

NBTA News

November 26, 2008
Vol. LI, No. 2

New Brunswick Teachers' Association

NBTA News: Going Green, But Staying in Touch

by Blake Robichaud, NBTA Director of Communications

This issue of the *NBTA News* marks the beginning of a new era. From this point onward, there will be far fewer paper copies of the *News* produced. Given the choice this fall, a large number of teachers decided they would prefer to access this publication in electronic format on the website rather than in hard copy. This choice, combined with a reduction in the number of annual issues of the *News*, will save in the vicinity of half a million sheets of paper per year, along with a significant amount of mailing and production costs. We will continue to send some additional copies to schools for staffrooms, to stimulate discussion, and to accommodate those who might simply want to leaf through the newsletter once in awhile. While the benefits are clear, it is my earnest hope that these changes do not diminish our ability to communicate with members.

There are a few ways to ensure that opting out of "paper" does not mean losing touch with your Association. Each new issue of the *NBTA News* will be prominently featured as a large icon on the website (www.nbta.ca) for several weeks, and permanently available through the *NBTA News* button at the top of the

main page. A recent improvement allows the *News* to be downloaded far more quickly than before, usually in about 5 seconds. The electronic product actually has significantly fewer limitations than the print version of the *News*, and we will continue to explore ways of improving it.

Each school rep will receive an e-mail reminder whenever a new issue of the *News* is available.

Another way to keep up-to date via the website is the WebNews. This button links to a summary of many of the stories featured in the newsletter, along with information on other major developments of interest to teachers that occur between issues. Additionally, other large icons on the main page of the website are arranged to draw teachers' attention to other important developments, upcoming events or announcements. In order to make these changes work, we have to develop and nurture the habit among our members to visit the website on a regular basis. Many teachers may have come to the website for information on negotiations in the Members-Only section, but we hope you will continue visiting to stay in touch with your Association.

NBTA Ad Hoc Committee on Student Activity Transportation

The NBTA has established a Committee to examine and make recommendations on changes to policies on the transportation of students to and from school-related activities. The group will review and respond to the eight recommendations of the Minister's Interdepartmental Working Group on Extracurricular Transportation and the Superintendent Directives instituted at the New Brunswick Inter-Scholastic Athletics Association AGM in June 2008. Significant concern has been expressed by many teachers over this issue. The SAT committee will operate on an extremely tight schedule, with several meetings, a large amount of input, and recommendations prepared for the Executive Committee by the end of November.

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Next Final Copy Deadline
For NBTA News:
Thursday, February 5



Kimberley McKay Joins NBTA Staff

Gagetown School teacher and principal, Kimberley McKay, will assume duties January 1, 2009 as an NBTA staff member in the area of Professional Issues. Kim has benefited from a vast number of varied experiences across New Brunswick over her 18 years as an educator. Her career began in District 10, teaching English and French at Grand Manan High School and Sir James Dunn Academy in St. Andrews before moving on to a one-year term as vice-principal at Vincent Massey Elementary School. Kim then relocated to District 17, where she served as a vice-principal at Gesner Street School in Oromocto, and then as an Education Supervisor (Learning Specialist), with a portfolio including high schools, literacy, French, differentiation, and BTIP. She also held a one-year position in District 14 as Education Supervisor responsible for high schools. Her educational background features a B.Ed. (English), DAUS (English and French), and an M.Ed. (Curriculum and Instruction) from the University of New Brunswick.

Kimberley has been involved with NBTA as a member of school, branch



Kim McKay

and provincial committees. She has contributed to the writing of provincial curriculum, is currently in the first cohort of the New Brunswick Educational Leadership Academy, and been the lead teacher for an Innovative Learning Fund Tier 2 project.

During her spare time, Kimberley is involved in reading, running, and curling. Ironically, it is at the curling rink that her philosophy about leadership and education has evolved. In fact, Kimberley would tell you that everything she believes about teaching and leadership she learned at the rink:

1. **No matter how effective a curler you are, you cannot win a game without a team.** We need to invest in all the people in our schools. We are not followers looking for a hero.

2. **Winning a game without a strategic plan is literally the luck of the draw.** Our work requires a bit of inspiring people to move towards a goal that cannot be easily seen.

3. **When a team needs to make a decision, they call a time-out and analyze the options.** We need to create a climate that invites people to participate. We also need to be sure that the school team can execute once the decision has been arrived at. Finally, education is not about asking the questions to which you already know the answer.

4. **You cannot wait until you get to the Brier to analyze your performance stats.** As educators we can't merely respond to the status quo but nor can we make decisions on "gut instinct" alone.

5. **You can learn just as much from your fellow players as you can from the TSN commentators.** We need to create opportunities for teacher leaders to develop. We need access to experts but not dependency.

Moving? Name Change? Not Getting Your NBTA News? LET US KNOW!

In order to keep our NBTA members' database as accurate as possible, it is important that you advise the NBTA Communications Department (**Carlene Merrick, 452-1833** [@ carlene.merrick@nbta.ca](mailto:carlene.merrick@nbta.ca)) of any changes such as marital status, home address, school location, phone number, etc., as soon as possible. This is necessary to ensure that all mailings reach our members and that our nominal roll is up to date for voting purposes. Initial information is collected on the green registration forms, but changes occur. Many of these changes occur during the summer months.



We do not receive this updated information through any other source, so please keep us informed of any changes.

Thank you for your assistance in helping us serve you better.



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What You See is What You Get



Brent Shaw

One of the best things about being President of the NBTA is the travel. One of the most difficult things about being President of the NBTA is also...the travel. In short, it is nice to get away once in awhile, but you fairly quickly get the sense that our province is a pretty good place to be. Getting together with teachers and their representatives across New Brunswick is very fulfilling and informative,

and whenever I go to a conference or meeting elsewhere in Canada, I always return with some new ideas and information that can help me do my job better. When you gain a national perspective, however, you also begin to truly understand the value and uniqueness of our own structure.

Transparency has been the cornerstone of the NBTA since it was incorporated as part of the NBTf almost forty years ago. The goal was, and continues to be, to make the functions and practices of the Association as open and democratic as possible. Input and key decisions come from teachers elected by their colleagues, be they School Reps, Branch Presidents and Directors, members of the Executive Committee or NBTA President. These individuals accept the **responsibility** to work on your behalf, and the **right** to represent you. Once again, I want to encourage all of you to participate in your Association to the greatest extent that you can. If you cannot volunteer or run for an elected position, there are many committees both at the local and provincial levels that could use your expertise. Finally, don't ever forget your right to speak your mind. Your representatives want to know what you think; it helps them in their decision-making. I want to encourage all of you to continue to contact me whenever you wish to express your opinion on an issue.

This month I want to highlight three very different examples of **transparency** in the NBTA:

Hiring Process: Kimberley McKay will be joining our staff in January 2009 as a Professional Issues Officer.

Unlike other organizations in Canada, only teachers are considered for NBTA Staff positions. Three steps, all involving separate groups of your elected representatives, were required for this hiring. First, a group comprised of four members of the NBTA Board of Directors reviewed the applications received and established a short list. Then a completely separate group, the Executive Committee, which is elected from the Board itself, conducted the interviews and recommended a candidate. Finally, the hiring was not finalized until the Board of Directors, as a whole, voted to endorse the recommendation.

Ad Hoc Committee on Student Activity

Transportation: The NBTA is structured to get as much feedback as possible from its members. Throughout the school year, whenever Branches hold their meetings there is an NBTA Staff member in attendance. This regular face-to-face contact with teacher reps is also something that does not occur in most jurisdictions, but it gives the people who work for you continued insight into what is occurring in your daily lives. I have received numerous communications from teachers who have strong concerns about decisions that have been made this year about transporting students for various school-related activities. At your Board of Directors' meeting in October, an Ad Hoc Committee on Student Activity Transportation was established. This will be a fast-track committee that will seek input from members and make recommendations to the NBTA Executive Committee at the end of November.

Collective Agreement: Finally, one of the most obvious and important examples of our democratic processes is **voting on a tentative Collective Agreement**. We, on the negotiating team, have worked hard to get you the best contract we possibly can, but in the end, the power is with you. **Get as much information as you can from the Members-Only website and through branch meetings, then make your best-informed decision.** In short, no contract is official until a majority of the membership say it is.

As this is the last issue before the new year, I would like to send a special "Happy Holidays" out to you and wish you a happy and revitalized new year!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brent Shaw".

Quality versus Quantity

by Melinda Cook, Director of Curriculum and Finance

Assessment in education is currently a "hot topic". Though this is not a profound statement, it took me four attempts to phrase this opening. In my first attempt I used the phrase "educational assessment"; I discarded it because so much of the assessment being conducted isn't, in fact, educational. In my second attempt I tried the phrase, "Currently, assessment in education..."; I discarded it because I felt it might imply the focus on assessment is a passing trend. I do not believe this to be true. In my third attempt I wrote, "In education assessment is..."; I discarded it because assessment is currently a hot topic everywhere!

We are now living in a world that is heavily driven by accountability. A customer service representative at a call centre expects to have calls monitored for quality assurance. A trucker may drive a rig carrying a sticker saying, "How's my driving?", and a phone number for motorists to call to report on it. As educators, we too expect to be held accountable.

We understand how essential formative assessment is in facilitating learning. Well-designed, timely formative assessments contribute tremendously to student learning. The development, administration, analysis, and reporting of such formative assessments, however, is extremely time-consuming. We must use professional judgment to weigh the benefit of the information gathered against the cost of the time and resources consumed. We must ensure the assessments are of high quality, not high quantity.

