



March 2023
Vol. LX No. 3

NBEA NEWS

NEW BRUNSWICK TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Words of Wellness



Collective Impact Challenges

Council Day Keynotes

#4Wellness Contest

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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From the President's Desk



After a stormy winter season in education on numerous levels, we await the awakening and light of spring with great anticipation. I have been prioritizing time for some reading on leadership as it provides me with time to reflect and brings me wisdom through challenging times. Of note is a quote I stumbled upon from Michelle Obama's book *The Light We Carry- Overcoming in the Uncertain Times*:

"How do we right ourselves inside a storm that shows no sign of abating? How do we find stability when the air around us remains unsettled, and the ground seems to shift constantly beneath our feet? I think it begins, in part, when we can find a sense of agency and purpose inside of ongoing flux. When we remember that small power can be meaningful power..." (p.283)

Does this excerpt not perfectly summarize the state of education in New Brunswick and provide us with wisdom on maneuvering forward? I believe this is a reminder that small actions can significantly influence what we cannot control.

Your NBTA Board of Directors met in February and strongly voiced the need to continue to press decision-makers for transparency by providing clear details regarding school governance reform and high school renewal. Further, they raised the many concerns voiced by teachers during the consultations on the proposed Innovative French Immersion program.

On the final day of deliberations, the government announced a that stakeholder group would be established and would involve the NBTA, experts within the education system, and parents to inform the development of the next steps to address challenges within the anglophone system. Following this announcement, I expressed to the media that the Association was encouraged that Minister Hogan announced that it will slow down, carefully consider the consultation feedback, and engage multiple stakeholders prior to any further decisions about system changes. I reiterated that the NBTA continues to emphasize that a focus on learning conditions for all teachers and all students is essential.

Your NBTA staff and I have taken every opportunity to educate decision-makers on the many teachers' concerns we have heard on these issues. We hope this will cause further reflection on the impact of their decisions. I continue to educate and bring awareness of the issues to the public, parents, and our members via media interviews.

In addition, your NBTA continues to focus on the impact of the daily teacher shortage crisis in our schools in the anglophone sector. The employer's inability to fill absences with certified supply teachers compromises teachers' capacity to do their work and offer critical services to support students. Entire school communities are paying the price. As New Brunswick continues to grow its population with an estimated 1,500 newcomers per month, the government must engage in multi-sectoral planning for human resourcing at the community level so that our schools can adjust to changing demographics.

These matters are of immense importance because of their impact on the teaching profession and students' education. Our system is already over-reliant on the goodwill of teachers and school administrators to operate. I have also witnessed how communities and teachers have taken a stand for public education. NBTA members have engaged in robust conversations alongside concerned families and other New Brunswickers to participate in public consultations on the proposed new Innovative French language learning program, contacting their MLAs and emailing our Minister of Education and Premier, to name but a few examples.

I believe we must continue to rely on one another during these extraordinary educational times. Government decisions beyond teachers' control cannot destabilize the resolve of thousands of teachers who remain united in solidarity. Together, teachers will continue to draw the attention of those who have the power to improve our working and learning conditions.

As we approach the final quarter of my term as your NBTA President, public education is in the spotlight, and people are paying attention. It has been reaffirmed that teachers can and do make a significant difference in the lives of children and youth in our communities.

There is no better opportunity than the present for government to reprioritize, reawaken and spring forward with long-term planning that assures the requisite stability and resources to strengthen New Brunswick's public education system. This shift in mindset and commitment to actions over the long term by present and future decision makers, will be the precursor for economic prosperity in this province we call home. Our communities are counting on it.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Connie Keating". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hatch Dispatch

By Kimberley McKay,
NBTA Deputy Executive Director

The September edition of the *NBTA News* included an executive summary of the Insight 2022 member survey. The November edition introduced members to the “Hatch Dispatch,” a new column to appear in the *NBTA News* as one way to keep members up to date on the progress related to the survey recommendations. As a reminder, for the school year 2022-23, the NBTA Executive Committee determined the following recommendations would be prioritized:

- R1. Articulate mandates and responsibilities at all levels of the NBTA
- R7. Develop strategies to rebuild trust in the professional association in a post-pandemic era
- R10. Prioritize the development of the NBTA School Representatives leadership skills

This edition of the Hatch Dispatch focuses on two areas of progress since the last article:

- General results of Insight Incubator focus group sessions
- Progress plans related to the implementation of recommendations 1, 7, and 10

Eleven one-hour focus group sessions were held between August 23 and September 8, with 104 members representing all four districts participating. Focus group participants were asked questions related to the initial findings of the survey, touching on such topics as understanding of the NBTA mandate, COVID-19 impact on member satisfaction, what a louder NBTA voice sounds like and how it is used, what contributes to relevance for members, understanding of roles and responsibilities, and the future design of professional learning.

NBTA engaged in a partnership with UNB and the New Brunswick Institute for Research, Data, and Training (IRDIT) to analyze the focus group data. The following icons represent emergent themes from the analysis of the focus group responses:



The NBTA Advocacy, Research, and Engagement Committee reviewed the findings of the focus group sessions and participated in drafting the NBTA Member Engagement Plan. When the committee meets again in April, it will consider and contribute to a proposal to empower leadership in NBTA members through a flexible set of optional, interconnected learning experiences. The series is being designed to incorporate several of the overarching focus group suggestions.

Collective Impact Challenges

By Katie Saunders, Director Branch 1430,
on behalf of approximately 120 NBTA members

In September, four members of our branch were fortunate to attend Hatch 2022, hosted by NBTA. The opportunity to listen to and discuss ideas on how we can strengthen our branches to build a stronger organization inspired the idea to hold Collective Impact Challenges to coincide with each of our branch meetings. The purpose of the challenges is to create community by having the staff from our branch's six schools work towards one impactful action that would benefit a local organization or charity. Our first challenge was collecting cereal for We've Got Your Back River Valley. This organization provides weekly backpacks of food for over ninety students in our area to support food insecurity. This non-profit organization is run through donations, grants, and the

commitment of volunteers. Our first impact was a success with 153 boxes of cereal donated. School reps voted at our meeting to continue with this organization for future collective impact challenges. We wanted to have a little fun with Impact Challenge 2 and asked schools to come up with a fun idea to collect monetary donations, perhaps choosing to involve students. Creative ideas included a fifty-fifty draw, admin covering classes and duty for a donation, dress down/theme days, and a tie into Literacy Week activities. Through this challenge, we were pleased to donate close to \$1,000 to the backpack program. As we launch our third challenge, collecting jars of peanut butter, we can be assured the collective actions of a few are benefiting many.



2023-2024 Education Leaves

In all, forty-one (41) NBTA and sixteen (16) AEFNB members received leaves for the purpose of retraining, specialization, or professional growth.

Education Leaves awarded to NBTA members amounted to approximately \$2,022,927. With the mix of full and part-time leaves, the Committee was able to grant 41 leaves.

In the past few years, NBTA leaves were awarded as follows:

2022-2023 ---46 leaves at \$2,225,282
2021-2022 ---45 leaves at \$2,164,727
2020-2021 — 45 leaves at \$2,146,328
2019-2020 — 44 leaves at \$2,032,533
2018-2019 — 46 leaves at \$1,897,732
2017-2018 — 40 leaves at \$1,897,455
2016-2017 — 47 leaves at \$1,972,484

Education Leave Committee

The Education Leave Committee, established under Article 37 of the Collective Agreement, met on January 16, 2023 to complete the difficult task of selecting the educational leave recipients for 2023-2024. The Collective Agreement specifies that the Committee will be comprised of eight (8) members representing the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD), the Superintendents, and the NBTA, AEFNB and NBTF. The composition of the Committee is as follows:

| | |
|------------------|---------------|
| Julie Mason | MEDPE (Chair) |
| Amber Bishop | EECD |
| Nathalie Brideau | AEFNB |
| Connie Keating | NBTA |
| Gilles Saulnier | AEFNB |
| Kimberley McKay | NBTA |
| Marc Pelletier | DSF-NE |
| Dianne Kay | ASD-W |

Process

The full Committee met virtually for a short time to review the reports on the 2022-2023 cohort, confirm the criteria to be applied in the selection process, and to verify the amount of money available pursuant to Article 37. The Committee then divided into two sub-committees to consider applications from NBTA and AEFNB members.

Criteria

Although an educational leave must fall into one of the three accepted purposes — **retraining, specialization, or professional growth** — the Committee receives confidential comments and recommendations from principals and superintendents regarding the value of the leave to the school and district.

In considering applications from NBTA members, the sub-committee must consider the total funds available and the number of NBTA members in each district so that the funds can be allocated fairly throughout the province. This means that, while larger areas may be allocated multiple full and/or partial leaves, some smaller areas may get a leave every second or third year, and, in some cases, an even longer period of time might elapse between leaves. Although the Committee is not bound to award leaves on a direct total numbers/leaves available ratio, it is a factor that must be considered. Other factors considered are:

- program to be followed
- benefit of leave to school and school district
- position distribution (teacher, S.P.R., vice-principal, principal)
- grade levels (elementary, middle, high school)
- past professional involvement
- years of experience
- number of times teacher has applied
- certificate level
- subject specialty

There is also the expectation that Education Leave recipients will share their knowledge and expertise through professional development sessions in their school, district and/or province with interested colleagues.

