

The Cuffer



A newspaper for School Councils in Newfoundland and Labrador

February 2016



Message from NLFSC President

Happy New Year! Since my last message the province of Newfoundland and Labrador has elected a new government. Congratulations to Premier Dwight Ball and our new Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, Dr. Dale Kirby.

Education is a partnership involving our communities, teachers, parents, students, principals, elected school boards, and the provincial government. Communicating with school councils is the single most important role of our federation. We all share the common goal of ensuring all of our children receive a high quality of education as well as an accountable education system for our children.

Our vital role in this province's education system depends on our ability to communicate with member councils. Your recommendations, concerns, and issues provide the basis for our advocacy with the school board and government. Together we influence decisions that affect

students' education.

Many channels of communication are required to ensure that your school council functions effectively. Chairs should ensure that council members are accessible to one another. They should poll council members to ensure every member has an opportunity to add items to the next meeting agenda. The chair needs to develop a good working relationship with the principal. Trust, respect, and open communication cannot be stressed enough.

Councils and principals must establish an effective means of communication to ensure information – like *The Cuffer* – are made available to the council. All council related communication, digital or written form, should be shared. Councils should have an in-box/mail box in every school for all materials related to council. Every councillor should be given a copy of the School Council's Handbook. All communication from the federation must be forwarded to council.

With our province facing an unprecedented financial crisis, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development has asked us **not** to come to the pre-budget process with a wish list. He wants the NLFSC to make suggestions about how education can be delivered at lower costs. There is an expectation that we can find ways to reduce expenditures, eliminate waste while identifying ways to deliver better and more efficient services.

Our provincial executive met recently to discuss the impact of the province's fiscal situation on the delivery of education. We have also written every council asking them to consider the Minister's request. It is vitally important that we all participate in this process. We already know budget cuts over the last three years have cut the front line delivery of education in our schools to the bone. Teachers, administrators, and programs have been cut consistently in past provincial budgets. These professionals are stressed and are now facing anxiety about their jobs.

We need teaching positions reinstated, we need more mental health specialists in our schools, smaller class sizes, more literacy and numeracy supports, and the Administration Allocation increased to where it was a few years ago. We are in desperate need of more resources for the fledgling inclusion model. There is no room for a 30% cut to the frontline delivery of education in NL.

The government is committed to the introduction of a Full-Day Kindergarten program for September 2016. The cost of the implementation (as of Budget 2015) is \$32 Million. Subsequent to implementation, the annual cost of the initiative will be \$13.3 Million for teaching and programming. To find savings, we believe the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development should reassess their expenditures on consultants, project management, school busing routes and the way tenders are awarded for education facilities.

It is more important than ever, as we head into this era of multi-BILLION dollar deficits, that the voices of school councils remain strong, informed, and united towards our common goal of ensuring all of our children receive a high quality of education. We must work together to ensure an accountable education system for our children.

Sincerely,

Peter L. Whittle (peterlwhittle@gmail.com)

Media Interviews

President Whittle has been in the media (TV, radio, and newspapers) discussing a number of issues affecting our schools, students, and School Councils.

Topics include:

- **Student Conduct and Social Media Policies**
- **Mental Health and Addictions**
- **Teacher Allocations**
- **Student Evaluation and Assessment**
- **School Board Elections**
- **Funding for Education**
- **Full Day Kindergarten**
- **School Construction and Renovations**

Meeting with the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association

On January 6, 2016, President Whittle and Executive Director Pike met with Jim Dinn, President of the NLTA and Steve Brooks, Assistant Executive Director, NLTA. The meeting provided the opportunity for engagement and discussion on common concerns and goals for public education in NL.

NLFSC values our relationship with the NLTA and looks forward to continuing to work with them on shared education concerns.

Thank you to the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association for printing this Newsletter!



