

NSTU Provincial Equity Committee
Year-end Committee Report 2016-2017

Committee Members:

Nigel Tinker—Chair, Annapolis
Tara Arseneau, Halifax City
Sheldon States, Hants West
Christine Gallant, Halifax County
Elizabeth Thomas, Digby
John White, Cape Breton District
Angela Deagle, Executive Member
G rard Cormier, NSTU Staff Liaison

Committee Mandate:

As part of their mandate, the Committee will explore current practices, attitudes and research regarding diversity, equity and social justice.

Meeting Dates:

October 14th
~~February, 3rd~~-(WTR job action)
April 10th

Budget:

The budget for the committee was \$5490.00. The actual expenses for the committee to conduct business was \$2944.41. The committee only had 2 meetings due to job action.

Committee Activities and Recommendations:

1. The Equity Committee hosted the Equity Conference, “Valuing Diversity from the Ground Up: A Collaborative and Restorative Approach,” on October 14 & 15, 2017 at the Lord Nelson, Halifax, NS. Conference participants engaged in didactic and heuristic learning experiences focused on relational theory and restorative practices, supporting black students, treaty education, and supporting LGBTQ+ youth.
2. The Equity Committee heard and discussed concerns submitted by the Metro teacher’s GSA pertaining to the protection of LGBTQ+ teachers and reviewed extant policy relevant to the protection of LGBTQ+ teachers. NSTU Staff expressed shared commitment to this improving this policy and drafting a resolution sent by the Equity Committee to the Provincial Executive. Committee members were informed Dr. Jacqueline Gahaghan presented her report to Executive Planning. Staff will debrief with Dr. Gahaghan on this.

3. The Equity Committee meeting scheduled for February 3rd, 2017 was deferred and eventually cancelled due to “work to rule” job action.
4. Staff reviewed the amendment process for the Standing Committee’s mandate.
5. Staff reviewed the process of assigning zone contacts. These will be assigned in the fall, 2017.
6. The Equity Committee discussed concerns around school boards’ student travel policies, and whether these policies were congruent with school boards’ RCH/diversity policies and objectives, as well as the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act (NSHRA) Of concern were travel policies that ostensibly reify the cultural practices of binary gender identification and heteronormativity, .e.g., by requiring male students be accompanied by male chaperons, female students to be accompanied by female chaperons, and male/female student groups to be accompanied by male and female chaperones. In the fall, 2017, the Equity Committee will review each school board’s student travel policy to determine if it aligns with the board’s existing RCH/diversity policies, as well as the NSHRA.
7. NSTU staff presented Equity Committee members with copies of “Truth and Reconciliation: What is it about? A Discussion Booklet for the Classroom,” and The Every Teacher Project, an Inclusive Education in Canada’s K-12 Schools Final Report.”
8. All Equity Committee members received a copy of the Equity Liaison Handbook. Local presidents received copies, spring 2017, to distribute to their Equity Liaison.
9. The Equity Committee reviewed a letter from Curriculum Committee Chair, Adam Boyd, concerning culturally responsive teaching professional development being available at professional associations’ conferences on conference day, October, 2017. NSTU staff will speak to Betty Jean Aucoin and Sue Taylor Foly.
10. The Equity Committee nominated Elizabeth Thomas, Digby, to be considered Chair of the Equity Committee for the 2017-2018 school year.

Best Wishes to the 2017-2018 Equity Committee,

Nigel Tinker—Chair