Leave Statistics for 2023-2024

There were 57 applications from NBTA members. Funds awarded for educational leaves, determined by the formula in Article 37.03 of the Collective Agreement, were \$2,022,927; the AEFNB was awarded approximately \$905,925.

Forty-one leaves (full and part-time) were granted to NBTA members.

Leaves Awarded

| | |
|--------------|----|
| K-8 | 16 |
| Grades 9-12 | 15 |
| Resource | 5 |
| Prinicpal/VP | 5 |

To Achieve

| | |
|-------------|----|
| CERT VI | 0 |
| Masters | 29 |
| Princ. CERT | 1 |
| Other | 11 |

Areas of Study

| | |
|--|----|
| Administration | 9 |
| Curriculum Studies | 10 |
| Exceptional Learners/ Spec Ed/Spec. Needs | 3 |
| Guidance/M&R/ Resource/Counselling | 9 |
| Literacy | 4 |
| Technology | 2 |
| Other | 4 |
| Total | 41 |

Conclusion

When all is said and done, 41 NBTA members will be happy to be receiving an Education Leave, while 16 members will be disappointed, and at least some of these members will feel frustrated by the process. The one thing that can be said is that the Committee did its best to weigh all of the criteria, consider all of the factors and award the leaves as fairly as possible.

To those teachers who received leaves, the Committee extends its best wishes for a successful and productive year of study and learning. And, to those who were not successful, the Committee thanks you for your interest and encourages you to apply again next year.

The NBTA recipients for the 2023-2024 school year are listed by district. The length of the leaves varies from four months to a full academic year.



Know an exemplary New Brunswick teacher or principal?

NBTA Centennial Award

**Vince Sunderland Award
for Outstanding Educational Leadership**

**NBTA Credit Union Award
for Excellence in Teaching**

Indu Varma Award for Creativity in Education

**Nominate a colleague for one of our four provincial awards at:
www.nbta.ca > Forms > Provincial Awards**

Teacher Designed Professional Learning Grants 2023

Kimberley McKay, NBTA Deputy Executive Director

The New Brunswick Teachers' Association recognizes that teacher professional learning occurs within a broad spectrum of experiences and processes that lead to deepened understanding and improvement of practice. Effective professional learning strongly links teacher and student learning and is guided by evidence. Further, research highlights that effective professional learning must be personalized and responsive to the complex and unique needs and context of the learner.

Allowing teachers multiple chances over several weeks to experiment with the new strategies in a low-risk environment, such as their own regular teaching settings, is important.

(Nelsen & Cudeiro, 2009)

As adult learners, teacher motivation for professional learning is linked to relevance, meaning and choice. Developing competence and a sense of self-efficacy by directing one's efforts to meet student needs is key to teachers undertaking professional learning. An integrated design that focuses on student and teacher learning activities within a job-embedded context and supported by both time and re-

sources is the ideal professional learning context.

In support of teacher designed professional learning, the NBTA is pleased to sponsor five grants valued at \$1,500.00 each. The grants are intended to support teacher professional learning within the context of improving student learning, fostering teacher leadership, and facilitating the sharing of exemplary best practices. Each team has autonomy to spend the grant as they see fit. Provision for release time for team collaboration, purchase of equipment, or production of materials for sharing represent some of the most common uses of grant funding in previous years.

Grant applications were received from 8 teams representing 3 districts and representing 2 levels (elementary and high). Grants for 2023 were awarded to 4 teams. Successful team applications were designed within the context of best practices and required grant criteria. The successful applications were clearly linked to teacher professional learning and gave thoughtful consideration to how to make the work sustainable once the grant funding was

depleted. Finally, the project proposals awarded grants were both convincing and clearly explained as to the potential impact on student development as well as describing a practical and realistic approach to measuring team goals.

The grant recipients will receive their cheques, as well as the TDPL manual containing information to support record keeping requirements and current research pertaining to professional learning. Teams may extend their work until December 2023.

The grant criteria requires that each project include a sharing component. We look forward to learning more about the successes and challenges teams experience as they go through a personalized learning process designed to deepen teacher understanding and, ultimately, enhance student learning.

Works Cited:

Nelsen, J. & Cudeiro, A. (2009). Lasting Impression. *Journal of Staff Development*, 30(5), 32-35.

Grant Recipients 2023

Fundy Shores

Enriching Teachers, Enriching the Curriculum
Team Leader: Ashley McDade

Sussex Elementary

Restorative Practices at SES
Team Leader: Raya Khedheri

Prince Charles School

Science of Reading: Learning, Connecting, and Implementing.
Team Leader: Heather Ward-Huskins

Summerhill Elementary

Mindfulness – Supporting Teachers, Supporting Students
Team Leader: Kandy Voutour-Barton

NBTA Info-Brief: Evolving French Language Learning (EFLL)

By Kimberley McKay, NBTA Deputy Executive Director & Chantal Lafargue, NBTA Staff Officer



Introduction

On December 15, 2022, the EECD announced its proposed New Brunswick Innovative Immersion Program and stated that “starting in September, kindergarten and grade one students will spend 50 percent of their day engaged in exploratory learning in French to foster strong literacy skills in that language, and the other half being taught in English on subjects such as math, reading and writing.”

Updates

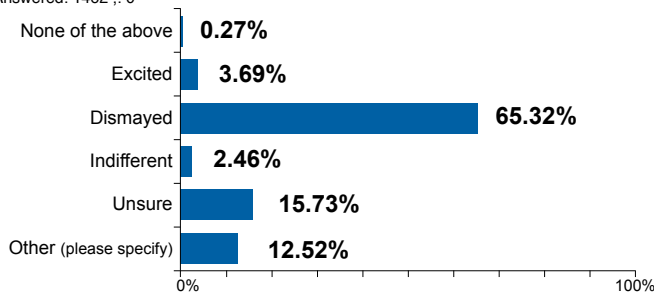
October 2022: The NBTA Board took a position at its October meeting to pull out of the first round of provincial consultations on this topic held in November.

November 2022: The NBTA Executive reaffirmed its position statement. Decision-makers were reminded that educational decisions must be made in the best interest of all students; address pre-existing classroom composition challenges faced by teachers; include additional human, pedagogical, and professional resources to support schools; and respond to the challenges posed by the teacher shortage.

January 2023: The NBTA conducted a short membership poll to capture teachers’ collective perceptions on the proposed Innovative Immersion Program and encouraged members to participate in EECD consultations and the online survey. Poll results were shared with members, and a snapshot of the results is depicted below. Finally, the NBTA Executive met in January and suggested minor adjustments to the NBTA’s EFLL statement, while reaffirming the overall intent of the message.

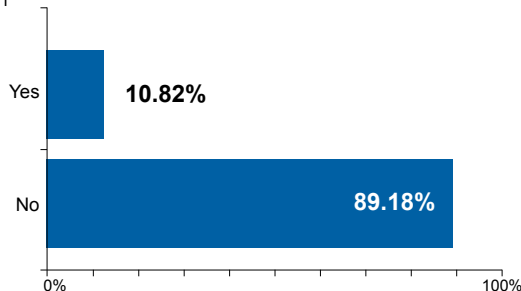
Q3: The government announced a proposed New Brunswick Innovative Immersion Program”. What is your professional view on this?

Answered: 1462 ; 0



Q4: Do you believe the EECD is keeping you well-informed about the “New Brunswick Innovative Immersion Program”?

Answered: 1451 ; 11



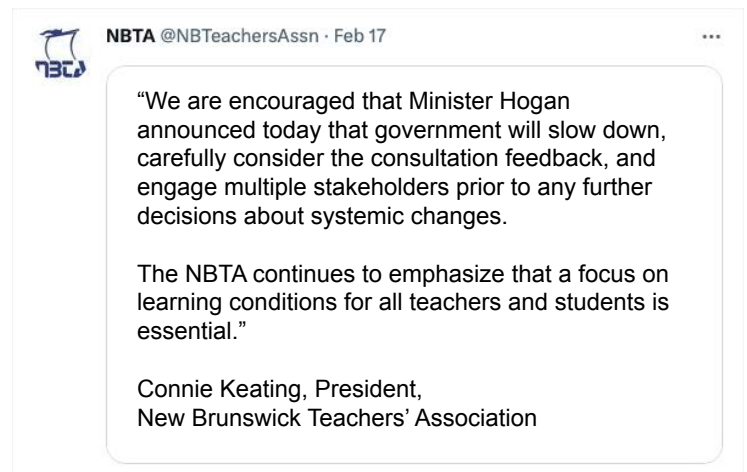
February 2023: The NBTA issued an EFLL communication statement to coincide with the close of EECD’s public consultations on the proposed Innovative Immersion Program.



