

COVID-19 creates turbulence and anxiety across school system



A turbulent and anxiety-filled month-and-a-half began rather inconspicuously on the evening of April 18th with the announcement of a COVID-19 case at South Woodside Elementary in Dartmouth. A few hours later, a second COVID-19 case was announced at a St. Joseph's-Alexander McKay Elementary in Halifax. Four days later there had been at least a dozen school-related cases and four families of schools in Dartmouth had pivoted to remote learning. As school cases around the province continued to pile up, the NSTU called on government to take stronger measures to protect students, teachers and their families and by April 27th in person learning across the province had been suspended.

Unofficially, there were more than 60 schools with confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 located across the province. The IWK reported on May 14th that at least 850 children had tested positive since mid-April, many of them hospitalized.

NSTU President Paul Wozney says the Province should have switched to on-line learning sooner to limit the spread of COVID-19, but the correct decision was eventually made.

In an email to members outside of the HRCE on April 27th Wozney stated, "Given the rising number of COVID-19 cases in several regions and the confirmation of community spread across HRM, this is welcome news. I hope many of you will be able to breathe a sigh of relief tonight. The situation as it stood was unsustainable. This decision will help keep you, your students and your families safe."

On May 19, Premier Ian Rankin announced that in-person learning was suspended for the remainder of the academic year, and students would continue to learn remotely until summer. At a press conference he told reporters: "To the students, I know that's difficult that you won't be able to go back in-person and see your friends. To the parents, I want to thank them for staying at home and keeping their children at home and learning from home. And to our teachers, thank you for your hard work and patience".

The NSTU supported this decision, as Paul Wozney said in a statement to media: "This was a difficult decision, which demonstrates a deep commitment on the part of Dr. Strang and Premier Rankin to the safety of students, teachers, school staff, and families."

Because of the decision, schools donated their food supplies to charities, classrooms were emptied out for summer maintenance, parents booked non-refundable childcare, and teachers prepared several weeks of on-line lesson plans. However, just over a week later on May 28th, the government reversed its decision without any prior consultation with the NSTU. As a result, teachers and parents were left scrambling to get organized.

In a media release NSTU President Paul Wozney said: "The government made a political decision to turn the education system on its head with just a few weeks to go in the year and it has resulted in a lot of confusion and disorder in the lives of students, teachers and their families."

As of the time of publication, there have been 11 schools with positive COVID-19 cases since in-person learning resumed, which has resulted in dozens of families being forced to quarantine for a two-week period to end the school year.

See Covid timeline on page 24

2021 NSTU Summer Hours

NSTU Summer Hours will be
Monday to Thursday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
and Fridays 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

These hours will be in effect from Monday, June 28
through to and including Friday, August 27.

Regular hours will resume on Monday, August 31.

The NSTU office summer shutdown
will be July 19 to July 30 inclusive.



people

New professional learning staff officer



The NSTU welcomes Amanda O'Regan-Marchand as an NSTU executive staff officer in NSTU's professional learning department effective August 1, 2021. She holds a Master in Professional Studies, Counselling from Acadia University, a BEd/Secondary from St. F.X., with a specialization in French as a Second Language, and a BA, Joint Major in English and French from St. F.X. Most recently Amanda was the school counsellor at East Antigonish Education Centre/Academy, a capacity she also held at École acadienne de Pomquet.

Prior to becoming a school counsellor, Amanda was a French Second Language teacher in classrooms from Grades 4 through 12 in both Core French and French Immersion settings. Her teaching/counselling experience includes positions with the former Strait Regional School Board, Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board and the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial.

Amanda served on the provincial executive from 2008-2010 as the Antigonish-Guysborough representative, was secretary of the Strait RRC and president of the Antigonish Local from 2016-2018.

Most recently she was President of the Nova Scotia School Counsellors Association, Antigonish Local's First Vice-President, Chair of the Strait Regional Economic Welfare Committee and a member of NSTU's Professional Associations Coordinating Committee. Amanda also served as co-chair for NSSCA conferences. She also served as New Teacher Liaison (Antigonish Local), member of the New Teacher Committee (Cape Breton District Local), and was PD vice-president (Antigonish Local).

Amanda's new duties include coordinating professional learning and member engagement initiatives, professional associations, equity and outreach programs, and teacher referrals. She will serve as staff liaison to NSTU's Comité de programmation acadienne, professional development, equity, and professional associations coordinating committees. She will also serve as CTF/FCE Francophone liaison and NSTU's University liaison among others, and is excited to use her skills to serve NSTU members.

Thérèse Forsythe re-elected first vice-president

Annapolis valley teacher Thérèse Forsythe was re-elected first vice-president of the NSTU through an online vote of Annual Council 2021 delegates on June 18, 2021. Forsythe held the position of first-vice president from 2019 to 2021, and previously served as one of two Annapolis-Hants West-Kings representatives on NSTU's provincial executive from 2015 to 2019. She was NSTU's secretary-treasurer from 2016 to 2019. Thérèse is a math teacher at Horton High School in Greenwich.



New second vice-president, secretary-treasurer and PE Members

During the June 4 provincial executive meeting, Russell Comeau (Digby-Shelburne-Yarmouth) was elected by acclamation for a one-year term as NSTU's second vice-president. Comeau had been serving in the role since being elected at the February 25 meeting. Incoming provincial executive member Peter Day (Cape Breton) was elected by acclamation as NSTU's secretary-treasurer for a one-year term. He replaces outgoing provincial executive member Wade Van Snick (Cumberland) who served in the role for two years. All terms begin on August 1, 2021. Incoming provincial executive members are: Myla Borden (Pictou), Peter Day (Cape Breton Industrial), Sharon Midwinter (Cumberland), and Georgette Samson (CSANE). Members returning to begin second-year terms are: Duncan Cameron (Halifax County), Russell Comeau (Digby-Shelburne-Yarmouth), Mary Currie (APSEA), Kathy Evans (Northside-Victoria), Angela Gillis (Halifax City) Jo-Leigh MacPhee (Annapolis-Kings-Hants West).



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from the nstu president

Summer: A season to recharge and reflect

As the days count down to the end of a school year that will forever be seared into our memories, maybe no summer in our lifetime is as anticipated as this one.

You have made it to the end of a year that demanded three major shifts in the way your teaching and work needed to happen due to pandemic-driven considerations.

When “in-person learning” resumed last September, it came with sweeping changes to how you taught, assessed, gave feedback and delivered interventions. These were driven by public health orders that handcuffed how you did all of these, all while demanding that you hit the same targets and miss no outcomes.

In April and May, positive cases exploded in schools from Lunenburg County to Sydney, as hundreds of positive cases closed more than 60 schools as variant-based infections flared across the province. Hundreds of students and staff were forced into self-isolation, and the operational viability of families of schools was compromised.

This resulted in a late April shift to remote learning as the Third Wave crested and threatened to swallow Nova Scotia. With a week after Holiday Break provided to collaborate and prepare for such a transition, you knocked remote learning out of the park. Polling results show that parent and student confidence in remote learning during 2020-2021 and respect for your work and dedication throughout this period were both high.

All of us were jarred by the snap announcement of the return to in-person learning by Premier Rankin in late May, mere days after he told the province remote learning would remain in place for the remainder of the school year. With less than 48-hours’ notice, you scrambled to adjust the plans and assessments you worked furiously for days to put in place.

At the writing of this piece, 11 metro schools have since registered positive COVID-19 cases, including suspected cases of the Delta variant, throwing the end of the year for dozens of students, staff and families into confusion and worry.

I’m exhausted reading this recap. I know you all feel it in your bones having lived it.

As the engine that powered the least disrupted stretch of in-person learning in Canada, we all feel the strain this year has extracted. We saw every minute of available time outside of contractually mandated prep time seized by our employer to cover for the lack of public health protections. Never before have we arrived at the end of a year so empty and weary.

That makes this summer one for the ages, too. The value of summer as a time to rest and recharge has never been higher for us. Where we have seen our employer add as much as it could to

L’été : Une saison pour se ressourcer et réfléchir

Alors que nous nous rapprochons de la fin d’une année scolaire qui restera à jamais gravée dans nos mémoires, il est probable qu’aucun été de notre vie n’ait été aussi vivement attendu que celui-ci.

Vous êtes parvenus à conclure une année qui a exigé trois bouleversements majeurs dans votre façon d’enseigner et de travailler en raison de considérations liées à la pandémie.

Lorsque « l’apprentissage présentiel » a repris en septembre dernier, des changements radicaux ont été apportés à la manière d’enseigner, d’évaluer, de fournir une rétroaction et de réaliser des interventions. Ces changements étaient dictés par des ordonnances de santé publique qui ont entravé votre façon de faire les choses, tout en exigeant que vous atteigniez les mêmes objectifs et que vous ne négligiez aucun résultat d’apprentissage.

En avril et mai, les cas positifs de COVID-19 ont explosé dans les écoles, du comté de Lunenburg jusqu’à Sydney. Des centaines de cas positifs ont entraîné la fermeture de plus de 60 écoles, alors que des contaminations dues aux variants faisaient irruption dans toute la province. Des centaines d’élèves et de membres du personnel ont été forcés de s’isoler, et la viabilité opérationnelle de plusieurs groupes d’écoles a été compromise.

À la fin du mois d’avril, il a donc fallu passer à l’apprentissage à distance, alors que la troisième vague était à son paroxysme et menaçait d’engloutir la Nouvelle-Écosse. Avec seulement une semaine après le congé des Fêtes pour collaborer et préparer cette transition, vous vous êtes surpassés pour l’apprentissage à distance. Les résultats des sondages montrent que la confiance des parents et des élèves dans l’apprentissage à distance en 2020-2021 et le respect à l’égard de votre travail et de votre dévouement tout au long de cette période étaient tous deux très élevés.

