



November 2021
Vol. LIX No. 2

NBTA NEWS

NEW BRUNSWICK TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION



Stronger Together

Indu Varma Fellowship Award

Your New NBTA.ca Welcomes You

The Calm Teacher



Your NBTA, Your Magazine

Have you ever thought about writing something for the *NBTA News*? If so, we would love to hear from you! We are always looking for interesting articles, stories or information about the amazing activities taking place in your schools. This magazine belongs to you, the members of the NBTA. Your submissions are essential in making this the best publication possible.

For more information about the *NBTA News* or to submit an article, contact Chantal Lafargue, editor of the *NBTA News* by email at chantal.lafargue@nbta.ca or nbtanews@nbta.ca.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Upcoming Deadlines:

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Message from the President

by Connie Keating,
NBTA President



Several weeks ago, we embarked upon a new school year and I, as your new president, hoped that we would get back to some sense of normalcy. We anticipated that the storm we had been living and teaching through for the last 18 months was subsiding. For some of our members this has been the case; however, this has been anything but the case in the areas where the 4th wave of Covid-19 has been prevalent.

Teachers and principals in the most impacted areas have grave concerns about the expectations that have been placed upon them and the result has been an inordinate amount of stress on school staff and their communities. I've listened to concerns, working closely with your NBTA/NBTF executive directors, board executive, staff and your sister organization, AEFNB, to strategically respond to the last minute decisions made by our government. In addition, your professional association has been continuously responding to the information coming from government that has been confusing, sometimes contradictory, and seemingly applied haphazardly. The challenge has been in knowing when best to speak publicly and act upon ever-intensifying concerns from you, our members.

We have been regularly advocating your concerns and recommendations to various levels of government. Nathalie Brideau, NBTF co-president, and I consistently convey the message, on your behalf, that there can be

- no more last-minute implementation of operational changes,
- no more employee testing in schools,
- no more medical responsibilities for teachers,
- no more allusions to teachers' organizations being anti-vaxxers, and
- no more selling the illusion that schools are open and it is 'business as usual'.

We have asked key questions such as whether or not schools are safe and whether we should be taking a break from all learning to allow the system to reset. Given all of this, we continue to ask for a concrete plan to address the supply teacher shortage that continues to occur in our system daily.

Further, I have participated in meetings and collaborated with presidents of teacher organizations across the country as we maneuver our current realities. As I write this article we are preparing for the NBTF and NBTA October Board meetings where elected teacher representatives from around the province will deliberate and make decisions on your behalf. It is expected that, I along with your NBTA staff, will receive further input and direction from them on how to strategically move through these uncharted waters.

One of the most challenging aspects of my role to date has been in responding to government decisions that have caused division within our membership. **Colleagues, it is imperative that we deal with our present challenges and weather the storm together!** Regardless of where we stand on government directives and protocols, everyone needs to come together to achieve our goals collectively.

It is vital that we all work together. Moreover, the steadfast professionalism of teachers across this province gives new meaning to the word togetherness. There is strength in solidarity.

During these uncertain times our role of teacher continues to take on different meaning yet we remain beacons of light to our students and communities who look to us for direction. **The work we do each and every day has an impact and makes a positive difference.** Thank you for all that you continue to do, many under exceptionally challenging circumstances. We will continue to work hard to ensure the voice of New Brunswick teachers is being heard to influence decisions that are in the best interest of teachers' and students' working and learning conditions.

Connie Keating

Meet Your NBTA Support Staff

by Ardith Shirley,
NBTA Executive Director



Recently, in a moment when I was feeling particularly discouraged and disillusioned, the excerpt below came to my attention just when I needed to read it.

A teacher who was horrified about the latest political ‘controversy’ had emailed and demanded to know ‘the position’ of the NBTA was and when they could expect us to ‘go public’ and ‘fight’ for them. Knowing that the teacher was distraught and understanding the issue of concern was an emergent one for which your NBTA doesn’t yet have a policy or ‘position’, I struggled to answer in a meaningful way.

I took a break from the ‘careful’ response I was crafting to make myself a cup of tea. While waiting for the pot to boil, I mindlessly scrolled my Instagram and noted that FIERCE® Conversations has a new webinar titled “The Lighthouse Effect.” Curious, I clicked, and before my King Cole could properly steep, the words below jumped off my screen.

“The current nature of our political discourse is rooted in opposition so deep it allows no room for healing or understanding. Working across the aisle, coming together for the greater good, seem to be nothing more than nostalgic notions of a bygone era, even though the founding fathers wove the spirit of compromise into our political system. (...) Value is derived by whom we can cancel, condemn, or criticize...”

...Like many others, I have grown weary of the division and dissonance and long for a way forward. I too, question whether we are able to see how much this destructive path has already changed our national character. I quietly wonder whether we can summon the will to find our common story, to disrupt the idea that our differences - and our fears - are too big to overcome.

I, like many of you, want to know that all is not lost, that despite it all, we can find a common good in our land.

And we can.

There’s another force far quieter, more humble, less celebrated, and anchored solely in a greater good that can give us hope again. It will allow us to feel good about the world again, to affirm that goodness, to be connected to it, to see it in ourselves as well as in others. In the end, it is not just a guiding force but the greater one.”

~ Steve Pemberton,

The Lighthouse Effect: How Ordinary People Can Have an Extraordinary Impact in the World (2021)

Thanks to that read, I went back to my desk and typed a simple sentence to the teacher: ‘Can you send me a number to reach you and a good time for me to give you a call?’ The teacher did. During the ensuing conversation, I shared my concerns with ‘positioning’ ourselves too quickly as an organization in the press and social media before investing a bit more time in truly understanding the complex issues at hand. I also shared that our NBTA President and staff don’t take a ‘position’ without having our NBTA Board

of Directors (elected teacher leaders from around the province) weigh in and consider.

During the call, I was also able to **listen** to the teacher. The tone of voice, the hesitations – words not spoken – helped me understand the real motivator for the email – **fear**. Once I understood that, I could share specific and related actions we had already taken on the **real** topic of concern. I was also able to note that our upcoming NBTA Board of Directors meeting would discuss the issue and hope to create a properly considered teacher-friendly (and student-friendly) action and propose solutions that might improve the situation at the provincial level.

While I won’t pretend that our chat ended with the teacher being 100% satisfied, I believe that we both left the conversation with a deeper understanding of one another and the situation that prompted it. As we ended the discussion, we did agree unequivocally on two points:

- Having a public ‘position’ is easy. Proposing meaningful solutions and actions is far more challenging.
- It is often slow, methodical, steady and strategic work that is best done one conversation at a time.

(Thank you to that teacher for agreeing to allow me to reflect on our conversation and for proofing this article.)

In his book, *The Lighthouse Effect*, Steve Pemberton shares the stories of ordinary people like his school guidance counsellor, John Sykes, who quietly changed Steve’s life by being a constant source of light and reliability when he was a struggling teen. He reminds us that ordinary people change the world every day by serving as lighthouses for one another.

“The lighthouse is a perfect symbol for what I have learned from others (...) the lighthouse is noble, selfless, steady and faithful. It requires no recognition and seeks no reward. The lighthouse does not judge or ask how the traveller has come to be in danger; after all, it finds itself in the same storm. Neither does it concern itself with socioeconomic status or the political party to which the voyager might belong. It has but one mission: to protect the journey of the traveller.”

As I considered the lighthouses in my life, I realized that many have been my teachers. I suspect I am not alone. What a wonderful opportunity we have as a profession to shine brightly each day!

In the September issue of our news, I began to introduce you to some of our staff. This month, I introduce those who remain. NBTA is fortunate to have each one of these bright lights as part of our team - supporting you (our teachers), as you support our schools and communities, is something we take great pride in!



Karen Vautour

Executive Assistant to NBTA President and Executive Director

Karen has worked at the NBTA for twenty-one years. For the past six years, she has been the Executive Assistant to the President and Executive Director. (Previous to that role, Karen was the Administrative Assistant for the pension portfolio.)

Karen's primary responsibilities would include making sure that our President, the NBTA Board of Directors, Executive, committees and governance structure operate like a well-oiled machine. Karen always goes the extra mile to keep our NBTA well organized and on track – making sure we are well fueled with candy at our meetings only adds to her popularity with our leaders!



Carlene Parker

Administrative Assistant

Carlene has worked at the NBTA for twenty years. She provides organizational support in the area of communications and has lead responsibility for our NBTA membership database. (We can't provide exceptional services to teachers if we can't find them or don't know who they are.)

Thanks to our annual member registration process, Carlene is often the first person that teachers meet when they join our profession. She also notices when they have significant life experiences that cause them to take leaves, change roles, move locations, retire and she eventually removes them when death occurs. Many teachers have benefited from Carlene's attention to detail and noticing their overall member experiences.



