

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

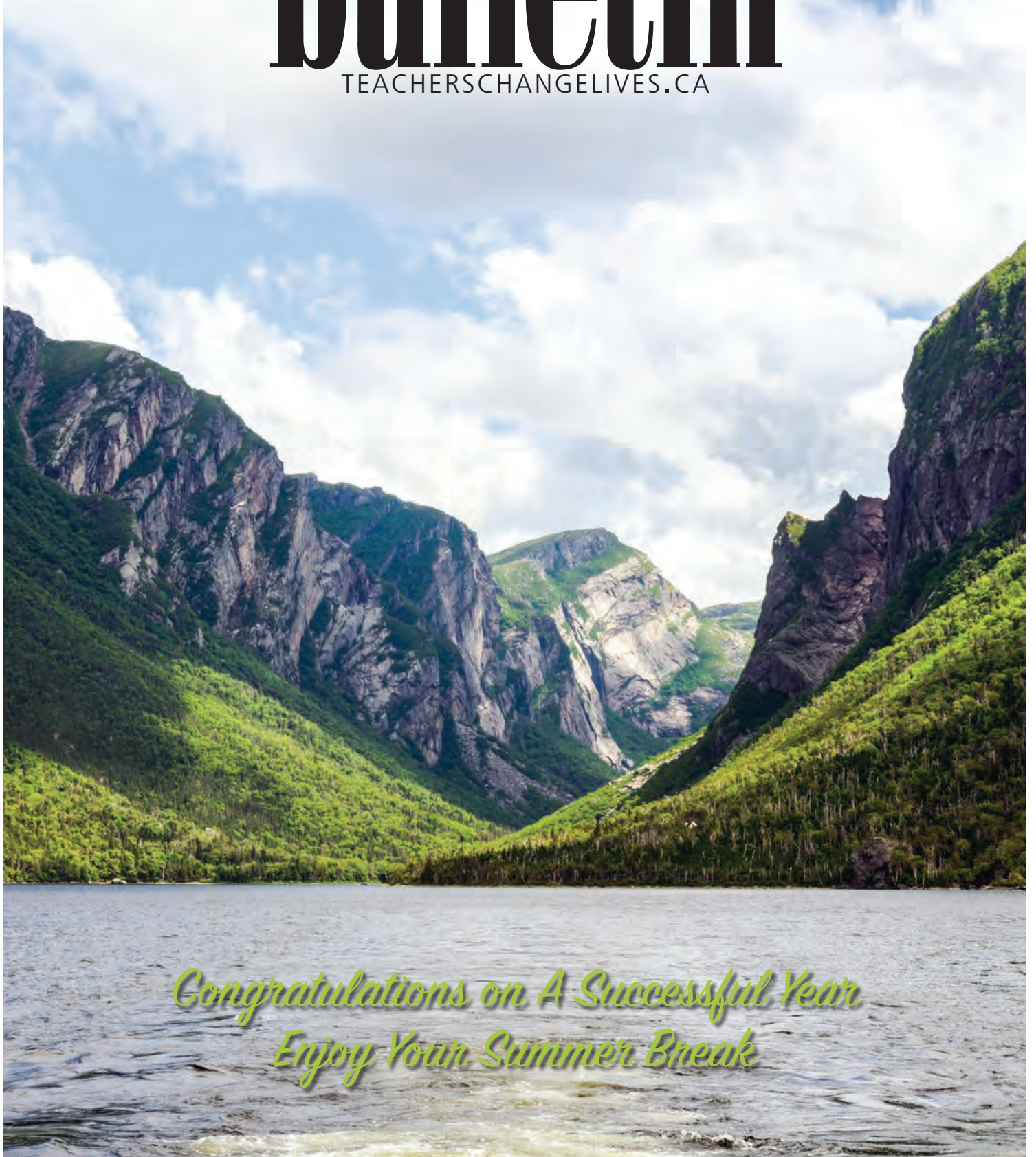
T H E

# bulletin

TEACHERSCHANGELIVES.CA

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*Congratulations on A Successful Year  
Enjoy Your Summer Break*

# Up Front from the President



Over the Easter break, teachers from across the province came together to participate in our Biennial General Meeting. The willingness of those hundred

plus individuals to give of their time during the Easter break is commendable. The work that is done at BGM is critically important as it sets the direction that your Association will take going forward.

Without question, one of the highlights of the convention was the keynote address as delivered by Maggie MacDonnell, 2017 Global Teacher Prize Award Winner. Her message of the impact teachers have on students' lives and the differences that we make to them hit a chord with the entire delegation at BGM. As she described her reality, I couldn't help but think of the many teachers across this province who share a very similar one. The emotional impact made on many in the audience was evident. The tenor of the media interviews conducted after the keynote certainly illustrated that. We all know that teachers do indeed change lives every day and we all have experiences that prove as much.

I am very proud of the work that has been done by the current NLTA Provincial Executive. I am also very much aware of the work that is before us all as we move into the next term of office. Let there be no mistake, our membership have expressed their frustration with the demands of the school system that we have in this province. There is a clear expectation that the Association must be fighting for improvements to our schools and our students' learning conditions, and that will only be accomplished through an improvement in their teaching conditions.

As I have said repeatedly, the NLTA is not just your Provincial Executive, Joint Council, or SIC. The NLTA is its membership – all teachers. When I speak, it is on your behalf. Our voices are as strong as the will of the full membership to be strong. As we move forward, we must remember that it is through the collective strength of teachers that we are able to be a collective voice with unity in purpose, and a willingness to speak out and demand the changes that are needed.

By the time you read this, the Provincial Election will be over and we will have a new government for the next four years. We are able to open our next round of negotiations in November of this year. It is important that we are positioned such

that the choice to open negotiations will not be impacted by our readiness. In the coming months we will become engaged in preparing for this. I would ask all of you to ensure that when requests are made for submissions on the priorities for collective bargaining, that you take the time to respond. Future directions are determined by the feedback that is received.

I do want to extend my thanks to all of those who offered themselves for our election for the 2019-21 Provincial Executive. All of the candidates would have represented the membership well. In coming weeks, we will be asking for teachers to sit on the various standing committees that carry out the work of the Association. I am very much looking forward to the work ahead and representing all of you during the 2019-2021 term of office.

In closing, let me say that I hope that the summer break is a rewarding one and that you take the time to relax and recharge. Our profession is a demanding one. We all need to take this time for ourselves. For those who are retiring at the end of the school year, I wish you sincere congratulations and I hope that retirement brings all that you want and more.

Until next time.

TEACHERS CHANGE  
LIVES EVERY DAY



T H E  
**bulletin**

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CONTENTS

**Features**

- 8 Programs & Services**  
*New Collective Agreement Provisions for Parenting Leave and New EI Parental Sharing Benefits*  
by Deana Hatcher
- 10 Filling Vacant Teaching Positions – An Overview of the Collective Agreement Process**  
by Ian Crewe
- 12 Pre-Retirement Seminars 2019**
- 14 Impact of 2016-2020 Collective Agreement Changes**
- 20 Living Well**  
*Summer: It's YOUR Time!*  
by Sophia Slaney

- 22 Technology Integration**  
*The Problem With Beavers*  
by David Gill & Louis House
- 24 Autism in the Classroom**  
*PEERS®: A Research-based Approach to Help Develop Positive Relationships*  
by Kendra Lane
- 26 Sharing Our Cultures**  
*Sharing Our Cultures Celebrates 20 Years in 2019*  
by Lloydetta Quaiocoe

**Departments**

- Up Front from the President* 2
- On Location News* 4
- In Memoriam* 7
- News and Events* back cover

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**  
**NLESD Substitute Teachers**

In order to be approved to the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD) substitute lists for the upcoming 2019-20 school year, current substitute/temporary/casual employees and employees on an approved leave of absence who are employed by the NLESD at the end of the 2018-19 school year, are required to submit a Criminal Offence Declaration. This is a written declaration prepared by the teacher listing the individual's charges and convictions for criminal offences under the Criminal Code of Canada and provincial legislation, since last submitting a Criminal Record Check or Criminal Offence Declaration to the District, up to and including the date of the declaration.

If you have never been employed by or have severed employment with the District and are planning to substitute in 2019-20, you will need to provide a Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Check. Due to the overwhelming volume of requests to the RNC and RCMP regarding code of conducts/vulnerable sector checks, **it would be wise to apply early to avoid delays.** Upon receiving your documents, they are then valid for six months.

If these documents are not present on your online profile at the time of applying for the substitute lists, you will not be approved. You should refer to the information provided on the NLESD website in this regard.

If you have any questions, please contact  
an NLTA Administrative Officer in Programs & Services  
at 1-709-726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, or mail@nlta.nl.ca

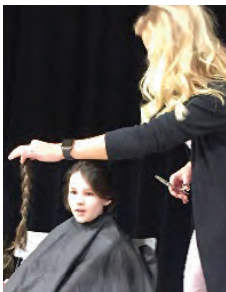
PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL  
**NEWS**

**ST. JOHN'S**
**Rennie's River Elementary Shave for the Brave**

It was another successful Shave for the Brave with 22 students at Rennie's River Elementary in St. John's. For some, it was their first shave; however, not for the brother team, Rex and Cole, who have been shaving for the past four years. When asked why they wanted to participate, they explained that they wanted to help others and to give to Young Adult Cancer Canada. Another student donated his long hair, which was braided, cut and then completely shaved.

Along with the 22 shavers, the whole student body participated by cheering them on and in some cases, even sponsored a shaver. Approximately \$4700 was raised for Young Adult Cancer Canada.

"In addition to supporting families of those dealing with cancer, Shave for the Brave teaches students lifelong lessons about citizenship and the importance of giving back," says Lorna Walters, Assistant Principal. "Rennie's River Elementary is most appreciative of the support of their brave student shavers, as well as the support of families and friends with their generous donations."



Rennie's River Elementary student donates his long, braided hair.



Students at Rennie's River Elementary participate in Shave for the Brave.

