They coordinate conferences, workshops, and keynote speakers for every subject area and grade level, ensuring that no matter where one teaches, there is a place to learn and connect. The engagement we see each October is a testament to the dedication, creativity, and leadership of the volunteers who make these events possible.

On behalf of NSTU members across the province, I would like to extend my sincerest thanks. Your hard work strengthens the profession, enriches classroom practice, and uplifts educators each year.

As we move toward the holiday season, I am reminded of the meaningful work happening every day in our schools, not only academically, but as part of the fabric of our communities. Many schools take on projects that bring joy, dignity, and support to those around them. One shining example is at Evangeline Middle

School in New Minas, where a small idea has grown into a powerful tradition: the *Tree of Hope*.

For more than 25 years, this initiative has nurtured empathy and connection by encouraging small acts of kindness. Whether it's writing a note of encouragement, sharing food, or offering a simple gesture of care, the *Tree of Hope* reminds students, and all of us, that helping others doesn't require something grand. Sometimes, the smallest act can light the way for someone feeling unseen or overwhelmed.

I had the pleasure of visiting the staff and students at Evangeline Middle School while filming this year's NSTU holiday commercial. The atmosphere was alive with excitement and warmth, an energy that quickly spread to everyone in the room. It was a powerful reminder that when we come together with compassion, hope grows.

As we enter this holiday season, let us carry that spirit forward. Let us remember that kindness is powerful, connection matters, and hope is something we can create together. A warm smile, a kind word, a moment of patience, these gestures cost little yet can mean everything to someone who needs it.

Thank you for the work you do every day in your classrooms and communities. You make a difference.

Wishing you rest, joy, and hope in the weeks ahead.

The NSTU supports Alberta teachers

The NSTU was proud to stand with the Alberta Teachers' Association as they took an historic stand to ensure Alberta's students, teachers, and classrooms receive the support they need and deserve. On October 17, NSTU Provincial Executive members and staff wore "Red for Ed" to show their solidarity and support for Alberta's teachers!



continued from page 1

Students in Grades 6–8 who participate in the Exploratory and Leadership Team also took part in the filming of the NSTU's 2025 Holiday Message. The production coincided with the school's Holiday Bake Sale, which raised \$600 for the *Tree of Hope*. Music teacher Kimberly Cormier also organized students from the band and choir to perform during the day.

"The atmosphere was alive with excitement and warmth—an energy that spread to everyone in the room," Day adds. "It was a powerful reminder that when we come together with compassion, hope grows."

A sincere thank-you goes to Kings Local President Laura McCulley, Principal Stan MacVicar, Vice-Principal Osama Darwish, school counsellor Paula Guy, and teachers Freda Larade, Kimberly Cormier, Kathy-Ann Browning, Sandra Bornemann, Marissa LaPierre and librarian Denise Young for their support in creating this year's holiday message. Appreciation is also extended to all students, teachers, and staff involved.

The 30-second greeting will air on television, Connected TV, digital platforms, and social media from December 15 to 31. A full version of NSTU's 2025 Holiday Greeting can be viewed on the NSTU YouTube channel: youtube.com/NSTUwebcast.



Freda Larade with NSTU president Peter Day.



Standing in front of the Tree of Hope are: Peter Day, Kimberly Cormier, Freda Larade, Marissa LaPierre, Paula Guy and Denise Young.

continued from page 1

profession in the first five years after certification, so we cannot simply recruit our way out of this situation," says Day. "Retention needs to be a central part of any strategy aimed at ensuring a sustainable workforce."

Day says that keeping qualified teachers in the system requires focused action in three key areas: improving workloads, eliminating school violence, and reducing class sizes. He notes that teachers are deeply committed to their students, making it critical that appropriate supports are in place to ensure all students' needs are met.

"Teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions, and ultimately the solutions to help eliminate the teacher shortage are the same solutions required to ensure students across the province have access to safe, happy, and healthy classrooms," Day says.

The NSTU's appearance is intended to support ongoing discussions with Government and education partners on how best to support Nova Scotia's students and teachers, and how to ensure classrooms remain fully staffed in the years ahead.

Building Classroom Community Through Theatre-Inspired Practices

by Aren A. Morris, Fine Arts Specialist, Halifax Regional Centre for Education

As a Fine Arts Specialist with Halifax Regional Arts, I have the privilege of being invited into classrooms to work with teachers and students every day. In those shared spaces, I see teachers taking relationship-building seriously; they know who is in front of them and offer the best they can to each learner.

At the same time, I recognize the complexity, fatigue, and increasing strain present in many classroom environments. Educators are navigating significant demands—adapting to diverse learner needs, implementing individualized approaches, and supporting positive behaviour—while ensuring meaningful learning still takes place.

Why Community Building Matters

This is where community building becomes invaluable. It goes beyond strengthening relationships between teacher and student—it creates intentional opportunities for students to build relationships with *one another*. It is social-emotional frontloading: fostering spaces where students know, trust, cooperate with, and empathize with each other.

In my 15 years teaching Drama and Dance at the secondary level—spaces where students must take positive risks—I found that community building minimized behaviour concerns and anxiety while maximizing creative and academic output. When students feel they belong, they are less likely to act out; instead, they reach out for support.

In my current role, I've spent the past eight years adapting ensemble-building techniques used in theatre for cast cohesion into everyday classroom use from Primary through Grade 12. These techniques help students (and teachers) better understand, support, and care for one another as they work and learn together.

"Building a strong community was paramount to having a successful year together in our classroom. Students felt comfortable to take risks with their learning and always felt like we all had each other's back all year."

– Grade 5 Teacher, Grosvenor Wentworth Park School

What Is Ensemble-Building?

In theatre, an ensemble is a group of performers who listen deeply, respond thoughtfully, and collaborate toward a shared goal. Though the context is artistic, the skills are universal: trust, communication, cooperation, and empathy. These same capacities allow classrooms to function as safe, thriving learning communities.

"Community and ensemble building [...] helped me develop confidence in leading communication workshop activities and helped my students come together as a classroom community. It enriched my speaking and listening curriculum and gave my students communication and public speaking tools that served them throughout the year."

– Grade 8 Teacher, Clayton Park Junior High



Techniques for Classrooms

Over the years, I've developed a simple formula: **GATHER, SHARE, PLAY**. I use this almost daily when working with students, and regardless of age, learners benefit from each component.

GATHER refers to the ways you bring the group together to acknowledge shared time and space. These are short, fun activities that help students learn names, collaborate, and build reliance and trust—icebreakers, cooperation games, or simple grounding practices. In any grade or subject, something as small as a name game or a one-word check-in communicates: *You matter. We notice when you're here. We're happy to work together.*

SHARE provides consistent opportunities for students to learn about one another, discovering commonalities and celebrating differences. A circle, a simple "Question of the Day," and a Talking Object can transform a room. I increasingly turn to questions that move beyond favourites and into culturally responsive prompts such as: *What food do you share when celebrating with loved ones? or Tell us the story of your name.* Invite participation—but always allow a pass.

PLAY is an invitation to engage in something simply for enjoyment. All learners—five, fifteen, or forty-five—need play. And if you must connect play to curriculum, there are countless ways to do it. Can your class gather in a circle and "Pass the Energy" while practicing eye contact, non-verbal communication and group awareness? Can students devise short, improvised scenes to model lab safety? If students know you value "serious fun," they are more likely to focus during challenging tasks. Play teaches listening, collaboration, and support—skills essential whether solving a math problem or creating a scene.

"We often hear about the importance of building classroom community however sometimes it is hard to know the 'how'. The games, discussions and activities introduced were fun, engaging and targeted the goal of building classroom community."