Nous avons tous été choqués par l’annonce soudaine du retour à l’apprentissage présentiel par le Premier ministre Rankin à la fin du mois de mai, quelques jours seulement après avoir annoncé à la province que l’apprentissage à distance resterait en place pour le reste de l’année scolaire. En dépit d’un préavis de moins de 48 heures, vous vous êtes empressés d’ajuster les plans et les évaluations que vous aviez travaillé furieusement durant plusieurs jours à mettre en place.

Lors de la rédaction de ce message, onze écoles de la région métropolitaine avaient à nouveau enregistré des cas positifs de COVID-19, notamment des cas qui semblaient dus au variant Delta, plongeant des dizaines d’élèves, de membres du personnel et de familles dans la confusion et l’inquiétude en cette fin d’année.

Je me sens épuisé en lisant de ce récapitulatif. Je sais que vous ressentez tous cela au plus profond de vous-mêmes, pour l’avoir effectivement vécu.

our load during the pandemic, it matters deeply that we set boundaries around this time for ourselves and consider boundaries for the school year to come.

All of us recognize the critical impact we have in the lives of students and families. Our work helps young people become graduates prepared to realize their life's goals. It's the core of what we do.

This summer, each of us has vital decisions to make about what must come off of our plates to ensure we can fulfill this role to the best of our ability.

The pandemic has highlighted how heavily reliant government is on the goodwill, personal time and resources of teachers to take the sharp edges off of generational impacts of child poverty, systemic racism, and systemic failure for students with complex needs and their families.

This is a pressure we have borne quietly for generations, but the crushing additional pressures of the pandemic demand a moment for us all to earnestly evaluate the sustainability of how much of our personal time and resources we invest to make our jobs doable.

Each of us is motivated and sustained by a unique combination of factors. What school looks like this fall remains an open question, with the very real possibility that the clawback of time during our day could become a fixture of how schools work.

Each of us must decide whether extras help fuel and support our excellence in the classroom or drain the vitality quality teaching demands of us. The answer to this question is going to be different for us all.

We each walk a unique journey as teachers and people in our lives outside of school, and need to recognize that what is right and healthy for us won't benefit others. As we give ourselves permission to strike the work/life balance needed to ensure positive impact in our teaching, we must also give others around us the same—even when their balance works out to be very different from our own.

So, here, at the end of a year for the ages, I want you to hear two messages.

First, feel good about setting personal limits on personal time and resources invested at school. It matters that we give 100 per cent during our work day. But what if we walk into next year still empty and leaking joy and vitality that support us to be at our best for our students during class time? Our lack of boundaries will help perpetuate a system that greedily scoops whatever it can from our personal lives to make up for what it glaringly fails to provide for us and our students.

Lastly, well done. Thank you. I am proud of you. You have seen your students through waters no one has charted in over a century, and history will remember you for your efforts that helped Nova Scotia roar back. Enjoy every last ounce of Summer 2021 and charge your batteries. There's no question you deserve it.

Summer up NSTU siblings! Stay safe & make memories.

All my best,
Paul Wozney.

Nous sommes le moteur qui a permis d'offrir la période d'apprentissage présentiel la moins perturbée au Canada, et nous ressentons tous l'intense pression que cette année a exercée sur nous. Nous avons vu chaque minute de temps disponible, en dehors du temps de préparation prévu dans la convention, saisie par notre employeur pour pallier le manque de protections en matière de santé publique. Jamais nous n'étions arrivés en fin d'année aussi vidés et aussi las.

Cela fait aussi de cet été un été mémorable. L'importance de l'été comme période pour nous reposer et nous ressourcer n'a jamais été aussi grande. Nous avons vu notre employeur ajouter autant qu'il le pouvait à notre charge de travail durant la pandémie et il est très important que nous nous fixions des limites à ce sujet et que nous réfléchissions à des limites pour l'année scolaire à venir.

Nous reconnaissons tous l'impact crucial que nous avons dans la vie des élèves et de leur famille. Notre travail aide les jeunes à obtenir un diplôme et à se préparer à réaliser leurs objectifs de vie. Ceci est au cœur de ce que nous faisons.

Cet été, chacun d'entre nous doit prendre des décisions cruciales au sujet des choses que nous devons éliminer pour pouvoir remplir ce rôle au mieux de nos capacités.

La pandémie a souligné à quel point le gouvernement dépend de la bonne volonté, des ressources et du temps personnel des enseignants pour mitiger les impacts générationnels de la pauvreté infantile, du racisme systémique et de l'échec du système à l'égard des élèves ayant des besoins complexes et de leurs familles.

Ceci est une pression que nous endurons en silence depuis des générations, mais les pressions supplémentaires écrasantes liées à la pandémie exigent que nous prenions un moment pour évaluer sérieusement si la part de temps et de ressources personnelles que nous investissons pour faire notre travail est vraiment soutenable à long terme.

Chacun d'entre nous est motivé et soutenu par une combinaison unique de facteurs. La question de savoir à quoi ressemblera l'école à l'automne est toujours sans réponse et il y a une possibilité très réelle que le temps supplémentaire qui a été exigé de nous durant notre journée de travail devienne une constante du fonctionnement des écoles.

Chacun d'entre nous doit décider si les responsabilités supplémentaires contribuent à alimenter et à soutenir notre excellence en classe ou si elles nous drainent de la vitalité nécessaire à un enseignement de qualité. La réponse à cette question sera différente pour chacun d'entre nous.

Chacun de nous suit un parcours unique en qualité d'enseignants et d'individus dans notre vie en dehors de l'école et nous devons reconnaître que ce qui est bon et sain pour nous ne sera pas nécessairement profitable à d'autres. Alors que nous nous donnons la permission de trouver un juste équilibre entre notre vie professionnelle et notre vie privée afin de garantir un impact positif sur notre enseignement, nous devons également donner aux personnes qui nous entourent la même permission, même si leur juste équilibre est très différent du nôtre.

Donc, ici, au terme de cette année mémorable, je veux vous communiquer deux messages.

Premièrement, il est bon de vous fixer des limites personnelles au sujet du temps et des ressources que vous investissez dans l'école. Il est important que nous nous donnions à 100 % durant notre journée de travail. Mais que se passera-t-il si nous abordons l'année qui s'en vient en nous sentant toujours vidés et privés de la joie et de la vitalité qui nous permettent de donner le meilleur de nous-mêmes à nos élèves en classe? Le fait de ne pas fixer de limites contribuera à perpétuer un système

Suite à la page 21

What Can I Do?

Recently, the disturbing discovery of the remains of 215 children at a Residential school made headlines in Canada and internationally. This tragic announcement has led citizens to ask the question: "What can I do?" As has been highlighted by many other marginalized communities, words and shared social media posts only go so far. It is concrete actions that will make a lasting impact. As educators, we have the duty to educate ourselves and to include Indigenous education in our classrooms as a daily practice. Below is an infographic created by the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs that provides clear and achievable steps on how we can start to repair the damage done, and start on the path to Reconciliation.

Nova Scotia Treaty Education <https://novascotia.ca/treaty-education/>

© The Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs.

Supporting Residential School Survivors and Indigenous People:

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Donate to organizations that support counselling and other supports for survivors and their families, and provide education about the legacy of residential schools. Such as:
 - National Indian Residential School Crisis Line
 - Legacy of Hope Foundation
 - Orange Shirt Society
- Support Indigenous artists, drummers, singers, dancers, language learners, and small business owners. They are helping communities heal.
- Host an Orange Shirt Day at your school or workplace to commemorate survivors and those lost at residential schools.
- Lift up the voices of Indigenous people, especially survivors.
- Hear the stories of survivors and their families. Watch *We Were Children*. Read *Out of the Depths* by Isabelle Knockwood, and other memoirs by survivors.
- Give room for Indigenous community members to mourn. While the news isn't surprising, communities are grieving for all the children they have lost, and are sharing the grief of the Tk'emlups te Secwépemc First Nation.
- Call on your local Senators to pass Bill C-5 "A National Day for Truth and Reconciliation" and call on your provincial government to designate the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as a general holiday under the *Labour Act*.
- Visit Indigenous cultural heritage sites to learn about the traditions, culture, and resilience of your local communities.
- Re-read the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and think about how you can implement the Calls to Action in your own life.
- Learn about the communities whose land you live on.
- Register for UBC's open online course in Indigenous Studies and Reconciliation for free.

Your actions are so important to healing and understanding.

Some references found in the infographic

Legacy of Hope: <https://legacyofhope.ca/>

Orange Shirt Day: <https://www.orangeshirtday.org/orange-shirt-society.html>

Nova Scotia Senators List: <https://sencanada.ca/en/senators-list/>

Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action: http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

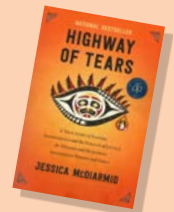
Indigenous Cultural Sites to visit around Nova Scotia: <https://www.novascotia.com/travel-info/about-us/mikmaq-culture>

We Were Children film: https://www.nfb.ca/film/we_were_children/trailer/we_were_children_trailer/

UBC free courses: <https://pdce.educ.ubc.ca/Reconciliation/>

The Teacher in conjunction with NSTU's professional learning department has the following books for giveaway to assist in including Indigenous education in your classrooms/schools.

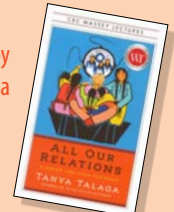
1. *Highway of Tears* by Jessica McDiarmid



2. *Teaching Each Other* by Linda M. Goulet & Keith N. Goulet



3. *All of Our Relations* by Tanya Talaga

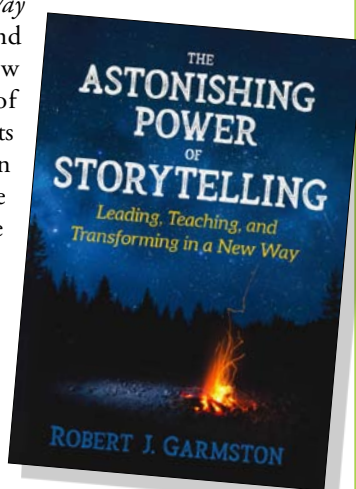


Email your name, home address, and the name of your school with PL + the number associated with the book (ie: for *Highway of Tears* – PL #1) in the subject line to ttheteacher@nstu.ca by September 1, 2021 to be eligible for the draw.