The same is true for any "accountability" program. Well-designed, timely formative assessments can contribute tremendously to teacher learning. Although there are programs in place that administrators use to evaluate teacher performance, a belief has been perpetuated that student results on standardized tests are an accurate reflection of teacher

performance. The damage that is being done to our education system because of this myth is considerable.

I believe the most damaging aspect of the current regime of standardized tests in New Brunswick is how results have been used to demoralize students and teachers. As teachers, we know student performance cannot improve when a child is constantly reminded that he/she is "a failure". The students and teachers in New Brunswick have

"...results have been used to demoralize students and teachers."

been bombarded by the erroneous message that we are inadequate. Many international organizations (an example being the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) deem the Canadian education system to be among the best in the world, yet our internal messaging is that we are doing poorly. Intellectually, it makes no sense, but emotionally it harms us.

Recently, there has been some media coverage concerning mathematics assessment results in the Moncton area because there is a belief that student learning has not improved over time. Since the standardized mathematics assessments that have sparked the debate have been implemented, the curriculum has changed, resources have changed, standards have changed, and students have changed. There is no baseline for comparison! There have been tremendous improvements in elementary mathematics education in the last few years, but the external assessments do not reflect this.

Last year, teachers responded very negatively to the reading portion of the Grade 9 English Language Proficiency Assessment, because of concerns with regard to the quality of the assessment instrument. Teachers were upset because they felt the test, written several years ago for Alberta

students, was not suitable for our New Brunswick students because of contextual inconsistencies. (Words such as *bannock* and *tiramisu* were used, cultural references to Kmart were made, topics taught in grade 11 in New Brunswick were included, etc.). The tests were marked and the results made available, but for teachers who had seen the test, those results held little meaning.

We live in a world in which we can easily be overwhelmed by information. One of the most important skills we must teach our students is to carefully analyze and evaluate information. We must remain cognizant of such critical thinking ourselves. We must not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the quantity of information that is available to us. As teachers we owe it to ourselves and to our students to demand quality in all things, including assessment and accountability.

Counselling Services

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Yvonne Vaughan

MA M.ED CCC

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NBTA Board of Directors Meeting October 2008



(l to r) Sarah Kilburn (Grand Manan), Doug Stewart (Sackville), Derrick Sleep (Saint John) and Linda McCarten (Quispamsis).



Deputy Executive Director, Larry Jamieson, and Director of Professional Development, Ardith Shirley.

March Break Specials!

► **Mayan Riviera**

February 28, 2009

Grand Sirenis Resort – 5 Star

\$1697 + \$300 tax p.p.

Direct from Moncton



► **Holguin, Cuba**

February 28, 2009

Occidental Grand Playa Turquesa – 4 Star

\$1197 + \$200 tax p.p.

Halifax departure

► **Mayan Riviera, Mexico**

March 1, 2009

Sando Playacar Beach Resort – 5 Star

\$1597 + \$267 tax p.p.

Halifax departure

Rates are subject to availability at time of reservation, space is limited



Sylvette Deveau CTC

(506)863-5117

sdeveau@searsholidays.com

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NBTA Holiday Hours

The offices of the New Brunswick Teachers' Association will close for the holidays at

12:00 noon on December 24th, 2008

and will re-open at

8:30 am on January 5th, 2009.

Michael Ketchum Named Coordinator



Michael Ketchum

Mike Ketchum has been named Coordinator of the Professional Counselling Service for Teachers. He replaces Betsy Colwell-Burley who retired from the service last year. Ketchum, who is based in the Fredericton area and serves Districts 14, 17 and 18, joined the program in 2007, following 18 years at Fredericton High School as a teacher, Guidance Counsellor, and Vice-Principal. He is originally from Nauwigewauk, N.B. and has Bachelor Degrees in Science and Education, as well as a Masters Degree in Guidance and Counselling.

Welcome to New Teachers' Workshop a Great Success

by Eileen McNeil, NBTA Communications

"...very INFORMATIVE."

"...how helpful, friendly and approachable everyone is."

"...mingling with other teachers and friends to catch up to share in the excitement of this new career."

On September 20th, over 150 new teachers from all over the province gathered at the NBTF Building in Fredericton for the NBTA's Welcome to New Teachers' Workshop.

The day started with an introduction of the NBTA Staff and a short description of what each does within the Association. A playful presentation by the Counselling Coordinator, Mike Ketchum, quickly

got the attention of those in attendance as he summarized the life of a busy new teacher while "hiding from parents" beneath a trenchcoat-style disguise.

Teachers were then split into two groups for the divided sessions where they were presented with information regarding pension, group insurance, professional development, legal and code of ethics.

The NBTF staff were also present to discuss Policies 701 (Pupil Protection), 703 (Positive Learning Environment) and 311 (Use of Technology) and how these policies affect new teachers.

During the lunch hour, teachers had the opportunity to visit the

NBTA Credit Union and Johnson Inc. to learn more about the services they offer.

Although it may have been far too much information to fully absorb in a day, new teachers have, at least, taken the first steps towards learning about and participating in their Association. Now it's back to the classroom for more,

"Very busy, a lot of work, lots of support from school staff, lots of fun!"

"Exciting, exhausting, thrilling, surprising, frustrating, welcoming, frightening, empowering."

"Exhausting but Great!"



Director Sheridan Mawhinney (far left) guides new teachers from Branch 1725 on a tour of the NBTF building.



NBTA President Brent Shaw reveals his answers to the "Get to Know Your NBTA Staff" quiz.



Over 150 new teachers and branch officers from around the province gathered in Fredericton for the NBTA Welcome to New Teachers' Workshop.

27th Annual New Brunswick Mathematics Competition (for Grades 7, 8, 9)

Friday, May 8, 2009

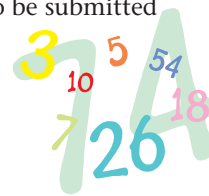
Forms will be sent to the principals by the beginning of February. Preliminary application forms should be returned by **March 6, 2009** and final application forms should be returned by **April 9, 2009**. Forms can also be submitted electronically by accessing:

<http://www.math.unb.ca/mathcomp/forms>

For Further information contact:

Fredericton (UNB) - Dr. Maureen Tingley
(506) 458-7343, tingleym@unb.ca

Moncton (U de M) Prof. Paul Deguire
(506) 858-4155, deguirp@umoncton.ca



Skills for Administrators Series: A Workshop for School-Based Administrators

Sponsored by the NBTA, School Districts and the Department of Education

Making Meetings Work: How to Get Started, Get Going and Get It Done

Date: February 16 and 17, 2009 (Monday and Tuesday) (9am - 4 pm)

Location: NBTF Building, Fredericton

Facilitator: Ardith Shirley, NBTA

Registration Deadline: February 9, 2009

Description: *Are you attending more meetings and getting less done?*

Even with our busy schedules, meetings can be a productive use of time when we follow some simple guidelines. Based on the NSDC Resource book by meetings expert Ann Delehant, this workshop will explore tools, strategies, tips, and ideas that fit the unique context of schools, learning communities, and instructional leaders.

We will discuss guidelines for determining whether to have a meeting, strategies for helping groups work together to make decisions, and developing action plans. We will also cover:

- Planning a meeting and building the agenda
- Considering innovative alternatives to traditional meetings
- Using energizers and other ideas for engaging and motivating groups
- Determining “who” gets to make “what” decisions
- Establishing norms and procedures for efficient use of time

School leaders will find this a dynamic resource to help groups work toward collaboration and change the environment and school community culture for the better!



Note: All workshops in the Skills for Administrators series are jointly sponsored by the NBTA, the Anglophone Districts and the Department of Education.

There are no registration fees to participants. Lunches will be provided for all sessions.

Participant travel costs and release time are the responsibility of the participants in collaboration with Districts.

Please note: These workshops are not eligible for Educational Improvement Grants.

**Please fax or email a PDF of the registration form to:
Ardith Shirley, Director of Professional Development, at 506-453-9795,
ardith.shirley@nbta.ca**

Skills for Administrators Series 2009

Name: _____

School: _____

Email: _____

I wish to register for:

____ **Making Meetings Work: How to Get Started, Get Going, and Get it Done** (February 16 and 17, 2009)

You will be emailed with a confirmation of your seat.

Teaching and Learning that Stands the Test of Time

Ardith Shirley, Director of Professional Development

Please forgive me if this month's PD Page feels more like a mélange of thoughts and ideas but I am afraid that is exactly how my brain seems to be operating right now. Perhaps it is all of the "Google-ing" I have been doing? (See closing quote by Nicholas Carr on the next page.)

At the risk of offending all of you concrete sequential thinkers out there, I humbly lay out some of the thoughts and ideas that are currently occupying my abstract random thinking in hopes that at least some of it may strike a chord with you.

Two "big" ideas that I seem to be dwelling on lately:

1. How do we best prepare students to succeed "tomorrow"? In a world that we currently may not even be able to imagine?
2. How do we TRULY measure

student learning? What do the "grades" we assign truly mean?

These questions have caused me to be very interested in two topics that have lots of folks writing and researching about:

- *Learning for the 21st Century*
- *Assessment for Learning*

I must confess that the amount of professional reading that I manage to do this time of year is not quite the amount I would wish it to be. But my exploration of these two big ideas led me to a bit of an epiphany while watering the poor "lone" plant in my office the other day...as I stood there, my eye fell on two precious possessions that have been in my work space over the past number of years. The first, my great-

great uncle's "Grade 2 Math" book dated 1912. The other is a framed photograph of my great-great grandfather who was the first schoolmaster in my hometown (a gift from a proud relative when I became the principal at our local middle/high school).