Tammy Boon

Administrative Assistant

Tammy has worked at the NBTA for six years. In her role, she supports our Retirement and Pension portfolio and the Teacher Counselling and Wellness program. Previous to working for NBTA, she held a leadership position with the Credit Union in McAdam.

A typical day for Tammy would include booking appointments for teachers, preparing pension printouts, supporting related correspondence and conducting financial record keeping. Tammy has also become an accomplished events planner as she assures our annual NBTA Retirement Banquet takes place without a hitch.



Janet Peabody

Administrative Assistant

Janet has worked at the NBTA for six years as part of our Professional Learning Services Team. She is lead for our new teacher programs (POINT and COMPASS) and she also supports several of our NBTA Committees.

Janet is also the primary clerical support for several of our events and conferences such as Developing Successful Schools. Always eager to take on a new challenge, Janet's commitment to teachers and NBTA are clear in her daily interactions with our members.



Margaret Mott

Bookkeeper

Margaret has been diligently looking after our NBTA finances for the last five years. Our auditors would tell you that Margaret's keen eye and attention to detail make sure that members' money is well accounted for and that our organization remains in exemplary financial position.

Margaret is responsible for tracking all revenues, expenditures, and investments. She is also in charge of our payroll system. When she isn't writing cheques or invoicing, she is usually winning the best costume for our annual Halloween social event.



Eileen Anderson
Graphic Artist

If you have read our *NBTA News*, visited our website, or social media pages, you have seen firsthand the evidence of Eileen's efforts. Eileen has been a key member of our Communications Team since 2008.

Eileen's creativity and attention to detail assures that our documents and communications are professionally produced. She looks after almost every stage of our communication cycle from concept, to print to mail out.

Our building social committee also is a benefactor of Eileen's dedication and fresh ideas. We all benefit from her commitment and keen sense of humour.



Darla Anderson
Administrative Assistant

Darla is the newest member of our NBTA team. She joined our Professional Learning Services Team this September. Darla provides clerical support for our Councils, Branch Professional Learning Chairpersons and our Educational Improvement Grant system.

Darla will also provide lead clerical support for several of our events and conferences such as CONTACT. While she is technically still in the 'onboarding' stage here at NBTA, Darla has quickly established herself as a steady and reliable resource for teachers. According to Judy Deveau who retired on September 30th after 35 years in the role, "I can rest easy knowing teachers will be in good hands."



Dawn Beckingham
Professional Interests

I am pleased to announce that Dawn Beckingham, Principal at Dalhousie Regional School has been appointed to this one-year term position, effective August 30, 2021.

Dawn has been an active member of our Association for many years, including experience in several positions within her Branch, several NBTA Committees, Councils, Board of Directors and Executive Committee. She also brings extensive experience in the public education system as a classroom teacher, vice-principal, and principal.

Please join me in congratulating Dawn on her new appointment!



Judy Deveau
Administrative Assistant

We wish all the best to NBTA Administrative Assistant Judy Deveau who officially retired from NBTA on September 30th, after thirty-five years of service. Our NBTA Councils, Professional Learning Chairpersons or any teacher who has applied for an Educational Improvement Grant will certainly attest to Judy's commitment to teachers and her professionalism.

Thank you Judy for all you have done for New Brunswick teachers and our NBTA!



Promoting the Profession Together

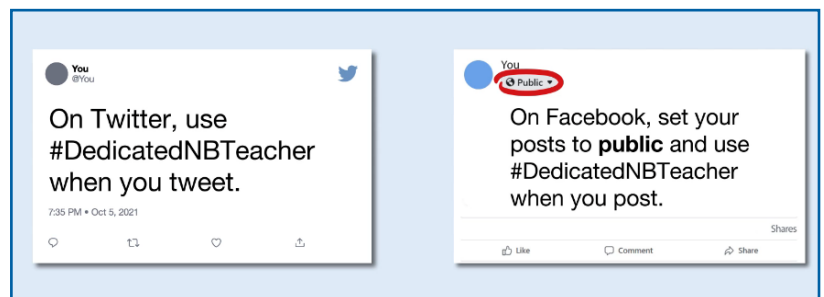
#DedicatedNBTEACHER

The Great News Contest for the 2021-22 school year has just begun. Your association encourages you to share stories about your positive contributions to public education in New Brunswick. This is an opportunity to celebrate what teachers do to lead, create, coach, care, mentor, teach, and make change possible. Collectively, teachers are impacting the lives of thousands of students through their dedication to the profession each and every day.

Want to share? Here's how:

Use **#DedicatedNBTeacher** when you make professional posts on **Twitter** and **Facebook** about the inspiring work happening in your school.

Your NBTA will follow this hashtag and help share this Great News as often as we can on Twitter and Facebook.



Don't use social media, but still want to share Great News?

Send us a picture and a caption to nbta.communications@nbta.ca and the NBTA Communications Team will post it for you.

Great News Winner!

September Winner: Perth Andover Middle School

Our newest Facebook share winner is Perth Andover Middle School for their photo which reached 3,818 people!

"The team at PAMS honored those who attended residential school yesterday by wearing orange, gathering around a sacred fire, and participating in a smudging ceremony. These activities will be shared with our PAMS BEARS when students return to in-school learning."



They will be receiving \$50 for staff wellness.



2021-2022 NBTA Pension Seminars Registration Form

Date and Time of Seminar:

January 12 & 13 ASD-W Virtual

February 7 & 8 ASD-E Virtual

(For each of the above seminars: Part I will take place on the first evening;
Part II will be the second evening. Both will be from 7:00 - 8:30 pm)

February 26 Fredericton, NBTF Building (limited seating)

(Registration at 8:30 am and session starts at 9:00 am until 1:00 pm)

Deadline for Registration:

December 20

January 17

February 7

Name of Teacher: _____ Birth Date _____

Email Address: _____

Certificate Level: _____

Have you received a Responsibility Allowance anytime between 2014 and now? (SPR, VP, Principal?) Yes No

Are you paid by pay bands (district staff)? Yes No

Have you changed certificate levels anytime between 2014 and now? Yes No

If "Yes" to any, please contact the HR Officer at your District to have your salary history, dated back to June 2014, emailed to tammy.boon@nbta.ca.

Form can be emailed or faxed to Tammy Boon

tammy.boon@nbta.ca

Phone: (506) 452-1722 Fax: (506) 453-9795

***Please note: under 10 years of pensionable service will not receive a pension estimate.
Please reference Vestcor Employee Statement of Benefits.**

Seminar Guidelines

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

1. All participants must pre-register; zoom link will be emailed.
2. Questions relating to these seminars should be directed to:
Michael Ketchum
NBTA Staff Officer
New Brunswick Teachers' Association
P.O. Box 752
Fredericton, N.B. E3B 5R6 (Tel. 452-1722)
3. All teachers are welcome to attend.

Virtual Program

Part I: 7:00 - 8:30pm

- Teachers' Pension Act
 - contribution rates
 - retirement options
 - pension calculations
- Retirement Allowance
- Canada Pension

Part II: 7:00 - 8:30pm

- Financial Planning for Retirement
 - RRSPs
 - RRIFs
 - Annuities
 - Old Age Security
- Survivor options
- Purchase and transfer of Pension Service
- Pre-retirement vacation
- Work Time Flex
- Group Insurance

**PLEASE NOTE: YOU WILL RECEIVE CONFIRMATION UPON
RECEIPT OF REGISTRATION FORM.**

Indu Varma Fellowship Award for Creativity in Education

The NBTA is pleased to announce that the Board of Directors recently approved a proposal submitted by Indu Varma, NBTA President (2005-2007), to offer a new annual award for teachers. This will be the fourth (4th) provincial award administered by the Association, joining the NBTA Centennial Award, the NBTA Credit Union Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Vince Sunderland Award for Outstanding Educational Leadership.

The Indu Varma Fellowship Award for Creativity in Education will be awarded annually to a K-12 teacher who has displayed excellence in collaborative, creative and inter-disciplinary teaching practices. The teacher must have demonstrated a high degree of student engagement through the linking of various subject areas taught within the curriculum as well as a focus on artistic and creative aspects, such as, art, music and drama, along with significant community involvement. The emphasis is to be on student-led, creative, interactive, cross-curricular, and interdisciplinary projects that have promoted inventiveness, fostered higher-order thinking, and problem-solving skills.

The recipient will receive \$1,000 in order to support the further development of existing project/teaching practices. The award recipient will be announced during the NBTA Annual Dinner during the AGM weekend in May. Thanks to Indu's vision and generosity, this award will promote teacher creativity for years to come.

The nomination deadline is **April 1, 2022**. Nominations will be received through the NBTA Awards Committee. For more information on all NBTA provincial awards or to download a nomination form, go to <https://www.nbta.ca/provincial-awards/>.