Email your name, home address, and the name of your school with **PL Giveaway** in the subject line to theteacher@nstu.ca by **September 1, 2021** to be eligible for the draw.

The Astonishing Power of Storytelling written by Robert J. Garmston

The Astonishing Power of Storytelling: Leading, Teaching, and Transforming in a New Way by Robert J. Garmston and Corwin shows you how to leverage the power of storytelling to engage students and colleagues. Written in a conversational style including current cognitive neuroscience research, this book provides elements and templates for great stories, tips for enhancing your stories and a guide to delivering your story effectively.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR APRIL BOOK WINNERS!

EQUITY — Michele Mockler — HRCE

FRESH — Helen Blaikie — CCRCE

PL GIVEAWAY — Sarah Umlah — SSRCE

The John Huntley Memorial Internship Program

*The deadlines for application for 2021-22
John Huntley Memorial Internship Program are*

February 1 and April 1.

NEW: The April 1 deadline will be for the May 26 to 27, 2022 session. This session is reserved for equity-seeking members. Please identify yourselves as such on the application form.

Nova Scotia Teachers Union

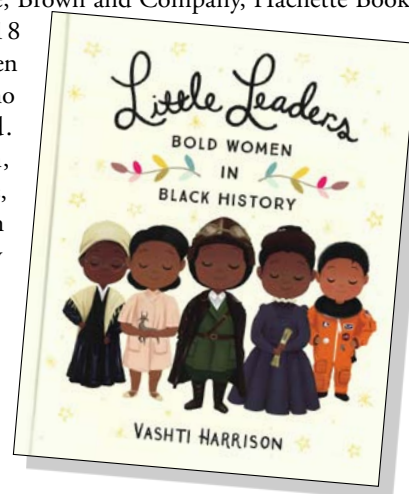
Applications for active NSTU members are available through your NSTU rep, on the NSTU website or through Central Office 477-5621 or 1-800-565-6788.

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

Email your name, home address, and the name of your school with **EQUITY** in the subject line to theteacher@nstu.ca by **September 1, 2021** to be eligible for the draw.

Little Leaders Bold Women in Black History written by Vashti Harrison

Little Leaders Bold Women in Black History by Vashti Harrison, and published by Little, Brown and Company, Hachette Book Group showcases 18 trailblazing black women in American history who changed the world. Among these women, are heroes, role models, and everyday women who did extraordinary things. The women profiled in the book were all taking a stand against a world that didn't always accept them.



fresh

Putting new members in the KNOW!

Email your name, home address, and the name of your school with **FRESH** in the subject line to theteacher@nstu.ca by **September 1, 2021** to be eligible for the draw.

Sulwe

by Lupita Nyong'o, illustrated by Vashti Harrison

Published by Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, *Sulwe*, this New York Times bestseller, written by Academy Award-winning actress Lupita Nyong'o and illustrated by Vashti Harrison was also the recipient of an NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Children's Literary Work. This powerful, moving picture book about colourism, self-esteem, and learning creates a whimsical and heartwarming story to inspire children to see their own unique beauty.

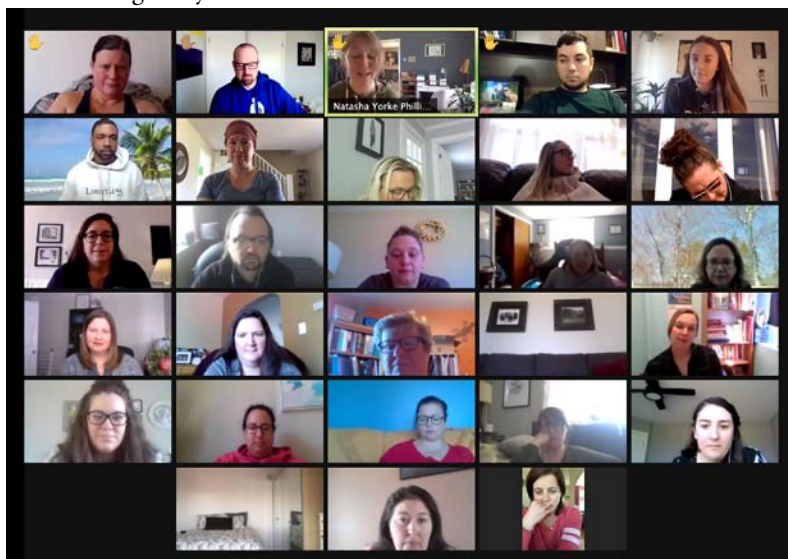


Equity conference focuses on systemic racism and white privilege

Through NSTU's Equity Conference, *Systemic Racism and White Privilege: A Conversation for Educators* on April 24, almost 100 NSTU members learned about the evolution of racism in Nova Scotia, the education system's role, and how teachers can support anti-racism work.

The conference speakers were NSTU member and teacher at Astral Drive Junior High, Megan Neaves, and DeRico Symonds, Senior Policy Analyst with the Province of Nova Scotia in the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism. Well-known advocates for racialized and marginalized communities, Neaves and Symonds' presentation focused on unlearning and relearning, with topics including race as a social construct, bias, white privilege, and ways to implement anti-racism in education.

Neaves began the presentation by sharing her disclosure statement, "I would like to acknowledge the work of all the resilient leaders who have come before me in anti-racism work and have been silenced by the systems we will be addressing today.



As a person who does not experience racism first-hand, it is a privilege to be in this space. This presentation is for all the children who have been disempowered through education, and then criminalized for not being successful in the systems that were not built for them to succeed. We have the power as educators to disrupt these cycles of systemic racism, but the first step for white people is to do the work ourselves."

"This is about paying homage to the folks who have been doing this work, who have been silenced, and have been fighting before us and continue to do the good fight," says Symonds.

Symonds and Neaves reminded participants that it's uncomfortable to unlearn what we have learned our whole lives and encouraged teachers to continue to research, learn and grow.

Symonds discussed race as a social construct, a false classification of people not based on any scientific truth. "It was created to give white people power over people who were not white. Remember that Canada was founded on racism—colonization".

The presenters gave examples of systemic racism in Nova Scotia's education system, most of which have been referenced in the BLAC Report 1994 and Reality Check. This includes lower literacy rates, disproportionate numbers of

Black learners on Individual Program Plans (IPPs) and higher suspension rates, history told through a Eurocentric perspective, no Masters in Educational Foundations focused on anti-racism education, and the school-to-prison pipeline.

"Fewer Black students enter post-secondary education because of the disproportionate number of Black students on IPPs," says Neaves. "If you graduate on an IPP you are not able to go onto a post-secondary education; it's extremely detrimental when you want to go into post-secondary and are not permitted."

Symonds says that having separate courses like African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq studies further marginalizes groups. "It takes away from the fact that it's actually all Nova Scotian history, so we're othering those particular histories for those students."

"Black learners are all getting their history told through a Eurocentric lens, what does that do to your subconscious mind if you're only learning about your ancestors in positions of inferiority, like the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and not the Black inventors or resilient leaders that really paved the way and contributed to Canadian history," adds Neaves. "We have to be mindful of what that is doing not only to the subconscious of the black learners, but white learners."

"For instance, the stop light was invented by a Black man, and the jolly jumper was invented by an Indigenous woman," continues Symonds. "Again, these things are not taught in history, my Black history as a student began at slavery and ended at Martin Luther King and there was Rosa Parks and some folks mixed between. There is so much more."

In doing her Master's project, which focused on how teaching a predominately white audience about recognizing white privilege and using it to affect change, she was surprised to learn that there's no requirement for new teachers to know the history of how the system disadvantages Black learners.

She sees low literacy levels as very detrimental. "We've had stats since 1994 about literacy levels of Black learners in our system. That to me is the school-to-prison pipeline. If I graduated from high school and couldn't read, what opportunities do I have in society to feel empowered."

Neaves reiterates the important role teachers play. "It's so crucial we continue to have these conversations within the classroom and also disrupt these cycles because we have the power to advocate, and we need to put pressure on some of these systems or else it can lead to some people losing their lives to the prison system."

Symonds adds that, "Black people make up three per cent of the population, yet 14 per cent of the incarcerated population. We need to think about the over-policing of Black communities. Black

communities don't commit more crimes, black people are over-policed."

Conference participants discussed in groups what they needed from the NSTU and their employer in being successful in implementing anti-racist education. Feedback included having a collective place to share resources and knowledge, more access to folks with expertise in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, and more professional learning opportunities

NSTU president Paul Wozney reported on his group's discussions. "If we intend to work to empower students that school has left out, we need to collectively engage students. We need to not centre on teaching Black suffering-which we need to acknowledge-but on Black joy and excellence." He gave the example of learning about Africville from a first-voice perspective. "Reflecting on the history of Africville, which is still a living history, gives us a great opportunity to teach through relationship and community."

Centring on the role of bias, something we all possess, is also crucial in anti-racist education. "When you constantly learn about yourself in inferior roles think about the effect of that on your psyche. Never having anyone in a position of power or authority that represents you may lead you to self-actualize who that system says you are," says Symonds.

"What we choose to do with our bias and how we get students to learn about their bias and what they should do about it, is what we can focus on," says Neaves.

To counteract bias, Symonds says reflecting and identifying are important. "Reflecting is difficult. Thinking about how you may have perpetuated something racist is hard to reconcile with. Question your first thought, before you let your bias show. Use your own personal filter."