As I watered the wee plant, my eyes met those of my rather stern-looking distant relative who had shared a passion for education. I began to wonder what he might be thinking if he were able to stand in my shoes in 2008? How would the art and science of his teaching be impacted? It was at that moment it occurred to me that perhaps it might not be impacted as greatly as we might think. Yes, the tools we use to teach have definitely changed, but have the fundamentals of student engagement, motivation and

20th Century Classroom	21st Century Classroom
Time-based	Outcome-based
Focus: memorization of discrete facts	Focus: what students Know, Can Do and Are Like after all the details are forgotten.
Lessons focus on the lower level of Bloom's Taxonomy – knowledge, comprehension and application.	Learning is designed on upper levels of Bloom's – synthesis, analysis and evaluation (and include lower levels as curriculum is designed down from the top.)
Textbook-driven	Research-driven
Passive learning	Active Learning
Learners work in isolation – classroom within 4 walls	Learners work collaboratively with classmates and others around the world – the Global Classroom
Teacher-centered: teacher is center of attention and provider of information	Student-centered: teacher is facilitator/coach
Little to no student freedom	Great deal of student freedom
"Discipline problems" – educators do not trust students and vice versa. No student motivation.	No "discipline problems" – students and teachers have mutually respectful relationship as co-learners; students are highly motivated.
Fragmented curriculum	Integrated and Interdisciplinary curriculum
Grades averaged	Grades based on what was learned
Low expectations	High expectations – "If it isn't good it isn't done." We expect, and ensure, that all students succeed in learning at high levels.
Teacher is judge. No one else sees student work.	Self, Peer and Other assessments. Public audience, authentic assessments.
Curriculum/School is irrelevant and meaningless to the students.	Curriculum is connected to students' interests, experiences, talents and the real world.
Print is the primary vehicle of learning and assessment.	Performances, projects and multiple forms of media are used for learning and assessment
Diversity in students is ignored.	Curriculum and instruction address student diversity
Literacy is the 3 R's – reading, writing and math	Multiple literacies of the 21st century – aligned to living and working in a globalized new millennium.
Factory model, based upon the needs of employers for the Industrial Age of the 19th century. Scientific management.	
Driven by standardized testing mania.	

Adapted from <http://www.21stcenturyschools.com>

learning changed? I wonder?

This leads me to my next “big” question...

What are the fundamentals of teaching and learning that would “stand the test of time”?

Unfortunately, the NBTA News deadline looms before my great-great grandfather and I have had a chance to come up with a definitive list of these fundamentals, but we promise

to get back to you after our next “plant watering” session together.

In the meantime, here are a few items (on the previous page) I have found that may prompt you to create your own list.



“It is hardly surprising that parents, teachers and students often discuss or dispute grades, with the constant threat of panic or conflict if the grade drastically dips. What is shocking is how rare the following question is asked: Does this grade reflect whether or not the student has actually learned something?”

**Paul Barnwell, 6th Grade Teacher
Education Week, June 2008**

“...(W)hat the Net seems to be doing is chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation. My mind now expects to take in information the way the Net distributes it: in a swiftly moving stream of particles. Once I was a scuba diver in a sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski.”

Nicholas Carr

Is Google Making Us Stupid? (Atlantic Monthly, July/August 2008)

Recommended Website: The 10 Principles: Assessment for Learning: http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_4336.aspx

NBTA Professional Course Available — Winter/Spring

- This course is applicable to a Cert. 5 or should you hold a Cert. 5 and a Masters degree, the course may be used towards Cert. 6.
- Course may be taken also for professional or personal interest.
- Fee for this course is \$375 payable by cheque dated the first day of the course. Make all cheques payable to NBTA.
- Course requires 36 hours of instruction.
- Full description of the course is available at www.plsweb.com. Click Graduate Courses.
- Maximum seats per course: 24 (minimum numbers are required for a course to run).

CL09WPDQ — Achieving Outcomes Through Cooperative Learning

Achieving Student Outcomes Through Cooperative Learning shows educators ways to work with students in groups and demonstrates how to weave a student’s mastery of subject matter with the development of lifelong interpersonal and questioning skills.

Dates: Wednesday evenings (January 7 - April 1, 2009, 6:15 - 9:15)

Location: Kennebecasis Valley High, Room 250, Quispamsis **Instructor:** Paul M. Dunnett

Registration Deadline: Friday, December 5, 2008

Meaningful Activities to Generate Interesting Classrooms

Meaningful Activities to Generate Interesting Classrooms is an exciting hands-on course that offers teachers opportunities to learn about and acquire a multitude of engaging activities that go beyond the textbook and worksheet. Participation in over 60 activities will give you practice in creating, evaluating and adapting ideas to your own specific curriculum needs - immediately useful in your day-to-day classroom at any grade level.

MAGIC09WDOSS

Dates: Friday evenings (6pm - 9pm) and Saturdays (9am - 3pm)
January 16 & 17, 30 & 31; February 6 & 7, 20 & 21, 2009

Location: St. Stephen Elementary, St. Stephen

Instructor: Derek O’Brien

Registration Deadline: Friday, December 5, 2008

MAGIC09SDOSJ

Dates: Friday evenings (6pm - 9pm) and Saturdays (9am - 3pm)
March 27 & 28; April 3 & 4, 17 & 18; May 8 & 9, 2009

Location: Saint John (Specific Location TBA)

Instructor: Derek O’Brien

Registration Deadline: Tuesday, March 10, 2009

**Register online only: pay by credit card or send cheque payable to NBTA for \$375.00 to:
Ardith Shirley, Director of Professional Development, NBTA, PO Box 752, Fredericton, NB E3B 5R6**



High School, Middle School and Elementary School Councils... We're on the Same Page!

According to our common mission statement, "The aim of the Councils of the New Brunswick Teachers' Association is to promote and foster the opportunities for professional development, communications and curriculum assistance to the teachers of New Brunswick." To make sure we achieve this goal, the Communications Officers for all three Councils recently met in Fredericton to discuss the new NBTA News format. We all agreed at this meeting to attempt a new format for our section of the NBTA News.

In each issue, the Council Section of the NBTA News will now have a common focus in an attempt to provide teachers with in-depth coverage of the current issues facing educators in New Brunswick. This month, for example, we are looking at the issue of **Assessment**, something that is certainly an emerging issue in the classrooms of New Brunswick. We are also adding a regular feature called "Teaching Tips" in an effort to provide teachers with practical strategies that they can use in their classrooms every day. November's "Teaching Tips" topic is **literacy**. We will also be running a regular "Frequently Asked Questions" section. If you have ever had a question about accessing funds for professional development, running an institute, or about Council Day, this will be the place to find the answers.

For those of you who have traditionally read our section to find out about what is happening with our individual Councils and the annual preparation for the May Council Day, do not panic. We will continue to provide you with information in every issue regarding each individual Council's business including updates on Combined Council 2009 in Moncton, institutes and professional development opportunities being offered for teachers, and funds remaining to support teacher professional development. We hope that you enjoy the new format and we would certainly welcome any comments you have about the new look.

Sincerely,

Erica LeBlanc, Elementary Council
erica.leblanc@nbed.nb.ca

Shelley Hunter, Middle School Council
huntेशr@nbed.nb.ca

Derek Taggart, High School Council
derek.taggart@nbed.nb.ca



Elementary Council



Elementary Council Executive Members - Our Volunteers

Peter Gorham - President

Peter has held numerous positions on Elementary Council over the years and worked on several NBTA Committees. At the local level he has served on PD committees and has held the position of Treasurer for several years. Peter began his teaching career as a Kindergarten teacher at John Caldwell School, Grand Falls, and later became the Art teacher in that K to 12 school. Four years later, he moved to Nackawic Elementary School where he teaches Art from Kindergarten to Grade 5 as well as Grade 5 Language Arts.

Donna Losier - Vice President

Donna has been involved with

NBTA for over 17 years in various capacities, including Branch Treasurer for 12 years, Branch PD chair for 12 years, and Elementary Council Second Vice President. Donna has taught in British Columbia and Manitoba. Her experience in New Brunswick ranges from Kindergarten to Grade 6. Donna's present teaching assignment is Grade 4 English and Grade 4 ELA at Parkwood Heights School, Bathurst, District 15.

Alyssa MacIsaac - Second Vice President

Alyssa is the Transition to School Coordinator for School District 6 in Rothesay. This is her third year on

the Elementary Council. She also serves on her local NBTA Branch executive, with local Branch PD, and on the NBTA Provincial PD Committee. This is her third year as a BTIP mentor. She is a Mom to two girls and that is her favorite job.

Kelly Gorham Gaines - Treasurer

Kelly is beginning her third year on Council and her second as treasurer. She is a third grade teacher at Canterbury High School, and last year was a Math Coach for District 14. Currently, she is on maternity leave with her first baby, Rori.



Sharyn (Sherry) Pope - Secretary

Sharyn has returned to the Elementary Council this year after 7 years as a Resource Teacher at Albert Street Middle School in Fredericton. She was the School Rep for 6 years at Albert Street and for 3 years at Connaught Street Elementary. She has also served on Branch 1826 Executives from 1998-2005 as Secretary and First Vice-President. She is now the new School Rep for Barkers Point Elementary and has just been appointed Secretary of the NBTA Elementary Council. Sherry is also First Vice-President of the Fredericton Chapter of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society, an international organization which promotes professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education.

Jean M. White - Past President

Jean M. White has taught all grades from K to 12 as a regular classroom teacher, reading specialist and resource and methods teacher. She has taught in five provinces in this vast country of ours. Prior to coming to New Brunswick, Jean served as Board Office and Provincial Curriculum Consultant, Vice Principal and Principal. Presently, Jean is vice principal and methods and resource teacher at Island View School in Saint John.

