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NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION
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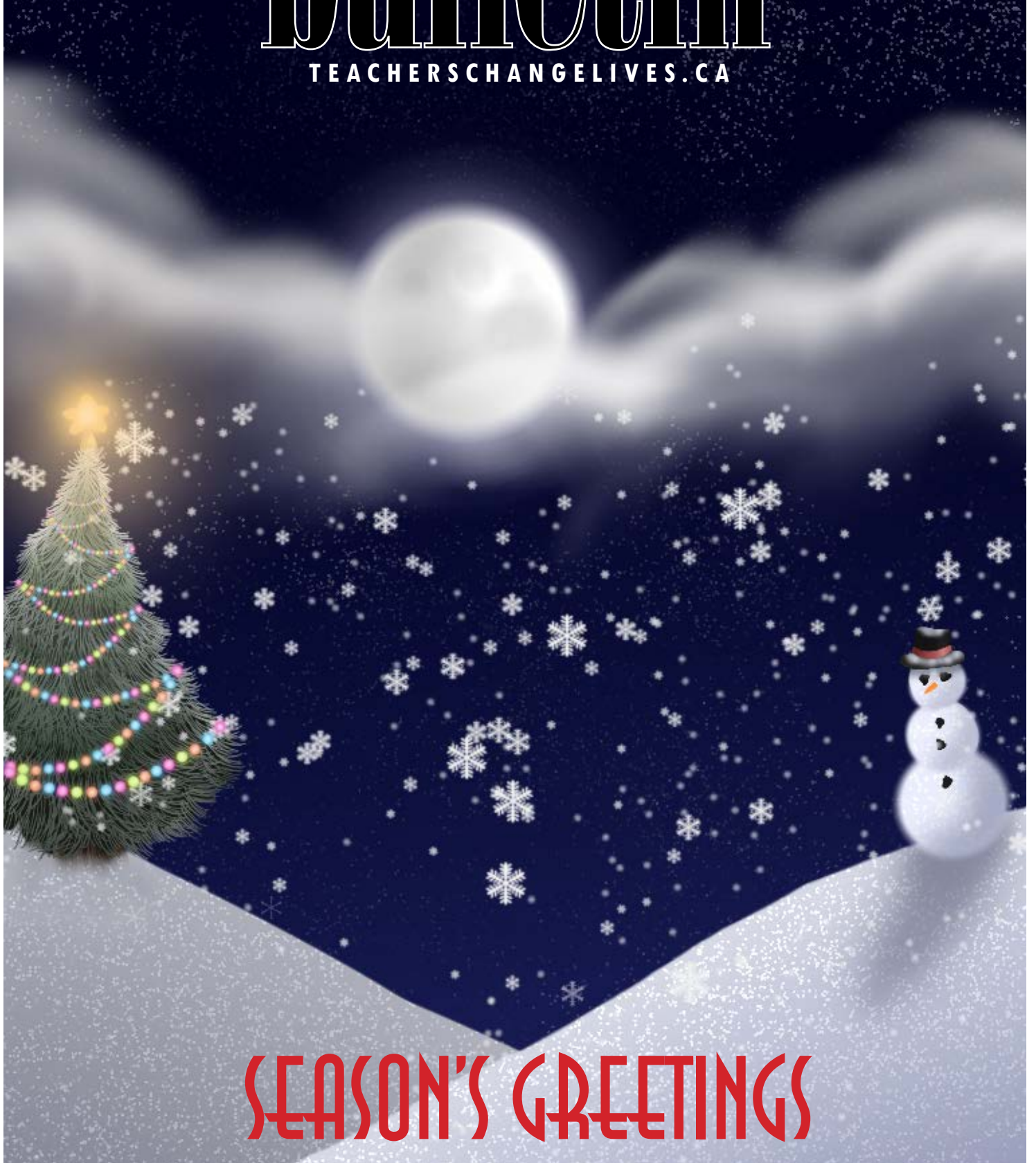
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Vol. 67/No. 2

November/December 2023



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This year marks 50 years of Collective Bargaining for your Association – an important milestone that celebrates the critical role the NLTA plays in improving the working and personal conditions of all members, as well as continuing to stress the importance of public education. You need to look no further than the pages of this issue of *The Bulletin* to see the important role our members play in the education system and the national and provincial recognition they have received for their hard work, dedication and professionalism.