— School Counsellor, West Bedford School



pathways

FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

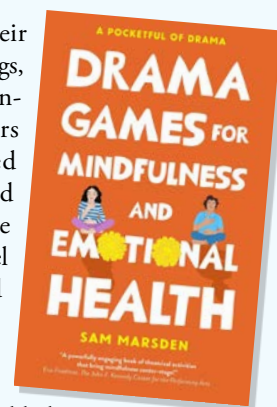
Email your name, home address, and the name of your school with **PATHWAYS** in the subject line to theteacher@nstu.ca by **January 21, 2026**, to be eligible for the draw.

Drama Games for Mindfulness and Emotional Health

by Sam Marsden

Morpho Press

Actors learn to stay aware of their breath, body, emotions, surroundings, and others skills that benefit non-actors as well. This book offers 29 simple, mindfulness-based activities for children, teens, and adults, helping students regulate emotions, improve focus, and feel more grounded. Educators and practitioners praise the book for its accessible, engaging activities and its strong support for mental and emotional well-being. Reviewers highlight its usefulness across age groups, its creative and calming classroom impact, and its value for anyone working with young people.



Practical Tips

Here are a few easy entry points for building community in your space:

Start small. Offer short daily or weekly ensemble-building activities. Keep them consistent and make them a priority.

Be a role model. If you expect openness, respect, and positive risk-taking from students, demonstrate those qualities yourself—and play alongside them.

Be consistent. Community building isn't a one-off activity. Pair the work with nurturing routines and return to it throughout the year.

Celebrate progress. Acknowledge the changes you see, big and small.

Take time to reflect. Reflection strengthens the ensemble. Ask: *What helped our work today? Where did we struggle? How did we support each other?*

Community building is an ongoing process, even once your classroom feels solid. Keep returning to **GATHER, SHARE, PLAY**, and remember you don't need to be a drama teacher to use these theatre-inspired techniques. A few minutes of intentional community building invites students to experience learning as part of a supportive collective—transforming the classroom from a group of individuals into a community with a shared purpose.

Aren A. Morris is an author, educator, theatre maker, producer, typewriter enthusiast, and a gatherer of creative folk. She serves 12 schools in HRCE, working for Halifax Regional Arts as a Fine Arts Specialist with a focus on Drama, Dance and Movement. Find her on Insta at @aren_a_morris.

Managing the stressors of the season

by Amy Mahoney, M.Ed, RCT and Sandra Murray, B.Ed, MCP, RCT

NSTU's Counselling Therapists, Member Assistance Program

Teachers are no strangers to stress during the work week. But stepping away from school responsibilities can sometimes mean stepping directly into a new set of pressures—especially during the holidays. Managing expectations, planning celebrations, and trying to create a festive season can bring its own unique stressors.

It is not so much about the stressors, it is about your individualistic expectations as to how you “should” handle these stressors—that terrible word “should.” We invite you to stop “shoulding” all over yourself.

Most people make the holiday season about creating happiness for other people, forgetting about what makes them happy. NSTU members are quite familiar with this concept. This time of year, presents a period to reflect and be intentional as to what you wish to occur and how you wish to feel during these holidays. Review the following list to assist you in going into the season with intention:

1. Make a list of what you normally have done during past holiday seasons. Set it down for a day. Then go back to the list and put a check mark by three things that bring you happiness. That may be baking—no judgement—just bring it in internally and see how it feels. Does it bring you joy?
2. Look at the remaining things that are on the list and if they are truly important to you—then delegate—for example, hosting a dinner—ensure it is now a potluck.
3. No comparisons are allowed. To be specific, no looking at the Martha Stewarts or Meghan Markles of the world. Limit use of your Pinterest, Threads and other social media networks.

4. Look at your calendar and have a “do nothing” day, or days, or hours, and by nothing—it means being decadent—long baths, reading in bed, hot chocolate, napping with a do not disturb sign on your door.
5. This may be a time when there is a loved one no longer with you—make time to share stories about that loved one and what they loved about the holidays. Stories are very healing and keep their memories close to your heart.
6. If you are alone, consider going to a community centre to share a meal. And if you are not alone, and know someone who is alone, start a tradition of inviting them to your table.
7. Get out in nature—trail walking (don't forget the hot chocolate at the end of the trail—holding it, smelling it, and feeling the warmth of it all.) Go sledding, skiing, or have a snowball fight.
8. Laugh—tell stories that made you laugh in the past—bring that laughter into the present—laughing is so good for the body. Watch a comedy show.

Setting boundaries around your time can be challenging, especially when long-held beliefs make it hard to practice self-compassion. Be gentle with yourself and remember that caring for your own well-being is essential—particularly during a season filled with outside demands. Just because you're acclimatized to constant pressures as a teacher doesn't mean you need to carry those expectations into the holidays. Healthy boundaries not only strengthen your relationships but also support a healthier, more balanced you.

Happy Holidays.

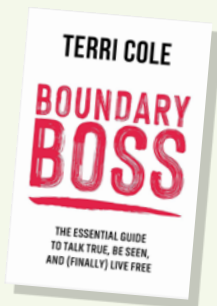


the well teacher

Email your name, home address, and the name of your school with **WELL TEACHER** in the subject line to theteacher@nstu.ca by January 21, 2026, to be eligible for the draw.

Boundary Boss by Terri Cole self-published

Most of us were never taught to clearly express our needs or limits, which can lead to resentment or relationship conflict. *Boundary Boss* by psychotherapist Terri Cole explains how learning to set healthy boundaries is a key skill for creating a happier, more self-directed life. Cole shows readers how to stop abandoning their own needs, communicate with confidence, and break patterns of people-pleasing—without guilt or drama. The book offers practical tools, for recognizing boundary violations, understanding your personal “Boundary Blueprint,” and dealing with manipulators or toxic personalities. It also addresses codependency and how to build balanced, healthy relationships. Written especially for women who feel drained from over-giving, *Boundary Boss* provides guidance to reclaim time, energy, and emotional well-being.



Bēginnings

Putting new members in the KNOW!

Email your name, home address, and the name of your school with **BEGININGS** in the subject line to theteacher@nstu.ca by January 21, 2026, to be eligible for the draw.

The Inclusive School by Gunther Sullivan self-published

The Inclusive School: Empowering Students through Diverse Learning invites readers into a learning environment where every student is valued and supported to thrive. It offers a comprehensive exploration of inclusive education guiding readers through topics such as understanding diverse learning needs, embracing neurodiversity, implementing individualized education plans, using universal design for learning, supporting English language learners, and leveraging assistive technology to remove barriers. It serves as an inspiring call to action. By celebrating difference and highlighting the transformative power of inclusive practices, the book encourages readers to help build schools where all learners belong, contribute, and succeed.



October Book Winners!



Patrick Harroun — CBVRCE

Bēginnings

Putting new members in the KNOW!

Hannah Cusack — HRCE



Jacinda Hatton — AVRCE



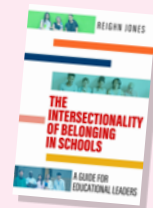
Myriam Landry-Leblanc — CSAP



Email your name, home address, and the name of your school with **EQUITY** in the subject line to theteacher@nstu.ca by January 21, 2026, to be eligible for the draw.

The Intersectionality of Belonging in Schools by Reign Jones

The Intersectionality of Belonging in Schools: A Guide for Educational Leaders offers educational leaders a clear and compassionate roadmap for addressing the emotional and systemic toll of marginalization tied to race, disability, gender, and other identity markers. Grounded in current research, it explains how intersectionality shapes students' experiences and shows why creating a genuine sense of belonging is both essential and achievable. Through practical examples, actionable strategies, and insightful guidance, Reign Jones empowers readers to strengthen equity, diversity, and inclusion across their school communities. The book highlights the vital connection between student identity and belonging, helping leaders develop the motivation and skills to foster an equitable environment for all.





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Building capacity: NSTU treasurers gather for training

On October 3 and 4, the NSTU hosted a conference for Local treasurers at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel in Dartmouth. The event offered both new and returning treasurers essential information to support their roles as financial stewards of NSTU's 22 Locals.

