



NSTU Raises Concerns Over Eliminated Teaching Positions

On June 9th, at a news conference held at Province House, NSTU President Peter Day raised concerns about the elimination of more than 80 teaching positions across Nova Scotia.

Day says the removal of specialist positions, including mathematics and literacy coaches, mentors, and interventionist teachers, will have a negative impact on student achievement.

“These specialist teachers play a critical role in our schools,” said Day. “They support classroom teachers, but more importantly, they work directly with students who have diverse and complex needs. They help students overcome academic, behavioural, and emotional challenges that can otherwise become significant barriers to success.”

“Removing these positions creates a significant gap in our public education system and will have real consequences for students and classrooms,” he added.

The NSTU is also concerned about the broader impact of eliminating teaching positions given ongoing teacher shortages across Canada.

“If the government has decided that Nova Scotia needs fewer teachers, there is a very real possibility that other provinces and territories will move quickly to recruit these highly skilled professionals,” said Day. “Once experienced teachers leave Nova Scotia, it can be incredibly difficult to bring them back.”

Day notes that teachers are already working hard to meet the increasingly complex needs of students and families. He warns that reducing staffing levels will place additional pressure on classrooms and school communities.



NSTU president Peter Day is pictured with MLA Paul Wozney and representatives from Literacy Justice Nova Scotia Ann Doyle and Louise Hanavan during a news conference held at Province House on June 9. Credit: Jaya Condran, Halifax Examiner

“Our schools need smaller class sizes, not larger and more overcrowded learning environments,” he continued. “Students need more supports, especially those with diverse and complex needs, not fewer supports and resources.”

Day attended the event with other public education stakeholders including Literacy Justice Nova Scotia, and NDP Education Critic Paul Wozney.

2026 NSTU Summer Hours

The NSTU Summer Office Hours will be starting on Monday June 29th and will conclude on Friday August 28th.

Summer hours are Monday to Thursday 8:00am – 4:00pm and Fridays 8:00am – 12:00pm.

The July Shutdown will be starting on Monday July 20th and the office will re-open on Tuesday August 4th.

people

Education Research Award presented to Pictou Local teacher



NSTU President Peter Day presented Karen Berezowski with her NSTU Education Research Award certificate during the Pictou Local AGM on May 12. Berezowski received the award for her research, *Exploring Social-emotional Wellbeing: A Yoga Curriculum*. A Yoga 11 and Behaviour Support teacher at Northumberland High School in Westville, Berezowski completed the research in part for her Master of Education in Sustainability, Creativity and Innovation at Cape Breton University. Her work explored strategies for managing difficult emotions and stress, including grief.

In her behaviour support role, Berezowski is also known for overseeing the school's *Karma Closet*, which began as a Yoga 11 project in 2019. The student-led initiative provides essential everyday items, including food, hygiene products, clothing and school supplies, to those in need. "We have experienced a positive shift in student behaviour since we started our free salad bar lunch

CAPPTO Presidents

Shown with NSTU president Peter Day (far right) are other presidents of the Council of Provincial and Territorial Teacher Organizations (CAPPTO) during the National Presidents' Meeting held in Alberta in early June.



Left to right: Heidi Ryder, New Brunswick Teachers' Association; Éric Godin, Association des enseignantes et des enseignants francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick; Dale Lambe, Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association; Andy Doran, Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation; Justin Matchett, Nunavut Teachers' Association.

program in 2023, and we are aware that this is not the trend provincially," she says.

Berezowski recently attended the National School Food Forum in Montreal with students involved in the *Karma Closet*, where they were invited to present to administrators, educators, and municipal, provincial and national leaders.

She was one of four teachers to receive the award during the 2025–2026 school year. Since 2003, the NSTU has recognized teachers for completed education research through an annual fund that encourages and supports this work, with individual awards of up to \$500. The deadline for next year's applications is December 2, 2026, at 4:00 p.m. [More information is found here](#). Berezowski is shown with Provincial Executive member Doug Read, and Pictou Local President Eliza Abbass (left) and NSTU president Peter Day.



THE teacher
ISSN 0382-408X

Managing Editor: Angela Murray
Assistant Editor: Mark Laventure
Advertising & Circulation: Nancy Day

CEPA
ACPÉ

Canadian Educational Press Association
Association canadienne de la presse éducationnelle

Published eight times a year
(September-June)
by the **Nova Scotia Teachers Union**
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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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CTF/FCE calls for stronger K-12 Protections in National AI Strategy



CTF/FCE

The Federation urges enforceable safeguards and educator consultation in addition to privacy and online safety commitments

The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE), representing over 370,000 educators through 18 Member and Associate Organizations, welcomed several commitments in the federal government's national AI strategy. Until now, policy has not kept up with the rapid pace of AI adoption in K-12 public schools. The strategy begins to address governance gaps that will help protect the rights and well-being of students and teachers.

While K-12 education across Canada falls mostly under provincial and territorial jurisdiction, Ottawa has an essential role in ensuring AI is used responsibly in schools. The CTF/FCE appreciated the strategy's commitment to modernize online safety and consumer privacy laws, with explicit mention of protecting children. Specific legal tools to mitigate harms arising from AI chatbots, including those used in schools, are essential to address serious threats to young people's learning and well-being. These are priorities that the Federation had previously urged the Ministry of AI and Digital Innovation to adopt.

"The government names trust as the north star of its strategy, but trust won't be achieved while risky AI tools are flowing freely into public schools," said Clint Johnston, President of the CTF/

FCE. "For families and young people to trust AI, the government must hold technology companies accountable for ensuring systems are safe by the time they reach classrooms."

The Federation appreciated the strategy's commitment to AI literacy, including learning kits for K-12 educators, but warned that the scale falls short. The strategy promises to reach one million post-secondary students, but only 3,000 of Canada's 420,000-strong public educator workforce. A commitment to train a few thousand teachers is not enough to improve Canada's position from 44th of 47 countries on AI literacy. Renewed investment in CanCode may help fill this gap, yet a fragmented approach carries risks. Critical AI literacy must be accessible to schools across the country, including rural, remote, and Indigenous communities which are often left behind. The government must also recognize that AI literacy cannot simply be a pathway to deeper AI adoption in schools. To ensure AI is beneficial in public education, students, educators, and unions must be at the core of defining and developing K-12 digital literacy programs – something that the CTF/FCE is well positioned to facilitate.

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From the NSTU President



Standing Together

As I sit and write this column, it is June 11, William Davis Memorial Miners' Day, also known as Davis Day.

This annual day of remembrance is observed across Nova Scotia to commemorate the life of William Davis, a coal miner who was killed during a strike in 1925. It is also a day to honour all miners who have lost their lives in Nova Scotia's coal mines.

For many Nova Scotians, particularly those of us with roots in Cape Breton, Davis Day carries deep meaning. It is a reminder of the sacrifices made by ordinary working people who stood together to demand fair treatment, safer workplaces, and dignity on the job.

In 1925, miners in Cape Breton were engaged in a bitter strike against the British Empire Steel Corporation. Living conditions were harsh. The company had cut off electricity and water to mining communities to pressure workers back onto the job. On June 11, William Davis joined fellow miners in a protest at the company's power plant in New Waterford. During that protest, he was shot and killed by company police.

His death became a rallying cry not only for miners, but for workers across Canada. The courage shown by Davis and countless others helped strengthen the labour movement and contributed to many of the workplace rights and protections we often take for granted today.

I mention Davis Day here because it serves as an important reminder that progress rarely happens by accident. Many of the rights and protections workers enjoy today were secured because people were willing to stand together and advocate for change. The labour movement has always been strongest when people recognize that collective action can improve not only their own lives, but the lives of future generations.

That spirit continues today. Whether we are advocating for safe and healthy workplaces, manageable workloads, appropriate supports for students, professional respect, or fair working conditions, we build on the legacy of those who came before us. The strength of our union comes from members who are willing to raise concerns, support one another, and work collectively toward a better future for public education and for all Nova Scotians.

June is also Pride Month, a reminder that the work of building inclusive communities requires the same spirit of solidarity that has driven positive change throughout our history. NSTU members continue to support school environments where all students and staff feel welcomed, respected, and valued. By embracing diversity and promoting belonging, we help ensure our schools remain places where everyone has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.

In June, we also recognize National Indigenous History Month, a time to honour the histories, cultures, contributions,

and enduring strength of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. It is an opportunity to reflect on the truths of our shared history and the ongoing work of reconciliation. Like all meaningful progress, reconciliation requires learning, understanding, and a commitment to action. As educators, we have an important role to play in helping students deepen their understanding of Indigenous perspectives and experiences, while fostering respect, empathy, and meaningful relationships within our schools and communities.

