

Bathurst Area Principal Assumes Presidency of NBTA

Heather Smith, a principal and teacher at Janeville School, has assumed duties as President of the New Brunswick Teachers' Association. She succeeds Noreen Bonnell of Oromocto whose two-year term ended on August 1. Smith has a combined Bachelor of Education degree in Elementary and Special Education and a Master of Education in Literacy. She has taught for 28 years at the elementary level, all here in New Brunswick. Her teaching duties have been primarily split between Kindergarten and Grade 4, with assignments in McAdam, Belle-dune, Bathurst and finally, Janeville, a small fishing community approximately 20 kilometers from Bathurst.

Earlier this year, Smith received national recognition, being the only New Brunswick educator to be named by the Learning Partnership as one of Canada's Outstanding Principals for 2011. She has been increas-

ingly drawn towards the challenge of providing comprehensive services for students with high needs, whether they are at-risk for physical, emotional or situational reasons. Improving and coordinating support for these children will be one of her priorities as NBTA President.

Smith also sees that there needs to be a better understanding that standardized assessments don't tell the complete story of an education system. "Assessment results are used to compare the achievement of NB students with those in other provinces; do other provinces include special needs students in their results, or have systems as inclusive as ours?"

Another priority of Smith's term will be addressing teacher workload issues. "It's all about time. Today's schools are about differentiated instruction, providing for, as much as possible, the individual educational

needs of all students. We have to find a happy medium with reporting and meetings so that adequate time is left for planning and collaboration."

Smith says it is an honour to be the spokesperson for such a respected profession, but says that she will be a dedicated listener as well. "I will be meeting with many different groups including the Department of Education, politicians, universities, and even the private sector, and not all of their views will be the same as those of the NBTA." There will be plenty of internal input as well. Last month, over a hundred teachers from across the province met in Fredericton to discuss NBTA priorities. This, and ongoing input from elected bodies, such as the NBTA Board of Directors and Executive Committee, and from individual members, will help provide guidance and direction for the next two years.



President Heather Smith (left) receives her gold NBTA pin from her predecessor Noreen Bonnell. The gold pins are uniquely-numbered and only presented to NBTA presidents.