Please continue to share the good work happening in your classrooms, schools and communities – we want to hear about it! And if you have someone in your school that you feel the entire membership should get to know, tell us and they could be featured in an upcoming *An Interview With...* feature.

Take care,
Jennifer



THE bulletin

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Published five times a year (September - June) by the Newfoundland & Labrador Teachers' Association, 3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL, A1B 1W1;
Tel: 709-726-3223; 1-800-563-3599;
www.nlta.ca

Submission Deadlines:
January/February: January 3

Opinions, advertisements and/or notices carried in this publication do not imply endorsement or recommendation by the Association.

ISSN-1189-9662

FEBRUARY 14, 2024

JANEWAY DAY IN THE SCHOOLS



UP FRONT WITH THE NLTA PRESIDENT



“Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.” ~ Malcom X

Colleagues/Friends,

I write this article understanding fully that your daily experiences on the frontlines of our province's schools are unpredictable and disjointed most days. Increasing demands on your time and heightened stressors in the workplace compete for your attention and impact your ability to effectively meet the needs of all your students. With that being said, I am invigorated and reassured by the knowledge that you continue to build strong relationships with your students, nurturing them and offering them essential opportunities for growth. I see examples of this every single day.

My current role (and that of your elected leaders and Association staff) requires that we continuously consider your well-being as it pertains to your experience within your own work setting and respective communities. Through many points of contact, I have learned that those experiences often vary immensely from region to region (and even from school to school in some cases) and that solutions cannot be necessarily determined through a “one size fits all” approach. This has been our consistent message to Government on all issues that impact you.

Given the ever-evolving uncertainty on provincial, national and global fronts, we must also remain in tune with the external influences that impact our collective quality of life and ultimately the future of our children (our students).

How do we influence the decision-makers such that the right decisions are made for our province at this point in time?

We have been pressing heavily from all angles, so Government and the general public are aware of our workplace realities. You will have seen our recent Invest in Our Kids campaign that asks the question, “What if teacher shortages were reported

daily in the news?” and the companion #HiddenRealityNL social media campaign that used actual quotes from our members highlighting what is really happening in our classrooms. With the current degree of shortages and understaffing (with no clear plan for remediation as of yet on the part of Government), my fear, and I am sure yours as well, is that the teaching ranks will continue to be “watered down” with shortages being normalized and replacement workers (i.e. emergency supply) increasingly standing at the front of our classrooms. (NOTE: Please make an effort to refer to these staff members as “emergency supply workers” as they are not trained teachers and should not carry the title. Though a seemingly small comment, it emphasizes the clear distinction and protects our professionalism.)

We must do everything in our power to prevent this evolution towards further degradation of our education system.

With a bleak forecast and all the markers pointing towards greater pressures into the future, we must see actions that address the acute issues while establishing foundations for long-term stability.

Government has committed to working with the NLTA and “consulting” with teachers to hear your ideas and suggestions for improvements in the coming months. Please make every effort to take advantage of this opportunity when it arises, for input and to “have your say.” Your Association has been calling (and will continue to call) for a long-term, comprehensive strategy that will finally raise the profile of education in this province to the level of respect it truly deserves. You can continue to count on the one uniting and stabilizing entity within your professional lives, that being your NLTA with 130+ years of strength and collective action.

Given that this is the final Up Front

for this calendar year and prior to heading into break, on behalf of the Provincial Executive and our NLTA Staff, I would like to pass along my sincere thanks for your professionalism and efforts throughout the year and to wish you and your family a rejuvenating holiday season.

Yours in Solidarity,

Knowing fully that you cannot always see or hear our media presence, a listing (with links) of our media coverage can be viewed on the NLTA website at the following link: <https://www.nlta.nl.ca/nltapresident-trent-langdon-2/>

Morale does not come easily, nor naturally. Respect is felt when the employer and policy-makers identify public education as an essential service that requires financial investment, is rooted in long-term objectives, and addresses the needs of the people on the ground. This, combined with our own steadfastness and self-advocacy, will lead to improved morale within our ranks.

**RECRUITMENT.
RETENTION.
RESOURCES.**

PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL NEWS

BURGEO

Career Day at Burgeo Academy

On October 18, 2023, the students at Burgeo Academy participated in Career Day. 22 booths were set up in the gym for junior high and high school students to interact with, which consisted of local artisans and businesses, as well as provincial and federal government departments.