Whether we are creating inclusive classrooms, advancing reconciliation, advocating for safe and healthy workplaces, or supporting students through their challenges and successes, the common thread is people. It is the willingness of individuals to care for one another, stand together, and work toward something greater than themselves. That same spirit connected the miners who fought for better working conditions a century ago, and it continues to guide the work of educators across Nova Scotia today.

As another school year draws to a close, I encourage all teachers and specialists to take a moment to celebrate the incredible work you do each and every day.

Throughout this year, you have done far more than teach curriculum outcomes. You have helped students discover their strengths, overcome obstacles, and build confidence in themselves. You have provided encouragement when it was needed most, celebrated achievements both big and small, and helped shape the citizens, leaders, and community members of tomorrow. The lessons students carry forward from your classrooms extend far beyond any curriculum document.

Your impact extends beyond your students as well. You have been mentors, collaborators, and sources of support for your colleagues. You have shared your expertise, offered a helping hand during difficult times, and contributed to the strong school communities that make our profession so meaningful.

Public education is stronger because of your contributions. Our communities are better because of your contributions. And just as those who came before us worked to build a better future for the generations that followed, your efforts continue to strengthen our schools, our profession, and our province.

Thank you for all that you do.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan B.'.

continued from page 3

High-level commitments within the strategy must now translate into enforceable protections reflected in the classroom. With the strategy strongly encouraging AI adoption, the Federation warned against rapid deployment in schools and called for safety-by-design obligations; independent impact assessments; and procurement standards that match the bar the government has set for its own AI integration in terms of transparency, privacy, and accountability.

The AI Missions Program, while promising, does not make mention of education within its priority sectors. This is a missed opportunity for Canada to be a leader in developing education technologies in partnership with teachers and students, tools which serve the public good while reducing reliance on foreign-owned platforms with a history of data security issues. The CTF/FCE urged that a future AI Mission be dedicated to public-good education technology, co-developed with educators and students, and driven by school needs over profit motives.

“Over 90 per cent of children in Canada attend public schools. Educators are on the frontlines as AI reshapes learning,” said Johnston. “They understand the risks to young people better than most of us, and should be meaningfully consulted on a better, safer path forward.”

The CTF/FCE stands ready to work with the federal government, provinces, and territories to ensure the “human-in-the-loop” principle extends into classrooms, so that the adoption of AI in K-12 does not strain the humanity at the core of learning.

Dyslexia Canada honours Ocean View Elementary teachers

Four Halifax County Local members from Ocean View Elementary were honoured on June 9 with Dyslexia Canada Educational Excellence Awards from Dyslexia Canada.

The 2026 Outstanding Team Award was awarded to Grade 2 teacher Nicole Curry, Early Literacy Support Teacher Christine Gillis, Grade 3 teacher Jacqueline Markowski, and Resource teacher Erin Mosher.

The Dyslexia Canada Educational Excellence Awards honour teachers, administrators, and specialists who champion structured literacy and inclusive environments for students with dyslexia. Honourees are recognized for implementing structured literacy approaches and early screening, creating inclusive and supportive learning spaces, and advocating for lasting, systemic change within their school regions.



Pictured from left: Dyslexia Canada Associate Director Una Malcolm; Dyslexia Canada Executive Director Alicia Smith; Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development Brendan Maguire; Early Literacy Support Teacher Christine Gillis; Grade 2 teacher Nicole Curry; Grade 3 teacher Jacqueline Markowski; Resource teacher Erin Mosher; and MLA Barbara Adams.



NSTU president Peter Day is pictured at the Cumberland Local Social, which took place on May 13.

Joint Statement from Canada's Education Leaders

In Opposition to the Use of the Notwithstanding Clause in Labour Negotiations

Teacher organization presidents from across Canada, representing more than 420,000 educators, met in Banff, Alberta, on June 1, 2026, to discuss the potential use of the Notwithstanding Clause (Section 33 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*) by provincial/territorial governments for issues it was never intended for, as it has been in Alberta.

The presidents affirmed their shared commitment to the democratic rights of teachers and all workers and stand united in their condemnation of the use of the Notwithstanding Clause as a tool to override constitutionally protected rights to freedom of association, collective bargaining, and strike action.

A Growing Pattern of Overreach

The Notwithstanding Clause was designed as a safeguard to be invoked only in exceptional and demonstrably justified circumstances. It was never intended to be a routine tool for governments to bypass the courts and silence workers amid legitimate labour disputes.

In the past five years, the Notwithstanding Clause has been used more frequently to deny human and democratic rights than at any other time in our lifetimes. Recently, Premiers in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Quebec have invoked the Notwithstanding Clause in the following legislation:

- *Bill 2, "Back to School Act"* in Alberta, 2025
- *Bill 9, "Protecting Alberta's Children Statutes Amendment Act"* in Alberta, 2025
- *Bill 137, "Parents' Bill of Rights"* in Saskatchewan, 2023
- *Bill 28, "Keeping Students in Class Act"* in Ontario, 2022
- *Bill 307, "Protecting Elections and Defending Democracy Act"* in Ontario, 2021
- *Bill 96, "An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec"* in Quebec, 2022

When governments invoke the Notwithstanding Clause to end labour disputes, they are not simply legislating. They are telling workers that their rights are conditional and that the *Charter* protections all Canadians depend upon can be switched off when it is politically convenient to do so. This is a threat not only to teachers, but to every worker and every citizen in this country.

Our Collective Position

The undersigned presidents, representing teachers and education workers in every province and territory across Canada, collectively and unequivocally declare:

- The use of the Notwithstanding Clause during labour negotiations is an abuse of legislative power. Governments must engage in good-faith collective bargaining, not weaponize the Constitution to silence workers.

- Teachers' rights to freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to strike are constitutionally protected and must remain so. No government should be able to pre-emptively nullify these rights and block the courts from providing recourse.
- The Notwithstanding Clause must only ever be used as a last resort, after judicial review has been permitted. Its pre-emptive use to shield legislation from *Charter* challenges is a subversion of the democratic rule of law.
- The implications of this trend extend far beyond education, threatening every worker and citizen in this country. What is happening to teachers today can happen to any worker, in any sector, tomorrow. This is a national issue requiring a national response.

Together we call on all levels of government to take the following immediate actions:

- Commit to good-faith collective bargaining with teachers and education workers, and resolve disputes through negotiation and mediation.
- Pledge not to invoke the Notwithstanding Clause in the context of labour relations with teachers and education workers.
- Support federal action to review and restrict provincial/territorial use of Section 33 when it is applied to deny citizens' fundamental democratic and human rights.
- Ensure judicial oversight is preserved by allowing courts the opportunity to examine the constitutionality of any legislation before the Notwithstanding Clause is considered.

Additionally, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE) Board of Directors has launched a petition that calls upon the federal government to *"annul or repeal any future provincial legislation that restricts workers' rights to strike and collectively bargain through the use of the Notwithstanding Clause, and to affirm the federal government's responsibility to uphold Charter rights across Canada."*

The presidents of all provincial/territorial teachers' organizations strongly encourage all Canadians who share our values to add their names to this petition before it closes on July 24, 2026. The petition can be found at: <https://www.ctf-fce.ca/take-action/notwithstanding-clause-petition/>

It is not too late to act with integrity. But governments must choose to do so now.

Signatories

Jason Schilling – Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA)

Gabrielle Lemieux – Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO)



Canadian Teachers' Federation



Éric Godin, Association des enseignantes et des enseignants francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick, Fédération des enseignants du Nouveau-Brunswick (AEFNB/FENB)

Carole Gordon – British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF)

Clint Johnston – Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE)

Mona-Élise Sévigny – Éducatrices et éducateurs francophones du Manitoba (ÉFM)

David Mastin – Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)

Heidi Ryder – New Brunswick Teachers' Association, New Brunswick Teachers' Federation (NBTA/NBTF)

Dale Lambe – Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (NLTA)

Peter Day – Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU)

Justin Matchett – Nunavut Teachers' Association (NTA)

René Jansen in de Wal – Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA)

Martha Hradowy – Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO)

Andy Doran – Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation (PEITF)

Samantha Becotte – Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF)

Ted Hupé – Yukon Association of Education Professionals (YAEP)

Chris Cowley – Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF)

Heidi Yetman – Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT)

Rita Mueller – Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (NWTTA)

Lillian Klausen – Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS)

National Presidents' Meeting

Pictured are the presidents of provincial/territorial teachers' organizations who met in Banff, Alberta for the 2026 National Presidents' Meeting, held June 1- 3. Representing more than 420,000 educators, this meeting focuses on addressing the challenges facing public education nationwide, including the repeated use of the notwithstanding clause for issues of which it was not intended.



NSTU Research Repository

The NSTU is in the process of establishing a repository of academic research in education, comprising the accomplished thesis work of our members.

Have you completed a thesis in educational research? Willing to share your results to inform members' practice and understanding of public education in Nova Scotia? We would like to celebrate and promote your good work through our repository of academic research in education by NSTU members.