**POINT LEAMINGTON**
**Point Leamington student selected as Janeway Children's Miracle Network Champion Child**

The students and staff of Point Leamington Academy had the pleasure to attend a very special event – the Janeway Children's Miracle Network Champion Launch. One of their own students, Sammi-Jo James, who is in Grade 7, was selected to be this year's Champion Child. Sammi and her family will now travel to Orlando, Florida to take part in the Children's Miracle Network celebrations. "We are so proud of Sammi and would like to wish her all the best," says John Loder, Principal of Point Leamington Academy.



This year's Champion Child, Sammi-Jo James, cuts the cake at the Janeway Children's Miracle Network Champion Launch.

**SPANIARD'S BAY**
**Holy Redeemer Grade 3's Little Green Thumbs Project**

This past March, Holy Redeemer's Grade 3 students prepared and ate salad from food grown in their own classroom as part of their "Little Green Thumbs Project".

Grade 3 teacher, Ms. Marion Sheppard, extends a



ON LOCATION

big thank you to Mr. Garry Gosse, Chef, for adding some delicious ingredients. The students also made lemonade. "We look forward to having a bigger celebration later this year," concluded Ms. Sheppard.

To view more pictures, visit Holy Redeemer's website at [moodle.redeemer.k12.nf.ca/hra](http://moodle.redeemer.k12.nf.ca/hra).



Holy Redeemer's Grade 3 students with teachers Ms. Drover and Ms. Sheppard, and Chef Garry Gosse. Photo credit: Student Brooke Gosse

BAY ROBERTS

## Intermediate Bay Roberts Lion's Club Public Speaking Contest

The annual Intermediate Bay Roberts Lion's Club Public Speaking, sponsored by the Bay Roberts Branch of the NLTA and the Bay Roberts Lion's Club, took place on February 26, 2019. Three schools – Holy Redeemer, St. Peter's and Amalgamated Academy – took part in the event. There were six speakers whose topic was centered around the theme for Education Week, *Go the Extra Mile*.



The annual Intermediate Bay Roberts Lion's Club Public Speaking Contest. (l-r): Mrs. Deborah Ryan (Branch Executive), Kassy Keats (St. Peter's), Holly Fillier (Amalgamated), Alleigha Mahoney, 3rd Place (Holy Redeemer), Olivia Dyke, 1st Place (Holy Redeemer), Emma Lucas, 2nd Place (Amalgamated), Carly Crane (St. Peter's), Mr. Paul Sheppard (Branch President), and Mrs. Jennifer Pilgrim (Branch Executive)

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# ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR SERVING OUR KIDS

The 2018-19 school year has been a very busy one for our KES Breakfast Clubs. Currently, we serve over 29,000 breakfasts every school day.

Nationally, 1 in 5 children go to school hungry. We are no different here in Newfoundland and Labrador. With a slow economy, many people find themselves out of work or in lower paying jobs, with the same monthly bills. Families continue to tell us that food is the last item or lowest priority on their monthly budgets, especially foods such as milk and fruit.

We also continue to hear stories from parents who tell us that knowing their children receive healthy food at school, at no cost, is one less thing they have to worry about.

The success of our Kids Eat Smart Breakfast Clubs is the direct result of the collaboration between individuals, community groups, businesses and government. Our school community continues to raise funds and awareness through events like TD Walk to Breakfast and Breakfast Blitz. Many schools take on other fundraisers throughout the year to support their Breakfast Clubs.

Breakfast Clubs would not exist without the dedication and commitment from our school community including principals, teachers and school administration staff who ensure KES Clubs are properly run, follow the School Food Guidelines and are financially managed.

We enjoyed working together with our school community during the 2018-19 school year and look forward to working with you in 2019-20. Together, we will ensure our children start their days well-nourished to be ready to learn.

Thank you for all you do to ensure the success of our KES Breakfast Clubs.

If your school does not have a Breakfast Club and you are wondering how to start one, please contact Kids Eat Smart Foundation NL. If you have questions or require further information please call 709-722-1996, email [info@kidseatsmart.ca](mailto:info@kidseatsmart.ca), visit us online at [www.kidseatsmart.ca](http://www.kidseatsmart.ca) or Facebook and Twitter @KidsEatSmartNL.



Kids Eat Smart  
Foundation

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

## First Book Canada

This September, the national, nonprofit organization, First Book Canada ([www.firstbookcanada.org](http://www.firstbookcanada.org)), will be teaming up with Stephenville Elementary School to host the first ever FBC free Pop Up Book Distribution event in Stephenville. Book Distribution events allow FBC to distribute upwards of 15,000 free, brand new, high-quality books to its members serving children up to 18 years of age. First Book Canada serves public schools, libraries, health care centers, daycare centers, food banks, shelters, faith-based organizations, military family support programs, and community programs serving children and youth.

In order to make this event a grand success, FBC and Stephenville Elementary need help spreading the word to all those interested in participating and to encourage as many individuals to register with FBC as possible.

There is no cap on how many individuals can register from any qualifying institution and it serves as a huge advantage to any school or organization that has multiple individuals signed up as it dramatically increases the number of free books they can receive from First Book Canada. Members will be able to attend the event and pick up as many books as they need free of charge.

Please take the time (5-10 minutes) to register as a First Book Canada member today via [www.fbmpcanada.org/register](http://www.fbmpcanada.org/register), and spread the word to your colleagues. First Book Canada and Stephenville Elementary hope you will join them in Stephenville on September 18-20, as they strive to build more home libraries in the Maritimes.

For any questions related to registration or FBC programming, please reach out to FBC's National Engagement Coordinator, Tessa Eisenberg ([teisenberg@firstbook.org](mailto:teisenberg@firstbook.org)) or Barry Kendall, IRT for Stephenville Elementary ([barrykendall@nlesd.ca](mailto:barrykendall@nlesd.ca) or 643-2927). As members, you are able to access FB Marketplace (up to 90% of retail value of books), as well as receiving gift certificates from FBC.

**Wallace Rowsell, 1946-2019**

Wallace Rowsell was born on September 29, 1946 in Come by Chance. He grew up in Terra Nova, where he completed Grade 10, and then went on to Glovertown to complete Grade 11. After completing high school, he attended Memorial University, obtaining a Master's Degree in 1978.

Wallace's teaching career began in Charlottetown, Bonavista Bay. He later taught in Lewisporte, and finally in Stephenville, where he retired in 1997.

Wallace loved the outdoors. He would hunt, cut firewood, and go for many quad and ski-doo rides. He loved to spend time at his cabin in Terra Nova, where he would ride his quad, pick berries, and go for numerous boil-ups to places he enjoyed going to as a child.

Wallace's greatest passion, however, was badminton. He played the sport for over 60 years and coached the Stephenville Junior Club for 25 years. He continued to play until a year and a half before his passing. His love of the sport was passed on to his two sons, who continue to play and coach today.

Sadly, Wallace passed away on April 4, 2019 after a short battle with cancer. He leaves behind his wife, Lenie, of 48 years, sons Sheldon (Charlene) and Trevor (Tina), and his three grandchildren, Jakob, Olivia, and Chloe.

Rest in peace our dear Wallace.  
(Submitted by Lenie Rowsell)

**Kimberly Ann Sharpe-Young, 1966-2018**

Kimberly Ann Sharpe-Young from Kippens, Newfoundland passed away at Sir Thomas Roddick Hospital in Stephenville on August 6, 2018 at the young age of 52, after a five-year long battle with colon cancer.

Kimberly would best be remembered by her colleagues for her dedication to her teaching and her personal strength and perseverance to battle her disease and continue to teach. This was so evident during the five years she battled cancer. Despite the mental anguish and the physical pain she endured, she would go to school with a smile on her face and a positive attitude towards staff and students. She would go to the hospital in the morning session to receive chemo and return to school for the afternoon session. She never talked about her illness or looked for pity, but focused on her job and her students. She attended school up to the last day of June 29, 2018. She would best be remembered by her students for her ability to connect with them no matter their difficulties, either educational or otherwise. Her students appreciated her because they could see she genuinely loved them and cared

about them. They felt her love because they felt valued and respected no matter their walk of life.

Kimberly was born in Cambridge, Ontario on April 26, 1966. She returned to Stephenville Crossing, Newfoundland with her family in 1975 where she went on to graduate from high school at Assumption High, Stephenville Crossing in 1984. She attended Memorial University in St. John's from 1984 to 1989 and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Primary/Elementary Education. She enrolled in the Special Education Diploma Program at Nipissing University, Ontario in the years 2000-2002, where she completed additional qualifications in Special Education from the Ontario College of Teachers.

Kimberly's first permanent teaching position was at St. Anne's School, Fort Albany, Ontario, where she was a Kindergarten K4/K5 classroom teacher from 1990 to 1996. Fort Albany is a fly-in Cree First Nations Community of a thousand people located on the western shores of James Bay. She taught with the Fort Vermillion School Board in Northern Alberta from 1997 to 1998 in the community of Zama. From 2000 to 2005, she returned to the Cree First Nations Community, Fort Albany, Ontario with her family to teach in the community's newly built school, Peetabeck Academy, where she was the Grade One teacher for the duration of her stay. In 2005, she returned to Stephenville, where she taught as a Special Education Teacher in replacement positions in schools in the Bay St. George area. In 2009, she became permanently employed as a Pervasive Needs/IRT teacher at Stephenville High, where she taught up to her passing in 2018.

When not at school, Kimberly enjoyed a variety of crafts, sewing and crocheting. She enjoyed going to her cabin, listening to music and watching movies. She loved spending time with her family and her three dogs.

Kimberly was a dedicated teacher, wife and mother. She leaves to mourn her loving husband and partner of 33 years (Josh), sons (Braydon, Dalton and Landon), her mom (Clara), her dad (Robert), her sister (Marlene), her mother-in-law (Sarah), her father-in-law (Joshua), and extended family and many close friends.  
(Submitted by Kimberly's husband, Josh, and sons Braydon, Dalton and Landon)



Wallace Rowsell



Kimberly Ann Sharpe-Young





# New Collective Agreement Provisions for Parenting Leave and New EI Parental Sharing Benefits

by DEANA HATCHER

The purpose of this article is to make teachers aware of the available options under the new Maternity/Adoption/Parental Leave provisions of the provincial collective agreement, and to provide information on changes to Employment Insurance (EI) parental sharing benefits which apply to parents of children **born or placed with them for the purpose of adoption on or after March 17, 2019**.