February 17, 2023:

During the February Board of Directors meeting, the government announced that it would not be implementing the proposed Innovative Immersion Program as it was not in the best interest of all students. The government also stated that “A stakeholder group will be established and will involve the New Brunswick Teachers’ Association, experts within the education system, and parents to inform the development of next steps.”

The NBTA responded as follows:



Vice Principal Leadership Development in New Brunswick: Turning the Tide on the Invisibility Cloak

By Katharine Hartnett, Andrea Garner, Zeinab Razavi, Tina Cole, and Lyle Hamm

Introduction

If you have been an educator in New Brunswick for a few years, you may have reflected on the scope and value of your pedagogy and leadership in the lives of the students you serve. School leadership has no limits. Many individuals provide formal leadership through the decisions and actions of administration teams consisting of principals, vice principals, core leadership groups, support staff, and curriculum leads. In 2023 with the Covid-19 pandemic still chasing our learning communities in the rear-view mirror, schools need “all hands on deck” to function effectively under a collective leadership mindset (Hamm, 2021).

An abundance of literature and professional articles describes and outlines the roles and actions of school principals. There is no shortage of writing from academics and practitioners about teachers and students and what they do in schools across the educational landscape. But what about our vice principals' role(s)? What is it that they do? Well, through our seminar work with two provincial cohorts of vice principals (VPs), our team has arrived at the answer — everything.

Educational researchers have documented the position of VP as the key pathway to principalship and senior leadership positions throughout school districts worldwide (Armstrong, 2009; Murphy, 2006; Walker et al., 2020). According to Cohen and Schechter (2019), VPs continue to grapple with the reputation of being forgotten educational leaders in North American schools. Therefore, our team believes that it is educationally critical to understand the roles and complexity of tasks New Brunswick VPs perform daily to better support them in their work and remove their invisibility cloaks.

Our professional leadership learning team in the Faculty of Education at the University of New Brunswick believes there must be a stronger focus on working continuously with VPs to help them develop and sustain their leadership and passion. That's right, vice principals! Since the start of the 2022-2023 school year, our team has been examining the leadership roles performed by VPs in two anglophone school districts while working on the ground with the cohorts through an invitational seminar-workshop series aligned with the Atlantic Leadership Standards (CAMET, 2020). The seminar series for VPs in New Brunswick evolved from the findings of a provincial study that was designed and focused on the work of VPs in ethnoculturally diverse schools (Hamm et al., in press).

What! Saturday morning seminars?

Our current team created five Saturday morning seminars and intentionally scheduled them between October and April. We sent a poster describing the seminars to both school districts involved in the project, inviting all their VPs to participate if they wished. The team's rationale and purpose for proceeding this way were threefold. First, our team believed that Saturday morning professional learning would enable the VPs to form an authentic learning community and gather together without the anxiety of leaving their school and responsibilities to attend professional learning. As such, no VP would be rushing back to their school to put out a fire. Secondly, if they chose to participate in the Saturday sessions themselves and were not told to attend them by their senior leaders, we would gain engaged VPs who wanted professional development. Finally, the spacing out of the seminars would give the VPs time for their September start-up activities in their schools before bringing them together to build



“...VPs continue to grapple with the reputation of being forgotten educational leaders in North American schools. Therefore, our team believes that it is educationally critical to understand the roles and complexity of tasks New Brunswick VPs perform daily to better support them in their work and remove their invisibility cloaks. ”

the learning culture and complete seminar five by the end of April so they could concentrate on the business of May and June.

Seminar one was titled “Avoiding harmful leadership styles and actions and demonstrating professionalism.” The activities planned and focused on building the learning culture through introductory activities and story-sharing. Participants also engaged in a World Café activity where they worked together to respond to two questions: what are the challenges that VPs are confronting in 2023 in their schools and communities, and what strategies are you using to address your challenges and complexities?

Initial Findings

Four themes arose from data collection with the first group of VPs. They have different realities depending on their schools or administration time. Many VPs teach for much of their day, saving administrative duties or educational leadership for after-hours. Teaching vice principals are attempting to be everything for everyone; in fact, many said they are “on call” for much of their time. Further, their role needs to be clearly defined. The expectation is that the VP is knowledgeable, yet they are not always provided with the necessary information to perform their role effectively. Finally, VPs must triage priorities, resulting in barriers to following through on their intended focus.

Throughout the seminar and the discussions, the VPs discussed their current post-pandemic reality. They have hope, and engaging with others sparked hope among the participants.

New Brunswick VPs love their schools and their leadership role. They want to support students, teachers, and their communities. As an educational community, we lean on VPs to be the constant in the storm. With time in the seminars to analyze their realities, VPs will have opportunities to grow as educational leaders.

The themes from the second cohort of VPs were similar, and yet our team realizes that the social realities vary between schools and school districts. For instance, two major themes that arose in the second group were mental wellness and self-care and social media challenges in schools. Both projects will conclude in April 2023, and the team will synthesize their understanding so they can be more effective in working with New Brunswick VPs in the future.

Conclusion

The initial seminars have shown a desire for professional learning and a need for collaboration and mentorship with our New Brunswick educational colleagues. VPs are leaders who support teachers, students, and their principals, and they need opportunities to be educational leaders in their schools. What our team is offering is not a pre-packaged one-size-fits-all solution for VPs. We are asking what are the current social realities they face within the schools and working with them on strategies to help them feel greater efficacy in their multiple roles. Our team will work within those challenges to find answers with the VPs to support their growth as school leaders in New Brunswick.

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What's CONTACT and what's all the hype?

Dawn Beckingham,
NBTA Staff Officer



CONTACT stands for Conference On New Techniques And Classroom Teaching. It is a regional conference sponsored by the four Atlantic provinces' teacher organizations, each taking their turn to host. This year the PEI Teachers' Federation is hosting in the lovely city of Charlottetown from August 8 to August 11, 2023. New Brunswick has thirty seats, and there are funds available to support NBTA participants.

This conference is a fantastic opportunity for teachers from Atlantic Canada to get together and share ideas, reflect on experiences, and celebrate all that is best about teaching. There is also social time built in for meet and greets and to see a bit of the host city. You will leave energized and ready to take on the new school year. But don't just take my word for it. Here are some comments from last years' conference attendees:

"I thought the keynote was engaging and inspiring. He touched my soul and reminded me, even a teacher as late in their career as me, why I do this."

"I loved this conference. It was great to connect with other teachers from around the Maritimes. It did not feel like work; it was like a wonderful, reflective holiday!"

"It was just what I needed as I prepare to go back to school in the fall."

Look for further information on registration, program theme, and grant opportunities in the next issue of the NBTA News and upcoming social media posts or contact Darla.Anderson@nbta.ca today to submit your name to attend. I'm looking forward to seeing all thirty seats filled and learning with you at CONTACT 2023!

DSS: Save the Date!

Leading with Heart: Enhancing and Refining Your Leadership Skills for Today's School Environment

Mount Allison University, Sackville, NB

July 11-14, 2023

DSS Facilitator:

Dr. Jen Schwanke

Dr. Jen Schwanke has been an educator for 24 years, teaching or leading at all levels. She is the author of three books:

The Teacher's Principal: How School Leaders Can Support and Motivate Their Teachers

You're the Principal! Now What? Strategies and Solutions for New School Leaders

The Principal ReBoot: 8 Ways to Revitalize Your School Leadership

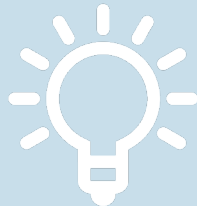
She has written for Choice Literacy, Education Week Teacher, Principal, and Principal Navigator. She presents at conferences for ASCD, NAESP, Battelle for Kids, RRCNA, and various state and local education organizations. She has provided professional development to various districts in the areas of school climate, personnel, and instructional leadership. She is an instructor in educational administration at Miami University and received her doctoral degree at The Ohio State University. She currently serves as a Deputy Superintendent in Ohio.



All things Professional Learning

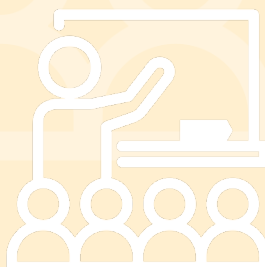
The profession of teaching is mentally, emotionally, and sometimes physically demanding. How do you cope? If you have great strategies to share, whether it be related to pedagogy, inclusion, enrichment, relationship building, self-care, time management or otherwise, let us know. You can be a great resource for other teachers, and we can work you into our PL opportunities. Teachers are generally humble, so if you know a colleague that would be a great resource, let us know that as well. I'm always looking for contacts to add to my resource bank.

The PL section of the NBTA website has a limited amount of suggested PL opportunities from external sources. It is a work in progress, and I am trying to spread the word as much as I can. If you know an organization offering PL, direct them to me and it will help populate this resource bank. NBTA is also collaborating with the EECD on developing a common PL Hub which is exciting news!