Indu Varma
NBTA President 2005-2007



2022 NBTA Provincial TEACHING AWARDS

NBTA Centennial Award

NBTA Credit Union Award
for Excellence in Teaching

Vince Sunderland Memorial Award for
Outstanding Educational Leadership

Indu Varma Fellowship Award
for Creativity in Education

Details and Applications: www.nbta.ca > Forms > Provincial Awards

Your New NBTA.ca Welcomes You!

Chantal Lafargue,
NBTA Staff Officer



Perhaps you've noticed that the NBTA website has changed? This is the outcome of a 20-month collaborative effort lead by the NBTA Communications Team involving all NBTA staff, the website hosting service provider, and teachers who serve on the External and Internal Communications Committees. This endeavour prompted future-oriented conversations about not only this digital service, but also many other NBTA communications practices and tools. Here's an overview of some of the website's new features.

To adjust the display, click on the **accessibility button** at the top left, near the NBTA logo. Most of the website is also mobile responsive, which allows for navigation on tablets, cellphones or other devices.

The homepage features the latest news at-a-glance. The **'What's New?'** section provides one-stop updates about upcoming events or opportunities.



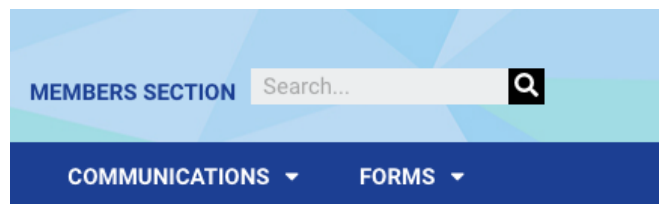
Calendar

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 01 - 02 OCTOBER FRIDAY | COUNCIL COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING All Day     | VIEW DETAIL |
| 05 - 06 OCTOBER TUESDAY | CAPTTO EXECUTIVE MEETING All Day     | VIEW DETAIL |
| 12 - 13 OCTOBER TUESDAY | VIRTUAL PENSION SEMINAR (ASD-N) 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm     | VIEW DETAIL |

Check out the **interactive calendar**, which is updated regularly as events are added, postponed or cancelled.

The **search feature** continues to be a work-in-progress which will help users find specific information quickly.

The **Members Section** remains largely unchanged with the exception of **Branch Contact Information** which is now housed here.



| YOUR NBTA ▾ | PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS ▾ | MEMBER SERVICES/BENEFITS ▾ | COMMUNICATIONS ▾ | FORMS ▾ |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| About Us | Early Career and Supply Teachers | Professional Learning | NBTA News Current Issue and Archive | Provincial Awards |
| Get Involved | School Administrators and Leaders | Teacher Counselling and Wellness | NBTA News Publishing and Advertising | Educational Improvement Grants |
| Contact Us | Learning and Working Environments | Retirement and Pension | Resource Gallery | Education Leave |
| Staff | Teacher Certification Information | Leaves | Calendars | Purchase of Service Session |
| NBTA Board of Directors | Professional Conduct and Standards | Insurance and Financial Services | Advocacy | Pension Seminars |
| NBTA Executive Committee | | The Collective Agreement (NBTF) | | |
| Committees | | Legal Information | | |
| Councils | | | | |
| Branches | | | | |
| Affiliated Organizations | | | | |
| Member Handbook | | | | |

Dropdown menus facilitate navigation. The **Your NBTA** section showcases how to engage in your professional association and how to contact NBTA staff. The **Professional Interests** and **Member Services/Benefits** tabs house a plethora of information that a member would require over the span of their career. The **Forms** tab lists various application, nomination, or registration forms that members may need.

Access nearly two decades of **NBTA News** issues in the digital archive. Other multimedia products, like videos, or pamphlets, are housed in the **Virtual Gallery**. All of these items are found in the **Communications** tab.

Found a bug?

Have a suggestion?

Email or call a member of your NBTA Communications Team to let us know.

**nbta.communications@nbta.ca
506-452-1833**

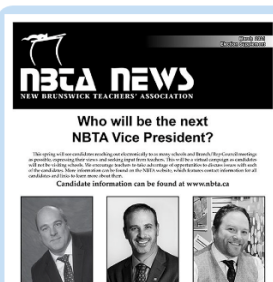
NBTA News Current Issue and Archive

+ 2021-2022

+ 2020-2021



June 2021



March 2021



April 2021



February 2021



November 2020



September 2020

+ 2019-2020

+ 2018-2019

+ 2017-2018

Improving The Teacher Performance Review Process One Atomic Habit At A Time

by Tina Estabrooks,
NBTA Staff Officer



Welcome to The Leadership Corner, a shared space intended to support the work of New Brunswick school leaders.

I am currently reading *Atomic Habits*, a #1 New York Times Bestseller written by James Clear. James, a regular speaker at Fortune 500 companies, begins with a personal account of a tragic accident that disrupted his plan of becoming a professional athlete. This heartrending life experience sets the stage for a deep dive into his theory that our habits form our identity and that small atomic changes can result in huge gains. He contends that people often fail to reach their goals because they set their sight on the desired outcome, fail to recognize smaller steps towards success, become frustrated and give up. His book challenges you to commit your energy to building atomic habits that will create an identity that permits success.

Clear's wisdom resonated with me as I pondered the content of this article. Teacher performance reviews can be one of the most daunting leadership tasks. During my tenure as a school leader, I approached teacher evaluation in many ways in hopes of securing a process that was appreciated and effective. Although I made some gains, I often felt I could have done better. In retrospect, I acknowledge that, because I trusted my staff and had witnessed them working hard, I did not always prioritize a formal process to assess their daily routines and practices. I also sensed that I valued the experience more than my teachers who were incredibly busy and doing a remarkable job. I didn't neglect the duty, but I may not have reached full potential in this domain.

This article examines the challenges of performance reviews and offers strategies to enhance the experience for both teachers and principals. All references refer to the co-authored work of Kim Marshall and Jenn David-Lang. Their book, *The Best of the Marshall Memo: Ideas and Action Steps to Energize Leadership, Teaching and Learning*, is a collection of professional articles written by multiple researchers and practitioners. I use a chapter that provides a synopsis of fourteen articles on teacher evaluation as a backdrop to share a few personal experiences and wonders. I hope that you enjoy the range of thought and opinion.

Marshall and David-Lang claim that the traditional evaluation process is widely disliked because it's time-consuming, compliance-oriented, and rarely has an effect on teaching and learning (p. 191). Mathew Kraft's examination of the perennial problems with teacher evaluation further suggests that school leaders may dodge performance reviews in an effort to maintain the teacher trust required to mobilize collective efficacy (p. 195). Although I appreciate these assertions, I would argue that a

thorough, well-understood and teacher-appreciated evaluation process, can be an incredible tool for improving student achievement and teaching satisfaction. Understanding that the teacher has the most influence on student success, leaders should see the value in the process. This could also become a mechanism through which self-reflection and professional improvement are sought after by teaching staff, rather than endured.

In *Why Evaluating Teachers Is So Challenging*, Julie Cohen and Dan Goldhaber, discuss seven challenges that school leaders confront when assessing performance. One such challenge that will resonate with most New Brunswick school leaders and educators, is the difficulty in capturing complex classroom dynamics in a rating instrument (p. 193). Teachers often report that our system is not adequately resourced to address the demands of our diverse and inclusive environments and many of our schools encompass communities with critical factors that are beyond teacher control, yet affect student achievement. Adding to the conundrum, is the practice of using routine "systems checks" (a.k.a. standardized assessment) to identify areas of systemic growth. When large scale assessment is used in isolation to identify success, it undermines the competency of highly skilled educators and school leaders. Although I will not argue with the need for large scale assessment (at least not in this article), nor the benefits of supporting teachers, I will point out the enigma school leaders encounter when teachers feel the system is ignoring the realities and placing sole responsibility upon their shoulders. I would suggest that before deploying system supports to high priority/low performing schools, further analysis is warranted. As well, school leaders must acknowledge that our classrooms replicate society and not all are the same. Empathic leadership fosters environments where teachers are receptive to constructive feedback. Appreciating how teachers are responding to complexity is a step towards constructive collaboration and improvement.

It will not surprise you when I suggest that being transparent, establishing trust, and being committed are the elements of successful performance reviews. Madeline Hunter writes that "teachers should know at the beginning of the year the agreed-upon criteria for effective teaching" (p. 203). As principal, I employed this tactic and found that it not only helped frame the focus of walkthroughs and teacher-principal conversation, it solidified a collective agreement on what we, as a teaching team, wanted to see in our school. This common understanding,

“If you can get 1% better each day for one year, you’ll end up thirty-seven times better by year-end.”

-James Clear

direction and commitment strengthened teacher confidence and increased teacher-to-teacher respect. In addition, it reduced the concerns that new educators had as they attempted to understand the school culture, fit in, and do well. This is another simple and effective step that can be employed at the beginning of each school year and should be included as part of any orientation package for new personnel.