Teachers can also access additional information on Maternity/Parenthood Leave at [www.nlta.nl.ca/leave](http://www.nlta.nl.ca/leave).

## Provincial Collective Agreement – New Maternity/Adoption/Parental Leave Provisions

With the provincial agreement signed on April 17, 2019, new parental leave options are available to teachers, extending the maximum duration for parenting leaves from 39 weeks while school is in session (one full school year), to a possible maximum of 58.5 weeks (one and a half school years). In both cases, this is actual school time and does not include the summer months. In the past, teachers wanting to stay home with their child for a period in excess of one school year had to request regular unpaid leave for that additional period. While on regular unpaid leave, to raise children, teachers would not have accumulated seniority, sick leave or service for salary increment purposes. Under these new provisions, teachers on approved parenting leave will continue to accumulate those benefits up to a maximum one-and one-half school years. Pensionable service can be purchased, following the period of leave, up to a maximum of 58.5 weeks. Teachers should make a request to purchase pensionable service within 180 days of returning from leave. As per Clause 26.06, government cost sharing of group insurance pre-

miums during a period of approved parenting leave is for a maximum of 39 weeks. It should be noted that while the Labrador West agreement is still being negotiated, these provisions only apply to members

of the Provincial agreement. Changes to the Labrador West agreement would come into effect as per any new provisions negotiated under that agreement.

**“It should be noted that while the Labrador West agreement is still being negotiated, these provisions only apply to members of the Provincial agreement.”**

## Employment Insurance – New Parental Sharing Benefits

Employment Insurance (EI) provides benefits for teachers on maternity/parenthood leave, provided the eligibility requirements are met. Biological mothers can receive 15 weeks of EI maternity benefits. Parental benefits are available under a Standard Option and an Extended Option (the latter was introduced in December 2017). Once a person starts receiving parental benefits, they cannot change options from standard to extended or vice versa. In March 2019, further changes were brought in by the federal government which may provide additional weeks of parental benefits for those parents who wish to share EI benefits for the purposes of raising their child. These changes apply differently depending on whether parents access the standard or the extended EI parental benefit option. For that reason, these changes are explained below as they apply to each option.

## Standard EI Parental Benefit Option

Standard parental benefits can be claimed by either parent, including adopting parents, for up to 35 weeks, or can be shared between them. For parents of children **born or placed with them for the purpose of adoption on or after March 17, 2019**, an



additional 5 weeks of benefits may be provided, as long as those benefits are shared between parents. Those benefits can be divided however parents choose, with the exception that one parent cannot receive more than 35 weeks of standard parental benefits. This means the total available parental benefits, when shared, goes from 35 to 40 weeks. Both parents could receive 20 weeks of benefits each or one parent could receive 35 weeks and the other 5 weeks and so forth. For 2019, standard parental benefits are 55% of your average weekly earnings, to a maximum of \$562 per week and must be claimed during the 12 months following the date the child was born or placed for the purpose of adoption.

### Extended EI Parental Benefit Option

Extended parental benefits can be claimed by either parent, including adopting parents, for up to 61 weeks, or can be shared between them. For parents of children **born or placed with them for the purpose of adoption on or after March 17, 2019**, an additional 8 weeks of benefits may be provided, as long as those benefits are shared between parents. Those benefits can be divided however parents choose, with the exception that one parent cannot receive more than 61 weeks of extended parental benefits. This means the total available parental benefits, when shared, goes from 61 to 69 weeks. One parent could receive 52 weeks of benefits and the other 17 weeks or one parent could continue to receive 61 weeks and the other 8 weeks and so forth. For 2019, extended parental benefits are 33% of your average weekly earnings, to a maximum of \$337 per week and must be claimed during the 18 months after the date the child was born or placed for the purpose of adoption.

### A Couple of "What If" Questions

**Q.** If I request parental leave from my employer for up to 1½ years, does that mean I have to request the extended EI option?

**A.** No. Remember that your leave from the employer is a benefit under your collective agreement and is not contingent on any EI benefits which may or may not be available to you. Your decision to avail of standard or extended EI benefits therefore remains your choice.

**Q.** If I take more than one year of leave from my employer, does it always make sense to choose the extended EI option?

**A.** It depends. If you're like me, you just sighed when you read that answer. I apologize in advance but it's a money issue, so stick with me on this! Let's take, for example, a teacher who starts parental leave on

May 1, 2019 and wishes to remain off work for May and June plus the following school year, preferring to come back at the start of September 2021 (about 8 weeks earlier than required). That teacher would request less than the full 1½ years of parental leave available to them. In addition to any EI maternity benefits, standard EI parental benefits of \$562 per week for 35 weeks plus \$0 benefits for the remaining 26 weeks the teacher is off would yield \$19,670. By comparison, extended parental benefits of \$337 per week for the full 53 weeks the teacher is off would yield \$17,861 (a difference of \$1,809). A teacher may wish to avail of standard EI parental benefits and put some money aside for those later weeks when EI benefits run out. This does not take into account an individual's tax implications and teachers may wish to explore this further with their financial advisor. Also, the above scenario is based on the benefits as of 2019 and does not account for any changes to EI benefits which could come into effect in the future.

### How Do I Decide?

You may be feeling a little overwhelmed as you digest a lot of information. In deciding whether to avail of any of these new benefits, you will need to reflect on your personal goals and individual circumstances. Hopefully, the above information will allow you to weigh some of the pros and cons of each of your options, combined with an assessment of your own personal circumstances, in order to make an informed decision that works for you.

For questions, information and advice on individual circumstances, teachers should contact an Administrative Officer in Programs and Services at the NLTA.

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*Deana Hatcher is an Administrative Officer in Programs and Services at the NLTA, dhatcher@nlta.nl.ca.*



# *Filling Vacant Teaching Positions* An Overview of the Collective Agreement Process

by IAN CREWE

As summer fast approaches, questions often arise surrounding the obligations of school boards when it comes to filling advertised vacant positions. Do transfer requests have priority over other applications? Does preference in hiring have to be given to replacement and substitute teachers over applicants who have no prior experience with the school board? How does the reassignment of teachers who have been declared redundant factor into the process? What does the new “seniority hiring” clause mean to permanent and replacement teachers? These types of issues are addressed in Articles 6 and 9 of the Provincial Collective Agreement and Articles 42 and 47 of the Labrador West Agreement.

Article 9 (Article 47 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement) sets out the manner in which school boards must deal with redundant teaching positions. If, based on seniority and an appropriate assessment of capability, a permanent teacher cannot be kept at his/her school, the teacher “shall have priority, based upon seniority, subject to capability to perform the job function required, to vacant teaching positions and teaching positions held by junior teachers, in the following order of priority: (i) within the community; (ii) within the nearest community, within the school district, where such a position exists.” The process of determining redundancies and offering reassignments for the coming school year takes place by May 7 of the current school year. Teachers who decline their reassignment are deemed to be laid off and will not be considered for recall until after the last day of June. However, those teachers who refuse reassignment can apply for positions between May 7th and the end of the school year and compete for positions along with other permanent teachers seeking transfer under Clause 6.11(a) (Article 44 for Lab West), as further explained below.

Vacant positions that are advertised between early May and the end of June, and from July 1

onward – after any reassignments and recalls of laid off teachers have been addressed – are filled in accordance with Article 6 of the Provincial Collective Agreement, in particular:

*6.03: The basic criteria for the selection of teachers shall be competence, suitability and qualifications as assessed by the School Board.*

*6.11: In filling vacant positions in accordance with Clause 6.03, the Board shall:*

*(a) make a reasonable effort to accommodate requests from teachers already employed with the Board in a continuing contract. When filling permanent positions only, if more than one such teacher makes a request for the same permanent teaching position, all of whom are assessed as competent, suitable and qualified, preference shall be given to the teacher with the greatest seniority as defined in Clause 9.01(a).*

*(b) subject to Clause 6.11(a), give consideration to applications from teachers who have served in replacement and/or substitute teaching positions with the Board before applications from teachers with no previous experience with the Board. (Emphasis added.)*

**(It should be noted that the Labrador West agreement is still being negotiated. Therefore, the provision for seniority-based hiring for permanent teachers looking to move to a different permanent position, which is new, only applies to members covered by the Provincial Collective Agreement.** Changes to the Labrador West Collective Agreement would come into effect as per any new provisions negotiated under that agreement. The process is otherwise the same within the Labrador West bargaining unit – see Clauses 42.05 and 42.07 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement.)

What this all means is that school boards have the right to establish, in good faith, the required currently modern standards in qualifications, com-

petence and suitability for teaching positions and to evaluate and assess applicants on the basis of those standards. After making a reasonable effort to accommodate requests, such as transfers, from teachers employed in continuing contracts, school boards are then obligated to consider their term contract and substitute teachers *before* moving on to consider applications from teachers who are new to the board. This language in the Collective Agreement creates three distinct pools of applicants for vacant positions: 1) teachers who have continuing (permanent) contracts; 2) teachers who have worked in term contracts or as substitutes; and, 3) teachers who have never been employed by the board before. The process is the same, but separate, for Teaching and Learning Assistant (TLA) positions, in accordance with Clause 6.12 of the Provincial Collective Agreement.

With respect to the new seniority provisions under the Provincial Collective Agreement, these apply to permanent teachers applying to move to a different permanent position – what is often referred to as “transfers”. This is minimum standard language, not a comparison or a question of degree. The new language ensures that, when permanent teachers – who are competent, suitable and qualified for the job in question – apply to move to a different permanent position with the same school board, preference in hiring will be given to the most senior applicant. Seniority hiring *does not apply* to recognized positions of administrative responsibility (Program Specialist, Principal, Vice Principal, and Department Head) or to TLA positions. The changes to Clause 6.11 have no impact on the rights of replacement and substitute teachers when applying for positions.