Classroom Management 101

This year we have offered this workshop in three of the four districts. The final session will be held in ASD-E during the month of April. Look for the upcoming advertisement through MailChimp or via branch POINT reps and/or district staff responsible for early career teachers. If you missed it this year, it is my hope that we continue this district-based approach to make it more accessible for our members.



Council Day 2023

The three councils have reviewed the member feedback from the past two years and acknowledge that there is a desire for the format of Council Day to change. We have members wishing to continue with the virtual format, others who wish to return to in-person, and some that like the alternate proposal option. The councils are exploring change but want to make sure that change is done for the right reasons, planned properly, and meets the needs of the majority. Stay tuned for an update on this in the upcoming months.

For this year, Council Day will be in-person with the three councils hosting in three locations.

Elementary & Music strand: Moncton

Middle Level & Phys Ed strand: Fredericton

High School & Art strand: Saint John

Alternate proposals will be an option. The form along with guidelines can be found on the NBTA website under the Council Day section or provided by your school rep. All NBTA members must complete this form to state their intentions for Council Day (attending or not). The form is to be submitted to your school-based PL representative by April 1.



Educational Improvement Grants

Is there a conference, webinar, or workshop you would like to attend and you're wondering how you can get financial support? Your NBTA manages the Educational Improvement Grants that access three different funds:

1. Provincial grant funds
2. Council grant funds
3. Branch grant funds

One application covers all three funds. Go to www.nbta.ca -> Forms -> Educational Improvement Grants.



Stepping UP: Realizing Culturally Responsive Schools Creating Intentional Opportunities for All

By James Burkett, Riverview Middle School

Where It All Began

In the fall of 2019, we as a Riverview Middle School (RMS) community began reflecting on many of our instructional and behavioral practices. Our leadership team, education support services (ESS) team, and professional learning communities (PLCs) began having intentional dialogue on how we could grow our restorative and inclusive practices while ensuring we were meeting the social and emotional learning needs of the middle school students. We¹ quickly recognized that we were often reacting, and we began our journey of implementing a more positive, proactive, and culturally responsive approach throughout the community².

It's important to note that when initial conversations around enhancing the culture of the RMS community began, the leadership team was new to RMS. The daily conversations centring on improving and growing our practices provided the important opportunity and time to listen while building positive and trusting relationships with staff and throughout the RMS community. Just as we began to gain momentum and make small positive adjustments to our processes, practices, and procedures, the pandemic began. The first few weeks of the unknown were unsettling for all our staff, but we rallied together and communicated frequently. We embraced our vulnerability and approached our new challenges as a unified collective. In many ways, the pandemic compelled us to look at our school practices differently, as this was new territory for all of us. We grew closer and more aligned in our practices while taking the opportunity for a school-wide reset instructionally and behaviorally. Navigating³ education throughout a pandemic highlighted much of what we had been previously discussing as a staff, further emphasizing the need for change while addressing the challenges faced by our students and community in proactive and supportive ways. During this time our community also experienced numerous traumatic events that affected our students, their families, and our community, solidifying our imperative as a school to be responsive to the needs of all our students. We could see that what had worked before these major and impactful events was no longer effective or what our students and staff needed. Working together, RMS began the journey to seek out programs, initiatives, collaborations, and solutions that would help our school respond positively to our new cultural dynamics.

Systems in Review

A renewed focus on our students' cultural needs led to new initiatives and ways of thinking. We developed more engaged lessons, reinvented our PLCs (which includes at least one member of our ESS team to focus on addressing individual

needs and school-wide collaborative planning), and built-in many initiatives and programs throughout the school day. Some of these programs include Genders and Sexualities Alliances; cultural diversity circles; and student engagement time scheduled into the school day, when they can choose activities that build skills and abilities in their own interests. Time dedicated to intentional social-emotional learning has evolved and is now carried out intentionally throughout the day and across our classes, in our lessons and extracurricular activities, as social-emotional learning has become embedded in all that we do as a school community. We were also recognized as a positive-behaviour incubator school, using professional learning opportunities to expand our knowledge base from trauma-informed to trauma-invested. We then reached out to our community to collaborate with others to help develop the culture in our school, including organizations like Jordan's Principle; the Impact Society, which delivers the Heroes Program for all grade



“We quickly recognized that we were often reacting, and we began our journey of implementing a more positive, proactive, and culturally responsive approach throughout the community.”

seven students; the Town of Riverview; and the BGC Canada; as well as district supports, which include the Positive Behavioural Interventions and Support (PBIS) lead, Indigenous support worker, and behaviour mentors. We have implemented weekly presentations from past alumni, and through these presentations we are fostering and modelling the importance of community and citizenship. We have also created a Peace and Friendship space with the help of our Indigenous support worker where we host cultural events, educate staff and students on their culture and traditions, and welcome visitors from other Indigenous communities to share this space.

With staff buy-in and programs and initiatives in full swing, we have now taken the next step, which has been to give students the lead. Our goal with student-led initiatives is to foster engagement, belonging, and autonomy. As with all change, this brought some trepidation. After the first few student-led opportunities, however, we immediately saw the benefits, engagement, and desire to be involved. As a school community we have done this through Student Voice, a leadership group that meets with the administration to advise on school issues. We also have student-led committees, daily student video announcements, student-led assemblies, student spirit committees, and student volunteer opportunities, such as running the breakfast programs, supporting/visiting seniors' homes, and supporting the neighbouring elementary school. We are now offering many student-led diverse lunch activities and groups such as the Executive Functioning Group, Spanish Club, Basket Weaving, and Circle of Care. Providing students with the opportunity to celebrate and share their diverse skills and abilities has been an important step in building a culturally responsive school. We⁴ have now shifted our attention to student-led learning, looking at ways we can engage students by providing them opportunities to choose what, when, and how they are demonstrating and attaining skills and knowledge.

From Reactive to Proactive

Throughout our journey, we are continually reflecting, pivoting, and dialoguing on ways we can be more proactive in our own understandings, attitudes, and approaches. Foremost we recognize the importance and need for all our school community to feel respected, represented, and heard. The process of building this culturally responsive community takes time, intention, sensitivity, vulnerability, and meaningful and frequent communication. As our leadership team often says, “We’re a work family, and sometimes a family needs to have some difficult conversations.” Being intentional entails being mindful of what practices we are implementing, continuous reflection on areas

of growth, and identifying gaps or what can be enhanced or embedded. We also reflect on our unconscious biases. Through these frequent conversations, staff is cohesive and consistently aligned in our practices.

Where We are Going

As we examine our successes in building a culturally supportive and effective climate at RMS, it is worth noting that there have been and will continue to be challenges. If we could offer other schools some advice it would be to remember that it takes time to build; it is a journey. You will have programs and days that aren't successful, you will even feel frustrated at times, but remember, it's daily consistent and purposeful decisions and attitudes that will develop the culture and impact the change.

As we move forward, we face many new challenges. Our school demographics continue to shift, and our students' needs are becoming more diverse. At RMS we have found that the key to progress in an ever-changing school is having processes that are intentional, consistent, and embedded in our daily actions. We try to ensure that every student has identified at least one adult that they can relate to and can go to when they are in need. Understanding and celebrating everyone's differences is the key to cultural acceptance and building a positive culture. In our continued work to become culturally responsive, our purpose is to provide everyone in our community with a safe and welcoming space. Finally, we have found that throughout this journey the continual building of relationships with staff, students, and our community has proven to be the most positive, effective, and significant factor in creating a culturally responsive school and community.

Key Indicators:

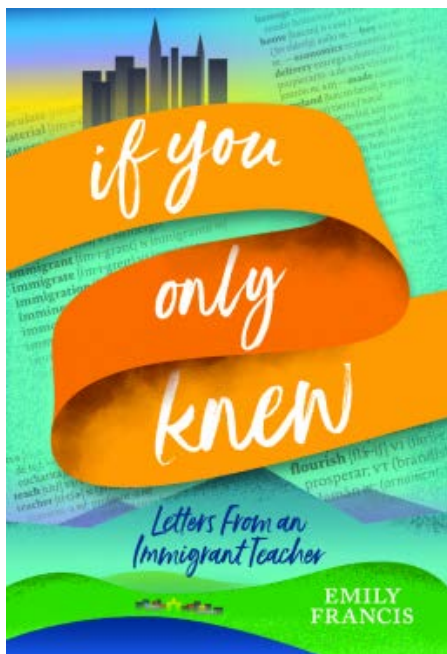
- 1 - Indicator 6: The school culture encourages the engagement, active involvement, and inclusion of every student (considering both face to face and virtual learning environments). Objectives 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9
- 2 - Indicator 7.4: The school environment encourages and supports the engagement, active involvement and inclusion of every student culturally.
- 3 - Indicator 20: School staff members ensure that the learning environment is welcoming, orderly, healthy and safe. Objectives 1, 7 and 9
- 4 - Indicator 6.3: Students are actively involved in creating and furthering an inclusive school culture.