Jean has also chaired the Curriculum Committee for the past two years.

Karla Roy - Institutes Coordinator

Karla Roy is in her third year on Council. Karla teaches Grade 4 at

Park Street Elementary School in Fredericton. She has served as our Secretary and is presently our Institutes Coordinator. Karla is her NBTA school rep. and is a mother of two.

Erica LeBlanc - Communications Officer

Erica LeBlanc is in her second year on the Elementary Council, she has been a member-at-large for both years and she has recently accepted the post of Communications Officer. This is her eleventh year teaching French Immersion. She has taught at all three levels and is currently teaching a Grade 4 French Immersion at Summerhill Elementary School in Oromocto, District 17. She is the President of Branch 1725, and the Grade Four Team Leader at her school. She is married with two sons. Her husband is currently doing his student teaching at Royal Road Elementary in Fredericton. Her father and brother are both teachers involved in the NBTA.

Roberte Melanson - Member-at-Large

Roberte is not new to the Elementary Council, having served on the Elementary Steering Committee during the transition period to three councils. Later she served as a member-at-large and as Secretary from 1994 to 1998. She was asked to work with the Art Strand Committee for Council Day in 2006 and joined that committee in 2007. Roberte has given Art workshops to teachers all over the province through district P.D.,

Elementary Council Institutes, and the Beaverbrook Art Gallery. Roberte is active in the province's visual arts community, has taught Art from Kindergarten to Grade 12, and is presently teaching art at Albert Street Middle School in Fredericton.

Ashley Dobbin - Member-at-Large

Ashley Dobbin is in her second year of teaching and her first year on Council. She presently teaches the English component of Grade 5 Intensive French. Ashley first sat in on an Elementary Council meeting with her cooperating teacher, Alyssa MacIsaac. She enjoyed the meeting, knew she wanted to be involved in Council and decided to volunteer in May, 2007. She is serving as member-at-large and is Co-chair of our Curriculum Committee. Ashley is a newly-wed.

Karen Miller - Member-at-Large

Karen Miller is new to the Elementary Council. She is a Grade three/four teacher at Nackawic Elementary School. She is the acting director of her branch. Karen will co-chair the Curriculum Committee this year with Ashley. Karen is a mother of two.

These are your volunteers on Council and I am proud to be working with them. It is good to know a little more about the people who give of their time and talent to the Elementary Council.

Peter Gorham
President

Middle Level Council



More Funds for Middle Level Education Grants

It was decided at the last Middle Level Council executive meeting that the surplus gained from our last council day in Moncton will go towards Educational Grants for the January 2009 – June 2009 timeframe. So, if you have found a great opportunity to grow professionally, there's more money in the coffers. Apply now!



Student-Driven Assessment...in Action!

Have you ever dreamed of a day when students would be excited about showing you what they know? For Keswick Valley math teacher, Nancy McAlinden, this dream has come true. With help from District 14 math mentor, Kathy Hildebrand, Nancy has created a classroom in which students own their learning!

Researcher Rick Stiggins has shown that "high-quality assessments encourage further learning and low-quality assessments hinder learning." Formative assessment is the key. Nancy is following the recommendation of research that feedback be descriptive and not a score.

In Nancy's classroom, math units start with a review of its outcomes, written in student-friendly language. For each outcome, students are responsible for building their math portfolio with pieces of evidence of understanding for each outcome which they track on a unit overview sheet. Students document their learning.

Nancy still follows a balanced math framework and although her teaching practices haven't changed, her assessment practices have. Students are busy gathering proof. "Take my picture," asks a student who has just modelled addition of

fractions with fraction circles. The photo is taken and printed and the student quickly adds it to his coloured math folder as proof that he can add fractions concretely.

Perhaps an illustrated solution to a different question and answers to some paper and pencil "Target" questions, designed collaboratively by District 14 math teachers, will complete the student's evidence file for the "add fractions" outcome.

Nancy says she cannot believe the students' enthusiasm for this

approach. Students are talking the talk and walking the walk. With students working at their own pace, she finds time to help those students who need her attention.

She and Kathy Hildebrand shared this wonderful idea with teachers during a recent District 14 PD day. They are also very excited about presenting their session to math teachers across North America at the 2009 National Council of Math Teachers (NCTM) annual conference in Washington, D.C.



Students put "evidence" of understanding in their coloured folder. Once they have three pieces per outcome, they're done!

High School Council



High School Council Executive 2008-2009

Front Row (l to r): Sheridan Mawhinney, Michael Butler, Derek Taggart, Paul Lenarczyk, Martin Daigle

Back Row (l to r): Shelley Stairs, Angela Murphy, Stacey Stairs, Marla Anderson, Jane Porter, Celinda Van Horne, Jocelyne Schwenger



Teaching Tips: Literacy

Elementary

Individual Conferencing

Individual Conferencing has become an important part of assessment in the classroom. There is no denying the wealth of information a teacher receives from listening to the explanation a student gives, as opposed to reading a short written answer on a paper and pencil test.

When conducting a writing conference, it is easy to point out several mistakes made by the student, as these tend to jump out at you. Lori Jamison in, *Marvellous Mini-Lessons for Teaching Writing K-3*, talks about writing conferences and the importance of positive feedback. She recommends employing the “wish and a star” approach. Start by making a praise point, perhaps by pointing out an improvement or commenting on something particular that was well done. Follow up by suggesting one area of concern.

It is tempting to point out several things that “need fixing”, but by focusing on one area of concern, students are more likely to show improvement in that area the next time you conference with them. This simple strategy can be used effectively with reading conferences as well.



Middle Level

Reading for All and All for Reading!

At the middle level, we begin to see a widening gap in reading levels. So how do you keep all students engaged? The H-I-P (high interest publishing) series of books offers high interest, low level novels with adolescent themes. Check out their offerings at www.hip-books.com. In addition to reading level, the abstract lists its interest level.

What about literacy across the curriculum? The National Geographic Explorer! Collection offers science booklets at two reading levels: the Pioneer edition features easier sentence structure and basic vocabulary whereas its Pathfinder counterpart is at grade level. With the same layout, pictures, and cover for both editions, it's easy to have groups reading the same content but at a level which is comfortable for them. Topics include Space, Sports and Health, Animals, Habitats, and Earth Science.

This tip provided by the Language Arts Team at Florenceville Middle School.



High School

Reading Non-fiction Articles

Students in high school are often asked by teachers to read articles relating to the concept they are learning, but many of them struggle with comprehension. Here are some tips for teachers that may help students better understand what they are reading:

- Ask students to preview the article by reading the title and subtitles and looking at the pictures, captions or diagrams first.
- From this first step, ask students what they think the main idea will be in this article.
- Now ask students to think about what they already know about this topic (engage their prior learning).
- After reading the article silently, ask students a series of questions to gauge their understanding.

Some examples include:

- What new information did you learn about the topic?
- Who is the author? Does he or she represent a particular organization or group?
- Was the article largely based on opinion or researched facts?
- Do you have questions that still need to be answered?

Looking Ahead:

In the Council section of the March issue, we will be focusing on the theme of report cards and providing teaching tips based on numeracy.



School-Based Learning Team Grants

In a true Learning Community, everyone learns.

What is a School-Based Learning Team?

A School-Based Learning Team (SBLT) is a team of 3-5 teachers from a school who decide to work together to examine some aspect of student learning with the goal of studying, collaborating, sharing and learning to improve instructional strategies that will lead to improved student achievement.

Can you give me an example of what a SBLT might attempt to accomplish under this program?

An Elementary Team might determine, by examining their school achievement data and their students' performance, that their students seem weak in the area of measurement. The team might work towards identifying/developing strategies to improve this area of student learning. The teachers might try various teaching techniques, learning from one another or experts, and continue to compare the progress of their students as a result of the efforts of the Learning Team. Likewise a Middle School Learning Team might recognize that their students are weak in poetry ; a High School Math Team might decide to focus on improving their students application of geometric principles.

What is a School-Based Learning Team Grant?

A SBLT Grant is a \$1000 grant that will be awarded to a school upon successful application to the NBTA Committee established to administer the grant fund. The focus must be student learning.

What is the Purpose of the grant?

The grant is intended to support the work of the Learning Team. Such support may include providing some release time for the team to meet, purchasing resources to support the efforts of the team, accessing

expertise in the form of resource people.

How often should the team meet?

The SBLT grant extends from the calendar year January to December 2008. The team is required to meet a minimum of 18 hours throughout the year for which the grant has been awarded. Team members determine when the meetings will take place.

*\$1000 Grant
for your School
to Support Student
and Teacher Learning*

How is a SBLT different from a study group?

In many ways the SBLT has similarities to a study group in that teachers are working together to grow and learn. *However, the Learning Team must focus on an aspect of student achievement and work towards improving the achievement levels of their students in that area.* Actually examining student work is an important part of a Learning Team.

Will there be any help for the SBLT to get started?

Yes. The Director of Professional Development for the NBTA will meet with each Learning Team to help them launch their work. A template for recording the work of the team will be provided and protocols for examining student work will be introduced. These guidelines are intended to provide a framework for both accountability and productivity but will not restrict the direction and creativity of the team.

How many grants will be available?

For the calendar year January '09 – December '09, there will be five \$1000 grants available.

How does my school apply?

Complete the 1 page application form found on the NBTA website (www.nbta.ca). A school may submit more than one application provided the guidelines above are represented in each application. **Deadline for applications is December 12, 2008.** Successful applicants will be notified by January 9, 2009.

Why should my school consider creating a School-Based Learning Team?