Meeting with the Minister of Education

On January 13, the President and Executive Director met with the Minister of Education, Dale Kirby. Some of the agenda items included:

- Mental Health and Addictions (secure treatment and secure withdrawal management legislation)
- Full Day Kindergarten
- School Board Elections
- Provincial Budget and the impact on Education

Annual Stakeholder Meeting of Recreation & Sport For Persons with a Disability

On January 2, 2016, President Whittle attended the first Annual Stakeholder Meeting of Recreation and Sport for Persons with a Disability. The meeting provided the opportunity for President Whittle to meet many people who are interested in improving recreation and sport opportunities for persons with disabilities, and to offer input and set priorities on the development of a 3-5 year work-plan.

NLFSC Executive Meeting

On January 23, 2016, members of the NLFSC met in St. John's for a planning meeting. Agenda topics included:

- ✓ *School Council Training*
- ✓ *Panel on the State of Public Education*
- ✓ *Political Leaders Forum (Funding Commitment)*
- ✓ *Mental Health and Addictions*
- ✓ *Board of Trustee Election*
- ✓ *Full Day Kindergarten*
- ✓ *School Council Training*
- ✓ *Operational Budgets for Schools and Fundraising*
- ✓ *Pre-budget Presentation/Provincial Budget*

School Board Election of Trustees

During a recent meeting with Minister Kirby, President Whittle inquired about the date of the next School Board Election of Trustees. The Minister said it would be held within 12 months. President Whittle expressed disappointment on the time-frame and said students and schools deserve to be represented by Trustees who are elected, as opposed to appointed, and that an election should be held sometime in the spring.

President Whittle also stressed the importance of effectively informing parents, school councils, and the public about the role of a Trustee – as well as the name of each Trustee representing their school and zone. *(The majority of School Councils and parents do not know who their representing trustee is, or what role they serve, and most question their value).*

Every School Council member, parent, and teacher deserves to know who is representing their educational concerns and advocating on their behalf. A board of Trustees is accountable to the people they serve and they should be locally-elected representatives selected by the public, not government. The role of a Trustee takes dedicated leadership, coupled with a willingness to seek innovative ideas, and the courage to implement them.

President Whittle will continue to lobby for the School Board Election of Trustees to be held this coming spring. He will also work to ensure that School Councils are included in the electoral process of the Trustee Election (date, setup, and promotion) – and that a Ballot Box is located at every school.

Pre-Budget Consultations

Over the next few months, the government of NL will be holding pre-budget consultations designed to provide key stakeholders, individuals, and interest groups an opportunity to identify budget priorities for consideration

during the upcoming provincial budget. As with other years, NLFSC will submit a proposal on behalf of our membership and students. Feel free to e-mail us your education priorities or suggestions to include in our presentation.

Our Fiscal Future: Starting the Conversation

On January 12th the Provincial Government launched a multi-year government renewal initiative to identify a combination of measures to eliminate the province's deficit and move forward with a sustainable budgetary framework for Newfoundland and Labrador. All Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans are asked to participate in this initiative and help define the actions the Provincial Government will take.

The government welcomes ideas, suggestions, and solutions as they attempt to get the province back on track and working towards fiscal sustainability.

These are the various ways you can get involved:

- Read the [discussion document](#)  (1 MB), which poses questions that ask what is most important to you.
- Attend a [public session](#). Check back for more dates.
- Hold your own session. Engagement guide will be available soon.
- Email government at OurFiscalFuture@gov.nl.ca
- Call 1-844-805-3494.
- Engage in conversation on [Twitter](#) .

You are encouraged to provide input and assist in setting financial priorities by answering the following questions:

1. **Thinking of all of the things government spends your money on to provide the residents of the province with services, what are three things that could be stopped in order to save money?**

2. **Given the financial challenges facing our province, what three things do you think government could do to raise money (increase revenue)?**
 3. **How can government be more innovative or efficient to provide quality services at lower costs?**
-



Pink Shirt Day

Bullying is often a problem in our schools, workplaces, homes, and over the Internet. On **Wednesday, February 25** the NLFSC executive encourages School Councils across the province to wear something pink to symbolize that we as a society will not tolerate bullying anywhere.