Members should contact
our Professional Learning
department via

appl@nstu.ca



The Intersectionality of Being an Ally

by Amanda O'Regan-Marchand, Executive Staff Officer, Professional Learning

Happy June!

As you are closing another chapter of successes, challenges, lessons and opportunities, reflect on all this school year has brought to you and consider how your allyship with students intersected. What commonalities and connections did you discover?

I am beginning to explore my intersectionalities and my neurospicy brain greatly enjoys finding commonalities and patterns. Whether your mind works similarly to mine or not, take a glimpse into the possible interconnectedness of allyship that exist as allies for your students.

Intersectionality refers to the different parts of our identity or pieces of our puzzle that allow us to explore and share, as we are comfortable, with the world around us; to practice discernment, to set and maintain boundaries and to honour the experience, knowledge and support that have brought us to this place. As members of a collective experience, what common ground do we share and what sets us apart? How can we celebrate our uniqueness while staying comfortably separate within a larger system?

Our students come to us with backpacks full of experiences. We build rapport through common interests, and this shared experience can help to cultivate a sense of safety for our students through genuine opportunities to see themselves in their learning experience. By being open to learning from one another, we get to discover [Mi'kmaq Ways Being of Knowing](#) and further extend our intersections with others to our natural world. We learn about sacred beliefs, practices and traditions that have helped our Indigenous neighbours respectfully tend this land through reciprocity and respect, for centuries.

Our responsibilities as student allies also call us to know students

as they are known and to recognize they come to us as part of a larger community. This involves broadening our understanding, creating meaningful opportunities for students to explore their identities, and embracing this diversity through our teaching practices, resources, and learning routines. Ensuring all our students feel empowered to ask, share and discover and to invite their families to their team helps us to build our allyship toolbox. This will see us equipped to ensure equity and accessibility in our students' learning opportunities. [The African Nova Scotian Student framework](#) is an excellent tool for this link of our allyship circle of care.

In terms of the intersectionality of being an ally, what connections did you discover this past year?

- What are some of the intersectionalities you discovered this year in your learning spaces?
- In what ways have you continued to implement the different intersectionalities into your practice?
- What 'yay me' moments do you recall?
- Finish the sentence: The students really responded to . . .
- How has your thinking grown or changed this school year?
- What have been some of your challenges this year, and how were you able to overcome them?
- What did you learn from your students this year?
- What did you learn about yourself this year? (Steve Barkley)

To help me feel better prepared for next steps, I make notes for next time. So, before you start, ponder this question and use the prompts below to help frame the future possibilities.

What opportunities can you find to interweave these into how we show up for and stand beside our students to encourage their learning.



- What do our students need us to learn in terms of how we can be an ally for them in ways that honour their unique needs? How can we incorporate this into our feedback.
- Which coaching practices were most/least useful to you?
- What is something that makes you feel hopeful?
- What are you most curious about in your practice?
- If you could remind yourself of one important thing at the beginning of the next school year, what would it be?

Along with June being Indigenous History Month, it is also PRIDE month and so extends our allyship and widens our circle of care. Supporting 2SLGBTQAI+ youth and their allies and families provides opportunities for us to realize, recognize and respond to their needs by ensuring they also see themselves in their learning. This is crucial to their wellbeing and success. I have shared the following resources previously but revisiting and reflecting is important in sound allyship. The Public Service Alliance of Canada has launched a gender-inclusive language toolkit, <https://psacunion.ca/psac-kicks-pride-season-launch-gender-inclusive>, which explains different terms related to gender orientation and sexual identity in a very accessible way.

[TeachingTransgender.org](https://teachingtransgender.org) has developed an educational toolkit that is downloadable and designed to build skills for supporting our youth who identify as transgender and to cultivate safe spaces for those youth who silently identify to possibly find a place where they can share this piece of their identity.

PHE Canada also has a great number of [resources](#) for incorporating inclusive language and activities into the Physical Education learning space, where activities and the physical space can sometimes be one of the most challenging for our youth.

I mentioned earlier that I have a neurosparkly brain; although this is a newer piece of my own intersections, it was likely there all along, and my ways of seeing and interacting with my world made me “different” from my peers and not always in the best way. Neurodiversity is an ever-growing exploration of how individuals exist within our world and the amount of research and associated strategies can be overwhelming. How can we be allies to our students who make meaning and share their understandings in ways that are different? Different is not worse, less than, or odd—it’s just different. We can learn a great deal from that which sets us apart while ensuring what makes us unique still allows us to belong. Brene Brown does an excellent job explaining the important difference between belonging and fitting in. Belonging is now recognized as a fundamental human need. Approaching learning differences and neurodiversity from a strengths-based perspective can help students see we are part of their team and are cheering for their successes and supporting their challenges. Offering a consistent environment where we expect their best each day and recognize that everyone’s best looks different on any given day, is another way to show allyship.

Remember that even as allies, our best looks different too. We must be gentle and give ourselves permission to be open to learning and not knowing in the moment and to make a commitment to do differently as needed.

The NSTU Professional Learning team wishes you a fulfilling yearly reflection and a much-deserved opportunity for rest and a recharge this summer. Check back in September for new additions and changes to our offerings.

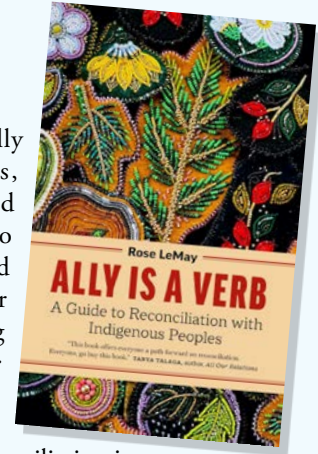
pathways

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Ally Is a Verb by Rose LeMay Page Two

How can you be a better ally to Indigenous colleagues, community members, and friends? By listening to Indigenous histories and lived experiences, you can better recognize and address ongoing inequities. In *Ally Is a Verb: A Guide to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples*, Rose LeMay offers guidance for reconciliation in communities and workplaces, including learning shared history, understanding non-Indigenous responsibility, responding to racism and difficult emotions, and supporting equity and inclusion. The book outlines key principles for deepening allyship and contributing to meaningful change.



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We are all at Risk: Brain Injury Awareness

by Francene Gillis, Educator and Brain Injury Advocate

According to Dr. Charles Tator, director of the Canadian Concussion Centre, and renowned neurologist and concussion expert, more than 400,000 Canadians sustain a concussion each year. The Universal Rehabilitation Service Agency (URSA) reports that one Canadian experiences a brain injury every three minutes.

June is Brain Injury Awareness Month, an ideal time to increase understanding of this often misunderstood and invisible injury, one that can have life-altering consequences. A concussion can occur in an instant: a misstep, a fall on black ice, or an unexpected accident. In those moments, everything changes, especially when the brain is involved.

On February 1, 2016, I slipped and fell, striking the back of my head twice. At the time, I had no idea that the fall would end a teaching career I loved and begin a long journey of confusion, challenges, and frustration. In the days, weeks, and months that followed, unexplained symptoms emerged. Teaching demands constant multitasking, concentration, and quick decision-making, skills that became increasingly difficult to manage in a classroom of 30 students. I was devastated.

For four months, I struggled to find specialized care. When I finally connected with concussion specialist Dr. David Cudmore, I was diagnosed with a mild traumatic brain injury and whiplash, which evolved into post-concussion syndrome (PCS). Sadly, URSA estimates that 15–30 per cent of people who sustain a concussion go on to experience PCS.

What do you know about concussions? Test your knowledge:

1. What is a concussion?
2. What is a midline shift?
3. Does a concussion show up on an X-ray or CAT scan?
4. What is PTVS?
5. What are the three most common symptoms of a concussion?
6. How many symptoms can a person have with a brain injury?
7. How long can a concussion last?
8. What is flooding?
9. What is neuroplasticity?
10. What medical test diagnoses a concussion?
11. What is Second Impact Syndrome (SIS)?

Understanding SIS is particularly important for teachers, coaches, and parents. SIS occurs when a second concussion is sustained before the brain has fully healed from the first. Although rare, the consequences can be catastrophic, including death.

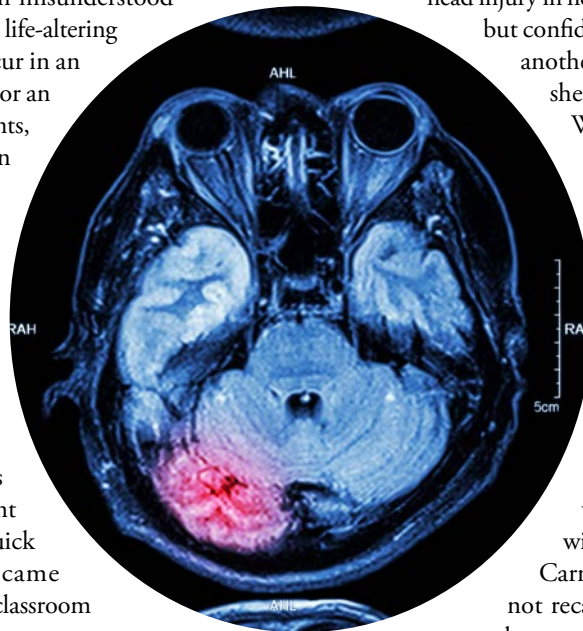
One tragic example is that of 17-year-old Ottawa rugby player Rowan Stringer. During a tournament in May 2013, she suffered a head injury in her first game and suspected a concussion but confided in only one friend. After sustaining another head injury in a subsequent game, she died from Second Impact Syndrome. While rare, SIS is real.