Led by NSTU's financial officer Melanie Waye, the conference covered key topics such as roles and responsibilities, banking procedures, expense guidelines, rebates, and taxable benefits. Treasurers also had the opportunity to exchange best practices related to managing budgets, overseeing income and expenses, maintaining bank accounts and financial records, and ensuring timely payment of bills and taxes.

NSTU president Peter Day, executive director Bethany MacLeod and secretary-treasurer Taunya Pynn Crowe brought greetings to the delegates. Members of NSTU's Finance and Property Committee were also present.

Treasurers usually receive professional development and training during NSTU's annual Leadership Development Conference in August, which did not take place this year.



Standing: NSTU secretary-treasurer Taunya Pynn Crowe, new treasurers Karleigh Huskins (Queens), Michelle Pineau (Northside-Victoria), Curt Crane (Colchester-East-Hants), James Streeter (Hants West), Lacey Richard (Guysborough County) and NSTU's executive director Bethany MacLeod. Seated: NSTU's financial officer Melanie Waye and NSTU president Peter Day.



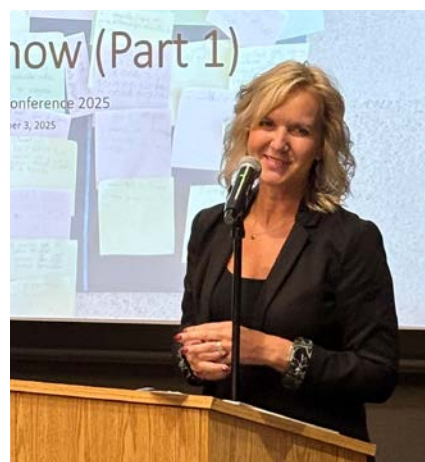
Melanie Waye



Peter Day



Taunya Pynn Crowe



Bethany MacLeod

Province-wide PD Day highlights

Friday, October 25, 2025

Strengthening Practice Across the Province: Highlights from Professional Associations Conference Day 2025

On Friday, October 25 over 7,000 teachers and specialists, including pre-service teachers participated in 20 conferences across the province as part of the 41st Annual Provincial Professional Development Day.

“This long-standing tradition continues to be the highest participation event within our union every year,” says NSTU president. “It reflects what we know to be true: educators are lifelong learners who are always striving to grow in practice, deepen understanding, and better support the students we serve.”

Each conference—organized for teachers and specialists at all levels—offered subject-specific professional learning in areas such as drama, English, French, math, science, and social studies. Others were tailored for school counsellors, speech-language pathologists, and school psychologists, along with one conference dedicated entirely to equity in education. All conferences were planned, developed, and delivered through the tireless volunteer efforts of NSTU members.

“The engagement we see each October is a testament to the dedication, creativity, and leadership of the volunteers who make these events possible,” adds Day. “Special thanks go to the leadership of our professional associations for the countless volunteer hours they devote to organizing these conferences. Their efforts strengthen and energize public education in Nova Scotia.”

This year’s events took place in Hants, Louisbourg, Kennetcook, Milford, Millbrook, Truro, Wolfville, and numerous locations

across the HRM, offering more some 476 keynotes, plenaries, panel discussions, and workshops.

In his video greeting, the president emphasized the importance of the day. “These sessions are more than professional development—they are opportunities to collaborate, share ideas, and enhance our collective practice. Each of you plays a vital role in shaping the future of public education in Nova Scotia, and your commitment to continuous growth reflects that dedication.”

Conference Day also coincided with strike action by part-time faculty—members of CUPE Local 3912—at Saint Mary’s University and Mount Saint Vincent University. The Social Studies Teachers Association held its conference at SMU, and the Psychologists in the Schools Association held theirs at MSVU. Prior to October 24, NSTU President Peter Day visited both picket lines to show support for CUPE members. He also spoke with a member of CUPE’s executive to offer NSTU’s support and to discuss the upcoming conferences, noting that NSTU members would be working on October 24 and required to attend the sessions scheduled at those locations.

Throughout the day, NSTU President Peter Day and newly appointed Executive Director Bethany MacLeod visited four conferences to meet with PA executives and NSTU members. See below and on the following page for highlights from this year’s events.



AST

This year’s Association of Science Teachers Conference was themed *Time for Science* and featured 50 workshops including all day sessions and wellness sessions. Held historically at Halifax West High School, over 500 delegates at this conference attended workshops including *Rocks & Minerals*, *Biodiversity: Building Ecological Literacy*, *IB Chemistry Discussion*, *Inclusive Pathways to Engineering*, and *Celebrate Green Science*. One session featured Star Finder, a new educational program from Saint Mary’s University that will enable teachers to integrate free resources for astronomy-focused curriculum aligned with Nova Scotia’s curriculum.



Shown with NSTU president Peter Day (far right) and executive director Bethany MacLeod (far left) are members of the AST executive: president Jessica Goora, vice-president conference Doug Perry, director Jane Berrigan, secretary Jennifer Smith, and director James Parsons.



The exhibit hall is a highlight of the AST conference.

EDANS

The Educational Drama Association of Nova Scotia hosted its *A Stage for Every Age* conference at Woodlawn High School in Dartmouth, welcoming 125 participants for a full day of hands-on workshops. Sessions explored dance, puppetry, improv, yoga, radio drama, and tabletop gaming in the classroom, along with practical methods and resources for Drama 10, Drama 11/12, and Musical Theatre 12.

The conference opened with a keynote by Logan Robbins, a queer environmental theatre maker, director, puppeteer, and Artistic Director of The Unnatural Disaster Co. Robbins presented a work-in-progress performance from a new puppet theatre project, *Sleep Demons*, joined by featured performers Kaitlyn Thompkins, Danel Nwobi, and Emma Chapman-Lin.

NSTU President Peter Day attended *Tabletop Gaming for the Classroom*, a session led by Northumberland High School English and Social Studies teacher Savannah MacDonald. The workshop introduced participants to the world of Dungeons & Dragons, a storytelling game MacDonald has integrated into her teaching practice. The session covered the fundamentals of gameplay and character creation, the educational benefits of role-playing games, useful digital tools, and how D&D can support exploration of neurodivergence, gender, and identity.

During a discussion on classroom applications, one participant shared how using D&D with a non-verbal student provided the student with a voice and a meaningful way to demonstrate learning. "It's a great way for students to understand that it's okay to fail—that it's not the end of the world," MacDonald noted. "The power of play isn't just fun; it's a vital tool for identity, connection, and expression."



Savannah MacDonald during her D&D workshop.



Shown in the photo are members of EDANS executive with the NSTU president and executive director. Back Row: NSTU executive director Bethany MacLeod, member-at-large Sarah Overmars, secretary James Thompson, , member-at-large Ryan Sadler, vice-president Kasi Humber, president Jennifer Priddle, and NSTU president Peter Day. Front Row: registrar Jonathan Grady, treasurer Brandi Kozuch, and member-at-large Savannah MacDonald.



Participants at the Tabletop Gaming for the Classroom session.



Sleep Demons performance

NSSCA

This year's Nova Scotia School Counsellors Association was held at Citadel High in Halifax. The 250 delegates attending could choose from some 20 workshops under the theme *Everyday Impact: Pragmatic Practices for School Counsellors*. Sessions included: *Cannabis and the Adolescent Brain*, *Understanding Students through Art: Practical Creative Strategies for School Counsellors*, *Neuro Spectacular Brains: Understanding and Supporting ADHD and Autism through a Neurodiverse Affirming Framework*, *How to Receive a Disclosure: Sexualized Violence and Human Trafficking*, and *Women in Trades*.



From left to right: executive director Bethany MacLeod, NSSCA vice-president Christine Comeau, president Amy Barry, director Danita Williams, treasurer Victoria Scott, director Darlene Kyte, secretary Stephanie Wallace, and NSTU president Peter Day.

