

Curriculum Corner



*by Marc Breough
Curriculum Committee Chair*

On October 10, Curriculum Committee members Marc Breough (chair), Darlene Bereta, Jason Ralph, Kathy Fougere, Sheri Scott, Keith Partridge, David MacFarlane, Jacinta Gracie (provincial executive liaison), and Debbie McIsaac (NSTU staff officer) met with a number of personnel from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

It was an informative day for members of the Committee. The executive director of Student Services, Don Glover, was accompanied by several consultants who shared pertinent information and answered questions.

The executive director spoke of some of the recent changes to the structure of Education Program Services. Kim Jackson is the liaison to elementary, Jennifer Burke is with junior high and John Cochrane is with the secondary level. They will liaise between the executive director and the schools, teachers, and school boards. Glover also reported that EDUfest was well attended with over 800 teachers attending the many offerings. He also shared that \$900,000 in targeted grants were sent out to schools to help Grade 3 students that did not meet the reading levels expected for that grade. There is increased accountability tied to targeted funding requiring information and data on the use of the funding and the results of board initiatives to improve student reading levels.

The presentation by math consultants Robyn Harris and Sharon McCready was of particular interest as the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP) has garnered media and public attention of late. The WNCP is now being used in all provinces and territories in Canada except for Quebec and Ontario.

It was highlighted how the WNCP, contrary to some misperceptions, does expect students to have knowledge of basic facts with quick recall, or automaticity. Students are recommended to access technology, in the form of calculators or computers as a problem-solving tool for 21st century learners at all grade levels. It was emphasized that technology, particularly in the elementary school, does not replace the quick recall of basic facts and facility with mental mathematics.

The other misperception has to do with WNCP adoption and provincial results on the PISA test. There was no cause and effect relationship between the two variables in the provincial PISA results.

The final phase of WNCP implementation is in September 2015 for Grades 7 to 9 and Grade 12. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is providing ongoing support for instruction and learning through professional learning resources, online Moodles for each course and grade, archived webinars and videos, mentors and coaches as well as digital eTexts for Grades 3 to 6, 10 and 11.

Susan Martin O'Brien, Coordinator of Literacy Support, gave an overview of *Learning Through Play* for Grades Primary to 2. There are a number of resources made available on the ednet site through Learning Resources and Technology Services. These can help teachers develop a plan to integrate play in a cross-curricular manner.



Curriculum Committee members - seated (l-r): Keith Partridge (CSANE); NSTU provincial executive liaison Jacinta Gracie (Northside-Victoria); Sheri Scott (Halifax County); chair Marc Breough (Lunenburg County). **Standing:** Jason Ralph (Dartmouth); David MacFarlane (Antigonish); Kathy Fougere (Colchester-East Hants); Darlene Bereta (Northside-Victoria), and NSTU staff liaison Debbie McIsaac.