

news



3106 Joseph Howe Drive
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3L 4L7
www.nstu.ca • pr@nstu.ca
Tel 902.477.5621
Fax 902.477.3517

N O V A S C O T I A T E A C H E R S U N I O N

Date: April 17, 2009 **For Release:** Immediately **Contact:** Angela Murray

Educators' conference focuses on sexual minority rights

On April 24 and 25 the conference *Educators: Taking Pride in Equity*, organized by the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, will focus on sexual minority rights and provide important professional development for some 175 teachers and school support staff across Nova Scotia attending the conference.

“This is the first time a teacher organization in Atlantic Canada has sponsored a conference on sexual minority issues in schools,” says NSTU president Alexis Allen.

According to results of Egale Canada, three quarters of self-identified lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) students who participated in a recent survey feel unsafe at school. “Results of this survey already tell us what we know students have been feeling in classrooms across Nova Scotia,” says Allen. “We need to ensure that tackling homophobia, heterosexism and transphobia are priorities in schools across the province.”

The NSTU has been planning this conference for the past year, in part due to the growing need within the school system to address this issue and the increased call for professional development in this area.

The Honourable Scott Brison, MP Kings-Hants will provide the opening keynote address on Friday, April 24 at 9:15 a.m. The conference will feature workshops on diversity, homophobia, transphobia, Gay-straight Alliances (GSAs), and include two panel discussions *Overcoming Challenges* and *Youth in Crisis*.

Workshops include *Reconciling Religion with LGBT Equality in the Classroom* with Kevin Kindred, lawyer and LGBT rights advocate, *That's So Gay: Addressing Homophobia at School* with teacher Lee Anne Arsenault, *Gendered Classrooms: Transgender Students* with Leighann Wichman and Kris Figueroa from the Youth Project, plus workshops from Trans Family Nova Scotia and the Canadian Centre for Diversity.

Lieutenant Governor's Teaching Award recipient and Avon View High School teacher, Dr. Steven Van Zoost will provide the Closing Keynote.

The Conference will also include an international banquet with music provided by Auburn High School student entertainment.

.../2

For a complete list of workshops and further details, please visit the NSTU website at www.nstu.ca and click the Equity Conference portal.

The Nova Scotia Teachers Union represents 10,900 public school teachers in Nova Scotia and Community College faculty and professional support staff. Organized in 1895, its programs are directed towards improving the quality of public education in Nova Scotia.

-30-

Media Contact:
Angela Murray
Nova Scotia Teachers Union
Cell: 902-497-0194
E-mail: amurray@nstu.ca