With respect to the filling of term and replacement positions, teachers should be aware of Clause 6.11(c), (Clause 6.12(c) for TLAs), of the Provincial Collective Agreement, which states: *Notwithstanding Clause 6.11(a), in filling term and replacement teaching positions that arise after July 15, the employer shall not be required to give consideration to teachers already employed in a continuing contract.*

This means that, in filling term or replacement vacancies that come into existence after July 15, the school districts are not obligated to consider permanent teachers who apply. Permanent teachers can still apply for such positions, but should understand that the employer may choose not to consider permanent teachers for term/replacement vacancies that arise after July 15. The same holds true for TLA positions, as per Clause 6.12(c).

Finally, it is important for all teachers who are

applying for positions to ensure that their individual teacher profile is up to date and contains all information relevant to their qualifications and previous employment, as well as up to date references.

Teachers who have questions about the hiring process or feel that their rights under the Collective Agreement have been violated in this or any other respect, should contact an NLTA Administrative Officer in Programs and Services for assistance and advice.

.....  
 Ian Crewe is an Administrative Officer in Programs and Services at the NLTA, [icrewe@nlta.nl.ca](mailto:icrewe@nlta.nl.ca).

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**VEHICLE**  
 2.80% on  
 5 Year Term

**PERSONAL LINE OF CREDIT**  
 Prime  
 +2%

**INVESTMENTS**  
 Posted Rate +0.35%

**As a teacher, you care for your students. We at NLCU, applaud all that you do, so consider this bundle of special offers a “Care Package” of sorts. You can benefit from any one or all of these special rates.**

**NLCU**
**NLCUHOME**

\* Annual Percentage Rate (APR) means the cost of borrowing for a loan expressed as an interest rate. It includes all interest and non-interest charges associated with the loan. Rates subject to change without notice. All loans and rates subject to credit approval.





# Pre-Retirement Seminars 2019

Teachers within two years of retirement eligibility should register for one of the NLTA's five Pre-Retirement Seminars scheduled to be held in the fall of 2019 in Corner Brook, Grand Falls-Windsor, and three in St. John's. These seminars are held in accordance with Association policy as part of its overall program of pre-retirement counselling. Clause 18.12 of the Provincial Collective Agreement and Clause 29.12 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement provide two days paid leave to attend these seminars.

Information sessions will deal with topics such as the Teachers' Pension Plan, Severance Pay, Employment Insurance, NLTA Group Insurance, Financial and Estate Planning and the Canada Pension Plan. As well, time is available for individual counselling of prospective retirees by the various consultants.

## Things You Should Know About Attending

- Potential participants must register with the NLTA for a particular seminar and apply to their Board office for leave.
  - Only those teachers eligible to retire during or before June 2022 will be eligible to attend.
  - Registration should be received at the NLTA Office at least four weeks in advance to ensure approval of attendance.
  - The Association reserves the right to refuse acceptance of registration at any particular seminar if the registration forms have not been received at the NLTA office in accordance with Association policy.
  - It is the responsibility of the individual participant to make arrangements and pay for hotel accommodations, should any be required. Please reference that you are attending an NLTA function and the hotel should provide a reduced rate which is available to the NLTA.
  - Travel expenses shall be reimbursed in accordance with the following provisions:
    - i) participants shall be reimbursed the lesser of travel by private vehicle or public transportation to the seminar closest to the place of residence. In the event that a teacher requests and is accepted to attend a seminar other than the closest seminar, the participant shall only be reimbursed the amount applicable for travel to the closest seminar. In instances where two or more members travel in the same vehicle, only one claim for travel expenses shall be paid.
    - ii) payment for private vehicle shall be at the rate which is 40% of the average cost of self-serve regular gasoline as determined on the first day of each fiscal quarter for the return trip from residence to seminar site.
    - iii) travel via public conveyance shall be reimbursed for ferry, taxi, or economy airfare; in the case of airfare, the lesser of excursion (seat sale) or 80 percent of economy airfare will be paid, where excursion (seat sale) fares can be arranged. Receipts shall be required for all reimbursement.
    - iv) no expenses will be paid to participants living or teaching in the community where the seminar is held.
    - v) a partner is welcome to accompany the participating teacher to the pre-retirement seminar, but no expenses will be covered.
  - All other expenses, such as meals, accommodation and child care, are the responsibility of the participating teacher.
  - Expenses will be provided for one pre-retirement seminar only and a teacher participant shall be permitted to attend one seminar only. (Notwithstanding this, a teacher may attend a second seminar as a partner.)
  - Teachers must attend the seminar location closest to their place of residence, except in cases where the mode, cost or availability of transportation necessitates otherwise.
  - School board management staff and partners are welcome to attend one pre-retirement seminar, but no expenses will be paid in accordance with this policy.
- Given the large number of teachers eligible to retire, we reserve the right to limit the number of people who will be granted access, depending on the physical facilities available at each site. Consequently, it is imperative that teachers plan ahead and register early in the event that registrations have to be taken on a first-come, first-served basis.

**NOTE:** The full text of the NLTA Policy on Pre-Retirement Seminars and the registration form can also be found on the NLTA website ([www.nlta.nl.ca](http://www.nlta.nl.ca)). Go to Programs and Services and then Pre-Retirement Seminars. The NLTA policy will also be emailed to teachers with confirmation of registration.

# 2019 PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINAR

## REGISTRATION FORM

Name .....

.....

Mailing Address .....

.....

Postal Code .....

Home Telephone .....

Last 4 digits of S.I.N.\* .....

School Name .....

School Telephone .....

Email .....

**\* By providing the last 4 digits of your SIN you are authorizing the NLTA to request your pension, severance (if applicable) and Group Insurance information from the applicable organizations. This information will be used for NLTA internal purposes only. Without your SIN information, your individual statements cannot be accessed and made available to you at the Pre-Retirement Seminars.**

Please check which session you will be attending:

- Oct. 24-25** – Mt. Peyton Hotel, Grand Falls-Windsor
- Nov. 6-7** – Greenwood Inn & Suites, Corner Brook
- Nov. 14-15** – Sandman Hotel, St. John's
- Nov. 28-29** – Sandman Hotel, St. John's
- Dec. 12-13** – Sandman Hotel, St. John's

Will your partner be attending?  Yes  No

Name of partner (if attending) .....

Earliest eligibility date for pension .....

Have you attended a previous pre-retirement seminar?

Yes  No

Do you have any food allergies?  Yes  No

If yes, please specify .....

- Note:**
- Teachers within two years of retirement (on or before June 2022) are eligible to attend.
  - All participants must pre-register.
  - You will receive confirmation prior to seminar.
  - Travel costs will be paid according to policy and only to the nearest seminar.
  - Teachers are advised to bring a calculator.

Please submit registration form to:

Janelle Downton  
 Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association  
 3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL A1B 1W1  
 Fax: 709-726-4302; 1-877-711-6582 (toll free)

or submit online at [www.nlta.nl.ca](http://www.nlta.nl.ca). Go to "Forms".

**NOTE: As space is limited, registrations will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis.**

FOR NLTA OFFICE USE ONLY		
Date Received	Confirmation Sent	Information Package Sent

# Impact of 2016-2020 Collective Agreement Changes

*The 2016-2020 Provincial Collective Agreement was officially signed on April 17, 2019.*

*Unless otherwise indicated, changes to the Agreement are effective as of the date of signing.*

## Letter #3 – Pensionable Service During a Legal Work Stoppage

The renewal of this letter in the 2016-2020 Provincial Collective Agreement has created a **THREE-MONTH WINDOW FROM April 17, 2019 – July 17, 2019 FOR TEACHERS TO PURCHASE LOST PENSIONABLE SERVICE DUE TO A PAST LEGAL WORK STOPPAGE.**

Teachers who were contributing members of the Teachers' Pension Plan during either or both of the work stoppages in 1982-83 and 1993-94 would have lost one month of pensionable service (0.1 years) in each of these school years, unless arrangements were previously made to purchase the lost pensionable service.

As a result, many teachers who work 30 complete years have 29.8 worked pensionable years and use rounding to retire in June of a year under "30 and out".

A teacher with 29.5 worked pensionable years can round for retirement purposes at the end of a school year (in June) only. A person with 29.3 or 29.4 worked pensionable years cannot retire in June, but must work an additional six or seven months in the following school year in order to be eligible to retire under "30 and out". (As well, rounding can occur in the same manner for teachers retiring under 29+1, and 25 and 55, but only in June.) For teachers who are short one or two months and wish to retire as early as possible, this window of opportunity to purchase strike time can be very important.

Purchasing pensionable service will also add 0.2% (0.22% for 1982-83 service) of pension accrual for each month purchased. The cost to purchase pensionable service during a legal work stoppage is twice the normal contribution rates at the salary in effect at the time of the work stoppage, plus interest.

For those teachers who are interested in purchasing this ser-

vice, the procedure is to email a request to the Teachers' Pension Plan Corporation (TPPC) at [memberservices@tppcni.ca](mailto:memberservices@tppcni.ca). You must provide your SIN and mailing address and ask for a contract to purchase pensionable service lost during a legal work stoppage(s). **This must be done within the three-month window ending July 17, 2019.** The TPPC will send you a contract in the mail outlining the cost and options for payment.

Relatively few teachers have utilized previous windows of opportunity to purchase "strike time" because there is no employer contribution to the cost. However, this window may be very important for those teachers who require one or two months to be able to utilize the rounding option for pension eligibility in June of a school year. Teachers should check their pension statement to determine their pensionable service as of the end of a school year.

To help in considering this option, the following examples, prepared by the TPPC, are designed to provide "ballpark" estimates of the cost of purchasing one month of strike time for pensionable service:

- A teacher with an annual salary of \$32,256.00 in 1993-94 would pay \$1,806.38 to purchase the one month of pensionable service.
- A teacher with an annual salary of \$36,657.00 in 1993-94 would pay \$2,035.77 to purchase the one month of pensionable service.

(Note: Your annual pensionable salary for each year of service is provided on your pension statement.)

Any questions can be directed to an administrative officer in Programs and Services at the NLTA.

## Article 5: School Board-Teacher Liaison Committee

For the NLESD, there will now be one provincial School Board-Teacher Liaison Committee (SBTLC) which will include five (5) teacher representatives, the President and NLTA staff, along with senior District staff and school board Trustees. Meetings will occur during the school day, twice per year. (There is already a single provincial committee for the Conseil scolaire francophone, which will continue as per current practice.)