"Understand how you were taught about racism and how it looks today. It's ingrained into our system and we can be racist without even thinking about it. Lots of good people still have racist ideas. Our first response is to be defensive. Understand you're going to mess up, but change the way in which you react, learn to listen, and respond with gratitude."

In discussing white privilege, Neaves reminds teachers that this is not about making you feel guilty for being white. "White privilege doesn't mean that white people do not have hard lives, it means that your skin colour didn't play a factor in making your life harder. Being born white means that you were born into a system that validates and reaffirms that you are socially included."

"Black people didn't create racism, yet we have to defend and present the issue, and then provide a solution for the same issue we've had to defend and

present. The folks who created racism need to shoulder the work of solving it."

In shouldering the work, and being an ally, Symonds outlined the steps. "Being an ally is a lifelong journey. I am Black for the rest of my life, and I am going to be engaged for the rest of my life, as an ally you need to be in for the rest of your life, you have a choice and that's part of the privilege, but please stay the course in a difficult, complex, messy journey."

Neaves outlined responsibilities for teachers in doing this work: Self-reflection – always question your first thought, talk and teach on how to deconstruct discriminatory thoughts; Education – racism is a symptom of uncomfortable people, the more educated the less uncomfortable and more informed you can be; Accountability – this is not about feeling guilty because you are white, it is about being held aware of your privilege, to use it to make change. As well, it's thinking about what you may be doing that is harmful and how to be a part of the solution, and; Commitment – at the core of white privilege is a "choice", you can choose to be a part of the solution or not. People of colour can't choose to not be a person of colour.

Symonds outlined his triple As: acknowledge, acceptance and alignment. "Acknowledge racism does exist, accept you may have been directly or indirectly complacent with issues of racism, and align your morals and beliefs to be actively anti-racist."

Presenters left participants with these final thoughts. "If your fear in having conversations about race is being uncomfortable, embrace that because it could save someone's life," says Neaves. Symonds adds, "It is a privilege to have uncomfortable conversations rather than live an uncomfortable life."

NSTU Equity Committee Conference 2021

Systemic Racism and White Privilege: A Conversation for Educators

The conference was organized by NSTU's professional learning staff officer [Miguelle Légère](#) along with members of NSTU's Equity Committee. For more information about this presentation contact Megan Neaves at megan.neaves91@gmail.com.



Megan Neaves



DeRico Symonds

Sleep study helps with teaching during pandemic times

by *Natasha Yorke-Phillip, School Psychologist,
Tri-County Regional Centre for Education*

As frequently reported, especially in recent months, schools are essential to the mental health of children and youth. As a school-based psychologist for the past 19 years with the Tri-County RCE, I wholeheartedly believe that schools are crucial environments to educate students about how their brains develop, learn, and regulate. Your school-based psychologist has a unique set of skills that goes far beyond providing assessment results. We can support students in gaining the awareness they need, from a young age, to learn all the amazing ways their brains work, and the power of how essential relationships are to their optimal functioning. As a committed life-long learner, I also uphold the fundamental function of our role as school-based psychologists, which is to advocate for students and spotlight their voices in all we do.

We also have a crucial role to play in supporting our teaching colleagues' mental health and wellness. To that end, I applied for an NSTU Group Insurance Trustees Mental Health and Wellness Grant. After being awarded the grant, the Yarmouth Local of the NSTU was invited to participate in a 30-day Sleep Challenge.

The goal of the challenge was to offer an opportunity to get very intentional about the quantity and quality of sleep. This school year began with members feeling 'June-tired' in September. Despite this sense of collective exhaustion, members were tasked with not only re-engaging students who had their previous academic year impacted, but also to soldier-on despite struggling with impacted personal lives (i.e., loss, continued and on-going racial oppression, grief, etc.).

Offering a self-compassion challenge to intentionally explore sleep practices was a solution-focused option for Yarmouth Local members. The 30-Day challenge began with a short video outlining the role sleep plays in our daily functioning and subsequently, each week of the challenge, members were encouraged to examine a different aspect of how their daily functioning impacts their sleep quantity and quality.

From exploring the characteristics of their sleep-environment, to introducing various aspects of mindfulness, being intentional with exercise, examining the impact of dietary choices, and reducing the role of technology before sleep, members had the opportunity to introduce small

changes in their routines that could have big benefits in the quantity and quality of their sleep.

Although the number of participants in the challenge was limited-and the number completing the challenge was even smaller -improvements were noted in multiple areas surveyed, i.e., functioning through the day as well as quantity of sleep at night. Several members felt they learned new things about their sleep-hygiene as well as some take-aways for improving their ability to initially fall asleep. Each member that completed all aspects of the 30-Day Challenge (including the final survey) were provided with an array of carefully selected items to complement their continued self-compassion journey towards a better night's sleep.

I am happy to share the supported resources that helped members of the Yarmouth Local engage with the 30-Day Sleep Challenge. I hope that the following resources and links to the accompanying videos will assist other Locals and members in improving the quantity and quality of sleep. If you want to reach out please contact me at neyorke@nstu.ca.



Through the Mental Health and Wellness Grant, the NSTU Group Insurance Trustees with support from Johnson Incorporated fund projects that support the mental health and well-being of children and youth in the schools across Nova Scotia, programs in classrooms, schools or communities for children and youth.

To be eligible, the individual must have a permanent, probationary, or term contract and be a member of the NSTU or PSAANS at the time of application. The NSTU Group Insurance Trustees awards grants valued at up to \$600 once per year. The criteria includes the project description, innovation and creativity, impacts on students, materials and budget and overall impression. The next application deadline is October 30, 2021. For more information visit: <https://nstuinsurance.ca/grants/the-mental-health-and-wellness-grant/>

Getting Intentional about Sleep Environments:

Apps for supporting Sleep-Tracking: Sleep Cycle

Wearable-tech Apps for tracking sleep: Fitbit – free (Fitbit), Pillow – free (Apple Watch), Apple Health (iPhone)

How Mindfulness Improves Sleep:

<https://www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au/mindfulness-and-sleep-2.html>

Apps offering Guided Meditation and Sleep-related calming strategies:

- Insight Timer (free and subscription options)
- Calm
- Aura
- Relax Melodies: Sleep Sounds

The Benefits of Exercise on sleep:

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/exercising-for-better-sleep>

<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/nutrition/food-and-drink-promote-good-nights-sleep>

Apps:

- Participaction (Free! Chalk FULL of awesome, evidenced-based information Hal Johnson and Joanne MacLeod in app form!)
- My Fitness Pal (Free! No wearable tech required. Daily tracking of your food/ beverage/ snack intake, great info for recipes and exercises, competition options)

Reduce Tech Use at Bedtime:

<https://www.wellandgood.com/working-in-your-bedroom/>

<https://www.becomingminimalist.com/technology-free-bedroom/>

Apps

- Utilize the 'Night Shift' feature on your smart phone, tablet, or e-reader to reduce the amount of melatonin suppressing blue light being emitted from the screen. Night Shift can be set manually or in advance of the evening hours. It works by switching the light within the screen of the device to a warmer spectrum of light. (Some android devices label this feature the 'anti-blue light' or 'blue light filter') The scientific data regarding these blue-light filters is inconclusive and the best option continues to be turning the device off for a minimum of 30 minutes prior to bedtime to ensure a reduction in light (in general) into the eyes.
- Think outside the box about alarms. Instead of setting your 'Wake Up' alarm only, set a 'Turn Off' or 'Wind Down' alarm in the evenings. This should be set approximately 30 minutes before you intend to be in bed.

The following video links were provided to members of the Yarmouth Local to assist during their Sleep Challenge:

Intro: <https://www.wevideo.com/view/2227527488>

Week 1: <https://www.wevideo.com/view/2074483727>

Week 2: <https://www.wevideo.com/view/2084145426>

Week 3: <https://www.wevideo.com/view/2096161624>

Week 4: <https://www.wevideo.com/view/2106114152>

Natasha Yorke-Phillip is a member of the Yarmouth Local.

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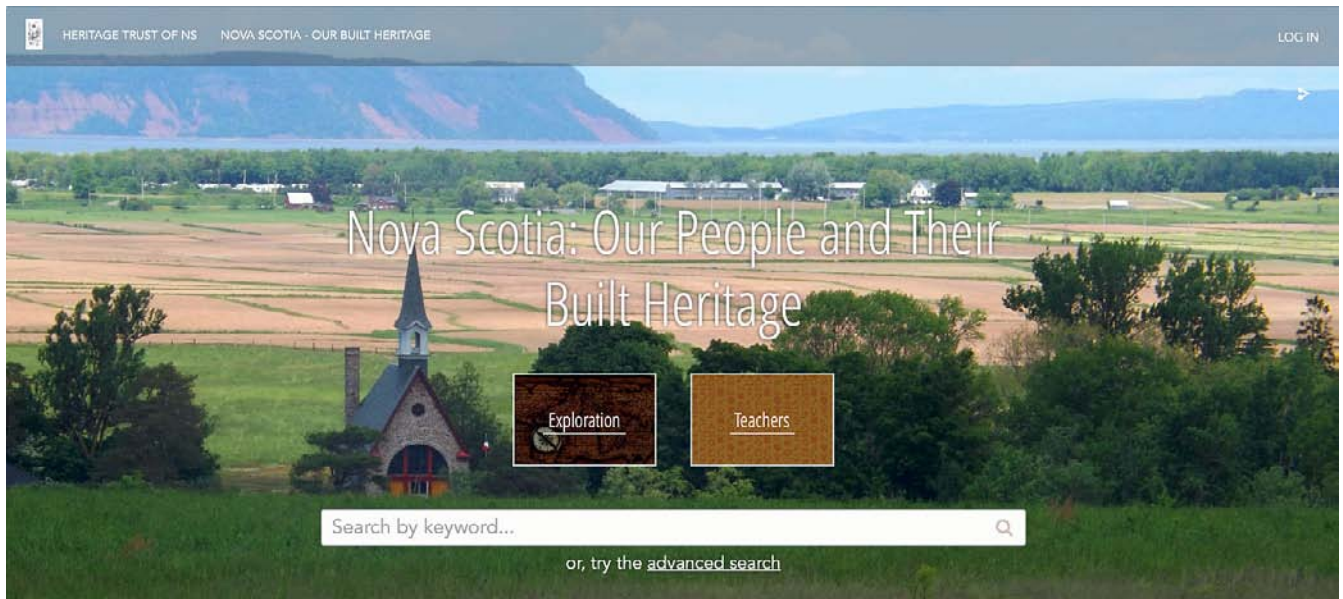
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Guiding Students Through
the Learning Pit
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resources



Grand Pré National Historic Site of Canada, designated UNESCO World Heritage Site — Photo: Janice Zann

INNOVATIVE ONLINE SOCIAL STUDIES RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS: Encourages Students to Explore Nova Scotia's Heritage

By Tanya Chedrawy for Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia's heritage buildings tell the stories of our collective culture and history. The Education Committee of Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia (HTNS) worked with Touchstone Design House to create the online tool for educators called, ***Nova Scotia: Our People and Their Built Heritage***. This resource encapsulates these stories in a series of learning modules. The content adheres to Grade 4 Nova Scotia curriculum and is suitable for higher grades and even adult learners.