The Stepping UP: Realizing Culturally Responsive Schools series is coordinated by EECD and NBTA contributors Francis Bennett, Kathy Whynot, Craig Williamson, Monique Hughes, and Chantal Lafargue. This article series is a space for teachers to highlight their journeys in embracing culturally responsive practice.

Book Giveaway

Send an email to Chantal.Lafargue@nbta with the subject line "Book Giveaway" to be entered into a draw to win this book:





The NBTA Board of Directors was thrilled to have two impromptu visits at their February meeting from Andy Hargreaves, world-renowned scholar, author and expert in engagement and well-being in schools, who expressed candidly his concern for the wellness of teachers and the importance of their contributions to society.

Attention Teachers! Are you eligible for a pay raise?

Are you an EARLY CAREER TEACHER with previous work experience that is related to teaching?

Apply to have previous work experience count!

If you are a new teacher who has previous work experience that is related to teaching, you may apply to the Office of Teacher Certification to have it considered for an increase on your salary grid. The form you need is available from the EECD Teacher Certification webpage. You should also contact your district office to ensure that all supply teaching experience has been credited.

March 31st is the deadline to have the increase back-dated to January 2, 2023.

Are you a teacher who has COMPLETED COURSE WORK towards a certification upgrade?

Don't forget to apply for your certification increase!

The form you need is available on the EECD Office of Teacher Certification webpage.

Don't forget to include the evaluation fee!

March 31st is the deadline to have the increase back-dated to January 2, 2023.

Celebrating Totally Awesome New Beginnings!

By Dale Mundle, ASD-N ICE Program Teacher at Elsipogtog Trades Learning Center

Let me begin with the history behind this story. The past director of the Office of First Nation Education (OFNE) had a dream. She saw communities having a trades learning centre so youth could be taught life skills that could become their passion, career pathway, and lifestyle. This would help decrease the strain on the aging trades workers and add highly qualified tradespeople to their community. To achieve this vision, OFNE, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD), and the New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) all started working together to provide high-quality education through a subject matter expert (SME) and local NBTA teacher. In Elsipogtog, where I'm teaching, the community built a new building for the education and training of their youth. Are our youth important? Absolutely, they are! The building was custom-made for our use. Half the building is the classroom, and the other half is for hands-on work and practical skills.

This has been absolutely the most incredible experience I have ever had teaching, and I get to repeat it every day! So what do I do that's so cool? I am an NBTA district skilled-trades teacher who has been seconded by the OFNE to teach trades in Elsipogtog. Here are the top three reasons why I'm so happy to be where I am:

First, I love and enjoy teaching our youth, especially in skilled trades. Right now, we are covering Electrical Wiring 110. This

encompasses all the wiring components you have in your home, and our students get to create, run, and test them here at our Elsipogtog Trades Learning Centre. Each day brings challenges, both from personal standpoints and the learning curve of new lessons. The awesome students tackle the situations head-on, sometimes with confidence and sometimes with uncertainty. The complete surprise and joy come when we test the project, and everything works properly. Their lightbulbs light up, heaters run, and personal extension cords start charging their phones. Hooray! Semester two will be welding.

Second, I am an active part of Today's Truth and Reconciliation Action. Sadly, I cannot do anything to change the past and the awful acts that happened, but I can change my today, every day! I am super privileged to be able to teach Indigenous students in their community. Almost every day the students arrive on the high school bus and walk through my front door smiling to learn electrical skills and enjoy some food from our BBQ. Yes, snacks are included! My students and I work together learn all about career explorations and what interests them for their future. We have planned and taken field trips to see, learn, and discover career possibilities from local and not-so-local companies. We have done virtual meetings with NBCC and seek out activities that can be translated into Red Seal careers. This past semester we finished the interior trim of the classroom (carpentry). We painted the classroom and washroom walls (painter & decorator).

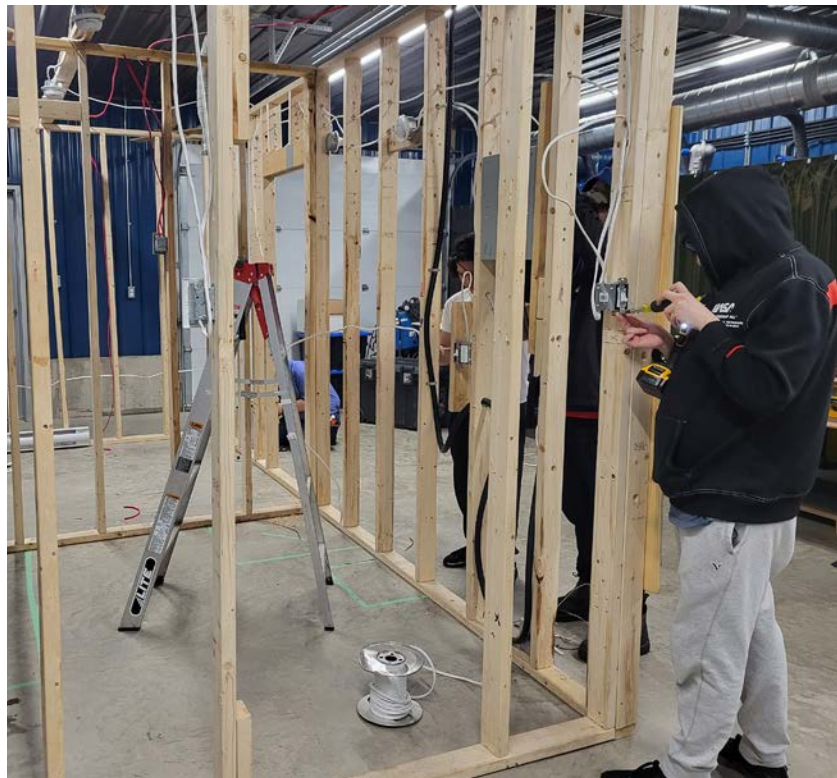
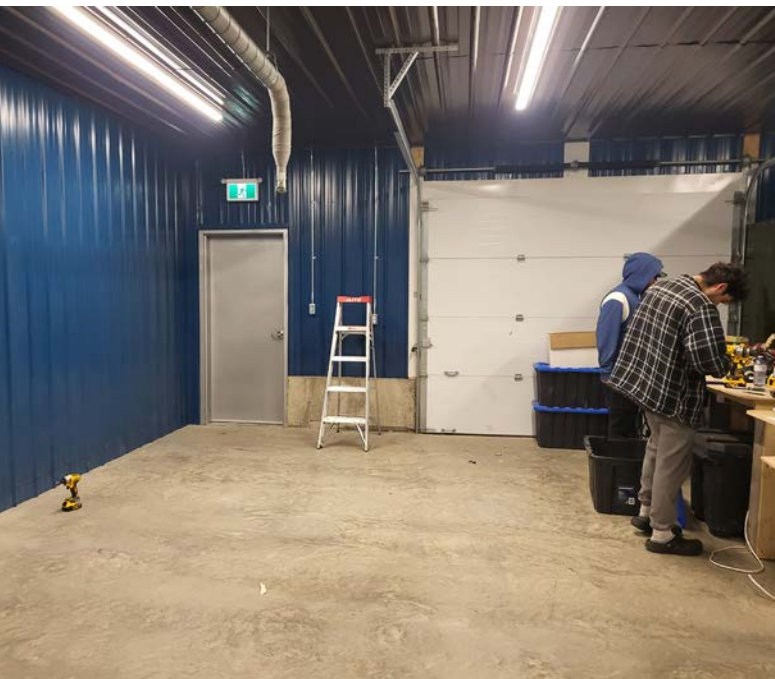


“My students and I work together learn all about career explorations and what interests them for their future.”

We levelled off and moved crushed stone alongside and in front of our building (landscape horticulturist). We cook on/with our BBQ (cook).

Third, I love and appreciate the fact the area has come together as one community. The Canadian Welding Bureau (CWB) made a proposal to the Trades Learning Centre. If the centre could have local businesses donate \$20,000 for welding equipment, they would provide the rest of the funding to purchase our equipment. Imperial Manufacturing Group (Richibucto & Dieppe) and Warman’s Welding (Rexton) both donated \$10,000 each. The rest, they say, is history! The amazing new system is in. During the summer of 2022, a Welding Camp was held here for middle school students that had incredible results of younger students achieving in the welding industry.

As you can see, this program is constantly evolving, and there are opportunities for all to get involved. This fall students built two square rooms that are 8 feet by 8 feet with an overlength of 16 feet. At the end of the first semester, they’re taking the walls back down, so we’ll be ready for the welding course in the second semester and new skills to explore this spring. This experience sure has been a fulfilling journey thus far, which will pave the way for more community success stories down the road.



Taking Pause on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

By Thérèse Trofimenoff, Antiracism and Equity Coach, ASD-S



The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is March 21 each year. I gently suggest that we take this day as an opportunity and reminder to do a self-check, kind of like what some do on New Year's Day and others do on birthdays, to think about how we've changed in the past twelve months. How have we changed in tiny ways, in medium ways, and in measurable ways? What have we done differently, and what work we have done toward the cause of antiracism? Let's take the time to do some introspection. It is such an essential piece of antiracism work.