Educators need training on concussions and other brain injuries as proper and timely treatment is crucial. Schools should have clear protocols to respond to accidents and injuries that occur on school grounds. People with concussions are often unaware at the time of their injury, as the symptoms may only start days or weeks later.

Consider this case of a preteen who slipped and fell while walking with her class to the arena during Winter Carnival. She remembered falling but did not recall hitting her head. At the rink, her teacher put her on the ice to play broomball. She soon felt dizzy, nauseated, and developed a headache. She was frightened because she had lost her memory of the entire morning. At the hospital, the doctor said she had a concussion and sent her home with old-school suggestions, which were not very helpful. Had she fallen and hit her head playing broomball, matters could have been much more serious.

Educators need to know that a concussion can occur even when the head does not seem to be affected. According to Dr. Charles Tator, a concussion can occur without an actual hit, the injury occurs when the brain jiggles rapidly back and forth inside the skull. Brain function remains a mystery, but research in the last decade has discovered new and valuable information. A concussion is a brain injury we should never take lightly. People can carry the damage for the rest of their lives. Statistics suggest that one in 10 of you will know someone who will suffer a brain injury this year.

I lost my identity when I fell. A wife, mother, educator for 30 years, an author, columnist, and writer for 25 years, who was I after my injury? I felt worthless. My entire world shrank, and I could not function in my home. Suddenly disabled, I felt like I was of no use to anyone. With treatment, therapy, and support,



I gradually rebuilt my life and turned my shortfalls around and regained purpose. Today my purpose is to empower anyone affected by a brain injury so they do not feel as lost, alone, and helpless as I did. Knowing how to get immediate help is the first line of defense.

My background as a teacher and professional writer had me asking questions and digging for answers. At my occupational therapist's suggestion, I began keeping a journal which evolved into notes to help friends, and a resource to help me. Eventually a manuscript containing the information I wish I had received when I was first injured resulted in *Where Did I Go?*, a memoir and practical resource published by OC Publishing on June 22, 2025.

The need for education remains significant. According to a February 2025 Canadian government study, *What Canadians Know About Concussions*, one in two Canadians has limited knowledge about concussions, one in four does not know how to treat one, 85 per cent cannot identify the best ways to treat a concussion, and only four in 19, know how to find information.

Since my fall, I have learned an incredible amount, because I was desperate to get back to my classroom. I was also determined to overcome the disabling symptoms that were holding me back from life: nausea, dizziness, flooding, extreme fatigue, anxiety, confusion, forgetfulness, headaches, and cognitive, visual, and vestibular difficulties.

I could not go outside—the sun was far too bright. Conversations were difficult to follow. When I tried to speak, I often substituted incorrect words that sounded similar. I stuttered, and if I slowed down, words were painstakingly hard to retrieve and pronounce.

For months I did not know where or how to get the proper help. Others in my community who had experienced a head injury reached out to me and shared their stories; this made me feel understood. But no two brain injuries are the same. Specialists helped me understand that what I was experiencing was real. My emotions were all over the place. For years I had nightmares of falling, being fired, hitting my head, waking up in panic.

Those of who sustain brain injuries, may never be who we were before, but we can adapt and recreate ourselves. It is ultimately up to us to learn how to navigate the complex world of brain injuries and fight to recover. With the right supports it is possible to relearn skills, retrain the brain, and even come out better. However, we need knowledgeable support.

There is so much more that could be said. My hope is that if you, a loved one, or someone you know sustains a head injury, you will have a better understanding of what to do and where to get qualified help. Not every medical professional who says they know what to do, has specialized training. Try to get referrals from others who have lived experience. Most importantly, don't allow anyone tell your symptoms are "all in your head." As Dr. Charles Tator has clarified that popular misnomer, concussion symptoms are real.

If you know someone who is recovering from a brain injury, encourage them to find something of interest and pursue it. Without a renewed purpose, it is easy to become isolated and discouraged. Get out of the house, carefully expose yourself to triggers until symptoms subside, and engage in light exercise. Keep a daily record of symptoms and activities. Early in my

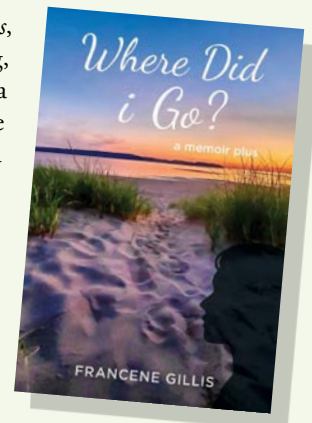
the well teacher

Email your name, home address, and the name of your school with **WELL TEACHER** in the subject line to theteacher@nstu.ca by **August 30, 2026**, to be eligible for the draw.

Where Did I Go? by Francene Gillis OC Publishing

In *Where Did I Go? A Memoir Plus*, Francene Gillis recounts the long, difficult recovery that followed a slip-and-fall on black ice while she was on her way to work as a high school English teacher. The accident caused a mild traumatic brain injury with symptoms that lasted for years. Her story explores post-concussion symptoms, post-traumatic stress, and the sudden ways life can change after an unexpected injury.

Gillis began writing as her focus slowly returned, hoping to support others living with brain trauma and other hidden injuries. The book includes her story and seven others, offering honest accounts of resilience, perseverance, and the importance of mindset, support, and effective treatment in recovery.



recovery, I did too much, which left me exhausted and depleted. Pay attention to what your brain is saying. Recovery unfolds on the brain's time, not our own.

If there is one key takeaway, it is this: the sooner a person receives treatment from a qualified concussion specialist, the better the chances of a faster and more complete recovery. The complexity of the brain and its control over all body systems necessitates a multidisciplinary approach for optimal therapies and treatments.

Where Did I Go? A Memoir Plus is an excellent resource for therapists, teachers, coaches, concussion clinicians, families, and those suffering from a brain injury. It features eight stories of remarkable people overcoming trauma and unexpected challenges. An education and awareness section answers questions, and a treatment section includes multidisciplinary suggestions, along with an extensive resource guide.

Incorporated hundreds of visuals, infographics, and large-print text, as reading can be difficult for those with cognitive challenges. It is imperative we learn about brain injuries, know what to do, when, and where to get help, as it makes the difference between successful recovery and a continual downhill slide.

One reader shared: "It's an incredible story, reading the words of

Continued on page 14

The Provincial Education Week Committee congratulates all recipients of this year's

Education Week 2026 AWARDS

Educator Awards

Michelle Harrington AVRCE
 Jacqueline Schurman AVRCE
 Ethan Stultz AVRCE
 Janice Gavin APSEA
 Melanie Wilson APSEA
 Alison Anthony CBVRCE
 Noeline Francis CBVRCE
 Alana MacLeod CBVRCE
 Samantha Constantine CCRCE
 Elizabeth MacDonald CCRCE
 Tracy Murray CCRCE
 Kim Bisson CSAP
 Leanne Dorey CSAP
 Catherine Warren CSAP
 Sheri Benjamin HRCE
 Dave Drapak HRCE
 Chantal Pye HRCE
 Ashley Buckle SSRCE
 Vanessa Miller SSRCE
 Kelsey Forgeron SRCE
 Kendra Landry SRCE
 Tracey MacDonnell SRCE
 Mandi MacLennan SRCE
 Erika Goulden TCRCE
 Muriel Hankinson TCRCE
 Tarah Thompson-Schwan TCRCE

Public School

Administrator Awards

Danny Frame AVRCE
 Amber Orychock CBVRCE
 Katie Wilson CCRCE
 Sheralynne Deveaux-MacKinnon CSAP
 Jacquelyn Reid HRCE
 Ann Wentzell SSRCE
 Susan DeYoung SRCE
 Elizabeth Wight TCRCE

Early Childhood Educator Awards

Joleen Olmstead AVRCE
 Susanne Ball CBVRCE
 Marylou MacDougall-Walst CCRCE
 Amy Chiasson CSAP
 Denise Jackson HRCE
 Leah Seamone SSRCE
 Catherine Allen SRCE
 Cherie Hemeon TCRCE