Ronald Ferguson discusses the value of student input on teacher evaluation contending that no one survey instrument or observational protocol should have high stakes for teachers. He suggests that student surveys can be one of several measures used. Ferguson proposes that student surveys be grounded in Seven Cs: Care, Control, Clarify, Challenge, Captivate, Confer and Consolidate. He submits that the student answers that correlate most strongly with achievement gains are:

- Students treat the teacher with respect
- Students behave in the way the teacher wants them to
- Students learn a lot every day
- The class is busy and doesn’t waste time
- Students learn to correct their mistakes
- The teacher explains difficult things clearly (pp. 204-205).

A student survey that considers the agreed upon criteria of effective teaching and the Seven Cs could be an incredible tool to inform teachers of areas of improvement in any class. In addition, including students in the process illustrates that they are valued and may serve to strengthen their commitment to learning.

In *An Unfair Critique of a Teacher’s Classroom*, Paul Murphy explains the need to follow-up classroom visits with face-to-face conversations. His work suggests that without the conversations, teachers lose the opportunity to provide context and may feel that anything said would be perceived as defensive or whiny (p197). If a trusting two-way practice is to evolve, school leaders need to acknowledge that they are observing a snippet of the day. Teachers will be more motivated to improve if they feel appreciated, competent, and an equal participant in the process.

It is imperative to take time and sit with the teacher to review the observation, seek clarity and recognize good pedagogy.

Marshall offers a model that promotes three collaborative conversations per year: One in the fall for self-assessment and goal-setting, a mid-year to compare a self-assessment with the supervisor’s assessment, and another comparison conversation at year-end. He also lists additional criteria that can guide a school leader when gathering evidence (p. 200). A 10-15-minute observation that occurs monthly where agreed upon look-fors are sought, coupled with surveillance of the teacher in other settings, provide adequate information for a judicious two-way discussion. One of his recommendations where I believe we have room to improve is training. We fall short at ensuring school leaders are provided opportunities to hone their performance assessment skills. If districts had time to work with school leaders to deconstruct the current review practices and reach common understanding of the purpose, both leaders and teachers may be more motivated to invest in the idea.

To conclude, I acknowledge the enormous work of a school leader and the difficulty in finding time to explore new ways to perform your daily tasks. However, for those who may now be motivated to undertake the challenge of improvement in this leadership domain, I will leave you with a few motivating words from James Clear:

If you can get one percent better each day for one year, you’ll end up thirty-seven times better by year-end.

Celebrate your small steps while on the journey.

Tina

Works Consulted:

Marshall, K., & David-Lang, J. (2019). *The Best of the Marshall Memo: Book One Ideas and Action steps to Energize Leadership, Teaching and Learning*. New York, USA: Epigraph Books.

Stepping UP: Realizing Culturally Responsive Schools

Co-authors:
Patricia Miller, Craig Williamson and Tina Estabrooks

*The road we travel is equal in importance to the destination we seek. There are no shortcuts.
When it comes to Truth and Reconciliation we are forced to go the distance.*

Justice Murray Sinclair
Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

In June 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its report entitled *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future* and called upon all levels of government to take action. The Government of New Brunswick committed to advancing reconciliation and in May 2021, released *Implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action*. This report highlights provincial advancements and offers a commitment to furthering efforts.

Learning about the Indian residential and Indian day schools is important throughout the year in schools across New Brunswick, however, is it never more important than it is on *Orange Shirt Day*, or as it is now formally called, *National Day for Truth and Reconciliation*.

As in past years, both provincial and First Nation community schools across New Brunswick marked this important teaching event with a wide variety of activities which included student assemblies, guest speakers, virtual events for both educators and students, and a renewed focus on teaching about the impact and legacy of Indian residential and day schools.

The anglophone sector of EECD provides a variety of resources in support of Orange Shirt Day and for teaching about Truth and Reconciliation throughout the school year, via the Office of First Nation Education OFNE One site (See resource list). Work continues to help embed this history throughout the diverse curricula.

Schools in Anglophone East observed a week of Truth and Reconciliation from September 27 - October 1, 2021. Educators were encouraged to incorporate Indigenous content and pedagogy into their classrooms, and across the whole school environment. Anglophone West district staff are creating a video in collaboration with First Nation youth with the goal of having students share drumming, dancing, artwork, language, and messages in honour of Orange Shirt Day and National Truth and Reconciliation Day. ASD-W has printed t-shirts from an Orange Shirt Day design contest from last year. ASD-W schools will also be asked to play the Wolastoq Honour Song at the beginning of the school day. Anglophone South School District is developing

a video with student interviews on the meaning of Orange Shirt Day. Read alouds and professional learning materials are also being distributed. Anglophone North is currently partnering with the Downie-Wenjack Fund to become a Legacy District. Through this partnership, they will create a team of reconciliation champions to enhance teacher learning, collaboration, and to promote reconciliation. As is the case with other districts, ASD-N is working hard to ensure that all students learn about the history and legacy of the Indian residential and day schools.

It is no surprise that, New Brunswick teachers did not wait to be informed of what to do. Rather, they stepped up, engaged in self-learning, became creative and are advancing their classroom practices. This issue of *Stepping UP* shares the collaborative effort of two educators from Anglophone School District-North, Patricia Miller (First Nations Educational Lead) and Jennifer Winchester (Grade 2 Teacher). Jennifer reached out to Patti for support to implement *The Spirit Bear "Embearrister" Program*. Together they gained insight and knowledge which allowed Patti to promote the initiative throughout the District. We extend our gratitude to Jennifer and Patti for their contribution to the NBTA News and commend all teachers who strive to honour and remember the past while improving the future.

Description of the Cultural Diversity in the School

L. E. Reinsborough School is an English provincial school serving students from the Dalhousie and surrounding areas. The neighbouring Mi'kmaq community utilize these provincial educational services. The Mi'kmaq students make up 33% of the student population.

The Change or Changes that You've Made

ASD-N Superintendent, Mark Donovan's, commitment to reconciliation has been seen via various district initiatives. One such commitment was to send a cohort of educators to the Indspire Gathering in Alberta. Jennifer Winchester was one of those in attendance. During the conference, Jennifer learned about the Legacy School Project which is supported by the Downie Wenjack Fund and the First Nations Caring Society's Spirit Bear Program. *The Spirit Bear Embearrister Program* was developed by the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society.

This program utilizes a stuffed bear to help teach children about the inequalities Indigenous children face in education, healthcare as well as the barriers in accessing other public services, including safe drinking water. Cindy Blackstock's book, *Spirit Bear and Children Make History*, documents Spirit Bear's trip to witness a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal case focused on First Nation children. Jennifer signed up to have an Embearrister bear in her classroom. She expanded upon this program to include utilizing the stuffed bear to help students learn about residential schools and the Mi'kmaq culture. She contacted me (Patti), as the First Nation Education Lead, to support her organization of a naming ceremony and to enhance the understanding of Mi'kmaq cultural teachings. Jennifer has administered this program in her classroom for three years. I have also utilized this program and extended it to other schools in our district. To date, we have the Embearrister Program operating in three classrooms in our District. Last year, the Superintendent to have the Embearrister Program operating in all of our district's elementary schools.

What was your motivation to embark on this work?

Jennifer's past work and life experiences, coupled with the knowledge she gained at the Indspire gathering, confirmed for her that Indigenous identity, cultural values, and Canada's historical relationship with Indigenous people were important age-appropriate lessons to teach. My life's work has been to advocate for an education system that includes teaching Indigenous identity, worldviews, contemporary and historical aspects, the contributions of Indigenous peoples and the cultural values. I believe that if we are to teach these foundational topics in the upper grades, we should also begin teaching in the early years and do so with a philosophy of respect, compassion, understanding and generosity.

What did you find that you needed to learn? How did you go about this?

Jennifer took the initiative to learn about Canada's residential school system and methods to incorporate age-appropriate lessons into her classroom. I needed to learn about the cultural significance of the bear. I also needed to learn how best to

present these ideas to other schools with a goal of promoting the program.

What challenges did you encounter and how did you move forward?

One of the major challenges was to integrate the Mi'kmaq Sacred Ceremony within the program. A portion of the program requires utilizing the teachings from Elders to hold a naming ceremony. A naming ceremony is a sacred ceremony conducted by a Traditional Elder who uses their connections with the ancestors to envision a name gifted by the spirits. This name is based on who the Elder sees you are, and this name helps guide you through to your purpose (to be the person you are meant to be). Although the program is designed to embed these teachings within the classroom and build relationships with First Nation community Elders and Knowledge Keepers, there needed to be a delicate building of this relationship.

What was the involvement and reaction of students and families?

Reaction of families to this program in our schools is something that I am unaware of. However, the students love having an Embearrister in their classroom. They are also excited to learn about the Mi'kmaq culture and treat teachings and guests that come to their classroom with great respect. The Embearristers in classrooms are taken in by the students as another student. The bear is enveloped in all aspects of the learning environment and school culture.