All teachers strive to do their best, but so much more can be accomplished if teachers can work together, share strategies and improve their instructional techniques. Students and teachers all benefit. In a true learning community, everyone learns. A School-Based Learning Team is one more step toward the creation of such a learning community.

The guiding question of a School Based-Learning Team is:

"What is happening differently in our classrooms as a result of what we are doing and learning in our Team?"



New External Assessment Report Cards

by Melinda Cook, Director of Curriculum and Finance

The Department of Education has designed School External Assessment Report Cards to be published and distributed for the first time this fall. These school reports are intended to fulfill the obligation within the *Education Act* for government to be accountable to the public. Although NBTA welcomes authentic accountability, the Association does not believe that the publication of external results in this manner will be a positive intervention.

The NBTA published a position paper outlining its stance with regard to external assessments in May 2007. The principal position with regard to any assessment initiative is that it should only be undertaken if it leads to an improvement in student learning. We are convinced the publication of External Assessment Reports will not lead to improvements in student learning. In fact, by diverting scarce resources from other initiatives, it may decrease student learning.

What we expect to see increased is the misinterpretation of results. Percentages will be stated for all available external test results for the school for a 3-year period. What will those percentages mean? In most cases, no one at the school can answer the question. Does a pattern of increasing percentages mean that student learning is increasing? Perhaps. Does little variation indicate that no improvements are occurring? Not necessarily. Curricula have changed, standards have changed, resources have changed, assessment instruments have changed, evaluation standards have changed, the student cohort has changed.... Given such change in learning conditions, seeing a lack of variation in results may suggest that students have, in fact, learned more, in order to maintain performance levels. What does it mean if a school percentage shows a dramatic drop in a particular year? Who knows?

The Department has taken care to design the reports to focus on the data, rather than the people. However, NBTA anticipates that by

taking an activity as complex as student learning and attempting to portray it in such simplistic terms, it

“The publication of School External Assessment Reports is one Department initiative the NBTA feels will be counterproductive to the learning environment.”

will engender simplistic assumptions. If the results appear “bad”, it will be because of the teacher; if the results seem “good”, it will be because of the teacher. Even more damaging is the potential of another assumption NBTA fears will be made – an assumption by those students who do not experience initial success with the external assessments that they are not as “smart” as their peers. Teachers strongly believe the only comparison of student performance must be to the own student’s past performance. Further, teachers

believe that external test scores are not indicators of intelligence, but rather simply indicators of performance.

If external assessments are to continue, then they should be used to improve student learning. In order to do that, the results need to be analyzed in greater depth, and that analysis communicated to teachers to better inform their practice. The New Brunswick Teachers’ Association and the Department of Education are both motivated by a sincere desire to improve the education system. Although we work collaboratively whenever possible, we do disagree on some issues, including this one. The publication of School External Assessment Reports is one Department initiative the NBTA feels will be counterproductive to the learning environment.

Escorted Cultural Adventure in Guatemala February 28 - March 8, 2009

Join Richard Faulkner (a retired teacher) and his wife Kathy, co-owners of Baymount Outdoor Adventures, on a 9 day Mayan Discovery Tour in Guatemala.

Baymount will be fulfilling its vision for “Making a Greater Difference in the World” by donating 50% of the tour profits to school-building projects in mountain villages in Guatemala.

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Erin Gruwell www.freedomwritersfoundation.org

Becoming a Catalyst for Change

Erin Gruwell has earned an award-winning reputation for her steadfast commitment to the future of education. Her impact as a change agent runs deep. So deep, in fact, that her story attracted Hollywood's attention. In January 2007, Paramount Pictures released **Freedom Writers**, starring two-time Oscar winner Hilary Swank as Erin. The film is based on *The Freedom Writers Diary*, *The New York Times* bestseller that chronicled Gruwell's extraordinary journey with 150 high school students who had been written off by the education system.

Gruwell and her students have appeared on numerous television shows, including **Oprah**, **Prime Time Live** with Connie Chung, **The View**, and **Good Morning America**, to name a few. Their story has earned them dozens of awards, including the Spirit of Anne Frank Award.



Alfie Kohn www.alfiekohn.org

The Homework Myth

Traditional Education and Its Victims: The Perils of Going 'Back to Basics'

Alfie Kohn writes and speaks widely on human behavior, education, and parenting. The latest of his eleven books are *THE HOMEWORK MYTH: Why Our Kids Get Too Much of a Bad Thing* and *UNCONDITIONAL PARENTING: Moving from Rewards and Punishments to Love and Reason*. Of his earlier titles, the best known are *PUNISHED BY REWARDS: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise, and Other Bribes*, *NO CONTEST: The Case Against Competition*, and *THE SCHOOLS OUR CHILDREN DESERVE: Moving Beyond Traditional Classrooms and "Tougher Standards"*.

Kohn has been described in *Time* magazine as "perhaps the country's most outspoken critic of education's fixation on grades [and] test scores." His criticisms of competition and rewards have helped to shape the thinking of educators -- as well as parents and managers -- across the country and abroad. Kohn has been featured on hundreds of TV and radio programs, including **The Today Show** and two appearances on **Oprah**; he has been profiled in the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*, while his work has been described and debated in many other leading publications.



Kylene Beers www.kbeers.net

Because Shift Happens: Literacy Demands of the Flat World
Building Fluency in Struggling Readers

Kylene Beers, a former middle school teacher, assumes a new position as Senior Reading Advisor to Secondary Schools with the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Columbia University, effective summer 2007. She's the author of *When Kids Can't Read/What Teachers Can Do* (Heinemann, 2002) and is the co-editor with Robert Probst and Linda Rief of the forthcoming *Adolescent Literacy: Turning Promise into Practice* (Heinemann, spring 2007). A respected authority on struggling readers who works with elementary, middle school, and high school teachers across the nation, Kylene was recently elected Vice-President of the National Council of Teachers of English to assume the presidency in 2008.



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present at

TEACHING TOMORROW II

NCETA
Council Conference
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www.ruthsutton.com **Ruth Sutton**

Assessment for Learning: Practical Implications for Classroom Teachers
Assessment for Learning Across the School: How to Achieve Both Consistency and Sustainability

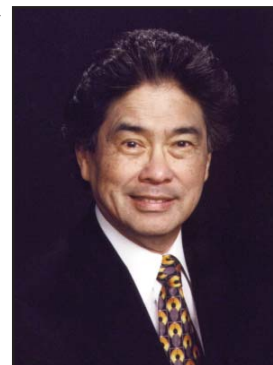
Ruth Sutton has been working on Assessment for Learning for twenty-seven years with teachers, schools and school districts in the UK, Canada and New Zealand, after a decade of classroom teaching and school leadership. She is interested in the practical implications for classroom teachers, and the need to re-think our approaches to planning, questioning, feedback, marking and reporting. Much of her recent work has been with school leaders, focused on successful and sustainable improvement in the quality of learning and teaching. She is centrally involved in 'Feedback for Learning' in Winnipeg School Division, and co-authored a series of books about this work called *Creating Independent Student Learners* published by Portage and Main Press.



www.harrywong.com **Harry Wong**
How to Achieve Maximum Results in Schools

Harry Wong is, arguably, the most motivational speaker in education. His techniques have been adapted by thousands of educators for success in their schools and classrooms and he is credited with renewing entire schools and rescuing countless frustrated teachers. He is the author of *The First Days of School*, which has sold 3 million copies and writes a monthly column for www.teachers.net. Harry Wong will explain that the single greatest effect on student achievement is the effectiveness of the teacher. Effective teachers have a classroom that is structured and organized and CONSISTENT in how the classroom is run. He has been called Mr. Practicality for his common-sense, research-based, no-cost approach to managing a classroom for high level student success.

In a survey of its readers, *Instructor* magazine announced the 20 people most admired by educators. Harry Wong was among the people on this list.



www.halurban.com **Hal Urban**
Lessons from the Classroom: 20 Things Great Teachers Do

Hal Urban was a teacher for thirty-six years: full-time at San Carlos and Woodside High Schools, and part time at his alma mater, the University of San Francisco. He won numerous awards at both levels, including the Character Center's National Educator of the Year award in 1999.

Dr. Urban has been on the speaking circuit since 1995. He has traveled more than a million miles, and has made more than 800 presentations in thirty-seven states and in five foreign countries. One of his presentations was a keynote address in the Great Hall of the People in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, China. He speaks to teachers at all grade levels, students of all ages, and parents. He has keynoted at several state and national conferences. In addition, he speaks to people in business, health care, service organizations, and places of worship.



Learning Today - Teaching Tomorrow II

by Carter Assels, Vice-Principal at Magnetic Hill School, Co-chairperson of Combined Council Day 2009 Ad Hoc Committee

On May 1st, 2009, NBTA Combined Council will be happening once again in Moncton. The NBTA Ad Hoc Committee is as "pleased as punch" to once again host educators from our province for this one-day professional development opportunity.

The Past:

To put things in 'Combined Council' perspective, this will be the fourth time a Combined Council has been held in our province. In 1988 and 1992, the Combined Councils were held in Moncton with a cast of speakers presenting in one venue, that being the main Coliseum arena. In 2004, the Coliseum and three arenas were utilized for the Conference and more than 4200 attended.

Following the Conference, the NBTA Combined Councils and the NBTA Board of Directors determined that this special event would be held every 5 years, allowing teachers from

all levels to join together in a day of professional learning and professional pride.

Why Moncton?

Once again 4 venues in the Moncton Coliseum and Agrena Complex will be the site of the Conference and publishers' trade show. Moncton is the ONLY location in NB which will house an event of this magnitude. There is just not another option that will allow all of us to be together. The format of 4 sections will allow participants to select the presenters whom they most would like to see and hear and build an individual schedule (more on this next issue.)