The SBTLC members for 2018-20 were appointed this past fall; however, this was based on the structure in place at that time under the previous agreement. The new Agreement is now in effect and discussions are ongoing with NLESD to establish the first meeting under the new structure. NLTA staff will be in communication with Committee members regarding the appointment of SBTLC representatives for the new, provincial structure.



## Article 6: Employment of Teachers

Changes to Clause 6.11(a) introduce seniority-based hiring for permanent teachers applying to move to a different permanent position. **This is “minimum standard” language, meaning that the District will not be entitled to ignore seniority to hire the person they feel is most or more competent, suitable or qualified.** It is not a comparison or a question of degree. The new language ensures that, when permanent teachers – who are competent, suitable and qualified for the job in question – apply to move to a different permanent position with the same school board, preference in hiring will be given to the most senior applicant.

Seniority hiring does not apply to recognized positions of administrative responsibility (Program Specialist, Principal, Vice Principal, and Department Head) or to Teaching and Learning Assistant positions.

The changes to Clause 6.11 have no impact on the rights of replacement and substitute teachers when applying for positions.

## Article 7: Probationary Period and Tenure

In Clause 7.01(b)(i), the minimum number of days required for a probationary teacher to get credit for a year of probation has been decreased from 115 days to 97.5 days, which is one half of a full school year.

## Article 8: Notification of Vacancies and Promotion

With the changes to Clause 8.02, ALL substitute and replacement positions of more than one month in duration shall be posted on the employer’s website, regardless of how much notice the school district has of the vacancy. (Permanent vacancies always have to be posted.)

## Article 9: Layoffs

As per Clause 9.18, seniority lists must now be posted by January 31 (not December 31) and must be accurate as of December 31 (not August 31). This will provide more up to date information for teachers heading into the staffing season as seniority lists currently only reflect service up to the end of the previous school year. Teachers are encouraged to review their posted seniority and report any inaccuracies to the school district as soon as possible.

## Article 11: Teacher Certification

Improved language in Clause 11.02 ensures that teachers impacted by decisions made by the Registrar of Teachers shall receive written notification of the decision, including being informed of any applicable review and/or appeal procedures and timelines.

## Article 14: Evaluation

With the new language in Clause 14.05, school districts are now required to consult directly with the NLTA, as the representative of teachers, when considering changes to teacher evaluation policies.

## Article 17: Maternity/Adoption/Parental Leave

The maximum duration for parenting leaves has been increased from 39 weeks while school is in session, or one full school year, to a possible maximum of 58.5 weeks, or one and a half school years. This is actual school time and does not include the summer months. While on an approved parenting leave, teachers will continue to accumulate service for the purpose of sick leave, salary increments and pension (pensionable service must be purchased following the period of leave), as well as seniority, for up to a maximum of 58.5 weeks.

(As per Clause 26.06, government cost sharing of group insurance premiums during a period of approved parenting leave is for a maximum of 39 weeks.)

## Article 18: Leaves in General

With the changes to Clause 18.13, it is now mandatory to replace principals who are absent from school but still working for up to 5 days per school year. Internal staff reassignments would occur first, such as the vice principal filling in for the principal, or a teacher

on staff if there is no vice principal, but the provision of a substitute to cover remaining teaching duties, thus facilitating the internal coverage of administrative time, is required. The new language also retains the discretion schools currently have to replace the principal when absent for other duties when such absences occur in excess of 5 days in a school year.

## Article 19: Leave Without Pay

New Clauses 19.05 and 19.06 provide teachers with gravely ill family members or critically ill or injured children with the guaranteed option of taking up to 39 weeks of unpaid leave. Employment Insurance benefits may be available in such circumstances, but receipt of EI is not required to be eligible for this leave. Teachers will continue to accrue seniority when on unpaid leave for such reasons.

## Article 22: Method of Payment

Under this Agreement, there is a heightened expectation on the employer under Clause 22.04(b) to pay substitutes, whenever possible, within **two** weeks of the week in which work was performed.

## Article 23: Deductions

The new language in Clause 23.07 provides greater certainty of process in cases where teachers are overpaid due to a mistake – all overpayment recoveries must be distributed over 12 months unless the teacher and the employer agree to a different repayment arrangement.

## Article 25: Travel Allowances

As per Clause 25.06, teacher expense claims now have to be paid within 4 weeks of the week in which a claim and all supporting documentation are submitted. This provision applies to claims submitted to the school district as well as to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

## Article 27: Superannuation of Teachers

In 2015, the NLTA negotiated a Pension Plan Reform Agreement which has seen the funding status of the pension plan go from 57% funded to 102% funded. The Pension Plan Reform Agreement and the Joint Sponsorship Agreement are now enshrined in the Collective Agreement, providing another layer of protection for government honouring its commitments in those agreements.

## Article 28: Length of the School Year

The changes in Clause 28.01 provide teacher **release time for report card preparation**. Of the 195 paid days in a school year, the equivalent of one full day is for the exclusive use of teachers to work on report card preparation. This is non student contact time, to be scheduled by the school board in advance of reporting periods. This provision is now in effect, so the full day must be applied before the end of the current school year. The time may be distributed differently in future years, when it is in effect for a full school year.

Instead of 187 actual teaching days, there are now 185, reflecting the guaranteed day for report card preparation, as well as an increase in the required number of days for professional development, from three up to four. **All schools now have a contractual entitlement to four professional development days per year**, including the current school year.

Under the new Agreement, teachers are guaranteed two less days of student contact time per school year, one of which is a PD day and the other a day for the exclusive use of teachers for report card preparation.

## Article 31: Grievance Procedure

Teachers with a grievance against the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development now have 15 days, up from 10 days, to file any grievances. This is now in line with the timelines for school district grievances.

## Article 33: Severance Pay

Effective March 31, 2018, there is no further accrual of service or salary for the purpose of severance pay. Severance will be paid out to all teachers, including substitute and replacement teachers, who have at least one year of continuous service as of March 31, 2018. Service accrual for severance purposes is determined in accordance with Clause 21.05. This means that, as of March 31, 2018, **any teacher whose accrued continuous service amounts to 0.5 to 0.9 of a year shall have that number rounded up to the next full year.**

Continuous service means service without a break, unless the break is identified in the Collective Agreement as an exception. The following situations do NOT constitute a break in service continuity for teachers for severance purposes:

- Periods of approved leave;
- The teacher left the employment of a school board to further his/her education as a teacher and returned to employment with a school board at the commencement of the next school year after the completion of the education;
- The teacher taught for at least twenty (20) days in any school year; or
- Any time service for severance is accrued pursuant to Clause 33.05 (for example, teaching at the College of the North Atlantic or a government school ...).

Service for severance purposes is calculated as follows, in accordance with Clause 21.05 of the Collective Agreement:

- A five (5) hour instructional day constitutes a day of service.
- Total years of service are determined by dividing the total days of service by the number of days in a school year (190 days before September 1, 2002, 195 days since then). Severance accrues at 2% per year, up to a maximum of 40% (or 20 years).
- A fraction of one-half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) of a year or more shall be counted as a full year and is rounded up. A fraction of less than one-half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) of a year is rounded down.

For example: A teacher has worked for a period of 10 years in a combination of substitute, replacement and permanent positions. On March 31, 2018, she was in a full-time, permanent position. She had one year off on approved unpaid leave, and prior to becoming permanent she always worked at least 20 days each school year. Her service is therefore continuous. Her amount of service is determined by dividing the total number of days she taught during the continuous period by the number of days in a school year (195). Over the 10 year period up to March 31, 2018, the teacher worked 1,297 days. Divided by 195, this amounts to 6.7 years, which is rounded up to 7. So, the teacher in this example would have 7 years of continuous service for severance purposes, which at 2% per year equates to a 14% severance payout.

A teacher's salary for the purpose of determining severance pay entitlement shall be the salary in effect for the teacher as of March 31, 2018.

The timeline for payout of severance to eligible teachers will be **no later than December 31, 2019**. Information and application packages, including a detailed "Frequently Asked Questions" document, will be sent directly to teachers by the school districts in the coming weeks.

Eligible teachers will have the option to:

- (a) take their severance payout by December 31, 2019; or,
- (b) defer payment of severance with the amount calculated and frozen as of March 31, 2018.

If a severance payout is taken at any time other than the point of retirement/resignation, the funds will be paid directly to the teacher, must be treated as employment income as per Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) rules, and will be subject to all applicable statutory deductions (income tax, EI, CPP). There is a \$15,000 corporate tax waiver from CRA in place, which means that teachers can receive up to \$15,000 of their payout without income taxes deducted, to be contributed to an RRSP if they have the personal RRSP contribution space to do so. Any amount in excess of \$15,000 will be paid with income tax deducted. To contribute more than \$15,000 to an RRSP without income tax deducted, teachers must apply individually to CRA for a personal tax waiver by completing a CRA form T1213.

If payment is received at the point of retirement, the severance payout will qualify as a retiring allowance and no EI or CPP will be deducted. All or a portion of the funds can be transferred directly to an RRSP, without income tax withholdings, if the teacher has sufficient RRSP contribution space to do so. No tax waiver is required for this if the severance payout is taken upon retirement. However, any amount of severance paid directly to the teacher at retirement (as opposed to being transferred directly to an RRSP) will be subject to income tax deductions at source.

Teachers should consult with their personal financial planner/advisor for advice on individual decisions regarding the severance payout.

## Article 50: Allowances

As per the changes to Clause 50.02(a)(i), religious education courses can now be included with social studies courses when determining eligibility for social studies department head allowances.



All schools with a student enrollment of 250 or more, as of September 30 in a school year, are now eligible for an official **Department Head for student support services**, regardless of grade configuration. To be eligible to hold the position, a teacher must hold a Bachelor of Special Education degree or equivalent and have at least 80% of their assigned teaching time as an instructional resource teacher.

## Article 57: Discrimination and Intimidation

In Clause 57.01, the list of prohibited grounds for discrimination has been expanded to include nationality, ethnic origin, social origin, disfigurement, gender identity, gender expression, family status and source of income. This is in keeping with provincial human rights legislation, and broadens the contractual basis for complaints under this Article.