What were the results and/or benefits of the work?

The benefits of this program, thus far, are the connections and relationships that are being built and/or strengthened with First Nation communities; the understanding of the importance of Indigenous representation within our provincial schools; the reinforcement of Indigenous/Mi'kmaq identity for Indigenous/Mi'kmaq students; the encouragement and support for teachers to incorporate cultural teachings; and the fostering of acts of reconciliation within classroom environments and personal lives.



BlueBeary and Friends

How will you continue to move forward?

I will be incorporating two Embearristers within my role as First Nation Education Lead to help support this program. We will continue to support classroom teachers who have already added this program into their classrooms. The goal for this year is to expand into full school participation of the Embearrister program. We are beginning with two schools, but our goal is to have the full participation of all elementary schools within our school district within a five-year projection.

What advice might you give to others who want to work on realizing a culturally responsive school but are unsure of how to start?

I think the best way to start is by looking within. We all come with a worldview that is comprised of our backgrounds, our educational experiences, our family, and community experiences. We need to be able to look at ourselves critically, to be able to acknowledge our conscious biases and become aware of any unconscious biases we may potentially have. When we can unpack those biases, we can begin the journey of unlearning those biases. I think it is important to know that this is a lifelong learning process. We should be willing to begin and to learn about our students' lives and build relationships with them. We also should be willing to challenge our ideas about other cultures while being gentle and kind to ourselves. Things may not always go according to plan. We may misunderstand each other from time to time, but we cannot let any missteps stop us. We should all learn from these minor missteps, provide apologies when needed, adjust and move forward in the name of progress and reconciliation.

If you are interested in learning more about Spirit Bear, please contact Patti at patricia.miller@nbed.nb.ca

We would love to share what is happening in your classroom or school and the process is easy. With editorial support, co-authors respond to eight questions and provide a few pictures. If you have a story and are interested in contributing, please contact Tina Estabrooks at tina.estabrooks@nbta.ca

School Indicators:

- 6 The school culture encourages the engagement, active involvement, and inclusion of every student (considering both face to face and virtual learning environments).
 - 6.1 School leaders are actively involved in creating and furthering an inclusive school culture.
 - 6.2 Staff members are actively involved in creating and furthering an inclusive school culture.
 - 6.3 Students are actively involved in creating and furthering an inclusive school culture.
- 7 School-based staff members create and maintain a learning environment that celebrates diversity, is focused on equity, and staff members are vigilant in eliminating barriers and reducing inequities.
 - 7.1 The school environment encourages and supports the engagement, active involvement, and inclusion of every student physically.
 - 7.2 The school environment encourages and supports the engagement, active involvement, and inclusion of every student academically.
 - 7.3 The school environment encourages and supports the engagement, active involvement, and inclusion of every student socially and emotionally.
 - 7.4 The school environment encourages and supports the engagement, active involvement and inclusion of every student culturally.



Additional Resources

First Nation Subject Coordinators:

Sweezy, Matthew (ASD-N) Matthew.Sweezy@nbed.nb.ca

Francis, Sarah (ASD-W) Sarah.Francis@nbed.nb.ca

Landry, Tracy (ASD-E) tracy.landry@nbed.nb.ca

Taylor, Laura J (ASD-S) Laura.Taylor2@nbed.nb.ca

Orange Shirt Day: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3vUqr01kAk>

Language and Culture:

Wolastoqey: <https://wolastoqewatu.ca/index.php?section=module&lang=en>

Online talking dictionary: <https://jilaptoq.ca/en/index.html>

First Nation helpdesk: <http://firstnationhelp.com/>

Self-directed online high school courses for teachers: <https://nbvhs-nbed.brightspace.com/d2l/login?noRedirect=1>

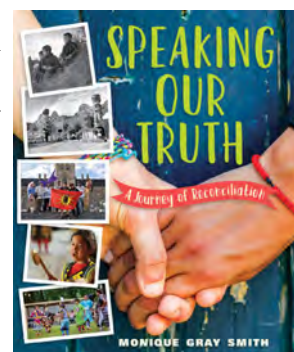
First Nations Child & Family Caring Society: <https://fncaringociety.com/welcome>

Teaching About the Mi'kmaq – The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq and Mi'kmahey Debert Cultural Center:

https://www.mikmaweydebert.ca/home/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Mikmawel_Tan_Telikinamuemk_Final_Online.pdf

Speaking our Truth – A Journey of Reconciliation by Monique Gray Smith

World of Wisdom website: <https://world-of-wisdom.ca/portfolio/traditional-knowledge/>



Book Giveaway

The following books are available. If you are interested, please email tina.estabrooks@nbta.ca. In the email, provide the name of the book and your current school.

Stolen Lives: The Indigenous Peoples of Canada And The Indian Residential Schools

~ Various Authors

21 Things You May Not Know About The Indian Act: Helping Canadians Make Reconciliation With Indigenous Peoples a Reality ~ Bob Joseph

Tihtiyyas Naka Jean ~ Donald Soctomah et. al

Storybook that provides text in 3 languages: English, French, and Pestomuhkati (suitable for elementary)

At Eqpahak Island ~ Oposenta

English translation follows the Wolastoqey latuwewakon text sentence by sentence. (suitable for elementary)

How Did Raccoon Get His Black Eyes And Hands? ~ Oposenta

English translation follows the Wolastoqey latuwewakon text sentence by sentence. (suitable for elementary)

Our Grandmothers' Words: Traditional Stories for Nurturing ~ Prune Harris, et. al

Text is provided in English and Micmac (suitable for middle/high school)

Works cited:

<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/aas-saa/pdf/truth-reconciliation-commission-calls-to-action.pdf>

Professional Orientation and Induction for New Teachers

Dawn Beckingham,
NBTA Staff Officer



I am very pleased to be the Staff Officer attached to the early career teachers portfolio this year. I love the new energy that these colleagues bring to the profession. If you are an early career teacher, you are entering in very unusual circumstances. Nothing in your university program would have prepared you to teach during a pandemic, unless you were completing your pre-service education last school year. Yet here you are on a daily basis, doing everything in your power to provide a quality education to your students to the best of your ability. Bravo!

The banner name 'POINT' began in the fall of 2010 and applies to any activity/event that NBTA funds in support of new teachers. Prior to this, NBTA worked collaboratively with EECD on BTIP (Beginning Teachers Induction Program), which is no longer in existence. POINT has evolved to what it is today so that we can support as many early career teachers as possible. This year any member having less than five years of cumulative experience in teaching (contract time + supply time) qualifies for POINT. You must also register online as a member with NBTA.

Each NBTA Branch has a POINT representative that has volunteered to support teachers who qualify for the program. I want to thank those reps for stepping up. Getting involved will also give you the opportunity to learn from their fresh perspectives.

What can POINT offer you? The answer to this depends on what level of teaching experience you are at. You remain in the program until you have cumulative five years of experience.

- Year 1: Your branch is provided funding to plan "Welcome to the profession" events for you.
- Year 2: You are eligible to attend the Uncharted Conference for early career teachers in the spring. Details will be shared later in the year.
- Year 3 and 4: You are eligible to apply for a maximum of one day of release time to attend a professional learning event relevant to your teaching needs.
- Year 5: Your branch is provided funding to plan and support opportunities for you.

At the time of writing this article, I have a growing list of 473 early career teachers that qualify for NBTA POINT. I wish you all a great school year and don't be scared to reach out when you need to. Asking for support will not reflect your ability as a professional because we all need a little helping hand at some point. Teachers at all stages in their career can become emotionally exhausted. In order for you to have enough energy to care for others, you need to first nurture yourself. Your students' resilience lies primarily on the adults that surround them. Remind yourself that your classroom does not need to be absolutely perfect. Find your balance.

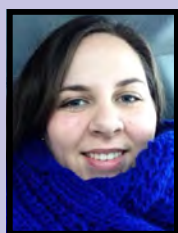
I will end by encouraging you to check out the Early Career and Supply Teacher section of the NBTA website. You will find useful information that will be updated regularly. Take care.

POINT 2.0

Welcome to your professional association!

NBTA, as the Professional Association, is pleased to offer support specific to the needs of our early career teachers. Part of that support comes through POINT - Professional Orientation and Induction for New Teachers. Each NBTA Branch has a POINT

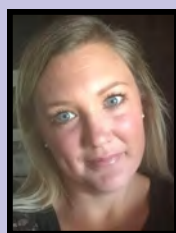
Liaison (pictured below) who takes the lead in organizing a Branch welcome, as well as a mid-year follow-up. Thank you to our POINT teacher volunteers who help make new teacher support possible.