Student Support Awards

Pebbles Gaul AVRCE
 Anne Jennings-Debaie APSEA
 Paul Wilkins APSEA
 Crystal Vassallo CBVRCE
 Marcie LeBlanc CCRCE
 Annick Belley CSAP

Brenda McNutt HRCE
 Ali Kramer SSRCE
 Margo Batherson SRCE
 Fallon Goudey TCRCE

African Nova Scotian/ African Ancestry Educator/Student Support Awards

Tristan Sampson AVRCE
 Nicole Bennett CBVRCE
 Ashley Jewell CCRCE
 Edwine Mompremier CSAP
 Vanassa Symonds HRCE
 Patrick Henderson SSRCE
 Sabrina Skinner SRCE
 Dylan Smith TCRCE

Mi'kmaw/Indigenous Educator/Student Support Awards

Taylor Deazley AVRCE
 Mandy-Lynne Markie CCRCE
 Matthew Merrick HRCE
 Shawn Feener SSRCE
 Lady Eagle Bird
 Violet Paul SRCE
 Sara Swinamer TCRCE

Partner Awards

Jean-Marc Samson FPANE
 Marc Bilodeau FPANE

Fostering Empathy Learning and Leading with Kindness

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Partners:

Education Week 2026



Education Week Award 2026 recipients

To launch Education Week 2026, Exceptional educators from across the province were recognized on May 11, during a ceremony at École secondaire Mosaïque in Dartmouth.

This year's theme, *Fostering Empathy: Leading and Learning with Kindness*, recognizes those who show how kindness can make a big difference in learning. Educators recognized during the ceremony were nominated by colleagues who felt the nominee embodied the theme.

"When schools focus on fostering empathy, they create safe and welcoming spaces where everyone feels included," said Brendan Maguire, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. "This Education Week, we celebrate the remarkable efforts of everyone in our school system who demonstrates that by learning and leading with kindness, we prepare students not just for success in school, but for making their communities better places."

Award winners included 67 school staff from all regional

centres for education and the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial. Minister Maguire and Chief Justice Michael Wood, representing Lt.-Gov. Mike Savage, presented winners with their award and a commemorative pin.

Education Week took place from May 10 to 16, involving these partners:

- Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- Public School Administrators Association of Nova Scotia
- Nova Scotia Teachers Union
- Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority
- La Fédération des parents acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse
- Council on African Canadian Education
- Council on Mi'kmaq Education

Education Week 2026 awards: <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/education-week>



Principal of École secondaire Mosaïque Tim Brown with and Chief Justice Michael Wood and Minister Maguire.



Emcees Melina Kennedy and Moussa Gueye



continued from page 11

how you felt. As a mom, I wish this had been available six years ago. Congratulations. Great read. Very well-articulated and well-written. My heart hurts that you had to endure this at the end of your teaching career, or at all! Wish I had this as a resource. I think you will help a ton of people.” — Gail Promponas, Cape Cod, Ma.

As Dr. Charles Tator reminds us, “Concussion is a clinical diagnosis. There is no biomarker. The earlier patients receive treatment, the better off they will be.” And as Dr. Camelia Tartaglia, Co-Director of the Canadian Concussion Centre, notes: “With education and the knowledge that it could happen to you, you can do more to protect yourself.”

May we educate and empower ourselves and others, as brain injury is but a fall, bump, or accident away.

Francene Gillis is a wife, mother, educator, author, and longtime columnist with the Inverness Oran. Over a 30+-year career, she taught high school English, worked as a consultant with the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and worked in adult literacy and education. She has also facilitated educational workshops across Canada and worked with national education organizations.

Following a life-changing brain injury in 2016, she is now an advocate for people with brain injuries. Her memoir, Where Did I Go?, shares her recovery journey and raises awareness about concussion and brain injury. Her third book, And Momma Cried, a creative nonfiction account of a Nova Scotia family during the Second World War, is scheduled for release in the fall of 2026.

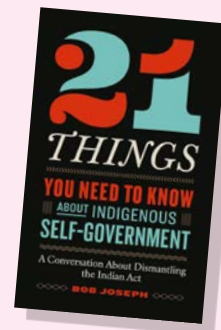
Discover more at gillis@live.com, <https://www.francenegillis.ca> or <https://www.facebook.com/francenegillis1>. Where Did I Go? A Memoir Plus is available through the author, on Amazon, at Bookmark II, and Dartmouth Book Exchange in Halifax, The Curious Cat & Five to a Dollar, Antigonish, and through local outlets in Inverness County.

EQUITY COMMITTEE

Email your name, home address, and the name of your school with **EQUITY** in the subject line to tbeteacher@nstu.ca by August 30, 2026, to be eligible for the draw.

21 Things You Need to Know About Indigenous Self-Government

by Bob Joseph
Indigenous Relations Press



From the bestselling author of *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act* comes a timely new book on dismantling the Indian Act and advancing Indigenous self-government. Bob Joseph explains why the Act has controlled and segregated Indigenous Peoples for generations and shows that self-governance is not only possible, but also already working in Canada. *21 Things You Need to Know About Indigenous Self-Government – A Conversation About Dismantling the Indian Act* is a clear, urgent call to understand the path forward and join the conversation.

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 tbeteacher@nstu.ca by August 30, 2026, to be eligible for the draw.

Acceptance: Stories at the Centre of us

Edited by Ailsa Craig, Sulaimon Giwa, AJ Ryan and Sarah Thompson
Engen Books and Quadrangle



Acceptance: Stories at the Centre of Us, is an anthology featuring stories by and about the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Quadrangle is working to create a community centre for 2SLGBTQAI+ people and organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador, a place to build resilience, connection, and support existing initiatives. All profits from this collection will go toward that goal. This collection features 22 short stories, including the talents of authors such as Hannah Jenkins (*The Birds Come Back in the Spring*), and Rhea Rollmann (*A Queer History of Newfoundland*), and many more.

May Book Winners!



Aren Morris
HRCE



Shannon L. Davis
CSAP



Lindsay Johnstone
HRCE



Delynn Reid
AVRCE

Celebrating 25 Years of Teaching Service

Reaching 25 years in teaching is a meaningful milestone, and NSTU Locals proudly recognize this achievement through special events and celebrations. This school year, NSTU President Peter Day attended celebrations hosted by the Cape Breton District Local and the Annapolis Local. The Cape Breton District Local event was held on April 23, while the Annapolis Local recognized members during its Annual End of Year Celebration on May 24, which also included the Local's retirement celebration.



NSTU President Peter Day is pictured with Annapolis Local members Jenn Handspiker and Cathy Wheeler as they celebrate 25 years of teaching service during the Annual End of Year Celebration.



Annapolis Local executive members and other members and guests who joined the End of Year Celebration are pictured.



CBDL 25-years of service celebration.



NSTU President Peter Day is pictured with Cape Breton District Local President Dawn Spracklin, who was recognized for 25 years of teaching service.



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NSTU Locals hold Spring AGMs

May and June are busy months for NSTU Locals as they host annual retirement celebrations, share updates from Annual Council (NSTU's Annual General Meeting), and hold their own AGMs. NSTU President Peter Day and NSTU executive staff officers attend many Local AGMs across the province. At these events, Local executive members are recognized for their service, and new executive members are elected for terms beginning August 1, 2026.



Members of the Kings Local are shown at their AGM on May 19. Seated: Vice-President PA/PR Eileen Hiltz, Provincial Executive Member Melissa Deveau, President Laura McCulley, Treasurer Jacinda Hatton, and Past President Joanne Richardson-Landry. Standing: NSTU President Peter Day, Secretary Krista Lunn, Vice-President of Professional Development Nadia Darwish, Vice-President of Communications Nisha Langford, 1st Vice-President Allison Corbett, and Provincial Executive Member Jemita Buchanan.



Pictured above are members of the Pictou Local executive at its May 12 AGM. Seated: Local President Eliza Abbass, NSTU President Peter Day, and Vice-President of Economic Welfare Emmy Tremblay. Standing: Vice-President of Professional Development/Social Josh MacKinnon, Treasurer Lisa MacKinnon, Member-at-Large Brigitte Ehler, Vice-President of Communications Nikki MacInnis, Secretary Sarah Grant, and Provincial Executive Member Doug Read.



Northside-Victoria Local AGM.



Cape Breton District Local AGM.

2026 NSTU Professional Associations Conferences

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23



Online Registration
Opens – Thursday, Sept 17 (members)
Friday, Sept 28 (education partners)
Closes – Friday, October 9
(no refunds after October 9)

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

NSTU members are required to use their NSTU username and password to register. Please contact webaccounts@nstu.ca to receive/reset your credentials ahead of the opening of registration.