## Article 58: Harassment

The changes to Clause 58.01 create a heightened responsibility on the employer to deal with incidents of harassment against teachers involving parents, students and other groups outside the school system, and to support teachers who are victims of harassment from any source. The list of potential prohibited grounds for harassment has been expanded to include nationality, ethnic origin, social origin, disfigurement, gender identity, gender expression, family status and source of income, in keeping with provincial human rights legislation. The definition of personal harassment in Clause 58.02 has also been expanded in that it is no longer limited to actions based on one of the listed prohibited grounds, as not all incidents of harassment engage one of these issues.

Overall, these changes will assist the NLTA in protecting and representing members who experience work related harassment.

## Schedules B and C, Article 24

Salaries and allowances remain at current levels as set out in Schedules B and C and Article 24 of the current agreement for the duration of this agreement – a four year deal from September 1, 2016 to August 31, 2020.

## Letter #6: Length of the Primary Day

Letter #6 provides that the maximum length of the primary instructional day is five hours. This protection remains in the new Agreement and has been expanded to include reference to Kindergarten, which is now full-day, in addition to Grades 1-3.

## Letter #8: Movement of Speech Language Pathologists and Educational Psychologists

Since the release of the report of the Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes in July 2017, there has been concern regarding Recommendation #10, which calls for certain services to children, including speech-language pathology and psychology, to be accessible year-round through one government department. Letter #8 is a new provision ensuring that all current permanent SLPs and educational psychologists as of the 2019-2020 school year will stay in education, covered by the NLTA Collective Agreement, for as long as they remain in that permanent position. This long-term protection for current members does not concede on any future decisions regarding the delivery of SLP and educational psychology services.

## Letter of Understanding re: Employer Cost Sharing for Post-Employment NLTA Group Insurance Premiums

The new provisions will impact **post-retirement** government contributions to group insurance premiums **ONLY for teachers who are hired AFTER** the signing date of the new collective agreement (April 17, 2019). **Any changes to government contributions to group insurance premiums will only take effect after a teacher retires.**

The Letter of Understanding language establishes the following:

- there is **no impact on current employees, including substitute and replacement teachers;**

- teachers who meet the definition of “Newly Hired Employees” (hired after the date of signing of the new Agreement) will not be impacted, at all, during their working careers. New hires will still be entitled to a level of employer cost sharing of group insurance premiums after they retire as long as they have at least **5 years** of completed pensionable service at the time of retirement.
- a “sliding scale” for government cost sharing of the required premium rates will apply to Newly Hired Employees **upon retirement (not while they are still working)**, as follows:
  - 5-19 years of pensionable service – teacher pays 85%, employer pays 15%
  - 20-24 years of pensionable service – teacher pays 70%, employer pays 30%
  - 25-29 years of pensionable service – teacher pays 55%, employer pays 45%
  - 30+ years of pensionable service – teacher pays 50%, employer pays 50%

For example, a teacher hired for the first time after April 17, 2019 **MAY** see a reduction in employer contributions to their group insurance premiums **AFTER** they retire, **DEPENDING** on how many years of pensionable service they have at the time of retirement.

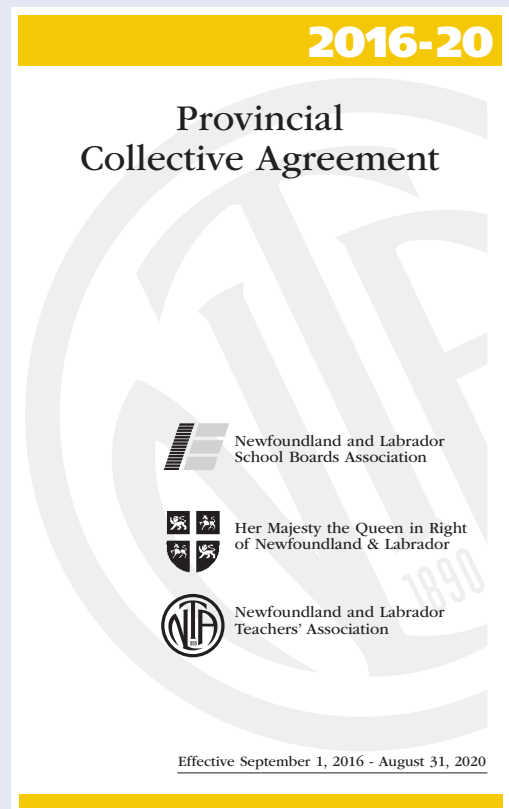
Eligible survivors of a deceased teacher will be able to continue to participate in NLTA Group Insurance coverage with employer cost sharing at the same rate as that to which the teacher would have been entitled.

## Memorandum of Understanding re Layoffs During the Term of the Collective Agreement

The new Memorandum of Understanding confirms that government will not institute large-scale layoffs of teachers in order to save money. Layoffs due to “business as usual” may still occur.

**NOTE:** There are other numbering/lettering changes to various provisions throughout the Agreement due to the integration of the text of the Memorandum of Agreement with respect to Teaching and Learning Assistants, which has now been incorporated into the appropriate Articles within the Agreement.

.....  
 Any questions can be directed to an NLTA Administrative Officer in Programs and Services at the NLTA at 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599 or mail@nlta.nl.ca.





# Summer: It's YOUR Time!

by SOPHIA SLANEY

Summer is just around the corner and teachers will be looking forward to a well-earned rest. The last weeks of school are a frenzy of activity with report cards, assemblies and classroom clean-out. It can be challenging for some teachers to switch off from work and avoid planning ahead to next year's lesson plans. Teaching is a calling, not just a profession, which makes it difficult sometimes to step away. Transitioning into "summer mode" may not be easy to do. There is empirical evidence indicating that it is in teachers' best interests to do so. Research out of the UK supports the idea that planning for a summer break that is restful and restorative is a good idea. A study of 90 teachers from across the UK by a research team, led by Dr. Paul Flaxman and Sonja Carmichael at City University, London, found that it is important for teachers to stop working and even thinking about work during school breaks and holidays. The report states that the time off allows teachers to "restore their emotional energy". Furthermore, Dr. Flaxman, a senior lecturer in organizational psychology at City University, stated that "Making sure that teachers have regular opportunities to recover from the considerable demands of the job will help to prevent burnout". Summertime, then, is the perfect time to unwind and recharge – the perfect time to look after "you".

## Relax

As teachers, we are commonly looked to be the "go-to" person at school, or with your family and friends when they have a problem or something important needs to get done. Summer is the time to dial it back and slow down. Take some time for yourself to do things that are just for you. This isn't selfish. It is vital to look after yourself so that you can continue to look after others. You've heard Eleanor Brown's saying, "You can't serve from an empty vessel". It's easy for teachers to become an empty vessel because, by nature, they are compassionate and giving individuals. Therefore, try to devote a few hours each day

to being GOOD to YOU! Get together with friends, enjoy a rousing game of golf or a hike in nature, start a new hobby or revisit an old one, read a non-professional book, listen to audiobooks and so on. Choose activities that bring YOU joy and – do them!

When you finally "arrive" in summer mode, to get the full benefit of your relaxation time, be mentally present. Gail Kinman, a professor of occupational psychology at the University of Bedfordshire, says that if you're not working, you may be thinking and worrying about work which "defeats the object of relaxation." She suggests that teachers practice some mindfulness techniques where you anchor yourself in the present moment. Mindfulness is the act of being present without judgement of what is happening; it is being aware and observing our thoughts.

Additional research on mindfulness point to benefits for both teachers and students. Patricia A. Jennings, a professor at the University of Virginia, led a team of researchers who collected data on educators' well-being, observations of classrooms and student behavioural reports over the course of a year. She found that teachers who received emotional regulation training (including mindfulness) were more emotionally supportive, demonstrated greater sensitivity to student needs, and provided more positive and productive classroom environments. The report concluded that when educators have opportunities across the school year to practice the arts of mindfulness, listening and emotional management, they can better navigate any number of stressors they face in a given day. Furthermore, when assessing teachers' stress levels, teachers noted considerably less distress and an improved ability to manage their emotions.

## Reflect

Another way to restore your energy over the summer is to spend some time thinking about the successes of the past year. Reflecting on the year's accomplishments can lead to a feeling of effectiveness. Martin Seligman, the founder of Positive Psychology (the

science of well-being), has identified five areas that, when cultivated, lead to people feeling good and functioning well. The five areas are often described as pillars of well-being known as PERMA (P-positive emotions, E-engagement, R-positive relationships, M-meaning, A-accomplishments). One of these five pillars is accomplishment – knowing and celebrating our achievements and goals. Celebrating your accomplishments can renew your sense of purpose and affirm your strengths. It can remind you why you love teaching and mentally ignite you for a fresh start to the new school year.

### Reenergize

Self-care shouldn't only be a priority in the summertime. It is easy to forget about your own needs when you have so many responsibilities during the school year. Use the summer to create a helpful self-care routine. The self-care habits we have finetuned during the summer can be carried into the new school year. The fun activities we enjoyed all summer season could be reframed and viewed as self-care. We don't need to wait until summer to get the same sense of fulfillment and vitality they provide. We could frame these activities as contributing to meaningful self-care all year long. Authors Jonathan Weinstein and Lauren Porosoff assert that by focusing on the *function* of our favourite summer activities rather than the *form*, we might be more open to what self-care can mean for us year-round. For example, in the summer, we may connect with loved ones on the beach or around a campfire. In the fall and winter, connecting with loved ones may consist of lunches on weekends with friends or having Sunday dinner at a family member's house.

There are many warm-weather practices we could continue beyond the summer season to restore the body, mind and spirit. Some of us recharge by enjoying alone time while others of us are energized by spending time with others. Recharge the body with a healthier diet by taking advantage of the fresh fruit and vegetables that are more readily available during the summertime and learn to cook some new healthy meals that are easy to make. Take advantage of any good weather we might have to enjoy the outdoors. Find something fun that gets you moving. Create an effective sleep routine. While you have the time, create or strengthen good habits and you will reap the benefits from them all year long.

Whatever recharges you and makes you feel good – do more of it this summer. If work recharges you, remember to balance it with plenty of time off. Look for professional development that is worthwhile or on a topic that you are eager to learn more about.