"Teachers should recognize the many opportunities to address English Language Arts (ELA) outcomes such as those related to research, note taking, comprehension, using a variety of ways to share information, and oral presentations, to name a few. Indeed, this is the very idea behind integrated curriculum." – (Heather Stewart, Nova Scotia Grade 3/4 elementary school teacher commenting on ***Nova Scotia: Our People and Their Built Heritage*** as a result of pilot testing the tool).

The tool is an opportunity to explore history through architecture. Nova Scotia is fortunate to possess a large number of heritage buildings and these structures reveal the province's story. With an inquiry-based approach, students are encouraged to become present-day explorers to discover information about our founding cultures: Mi'kmaq, Acadian, African-Canadian, and Gaelic.

Teachers can determine the cultural group on which their students may focus. Once you enter the portal there are two sections. The first is the "Exploration" section and includes the topics that teachers can decide to concentrate on. The second section, "Teachers" is for the guidance of educators. It contains information that helps teachers shape the material into engaging and interactive lessons for the students. Questions are also provided to help



Archaeological dig at a farm house in Poplar Grove, NS

Photo: Sara Beanlands

prompt further discussion on any given topic.

Learning is not relegated to the classroom. The goal of this educational tool is to capture the minds of students and encourage continued learning and exploration in their own communities and beyond. Included in the resource are images, downloadable maps and historical illustrations. Armed with these research tools, teachers and students are encouraged to conduct outdoor exploration, including mapping exercises and community buildings discovery.

Students will become aware of other methods of research in addition to newspapers, books and documents. They will then understand the importance of artifacts and archaeological discoveries. Studying the styles of buildings and materials used will also help determine the origin of the builders and enable students to become appreciative of their own built heritage. They will also become more aware, understanding, and appreciative of all cultural groups.

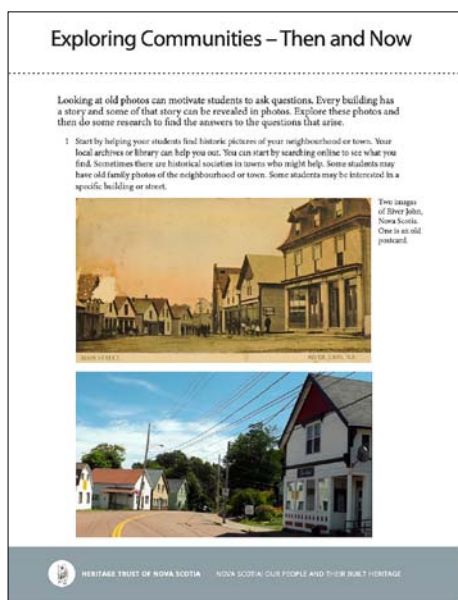
This innovative learning tool is also useful for planning next year's lesson plans. It is the result of a dedicated collaboration between the Education Committee of HTNS, historians, archaeologists and many former educators and can be found here: <https://ourbuiltheritage.htns.ca/stories>.

For more information contact:

Denise Hansen

Chair, Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia Education Committee

Email: dhansen155@gmail.com



River John, NS Then & Now

Photo: Arthur Carter

resources

media
LIBRARY

@LRTS

Digital
Resources
for
Teachers

The Media Library is the place to go for all your curriculum video needs! We provide you with access to online videos to stream or download and a collection of educational videos and DVDs that you can borrow or purchase to support grades P-12 in all subject areas of the Nova Scotia curriculum.

Online videos can be accessed from your gnspes landing page. Just click on the link for Learn360 and you're good to go. You also visit our website directly at <http://medialibrary.ednet.ns.ca> to access these and other digital classroom resources!

eLearning Support for Teachers

This month, we are highlighting online resources you can access to help you transition to new ways of working and teaching.

Google Apps for Education is the best place to start looking for information. Once you have logged in, you will see at the top of the landing page two new icons: one for the eLearning Support Site and one for the new Curriculum webpage.

The new Curriculum webpage can be found here: <https://curriculum.novascotia.ca/> and has course outlines and curriculum documents as well as additional online resources.

The eLearning Support Site will help you with how-to tutorials for Google, Moodle, Chromebooks and Virtual Meetings, tips for eLearning, links to eResources and curriculum supports, and links to student services resources. The eResources page will also give you information about project planning, prioritized outcomes and assessments.

More information about school closures and cancellations as well as learning from home can be found here: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/education/>

Information for Parents and Families can be found here: <https://curriculum.novascotia.ca/parentfamily-information>; information for Teachers can be found here: <https://curriculum.novascotia.ca/teacher-information>; and additional documents and infographic posters can be found here: <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/backtoschool/resources#documents>.

Lastly, online learning resources and examples can be accessed from the Nova Scotia Virtual School launchpad page: <https://nsvs.ednet.ns.ca/> Click on the large icon for Provincial eLearning at the bottom. You may need to re-log into Google Apps for Education to access this page. Here you will find examples of lessons and excerpts from online courses offered through NSVS that you can use with your students.

As always, online curriculum videos are available to use with your students from Learn360 and are accessible from the GAFE landing page under Learning Resources.



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Teacher Appreciation Campaign highlights innovative teaching

The NSTU partnered with Now Communications and CTV Bell Media for a month-long Teacher Appreciation Campaign which was launched on May 31. "The goal is to celebrate teachers and acknowledge your commitment and professionalism during this very hard year," says NSTU president Paul Wozney. "I'm proud of so many of you who are doing your best to make schools better and advocate for students."

Using the voices and faces of real teachers to tell the story of this unique year, five NSTU members are featured in the campaign. The following teachers are the faces and voices of this campaign: Keli Brewer (Cape Breton District Local), Rebecca Fisk (Lunenburg County Local), Dana MacLeod (APSEA Local), Keith Partridge (CSANE Local) and Malcolm Westhaver (Halifax City Local).

The 15, 30 and 60 second campaign spots running on TV, digital pre-roll, and social media.

CTV Morning Live celebrated teachers through editorial

coverage during their themed *Teacher Appreciation Week* from June 14 to 18. NSTU members Jenn Priddle (Antigonish Local) and Justin Oliver (Yarmouth Local) shared their innovative teaching strategies during the pandemic during the week. Students and parents were encouraged to give a shout out for their teachers through social media, which were shared live during the program.

"Through this campaign, we are reaffirming the importance of teachers' commitment and ongoing responsibility towards all students and their educational needs during these emotional and trying times," adds Wozney.

NSTU's Public Relations Committee were involved in bringing this campaign to fruition. "Thanks to members of the Public Relations Committee, all the teachers involved in the campaign and others who contributed footage of online teaching. You've helped us show the distance you'll go for your students."

You can check out the campaign spots on NSTU's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/nstuwebcast>



Nourish Nova Scotia, Devour! The Food Film Fest and CBC invite all school-aged children and youth to make a short film about food as part of the **2021 Nourish Food and Film Challenge**.



Film should follow the theme *Food for a Brighter Future* and be 3 minutes or under in length.

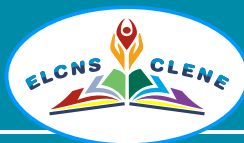
The winning film receives a \$500 camera package from CBC, \$500 to support a healthy food program in their school or community from Nourish Nova Scotia, and will be screened at Devour! The Food Film Fest and on CBC.

Deadline is October 12, 2021. For more information visit nourishns.ca/film-challenge



Deals & Discounts

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



Instructional Leadership Virtual Conference: August 12-13, 2021 - 9 am to 4 pm

Mike Rutherford

creator and designer of

“The Artisan Leader: An Ed Leadership Conference Series”
will facilitate this two-day virtual learning experience.

Participants will explore, using best practices
for virtual professional learning, these relevant topics...

**COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WITH GROUPS, KEY INDIVIDUALS,
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READING, SHAPING, AND RE-SHAPING SCHOOL CULTURE...

Improve your vision for seeing and employing the invisible,
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CREATIVITY, AND RE-INVENTION...**

How to attract, support, and retain innovative, creative,
and future-focused staff.

TIME MANAGEMENT FOR INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS...

Some administrators spend 60-70% of their time engaged in instructional
leadership rather than school management. And, their schools run pretty well.
How do they do it? This session we'll examine ten practical time management
strategies for increasing instructional leadership capacity at your school.

HOW TO USE ORGANIZED ABANDONMENT TO FUEL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT:

Successful school leaders make to do lists, and not-to-do lists.
This session details practical ways to keep the past from robbing the
future at your school.