Association des enseignantes et enseignants acadiens (AEA)

Theme: *Réimaginer la roue*

Location(s) École secondaire de Par-en-Bas, Tusket; Centre provincial de ressources pédagogiques (CPRP), Pointe-de-l'Église

Fees NSTU Members: \$100
 Substitutes: \$50
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$50
 Retirees: \$50
 Affiliate/Other: \$50

Contact Noé Bourque
conferenceaea@nstu.ca

Association of Science Teachers (AST)

Theme: *Time for Science*

Location(s) Halifax West High School, 283 Thomas Raddall Drive; Shubenacadie Wildlife Park & Dal AC Truro

Keynote "Silver Lining Prospecting" Creating an Intentional Mindset Infrastructure

Fees NSTU Members: \$100
 Substitutes: \$50
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$50
 Retirees: \$50
 Affiliate/Other: \$50

Contact Jessica Goora
astconference@nstu.ca

Art Teachers Association (ATA)

Theme: *Valuing Visual Art: The Heartbeat of Our Province*

Location(s) Sackville High School and Cape Breton Centre for Craft

Fees NSTU Members: \$100
 Substitutes: \$60
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$60
 Retirees: \$60
 Affiliate/Other: \$60

Contact Jeff Wilson
ataconference@nstu.ca

Association of Teachers of Every Child (ATEC)

Theme: *Supporting Minds: Teaching in Today's Classrooms*

Location(s) Scotiabank Theatre Halifax, 190 Chain Lake Drive & Virtual

Fees NSTU Members: \$100

Substitutes: \$80
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$60
 Retirees: \$80
 Affiliate/Other: \$100
 Contact Evan Critchley
ateconference@nstu.ca

Association of Teachers of English of Nova Scotia (ATENS)

Theme: *Literacy in Modern World*

Location(s) Lighthouse Arts Center 1800 Argyle Street, Halifax & Virtual (TBD)

Fees NSTU Members: \$100
 Substitutes: \$90
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$90
 Retirees: \$90
 Affiliate/Other: \$100

Contact Liam Timmons
atensconference@nstu.ca

Association of Teachers of Young Adolescents (ATYA)

Theme: *Building the Bridge Between Bravery and Self-Compassion*

Location(s) Riverside Education Centre – 6 Riverside Drive, Milford

Keynote Sandra Murray, Counsellor – NSTU

Fees NSTU Members: \$100
 Substitutes: \$90
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$90
 Retirees: \$100
 Affiliate/Other: \$100
 Contact Mary Barrington George
atyaconference@nstu.ca

Business Education Teachers Association (BETA)

Theme: *BETA The Future-Proof Approach "Beyond the Textbook: Equipping the Class of 2030"*

Location(s) Dalhousie, Rowe School of Business
 Keynote Greg Hadley Associate Professor with the Faculty of Education ST FX

Fees NSTU Members: \$120
 Substitutes: \$100
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$100
 Retirees: \$100
 Affiliate/Other: \$100

Contact Brad Boudreau

betaconference@nstu.ca

Career & Technology Educators Association of NS (CTEANS)

Theme: *What's Old is New*

Location(s) West Bedford High School

Fees NSTU Members: \$110
 Substitutes: \$25
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$25
 Retirees: \$25
 Affiliate/Other: \$25
 Contact Kyla Hogan/Erin Mullen
cteansconference@gmail.com

Education Drama Association of Nova Scotia (EDANS)

Theme: *Acting up in Class: Drama in every classroom*

Location(s) Woodlawn Highschool, 31 Woodlawn Rd Dartmouth & Virtual

Keynote Noella Murphy, Rachel Lloyd and Laura Stinson

Fees NSTU Members: \$115
 Substitutes: \$60
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$60
 Retirees: \$60
 Affiliate/Other: \$115

Contact James Thompson
edansconference@nstu.ca

Family Studies Teachers Association (FSTA)

Theme: *Skills for a Changing World*

Location(s) Dr. J H Gillis regional Hlgh; Antigonish

Fees NSTU Members: \$100
 Substitutes: \$60
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$60
 Retirees: \$60
 Affiliate/Other: \$60
 Contact Suzi Synishin
fstaconference@nstu.ca

Mathematics Teachers Association (MTA)

Theme: *Charting the Course: Empowering Journeys in Mathematics*

Location(s) Charles P. Allen High School

Keynote Graham Fletcher and Vanessa Vakharia

Fees NSTU Members: \$90
 Substitutes: \$45
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$45

NO ONSITE REGISTRATION
Register Early!

2026 NSTU Professional Associations Conferences

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23



Online Registration
Opens – Thursday, Sept 17 (members)
Friday, Sept 28 (education partners)
Closes – Friday, October 9
(no refunds after October 9)

Please bookmark this page for reference



Retirees: \$45
 Affiliate/Other: \$90
 Contact Erick Lee
 mtaconference@nstu.ca

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

Theme: *Building Community to Combat Gender-Based Violence*

Location(s) King's County Academy, Virtual
 Keynote Anchor Youth and Maggie's Place
 Fees NSTU Members: \$90
 Substitutes: \$50
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$15
 Retirees: \$50
 Affiliate/Other: \$90

Contact Jeff Purchase
 nsateeconference@nstu.ca

Nova Scotia Language Teachers Association (NSLTA)

Theme: *The Heart of the Matter: Sustaining Language & Culture in the Age of AI*

Location(s) Dartmouth South Academy, 111 Prince Arthur Ave, Dartmouth
 Keynote Dr. Chris Cocek Technology Integration Lead Team
 Fees NSTU Members: \$90
 Substitutes: \$50
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$70
 Retirees: \$50
 Affiliate/Other: \$90

Contact Caroline Higgins/Leijsa Squires
 NSLTAConference@nstu.ca

Nova Scotia Music Educators Association (NSMEA)

Theme: *Collective Voices: Stronger Together*

Location(s) Rocky Lake Junior High, Bedford
 Keynote Scott Leithead, Founder and Artistic Director of Korora Choir Association
 Fees NSTU Members: \$100
 Substitutes: \$60
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$15
 Retirees: \$60
 Affiliate/Other: \$40

Contact Noelle Wadden
 nsmeaconference@nstu.ca

Nova Scotia School Counsellors Association (NSSCA)

Theme: *Renewing the Work: Motivation, Resilience & Counselling Practice*

Location(s) Citadel High School
 Keynote Tia Upshaw & Dr. Shelley McMain
 Fees NSTU Members: \$110
 Substitutes: \$80
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$80
 Retirees: \$80
 Affiliate/Other: \$80

Contact Amy Barry
 nsscconference@nstu.ca

Nova Scotia Teachers Association for Literacy and Language (NSTALL)

Theme: *Theme Beyond the Book: Every Age, Every Stage, Every Subject*

Location(s) Cobequid Educational Centre, 34 Lorne Street, Truro
 Fees NSTU Members: \$100
 Substitutes: \$80
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$60
 Retirees: \$80
 Affiliate/Other: \$100

Contact Tami Cox Jardine
 nstallconference@nstu.ca

Primary Elementary Teachers Association (PETA)

Theme: *Strengthening Literacy for Today's classrooms*

Location(s) 145 Shubie Drive Dartmouth (Cineplex)
 Fees NSTU Members: \$120
 Substitutes: \$80
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$80
 Retirees: \$80
 Affiliate/Other: \$80

Contact Beth Lamb-Hamilton
 petaconference@nstu.ca

Psychologists in Schools Association (PISA)

Theme: *Radical Belonging, Strategies for Student Engagement and Attendance*

Location(s) Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU)
 Keynote Dr. Jess Whitley and Dr. Tracy Vallaincourt
 Fees NSTU Members: \$100
 Substitutes: \$80
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$80
 Retirees: \$80

Affiliate/Other: \$100
 Contact Chantal Leblanc/ Stephanié Deveau
 pisaconference@nstu.ca

Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists Association (SPAA)

Theme: *Neurodiversity Affirming Practices in Education*

Location(s) Best Western Plus Dartmouth Hotel & Suites
 Keynote Cari Ebert, MS, CCC-SLP
 Fees NSTU Members: \$125
 Substitutes: \$100
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$100
 Retirees: \$100
 Affiliate/Other: \$100

Contact Meghan MacNeil
 spaaconference@nstu.ca

Social Studies Teachers Association (SSTA)

Theme: *Level UP Learning!*

Location(s) Saint Mary's University; The Fortress of Louisbourg & Millbrook Heritage Centre & Virtual
 Keynote Michael Matera (EMC2Learning)
 Fees NSTU Members: \$125
 Substitutes: \$125
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$75
 Retirees: \$75
 Affiliate/Other: \$125

Contact Holly Schaller (Chair) / Michael Wilson (Registrar)
 sstaconference@nstu.ca

Teachers Association for Physical and Health Education (TAPHE)

Theme: *Waves of Wellness*

Location(s) Maple Grove Education Centre 52 Grove Memorial Drive, Yarmouth
 Fees NSTU Members: \$110
 Substitutes: \$35
 Pre-Service Teachers: \$35
 Retirees: \$35
 Affiliate/Other: \$35

Contact Laura Wilson (Registrar) Dave MacNutt (Chair)
 tapheconference@nstu.ca

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Register Early!