SPAA

Close to 200 of NSTU's Speech Language Pathologists came together at the Speech-Language and Audiologists Association's Conference which focused on *Comprehensive Literacy Instruction: Bridging from Emergent to Conventional Literacy Instruction*.

This conference featured an all-day session presented by SLP Dr. Lori Geist, who is an associate professor at University of North Carolina's School of Medicine. With an emphasis in augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), her session provided an instructional framework, practical approaches and access to free resources for literacy instruction for students who cannot rely on speech alone to be heard and understood. During the conference time for hands-on exploration of the resources in small groups and follow-up discussion was provided.



From left next to right: Peter Day, SPAA executive members Laurenn McCoy, Communications; Meghan MacNeil, President; Stephanie Porter, Secretary; Mattie Smith, Vice President; Laura Zentner, Treasurer; and Bethany MacLeod.



SLPs working for schools in the Tri-County Regional Centre for Education: Tammy Farrell (Digby), Brittany Fry (Shelburne County), Mattie Smith (Yarmouth) and Colleen Rowland are shown with Peter Day and Bethany MacLeod.



SPAA president Meghan MacNeil during the association's AGM.



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Presentations are age-appropriate for elementary and secondary students, available in French or English, and free of charge.

To learn more or to book a presentation, visit [RickHansen.com/Ambassadors](https://rickhansen.com/Ambassadors) or scan the QR code.



We're shining a spotlight on teachers who make inclusion real.

Across Canada, dedicated teachers are creating classrooms where students with diverse learning needs - including those with intellectual disabilities - are welcomed, supported, and able to learn and participate fully. At **Inclusive Education Canada**, we are gathering positive examples of teachers who adapt, collaborate, and innovate to ensure every student belongs.

We invite you to complete our survey so we can collect examples of outstanding practice. Your submission may highlight academic learning, group projects, performances, athletics, vocational experiences, extracurricular activities, field trips, or even a small but memorable moment that shows a teacher making a difference.

As a gesture of appreciation, we will be recognizing **three exceptional inclusive teachers** with gift cards for their classrooms. These honoured educators will also be invited to share their strategies and insights during our **National Inclusive Education Month** observance in **February 2026**, helping to inform effective inclusive practice across the country.

Thank you for helping us celebrate your efforts as you lead the way to make inclusion real in your classroom. Your story strengthens our shared commitment to ensuring that every student is included—and able to succeed.

Teachers can complete our SURVEY by the following LINK:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/13xoy4Wp2u-ldk8USykSbtHnVTX28cxL-j2gPZbQ4TKQ/edit>

executive highlights

October 17, 2025

- Filed the Table Officers Report;
- Selected members for the John Huntley Memorial Internship Program for a 2-day session;
- Approved the Financial Officer's Personal Services contract;
- Approved the Administrative/Operations Staff contract for August 1, 2025 to July, 31, 2028;
- Adopted a new Operational Procedure entitled Defining Equity to be placed in the Governance Section;
- Amended Operational Procedure 3 – Committees of the NSTU – General Terms of Reference, F – Selection Process and Criteria;
- Amended Operational Procedure 4 – Committees – Standing Committees of the Provincial Executive, C – Equity Committee, I – Mandate, C;
- Amended Operational Procedure 25 – John Huntley Memorial Internship Program;
- Amended Operational Procedure 26 – Professional Learning Support;
- Amended Operational Procedure 32 – NSTU Delegation to the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour Biennial Convention;
- Amended Operational Procedure 9 – Election Procedures;
- Forwarded resolution to Annual Council 2026 regarding amending NSTU By-Law III – The Provincial Executive, effective August 1st, 2026.

December 5, 2025

- Filed the Table Officers Report;
- Selected a member to serve on the NSTU Group Insurance Trustees;
- Selected a member to serve on the NSTPPT Inc. Board of Directors for a 3-year term;
- Selected members to be forwarded to the NS Federation of Labour as NSTU's nominees for NSFL Committees;
- Selected a member to serve on the Professional Associations Coordination Committee (PACC);
- Selected a member to serve on the Status of Women Committee;
- Selected a member to serve on the Substitute Teachers Committee;
- Approved a motion that the recommended candidate be offered a probationary contract for position of Executive Staff Officer;
- Approved Conference Grants in the amount of up to \$600.00 each;
- Unanimously approved a motion that the NSTU President request of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development that the current roll out of the gender-based violence curriculum be paused immediately until appropriate and sufficient professional learning has taken place, due to concerns for safety of students, members and school communities;
- Ratified the 2025 Halifax City Local Constitution;
- Defeated an amendment to Operational Procedure 33 - NSTU Delegation to the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour Biennial Convention;
- Approved amendments to Operational Procedure 9 – Defining Equity;
- Approved an amendment to Operational Procedure 16 – Provincial Executive, G - Provincial Executive Honorarium be amended as of August 1, 2026.

coming events

JANUARY 26 TO FEBRUARY 1, 2026

Crayola Creativity Week 2026

Crayola Creativity Week is happening January 26 to February 1, 2026. This free, global learning event, in its fifth year, saw more than 13 million students from 122 countries participate in 2025 alone.

This year's lineup includes musician and filmmaker Questlove, actor Michael Rainey, Jr., Property Brothers stars Drew and Jonathan Scott, the artists behind Bluey and Snoopy, and soccer players Harry Kane and Matt Turner, and more.

A great resource for schools, the program allows students to explore creativity across subjects with help from inspiring creators.

Registration is now open at Crayola.com/CreativityWeek. A Crayola learning expert is available to share additional information on the need for creativity-led learning and why programs like this are important.

ANNOUNCING THE 2026 CRAYOLA CREATIVITY WEEK LINEUP!



A vertical graphic showing the daily lineup for Crayola Creativity Week 2026. Each day is represented by a colored banner with a date, title, featured guests, and a Crayola Creativity Week logo. The days are: Monday, Jan. 26 (Facing the Music), Tuesday, Jan. 27 (Building Together), Wednesday, Jan. 28 (Embracing Your Ideas), Thursday, Jan. 29 (Reaching Team Goals), Friday, Jan. 30 (Exploring the Moon), Saturday, Jan. 31 (Empowering Communities), and Sunday, Feb. 1 (Storytelling Adventures).

Day	Date	Topic	Guests
MON.	JAN. 26	FACING THE MUSIC	with artist Kate Micucci and illustrator Mark Hoffmann
TUE.	JAN. 27	BUILDING TOGETHER	with Property Brothers Drew & Jonathan Scott and illustrator Kim Smith
WED.	JAN. 28	EMBRACING YOUR IDEAS	with filmmaker, musician, and author of <i>The Idea in You</i> Questlove and illustrator Sean Qualls
THUR.	JAN. 29	REACHING TEAM GOALS	with football/soccer players Harry Kane & Matt Turner and illustrator Marina Ruiz
FRI.	JAN. 30	EXPLORING THE MOON	with NASA astronauts and Snoopy artist Mary Valencia-Shyne
SAT.	JAN. 31	EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES	with actor Michael Rainey Jr. and illustrator Rob Flowers
SUN.	FEB. 1	STORYTELLING ADVENTURES	with Bluey artists from Ludo Studio Jasmine "Jazz" Moody & Nick Rees and wildlife conservationist Bindi Irwin

Deals & Discounts

for NSTU members
(including retired members),
please visit the website at www.nstu.ca

FEBRUARY 1 TO 28, 2026

First Page student writing challenge

The First Page student writing challenge is back for the 2025-2026 school year.

Each year, [CBC Books](https://CBCBooks) asks students to give us a glimpse of the great Canadian novel of the future for the [First Page student writing challenge](https://CBCBooks).

Students are challenged to write the first page of a book set 150 years in the future, with the protagonist facing an issue that's topical now and set the scene for how it's all playing out in a century and a half.