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\$499.00
+ HST**

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elcns.ca/summer2021





Achieve Virtual Institute

Solution Tree Canada is offering ELCNS members preferred pricing for Achieve Virtual Institute

Achieve Virtual Institute: Promising Practices in Instruction, Assessment and Grading

- August 16-18, 2021
- Delivered live online through Zoom and Elevate platforms
- Featuring authors from the Solution Tree Assessment Centre including Canadian educators Tom Schimmer and Katie White
- All interactive sessions delivered live with recordings available for 60 days after the Institute
- Agenda and session descriptions available [here](#)
- Each attendee will receive a copy of Growing Tomorrow's Citizens in Today's Classrooms

[Registration](#) is now open. ELCNS members registering online can apply Discount Code Leader21 at check-out. If paying by purchase order please quote "ELCNS Discount Code Leader21".
*The ELCNS discount code provides \$100 off each registration & cannot be combined with other discounts i.e., team pricing

Call for Reviewers

[Solution Tree Education Canada](#) is looking for book reviewers from Atlantic Canada! As we continue to publish professional books for P-12 educators, it's crucial we gather feedback from Canadian educators across the country. If you are an educator in Atlantic Canada and passionate about professional learning, we would love to hear from you.

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- Only take on reviews when you have the time—no requirement to accept every review offered.
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2021 NSTU Professional Associations Virtual Conferences

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22



Online Registration

Opens – Wednesday, Sept 8

Closes – Tuesday, October 5

(no refunds after October 8)

For registration and conference details go to **www.nstu.ca**

While we encourage members to have a NSTU web account, please be advised that one is **NOT** required to register for a conference. A member may register utilizing any non-employer email address.

Association des enseignantes et enseignants acadiens (AEA)

Theme ***Appuyons notre enseignement***

Platform Zoom

Keynote: Vous aurez le choix de 3 ateliers parmi notre programmation. Ces ateliers explorent les domaines du bien-être, des sciences et des sciences sociales.

Fees 90\$ pour les membres du NSTU
45\$ pour les étudiants, les suppléants et les enseignants à la retraite

Contacts Gabrielle Samson: sagabrielle@nstu.ca

Association of Science Teachers (AST)

Theme ***Time for Science***

Platform Online

Fees \$60 NSTU Members
\$40 Substitutes, Retired and Pre-Service Teachers

Contacts James Parsons: jeparsons@nstu.ca

Art Teachers Association (ATA)

Theme ***Art-Official Intelligence***

Platform Pheedloop with Zoom breakout sessions

Keynote: TBA

Fees \$75 NSTU Members
\$40 Substitutes, Retired and Pre-Service Teachers

Contacts Alison West: alwest@nstu.ca

Association of Teachers of Exceptional Children (ATEC)

Theme ***Emerging From the Pandemic Fog: Reconnecting with Ourselves and Others***

Platform Zoom

Keynote: Dr. Jody Carrington

Fees \$100 NSTU Members

\$60 Substitutes, Retired and Pre-Service Teachers

Contacts Keli Crocker: kcrocker@nstu.ca

Association of Teachers of English of Nova Scotia (ATENS)

Theme ***The Student Centered ELA Classroom: What can that Mean?***

Platform Event Brite

Keynote: Jason Flinn – Vault Life Coaching

Fees \$75 NSTU Members
\$50 Substitutes, Retired and Pre-Service Teachers

Contacts Alison Walker: amwalker@nstu.ca

Association of Teachers of Young Adolescents (ATYA)

Theme ***Are We There Yet?***

Platform Zoom

Keynote: Dashboard Living – Sara and Brent Mills

Fees \$60 NSTU Members
\$50 Substitutes, Retired and Pre-Service Teachers

Contacts Dawn Chapman: adchapman@nstu.ca

Business Education Teachers Association (BETA)

Theme ***Resilience and Adaptability: How Small Businesses in NS Navigated a Global Pandemic***

Platform VIRTUAL – will advise platform soon

Fees \$80 NSTU Members
\$50 Substitutes, Retired and Pre-Service Teachers

Contacts Danielle LeBlanc: danleblanc@nstu.ca

Education Drama Association of Nova Scotia (EDANS)

Theme ***Conference of Stuff: Tools for the Drama Classroom***

Platform Zoom

Keynote: The Art of Games, Bekah Schneider

Fees \$60 NSTU Members
\$25 Substitutes, Retired and Pre-Service Teachers

Contacts Melanie Kennedy: mjkennedy@nstu.ca

Family Studies Teachers Association (FSTA)

Theme ***Mind, Body and Soul***

Platform Google Meet

Fees \$85 NSTU Members (Includes \$15 Membership Fee)
\$55 Substitutes, Retired and Pre-Service Teachers

Contacts Tanya Mercer: tmmcsheffery@nstu.ca

Mathematics Teachers Association (MTA)

Theme ***Mathematics***

Platform Zoom

Fees \$40 NSTU Members
\$35 Substitutes, Retired and Pre-Service Teachers

Contacts Zeno MacDonald: zmacdonald@hrce.ca

Nova Scotia Association of Teachers for Equity in Education (NSATEE)

Theme ***Systemic Racism and White Privilege in Nova Scotia. Looking at these issues from a historical and current perspective, and how it effects students, staff and families in Nova Scotia's Public Schools.***

Platform Zoom

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2021 NSTU Professional Associations Virtual Conferences

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22



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Keynote: DeRico Symonds, Natteal Battiste & Megan Neaves
Fees \$80 NSTU Members
 \$40 Substitutes, Retired and Pre-Service Teachers
Contacts Rachel Creasor: nsateepa@gmail.com

Nova Scotia Language Teachers Association (NSLTA)

Theme *Many Voices, One World*
Platform Zoom
Fees \$65 NSTU Members (included \$20 membership fee)
 \$50 Substitutes, Retired and Pre-Service Teachers
Contacts Sara Adams: smmacinnes@nstu.ca

Nova Scotia Music Educators Association (NSMEA)

Theme *Unmasking Music Education*
Platform Zoom
Fees \$100 NSTU Members
 \$50 Substitutes and Retired Teachers
 \$30 Pre-Service Teachers
Contacts Keshia Laffin: kalaffin@nstu.ca

Nova Scotia School Counsellors Association (NSSCA)

Theme *Helping Hearts Growing Minds*
Platform Zoom for the platform, Agenda Mangers for conference planning and support
Fees \$95 NSTU Members
 \$55 Substitutes, Retired and Pre-Service Teachers
Contacts Andrew Gosney: wagosney@nstu.ca
 Amy Barry: albarry@nstu.ca

Nova Scotia Teachers Association for Literacy and Language (NSTALL)

Theme *Connecting Through Literacy and Learning*
Platform Google
Keynote: Sheree Fitch
Fees \$75 NSTU Members
 \$50 Substitutes and Retired Teachers
 \$40 Pre-Service Teachers
Contacts Stephanie Deagle: sddeagle@nstu.ca

Nova Scotia Technology Education Association (NSTEA)

Theme *Returning to Hands-On Learning*
Platform Google Meet
Fees \$70 NSTU Members
 \$20 Substitute Teachers
 \$0 Pre-Service and Retired Teachers
Contacts Andrew Seymour: agseymour@nstu.ca

Primary Elementary Teachers Association (PETA)

Theme *Literacy, Laughs and Self Love with Jennifer Serravallo, Joe (Mr. D) Dombrowski and Asha Croggon*
Platform Zoom
Keynote: Jennifer Serravallo, Joe (Mr. D) Dombrowski and Asha Croggon
Fees \$90 NSTU Members
 \$60 Substitutes, Retired and Pre-Service Teachers
Contacts Jennifer Eisener: petaconference@nstu.ca

Psychologists in Schools Association (PISA)

Theme *Cognitive Profile Analysis in School Psychology: History, Challenges, Opportunities?*
Platform Zoom

Keynote: Ryan J McGill, Ph.D., BCBA-D
Fees \$90 NSTU Members
 \$80 Substitutes, Retired and Pre-Service Teachers
Contacts Natasha Yorke-Phillip: neyorke@nstu.ca

Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists Association (SPAA)

Theme *Strategies to Promote Higher-Level Language Skills and Reading Comprehension (Dr. Laura Justice, The Ohio State University)*
Platform Zoom
Fees \$75.00 NSTU Members
 \$50.00 Substitutes, Retired and Pre-Service Teachers
Contacts Stephanie Brushett: sebrushett@nstu.ca

Social Studies Teachers Association (SSTA)

Theme *Social Studies: Now, More Than Ever!*
Platform Pheedloop
Fees \$75.00 NSTU Members
 \$40.00 Substitutes, Retired and Pre-Service Teachers
Contacts Wendy Driscoll: sstaconference@nstu.ca

Teachers Association for Physical and Health Education (TAPHE)

Theme *♪♪ This is How We Virtual ♪♪*
Platform Zoom
Fees \$75 Delegates
 \$30 Students and Substitutes
Contacts Amanda Brewer: aebrewer@nstu.ca

ALL CONFERENCES ARE VIRTUAL FOR 2021
Register Early!

executive highlights

April 14, 2021

- Approved a recommendation that the recommended candidate be offered a probationary contract as an executive staff officer in professional learning, effective August 1, 2021;
- Approved a recommendation that the deadline for locals to submit nominations for 2021 Local Service Awards be extended until Tuesday, June 1, 2021.

April 28, 2021

- Approved a recommendation that Council 2021 be postponed and a plan be developed for a future date.

May 12, 2021

- Approved a recommendation that Annual Council 2021 be delivered as outlined in the terms of D1, with elections to be concluded by June 30, 2021 under the alternative to term extensions presented with the plan;
- Approved a recommendation that the elections for First Vice-President, CTF Delegate, Professional, Discipline and Resolutions Committees be held on Friday, June 18 via email ballots;
- Approved a recommendation that nominations for CTF Delegate, Professional, Discipline and Resolutions Committees close on Monday, June 7, 2021;
- Approved a recommendation that the First Vice-President Question and Answer Forum be held by telephone town hall on June 7, 2021;
- Approved a recommendation that in the event plan D1 is not possible that plan D2 be used to deliver Annual Council 2021 virtually excepting elections.