Students were given a Career Passport and were required to collect signatures as they visited each booth. Once the passport was complete, the student's name was entered into a prize draw for one of ten \$25 gift certificates. Several booths even held their own prize draws.

Thank you to our Guidance Counsellor, Mrs. Ruby Penney, for organizing the day's activities.



A park warden from the Sandbanks Provincial Park was one of the many booths set up for Career Day.



The Burgeo Fire Department showing students the various pieces of equipment used while on duty.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Kids Eat Smart Radiothon

The NLTA, a proud sponsor of the Kids Eat Smart Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, participated in the recent Kids Eat Smart Radiothon on November 8, 2023. President Trent Langdon was joined by Executive Members Angela Dawe and Lynette Snook.

The Association donated \$7,500 to Kids Eat Smart. A total of \$379,503 was raised during the radiothon, which will provide 379,503 breakfasts to school-age children in NL at no cost to families.



L-R: Lynette Snook, Trent Langdon, Angela Dawe



The NLTA donated \$7,500 to support 2023-24 Kids Eat Smart programming in schools throughout the province.

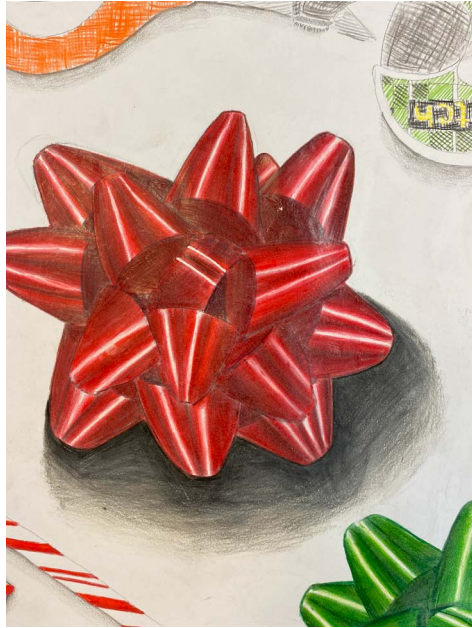
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

NLIA Winter Art Contest

Thank you to all the teachers and students who participated in our Winter Art Contest. We asked students in Grades 7-12 to show you what this season means to them and the creativity was wonderful! The cover image was designed by **Willow Nicholl**, a Grade 8 student of teacher Stewart Ralph at Amalgamated Academy, Bay Roberts. Below are honourable mentions.



VIKKI SAINNAWAP • Grade 11 • Southwest Arm Academy



EMILY BILLARD • Grade 11 • Marystown Central High



JIALE QUAN • Grade 10 • Corner Brook Regional High



WINTER PEDDLE • Grade 7 • Villanova Junior High School

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Newfoundland & Labrador

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May 22, 2024

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and registration

forthcoming in

the new year.



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Newfoundland & Labrador

However you
recognize this special
time of year, may you find
joy and peace.



They Should Have Seen It Coming (like we did...)

by Stefanie Tuff

The Association knows that teacher shortages are being experienced by schools across the province. The impact of vacant positions and substitute teacher shortages on teaching and learning is the focus of ongoing lobbying efforts and recent NLTA campaigns and messaging, under the “Hidden Reality” slogan. Targeted advocacy for a comprehensive strategy to address the retention and recruitment of qualified teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador has been a priority focus for NLTA for almost three years now. But, while the NLTA would argue that teacher shortages have reached crisis levels in recent years, we have in fact been sounding the alarm for much longer.

The Association supported the research conducted by Dr. David Dibbon and Dr. Bruce Sheppard of Memorial University, which was the basis for their 2001 report and recommendations entitled, **Teacher Demand, Supply and Retention in Newfoundland and Labrador**. This work confirmed many things that the NLTA and its members already knew, including that there has always been a degree of challenge in recruiting teachers for remote/rural locations and filling certain teaching assignments. While the report found no evidence of an overall teacher shortage in the province at that time, it did find cause for immediate action by key stakeholders,

To proactively deal with the current situation and to avoid the prospects of an overall shortage of teachers... and work in partnership to find creative solutions to current and future problems that are related to teacher supply and demand.