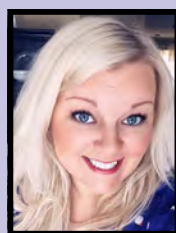
Lorissa Johnson
0214



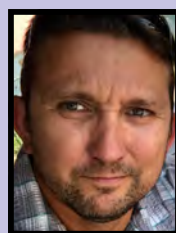
Joanne Jardine
0215



Melissa Steeves
0216



Kerri Ryder
0217



Shane Tremblay
0618



Jillian Kiervin
0619



Stacey Wood
0820



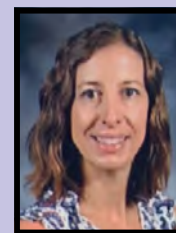
Christine Bourque
1021



Sally Cogswell
1022



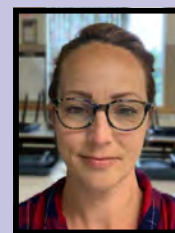
Heidi Brown
1023



Jennifer Rogers
1428



Andrea MacInnis
1429



Somer Drost
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Claudine
Bouvrette-Dionne
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Harmien Dionne
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Parise Plourde
1454



Tammy Oakes
1536



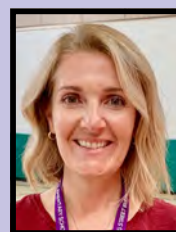
Mae Cameron
1538



Stephanie Coles
1542



Kelly Sisk Matchett
1608



Sheri Lynn McFarlane
1610



Breanna Flanagan
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Kelly Harris
1724



Kandy Voutour-Barton
1725



Angela Lardner
1809



Derek Taggart
1826



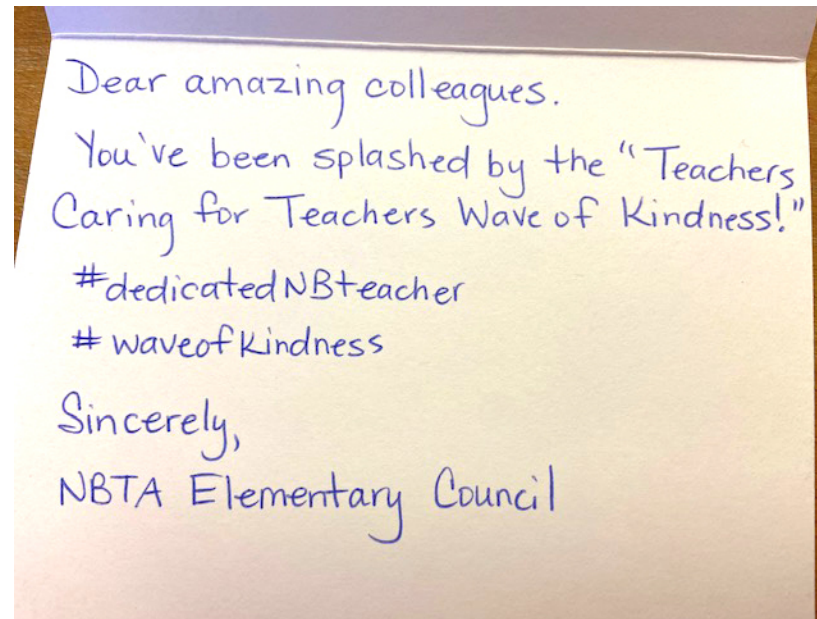
Tina Noble
1827

Teachers Caring for Teachers: #WaveofKindness

by Tracey Comeau, Elementary Council Vice President

I don't know about you, but I'm beat! We have only been in school for a few months now and it already feels like June. Between worrying about the safety of my 6-year-old son, my 8-year-old students, and my 45-year-old self, I've become paranoid of every cough and sneeze I hear. I was looking forward to returning to some sort of normalcy this year, but those hopes have quickly vanished. When I started teaching in 2000, a "rapid test" was a pop quiz, a "circuit breaker" was something only the custodians were allowed to touch, and my principal would only be monitoring some form of testing that was educational... but now, here we are in 2021, and these things are our reality. In this stressful and confusing time, when more and more things are being added to our plates, we need to support each other and lift one another up.

Simple acts of kindness carry a lot of weight this year. So, I propose we start a province-wide **"Teachers Caring for Teachers Wave of Kindness!"** I'll start. My teaching friends and co-workers have been the best support system I have, and I am so grateful for them. As a sign of my appreciation, and as an act of kindness, I will begin with my school, Bessborough School in Moncton. Let's keep the wave of kindness going! Pick a school and do something nice for your fellow New Brunswick teachers. Update: Since this article was written, Bessborough School continued the wave of kindness to Riverview East School. Who will be the next school to continue the wave? Follow our teacher wave of kindness on social media with #DedicatedNBTeacher #WaveofKindness





The Joys of Teaching Outside

by Meaghan Pennell, Elementary Council

The other day, I was doing the usual—mindlessly scrolling through social media—when I came across a quote that really resonated with me. It said, “Sometimes you have to let go of the picture of what you thought life would be like and learn to find joy in the story you’re living.” Let that sink in for a moment. It makes sense that this quote came from Rachel Marie Martin, the author behind *Finding Joy*. And that is exactly what I want to address in this piece. Find the JOY. There is always something to be thankful for.

When we began teaching, we never pictured ourselves navigating our careers through a pandemic. We never pictured stressing about sanitizer and washing our hands until they’re raw. We never pictured ourselves refreshing the exposure page several times a day or waiting around for that 2:30 p.m. press conference. And personally, I never pictured sending my own child to kindergarten with fear in my heart that she may be exposed to a deadly virus while she is supposed to be learning her ABCs and 123s. Yet... here we are.

When I was approached to write this article about teaching Physical Education (PE) outside, I almost responded with, “I’m not sure if I should be the one to write this.” For years, I was (and still am) primarily a music teacher. However, I really want to spread my message of joy and gratitude so I thought for another minute, and my response was, “I’ll try my best!” And that’s exactly what we are all doing right now. We are trying our very best.

I remember that Friday afternoon. The students had gone home for the weekend when the new guidelines for PE arrived in an email. I was just settling into my new position as a Physical Education teacher at Salisbury Elementary School (SES), trying my absolute best to fill the very big shoes of Janice Bos, when my little world got a bit rocked.

Announcement: “Physical education classes will be taught outdoors, weather permitting. If taught indoors, students and staff must wear masks.” I remember walking down the hall, into my principal’s office and sitting down. For those not familiar with SES, we do not have a soccer field. The middle/high school next door does not have a functioning field (currently unavailable due to re-seeding). We do not have adequate playground space. Our pavement needs repairs. “What are we going to do?”

I emailed my PE lead, Julie MacPhail for outdoor ideas and let her know that we don’t have outdoor space. We have a small front yard and a trail. She asked if we were allowed to use the village ball fields. I hadn’t thought of that. Sure, it’s a bit of a walk, but it’s a safe walk for my students. YES, we CAN use the ball fields! They’re perfect!

On short notice, my mind immediately went to soccer. I coached my daughter in soccer this past summer, so it was all still very fresh in my mind. Soccer was something I could make happen. So, that’s what we’ve mostly been focusing on since we’ve been outside.



that little voice in one of my kindergarten classes say, “It feels so nice to breathe,” that was the affirmation I needed to know that I’m doing the right thing; that all of these extra efforts are worth it.

So now I’m going to list a few tips for teaching outside that have helped me:

1. Get yourself a wagon or two for hauling equipment. Let the students pull the wagons. They love to help.
2. Bug Spray & Sunscreen – apply several times a day.
3. Portable mic – the great outdoors is a big space. If you have a quiet voice, this is very helpful.
4. Whistle
5. Bluetooth speaker
6. First aid kit
7. Hydration
8. Ask homeroom teachers to send their classes to the bathroom before you pick them up.
9. Remind students to bring water bottles.
10. Dress in layers (including a ball cap) – we are currently in a season where it’s cold in the mornings and hot by the end of the day.

Do you know what children love? They love to be outside. Do you know what they may love even more than being outside during this particular time of our lives? They love being unmasked. Being unmasked makes children happy. Being able to run and play outside makes children happy. What I’ve personally discovered is that when children are happy, they

participate more. They have a genuine interest in what they’re being asked to do. There are little to no behaviour issues (Knock on wood!). They are thrilled to be learning outside. When this all comes together – and I know it’s happened to all of us at one point or another – it takes your breath away. In these moments, we are reminded that we are exactly where we need to be, doing what we love to do. Even during these crazy times that we’re living in, I often pause several times a day and account for my level of gratitude. The more grateful I am, the more blessed I feel.

Happy Children = Happy Teachers. How lucky are we that we get to be that person that can bring them so much joy and, in turn, bring us so much joy?!