The contest will be open for submissions from Feb. 1-28, 2026.

Download posters for your classrooms: in [colour](https://CBCBooks), [black and white](https://CBCBooks), or [mobile-friendly version](https://CBCBooks).

TEACHER GUIDES: Visit Curio.ca for discussion questions and writing tips from Canadian writers, like [Cory Doctorow](https://CoryDoctorow), [Linwood Barclay](https://LinwoodBarclay), [Fonda Lee](https://FondaLee), [Cherie Dimaline](https://CherieDimaline), [Erin Bow](https://ErinBow), [Katherena Vermette](https://KatherenaVermette) and [M.G. Vassanji](https://M.G.Vassanji).

Got questions? Email cbcbooks@cbc.ca and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.



A poster for the First Page Student Writing Challenge. It features a stylized illustration of an astronaut in a red suit standing on a planet surface, holding a notepad. A small dog in a red suit is sitting next to the astronaut. The background is a dark blue space with stars. The text on the poster reads: "ENTER THE FIRST PAGE STUDENT WRITING CHALLENGE FEBRUARY 1-28 CBC.CA/THEFIRSTPAGE". A QR code is in the bottom left corner, and the CBC Books logo is in the bottom right corner.

The LEGACY Collexion

Welcome back to School! Let's Inject equity into the curriculum gradually with Afrotastic NEXT!

Please support us in making a difference in the minds of students BY ORDERING BULK AMOUNTS (50, 100, etc) for your class, school or school board.

Our **Afrotastic activity books** are designed for Grades 4–8, offering engaging, curriculum-linked activities that bring Black history to life **all year long**—not just in February.

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- Explores global Black achievements

Each 20-page, full-colour book is print-on-demand, allowing schools to order in bulk so every student can participate. Prepaid orders ensure timely delivery straight to your classroom.

Join us in advancing equity in education—equip your students with the tools to learn, reflect, and lead. Purchase a book for your students!

Buy yours today!!



A young boy with short dark hair, smiling broadly, wearing a white t-shirt under a blue denim jacket and a black backpack. He is positioned on the left side of the poster.

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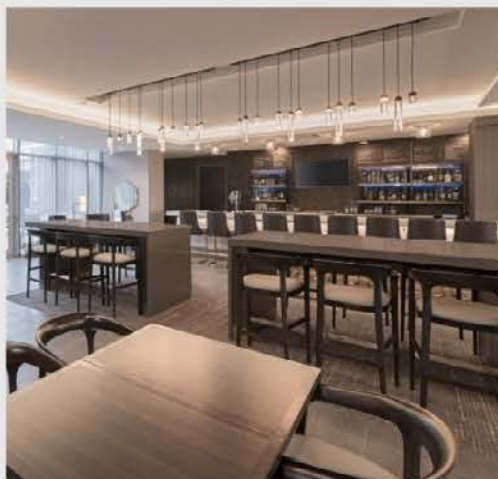
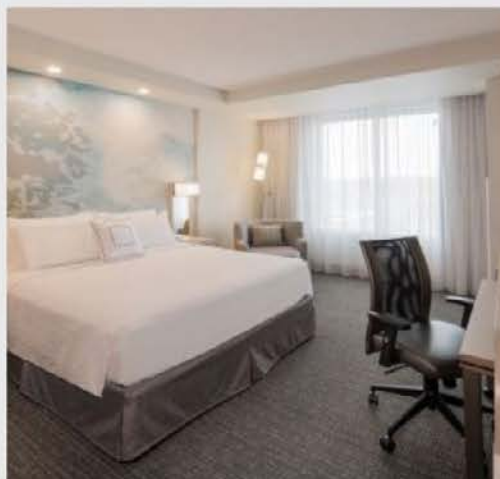


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Strengthening Union leadership through Huntley Internship

This fall, six NSTU members took part in the John Huntley Memorial Internship Program, held November 13 and 14, 2025. Each school year, members are selected through an application process reviewed by NSTU Table Officers and approved by the Provincial Executive. During the two-day internship, participants spend time at the NSTU Central Office exploring the union's programs, services, and governance. Interns engage in sessions with NSTU staff—including the Executive Director, the NSTU President, and staff members from Member Services, Professional Development, Public Relations, the Member Assistance Program, Governance and Finance.

Facilitated by the Professional Learning Department, this program continues to receive positive feedback from participants.

The next internship session is scheduled for March 26 and 27, 2026. Internship Huntleys Fall 2025. Click [here](#) to apply.



Standing: Executive staff officer and staff liaison to the program Pamela Langille; Darren Rudolph (Dartmouth) a math coach and math support teacher at Ocean View Elementary School in Eastern Passage; Becky Lytle (Halifax County) Halifax Regional Arts drama teacher with the Lockview Family of Schools; Jennie McKibbin (Cape Breton District), a music and band teacher at Riverside School in Albert Bridge; Dawn MacDonald (Dartmouth) a Grade 2/3 teacher at Crichton Park School; and NSTU president Peter Day.

Seated: Justin Burns (Halifax City) a Grade 6 teacher at St. Stephen's Elementary School; and Rachel Smith (APSEA) a teacher who supports students who are deaf or hard of hearing. She works for schools from Enfield to Truro which includes mostly those in the Chignecto Central Regional Centre for Education, and some in Halifax Regional Centre for Education. She is also APSEA's Local president.



Shown are members of the Annapolis Local of the NSTU at a professional development session about Pregnancy Parental Leave and Adoption. The session took place on October 9 and was presented by Executive Staff Officer, Kyle Marryatt, who is the staff liaison to Annapolis Valley Locals. Left to right: Karlee Perry, Brittany Aalders, Amber Corkum, Jenn Handspiker, Nate Goudreau, Carrie Murray, Emily Reimer, Annapolis Local president Jeannie Montgomery and Hannah Allbright.

Finance & Property Committee

The NSTU's Finance & Property Committee is pictured below at its October 3 meeting. This committee is responsible for preparing the annual budget, costing all resolutions going to Annual Council, and overseeing the Union's finances. It reviews regular reports on income, expenditures, investments, and loans, and ensures yearly audits are completed. The committee also reviews internally examined financial reports from Locals, RRCs, and Professional Associations, and provides recommendations to the Provincial Executive regarding financial and management services.



Seated: NSTU's financial officer Melanie Waye; NSTU's secretary-treasurer and committee Chair Taunya Pynn Crowe, (Colchester-East Hants); and NSTU president Peter Day.

Standing: Phil Samson (Richmond), Sharon Midwinter (Cumberland), provincial executive liaison to the committee Vera Ryan, Crystal Patterson (Halifax County), and NSTU's executive director Bethany MacLeod.

Meaning of Home

The Meaning of Home is an annual writing contest for students in Grades 4, 5 and 6 that invites students across Canada to submit a poem or essay explaining what home means to them in support of Habitat for Humanity Canada.



The Nova Scotia Impact

In 2025, over 1900 students from Nova Scotian schools submitted entries to the Meaning of Home contest. Three runner-ups from Nova Scotia brought home grants worth \$30,000, raising over \$49,000 for Habitat for Humanity Nova Scotia. The funds will help build safe and affordable homes for families in communities across the province.

Teacher sign-up is now open!

The Meaning of Home contest is a unique and meaningful way to get your students involved in creative writing and giving back in their community. Lesson plans and curriculum to help guide the creative writing process are available to teachers.

Register at: meaningofhome.ca/register

Teachers from Nova Scotia will be entered to win a one-night stay at The Westin Nova Scotian, sponsored by The Westin, Halifax.



Grand Prize (3)
\$30,000 Grant
+ iPad + Pizza Party for
their class



Runner Up (9)
\$10,000 Grant
+ iPad + Pizza Party for
their class



All Entries
\$10 donation to Habitat
for Humanity Nova
Scotia



SAGEN™

For more information, please visit: meaningofhome.ca

Food, Film, and Learning for Nova Scotia Students

The NSTU marked its seventh year as a sponsor of The Big Picture Program, a signature youth-focused initiative of *Devour!* The Food Film Fest, which takes place in Wolfville each October.