The recommendations made more than twenty years ago included many of the approaches that the NLTA has been advocating for over the past several years, including:

- A combination of targeted incentives, including increases to salaries and bonuses, travel allowances, accommodations/housing support, student debt forgiveness, etc. for teaching positions in

hard to fill locations and assignments/specialized areas; and,

- Providing opportunities for individuals to pursue university studies to become certified teachers in and from their local area(s)/cultural environment.

Of particular interest is that, even back in 2001, the research identified the importance of substitute teachers to the overall effectiveness of the K-12 public education system and found evidence that “...**the substitute teacher pool is declining in numbers** and that some schools currently find it difficult or impossible to find substitute teachers.”

Not long after this report was completed, the NLTA commissioned research conducted by Dr. Dibbon on the impact of teacher workload on teaching and learning in the province. This study was completed in 2004 and resulted in conclusions and recommendations set out in **It's About Time – A Report on the Impact of Workload on Teachers and Students**. The findings regarding the effect of teacher workload intensification, increasing demands without added resources or time, the resulting rise in burnout, and the increasing cost of emotional labour all still ring true today, and circumstances in our public schools have not improved. The undeniable fact that working conditions for teachers ARE the learning conditions for students has been and remains a key point in Association messaging and advocacy. With respect to the issue of teacher shortages, Dr. Dibbon noted, almost twenty years ago, that,

*The conditions under which teachers are expected to work have a direct impact on their capacity to perform their job functions, and dysfunctional working conditions are known to reduce both high levels of capacity and high levels of motivation – to the point where some teachers burn out and others **just leave the profession**. ...*

*Failure to address the issues associated with a high workload will likely result in lower levels of teacher satisfaction and **higher levels of attrition** – two conditions*

that would have a negative impact on the provincial school system.

But, decision makers did not heed the warnings that research and experience over the past two decades have shown to be well-founded. Opportunities have been missed, the problems identified at the turn of the century have grown more severe, and effective solutions have become more difficult to implement. Teacher shortages are the reality, to varying degrees, province-wide, but are also the norm right across Canada and internationally. The issues are complex and multi-dimensional, and there are no easy fixes. But the Association continues to identify and advocate for actions that could set us on a positive path forward.

There are a variety of responses that may help attract new people to the profession and reduce the loss of experienced teachers, most of which are not new ideas, but have been identified in various studies and input from teachers over the years. In addition to incentives and enhanced, localized access to teacher training programs, the NLTA has been and continues to work – through collective bargaining, advocacy, outreach and public information campaigns – to achieve measures that include:

Improving teacher compensation and benefits: Teacher salaries have not kept pace with the cost of living; improving teacher salaries and employment benefits would help make the profession more attractive in comparison to other alternatives, including competing opportunities in other Canadian jurisdictions.

Improving classroom conditions: The working environment for teachers is the learning environment for students. Increases in class size and in the complexity of class compositions are exacerbating long-standing challenges and increasing demands on teachers, contributing to burnout, compassion fatigue, and leading some teachers to leave the profession.

Adequately resourcing inclusive education: Teachers have always supported the principles of inclusion, but insufficient student supports has created an unsustainable situation, including increased incidences of violent/aggressive student behaviour. The constant struggle to meet students' needs without adequate resources and safety precautions is a significant source of teacher stress and dissatisfaction.

Respecting teacher professional judgment and autonomy: Teachers often report that they are not supported in exercising their professional judgment and are second-guessed when they do. Teachers derive great satisfaction from fostering students' innate curiosity and love of learning, but too often they are

constrained by excessive and overly prescriptive curriculum and assessment policies. This problem is exacerbated by attempts to politicize education and efforts by certain external interest groups to impose their own agendas on teachers' practice.

Increasing supports for student well-being so that teachers can focus on learning: Teachers teach students, and for this to be successful, students need to arrive at school well rested and fed, with their medical/health needs met, secure and looked after outside of school so that they are ready to learn. Teachers cannot solve all the systemic societal problems that impact student learning, but they see and deal with the consequences of those problems as they present themselves in the classroom, taking time and focus away from teaching and learning.