CONTACT 2026

The Intentional Educator Conference:
Cultivating Wellness, Balance, and Purpose in Our Practice

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contact your Local/Professional Association President
for information on how to express interest



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resources

Confronting and Preventing Hate in Canadian Schools

Public education plays a vital role in building inclusive, equitable, and democratic communities. As educators, we are committed to ensuring that every student feels safe, respected, and valued in their learning environment.

To support this work, we are pleased to share the second edition of a resource by the Canadian Anti-Hate Network: [Confronting and Preventing Hate in Canadian Schools](#).

In a time when educators are navigating increasingly complex social challenges, this resource provides practical tools to help create safe, inclusive, and caring learning environments for all.

This free toolkit is designed to help educators and school communities (**high school and middle school**) recognize, address, and prevent hate, discrimination, and extremism in schools.

The toolkit includes:

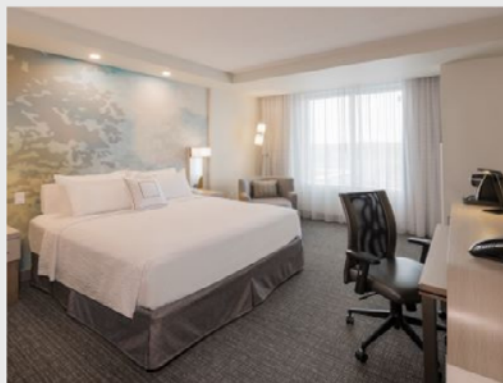
- Strategies for identifying signs of hate and extremism
- Guidance on how to respond to incidents of hate and discrimination in school settings
- Resources to support students, families, and colleagues
- Approaches to building inclusive and welcoming school communities
- Information on addressing online hate and harmful ideologies that may affect young people

Explore this resource and share it with colleagues in your school and community, and consider reaching out to the [Canadian Anti-Hate Network](#) at info@antihate.ca to share your experience and provide feedback.

[Download Toolkit \(PDF\)](#)

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coming events

JUNE

Pride Month

June is Pride Month in Canada celebrating 2SLGBTQI+ communities, honouring grassroots activism, and remembering pivotal moments in queer history. While festivities kick off nationally in June, celebrations actually span a broader *Pride Season*. Canada Post's 2026 series of commemorative stamps highlighting pivotal queer history locations and events includes Halifax's The Turret Club, which was an important gathering place for social, political and cultural life from 1976 to 1982.

Following are Nova Scotia Pride Season events.

West Hants / Windsor Pride & Parade: June 6.



Sherbrooke Pride: June 12, 13 & 14.

Cumberland Pride: June 13-26; Parade: June 13 (Amherst); Drag Show: June 26 (Parrsboro); [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [BlueSky](#)
Pictou County Pride: June 15-21; Pictou Landing First Nation's Pride March: June 17;

Annapolis Valley Pride: June 20-27, Parade: June 20;

Truro: June 22-27, Parade: June 27, [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Website](#)

Parrsboro: June 26-27: Festival: [Wayves Magazine article](#)

Annapolis Royal: July 3-5; [Facebook](#), [website](#)

July 4: Petite Queer Pride. Parade July 5 with Lunenburg Pride.

[Instagram](#), [Website](#)

Lunenburg County Pride: July 4-12; Parade: July 5; [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Website](#), [Schedule here](#).

St. Margaret's Bay Pride: July 5-26. Fest: July 25. [Website](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#)

Halifax: July 16-26; Parade July 18. [Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Full Halifax Events listing here](#).

Sheet Harbour: July 24-26. [Facebook](#)

Cape Breton Pride: August 7-14; Parade: August 8; [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Website](#)

Eastern Shore Pride: Aug 15-23, no June 20

executive highlights

June 5, 2026

- Filed the Table Officers' Report;
- Appointed Paula Landry to serve on the NSTU Group Insurance Trustees;
- Nominated members to CTF/FCE Advisory Committees;
- Appointed Standing/Other Committees for 2026-2027; *(see attached Committee List)
- Approved a recommendation that an advertisement be placed to fill three (3) vacancies on the Professional Association Coordination Committee (PACC);
- Approved the granting of fourteen (14) Local Service Awards;
- Approved Conference Grants in the amount of up to \$600.00 each;
- Approved Travel Fellowships Belair Direct in the amount of \$500 each;
- Approved French Language Professional Development Grants in the amount of up to \$500 each;
- Referred Operational Procedures 25, E – French Language Professional Development Grant to the Governance and Policy Committee;
- Approved additional Conference Grants in the amount of up to \$600.00 each. The funds to be reallocated from the Full Time Study Grant budget line, which is underspent at this time;
- Received the Audited Financial Statements for the NSTU Group Insurance Trustees Fund;
- Approved an amendment to the Local Constitution Model in Article X – Finances, 4;
- Approved an amendment to the Constitution for each NSTU Local in Article X – Finances, 4;

- Approved an amendment to the Regional Representative Council Constitution Model in Article VII – Finances, 3;
- Approved an amendment to the Constitution for each NSTU RRC in Article VII – Finances, 3;
- Elected Second Vice-President: Janet O'Brien; Elected Secretary-Treasurer: Lindsay Crossman Wheaton;
- Appointed Provincial Executive Members to serve as Executive liaisons to NSTU Standing Committees;
- Approved Signing Officers for 2026-2027;
- Approved the appointment of Tina Thibeau as the Employer Trustee of the NSTU Group Insurance Trust to replace Andrew Coates;
- Approved an amendment to NSTU Operational Procedures by inserting a new Operational Procedure 20 entitled Union Membership Fees in Section 1 – Governance;
- Approved a motion to have the NSTU develop a series of one-page infographics to support members' understanding of Joint Occupational Health and Safety committees (JOHSC);
- Referred a motion regarding the development of a JOHSC campaign to help members recognize the strength and authority of JOHSC in enacting workplace health and safety changes, and to encourage members to use JOHSCs as a key mechanism for addressing concerns to the Member Economic Welfare, Health & Safety, and Working Conditions committee;
- Ratified the 2026 South Shore Regional Representative Council (SSRRC) Constitution;
- Approved a motion that the NSTU request that the EECD immediately stop the implementation of the new gender-based violence curriculum by teachers and instead engage with outside experts in trauma-informed practices and intimate partner violence;
- Ratified amendments to the 2026 Halifax City Local Constitution.

NSTU Locals around the province celebrate retirees

NSTU Locals across Nova Scotia honoured retiring teachers and specialists at events throughout May and June. Retirement events were held across the province, including for the CSANE Local on May 23, Annapolis Local on May 24, Antigonish Local on May 29, Cape Breton District and Inverness Locals on May 30, Kings Local on June 2, Guysborough County, Hants West and Pictou Locals on June 4, Dartmouth Local on June 5, Halifax City Local on June 12, and the Colchester-East Hants and Lunenburg County Locals on June 13.

NSTU President Peter Day joined retirees, colleagues and families at many of these celebrations.

“Throughout your careers, you have not only taught lessons from curriculum, but life lessons students will carry with them for years to come. Your patience, encouragement and commitment

have left a lasting mark on generations of young people,” says Day. “You have also been mentors, supporters and friends to your colleagues, helping create the strong school communities we all value. Public education is stronger because of the contributions each of you has made.”

While Day could not attend every retirement celebration, he sends best wishes to all retirees. “Thank you for your years of service, your passion, your resilience and the countless lives you have touched. Congratulations, enjoy this well-deserved celebration, and may your retirement be filled with joy, relaxation and perhaps a little less lesson planning.”

Volunteer NSTU members throughout the province organize these special Local events to honour the careers and contributions of teachers and specialists.



Antigonish Local retirees.



Members of the Antigonish Local executive are shown with NSTU President Peter Day at the Antigonish Local retirement celebration.



CSANE Local retirees are shown with NSTU President Peter Day.



CSANE Local executive members and retirees are shown at the May 23 retirement event.



Colchester-East Hants retirees.



Pictou Local retirees are recognized at the Local's retirement celebration.



Dartmouth Local retirees.



The Pictou Local president welcomes guests to the Local's retirement event on June 4. Head table guests included Premier Tim Houston and Pictou West MLA Marco MacLeod.



Halifax City retiree Paulette O'Connor received a special award from the Local on June 12. She is pictured (centre) with members of the Halifax City Local Executive.



Former provincial executive member Myla Borden, the first African Nova Scotian to serve in the role, was celebrated at the Pictou Local retirement event on June 4 and provided grace for the event.



NSTU President Peter Day at the Pictou Local retirement event.