Over the last decade, *Devour!* and Nourish Nova Scotia have partnered to present engaging, curriculum-relevant films for students, exploring themes such as sugar consumption, farming, food waste, and climate change. This long-standing program has reached more than 4,500 students across Nova Scotia, offering enriching film screenings and interactive workshops.

On October 21, NSTU President Peter Day addressed students and teachers from West Hants Middle School before the screening of *Priced to Thrill*. Directed by Stephanie Joline, the documentary highlights Dartmouth's family-owned Gateway Meat Market and the dedicated team that keeps prices low while serving as a vital community hub. *Priced to Thrill* is available for streaming on CBC Gem.

"I want to thank your teachers for bringing you here to take part in this unique food and film experience," Day told participants. "Today's event is a wonderful opportunity for you to learn, explore, and be inspired."

The two-hour program combines film screenings with facilitated discussions led by Nourish Nova Scotia and hands-on cooking classes offered by Nova Scotia Community College's culinary program.

This year's festival, celebrating its 15th anniversary from October 21 to 27, featured the theme Montréal All Stars, showcasing Montréal's top culinary talent alongside more than 30 Atlantic Canadian chefs, food producers, and beverage innovators.



NSTU president Peter Day is shown with Hants West Middle School teachers Taylor Masters and Michelle Clarke who brought their Grade 8 integrated French immersion students to The Big Picture Program, and Claire Allély, Nourish Nova Scotia's Youth and Community Food Coordinator.



Priced to Thrill filmmaker Stephanie Joline is shown with Tamara McKay co-founder of Gateway.



NSTU Webmail has ended...

but let's stay in touch



Visit <http://www.nstucentral.ca> and update your member registry profile with a preferred non-employer email

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Email webaccounts@nstu.ca for help



Annapolis East Elementary School (AEES) celebrated Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) month in October, by sharing the new, accessible AAC board on its playground.

Funded by a grant from the NSTU Program Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) and the AEES School Advisory Committee, this initiative allows all students to communicate and connect during outdoor play.

“For students who are non-speaking or use a communication board, book, or device, this board gives them access to language outdoors,” says Laura Boates, Speech-Language Pathologist with the Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education. “Cold, snowy, and rainy weather, glare from the sun, or a lack of surfaces, like a table, can make it difficult to access AAC systems outside of the classroom.”

The board is a large, durable sign that uses picture symbols to represent common words. The board includes essential core vocabulary words and playground specific fringe words. Students and staff can point to symbols to communicate like: *My turn, I want to push, and Let's go.*

She says this new resource is not just for our students who use AAC; it benefits the entire school community. It does so through the following:

- Promotes Social Skills: It helps all students initiate play and conversation with their peers.

- Supports Literacy: The pairing of symbols and text, and inclusion of the alphabet and numbers, is an excellent tool for early literacy skills and for our English language learners.
- Reduces Frustration: By providing an immediate, easy way to communicate, the board can reduce the frustration that may lead to challenging behaviors.
- Provides Opportunities for Modeling: Staff and students can easily use the board to model language by pointing to symbols while speaking, which is the most effective way to teach AAC use.

“We are thrilled to be creating an inclusive communication environment where every student has a voice,” concludes Boates. She also supports students at Lawrencetown Consolidated School and Middleton Regional High School.

AAC Awareness Month is dedicated to raising awareness about different communication methods and ensuring people with speech or language impairments can be heard. For more information about AAC and AAC Awareness Month, you can speak with your school Speech-Language Pathologist.

The PDAF program encourages innovative program development in Nova Scotia's public schools. Co-sponsored by the NSTU and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development with an annual sum of \$200,000, it provides financial support for projects directly related to the Public School Program. Application deadlines coming up this school year are February 1, April 1 and June 1 by 4:00 p.m. For more information [click here](#).



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NOTICE OF REGIONAL, AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN, AND INDIGENOUS PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE ELECTIONS

Spring 2026

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:

1. COMPOSITION

- (a) *The composition of the Provincial Executive shall be: the President, the First Vice-President, the Immediate Past-President, twenty-one (21) Regional Members, one (1) African Nova Scotian Member, and one (1) Indigenous Member. African Nova Scotian as self-identified and Indigenous as self-identified.*
- (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 County/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.*
- (e) *Pursuant to 1 (b) where some regions elect more than one (1) member, one (1) of the two (2) elected Members shall be designated for an individual from an Equity-Owed group, Equity-Owed as defined in NSTU Operational Procedures. If no Equity-Owed Member(s) offers to run as a candidate in the first round of nominations a subsequent nomination period shall be open to all Active Members.*

NSTU By-Law Article III – The Provincial Executive sub-article 4 outlines the election process of the Provincial Executive as:

4. ELECTIONS

- (a) *The President shall be elected by a majority vote of the entire Active and Reserve Membership following the process outlined in Operational Procedures.*
- (b) *The First Vice-President shall be elected by a majority vote conducted at Annual Council following the process outlined in Operational Procedures.*
- (c) *The Second Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer shall be elected by the Provincial Executive at a meeting prior to the commencement of the term of office from amongst the Regional Members who will be Members of the Provincial Executive on August 1st of that year. The election shall be by majority vote.*
- (d) *Regional Members shall be elected by a plurality vote of the entire Active and Reserve Membership of the regions defined in 1. (b), following the process outlined in Operational Procedures.*
- (e) *The African Nova Scotian Member and the Indigenous Member shall be elected by a plurality vote of the entire Active and Reserve membership who self-identify as African Nova Scotian or Indigenous respectively following the process outlined in Operational Procedures.*

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

8. DUTIES

- C. *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.

REGIONAL, AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN, AND INDIGENOUS PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE ELECTIONS TO BE HELD IN THE SPRING OF 2026

Regions Elections	Number of Members to be Elected
Annapolis/Hants West/Kings*	1 Member
Antigonish/Guysborough	1 Member
Cape Breton District*	1 Member
Colchester/East Hants	1 Member
Conseil syndical acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse (CSANE)*	1 Member
Dartmouth	1 Member
Digby/Shelburne County/Yarmouth*	1 Member
Halifax City*	1 Member
Halifax County*	1 Member
Inverness/Richmond	1 Member
Lunenburg County/Queens	1 Member
Provincial Elections	Number of Members to be Elected
African Nova Scotian	1 Member
Indigenous	1 Member

* Indicates a Region where one (1) of the two (2) elected Members shall be designated for an individual from an Equity-Owed group, Equity-Owed as defined in NSTU Operational Procedures. If no Equity-Owed Member(s) offers to run as a candidate in the first round of nominations a subsequent nomination period shall be open to all Active Members.

DEFINING EQUITY

NSTU Operational Procedure 9 defines equity as:

9. DEFINING EQUITY

In instances where there are references to terms such as Equity-Owed, Equity-Deserving, or Equity-Seeking in NSTU documents these terms are defined as: a traditionally underrepresented in Union Leadership individual who self-identifies as being Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqew, First Nations, Indigenous, Inuit, or Métis; Black, African Nova Scotian, or of African Descent; Acadian; Person of Colour or Racialized; Two-Spirited, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, or additional sexual orientation or gender identity; a person with a Disability; a woman; or an individual from any other group traditionally underrepresented in union positions.

PROCEDURE AND TIMELINE OF ELECTION PROCESS FOR REGIONAL MEMBERS

NSTU Operational Procedure 10 – Election Procedures sub-section B outlines the voting procedures for Regional Provincial Executive Members as:

B. Elections/By-Elections for Regional Provincial Executive Members

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 2026 elections this means Wednesday, January 14, 2026)**
- 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 2026 elections this means Wednesday, January 14, 2026)**
- c. Notice shall include the process for nominations.
- d. Notice shall include the requirements regarding Equity-Owed Provincial Executive seats.