At the end of the summer, when you are engaged in preparatory activities for the new school year, set boundaries and limits around your time. Go to your classroom during the last part of the summer and only on rainy days. Strengthening these self-care skills in the summer will make it easier to apply them during the school year when it becomes very busy. According to registered dietitian Nancy Clark, “you will choose to carry your good habits with you into the school year when you stay mindful of the benefits of healthful fueling and enjoyable activities.”

### It IS all about YOU!

Taking a break from developing lesson plans and curriculum materials and, instead, investing in some much deserved “you” time will help you to strengthen your emotional resilience and it could be the way to prepare for your best year yet. Dr. Sue Roffey, a psychologist and academic who has published widely on the subject of well-being, says that teachers themselves recognise that focussing on their own well-being is crucial in supporting student well-being. The growing evidence coming from the field of Positive Psychology is showing how we can not only support student well-being, but also that of teacher well-being. If teachers have strategies to support their well-being, they will be better placed to manage every day stressors of the job to not only survive, but flourish. In doing so, they become better role models and educators for their students.

Treating yourself with care can help you achieve a positive work-life balance and approach stress management in a way that balances your needs and the needs of your students. Summer is a great time to take a step back, evaluate your self-care needs, and start practicing beneficial behaviors so they become habits before school starts. Practicing these approaches over the summer can help you prepare for the challenges of back-to-school, so you'll start the school year more energized, more rested, and ready to give your students your best all year long. This summer, take the opportunity to invest in yourself and maybe even establish a few more healthy habits to carry through to the rest of the year. You will return to school in the fall feeling more balanced and revitalized and ready to inspire a new group of students.

*Sophia Slaney is an EAP Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for Teachers. For confidential assistance contact Sophia at 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 242 [saslaney@nlta.nl.ca](mailto:saslaney@nlta.nl.ca), or Judy Beranger, ext. 265, [jmberanger@nlta.nl.ca](mailto:jmberanger@nlta.nl.ca).*

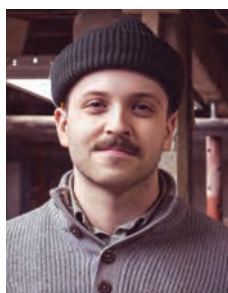


# The Problem with Beavers

by DAVID GILL & LOUIS HOUSE



David Gill



Louis House

Conventional wisdom would tell us that technology is an ever-increasing progressive modern wonder, a cure-all for society's ills. This thought can also lead to an overwhelming sense that technology is a driving force in all aspects of life and without it we are somehow less human. From the perspective of public education, this idea has often manifested itself as a race to buy and supply students and teachers with technological "stuff" as a means of modernizing and innovating teaching and learning. This "stuff" may be promoted as an educational end in and of itself, with little thought of how it can be meaningfully used to help students understand the world around them from a holistic and balanced perspective. While most people enjoy receiving and tinkering with bright and shiny new gadgets, without a solid educational purpose, what place does this "stuff" really have in a classroom? Some people would argue that an overarching purpose doesn't matter when introducing new technology to a learning environment, that we should just accept it at face value and push forward. Another perspective would argue the opposite, that a clear purpose, with strong educational goals should be the first steps in introducing any new technology to a lesson, activity, or unit of study. This article will outline some of the work that is being done at Memorial University's Faculty of Education in respect to pre-service teacher education and purposeful technology integration.

During the 2018-2019 academic year, the Faculty of Education introduced a new cohort-based STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) primary/elementary B.Ed. program. One of the goals of this new program is to integrate pedagogy and subject content through immersive authentic experiences based on school realities and current research. Traditional courses and lectures have been replaced or supplemented with seminars, experiential learning opportunities, and a dramatic increase in embedding pre-service teachers in schools. One experience that is unique to the program are STEMinars. STEMinars are concentrated learning experiences that focus on specific topics of interest that are deemed important for pre-service teacher development. They allow our pre-service

teachers the time to focus on, and develop, deeper knowledge and skill in one area at a time.

The purpose of this particular STEMinar was to introduce our pre-service teachers to some of the trending technologies currently available to teachers and students at the primary/elementary level in the Newfoundland and Labrador context. Following in the spirit of our new program the experience had to be immersive and authentic to hopefully maximize pre-service teacher engagement. Things like BBC micro:bits, littleBits Makey-Makey, Scratch, Tinkercad, and 3D printers seemed to be very popular and had some promising potential. After considerable thought and deliberation I settled on... beavers. The rodent, symbol of Canada, and both foe of infrastructure and economic development and saviour of ecological sustainability, depending on your perspective, became my STEMinar obsession.

## What's the Problem?

Why beavers? And how do beavers relate to the latest trending technologies available to teachers and students? Focusing on technological "stuff" has been linked to the idea that we have solutions looking for problems, rather than exploring an authentic problem and then moving into designing solutions. This solution looking for a problem-oriented mindset can lead to focusing on the technological "stuff" in question – learning how many functions the "stuff" has, knowing how to set up the "stuff", playing with the "stuff", but very seldom using the "stuff" in authentic, critical problem solving. With this in mind, I moved away from exploring technologies and onto exploring authentic problems that could be related to a primary/elementary audience and their curriculum. Beavers are engineers. They modify their environment to suit their needs, much like humans. Because of this trait, they may come into conflict with human development and infrastructure causing damage and monetary loss. On the other hand, beavers also maintain and restore much needed watersheds and habitat wherever they live. This tension became the context for an authentic exploration of sustainability, human development, and technology for our pre-service teachers. Simple questions sometimes have

very complex answers and this became apparent to our pre-service teachers as they were presented with an authentic problem. Posing a simple question with explicit constraints about how technology could help beavers and humans cohabitate initiated a challenge that led to purposeful technological integration. The intersect between sustainability, human development, technology, and curriculum was squarely placed on the humble beaver's back. Understanding and traversing this intersect became one of our pre-service teachers' biggest obstacles.

### Overcoming Obstacles

We began with a series of rapid tutorials showing the basics of how to use the different pieces of supplied technology (BBC micro:bits, littleBits, Makey-Makey, Scratch, Tinkercad, and a 3D printer) before moving on to hands-on, free experimentation. The pre-service teachers thought that the tutorials were useful, but the time spent encountering and navigating problems themselves is where the bulk of their learning occurred. Of course, anyone who has worked or taught in a technical field knows this already. There's only so much you can learn by watching someone else manipulate tools or by listening to them describe a process. Opponents of the growing ubiquity of technology in schools say that it brings us out of touch with "real life"; however, the experience of this STEMinar shows that, when discriminately selected and properly introduced with purpose, technology can ground us firmly in the classroom and demands our presence in the moment. It transforms learning from something that happens in our head to something we can see, touch and interact with. As such, the pre-service teachers were eager to move past the demonstrations and spent the rest of the sessions learning, playing, tinkering, integrating and designing.

One potential explanation for why this worked so well is the idea that setting up a compelling problem to solve shifts a student's focus from seeing the technology as the thing to overcome (technology as obstacle) to being the means by which they overcome the introduced problem (technology as way); the beaver trouble became the primary objective and obstacle. Seeing the obstacle as the way is not a new idea, but might help engage students and promote a conscientious and purposeful approach to their work. This problem-based learning approach gives students a goal – the technological solution to an interesting and relatable scenario. Designing a solution can transform learning, creativity, and experimentation into a means of succeeding in a non-abstract way by setting up conditions that naturally promote obstacle-as-way thinking.

### Problem Solving through Designing and Making

In addition to individual variance in how pre-service teachers aligned with an obstacle-as-way mindset, their choice of technology played a large role in creating a spectrum of solutions. Some of the technology, such as the BBC micro:bit, was more complex, which lent itself to a wider range of possible uses, but required more preparation and troubleshooting. Other tools, such as the littleBits, were more accessible, but were limited in the scope of their utility due to their simplicity. Certain technologies integrated with each other rather well, such as the touch-sensitivity of the Makey-Makey with the block-based Scratch programming. Pre-service teachers also found a variety of uses for 3D printing in their solutions.

The fact that each pre-service teacher was able to approach these technologies in their own way, with their individual experiences and skills guiding their learning, meant that there was a wide range of creative solutions to the beaver problem, solutions that looked very different from one group to the next. Because of the open-ended nature of the problem, students were also able to explore cross-curricular connections based on their experiences teaching other courses such as science or social studies.

However, the freedom in designing a solution did not necessarily provoke an immediate blossoming of the variety of creative responses that were later showcased. The pre-service teachers tended to fixate on their first idea. Engaging with a design process can be difficult if we are accustomed to passive learning. While there is always a constant need to demonstrate and troubleshoot, a much more important role for teachers is encouraging students to move beyond their preliminary ideas and into the creative work of designing and using technology with purpose.

There will always be a new technological gadget promoted as the next-best-thing for education. There is no escaping that fact. How teachers and other educational stakeholders decide to react to this reality is another matter. If we move away from the solution looking for a problem mindset and a fixation on "stuff" there is real potential to integrate technology in a meaningful and purposeful way. Starting from a problem orientation and working through solutions gives a much needed purpose for technology integration. Hopefully this is one message and method that will follow our pre-service teachers into their future careers.

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*Dr. David Gill is an Assistant Professor at Memorial University's Faculty of Education where he teaches and conducts research on technology education and integration. He can be reached at [dgill@mun.ca](mailto:dgill@mun.ca). Louis House is a teacher candidate and woodworker in Nain, Labrador.*



# PEERS®:

## A Research-based Approach to Help Develop Positive Relationships

by KENDRA LANE

A growing number of services are becoming available for individuals with autism including behavioural interventions, transition supports, pre-employment training, and community recreation. But still the question remains: what about the social skills that underpin success in each of these areas? Let me introduce you to PEERS®.

### What is PEERS®?

The Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS®) is one of the few evidence-based social skills curriculums available. Originally developed at UCLA by Dr. Elizabeth Laugeson, Founder and Director of the UCLA PEERS® Clinic, and Dr. Fred Frankel in 2005, PEERS® has expanded to locations around the world. PEERS® is a manualized, social skills training intervention for youth with social challenges. It has a strong evidence-base for use with adolescents and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), but is also appropriate for preschoolers, adolescents, and young adults with ADHD, anxiety, depression, and other socio-emotional problems.