Pink Shirt Day began in Nova Scotia in 2007, when two Grade 12 students – David Shepherd and Travis Price – stood up to defend a young male person who was bullied because he was wearing a pink shirt during the first week of school. The students took a stand by wearing pink shirts to show solidarity, and handing out pink shirts to their classmates.

Pink Shirt Day has since become a national campaign aimed to raise awareness about the power to prevent bullying.

Pink Shirt Day aims to reduce bullying by celebrating diversity and promoting the development of positive social relationships. The annual event helps to create a province and nation where all people feel safe, valued, and respected.

Pink Shirt Day unites people in a movement to change people's attitudes towards bullying. It

teaches young people that we need to be more accepting of differences and that we cannot stand by and watch as bullying occurs around us. Schools, police departments, businesses, politicians, and youth groups across Newfoundland and Labrador are using this day to raise awareness of the negative effects of bullying and show that any form of bullying will not be tolerated in their organization.

You too can join the sea of pink! NLFSC invites you to take the opportunity to address the issue of bullying with your children or teens, by wearing pink, planning an event or activity or just having an intentional conversation.



The NLFSC Executive met in St. John's on January 23 for a Planning Meeting.

Members, from left, include:

- President Peter Whittle
- Vice President Paulette Fifield
- Past President Ruby Hoskins
- Vice President Terry Green

Missing from photo: Secretary Margaret Moore and Treasurer Michele Peach.

Mental Health and Addictions

The importance of healthy mental and physical development for children cannot be over-estimated. Many people recognize the importance of a healthy childhood, but few understand the impact of mental and emotional problems and the effect it can have on children and youth.

As many as one in four young Canadian adults between the ages of 15 and 25 suffer from some degree of depression, substance dependence, or anxiety disorder.

Advocating for supports for Mental Health Issues and Addictions among our youth has been one of the main goals of the NLFSC over the past few years.

We often hear from parents who are searching for Mental Health and Addictions Counselors for their children.

Provincial Secured Treatment Plan

For the past five years NLFSC has been lobbying government to change the age of consent for treatment from 16 to 18 years of age to give parents the right to ensure their child receives treatment.

NLFSC would like to see a similar model like the Alberta's Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Act (PCHAD) implemented in NL. Under this model, parents or guardians of children under the age of 18 (with addictions) can apply for a protection order for treatment for their child. If the court agrees with the parents or guardians that drug use is causing harm to their child, the court can send the child to a protective safe house for up to ten days. This safe house will provide them with treatment and help them manage withdrawal.

Despite numerous meetings with representatives from the departments of Justice, Education and Health, as well as multiple promises to have the legislation regarding Secured Treatment tabled in the House of Assembly, no changes have taken place.

NLFSC has requested a meeting with the new Minister of Health and Community Services, John Haggie, and is waiting for a scheduled date.

In the meantime, President Whittle and Past President Ruby Hoskins continue to lobby

ber those little, often overlooked qualities that make teachers such special people in our children's lives.

Be sure to tell teachers and school staff how much you appreciate who they are and what they do.

Give Teachers/School Staff More Quality Time

One thing parents probably don't think about is that the "quality time" teachers and school staff spend with our children is just as important to them as it is for parents. Quality time for teachers means teaching.

Often teachers are asked to assume a range of clerical and other school duties that take time away from teaching our children. When you advocate for teachers, advocate for giving teachers the time they need to teach. Let your teachers know you value their profession and support their needs. Be their advocate and you will find them advocating for you and your children!

A little gesture can make a huge difference. When parents take time to thank teachers, it makes both the parents and teachers feel good about working together. When parents and teachers work together, student achievement soars!



Education Week 2016

Education Week 2016 corresponds with Teacher Staff Appreciation Week – celebrated from February 14-20.