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 second (2nd) Friday of February (the closing of nominations). **(for Spring 2026 elections this means Friday, February 13, 2026)**
- e. In the event that no nominations are received in a given region, the close of nominations shall be extended by four (4) weeks, and notice shall be sent to NSTU leaders from within the boundaries of the region. **(for Spring 2026 elections this means Friday, March 13, 2026)**
- f. In electoral regions with two (2) Provincial Executive seats, one (1) of the two (2) elected Members shall be designated for an individual from an Equity-Owed group. If no Equity-Owed Member(s) offers to run as a candidate in the first round of nominations a subsequent nomination period shall be open to all Active Members.

III. Campaigning

- a. Campaign guidelines are as set out in NSTU Standing Orders and these Operational Procedures.
- b. Active campaigning for the office of Regional

Provincial Executive Member may begin no sooner than the close of nominations.

- c. A one-page (8 ½ x 11) poster will be printed and circulated to NSTU Representatives within the Region by NSTU Central Office upon receipt from a candidate. An electronic copy of the poster shall be circulated, by NSTU Central Office, to members in the region.
- d. If a Local invites candidates to attend a Local meeting or event, the invitation must be extended to all candidates.
- e. Campaign spending by or on behalf of each candidate may not exceed two hundred dollars (\$200). Candidates are solely responsible for all campaign spending.
- f. All candidates shall submit an official financial statement report form to the Executive Director or designate within sixty (60) days from the conclusion of the election. This report is to include an itemized list of expenditures.
- g. Suspected violations to these campaign guidelines shall be resolved in the following manner:
 - i. suspected violations shall be reported to the Regional Electoral Officer, in a timely manner, for resolution;
 - ii. the Regional Electoral Officer will attempt to resolve the issue informally;
 - iii. if the Regional Electoral Office is able to resolve the issue informally no further action is required;
 - iv. if the Regional Electoral Officer is unable to resolve the issue informally the suspected violation shall be referred to the Executive Director or designate for resolution;
 - v. the Executive Director or designate will attempt to resolve the issue informally;
 - vi. if the Executive Director or designate is able to resolve the issue informally no further action is required;
 - vii. if the Executive Director or designate cannot resolve the issue informally the Executive Director or designate shall make a ruling and inform candidates and the Regional Electoral Officer regarding this ruling, the ruling shall be final; and,
 - viii. rulings may include but are not necessarily limited to:
 1. a written warning,
 2. a notice of censure to other candidates,
 3. a public notice of censure to the membership, or
 4. removal from ballot.

IV. Voting Day

- a. The voting day shall be the third (3rd) Wednesday in April. **(for Spring 2026 elections this means Wednesday, April 15, 2026)**

PROCEDURE AND TIMELINE OF ELECTION PROCESS FOR AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN AND INDIGENOUS MEMBERS

NSTU Operational Procedure 10 – Election Procedures sub-section C outlines the voting procedures for Regional Provincial Executive Members as:

C. Elections/By-Elections for African Nova Scotian and Indigenous Provincial Executive Members

I. Notice of Pending Election

- a. Notice of pending African Nova Scotian and Indigenous Provincial Executive election(s) 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 2026 elections this means Wednesday, January 14, 2026)**
- b. Notice of pending African Nova Scotian and Indigenous Provincial Executive election(s) shall be sent to NSTU leaders (Local Presidents, RRC Chairs, and Provincial Executive Members) at least thirty (30) days prior to the closing of nominations. **(for Spring 2026 elections this means Wednesday, January 14, 2026)**
- c. Notice shall include the process for nominations.

II. Nominations

- a. Nominations for the office of African Nova Scotian and Indigenous Provincial Executive shall be submitted on the official Nomination Form.
- b. For the African Nova Scotian Provincial Executive position, nominations are open to individuals who self-identify as being African Nova Scotian. For the Indigenous Provincial Executive position, nominations are open to individual who self-identify as being Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqew First Nations, Indigenous, Inuit, or Métis.
- c. The official Nomination Form may be found on the NSTU website.
- d. Individuals may nominate themselves.
- e. 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 second (2nd) Friday of February (the closing of nominations). **(for Spring 2026 elections this means Friday, February 13, 2026)**
- f. In the event that no nominations are received, the close of nominations shall be extended by four (4) weeks, and notice shall be resent to NSTU leaders. **(for Spring 2026 elections this means Friday, March 13, 2026)**

III. Campaigning

- a. Campaign guidelines are as set out in NSTU Standing Orders and these Operational Procedures.
- b. Active campaigning for the office of African Nova Scotian and Indigenous Provincial Executive Member may begin no sooner than the close of nominations.
- c. A one-page (8 ½ x 11) poster will be circulated

electronically to NSTU Representatives by NSTU Central Office upon receipt from a candidate. An electronic copy of the poster shall be circulated, by NSTU Central Office, to members.

- d. If a Local invites candidates to attend a Local meeting or event, the invitation must be extended to all candidates.
- e. Campaign spending by or on behalf of each candidate may not exceed two hundred dollars (\$200). Candidates are solely responsible for all campaign spending.
- f. All candidates shall submit an official financial statement report form to the Executive Director or designate within sixty (60) days from the conclusion of the election. This report is to include an itemized list of expenditures.
- g. In cases where a vote is required a virtual All Candidates Forum shall be organized by the NSTU in the following manner:
 - i. The Forum shall take place at least one (1) week prior to Voting Day at a time selected by the Table Officers.
 - ii. The Forum shall consist of seven (7) minute presentations by each Candidate followed by a question-and-answer period of up to thirty (30) minutes. Candidates will be offered up to two (2) minutes each to provide an answer to questions. Candidates will alternate turns in answering questions.
 - iii. The order of the Candidates' presentations shall be chosen by lots.
 - iv. The Forum will be moderated by the Regional Electoral Officer. The Regional Electoral Officer may extend the question-and-answer period at their sole discretion.
- h. Suspected violations to these campaign guidelines shall be resolved in the following manner:
 - i. suspected violations shall be reported to the Regional Electoral Officer, in a timely manner, for resolution;
 - ii. the Regional Electoral Officer will attempt to resolve the issue informally;
 - iii. if the Regional Electoral Office is able to resolve the issue informally no further action is required;
 - iv. if the Regional Electoral Officer is unable to resolve the issue informally the suspected violation shall be referred to the Executive Director or designate for resolution;
 - v. the Executive Director or designate will attempt to resolve the issue informally;
 - vi. if the Executive Director or designate is able to resolve the issue informally no further action is required;
 - vii. if the Executive Director or designate cannot resolve the issue informally the Executive

Director or designate shall make a ruling and inform candidates and the Regional Electoral Officer regarding this ruling, the ruling shall be final; and,

viii. rulings may include but are not necessarily limited to:

1. a written warning,
2. a notice of censure to other candidates,
3. a public notice of censure to the membership, or
4. removal from ballot.

IV. Voting Day

- a. The voting day shall be the third (3rd) Wednesday in April. **(for Spring 2026 elections this means Wednesday, April 15, 2026)**
- b. The Regional Electoral Officer shall be the NSTU First Vice-President or designate as selected by the Table Officers.

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.

CONTACT PERSON

For further information regarding the 2026 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).

Deadline for nominations for NSTU President Friday, February 27, 2026

The deadline for nomination forms for NSTU President is Friday, February 27, 2026. Forms are available through the NSTU Executive Director, Bethany MacLeod by calling the NSTU office at 902-477-5621 or via email at executivedirector@nstu.ca.