June 4, 2021

- Filed the Table Officers Report;
 - Submitted the name of Colleen Scott as a candidate for the CTF Advisory Committee on the Status of Women.
 - Submitted the name of Tavis Bragg as a candidate for the CTF Advisory Committee on The Teaching Profession.
 - Submitted the name of Jenny-Rachel Lind as a candidate for the CTF Advisory Committee on Diversity and Human Rights.
 - Approved a donation in the amount of \$2,000 to the "EI Myanmar Solidarity Fund" through the CTF/FCE.

- Approved the granting of nine Local Service Awards;
- Elected 2nd Vice-President: *Russell Comeau*
Elected Secretary-Treasurer: *Peter Day*
Governance & Policy Committee: *Yolanda Aubrecht, Shannon Roy, Mike Jamieson, Byron Butt, Mary Currie, Jo-Leigh MacPhee, Georgette Samson, Colleen Scott, and Phil Samson.*
Nominating Committee: *Russell Comeau, Duncan Cameron, Deena Jewers, Byron Butt and Colleen Scott*
Personnel Committee: *Russell Comeau, Natalie MacIsaac, Jo-Leigh MacPhee, and Meg Ferguson*
- Appointed all Standing Committees for 2021-2022;
- Approved a recommendation that an advertisement be placed to fill three (3) vacancies on the Health and Safety Committee;
- Approved a recommendation that the 2021-2022 Budget be approved to be ratified by Annual Council;
- Approved Signing Officers for 2021-2022;
- Approved a recommendation that Leadership 2021 be cancelled;
- Approved a recommendation that Leadership 2022 be held at St. F. X. University;
- Approved a recommendation that Operational Procedure 31 – Labour Liaison be rescinded;
- Approved amendments to Operational Procedure by inserting a new Operational Procedure in Section VI – General, entitled NSTU Delegation to the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour Biennial Convention;
- Approved a recommendation that the nominations for the by-election of the CSANE Regional Provincial Executive Member open immediately and close on Tuesday, June 29th, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. and that the voting day be set for Wednesday, September 22nd, 2021;
- Approved a recommendation that Georgette Samson serve as the Regional Electoral Officer for the CSANE Regional Provincial By-Election;
- Ratified the Halifax County Local Constitution;
- Ratified the Northside-Victoria Local Constitution;
- Referred a motion regarding the Status of Women Committee composition to the Governance & Policy Committee for review and report back to the September 2021 Provincial Executive meeting.

100th Annual Council to be held October 1 to 3

NSTU's 100th Annual Council originally to be held virtually, and scheduled for April 30 to May 2 was postponed on April 27 due to the COVID-19 third wave lockdown. On May 13, after consulting with NSTU's Local presidents, the NSTU's provincial executive approved a motion to hold an in-person Annual Council from Friday October 1 to Sunday October 3, depending on public health guidelines.

"We're hopeful it will be safe to hold a regular in-person Council meeting, and celebrate our 100th Council Anniversary in person," says NSTU president Paul Wozney.

The business of this in-person Council will be as normal as possible with a few exceptions. The Halifax Convention Centre will host the event and hotel accommodations will be arranged at the Hotel Halifax and the Barrington Hotel. Future correspondence will be sent to Delegates regarding registration for this event. It is recognized that not all currently registered Delegates may be available for these new dates. Locals will have the opportunity to alter their Delegations accordingly.

"If public health restrictions limit gathering sizes and/or

travel between regions in October, Annual Council will be conducted virtually on the same weekend, following the plans set out for Virtual Annual Council 2021 as previously scheduled for May 2021."

Elections for Council committees, CTF delegate and First Vice-President took place June 18 in advance of the Annual Council to maintain the traditional terms of office.

Nominations for First Vice-President closed on Friday, April 23rd, 2021 at noon with two individuals being nominated, Thérèse Forsythe and Sue Larivière-Jenkins. These two individuals had the opportunity to videorecord a seven-minute address to Council Delegates that was posted on the NSTU website. A 30-minute First Vice-President Candidate Forum, moderated by Council's Independent Chair Mary-Lou Donnelly, took place via a telephone townhall on Monday, June 7th, 2021.

If you require any guidance in regards to this memo, please do not hesitate in contacting Executive Staff Officer Louis Robitaille via email at lrobitaille@staff.nstu.ca.

Suite de 5

qui puise avidement tout ce qu'il peut dans nos vies personnelles pour compenser ce qu'il ne parvient manifestement pas à nous fournir et à fournir à nos élèves.

En conclusion, bravo. Et merci. Je suis fier de vous. Vous avez aidé vos élèves à naviguer une situation dont personne n'avait fait l'expérience depuis plus d'un siècle, et l'histoire se souviendra de vous et des efforts que vous avez déployés pour aider la Nouvelle-Écosse à rebondir. Profitez pleinement de chaque moment de l'été 2021 et rechargez vos batteries. Il ne fait aucun doute que vous le méritez.

L'été est là, frères et sœurs du NSTU! Restez en bonne santé et créez de beaux souvenirs.

Je vous souhaite tout le bonheur possible,
Paul Wozney.



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**Nova Scotia
Teachers Union**

Senator Series presentation focuses on mental health during COVID-19

The NSTU's *Senator Series of Professional Learning* continued on March 9 with Senator Stan Kutcher. Almost 80 teachers attended his virtual presentation, *Mental Health in Education during COVID*, which focused on teacher and student mental health during the pandemic. Dr. Stan Kutcher is a leading psychiatrist and professor who has helped young people successfully manage major mental illnesses. He has created many school-based mental health programs to help educators better understand mental health and mental illness including leading the development of *Teacher Mental Health*, a program for pre-service teachers.

"Teaching is challenging at the best of times, but even more so during a pandemic. As educators, we have been asked to focus on our students' mental health as well as our own," he said.

Starting with mental health basics Senator Kutcher incorporated the pandemic throughout his presentation on key concepts in mental health. "COVID is causing stress in our lives and dis-equilibrium for all of us."

"Mental health is the capacity or competency to successfully adapt to life's challenges," he said. "It has emotional, cognitive and behavioural components."

He reminded participants that, "It is the adaptive component that is key. It's not about feeling good—we're going to feel good and not so good, in fact negative emotions are healthy. It's the quality of the emotional response we have to negative emotions that is critical."

Dr. Kutcher also discussed the stigma and confusion around mental health. He says the first step is to be aware we have the stigma. "It's your problem, everyone's problem. We share the same stigma. We have to educate ourselves about mental health."

He goes on to say that people confuse mental health with mental disorder, "People say we have stigma against mental health. No, we don't have stigma against mental health—but against mental illness, it's against the disorder itself, the person who has it and it's against the treatment they receive."

He also outlined the importance of using the correct language. "Language matters; at the beginning of the pandemic people confused fear and anxiety. When it comes to COVID, we were afraid, people could die from it, therefore we had fear, and the antidote to fear is courage, and mitigating the threat. Following public health advice is the antidote to mitigating the threat. However, if we call it anxiety the way we tend to deal with anxiety is to withdraw, turn inward, to avoid, so it's really important to use the right kind of language."

He says that depression is another term used more during the pandemic, becoming something that defines almost any negative

emotion, compared to the actual symptoms of depression.

"In social emotional learning for instance, we teach kids about all these different emotions, and it's so important to teach the right word for the right type and nuance of emotion so they can develop control and agency over their emotions. One of the issues I've been seeing during this pandemic is that we've just been using the word anxiety for anything that is hyperarousal and the word depression for any negative emotion. This tends to make us think about, or focus on pathology, instead of just feeling upset—which may be a positive thing."

He also discussed current surveys and studies that use the words anxiety and depression instead of the nuances of what people are feeling. "This gives the impression that Canadians are overwhelmed with all these negative pathologies, some people are, but lots of people aren't. Very few surveys have asked about the full gamut of emotions. One exception is the Vanier Institute Study on Youth Well Being."

(<https://vanierinstitute.ca/covid-19-impacts-youth-well-being-in-canada/>)



He also cautioned about the marketing of wellness, the majority of which is targeted towards women. "There is a real concern about what is being sold under the banner of wellness and wellbeing," he adds. Many things that are being marketed and sold are based on pseudoscience and non-science and have no positive demonstratable objective impact. "As teachers it's important to recognize this for our students." He highlighted some articles that explore this issue through a feminist lens.

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/08/opinion/sunday/women-dieting-wellness.html>)

(<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2019/08/what-goop-really-sells-women/596773/>)

He also outlined the "5 (+1) to Thrive" keys in maintaining good mental health: exercise, nutrition, sleep, strong supportive relationships, helping others, and avoid smoking/vaping or excessive use of legal substances.

“As teachers you are an invaluable asset for helping families and communities identify, support and channel young people who may be in need of additional assistance—and schools can be a location in which health of students can blend with education seamlessly.”