### How is PEERS® implemented?

PEERS® has several manualized options including an Adolescent Curriculum, Young Adult Curriculum, and a School-Based Curriculum. The Adolescent and Young Adult versions are typically offered through health or community providers with parents and/or personal social coaches integrated fully into the 16-week program. The School-Based version is designed specifically for teacher-facilitated implementation, in the school setting, with a 16-week curriculum that is structured into 30-60 minute lesson plans. There are weekly, comprehensive parent handouts which coach parents on how to support their children throughout the program (and beyond). It is an evidence-based treatment in both the middle school and high school settings.

### What topics are covered in PEERS®?

During each group session, participants are taught important social skills and are given the opportunity to practice these skills in session during socialization activities (e.g. playing sports, board games, etc.). While the curriculum varies slightly based on the age-group, the following is a general overview of topics included in the lessons:

- How to use appropriate conversational skills
- How to choose appropriate friends
- How to appropriately use electronic forms of communication
- How to appropriately use humor and assess humor feedback
- How to start, enter and exit conversations between peers
- How to organize successful get-togethers with friends
- How to be a good sport when playing games/sports with friends
- How to handle arguments and disagreements with friends and in relationships
- How to handle rejection, teasing, bullying, rumors/gossip, and cyber bullying
- How to change a bad reputation

### Why does PEERS® focus on making friends?

The social deficits associated with autism can negatively impact a person's ability to make friends. Having just one or two close friends is a predictor of later adjustment. Friendship can buffer the impact of life stressors; it correlates positively with self-esteem; it increases independence; and it correlates negatively with depression and anxiety. Learning how to make and keep friends is the central core of PEERS®.

### What makes PEERS® unique from other social skills programs?

- Unlike other social skills programs, this program:
- Is evidence-based
  - Includes parents/caregivers

- Teaches ecologically valid social skills
- Tailors teaching methods to shared social skills deficits
- Has been translated into more than a dozen languages.
- Is used in more than 35 countries
- Also has a strong evidence-based use for middle or high school adolescents with ADHD, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and intellectual disability

**I am not able to offer a full curriculum; are there other evidence-based resources available?**

Yes! Dr. Laugeson's book, *The Science of Making Friends*, is based on the PEERS® program and provides a step-by-step guide to help parents, educators, and others provide "social coaching" to teens and young adults on the spectrum. It includes concrete rules and steps of social etiquette (identified through research) that can be used to assist in improving conversational skills, expanding social opportunities (including dating), handling peer rejection, and developing and enhancing friendships.

**How can I learn more?**


For all of this information, research articles, resources, and more, please visit [www.sem.el.ucla.edu/peers](http://www.sem.el.ucla.edu/peers). In March 2019, Dr. Laugeson spent a week in NL training health and education professionals from across the province in the implementation of the PEERS® curriculum. A list of Certified Providers will be available on the PEERS® website, so reach out to someone in your area to learn more today!

Kendra Lane is Director of Operations with Autism Society, NL and a certified TEACCH Practitioner. She can be reached at 709-722-2803, ext. 226 or [klane@autism@nf.net](mailto:klane@autism@nf.net).

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# Sharing Our Cultures™ Celebrates 20 Years in 2019

by LLOYDETTA QUACOIE

“Sharing Our Cultures™ not only validates what I am teaching but has a larger impact on my students. It brings the real world to them, realizing that what they are learning is not something that they leave in the classroom but lessons that follow them throughout their lives.” (Teacher, March 2019).

The Sharing Our Cultures™ (SOC) program and events support the delivery of several provincial curriculum outcomes, including Career Development, Social Studies, Language Arts, and Religious Education. The SOC program, in collaboration with Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN), engages high school students in weekly activities and workshops that develop or enhance their language, literacy, project planning, time management, interpersonal, public speaking, and leadership skills. Integral to the SOC program is its public annual event which had been held in the Eastern region since its inception, with students residing in St. John's hosting events in rural communities such as Clarenville, Marystown, Old Perlican, Random Island, and Swift Current.

In 2019, SOC, in collaboration with school principals at Mealy Mountain Collegiate, Corner Brook Regional High, and Exploits Valley High, expanded the program and event to the three other regions of the province, namely Labrador, Western, and Central. The four regional programs and events provided resident high school students an opportunity for deeper learning in and showcasing of the diverse cultures within their own communities. The diversity of cultures represented included Brazil, China, Colombia, Congo, England, Ethiopia, France,

Francophone, Germany, Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Inuit, Iraq, Ireland, Japan, Labrador, Libya, Mexico, Newfoundland, Nigeria, Philippines, Qalipu First Nation, Romania, South Africa, Spain, St. Pierre et Miquelon, Sudan, Syria, and Turkey.

A combined total of 2,094 students participated in SOC events across the province this past March. Two hundred and thirty-four students served as cultural presenters, performers, or tour guides to the approximately 1,860 visiting students who interacted with cultural presenters and learned about their cultures as they “journeyed around the booths with their individual ‘passports’”. Government departments and community organizations staffed information booths on such topics as Indigenous arts and heritage, provincial immigration, newcomer settlement and integration, francophone communities, post-secondary education, and the rights of children and youth.



Student from Syria at the SOC event at Corner Brook Regional High, March 21, 2019.



Students share Inuit culture at Exploits Valley High.

In commemoration of SOC's 20th-year anniversary, 46 primarily high school students and MUN international students learned the traditional art of rug hooking and hooked a map of the world, with red dots indicating the 90 countries represented by SOC participants since 1999. These young volunteers came together to hook the SOC legacy rug but ended up gaining so much more as they developed friendships and created memories that will last a lifetime. The SOC organization was recognized by Members of the House of Assembly and the rug was displayed in the Lobby of Confederation Building on March 7, 2019.

SOC acknowledges the financial and in-kind contributions of the Government of Canada, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, The Rooms Corporation, Newfoundland and Labrador English School District, Conseil scolaire francophone provincial de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador, Memorial University of Newfoundland, and CBC NL.



Sharing Our Cultures official opening ceremony at The Rooms.

Lloydetta Quacoe is Founder and CEO of Sharing Our Cultures, Inc.

## Scholarship Program 2019

OPEN: April 1, 2019

*"Smells like  
an A+ to me"*



Johnson Insurance is proud to offer 50 scholarships, valued at \$1000 each, to students completing high school in 2019 and starting post-secondary education in the fall.

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1-866-544-2673

**Application Deadline: August 12, 2019**



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# LIFT-NL

## Literacy Innovations for Today Newfoundland and Labrador

St. John's, Newfoundland  
September 26-28, 2019

Conference Sites  
Memorial University  
Holiday Inn



*A Literacy Conference for Teachers*

For more details please go to: [www.liftnl.ca](http://www.liftnl.ca)

# NEWS & EVENTS

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION & HEALTH EDUCATION COUNCIL CONFERENCE

September 20, 2019

Memorial University, St. John's. PESIC and the Health Education SIC are joining together to host a Fall Provincial Conference. Educators will be provided with a full day professional development focused on the health and well-being of students. Theme: *Innovate, Educate, Integrate, Motivate: Working Together to Improve Physical, Social and Emotional Well-Being*. Go to @PESICNL or @NLTA\_Health\_Ed for updates such as Call for Presenters & Registration Information.

## MUSIC COUNCIL RESONATE 2019 CONFERENCE

October 24-25, 2019

Sandman Hotel, St. John's. Keynote and feature presenter is Gena Pretty-Norbury. Early Bird Registration: \$75; after September 30: \$100. Registration Opens June 1, 2019. For more information visit: nlmsic.com.

**For a full list of conferences and professional development opportunities, visit the NLTA website at [www.nlta.nl.ca/pd\\_opportunities/](http://www.nlta.nl.ca/pd_opportunities/)**

## Dates to Remember

### June 2019

- June 7-8 NLTA Provincial Executive Meeting
- June 15 **Deadline:** Notice by Board of acceptance/rejection of Deferred Salary Leave requests
- June 20 **Deadline:** PD Fund applications

### July 2019

- July 31 **Deadline:** NLTA Scholarship applications

## NLTA Summer Hours

**July 2 - August 30**

**Monday to Thursday**  
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

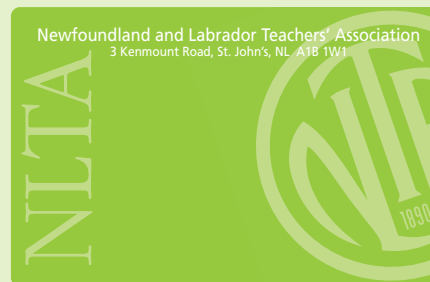
**Friday**  
8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

## NLTA Membership Cards

If you require an NLTA membership card, visit [www.nlta.nl.ca](http://www.nlta.nl.ca), click on "Forms" and then "Request a Membership Card".

Cards will be mailed to your home address.

If you have had a recent address change, please update your current address.

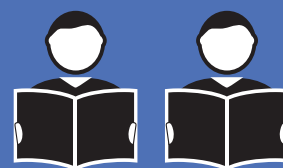


### For further information please contact:

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association  
Tel: 709-726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599  
[mail@nlta.nl.ca](mailto:mail@nlta.nl.ca)

**Note:** You may need your NLTA membership card to access discounts from the **NLTA Teacher Discount List** which can be found at [www.nlta.nl.ca](http://www.nlta.nl.ca). Go to "Programs and Services" and then "Member Services".

## NLTA SCHOLARSHIPS



The NLTA will award six scholarships to dependents of active, retired, disabled or deceased members of the NLTA. The award will be made upon completion of secondary school and through application to the NLTA. Scholarships are valued at **\$1,000** and are awarded based on the criteria used by the Department of Education for the selection of provincial scholarship recipients.

To obtain an application form visit the NLTA website at [www.nlta.nl.ca](http://www.nlta.nl.ca) and click "Forms" or contact the NLTA at **726-3223** or toll free at **1-800-563-3599**

or [mail@nlta.nl.ca](mailto:mail@nlta.nl.ca)

**Application Deadline:** July 31, 2019

