



Welcoming Early Career Teachers to the Compass Conference

important file and will consume a lot of time, energy and resources. The New Brunswick Teachers' Federation will be updating you on a regular basis through emails and communiqués to ensure that you stay up-to-date.

The NBTF Negotiation Team and the Employer met on October 11, 12 & 13, 2016, to continue talks. We are scheduled to meet again toward the end of October and for five more days in November. Given the number of issues to discuss, additional dates for bargaining have been booked through the end of April, 2017.

COMPASS CONFERENCE 2016

The Compass Conference 2016 was another great success. We had 90 early career teachers in attendance along with 26 POINT Reps. This event is designed to support early career teachers as they develop their professional identity, reflect on their professional practice and purposefully seek out formal and informal networks of support. There was plenty of learning over the two-day conference, but there was also a healthy mixture of laughter.

A special thank you to our staff, presenters, and POINT Reps for providing such a great professional learning opportunity for our early career teachers.

FRENCH IMMERSION ENTRY POINT

On September 29th the government announced that the entry point for French Immersion will return to Grade 1 in September, 2017.

As the NBTA spokesperson, I expressed concern that the government had not done its due diligence. In making this announcement, they should have presented their strategy or plan on how they were going to address the significant dislocation, classroom composition and rural access issues. All of these decisions should be backed by data so that when we have a change in government there is not yet another political decision to change the entry point. I firmly believe that, if we are to return to a Grade 1 entry point, it should be unfolded properly and adequately resourced with new money allocated for the next ten years, in conjunction with the government's 10-Year Education Plan. This infusion of money to support this government's new initiative cannot be taken from other programs as has been done in the past when implementing changes or new programs.

Here we are! It's now November which means we survived Hallowe'en... always a beehive of activity and excitement in schools, especially at the elementary level. November has always been a very significant month for me. It is important that we, as Canadians, pause to remember and reflect upon the sacrifices that our veterans have made to preserve peace and democracy. I know veterans greatly appreciate the role that schools play in commemorating Remembrance Day.

NEGOTIATIONS

Negotiating our next collective agreement continues this school year. As you know, this is a very

It is important for you to know that the NBTA has not taken any position of favouring a Grade 1 entry over a Grade 3 entry point or vice-versa. Our concern is about the timing, lack of New Brunswick data supporting the decision, how the government will be addressing classroom composition issues, and what supports will be in place for any displaced teachers. We also question the process and the lack of consultation with our Association. There should be a clear educational rationale for any decision or change of this magnitude contemplated by government, a detailed implementation plan, and dedicated new funding provided.

In the government press release it was stated that they intended to work with the NB Teachers' Associations to find opportunities for teachers displaced, including initiatives such as providing support to classes with challenging class compositions and supporting the objectives in the education plan, particularly literacy and inclusion. The proof will be in their actions and we intend to hold them to this commitment.

BRANCH PRESIDENTS' LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Local NBTA leaders from across the province were in Fredericton on September 30th attending our annual Branch Presidents' Leadership Conference. I want to take this opportunity to thank these teachers who volunteer their time on behalf their colleagues, in addition to their teaching assignments. They contribute immensely to the effectiveness and strength of the NBTA. Their role and responsibilities will be especially important during negotiations. Please take the time to thank them, other branch executive members and school reps for the volunteer work that they do on behalf of teachers. Attending branch meetings (Rep Councils) is a great way to stay informed and show support.

NEW CTF RESOURCE

If you recall in my last message, I highlighted a new resource from the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF), entitled "Mental Health Stigma: Challenging It Together." On October 14th, CTF released a second teacher resource, "Truth and Reconciliation: What is it about?" This classroom discussion booklet aims to support dialogue about residential schools and to explore how it has hurt generations of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. It offers first voice content from students, some indigenous and non-indigenous, with words, thoughts, drawings and poems. The booklet is available through CTF's Publication Catalogue on their website.

NEW EECD ADM

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development recently appointed Chris Treadwell to the position of Assistant Deputy Minister. The former Principal of Park Street Elementary School in Fredericton comes to the Department with an abundance of experience and credentials in advocating for publicly-funded, public education. He has always been a strong advocate for teachers and administrators in our province.

I would like to end this message by reminding you that, as teachers, we have a profound influence on our students. We face many challenges in and outside of the classroom. However, as dedicated professionals, we continue to make an important and positive difference in the lives of our students throughout our province. In turn, our students will make a difference in our society.

Remember to enjoy the process and the little moments that mean so much to your students. This is what will impact our future adults and leaders.

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Original Watercolor Painting by Retired Teacher Heather Scott