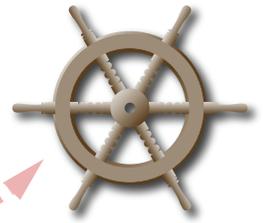




Charting Your Course FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Addressing cyber bullying

by *Betty-Jean Aucoin, Executive Staff Officer, Professional Development*

On October 29, the province announced amendments to the Education Act requiring all school staff, not just teachers and administrators, to report incidents of bullying and cyber bullying.

This new legislation in no way differs from present practice in schools; bus drivers through bus incident reports, teachers through conversation with principals and guidance counsellors and principals with parents have been reporting incidences of bullying and cyber bullying. This is part of how our members ensure our schools and campuses are safe places for all students. What this legislation does not address is the fact that bullying/cyber bullying has increased with the emergent use of multiple technologies. Cyber bullying and incidences of bullying now take place off school sites, in bedrooms, rec rooms and other places.

What I hear many teachers say throughout the numerous workshops, keynotes and one-on-one meetings I conduct is that they need support.

Through NSTU's *Charting Your Course For Professional Development* offerings we have presented workshops for a number of years under the safe and inclusive schools/campuses theme in the areas of creating safe spaces, conflict resolution, appropriate online conduct and digital citizenship and more recently—addressing cyber bullying. The NSTU has been working to educate our members, who in turn educate their students on what bullying and cyber bullying is, the various methods of cyber bullying and how one protects themselves and others. We have also been working on educating our teachers and students on the six tenets of being a good citizen and cyber citizen: respect yourself, protect yourself, respect others, protect others, respect intellectual property, protect intellectual property.

Through my involvement on the Nova Scotia Cyberbullying Task Force as the NSTU representative, I helped to research and develop supports for students, teachers, schools and teacher organizations on this topic. By providing participants with knowledge and providing resources to reinforce action on this topic, we help to support our members in their efforts in creating safe environments.

Our Sheonorail Foundation has been providing project funding to schools and campuses



Betty-Jean Aucoin presents her Addressing Cyberbullying workshop to students at E.B. Chandler Junior High students on October 29. Aucoin also presented the topic for E.B. Chandler staff following the student presentation.

for over ten years to support research, inquiry, reflection, writing, distribution of information and interventions that focus on all forms of violence in the public school and community college systems, including anti-bullying and peaceful schools initiatives (<http://sheonorail.nstu.ca/>).

Parents need to be educated too. Parents are placing technology in their children's hands without providing them with important lessons of appropriate use of social media tools and technology. Beyond reporting incidents of cyber bullying and educating teachers and students, we must also have in place policies that support the mitigation of bullying and cyber bullying. So too should parents have in place learning consequences for their children to ensure they are supported in learning how to be ethical digital citizens. Parents are our children's first and life long teachers. Teachers join parents in supporting their children in becoming respectful citizens.

Digital citizenship is supported by three pillars: infrastructure; guidance; and practice. It's imperative that these three pillars are practiced within the home, at school and in the community at large.

For more information on the Addressing Cyber Bullying Workshop or other NSTUPD workshops, contact Gail Doucette at gdoucette@staff.nstu.ca.



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Email your name, home address, and school or campus name with PD Giveaway in the subject line to theteacher@nstu.ca by November 30 to be eligible for the draw.

Written by Doretta Groenendyk, a painter, writer and teacher living in the Annapolis Valley, *Bully 101* explores both the temptations of bullying and the remarkable possibility of kindness. It is an excellent conversation starter for both families and schools, and anyone who hopes for peace. *Bully 101* is published by Acorn Press in Charlottetown, PEI. For more information on Groenendyk visit doretta-art.com.