Last year, I felt a bit lost. Our world turned upside down and we were expected to put on our “masks” and pretend like everything was “normal.” (Good thing I have a degree in theatre studies!) But seriously, there were times when I knew I was just going through the motions, and I felt like I had been robbed of the joy of teaching I once had. Like most of you, I’m tired of Covid. I believe “Covid Fatigue” is the term. But it’s here. It’s not going anywhere. And it’s constantly changing. I encourage you to refrain from pushing your joy away. Find it again. We need to let go of the picture we thought our teaching lives would be because we are living through times that we couldn’t have imagined. Lean into the chaos. Take your students outside. And maybe, just maybe, you may rediscover your love of teaching.



Educational Improvement Grants: Funding for Professional Learning

by Sarah Brooks, Middle Level Council

Editor's Note: This article was submitted by the Middle Level Council as a reminder to all NBTA members that there is a new way to access funding for professional learning opportunities for Elementary, Middle, and High School Council members.

Feeling stagnant with the same old subject projects? Received a brand-new teaching assignment with curriculum you have never set eyes on? Found a professional learning opportunity in person or virtually but the costs are making it unattainable at the moment? To keep up with our ever-changing world and the fast pace at which it moves, why not consider an Educational Improvement Grant?

We know that professional learning provides rich opportunities for growth in knowledge and educational practice, both in and out of the classroom. These enriching experiences translate into our teaching, inspiring our students to push their boundaries, take ownership for their learning and become global citizens. To aid us in these endeavors, your NBTA has partnered with EECD for over 30 years to provide teachers with financial grants

to financially support their individual professional growth. Opportunities may include those of a general professional nature or may be specific to your teaching assignment.

The grant application process is easier to access than ever before. Teachers can complete the online application form on the NBTA website and know within minutes the amount of funding they are eligible to receive. One online form provides access to three separate funding opportunities (provincial, council, branch).

For more information about accessing Educational Improvement Grants available to all Council members, the valuation of individual grants, and what types of professional learning opportunities qualify for possible funding, check out the NBTA website or use this URL: <https://eigs.nbta.ca>.

TEACHER DESIGNED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING GRANTS 2022

What is a TDPL grant?

TDPL is an annual school-based professional learning opportunity funded by the New Brunswick Teachers' Association. NBTA will award five \$1500 grants for the calendar year January 2022 – December 2022. Interested teams of 3-5 teachers are invited to apply. Application forms will be available online beginning **November 9th**, at www.nbta.ca.

What criteria is considered?

- I. The extent to which the project proposal is guided by characteristics of effective professional learning:
 - a. **Coherent** – project is designed within the context of both best practices for student learning and provincial/district/school mandates
 - b. **Goal-Oriented** - project clearly connected to student learning, daily practice and provincial/district/school mandates
 - c. **Sustainable** – proposal includes practice time, reflection time and a plan to progress over time with grant funding used for resources critical to the project
 - d. **Evidence-Informed** – proposal considers current research as well as any formal or informal relevant data

- II. The extent to which the project proposal demonstrates the following general characteristics:

- a. **Quality** – proposal is well thought out and realistic
- b. **Impact** – proposal has the potential to impact student development as well as the learning of participating teachers
- c. **Measurable** – project goals can be measured and clear description of how this will be done
- d. **Sharing** – proposal incorporates a specific plan for sharing the project with other educators
- e. **Demographics** – general consideration will be given to distributing grants to various levels (K-12) as well as geographic location, team composition, etc.

What is the TDPL grant selection process?

- Applicant teams develop a project proposal and complete an application form. Applications received after 4 pm on December 9, 2021, will not be considered.
- The NBTA committee established to administer the grant fund will screen all applications received by the deadline.
- Five successful teams will be notified by January 7, 2022. Start-up materials and funding will be delivered to each team.
- Unsuccessful team applicants will be notified by January 7, 2022.

Questions? Contact
kim.mckay@nbta.ca

The Calm Teacher

Michael LeBlanc is a Teacher Counsellor and Wellness Coordinator in the "Professional Counselling Service for Teachers."



We teachers are living in stressful times. There is a lot going on in the 'outside' world, and in the world of education. Things feel like they are spinning faster and faster. A lot of us have too many balls in the air. We have a lot on our plates. We are up to our eyeballs in work. We are swamped. Backed against the wall. Overwhelmed. Keeping a healthy mind, body and spirit as a teacher is proving to take more energy and intention than ever before. **But it is possible!** I believe this because I know healthy teachers.

I started wondering, "What is the difference between the healthy teachers I know, and the struggling teachers I know?" For some, it's life and work circumstances. For others, it's their genetics or upbringing. But for most, it's their ability to quickly and regularly **regulate their nervous system**, and get to a state of calm before anxiety becomes a habit. They can ground themselves before anxiety takes over. They have developed an ability to calm themselves quickly and often so anxiety doesn't become habitual and start taking a toll on their physical, mental and cognitive functioning.

It's important to note here that anxiety is a normal reaction to ambiguous situations. It can be very healthy and helpful. Paying attention to what might be coming around the corner is a biological trait we all have. The issues come when we start feeling anxious even when we aren't in the ambiguous situation – meaning, when it becomes generalized. Learning how to utilize our nervous system to help us move from fight or flight to calm can make all the difference.

This article is about **how to calm yourself**, which can reduce your stress and possibly head off burnout at the pass. First off, I wish I could do the one thing for you that I know would help: Reduce your workload. This one change would improve a lot of teachers' lives. I can't offer you that. But what I can offer you are 3 areas of focus with multiple strategies I have learned and practiced over the years, or have heard from others, that have proven to be effective to reduce anxiety.

Recognizing When You Are Anxious

How do you know when you are anxious? It can be hard to pinpoint because when we are anxious we lose our perspective and focus all of our energy on survival and protection. To notice our anxiety, we need to be intentional. In terms of the signs, everyone has a different set of indicators. It might be a racing heart, twitching eye, poor mood, sweating, headache, nausea, restlessness, catastrophizing, or fidgeting.

My anxiety cues are racing heart rate, headache, sweaty palms and underarms, and/or catastrophizing. When I have one or more of these signs I know it is time to do something to shift. I have learned that if I just wait for the symptoms to fade away it takes much longer to get to a calm place. And if I'm not careful, it could spiral into a panic attack.

We need to become aware of our signs, and we need to interpret the signs in a way that allows us to take action that leads us to calm without judgment. One interpretation could be, "Hmm. I'm starting to catastrophize now - that must mean I am anxious." Or, "I'm getting anxious. Good thing I know how to calm down." Or, "Here it comes. It's time to breathe from my belly."

Try to take a practical look at your indicators of anxiety. Being anxious doesn't have to 'mean' you've done anything wrong or that you've messed up. You haven't 'blown it' - you just got anxious. And it happens out of our awareness, so we have to look for the signs. If we look practically at our signs, we can stop the worrying in its tracks and shine a light on what is going on in our body and mind. This allows us to start putting our strategies to work.

Calming Your Body

Once we notice we are anxious, we need to work on calming our body. Our physiology is at the core of our anxiety - and thoughts, feelings and actions follow suit. We are in a state of temporary 'fight or flight', and the goal is to shift out of that state and into a state of calm. Our nervous system is on alert for something bad to happen, and it's our job to create a sense of safety and connection.

There are lots of ways to calm our body when we are anxious. The quickest and easiest way is to focus on your breathing. Diaphragmatic breathing is often the best first choice. Breathing from your belly changes everything. Let me repeat that – *breathing from your belly changes everything*.

Start by becoming aware of your breathing, then focus on breathing slowly from your belly...in...out...in...out. S-l-o-w things down. **Focus on a longer exhale** in particular because the exhale connects you to calm, while the inhale connects to you energizing your body. If you feel you need some guidance, there are a lot of options. YouTube has millions of guided breathing videos. There are also many apps out there that can help. The 'Calm' app is a popular one.

There is also a protocol called the 'The Relaxation Response'. It is a science-based set of steps aimed at reducing anxiety and stress in your body. It was developed by Dr. Herbert Benson from Harvard University. You can learn about it from his book of the same name, take an entire 8-week course on it, or watch a variety of videos teaching you how to do it.

Deciding to **refocus and shift your energy** is another strategy. Perhaps you need to move to walk around (preferably outside), get up and stretch to move your energy, do some yoga, do a body scan (see URL in resource list), or lay down for a few minutes with a cold pack over your eyes. Some folks deal with immediate anxiety by **exercising**. Running has always worked like a charm for me.

Connect to another person or animal that is calm. Nervous systems feed off other nervous systems. **Hook on to another living organism that is calm.** Your spouse, friend, pet, or something in nature.

Other people need to **talk it out** - move the energy by chatting with a friend or partner. This can be effective as long as you are working toward a solution and not just complaining. Talking through a worry with a commitment to try something new can ensure you exit from the 'complaining loop'.

Aromatherapy is becoming increasingly popular. Get a diffuser and start enjoying scents that can lift your mood and reduce your anxiety.

