

## Paths for Professional Growth

by *Miguelle Légère, Executive Staff Officer, Professional Learning*

Teaching is an artform. It is a craft that takes practice, specialized ability, reflection, professional networks, and a drive to improve and stay current. The reason we chose “Pathways for Professional Learning” as our professional learning rebranding was to highlight the plurality of paths a teacher can embark on during their journey as teachers.

How am I getting better at my craft this year? What do I want to learn? What current trends in pedagogy am I excited about? What am I going to try this year that is new to me? Who is my “go-to” colleague when I want to discuss, share, and implement new ideas? What pedagogical books are on my list for 2019-2020? These are questions I constantly reflect upon, especially during the summer months, when there is more time for contemplation. Below are some potential paths to support your professional growth.

### Professional Associations

On October 25th, teachers across the province attend a day of professional learning commonly known as the “October Conference Day”. The Nova Scotia Teachers Union has 20 Professional Associations. These associations are entirely comprised of volunteers who have been working diligently to offer a range of high-quality keynotes, workshops and professional networking opportunities.

We acknowledge that this year’s registration has not been as easy as it should have been. We take responsibility for that. We have revamped the software and have been working hard to make sure that this technical issue does not negatively impact your

professional learning experience, and we thank you for your ongoing patience as we continue to strive for an easy registration process. Due to the unforeseen technical difficulties, we extended the registration process by a few days for many associations.

### Did you know?

Some types of professional learning require funding. There are different ways you can access supplementary funds for support. The NSTU offers funding through a number of programs. The NSTU has negotiated professional development funding available under Article 60 of the Teachers’ Provincial Agreement.

At the NSTU, we offer Education Research Awards, Full-Time Study Grants, Out of Province Grants, Travel Fellowship Grants, anti-violence program funding through the Sheonoroil Foundation and grants through the provincially-negotiated Program Development Assistance Fund (PDAF). PDAF is an annual allocation of \$200,000 under the Teachers’ Provincial Agreement that is administered jointly by the NSTU in conjunction with the EECD. PDAF grants of up to \$5,000 support the development of innovative programming in the public education system.

The most famous and extensive professional learning support is commonly referred to as “Article 60” under Professional Development Fund of the Teachers’ Provincial Agreement. These grants are allocated through a joint committee comprised of an equal number of NSTU and Regional Centre for Education or CSAP representatives. Every RCE/CSAP has the same types

of grants, ie: educational leaves, conference grants, professional development grants, and teacher/school initiated in-service education, but how the money is allocated between grants is decided locally. These grants are invaluable to support your growth as a teacher. Contact your Local or RCE to get details on deadlines and application process.

### Professional Reading

Teaching is not a profession where once you have earned your degree, the learning is over. Lifelong learning is inherent to the profession. To support you in learning about current pedagogy, we have three book draws per issue of *The Teacher*. This year, we are going to tap into social media to showcase our book giveaways and also try a separate Twitter book giveaway. Please follow @MmeMiguelle or the @NSTeachersUnion for updates. We look forward to supporting you on your professional learning pathway.