Who Can You See?

This year we have six professional speakers from a wide range of backgrounds who will undoubtedly be of great interest for our members. Check out the centerfold of this issue for the first look at the outstanding, internationally

acclaimed educators who will take to the stage on May 1, 2009. We think you will, like the Committee, be really excited about seeing these experts right here in our own province!

How Much?

If you are an NBTA member, you have already paid the \$30 registration fee as part of your dues (which are tax deductible). It won't cost you anything more to register. Plan to car pool, share a hotel room, organize a school bus and reduce your travel costs.

Check the Website!

Check the NBTA website (www.nbta.ca) and click the Learning Today - Teaching Tomorrow II icon to find more info about the Conference speakers, hotel bookings, and (eventually) registration.

Note: Registration opens January 5! Plan to register early and pre-select your favourite sessions.

Quotes from Learning Today - Teaching Tomorrow 2004

"It was absolutely one of the best PD experiences of my career. I loved every minute of the day. Teachers will never forget the phenomenal speakers, and the fun and time we spent together."

"The quality of the Conference and the precise planning not only contributed to the success of the day, but to the level of professionalism all teachers should feel. A very professional conference".

"I have been to National conferences that couldn't hold a candle to what happened in Moncton! Thank you!"

"Wow!"

"It was wonderful from the start and stayed wonderful all day. The speakers were touching and inspiring. Lunch was great and it was a perfect place to 'catch up' with colleagues. I can't tell you how proud I am of our Association for 'nailing' this event."

"Moncton was awesome! I am at the shank of my career and many of the old friends I met are close to retirement as well, however, as one, we could not be more enthusiastic about the Conference. Inspiring was the word I heard over and over. I came away with a few practical ideas, but it was the renewed enthusiasm and the dusting off the cobwebs of my vision of school that made the trip to Moncton worthwhile."

Wanted: Learning Today - Teaching Tomorrow II Theme Song

The ad hoc Committee of teachers in charge of organizing this exciting PD opportunity for May 1st, 2009, invites submissions for a "theme" song that compliments the theme of "Learning Today, Teaching Tomorrow" and could be used during the opening ceremonies of our conference or on breaks. Please include:

Song Title: _____ Submitted by: _____ Submissions should be emailed to:
Artist(s): _____ School: _____ carter.assels@nbed.nb.ca

Interest-Free Loans

Up to \$1,500.00 in any one school year shall be made available to statutory NBTA members on leave who are improving their professional qualifications through educational programs. Application forms are available from:

Melinda Cook
New Brunswick Teachers' Association
PO Box 752, Fredericton, NB E3B 5R6
Tel: (506) 452-8921
Email: melinda.cook@nbta.ca

**The application deadline
for 2009 - 2010 is:
March 31, 2009**

Educational Improvement Grant Funds

All Funds for the NBTA / Department of Education Provincial and/or NBTA Council Grants have been **depleted** until January 2009.

Applications can be made at any time for NBTA/DOE Provincial and/or Council funding for **activities taking place after January 1, 2009.**

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Salary Deferred Leave Plan 2009-2010

Application forms will be available from
District Offices in early January 2009.
Application Deadline is February 28, 2009.

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Are You Eligible to Retire?

By Larry Jamieson, NBTA Director, Teacher Welfare Services

The New Brunswick Teachers' Pension Act (TPA) provides that a teacher becomes eligible to retire on an immediate pension:

- (a) at age 65 with 5 or more years of pensionable service (no reduction)
- (b) at age 60 with 5 or more years of pensionable service (Pension reduced 5 per cent per year for each year under age 65)
- (c) at age 60 with 20 or more years of pensionable service (no reduction)
- (d) when the combination of a teacher's age and service reaches 80 (reduced pension). (Reduction will be 2.5% for each index year that retirement precedes age/service index of 87)
- (e) when a combination of a teacher's age and service equals 87 (no reduction)
- (f) after completing 35 years of pensionable service (full pension)

Below is a checklist of things you should do when you have decided to stop teaching and receive your pension:

- If you are unsure of your pension service, check with the Compensation & Employee Benefits Division, Office of Human Resources (Pensions Branch) to make sure that you are indeed eligible for retirement. Include your Social Insurance Number (SIN) and birth certificate in any communication with the Pensions Branch.
- Notify your Superintendent, in writing, of your intention to retire (the Regulations of the *Education Act* now stipulate this notification be communicated as of February 1st):
 - (a) specify the date of retirement (always at end of the month - e.g., June 30, 2009)

Note: In the case of a disability pension, these steps will only occur once the teacher has received approval for his/her disability pension from the Compensation & Employee Benefits Division, Office of Human Resources.

- Make arrangements with a financial institution to have your retirement allowance placed in a RRSP account or any other registered investment mechanism. The banking institution, trust company or credit union, etc. will then undertake the necessary steps (complete TD2 form) so that the amount is

deposited directly into a RRSP account without going through your hands. Otherwise you might end up paying tax at a high rate on that amount.

- If you are age 60 or over, do not forget to apply for the Canada Pension (CPP).

Forms to fill out at District Office:

1. Termination Notice / Benefit Request — Claim for pension benefits (copy of birth certificate(s) required)
2. TD1 — Personal exemptions for income tax purposes after retirement
3. Direct Deposit form (*blank, void cheque required*)
4. NBTF Group Insurance form indicating what you plan to do regarding your group insurance coverage. This will allow the Compensation & Employee Benefits Division to make the necessary deductions from your pension cheque.

Note: It is important that the Compensation & Employee Benefits Division receive the necessary forms properly filled out (notice of termination and TD1) at least 90 days prior to the month you expect to receive your pension. The School District will look after sending these forms where appropriate.



Larry Jamieson

Pension cheques are received on the 23rd/24th of each month, except December.
For any additional information on the above process, please contact:

→ Larry Jamieson, New Brunswick Teachers' Association
P.O. Box 752, Fredericton, NB E3B 5R6 Tel. 452-1722

or

→ Compensation & Employee Benefits Division, Office of Human Resources
P.O. Box 6000, Fredericton, N.B. E3B 5H1 Tel. 453-2296 or 1-800-561-4012

If you have decided to retire, please notify NBTA Central Office as soon as possible.
This will help us prepare for the provincial Retiring Teachers' Luncheon which will be held on Saturday, May 30.

2008-2009 NBTA PENSION SEMINARS

REGISTRATION FORM

Please accept my application to attend the NBTA Pension Seminar to be held on (check one):

NOTE:

Due to the change in the issue schedule of the NBTA News, this is the only hard copy of this application form that will be printed before the new year's seminars. It may also be found on the NBTA website at www.nbta.ca

DATE OF SEMINAR _____

DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION _____

- _____ January 10 - Fredericton, NBTF Building
- _____ January 24 - Miramichi, Dr. Losier Middle School
- _____ January 31 - Sussex, Sussex High School

- December 23
- January 16
- January 23

Name of Teacher: _____ S.I. No. _____

Mailing Address: _____ Dist. _____

_____ Name of Spouse (if attending) _____

(If spouse is a teacher, please fill out a separate form)

No. of pension years you will have accumulated to June 2009 _____ Certificate Level: _____

Are you planning to buy back time? _____ If "yes", how much time? _____

Do you have Responsibility Allowance? Yes _____ No _____ *(If "yes", contact your payroll officer at your District Office and have your last 5 years' salary history faxed to Karen Vautour, 453-9795)*

I am enclosing a cheque in the amount of \$5.00 / \$10.00 (please circle one) to cover the cost of registration; nutrition break, and materials to be supplied. Please make cheque payable to **New Brunswick Teachers' Association**.

Mail Application form to: Karen Vautour, P.O. Box 752, Fredericton, NB, E3B 5R6 or fax to 453-9795.

Signature: _____

SEMINAR GUIDELINES

The following guidelines should be noted for participation in these seminars:

1. All participants must pre-register.
2. A registration fee of \$5.00 for each participant must accompany the application; however, cheques will not be cashed until after the workshop.
3. Travel and accommodation costs are the responsibility of the participant.
4. A nutrition break will be provided.
5. Questions relating to these seminars should be directed to: **Larry Jamieson**
Director of Teacher Welfare Services
New Brunswick Teachers' Association
P.O. Box 752
Fredericton, N.B. E3B 5R6 (Tel. 452-1722)
6. Any interested teachers are eligible to attend.
7. All workshops begin with registration at 8:30 am and sessions at 9:00 am until 1:00 pm.
8. Detach and return the registration form as soon as possible.

PROGRAM

- Teachers' Pension Act
- The Canada Pension Plan
- Pension Records (will be available at meeting if possible)
- Pension Calculations
- Old Age Security
- Retirement Allowance
- Pre-retirement Vacations
- Deferred Salary Leave Plans
- Financial Planning for Retirement:
 - RRSPs
 - Annuities
 - Registered Retirement Income Funds
- Individual Consultations



PLEASE NOTE: YOU WILL RECEIVE CONFIRMATION WITHIN ONE WEEK OF CONFERENCE.

Wellness Highlights

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Niel Cameron, Districts 2, 15, 16
1-888-763-5050



Michael Ketchum

Districts 14, 17, 18
1-800-561-1727
462-0208



Carmen Meehan

Districts 6, 8, 10
1-800-563-3938
634-2901



Niel Cameron

Districts 2, 15, 16
1-888-763-5050
855-5243

The Winter Blues

It doesn't seem all that long ago when the last bits of snow from the renowned winter of 2008 finally melted away. With record-breaking snowfall, it will certainly be a winter to remember and will be talked about for years to come. The impact of this past winter is etched in our minds and it would be wise to learn from this as we approach another cold and snowy New Brunswick winter.