Perhaps we can take a moment today to develop a deeper understanding of why we even have this day in the first place. This date is important because it marks the day in 1960 when police in Sharpeville, South Africa, opened fire and killed sixty-nine people at a peaceful demonstration against the apartheid-friendly pass laws that were in place at the time. These pass laws were an internal passport system designed to segregate the population, control urbanization, and allocate migrant labour. Six years later, the United Nations General Assembly officially called on the international community to redouble its efforts to end racial discrimination, and the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was born. It is known as Human Rights Day in South Africa. This appellation strikes me as significant.

The International Day for the Elimination of Systemic Racism and the International Day of the Woman both occur in March. Something to think about this year: often, we don't talk about gender when we talk about race. That intersectionality is important, however, and informs how we show up in both of those spaces. When discussions of equity as it relates to feminism don't include racialized voices, there exists an incomplete picture of the totality of the injustice. And vice versa.

Although March is a significant month, activities can of course be conducted year-round. Activities can include celebrating Black voices, emphasizing the importance of respecting Indigenous culture, debunking a myth about immigrants, taking time to learn a new way to incorporate antiracism practices in our life and work, finding a new show/book/entertainment that centres brown voices, and reflecting on what it means for us to participate in helping to eliminate racial discrimination in our corner of the world.

Students often feel a deep sense of injustice at the unfairness they see in the world. This feeling is borne of empathy, and that connection is so very human. This is an opportunity to teach them how their actions can help shape the world into a fairer and more just one. With their words, with their understanding of what racism is, what antiracism means, and how to be antiracist. Students look to their teachers, to show them how. So . . . talk about it. Talk about how. If you're not immediately sure what to say, revisit an uncomfortable moment or conversation after careful thought.

Although this is one day, remember that sustained change can only come with sustained effort. Bystanders must become upstanders. Let this day be a reminder that we can show up to end racial discrimination, one small action at a time, and with our own talents, beautiful influence, and modelled example, we can encourage others to do the same. We all have a role in shaping this world, and we all have an effect. Small actions are so, so, so very important. Stay brave and open-minded in difficult conversations, beautiful people, and continue trying. It's how we move forward.

Calling All Supply Teachers!

Please register each school year
at www.nbta.ca
(after working your first day)



Visit these websites for more information on rights, responsibilities, and benefits:

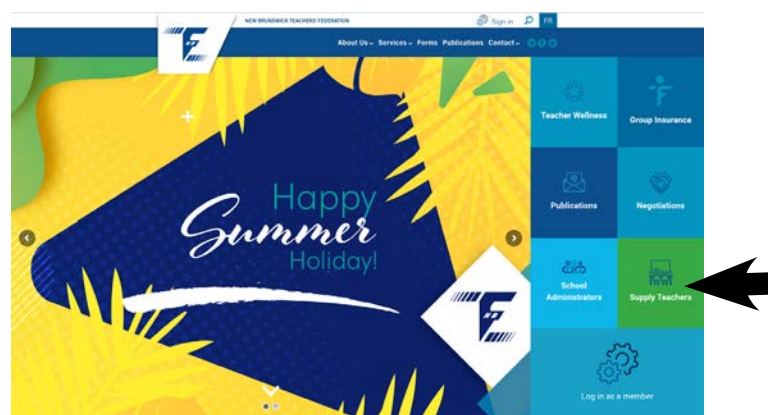
www.nbta.ca



click on:

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www.nbtfffenb.ca



click on: Publications > Category > Collective Agreement

Members' dues are deducted automatically, whether registered or not.

Registering with the NBTA means you have also registered with the NBTFF

If you are experiencing difficulty registering, contact Carlene Parker at (506) 452-1833 or carlene.parker@nbta.ca.

Councils

NBTA Elementary Council Aviation Institute

By Melissa Gaudet, NBTA Elementary Council Institute Chair

On November 24, thirteen teachers from across the province came together for a day of professional learning at the Miramichi Airport and NB Aviation Museum.

Thanks to Jody Coakley and Rob Lehnert of the ASD-N Centre, we had a day of exploration and discussion on the topics of aviation and education in the K-12 classroom.

We were given a tour of the Miramichi Airport and NB Aviation Museum as well as a Private Pilot Hangar. We heard many stories from pilot and former teacher, Bob Gillis, learned about logs, various parts of planes, and some basics of flight.

We proceeded to simulator training and aircraft design activities, including, making a Ring Wing Aircraft.

In the afternoon, we discussed how aviation can be incorporated into the Elementary classroom as well as upper level.

We received excellent feedback from participants and Jody shared his PowerPoint on Aviation, as well as the instructions for making Ring Wings, that we can use in our own classrooms.



A Professional Indigenous Learning Experience – the Australian Way!

By Ryan MacDougall

In September, I had the honour of attending the World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education (WIPCE) in Adelaide, Australia. I knew this would be a once-in-a-lifetime chance to experience Australian culture and meet Indigenous educators from across the globe.

Earlier in the spring, when I found out that I would be attending WIPCE, I dealt with many different emotions. I was anxious. I was excited. I was even a little bit scared. The idea of travelling so far to attend such an amazing conference celebrating Indigenous cultures from around the world was certainly exciting — but daunting at the same time. I had no idea what to expect, but I left Canada ready to learn and be inspired.

The moment we arrived at the Adelaide Convention Centre for the opening ceremonies, all those emotions melted into pure excitement. My words cannot possibly do justice to how beautiful the opening ceremonies were. Each Indigenous group had an opportunity to go up on stage, introduce themselves, and share a poem, story, song, etc., that was culturally significant. I remember feeling in awe as we watched the sharing of song or poetry in their traditional languages.

Each day, conference delegates had the privilege of attending different sessions on various themes related to Indigenous education. It was astounding to listen to speakers from around the world share the impact that education is having on their communities. Each session offered a different perspective on how education is serving Indigenous youth on the global stage. At the end of each day, it was easy to leave the conference centre inspired. Our group was also extremely fortunate to view

presentations from some of our talented educators in Anglophone North. They spoke with pride and devotion as they shared the various initiatives they have been working on with youth in ASD-N. We were there to witness this occasion and learn from their expertise. I cannot underscore how amazing it was to see the way in which local educators' work was respected and celebrated on this global stage.

While the conference was certainly the purpose of our visit, I'd be remiss if I did not mention the awesome "touristy" activities that we were able to take in. Have you ever fed a kangaroo? A few months earlier, I would have said no, me neither, but now I can say that I have! We were extremely fortunate to visit an Australian zoo in a community called Victor Harbor. After visiting the zoo, our new friends (aka our cab drivers) took us out to a beach. The distance we had travelled finally dawned on us when we realized that we were standing on the shores of the Indian Ocean. The weather was not the greatest — it was kind of dreary spring day in Australia — but being able to say that I dipped my foot in the Indian Ocean was a neat experience.

While there is a lot more I could talk about (an Australian Rules Football game, a stop in Brisbane on the way home), I will end by reflecting once again on how fortunate I was to receive this opportunity, both to attend this conference centring on the Indigenous peoples of the world and to experience a professional learning opportunity in another hemisphere. I returned home with stories and memories that will certainly last a lifetime. I have a newfound appreciation for how, even on this massive planet of ours with all its diversity, fundamentally we all want the same thing for children and youth.

Coming to You Soon...New to NBTA Middle Level Council Day Curricular Round Table Discussions

Have you ever just wanted some time to collaborate with New Brunswick's finest educators, but lacked the opportunity? New this year . . . Middle-Level Council (MLC) has included curricular roundtable discussions as an option for Council Day. These discussions will be open to educators looking to broaden their capacity in best practices, network with like-minded professionals, discuss and problem-solve topics, and explore potential resources while sharing and creating collaboratively. Rooms will be equipped with various items to encourage professionals to slow down, focus on their specific practice, and take control of their specific learning. A think-tank opportunity for New Brunswick teachers, by New Brunswick teachers. Stay tuned for the MLC program coming to you soon!

Post Pandemic Teacher Well-Being and Self-Compassion

By Karrie Harris, Integrated Service Delivery, Saint John East, School Counsellor

It's fair to say that the past two years have stretched most of us to our limits and that our well-being has been put on the back burner. Post-pandemic is the time to reflect on what we have learned from the challenges and setbacks and to start to take baby steps towards wellness.

When reflecting on one's current state of well-being and thinking about setting goals, it is important to consider how small changes over time can make a big difference. So often we get caught up in the end goal, become overwhelmed, and give up before really allowing the time necessary to see progress. This is where self-compassion becomes so important.