Any active NSTU member is eligible to run for NSTU President. Potential candidates need to obtain the signatures of 25 Active or Reserve Members of the NSTU and each nomination form must be signed by the candidate. The nomination forms must be received by the office of the NSTU Executive Director, on the official nomination form, by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, February 27, 2026. Forms must be delivered via mail, courier, or in person. Nomination Forms received by telephone, fax, or other electronic means will be considered invalid.

Official campaigning for the NSTU Presidential election will begin on Monday, March 23, 2026.

The term of office for the next NSTU President will begin on August 1, 2026.



Teacher Wellness: Simple Strategies for Healthy Living and Weight Maintenance

Teaching is rewarding – but it's also fast paced and demanding. Long days, limited breaks, and the emotional load of supporting students can make it hard to prioritize your own well-being. The good news: small, consistent choices can help you maintain energy, support a healthy weight, and feel your best throughout the school year.

Healthy Living during a Busy School Day

Fuel up Smartly

It's easy to skip meals or grab quick snacks between classes, but steady energy comes from balanced eating. Keep nutritious options on hand – fruit, yogurt, nuts, whole grain crackers – and aim for regular meals that include protein, vegetables, and whole grains. Staying hydrated throughout the day also boosts focus and mood.

Move a Little, Move Often

You don't need a gym to stay active. Short bursts of movement add up: a brisk walk during prep time, stretching between classes, or a few minutes of stair climbing can increase energy and reduce stress. Even 10 minutes makes a difference.

Protect your sleep

Consistent sleep supports memory, patience, and emotional resilience – core ingredients for teaching. Establish a bedtime routine and try to set a limit on evening work to protect your rest.

Sustainable Weight Maintenance

Maintaining healthy weight is more about consistency than perfection.

- Choose balanced meals rather than skipping and then overeating.
- Practice mindful eating – slowing down helps you notice hunger and fullness cues.
- Incorporate low-impact activity like walking, yoga, or home workouts that fit your schedule.
- Manage stress with breathing exercises, quick mindfulness breaks, or journaling.

Wellness Highlights for the School Year

- Build small, lasting habits: Keep a water bottle in your classroom, prep snacks on Sunday, or set reminders to stretch.
- Strengthen emotional well-being: Connect with supportive colleagues, set realistic expectations for yourself, and take short breaks to reset.
- Maintain work-life balance: Block off personal time during the week and make space for hobbies.

Make the Most of your Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)

Your EFAP provides confidential support designed to help you maintain your health – physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Counselling Services

EFAP offers short-term counselling for a variety of concerns, including:

- Weight management
- Smoking cessation
- General health concerns
- Family or relationship challenges

The counselling is designed to provide support and understanding, help build coping skills, and teach ways to effectively manage issues and problems. Please visit www.nstuinsurance.ca for a complete list of counselling services.

Lifestyle & Specialty Coaching

Your EFAP also includes personalized coaching services such as:

- Nutritional coaching
- Smoking cessation
- Jumpstart your wellness
- Stress solutions

Lifestyle and Specialty Coaching Services are designed to allow you to take a proactive approach to everyday challenges and life transitions with information and coaching from experts in their field. Please visit www.nstuinsurance.ca for a complete list of lifestyle and specialty coaching services.

Online Resources

- Health Risk Assessment - accessible at any time via the online mental health platform and mobile app, addressing four specific dimensions of emotional health: work-life balance, anxiety, depression and stress.
- Online Health and Wellness Library - contains a continually updated collection of articles, videos and podcasts and other resources written by qualified experts in their subject field. Topics include stress, anger management, family issues, health and wellness, and current public concerns.
- E-Courses - offer instant access to online learning developed by psychologists and e-learning experts, targeting potential issues, such as stress, mood, alcohol use, relationships, resilience, money matters and workplace issues.

For additional help and support, the following programs and services offered through the NSTU Group Insurance and Member Assistance Program (MAP) are available:

NSTU Member Assistance Program	Contact Information
NSTU Counselling Services	(902) 477-5621 1-800-565-6788
Employee and Family Assistance Program	1-877-955-6788 www.homeweb.ca
<u>Total Care Medical Plan</u> Psychologist Services - 80% of the usual and customary charges to a maximum of 20 visits per year. Paramedical services – 80% of the usual and customary charges per treatment and a maximum of 20 visits per calendar year for the services of a naturopath, acupuncturist, osteopath, chiropractor, speech therapist, podiatrist/chiropodist, or occupational therapist. The services of a registered massage therapist will be covered at 80% of the usual and customary charges to a maximum of 20 visits per year (August – July).	belairdirect (902) 453-9543 or 1-800-453-9543 (toll-free) Email: GroupBenefitsNS@belairdirect.com

We trust the information outlined above is helpful. Please don't forget to visit our website at www.nstuinsurance.ca or scan the QR code to review the many benefits and programs available to you through the NSTU Group Insurance Plan.





Simple insurance that passes the test.

With the complimentary Affinity Plus endorsement, NSTU Members have exclusive access to enhanced home insurance coverages and add-ons.

Call **1-833-887-5310** or
visit **www.belairdirect.com/en/educator**
to get a quote.

belairdirect.
car and home insurance

Certain conditions, eligibility requirements, limitations and exclusions apply to all others. Visit belairdirect.com for more details. Offers may change without notice. We offer car insurance and home insurance in Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island and home insurance only in British Columbia. © 2025, Belair Insurance Company Inc. All rights reserved.

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 Elementary Teacher looking for one year job exchange (potentially longer) with teacher in CBVRCE. French qualified. Possible housing swap. Contact: Hrcetocbce@gmail.com

The John Huntley Memorial Internship Program

The deadlines for application for the John Huntley Memorial Internship Program are

**October 1, February 1
& April 1.**

Applications for active NSTU members are available through your NSTU rep,

on the NSTU website at www.nstu.ca or

at Central Office 477-5621 or 1-800-565-6788.

The internship provides members with an opportunity to learn more about the NSTU.



Nova Scotia Teachers Union

The deadline for the
January/February issue
of The Teacher is January 23

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

2025-2026 NSTU RETIREMENT SEMINARS SCHEDULE

DATE	REGION	LOCATION
October 7-8, 2025	HRCE	Nova Scotia Teachers Union – Halifax
October 15-16, 2025	TCRCE	Tru by Hilton – Yarmouth
October 21-22, 2025	CCRCE	Wandlyn Convention Centre (Travelodge) – Amherst
October 28-29, 2025	AVRCE	Old Orchard Inn – Greenwich
November 4-5, 2025	SRCE	Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre – Port Hawkesbury
November 18-19, 2025	CBVRCE	Holiday Inn Harbourfront – Sydney
December 2-3, 2025	SSRCE	Best Western Plus – Bridgewater
December 9-10, 2025	HRCE	Nova Scotia Teachers Union – Halifax
January 6-7, 2026	CCRCE	Pictou County Wellness Centre – Stellarton
February 11-12, 2026	HRCE	Nova Scotia Teachers Union – Halifax
February 18-19, 2026	HRCE	Nova Scotia Teachers Union – Halifax
February 24-25, 2026	CCRCE	Inn on Prince – Truro

Information from the



Nova Scotia Teachers Union

FEEL LIKE A CHANGE?



Secondments at the Nova Scotia Teachers Union

The Nova Scotia Teachers Union is updating its resource file of active members interested in short-term secondment to NSTU staff.

Seconded staff supplement the work of permanent Union staff, and increase staff available when the demand exceeds the capacity of the organization.

Individuals may be seconded to provide a service or program over a period of weeks, to serve as a resource person or liaison with a Union committee or group or to initiate and/or implement a specific program, project or task.

Secondments may be in member services, professional services, public relations, public affairs or organizational support.

Active members interested in being listed in the resource file are requested to print and fill out an application form available on-line by:

- ENTERING THE NSTU WEBSITE
- SELECT "STAFF"
- SELECTING "SECONDMENTS" FROM THE MENU ON THE LEFT-HAND SIDE

Information forms will be retained in the resource file for a period of one year.