This year's theme is "*Teachers Change Lives Every Day*" with five sub-theme words for the week. They are: **T-technology; E-educate; A-appreciate; C-career; and finally H-health.** Education Week can be an enriching experience for students, teachers, and parents. All teachers are encouraged to continue to observe Education Week with their students. All students have much to contribute and would grow and learn from involvement in Education Week activities.

The Opening Ceremonies for Education Week will be held at St. Bernard's Elementary in Witless Bay on Monday, February 15th starting at 9:30 a.m. Schools will be provided with the opportunity to view the event via a live stream.

Lets celebrate learning and the importance of learning!

Membership

If you have not yet sent us your membership renewal, we would like to extend to you a friendly reminder to do so.

We don't want you to miss out on your ability to participate fully in the upcoming General Meeting on May 2, 2016 in St. John's. If you have any questions about renewing your membership, or about NLFSC, please don't hesitate to contact us at our email address, by telephone, or regular mail. We look forward to receiving your renewal.

Thank you to schools that have already paid their membership fees!

School Council Person of the Year Award



Piccadilly Central High School Principal James Parsons presents the NLFSC 2014-15 School Council Person of the Year Award (SCPYA) to Judy Gaudon during the school's annual Awards Night Ceremony on December 17, 2015.

Judy was nominated for the award by Michael Hawco and John Cherwinski – teacher representatives on Piccadilly Central High School Council (Port au Port Peninsula).

Judy is a tireless volunteer who has worked exceptionally hard to achieve a number of goals to benefit the school community of Port au Port. Her leadership, hard work, determination, and tremendous commitment in spearheading three significant school level initiatives make her a worthy recipient of the School Council of the Year Award.

The first initiative was the establishment of a Cap and Gown Ceremony for student graduates. Judy organizes the physical set up of the school gymnasium, the ordering of the food, printing of programs, and the sizing and ordering of gowns. She also contacts each graduate personally to encourage his or her participation in the ceremony.

Secondly, Judy has been the driving force behind the establishment of the Piccadilly Central High Scholarship and Bursary Program. Judy singlehandedly canvassed area businesses, municipalities, and private citizens to secure a scholarship fund for disbursement on an annual basis. The program awards approximately \$4500

to Piccadilly high school students pursuing post-secondary studies.

Judy also worked with the donors to develop the award criteria and has established a bursary awards selection committee. She is currently in the process of incorporating the bursary awards selection committee with Revenue Canada. Finally, Judy heads the two major fundraising initiatives for the senior prom, which include the selling of tickets on donated prizes and organizing a food bingo.

Together these fundraisers contribute approximately \$3000 to the school on an annual basis. Several letters of support accompanied Judy's nomination application. "Judy has exhibited tremendous perseverance and determination in successfully establishing the Piccadilly Scholarship and Bursary Program," says James Parsons, Principal of Piccadilly Central High.

"This programs serves a symbiotic educational purpose: students benefit financially as they begin post secondary studies and the donors become firmly invested in the success of Piccadilly Central High Students. Judy has also demonstrated a keen interest and understanding in the academic issues (challenges and successes) relevant to our school. She has been a strong advocate in the promotion of our academic success to the community which in turn has contributed to a more positive school climate."

In her letter of support, Mary Baxter, CYN Youth Engagement Coordinator for the Port au Port District said: "Judy is a strong and dedicated volunteer and has personally been the driving force behind many initiatives that benefit not only the school and students, but also the community at large."

In the spirit of true volunteerism, Judy works unselfishly each year at her school and never looks for recognition.

"Because of Judy's effort, many students have received numerous scholarships and bursaries

that have aided them in achieving post secondary success,” says Tony Cornet, MHA for the District of Port au Port.

“Judy has also been very active and effective with the local 3012 Lynx Army Cadet Program and the Duke of Edinburgh Program.”

Judy has consistently gone above and beyond the call of duty in volunteering her time and effort for her school. She is very positive and goal oriented, and has earned the respect of Piccadilly School Council, her school community as well as the members of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils.