The NLTA will continue its efforts to lobby for action on teacher retention and recruitment in Newfoundland and Labrador. One piece of good news is that Minister Howell has acknowledged the significance of this issue and has authorized the establishment of a **Teachers Think Tank**, in collaboration with the Association and other stakeholders, **to address teacher retention and recruitment and discuss ways to respond to the challenges and concerns facing teachers and the K-12 public education system in the province. Input and feedback from NLTA members in the field will be of critical importance.** The anticipated timeframe for this is January/February 2024. It will start with a teacher questionnaire administered online through EngageNL – please keep an eye out for more information on this early in the new year. The NLTA will be strongly encouraging all members to take the time to complete the online questionnaire, the results of which will inform the next steps in this process, including the Think Tank session(s). There are no simple solutions, but the Department of Education's willingness to work with us on this is a step in the right direction.

So, I will close with a question borrowed from the title of a recent article written by my counterpart with the Alberta Teachers' Association on this all too familiar topic, "Where have all the teachers gone?" The answer, unfortunately, is that we knew where they were headed twenty years ago, as did government. The Association will keep drawing attention to this issue because teachers, students, and our public education system cannot afford any further delay.

Stefanie Tuff is the Executive Director of the NLTA.



Estimating Pension Take Home Pay

by Deana Hatcher

I once read a quote on Facebook that said, “Appreciate your blunt friend, they are often the realist.” While recently helping one of my dearest friends with her pension estimate, this quote came immediately to mind. After I explained the amount, she was quick to tell me “What most people want to know is what the bi-monthly pension pay will be – take home.” Emphasis on take home. Fair point.

The challenge is that neither the Teachers’ Pension Plan Corporation nor the NLTA are tax advisors who can provide that kind of individualized advice. However, when trying to estimate your pension take home pay, the following may be helpful as a starting point for discussion with your financial or tax advisor.

It is important to remember that your pension is paid twice monthly, so there will be 24 payments per year. By comparison, your regular salary is paid every 2 weeks, for a total of 26 payments per year. When you retire, you will no longer have certain deductions taken from your pension, including CPP, EI, TPP pension premiums, NLTA dues as well as some group insurance coverages. Basic Critical Illness and LTD will automatically end, for example, if you have those coverages (Voluntary Critical Illness coverage is still available).

Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has an online tool which you can use to estimate the amount of taxes that will be deducted from your semi-monthly pension payment using current year tax rates. Yes, unfortunately, you will still pay taxes, but they will be based on your pension income amount rather than your salary amount, so not necessarily the amount that you pay while working. Google “CRA TOD” or visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/e-services/digital-services-businesses/payroll-deductions-online-calculator.html> to access the calculator.

Let’s take an example of someone whose pension is \$56,000 annually. When you divide that by 24 you get a semi-monthly gross amount of \$2,333 ($56,000/24$). When you access the CRA calculator, you will need to select “pension” when prompted for the type of calculation

and click “next.” Then fill in the information on the next page and remember for Pay period frequency you would select “semi-monthly” and click “next.” When asked to provide your gross income per pay period be sure to take your annual pension and divide it by 24 (\$2,333 in the example above). Once you have entered your information and completed all the necessary steps, it will estimate your taxes (based on the tax rates in the year selected) and give you an estimated net (take home) pay amount.

Your group insurance deductions still must come off that estimated net pay amount. While premiums may change slightly, you can use a current pay stub to estimate your group insurance deductions by adding up most of your group insurance employee deductions (not all your deductions, just the insurance ones). As a reminder, Basic Critical Illness and LTD cease once you retire so they should not be included in this total. You can then subtract your total group insurance deduction estimate from the net amount provided by the CRA tool.

The approach above is intended as general advice only and should not be relied upon when making a final determination of your readiness to retire. Your financial advisor is best suited to provide you with such advice as they can make an individualized assessment considering any other sources of income or investments you may have, which may be important considerations for your retirement planning.

Payroll Deductions Online Calculator

Fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

* Calculation type
Select one

Salary	Commission	Pension	Verify CPP contributions and EI premiums
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Next >

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



Thank you for your support!

It is with gratitude that we thank you for the positive, direct impact you are having on the lives of school age children in Newfoundland and Labrador.

At Kids Eat Smart Foundation NL, our breakfast clubs serve over 40,000+ meals in our 276 Kids Eat Smart Clubs in Newfoundland and Labrador, every school day, and this is a monumental task!

We can only accomplish this with the generosity of our Principals, Club Coordinators, Teachers, Administration, and staff who volunteer to help our children learn, grow and be their very best.