Accessing the Care You Need: Paramedical Services Explained

Paramedical Practitioners play an increasingly important role in supporting overall health and wellbeing. These professionals provide a range of therapeutic and rehabilitative services that fall outside the traditional physician or hospital care, helping individuals prevent, manage, and recover from injury, illness, or everyday strain. The NSTU Group Insurance Trustees want to ensure that you are aware of the resources available to you through the Total Care Medical Plan, including access to paramedical care. Taking the time to understand how these services are covered and when they may be appropriate can help you make the most of your benefits plan.

Acupuncturist

When you actually look forward to getting needles...The general goal of all acupuncturists is the promotion, maintenance and restoration of health, and the prevention of illness. Traditional oriental medicine defines a perfect state of health as a state of balance. The key to active treatment is to identify the most important imbalances and do what is possible to shift the patient back towards this balance.

Massage Therapist

Better than a bubble bath...Massage is, by far, the most widely used paramedical service amongst our teachers. A massage therapist is a professional who performs massage treatment. A massage therapist's goal is usually to relax the patient while promoting general health and well-being. Some branches of massage therapy are focused on treating specific health conditions and on addressing muscular problems.

Naturopath

Nature nurtures...Naturopathy is a system of healing that aims to provide holistic or whole body health care by drawing on treatment methods from several traditional systems of medicine. Naturopathy seeks to use the natural healing powers of the body to cure itself and focuses on treating the cause of disease rather than the symptoms.

Chiropractor

When the sound of your back cracking is a good thing...Chiropractors believe the vertebrae of the spine and neck are routinely pulled out of alignment by everyday stressors and these misalignments can be the cause of many physical and mental ailments.

By physically manipulating individual vertebrae or readjusting the entire spine, chiropractors hope to relieve pressures caused by these misalignments.

Occupational Therapist

More than just ergonomic assessments...Occupational therapists (OTs) help patients discover and achieve a balance in work, leisure, and self-care that results in a level of independence and competency in all three areas of life. Occupational therapists seek to identify potential habits within each lifestyle component that could result in compromising the health of the individual and have a real potential of leading to injury or possibly a permanent disability. While all areas of life include some degree of risk, the role of the OT is to help the client see those risks clearly and move toward behavior patterns that help minimize the risk.

There are currently three OTs working at the NSTU. You can access this service privately (at 80% coverage) or for free by calling the NSTU and setting up an appointment with one of our OTs.

Osteopathy

The link between the structures of the body and the way it functions...Osteopathy is a way of detecting and treating inner parts of the body such as muscles, ligaments, nerves, and joints. It assists the body to function as a balanced and efficient system. Once balanced, the body will function with minimum wear and tear which enables it to have better function and more energy. Osteopathic practitioners use specialized skills to identify restrictions and tensions of the tissues in the body. Their specific techniques ease those restrictions which allows for normal physiology to continue.

Physiotherapist

I like to move it...move it! A physiotherapist works with patients who have become disabled by injury, illness, or age. The goal of the physiotherapist is to help patients regain their range of movement, or to support patients with permanent disabilities to prevent further damage and increase their functionality. Typically, a physiotherapist establishes a relationship with their patients, and they are part of a larger care team which is designed to support the patient through the healing process.

Podiatrist/ Chiropodist

To let your feet do the talking and the walking... Podiatry is a field of medicine that focuses on preventing, diagnosing, and treating conditions associated with the foot and ankle by medical, surgical, or other means. Some common issues that are treated by podiatrists are problems of the feet including bunions, corns, ingrown toenails, and plantar warts. Podiatrists prescribe orthotics when needed, treat plantar fasciitis, flat feet, hammer toes and club feet. Circulation problems in the feet due to diabetes can also be treated by a podiatrist.

Psychologist Services

Mental health matters! Psychologists typically provide services to manage and enhance the cognitive, behavioural, emotional, interpersonal, and physical functioning of individuals or groups of people by applying and using psychological assessment and intervention strategies, including psychometric testing and psychotherapy. As part of this work, psychologists also assess and diagnose behavioural, emotional, cognitive, and mental disorders.

Speech Therapist

Say what? Say anything! Speech therapists work with patients who have a variety of speech-related disorders. These disorders can include the ability to produce certain sounds, speech rhythm and fluency problems as well as voice disorders. Speech therapists use written and oral tests, as well as special instruments, to diagnose the extent of impairment and to record and analyze speech, language and swallowing irregularities. Once a patient has been assessed, they develop an individualized plan of care tailored to each patient's needs.

Benefit Coverage

The plan reimburses you for 80% of the usual and customary charges per treatment to a maximum of 20 visits per calendar year for the services of each of the following practitioners:

- ❖ Acupuncturist
- ❖ Occupational Therapist
- ❖ Podiatrist/Chiropodist
- ❖ Chiropractor
- ❖ Osteopath
- ❖ Psychological Services
- ❖ Naturopath
- ❖ Physiotherapy
- ❖ Speech Therapist

Massage Therapy - the plan reimburses you for 80% of the usual and customary charges per treatment to a maximum of 20 visits per school year (**August 1 to July 31**).

The service providers listed above must be certified, registered, or licensed paramedical practitioners and must be one approved by Medavie Blue Cross (the insurer). A Master of Social Work will be considered as an eligible service provider under Psychology Services.

For more information on the benefits and programs available under the NSTU Group Insurance Program, please visit the NSTU Group Insurance Trust website at www.nstuinsurance.ca.



coming events

JUNE

Brain Injury Awareness Month

Brain Injury Awareness Month is an annual June campaign in Canada that raises public awareness, reduces stigma, and highlights the experiences of people living with brain injuries. Led by organizations such as Brain Injury Canada, this year's campaign emphasizes the full recovery journey, from rehabilitation and daily realities to the need for greater recognition, prevention, and systemic support.

Supporting Women’s Health

Your benefits plan provides access to a variety of resources designed to support your health and well-being, including valuable tools focused on women’s health. To help support members, the NSTU Group Insurance Trustees have created a Women’s Health Resources guide highlighting services and tools available through your benefits plan. These resources are designed to provide information, guidance, and support on a variety of women’s health topics, helping you better understand and make the most of the benefits available to you.

The Women’s Health Resources guide can be found at nstuinsurance.ca and may be updated from time to time as new information and resources become available. We encourage you to keep this guide as a helpful reference and revisit it periodically for the latest information on women’s health resources available through your benefits plan.

Women’s Health Resources

This information brings together the women’s health related benefits, resources and supports available through the NSTU Group Insurance Plan. The information provided is intended to help members better understand the services, programs, and coverages that may support their physical, mental, and overall well-being.

<p>Total Care Medical Prescription Drug Coverage</p>	<p>The Prescription Drug coverage under the Total Care Medical Plan may provide coverage for medications commonly used to manage Women’s Health menopause symptoms.</p> <p>For more information on prescription drug coverage, please visit nstuinsurance.ca.</p>
<p>Total Care Medical Paramedical Services</p>	<p>Coverage is available for licensed healthcare practitioners who can support women’s health related symptoms. Services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Psychologists/Registered Counselling Therapist – support for mood changes, anxiety, sleep issues, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Naturopaths – guidance on holistic and lifestyle approaches <input type="checkbox"/> Physiotherapy – pelvic health and musculoskeletal support. <input type="checkbox"/> Acupuncturist – helps to relieve pain, reduce stress, and ease symptoms related to menstrual cycles and hormonal changes. <input type="checkbox"/> Osteopath – improve musculoskeletal function, relieve pain and tension, pelvic discomfort. <p>For a complete list of paramedical services, please visit nstuinsurance.ca.</p>
<p>Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)</p>	<p>Confidential support is available through your EFAP, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Short-term counselling (in-person, phone, or virtual). <input type="checkbox"/> Lifestyle and speciality coaching services such as nutritional coaching for weight, bone health, and energy levels. <input type="checkbox"/> Enhanced Mental Health Care services <input type="checkbox"/> Access to online wellness tools and resources. <p>For a complete list of EFAP services, please visit nstuinsurance.ca. You can access online resources by registering through the Homewood Health website, homeweb.ca.</p>
<p>Carepath Chronic Disease Program</p>	<p>The Nurse Case Managers available through Carepath can provide menopause support as they utilize their extensive healthcare system knowledge to help you better understand your symptoms, test results, and treatments. They also provide you and your family with emotional support.</p> <p>For more information on the Carepath Chronic Disease Program, please visit nstuinsurance.ca or carepath.ca.</p>
<p>NSTU Counselling Services</p>	<p>The NSTU has three counsellors on staff that provide short-term counselling services to NSTU members and their partners.</p> <p>For more information on counselling services, please visit nstuinsurance.ca.</p>

For more information on the benefits and programs available under the NSTU Group Insurance Program, please visit the NSTU Group Insurance Trust website at www.nstuinsurance.ca.

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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 September issue of The Teacher is September 4

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

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.

Deals & Discounts

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



Retired Teachers Organization

<https://rtonstu.ca>