The 2014-15 Winner of the School Council Person of the Year Award was officially announced on May 2, 2015 at the NLFSC Annual General Meeting.

NLFSC Life Membership Award



NLFSC President Peter Whittle presents Past President Ruby Hoskins with the 2015 NLFSC Life Membership Award in recognition of her exemplary commitment to the NLFSC at both the local and provincial level.

Ruby Hoskins lives in Creston South on the Burin Peninsula. Ruby has been involved with School Councils for 20 years in various capacities and served on numerous school committees.

As a long time School Council representative and a member of the NLFSC executive for nine years Ruby has:

1. Promoted the involvement of parents in NL’s public education system in a positive, effective, and long-lasting way.
2. Actively contributed to the work of NLFSC and the significant advancement of its purposes as an organization.
3. Shared her expertise on the Boards of NLFSC through participation in dialogue with executive and involvement in numerous AGMs.

Ruby’s contribution to the Federation is considered to have been of significant lasting importance to the inclusion and support of parents in NL’s public education system and the improvement of education for children in the province.

Ruby was a member of the Sacred Heart Academy Nutrition Policy Committee – one of the first schools in the province to implement a nutrition policy before government regulations went into effect. Because of their leadership, Sacred Heart Academy was recognized by the Dept. of Education as a model school for policy reform and implementation of best practices.

Ruby has also been actively involved with the local Minor Hockey Association in Marystown for 11 years where she served as President for five and is now the Past President. Ruby also coaches the local Minor Hockey Association Midget House League and All Star team. Seven of the years she served as coach, she was also a member of their Executive.

Ruby has volunteered with countless organizations and committees, both locally and provincially, and continues to advocate for improvements in education and health care, especially when it comes to Mental Health and Addiction issues for our youth.

Ruby's leadership skills and passion to help others assisted her in obtaining a seat as a Councillor in the town of Marystown during the 2013 Municipal Election. She has since been appointed Chair of the Protection of Persons and Property Committee, and Co-Chair of the Public Works Committee.

Ruby is also an active member of the Town of Marystown Recreation Committee and a member of MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving).

One of Ruby's most renowned accomplishments was the establishment of the committee ***Stand Against Drugs*** – a committee she founded out of concern and compassion to help educate parents and caregivers about the impact of drugs on a person and family.

Because of Ruby's leadership advocacy many youth and families have received support and an improvement in services to assist them with their addictions and mental illness. Her close work with the RCMP has also resulted in several drug busts, and an increased fear among those peddling the drugs, of getting caught.

Ruby served two terms as President of the NLFSC. During that time she repeatedly demonstrated education leadership when it came to advocating on behalf of students and schools. She also represented NLFSC on numerous provincial committees including the Student Support Services Advisory Committee with the Department of Education and was part of CURA (Community-University Research). In her current role of Past President, Ruby continues to assist and support the executive and is always eager to share her expertise and knowledge on various issues.

Over the past 10 years she has participated in hundreds of discussions with officials from the Department of Education and other agencies on issues affecting students and families both academically and socially – always with a student first philosophy in mind.

Ruby has been a dedicated and loyal member and supporter of the NLFSC Executive and has worked diligently to further the NLFSC's mandate for excellence in education for all children in Newfoundland and Labrador.

On behalf of the NLFSC membership we are pleased to present Ruby with the Federation of School Councils Life Membership Award for outstanding and dedicated service to Education and to the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils.

Congratulations Ruby! We are sincerely grateful for everything you have done to help move NLFSC into the future.



School Council of the Year Award

NLFSC is currently accepting nominations for the 2015-16 School Council Person of the Year Award.

Purpose

The purpose of the Award is to publicly recognize significant and outstanding achievements of School Council Members.

Candidates

Candidates for the award may be any school council member (i.e. parents, teachers, students, community reps, principals).

Candidates who contribute by actions and efforts to the development of a positive learning environment may be nominated by their colleagues, students, or parents.