Self-compassion is kindness toward oneself. Kristin Neff, a leading researcher in self-compassion, defines it as "being open to and moved by one's own suffering, experiencing feelings of caring and kindness towards oneself, taking an understanding, non-judgmental attitude towards one's inadequacies and failures and recognizing that one's own experience is part of the common human experience." As teachers, we are often experts when it comes to showing compassion to others, but it is a very different

story when it comes to the self. Why not work on extending the same loving kindness to ourselves? Sounds simple. This, however, is a practice that needs to be developed in many of us.

Letting go of self-criticism and learning to be kind to ourselves is essential when embarking on a wellness journey. The first step is to recognize the inner critic and challenge the negative self-talk. To take it a step further, you could practise using a tool called the Self-Compassion Miracle Question. This tool is adapted from a long-used counselling tool, the Miracle Question. In this exercise, you imagine that a miracle happens and suddenly you are not able to speak any negativity and criticism towards yourself. Instead, you are only able to speak to yourself with genuine kindness and compassion. Take a minute to think. What are you saying? Notice your tone of voice. How does it feel to receive this kindness from yourself?

As we begin to take steps to improve our wellness, it is so important to nourish and care for ourselves first. What is one small change that you can make in the coming weeks that will improve your well-being? Remember that small changes add up!

Council Day: May 5, 2023

Elementary Council Keynotes



Kate Davis
Comedian, Writer, Mother

Those who attend Kate's "Balancing Life with Humour" lecture, leave with an understanding of practical techniques for refueling, rediscovering and re-engaging their true selves. Learning to use humour as an instrument of communication creates an atmosphere of compassion, caring and productivity.



Jason Cyrus
Hypnotist

As a Professional Hypnotist, Naturopath and Neuro Change Practitioner, Jason Cyrus has dominated and transformed the field of stage hypnosis over the last decade with his unmatched stage presence, unique style, positive attitude and charisma. In his wildly entertaining keynotes, he shows you how to achieve the unthinkable.



Betty Jean Aucoin
Former NSTU Executive Staff Officer - PL

Teachers are conditioned to be empathetic to those they support and to those in our communities, often leading to compassion fatigue. This session will assist you in maintaining, enhancing, and establishing the variables for you to live your best life.



Maestro Fresh Wes (Wes Williams)
Musician

In "Stick to Your Vision", Wes shows you how to define your vision, how to achieve it, and what to do once you're there. He offers useful tips and advice, as well as inspirational stories and quotes, and exercises that will keep you moving towards your own vision.

Middle Level Council Keynote



Shaun Majumder
Comedian and Actor

Raised in rural Newfoundland Canada, Shaun Majumder has been a performer his entire life. After leaving his hometown of Burlington (Pop 350) and moving to Mississauga Ontario at the age of thirteen, Shaun acted in his first stage play in the Grade 8. Immediately he was hooked. He continued theatre throughout high school, winning several awards at festivals for his many performances.

He found early success as a Standup Comedian and host, landing his first gigs with YTV (Canada's Nickelodeon) as a host/PJ for five years, along with CBC's Just For Laughs comedy series. He continued to book small roles in Film and TV and in 2003 he Joined the cast of CBC's This Hour Has 22 minutes where he spent seventeen seasons.

For the past twenty plus years, Shaun has found success on both sides of the border.

Shaun's humour is often delivered straight-faced and straight-up as he pokes fun at cultural differences and political correctness. He will make you see the bright side of teaching and make you glad you chose the best (well, second best) profession on the planet.

High School Council Keynotes



Dr. Carol Salva

Carol Salva is an award winning educator with proven success working with unschooled/under-schooled, multilingual learners classified as SLIFE (Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education) or ELD (English Language Development) students. She is a key Seidlitz Education consultant for training, coaching, modeling, and supporting program leaders.

Dr. Ashley Margeson

I'm a born and raised East Coaster. I'm an obsessive learner who spends time reading, researching and hosting The Superwoman Code (our podcast!), creating individualized health programs for my patients, and supporting high-functioning women in accomplishing their goals as healthily as possible. I consider the ability to sleep my most important Superpower, so you'll rarely (if ever!) see me pulling a late night.



Dr. David Scott

Dr. David Scott is an Associate Professor of sport psychology in the Faculty of Kinesiology at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, New Brunswick. He teaches and does research in the area of sport and exercise and psychology. Maclean's magazine has named him one of the most popular professors at UNB and the Globe and Mail recently named him as one of the outstanding professors teaching in Canada.

James Mullinger

James Mullinger was one of the UK's top comedians and the Comedy Editor for GQ magazine when he moved to New Brunswick, Canada in 2014. Since his arrival, he has taken the country by storm. He has sold out shows across the country, made appearances on CBC's The Debaters, movies, Television shows, festivals, award shows and stand up specials...he's done it all.



AHHHH . . . the feeling of a good night's sleep . . . Zzzzzzzzz

By Lisa Vienneau, Teacher Counsellor, ASD-West

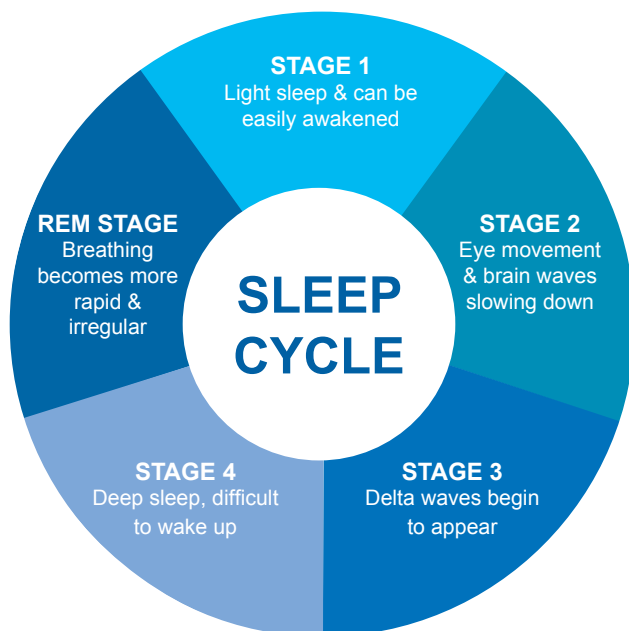
How awesome is it to wake up feeling fully refreshed after a wonderful night of sleep? I am sure this must be one of the most sought-after feelings these days. In fact, sleep researcher Kimberly Truong indicates that, as of July 2022, 10 to 30 per cent of the world's population has trouble sleeping, and sleep issues can lead to chronic insomnia. This data indicates there's a lot of tired people out there, including teachers.

We currently live in a society and work culture that applauds working lengthy hours, loaded with a full schedule with twenty-four-hour access to our phones. We are often so busy that our bodies are continuously running on adrenaline. Just as water is one of the most essential needs for our bodies to function properly, so too are rest and sleep.

As someone whom sleep has eluded at various times in my life, I read some research from Saundra Dalton-Smith, MD. In her book *Sacred Rest*, she provides great insights on how important it is to distinguish rest and sleep attributes. She states that good-quality sleep trickles down from a life well-rested. I've come to realize that this is one of the key strategies to help those who struggle with sleep.

Overall, rest within our daily lives is the deciding factor or, as Dalton-Smith puts it, the bridge between good sleep and bad sleep. Rest has become the new way to view how to get that sweet sleep we all crave.

Let's examine sleep by breaking it down. Sleep is divided into five stages, as shown in this **Sleep Cycle** image.



- We normally begin sleep patterns at stage 1 and cycle through the stages to stage 5 where REM sleep begins. That's one full cycle which lasts about 90 minutes.
- A good sleeper goes through approximately 4 to 6 cycles per night.
- Interesting to note, as the night begins, deep sleep lasts longer, and REM sleep is shorter. However, as the night progresses to early morning, deep sleep decreases and REM sleep increases. This explains why when you wake up in the morning and you've been dreaming, you're more inclined to remember these dreams.

High quality sleep begins at stage 3. Before reaching stage 3 during sleep, we are easily awakened and don't get into the sleep that rejuvenates us. The answer to having a good sleep, however, isn't about being more active and draining yourself, i.e., the more you do, the more exhausted you'll be, and therefore, the better sleep you will have. The answer lies in slowing down, pausing, and resting. Dalton-Smith identifies in her research that rest is the precursor to getting a good night of quality sleep.

Below are a few lifestyle and environmental tips that may help you obtain the rest and sleep required for your body and mind to rejuvenate and improve your day.

Activities for better sleep and health

Light exercise provides the daily rise and fall of our body temperature. Research shows this rise and fall of body temperature prior to sleeping enhances quality sleep. Here is a list of light to moderate exercises and activities that can help.

- General house-cleaning
- Climbing up and down steps
- Golfing and fishing
- Walking

Improve sleep with bright light during the day

Sleep and body temperature are directly influenced by the effect of light and darkness on the hormone melatonin. Darkness causes melatonin levels to rise, which in turn lowers your body temperature and encourages sleep. It is important to be exposed to as much natural bright light during our waking hours. You may consider the following:

- Open curtains and blinds upon waking.
- Eat breakfast near a window.
- Avoid wearing sunglasses in the morning.
- Take an early morning walk or go outside for coffee breaks.