Many people have already made the adjustments making snow removal arrangements, trying to purchase fire wood, booking trips south (we can dream), etc., to help get through a winter that is hopefully not as severe as the last one.

However, what about the effects of another winter on the human psyche? Some call it the winter blahs or winter blues and some are diagnosed as suffering from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). How does one curb the impacts of these less visual but still very real effects of our long winter?

Just as we prepare for the physical aspects of winter, so too should readiness be part of the psychological preparation for the upcoming months. Being aware that you may suffer emotionally in some way during this time of year and taking action to minimize the impact is key to a better winter. We cannot control the weather but we can influence our response to it.

Here are a few suggestions from my research that you may find helpful.

- **Get Outside.** Yes this is a challenge when you teach from dawn to dusk, but trying to find 10-15 minutes a day can make a substantial difference in your health. Perhaps even volunteer for outside duty!
- **Exercise** is always important to maintaining proper physical and emotional health. Research continues to demonstrate that there are chemical changes that occur in our bodies when we exercise regularly, that have a positive impact on our psychological well-being. Even getting a few minutes of walking in a day is helpful.
- **Eat well.** Try as much as possible to stay away from those high sugar, high fat foods and eat more natural and less

refined food. There are lots of organic foods on the market now as an alternative to the other options. Now may be a time to try some of these as well.

- **Vitamin D** has been in the news a great deal lately. It plays a critical role in working with calcium to keep our bones strong and has the potential to help us in many other ways, including reducing the risk of cancer. Check with your doctor on the recommended daily intake for you, but a range from 200 to 10,000 IU has been mentioned in the research. Also don't forget your vitamin C and B as basic

requirements for good health during the winter.

- **Light therapy** is something that has proven successful with many people in beating the winter blues and preventing SAD. In some ways it makes sense that getting up 30 minutes earlier and reading in bright light would have a beneficial impact. If the light is around 10,000 lux, there can be chemical changes that occur in the body. There is lots of research on line to indicate the benefits here, along with simply having 30 minutes of quiet time, which is appealing.

The basic principle is, if we know the cold, dark winters have a negative impact on our psychological health, why not try something different this year to hopefully avoid the winter blues, and /or SAD.

Remember, the quality of your teaching and day-to-day living is directly correlated to your health. So take care of your "self" and have a fantastic winter!

Fall Wellness Representatives' Training Day Districts 2, 15, 16 Miramichi, October 10th, 2008



"Making the time to care for yourself is not a selfish act, it's a selfless one that will positively impact all those around you"

- Robin Sharma



NBTA Golf Tournament Results

The annual NBTA Golf Tournament was held in Saint John at the Rockwood Park Golf Course. The closest-to-the-hole winners were:

- #3 Peter Woytiuk
 - #6 Bob Fitzpatrick
 - #10 Tim Quinn
 - #18 Glen Carroll
- (NBTA Credit Union Golf bag and Towel)

We would like to thank the following sponsors: NBTA, NBTA Credit Union, Johnson Inc., Moosehead Breweries (Mike Harron), Rockwood Park Golf Course and Children's Wish



#1 Fun Team 2008: Peter Murray, Ed Lester (Chairpersons), Derek Taggart, Brent Jewett, Glen Carroll, Rob McNeill

Stephanie Chowdhry
MEd, CCC

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The online Master of Education program in Curriculum Studies will enhance and refine the instructional skills and leadership abilities of teachers and administrators.

The MEd consists of 30 credit hours of courses, all offered online, in a rotation, one per term. Applications are being accepted for the May 2009 and September 2009 cohort. Participants will be able to complete the program within three years and work with others in an online community.

Application deadline: January 31, 2009

For more information please contact Terri MacLean.
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U N I V E R S I T Y O F N E W B R U N S W I C K

Project Overseas in Ghana

by Carl Killen, St. Malachy's Memorial High School

Five weeks in Africa is hard to sum up: it's an experience that needs many days, nights and conversations to process. The tendency to refer to any visit to a country in Africa simply by the name of the continent speaks volumes about how much a North American like me is unenlightened when it comes to the diversity of cultures and traditions found there. I learned, for instance, that Ghana, a country not much more than twice the size of New Brunswick, has sixty-six separate language groups. And we think bilingualism can present a challenge.

My journey began in Ottawa on July 3rd. Forty-six teachers representing every province and territory gathered for a three-day orientation session for Project Overseas (PO). A volunteer initiative of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF), PO has provided assistance with professional development to teacher organizations in third world countries since 1962. This year, PO sent teams to 13 countries; overall, through the years, PO has landed in more than 50.

The time in Ottawa passed quickly and it wasn't long before we were saying our goodbyes and heading for our various destinations. The time it took to get there provided a sense of just how far removed from the life I know Ghana really is. We had a full-day stopover in Amsterdam before we boarded a KLM flight to Accra, a capital city with a purported population of between 2 and 4 million. By the time I was leaving the country, I questioned how anyone could be expected to accurately compile any figure. Suffice to say that Accra was a big city, but a big city unlike any I had

ever encountered.

My most vivid early memory was the drive to the headquarters of GNAT (Ghana National Association of Teachers) on our second day in the country. The traffic was dense, the fumes were inescapable and the people lined the lanes of traffic in a

newspapers; toiletries: you get the picture. A Ghanaian who befriended me spoke solemnly of the respect he had for these street vendors: he admired their strength and their determination to survive in what is, unquestionably, for many Ghanaians, a difficult world.

Our introduction to education in Ghana began at the national headquarters of GNAT where our hosts – John, Jacob and Ernest – would eventually introduce us to the Ghanaian teachers whom we would be working with in GNAT's efforts to offer PD to colleagues in three regions of the country. In the interim, after a tour of headquarters and some Ministry of Education offices, a few days were set aside to visit local schools.

Goats and chickens wandered through at the front of the room, desks showed their years, classes of 45 and up, few resources: it sounds grim and it was in many ways. Even as it can break your heart, the children and their teachers charm you. Esther, back from three months maternity leave, had her baby in a sling on her back while she continued to teach computer education to a class where none of the students had ever seen a

computer. It was apparent that she was tired – who wouldn't be – but she carried on. The students were inevitably fascinated by their unusual visitors and smiles, enthusiasm and laughter were shared all around.

The schools we visited were all public and were, in fact, project schools, essentially schools that GNAT was seeking to assist in some way. I suspect, though, that much of



manner that we all found off-putting – initially.

At first sight you might think of squeegee kids that used to be prevalent at intersections in larger cities but it's nothing like that. For anyone with a car, this is a viable and popular alternative to a store or the markets that are found at various locations throughout the city. Foods – fresh and prepared; clothing; garden tools; phone cards;



what we saw was the norm. As was predicted by us and by others, we came away thinking that we have so little to complain about in our system. It is all relative, though, and the deficiencies in Ghanaian schools certainly do nothing to justify the ones that we all face.

The orientation now over, we headed out of Accra for Cape Coast, the main city of the Central Region where we were scheduled to conduct a week of workshops for 200 Ghanaian teachers from the area. We were four Canadians and a dozen Ghanaians tasked with offering help with everything from Administration to Elementary Math. In what was, for me, a monumental alteration of original plans, John, the Ghanaian director of the program, decided that I was needed to teach secondary administration rather than the secondary English I had planned for. The fact that I was a Department Head qualified me for the task.

Interestingly enough, I discovered I knew far more than I had thought. Ghana operates on what is essentially an English system so I was dealing primarily with headmasters/mistresses and the like. It is a very hierarchical system and I spent three weeks in three different places trying to convince three different groups of administrators that the future success of their schools depends on collaborative teamwork, developing Professional Learning Communities and shared responsibility. The reactions ranged

from enthusiastic embrace to near-scorn. It was inevitable that, at times, I would feel entirely irrelevant to their needs. Consider the village where the school had been built on the wrong side of the river: at certain times of the week, it was considered taboo to cross. If you lived on the wrong side . . . you get the picture.

There is so much to tell about my experience in Ghana; I could not begin to summarize it here. How do I convey the deep appreciation and regard I felt everywhere I went? The shame you can feel when the nature of poverty really sinks in: it's not a condition; it's a way of life? The horror of the slave castles (Auschwitz before there was an Auschwitz)? The joy and excitement of crowded, congested markets? Pineapples and mangoes so sweet you wonder if all the others are fakes? The thrill/terror

of being on 8" suspension walkways elevated above the rain forest in Kakum National Park? The wonder of children when they are given a new soccer ball?

I made many friends in Ghana. The teachers I met were, without exception, dedicated to their profession and to their country. We could learn something from them as far as PD is concerned. At the end of every week, an evaluation was conducted of the courses, the tutors, the accommodations, the food and any other element that might be identified as important. Invariably, this exercise was treated with the greatest seriousness by all involved. "Involved" is an important word here. As professionals, Ghanaian teachers are hungry for ways they can improve their system and they hold to account all those who would seek to lead them. They work under stresses in conditions I could not have imagined and yet they can smile and laugh and dance (did we ever dance!) with the best of us.

I still check the news to see what is going on in Ghana and I have spoken with one Ghanaian and been in contact through email with a few others. I hope I can keep these connections alive and I look forward to a time when I can return to the country. Project Overseas gave me a chance to give a little. It is inevitably cliché to say so, but I'll say it anyway: I brought home more than I could ever repay.



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**29th Annual NBTA Men Teachers'
Curling Bonspiel**

**Carleton Curling Club, Saint John, NB, January 16, 17, 18, 2009
Registration: \$120.00/team**

Not more than 18 teams will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Entries must include skip's name, address, telephone number, and team members.