The other thing that works for me is to either **sing or laugh**. It helps stimulate the Vagus Nerve, which brings us into a state of calm (see URL in resource list).

Calming Your Mind

A calm mind always starts with calming your body first - so do your deep breathing before you try to change how or what you think.

Then work to bring **self-compassion and acceptance** into your mind and body. Anxiety loves negative self-energy, so we combat it by accepting that we are anxious, then giving ourselves a mental hug or reminding ourselves that we are doing our best right now. Anxiety always gets worse by getting upset that we are anxious in the first place. Allowing ourselves the space to be anxious gives us a chance to shift without guilt or shame.

You can build a habit of stopping or reducing your anxious or 'What if something happens' thoughts. These are thoughts that look for the worst-case scenario and try to prepare us for it. We can deal with 'What-if' thoughts by using a CBT strategy called '**Thought Stopping**'. Here are the steps: a) Deep breathing for 30 seconds, b) Ask yourself if the 'What-if' thought is true, and ask what purpose it is serving, c) If you realize the thought is likely not true, tell yourself to 'stop', d) then change the direction of your thinking and move to another topic that you know keeps you calm, such as thinking about something going well or a friend you know has your back.

Positive and hopeful self-talk is very helpful. When you feel a pang of anxiety is setting in, using self-soothing language right away can help. Say things like "I know I am feeling anxious right now, but it always goes away", "Just breathe", or "I can deal with this anxiety if I focus on my breath."

If you are catastrophizing or ruminating, **decide that you are only going to allow yourself to worry for 5 minutes**. Put on a timer. Then start either writing down your thoughts, or record yourself on your phone. When the timer goes off, start a new timer. This time give yourself five minutes to come up with solutions and strategies. When this second timer goes off, decide which solution you are going to pick. Next, either start taking action, decide when you will act, or choose to let it go. Then move on to doing something else.

If your mind is full of too many things to do, **write out your to-do list with time frames and priorities** attached. Incorporate gentle reminders along the way about your limits, such as "I'll do what I can and let go of the rest", "I can't please everyone" and "Rome wasn't built in a day."

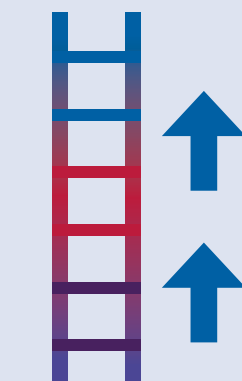
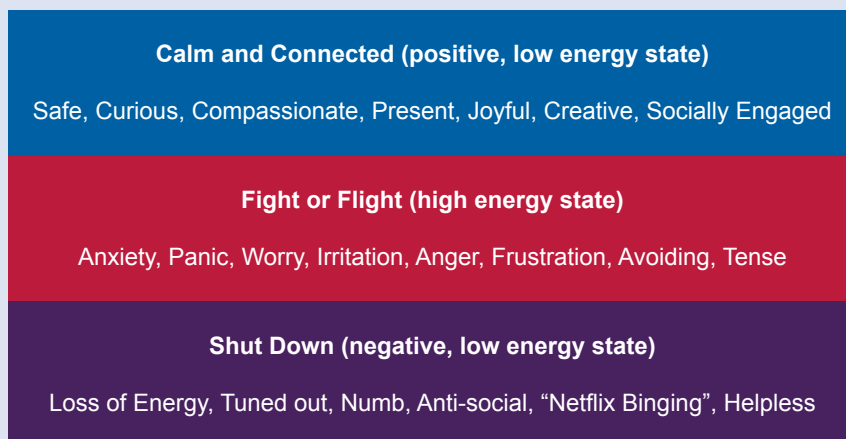
Conclusion

Why not commit to practicing a number of different anxiety-reducing strategies and making them part of your life? With practice, you can have several go-to anxiety strategies that can build your confidence and keep you grounded and calm. These are life-long skills that can change your life.

Resource List:

The 10 Best-Ever Anxiety Management Techniques - Margaret Wehrenberg
The Anxiety Toolkit - Alice Boyes
Rewire Your Anxious Brain - Pittman and Karle
The Calm App - <https://www.calm.com/>
The Relaxation Response - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZ7JfC3_Zgc
Body Scan - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QS2yDmWk0vs>
Vargas Nerve - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSN2CeDkslg>
Self-compassion - <https://self-compassion.org/>
Anxiety resources - www.teacherwellness.ca, **Twitter:** @wellteacher235
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Nbteacherwellness>

A Teacher's Nervous System: Calm, Fight or Flight, and Shut Down



Notes:
Many teachers fluctuate between all 3 states in a day.
There is a spot between F&F and Calm - here you are 'on' with your class.
Focus on moving up the Nervous System Ladder.

What do you need to do to move up the ladder?



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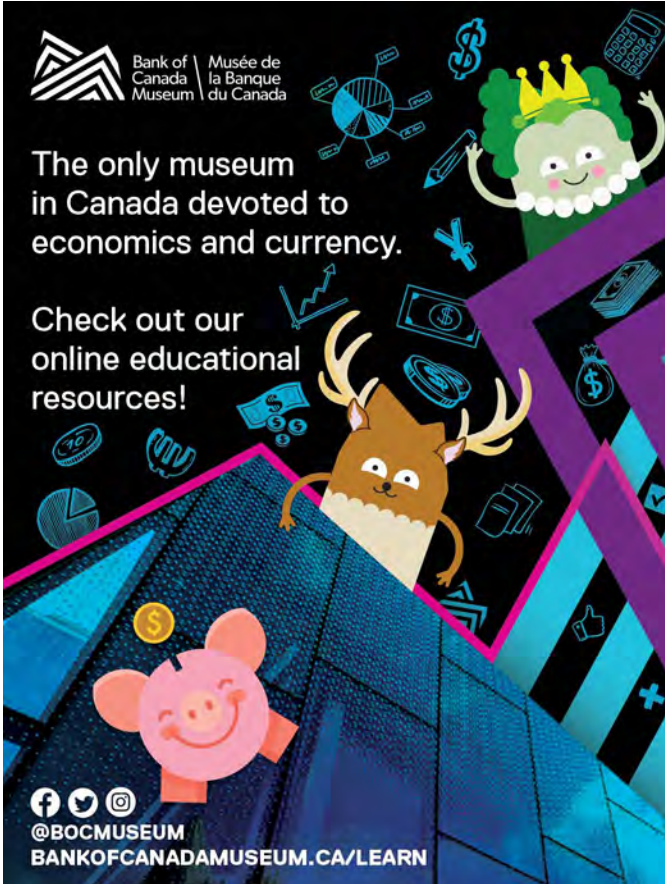
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Janean Marshall, Director of Academic Services, Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey



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You can't take it with you

by Margery Nichol, General Manager

I came across a brochure the other day that said, "I died, and no one knew where to find anything". I know this is one of the topics that most people try to avoid thinking about let alone talking to our family about it. We have all heard of family disputes after someone dies. You may be thinking you don't have an estate big enough to warrant seeing a financial/estate planner or having a will. Nothing could be further from the truth. Everyone should have a will. You don't want Jimmy and Sally fighting over who gets the silverware or who gets your stamp collection. Having a plan and keeping your will up-to-date will help to ensure this doesn't happen.

Your financial wellness is an important part of your overall wellbeing. Your finances can affect many other aspects of your life including your mental and physical health. Thoughtful planning now will help ensure your wishes are carried out when the time comes.

Here are a few tips for estate planning:

- **Evaluate your priorities.** It may be making sure your spouse can live out the remainder of their days comfortably or preserving family wealth over generations.
- **Create or update your will.** If you don't have a valid will, the laws of intestacy apply. This means your assets will go through probate and be distributed according to provincial legislation. This process eliminates your ability to control the distribution of your assets. Further, the process is more costly and time-consuming, which will require your loved ones to spend more time and money settling your affairs. Any major life changes may mean an update to your will should be considered.
- **Include a living will.** A living will appoints a health care/mental power of attorney. It also clarifies your wishes in the case of life support or other medical procedures.
- **Carefully consider who you want as your executor.** This person will be responsible for "executing" the transfer of assets as specified in your will. You may also want to appoint someone as your Power of Attorney.
- **Speak to an expert about taxes and your estate.** The goal is to minimize the tax burden and leave more to your loved ones.
- **Talk to your loved ones.** This conversation should include everything from where you keep important documents, to the type of funeral you would like.

Making these decisions can be difficult but once they are done, you and your loved ones will have some peace of mind. It is much easier to make these decisions while you have the time to think things over rather than under pressure when the unexpected happens.

Remember, you can't take it with you, but you can decide who gets it.



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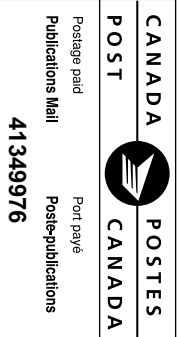


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