Criteria

- Performance of volunteer duties at a high level at all times.
- A significant school and/or system-related achievement.
- A specific innovation or achievement of significant value or importance to the school community, or a unique circumstance considered worthy of recognition by the NLFSC Board.
- A member of a School Council in good standing with the NLFSC.

Nomination Procedure

Nominations will be submitted on the Award nomination form by: Individual School Council members, Students, Parents, or School Council as a whole.

Nominations must include:

- The name of the candidate(s) and School Council location.
- Names of at least two nominators and their positions; or the School Council chair on behalf of the entire School Council.
- Signature of the administrator or School Council Chair along with a short rationale for the nomination.
- The provision of supporting documentation (letters of support, etc.) is important because it provides background information for members of the selection committee.

Nomination forms must be submitted to the NLFSC Office by **March 29, 2016**.

(Nomination form enclosed)

2016 Prime Ministers Award

Congratulations to teachers Cindy Barker of Stephenville Elementary (Stephenville), Denise Francis of St. James Elementary (Port aux Basques), and Kimberly Leonard of Mary Queen of Peace School (St. John's) on winning the 2016 Outstanding Principals Award.

The Award, presented by The Learning Partnership, honours principals from every province and territory in Canada who demonstrate innovation, entrepreneurial spirit and who have done something truly remarkable in public education.

Launched in 2005, the executive leadership program was created, in partnership with Rotman School of Management, to strengthen the education system in Canada by developing its leaders in publicly funded schools across Canada. The program offers principals from across Canada, who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in their schools and community, the opportunity to be brought to Toronto to be recognized nationally as innovative educators at an annual gala awards evening. The gala awards dinner for the 2016 winners will take place in Toronto on Tuesday, February 23.

The Outstanding Principals Award appropriately reflects the endless hours Ms. Barker, Ms. Francis, and Ms. Leonard have spent ensuring that each individual student obtains every opportunity to fully realize his or her talents and gifts.

On behalf of NLFSC executive and membership, thank you for your commitment to students and learning. Please accept our sincerest congratulations on this great achievement!!!



Census jobs

The 2016 Census is staffing 35,000 jobs across Canada

Period of employment:
early March to end of July 2016 (start date varies by assignment)

Hours of work:
flexible, but must commit to at least 20 hours per week

Rate of pay:
\$16.31 to \$19.91 per hour plus authorized expenses

Requirements:
must be 18 years of age or older and eligible to work in Canada

Apply now / tell a friend
www.census.gc.ca/jobs
 1-877-325-2016
 TTY (a telecommunications device for people who are deaf): 1-866-753-7083

Canada

some classroom exercises. For more information visit their website at:
www.freedomtoread.ca/kits.index.htm



Newfoundland and Labrador
 Federation of School Councils

National Nutrition Month

March is Nutrition month across Canada. This year's theme, "Eating 9 to 5," encourages personalized healthy eating styles and recognizes that food preferences, lifestyle, cultural, and ethnic traditions and health concerns all impact individual food choices. Registered dietitians play a critical role in helping people eat right, their way, every day.

National Nutrition Month is a nutrition education and information campaign created annually in March by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The campaign focuses attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits.

Freedom to Read Week February 21–27, 2016

Freedom to Read Week is an annual event that encourages Canadians to think about and reaffirm their commitment to intellectual freedom, which is guaranteed them under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The Freedom to Read kit is suitable for librarians and educators. It includes a poster, extensive background material on freedom to read, and

The Cuffer is a benefit of membership in the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils.

Annual membership dues are based on school enrolment. Individual subscriptions are available at \$15 per year.

The views expressed or implied in this publication are not necessarily official positions of the Federation. The mention of any program, organization, resource, product, person, place, or school does not constitute an endorsement by NLFSC.

Editor: Denise Pike
 Proofreading: Paulette Fifield

NLFSC Contact Information

P.O Box 23140
 St. John's NL
 A1B 4J9

Tel: (709) 229-2094
 Toll Free: 1-877-739-4830

Email: nlfsci@gmail.com