Senator Kutcher ended his presentation with his lessons from COVID:

- Extreme hype is not helpful (suicide, echo-pandemic) – we will adapt but not everyone will adapt equally (social inequalities have a huge impact on adaptation)
- Robust and valid data is hard to find (but many problematic “studies” are easily available) – believe almost nothing of what you read or hear
- Social determinants of health predict outcomes during times of global crisis as well as when global crises are not occurring (race; income; geography; etc.)
- It’s really easy to criticize but much harder to act in a way that balances the complexities of needs and wants – public health measures versus economic growth
- Fake news spreads much more rapidly and at much greater volume than reliable and best evidence-based facts – and it is so much more difficult to counter (Brandolini’s law) – need robust science/health/mental health literacy (schools): <https://www.scienceupfirst.com/>

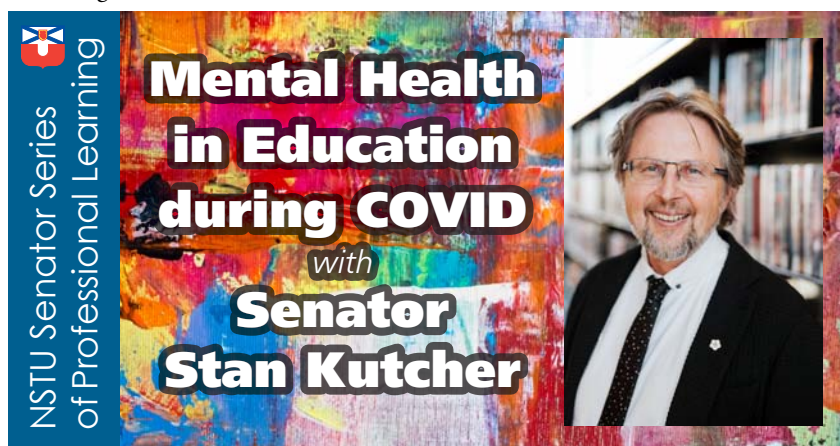
- The importance of social connection – Human connection is the key to improving the human condition.”
- Schools are a critical institutional framework for promoting/ supporting the health of our communities

A recording of Senator Kutcher’s is found here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/sqkEF2jOZ2QXUc63mYFj3wYOrMkVPWyEOIcPVuSqUinKRZy_CywcWPD-YH2nsLei.sbpL_TPUUnQzRanx8

Free online mental health training, for pre-service and current teachers, which aims to enhance mental health literacy, is found here: <https://pdce.educ.ubc.ca/teach-mental-health-literacy/>

Another useful resource mentioned is Teen Mental Health <https://teenmentalhealth.org/>.



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– Marilyn Nunn,
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COVID-19 and schools Spring 2021 3rd Wave Timeline

April 15, 2021 – Only three cases of COVID-19 announced across province

April 18, 2021 – Two school cases announced in HRM.

April 20, 2021 – Three school cases announced in HRM.

April 21, 2021 – 25 COVID-19 cases announced across province.

April 22, 2021 – 38 COVID-19 cases announced across province.

April 22, 2021 – NSTU asks province to provide clarity about what would trigger a switch to remote learning.

April 22, 2021 – all schools in Dartmouth pivot to remote learning, except Prince Andrew family.

April 23, 2021 – St. Joseph's Alexander McKay school in HRM pivots to remote learning.

April 23, 2021 – Provincial Pediatric Advisory Committee and IWK release a statement discouraging a shift to at-home learning.

April 24, 2021 – 52 cases of COVID-19 announced across province.

April 25, 2021 – 63 cases of COVID-19 announced across Province, plus 9 school cases.

April 25, 2021 – Prince Andrew family of schools in Dartmouth pivots to remote learning. Dr. Strang tell media that schools "by and large are safe."

April 26, 2021 – NSTU asks that in-person learning be suspended across the province for safety reasons.

April 26, 2021 – Province pivots to remote learning across the entire HRCE and some surrounding communities.

April 27, 2021 – In-person learning suspended across province. All students switch to remote learning. (There were more than 60 school related cases prior to suspension of in-person learning.)

May 1, 2021 – 148 cases of COVID-19 announced across province.

May 7, 2021 – 227 cases of COVID-19 announced across province.

May 7, 2021 – Dr. Strang tells media that school facilities could remain closed to in-person learning until summer.

May 14, 2021 – IWK reports that more than 850 children have tested positive for COVID-19 during 3rd wave, many of them hospitalized.

May 19, 2021 – Premier Rankin announces that remote learning will continue for remainder of school year across province.

May 21 – Deadline for teachers to communicate information about year-end online assessments to students and families.

May 26, 2021 – EECD staff appear at Legislative Committee, report positive results of current remote learning program.

May 28, 2021 – Premier Rankin announces in-person learning will resume outside of HRM and Sydney effective June 2nd. Schools inside HRM and Sydney will remain virtual for Phase 1 (at least June 14) of reopening plan.

May 31, 2021 – Premier Rankin announces in-person learning will resume in Halifax and Sydney effective June 3rd.

June 6, 2021 – Two school cases announced in Nova Scotia.

At press time on June 23 the NSTU was aware of 11 schools with cases of COVID-19, all but one within HRCE.

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 Grade 6 Teacher in CCRCE looking to do a permanent exchange with a teacher in the SRCE for 2020-2021. Please contact Angela: angela_macd3@hotmail.com OR 902.209.9807

Permanent HRCE Secondary Teacher looking to do a permanent exchange with a teacher in SSRCE. Please contact: mackenziemichael@gmail.com.

Interested in a 20% job share in the HRCE for the 2021-22 school year. Preferably in the Lower Elementary, taught Primary for last three years. Preferably Lower Elementary. Taught Primary for last three years in Dartmouth. Email marharris@ns.sympatico.ca for more information.



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For a list of opportunities see:

www.internationalprograms.ednet.ns.ca

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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

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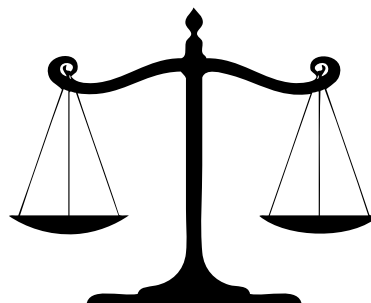
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- April Wallace
school teacher



Mindfulness for Mental Health Conference and Yoga Teacher Training - online or in-person

This summer's conference

In the face of the difficulties 2020 has brought Canadians, these two training opportunities are the perfect solution for repairing mental health and fostering emotional stability and stress management. Whether you attend the full 3-week training or the four-day conference, both of these experiences will help you to heal and best serve your students' mental and emotional wellbeing.

The workshops are suitable for all levels of ability and include both theoretical and movement-based practices, designed to relieve stress and promote calmness in yourself and students.

- Body-based approaches for mental health
- Trauma-informed mindfulness
- Mindfulness for addiction
- Mindful practices for anxiety and depression
- Addiction treatment using First Nations Teachings

Full 200hr Yoga in Schools and Studio Certification, with manuals and training in Yoga Grade 11, Yoga for Autism, Yoga for Special Needs and level 1 mindfulness. Certification training runs from July 5-24th, with the 4 day conference included.

Conference hosts: Jenny Kerstead and Blair Abbass, authors of the NEW Mindfulness in Schools Manual and founders of Yoga in Schools.

Who can attend: Ideal for teachers, support staff and therapists

When: July 19th-22nd, 2021

Where: Chocolate Lake Hotel, Halifax, NS

Fee: \$550.00 + tax

NOTE: This full YTT is certified by Yoga Alliance, online or in-person


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Managing Mental and Physical Fatigue

As we approach the end of the school year, it is not uncommon for teachers to experience both mental and physical fatigue, especially when we factor in the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. You have gone from trying to keep children safe in the classroom to then having to pivot to online learning and now teaching in-person. It is no wonder why many teachers are exhausted!

How you manage this fatigue is important. Whether you are feeling physically tired, mentally tired or both, there are steps you can take to re-energize and improve your overall wellness. One of the best ways to start to feel better is to reflect on where you are in your life both mentally and physically. Think about any concerns you have or behaviors you want to address to combat the fatigue you are experiencing.

Some ways to re-energize yourself mentally could include:

- Focus on the present and practice relaxation and stress reduction through mindfulness and meditation.
- Maintain relationships with friends and family by exploring new ways to connect and come together while apart. You could participate in, or host, watch parties to view different television programs or movies, or attend virtual events such as paint nights or cooking classes. It is important to revive the social aspects of your life even if you are struggling by talking and listening to the people closest to you. Remember to reach out to people who you have not heard from in a while as they may be facing similar challenges of their own.
- Explore services and supports offered through the NSTU Group Insurance Program such as the Manulife Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) or Your Wellness Partner offered through CAREpath. Information and how to access both programs can be found by visiting the NSTU Group Insurance Trust website at <https://nstuinsurance.ca/>.

In an effort to re-energize physically, you could consider the following:

- Keep up with simple exercise such as walking and housework, or explore online classes, like yoga, that are low-impact and do not require equipment.
- Maintain good sleep hygiene and sleep routines. Plan on getting eight hours on a regular sleep schedule, and where possible, plan for naps.

- Ensure that your nutrition is optimized to provide the nourishment, vitamins and minerals that your body needs. Stick to a well-balanced diet, heavy in fruits, veggies and lean proteins. Steer clear of caffeine, sugar, and processed foods. These tips will help you achieve both physical and mental wellness by giving you the energy to do more of the things you want to do.

As teachers, your NSTU Group Insurance Trustees understand that mental and physical fatigue is a real issue, especially given how difficult the last year has been. They want to thank you for your continued hard work and dedication.

The information provided here can help when you are feeling mentally and/or physically exhausted as well as arm you to become more resilient as we continue to navigate our “new normal”. We are in this together. Take care and stay safe!

Halifax 2022 Outreach Program Ideas from Science Educators & Committee Opportunities

The 2022 Annual National meeting of Earth Science professionals will be held 15th to 18th May in the Halifax Convention Centre. We're excited to be offering an Outreach Program aimed at Earth Science educators and enthusiasts, with workshops, field trips and lectures facilitated by scientists and other experts. With so many diverse topics and resources, we are inviting educators of all grade levels to submit their ideas on what would help them teach earth sciences so we can incorporate these into our Outreach Program. We are also seeking interested educators to join our committee to assist with conference planning.

To submit your ideas or to inquire about joining our committee please contact Louise Leslie (Committee Chair) at 902-728-3602 or louise.leslie@hotmail.ca



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