(If you want to participate but aren't on a team, contact Terry)

Send entries and cheque to:

Terry Kilfoil, Chairperson
NBTA Men Teachers' Curling Bonspiel
21 Meadow Drive
Rothsay, NB E2H 1K9
Tel: 847-5429 Fax: 847-5424
Email: kilfoilt@nbnet.nb.ca



Teachers' Mixed Curling Bonspiel

**Carleton Curling Club, Saint John, NB, March 27, 28, 2009
Registration: \$120.00/team**

Teams will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Entries must include skip's name, address, telephone number, and team members.

(If you want to participate but aren't on a team, contact Rob MacMurray)

Send entries with cheque payable to:

NBTA Teachers' Mixed Curling Bonspiel
c/o Rob MacMurray
30 Brickyard Rd., Little Lepreau, NB E5J 1R4
Tel: 654-2539 Email: rob.macmurray@nbnet.nb.ca

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Explore at Mount A!

Your next class trip is already planned! Mount Allison University has launched an exciting line-up of day and week-long camp programs for middle school and high school students. The *Explore* programs allow teachers to bring their classes to campus in May and June for a customized learning experience and lots of fun activities. Whether you wish to come for the day or spend a night in residence, Mount Allison can accommodate your group.

When asked if the *Explore* program met their expectations in 2008, one teacher wrote, "Yes! This program was excellent. It held children's attention all the way through each activity."

The *Explore* program offers an overnight experience for middle-school children in Grades 5 through 8. The University also offers a *Mini-Explore* program, a one-day program as an alternative to the over-night option. Each trip is customized to suit the group's needs and teachers and students can engage in activities ranging from the exploration of classical texts to the latest in biotechnology research. All activities are facilitated by Mount Allison students, faculty, and staff.

Students also get to experience University life outside the classroom, eating in Mount Allison's award-winning dining hall throughout their stay, using facilities like the new Student Centre and the Fitness Centre. *Explore* participants stay in one of the University's residences, with Mount Allison conference staff on site.

Mount Allison also offers many unique camp offerings for middle school and high school students during the summer months, one of the most popular being the *Go Global* series. *Go Global* currently offers weeklong camps in international relations, music, language studies, and science. The camps are \$500, all-inclusive, and if students decide to come to Mount Allison for their post-secondary studies, the fee is reimbursed as a *Go Global* scholarship. For more information on these and other exciting summer programs in Sackville, please visit www.mta.ca/summer or contact Weihong Lu, conference co-ordinator, Mount Allison University, 506-364-2253 (summer@mta.ca).



School of Graduate Studies Award The G. Forbes Elliot Award for Educational Leadership

Value: \$5,000 in 2009

Duration: One year

Description

The award is to encourage experienced teachers who have demonstrated leadership qualities related to their educational field to return to university to undertake postgraduate studies at the Master's or Doctoral level at the University of New Brunswick.

It is funded from the estate of the late Dr. G. Forbes Elliot, first Vice-President of the Saint John Campus.

Eligibility

Recipients must have taught for a minimum of five years in the public schools of New Brunswick. They must have been accepted unconditionally into the graduate program in

education and normally be in full-time attendance at the time of receipt of the award. If in any year, in the opinion of the Selection Committee, there are no full-time graduate studies candidates who satisfy the eligibility criteria, all or part of the award may be granted to one or more suitably qualified part-time graduate studies candidates.

Application Deadline

February 15 of the year in which the studies are expected to commence.

Awarding Agency

The University of New Brunswick, upon the recommendation of the Selection Committee.

Application forms available from:

The Elliot Award Selection
Committee Coordinator
PO Box 5050
Saint John, NB E2L 4L5
E-mail: pchiasso@unbsj.ca

Announcements

Teacher Discounts:

New discounts are available for teachers at:

Kingswood Fitness

ICI Paints

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Visit www.nbta.ca for a complete list of teacher discounts.

Free Resource Tool:

E-STAT is an interactive research tool free to schools at <http://www.statcan.ca/english/Estat/licence.htm> or www.statcan.ca/english/edu > E-STAT.

Students can retrieve data on virtually every aspect of Canada's economy and society. Data can be displayed in tables, graphs or maps and downloaded for use in other software applications.

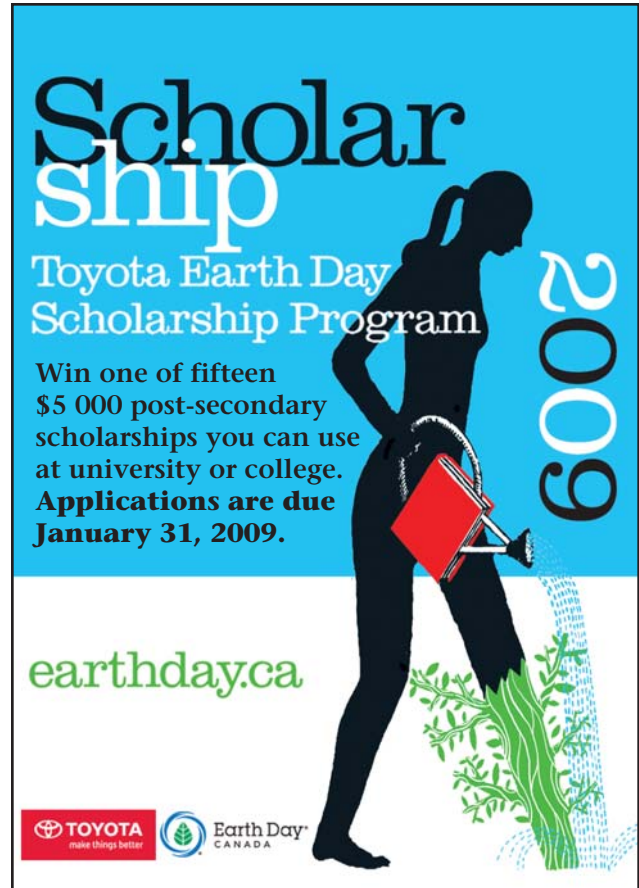
To see if your school is registered and allowed access, click on 'Educational institutions registered with E-STAT' at <http://www.statcan.ca/english/Estat/Schools/school.htm>. If you are assigning homework that requires students to use E-STAT, remember to give them your school's username and password.

Habitat in the Balance:

(developed by the SEEDS Foundation)

This is an online educational resource for teaching about socio-scientific issues and process skills. This interactive, decision-making program examines sustainable development issues in four topic areas - water, land, inhabitants and air.

For more information please visit the website, email info@seedsfoundation.ca or call 1-800-661-8757.



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Focusing My Future My Way

During the third week of September 2008, thirty counsellors and school administrators gathered in Fredericton for a week of intensive training. The CDAC approved trained personnel to pilot this program replacing, for one year, the present Personal Development and Career Planning curriculum.

Focusing My Future My Way is a program that uses Career Focusing to help students plan for learning and work. Ultimately the goal is to help students make informed, intentional decisions about their futures. Positive feedback of the program spurred individuals in the province to lobby for the continuation of the program and training was made possible for New Brunswick teachers and counsellors.

Pilots of the program are well underway in many sites and we look forward to hearing updates of their progress as the year unfolds. Congrats to all involved!

Kathy Conde
Future to Discover Facilitator



Mediation & Conflict Resolution Certification Course

The last week of November 2008 will mark the end of an amazing journey for many New Brunswick educators. This team of professionals has worked together for more than a year to develop leadership skills in the area of mediation and conflict resolution. The program consisted of 5 components: managing conflict, dealing with anger, communicating effectively, negotiating collaboratively and creating agreement.

The 28 participants who took part in this unique opportunity came from all areas of the education system; including school-based personnel, such as guidance counsellors and school administrators, along with district office employees including learning specialists and human resources managers side-by-side with staff from the Department of Education.

After each session we left with newfound knowledge that was relevant and meaningful to the diverse work we do. The skills acquired are helpful in dealing with students, parents/guardians, colleagues, and beyond.

Tammy Strong B. A. , B. Ed., M. Ed.
Guidance & Transition Consultant
School District 10



*As of printing, many fall committee meetings and conferences had not been set. For the latest updated NBTA calendar, please go to the website (www.nbta.ca) and click on upcoming events.

November 2008						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
						1 Pension Seminar in Moncton Project Overseas Deadline
2	3 Nominating Committee Meeting	4	5	6	7 Educational Leave Deadline for Application	8
9	10	11	12 CTF Staff Officers	13 CTF Staff Officers	14 CTF Staff Officers	15 Transition to Retirement Seminar, Fredericton CTF Staff Officers
16 CTF Staff Officers	17	18	19	20	21 Council Day (School Based)	22 Pension Seminar in Saint John
23/30	24	25 Skills for Administrators	26 PCAC Pension Seminar in Bristol NBTA Credit Union Annual Meeting	27 PCAC	28 NBTA Executive	29 NBTF Executive
December 2008						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12 School Based Learning Team Grant Deadline	13
14	15	16	17	18	19 Schools Close for Christmas Break	20
21	22	23	24	25 Christmas Day	26 Boxing Day	27
28	29	30	31			
January 2009						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1 New Year's Day	2	3
4	5 Schools Re-open	6	7	8	9 Nominating Committee Report to Membership	10 Pension Seminar in Fredericton
11	12	13	14 NBTA Finance	15 NBTF Finance	16 NBTA Executive	17 NBTF Executive
18	19	20	21	22	23 School Learning Environments	24 Pension Seminar in Miramichi
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 Pension Seminar in Sussex Deferred Salary Leave Plan Application

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