The food/sleep connection

Some research has also been done on foods that promote sleep and those that may inhibit sleep. Our digestive system slows down at night, and it is harder to fully digest foods that are consumed before bed. Therefore, it is best to:

- avoid foods high in sugar as this raises blood sugar levels and causes a burst of energy.
- avoid foods that cause heartburn and indigestion (peanuts, spicy foods, cucumbers).

Create an optimal sleep environment

- Keep your bedroom cool for sleep: turn the heat down, open a window, use a fan or air conditioning.
- Keep the bedroom dark.
- Use earplugs to cancel noise.
- Have a supportive mattress and pillows.

Focus on a relaxation response

Just prior to sleeping:

- find a comfortable position in bed.
- close your eyes to minimize distractions.
- disregard daily thoughts.
- relax your muscles.
- use breath work or a mantra to focus on sleep.
- listen to relaxing music or a guided meditation.

Sleep well!



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Letting Go of the Search for Work-Life Balance

by Michael LeBlanc,
Coordinator, Professional Counselling Service for Teachers



This year marks my thirteenth supporting the mental health of New Brunswick's teachers. It has been an honour. I have more respect for teachers now than ever before. Seeing what they go through daily to be their best selves makes me proud to be in this profession.

But I am worried. I am worried about the increasing challenges that teaching presents — namely the increased workload put on their plates, the ever-rising pressure put on them to do more with less, and the toll all of this takes on their mind, body, and spirit.

Teachers are a proud and strong group of professionals. But even they have their limits, and that's when they pick up the phone or shoot an email my way. They come to see a teacher-counsellor because they are struggling with work or life, or both.

The most common question we discuss is "How can I stay healthy while teaching?" This is the ultimate question. And inevitably in our conversation the term work-life balance pops up. "How can I find the right balance between teaching and my family life?"

While I wasn't around 120 years ago when the NBTA started, I suspect that even back then teachers struggled to find work-life balance. Finding a way to prioritize your career and your life outside of your career equally seems like the holy grail of happiness. But I've come to believe that finding and keeping a balance between work and life is an impossible goal to reach. It's hard to find a balance when we are always changing, and work and life are always changing at the same time.

When I think about times when I reached work-life balance, it reminds me of the proverb "Even a broken clock is right twice a day." From what I have seen in my own life and in my work with teachers, everyone has a brief sense of feeling a "balance" here and there, but it's mostly due to pure luck (or to the teaching calendar).

I believe that teachers need to let go of seeking work-life balance. It seems like a lofty objective that we can't meet. I stopped aiming for this several years ago. I believe in setting myself up for success when it comes to my health, and I noticed that striving for constant balance just made me frustrated and disappointed. I needed to find a new perspective.

Life-Work Fit

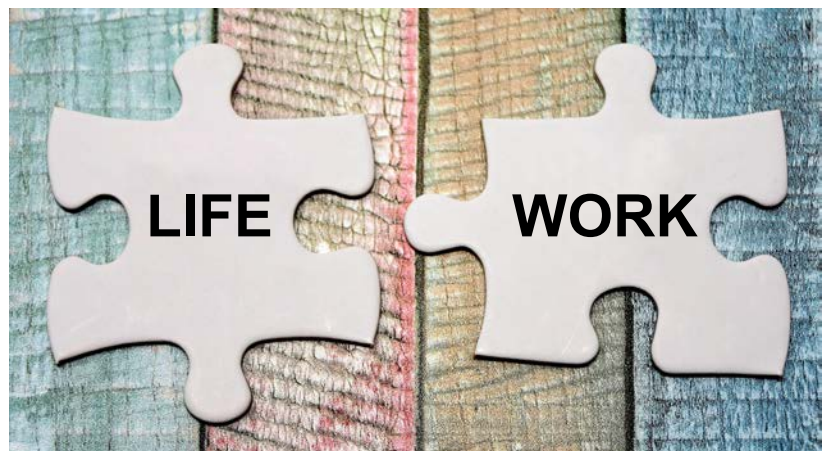
It was then that I came across the term work-life fit. The word fit really resonated with me. "Yes! I need to view each day like a 'priority puzzle' that I need to fit together rather than trying to make work and life balance out." To me the word fit means that

sometimes work will be busier, sometimes life will be busier, and my purpose is to find a way to make them work together based on my own needs and those of my family and work. By focusing on how they all fit together, I don't have to search for this elusive notion of "balancing" them. This gives room for imbalance, which is inevitable as our lives change.

And who says that work must come first? I took the initiative to change the term. I say, "Life-work fit." I am the one who gets to decide which one is more important to me. And I choose life. I am going to strive to fit work into my life, although it would be naive of me to think, especially as a teacher, that they can be totally separate. I know that I can't stop caring for and thinking of others when I leave my office at 5:00. Our work as teachers involves helping other humans, and when we help others, we naturally worry about them, so our work takes up a large role in our sense of self.

We often think about our students and our to-do lists when we are not at school, especially during the school year. This is just the way it is. So if life and work blend into one another, how do we fit them together in a way where we don't feel like we are working all the time but still feel competent in our work as teachers?

This is what part two of this article in the next issue is going to cover: "How to Incorporate a 'Life-Work Fit' Model as a Teacher."





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Duration:
March 14 - April 21, 2023.



So, You Have Decided to Retire?

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

Retirement Process

- Verify that you are eligible to retire by contacting NBTA or Vestcor Pension Services.
- Notify your superintendent, in writing, of your intention to retire: specify the date of retirement (always at end of the month - e.g., June 30, 2023)
- Make arrangements with a financial institution to have your retirement allowance placed in a RRSP account or any other registered investment mechanism.
- If you are age 60 or over, do not forget to apply for the Canada Pension (CPP).

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 Vestcor Pension Administration Services (Pensions Branch).

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

Michael Butler
michael.butler@nbta.ca
452-1722

District Office will contact you to complete various forms and will require the following documents:

- birth certificate for you and, if applicable, your spouse/partner
- blank/void cheque for direct deposit
- name of financial organization to send your retirement allowance
- your latest Income Tax Assessment (to verify RRSP space)
- marriage certificate (if applicable)

Vestcor Pensions Preliminary Retirement Statement will be forwarded to your home address. Choose the surviving spouse/partner percentage option on this document (if applicable).

Note: It is important that the Vestcor Pension Administration Services 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 first pension deposit. The school district will look after sending these forms where appropriate.

Attention 2023 Retirees!

Teachers retiring this school year will be able to choose the option of having a donation made in their honour to the **Make-A-Wish Foundation**, rather than receiving the framed, inscribed print, featuring the NBTA stained-glass window. Those retirees wishing to choose the option of a donation must **contact Tammy Boon at the NBTA by [April 17, 2023](https://www.nbta.ca) (tammy.boon@nbta.ca)**.



*These donations are not individually tax-deductible as it is the organization making the payment.



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2023-2024 School Year

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Application forms are available on the NBTA website (www.nbta.ca) under Forms > Interest-Free Loans.

Have questions?
Rick Cuming
rick.cuming@nbta.ca
or (506) 452-1721

Form Submissions:
Margaret Mott
margaret.mott@nbta.ca
or (506) 452-1739

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We Believe - Saint John is a registered charity that engages students in volunteerism, leadership, and social action through year-round activities. We Believe is an international celebration to motivate students across the Maritimes and the state of Maine to give back locally and globally to causes they are passionate about. On May 18, 2023, at TD Station, We Believe will be celebrated by almost eight thousand students and staff, from grades five through twelve, from across New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Maine.

At We Believe 2023, the speakers and performers will focus on mental and physical health, volunteering, bullying, and how each of us can better the world. Students and adults attending the event will have the opportunity to speak with over forty organizations where they can become volunteers in their community. In addition to this, various organizations will offer information to students who wish to broaden their volunteer experiences by going beyond the Maritimes and out into the rest of the world. We Believe 2023, in partnership with the many businesses and organizations across the Maritimes and Maine, will be the second time We Believe will be held at TD Station in Saint John. Students cannot purchase a ticket to We Believe 2023; they must earn their way by doing something positive, locally or globally.

Please feel free to check out our website at www.webelieve.ca and contact Dan Foote at danfoote@nbnet.nb.ca to request your free tickets to We Believe 2023.



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“Some students at McAdam High were lucky enough to have their picture taken with the large Canadian flag that went around the arena in Halifax at the world junior hockey championships. The flag crew for the world junior tournament are six former students and staff from McAdam High. Dean McIntyre, Corey Messer, Perry Reagon, Michael Moffitt, Wayne Coburn, and Jody Robinson thought it would be a great chance to have the students touch a piece of history before it was shipped back to Alberta.”





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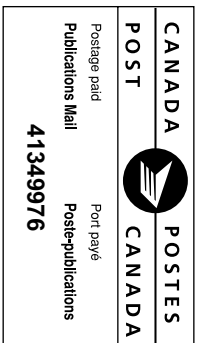
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