It is through your unwavering support and dedication that we continue to always find a way to serve and provide the essential support to our breakfast clubs in our schools. We are grateful for the continued support of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association for your ongoing commitment to our program who help to provide stability for continued growth.

Together, with your support, we ensure every school age child and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador has access to food at school, at no cost to families, ensuring our children start their school days well-nourished and ready to learn - creating opportunities for a stronger, brighter future.

On behalf of the children who have food at school because of you, we thank you.

Sincerely,

Celina Stoyles

Celina Stoyles
Executive Director

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MARY THERESA CRAIG (OCTOBER 30, 1938 – AUGUST 23, 2023)

It is with deep sadness that we announce the peaceful passing of Mary Theresa Craig, 84, of St. John's, NL, on August 23, 2023, at home and with her family by her side.



Mary Theresa Craig

Mary was born a natural teacher and taught for 37 years until she retired in 1992. As a lifelong learner, Mary returned to Memorial University at the age of 43 and earned her Master of Education Degree while studying beside her three children. While Mary was recognized as a uniquely gifted math teacher, she also influenced her students in the areas of music and religious education, and many of her students went on to become educators themselves. She encouraged her students to achieve their personal best while imparting on them the important values of kindness, generosity, love, and friendship. Mary's strong vocation to teaching and commitment to her students were well recognized, and both her students and fellow teachers loved and respected her in return.

Mary's teaching career began at Immaculate Conception School on Bell Island, followed by St. Pat's, Our Lady of Mercy, and Holy Heart of Mary in St. John's. Later in her career, Mary took on a leadership role in the development and implementation of the Enrichment Program for the Roman Catholic School Board, and following her retirement from the Eastern School District, she accepted a position in the Department of Education at Memorial University.

Mary is predeceased by her son Aiden, her parents, many siblings, and lifelong friends. She is survived by her husband Aiden, daughters Catherine and Judy, daughter-in-law Kim, and their families, including eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren whom she adored.

Courageous, resilient, and graceful to the end, Mary's kindness, generosity, and warmth continue to impact the lives of all those who were fortunate enough to know her.

(Submitted by the Craig Family)

WILLIAM (BILL) DIXON (JULY 11, 1935 – SEPTEMBER 28, 2023)

William George Dixon passed peacefully away in the presence of his ever-loving wife on Thursday, September 28, 2023. Bill, as he preferred, aged 88 years, was born July 11, 1935 and grew up in Buchans, NL.

Leaving to mourn his loving wife of 67 years, Zelda, son Robert Dixon (Nancy), son-in-law Michael Sweeney (Jr), grandchildren James Sweeney, Dylan



William (Bill) Dixon



Franklin Peckford

Dixon, Caleigh Sweeney and Julia Dillon, brothers-in-law Clarence Barnes (Janet), Leo Moulund, the Wells Family, the Barnes family and many cousins, his "Tim's crowd" and a large circle of friends.

Predeceased by his daughter Peggy (May 2023), parents, James and Margaret Dixon, in-laws, Brigaderes Lester and Martha Barnes, sister, Margaret Moulund, brother, infant David, and brother-in-law Edward Barnes.

Bill received his BA and BAEd from Memorial University of Newfoundland. He spent most of his working career in education in Baie Verte, NL, and his retirement years in Conception Bay South, NL. He received many awards from his time volunteering with numerous committees and his many years as mayor, deputy-mayor and councillor with the Town of Baie Verte, and Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador.

Bill had a great sense of humor, weird at times, and enjoyed a good argument. His interests were varied and ranged from hunting and fishing to cruising many places in the world to spending time in the garden. His greatest love by far, however, was Zelda and his family and he adored his grandchildren.

The family would like to thank the staff at Neurosurgery of the Health Sciences Centre, the staff at Veterans Pavillion, Dr. Tony Rolfe, family physician, and Hickey's Funeral Home.

Bill was a great husband, father, son, brother, uncle, grandparent, nephew, colleague, mentor and friend. He will be missed.

(Submitted by the Dixon Family)

FRANKLIN PECKFORD (JANUARY 11, 1941 – OCTOBER 19, 2023)

Franklin Peckford passed away, on October 19, 2023, unexpectedly after a short stay at the Fogo Island Hospital. With family by his side, Franklin left the earthly world to walk again across the bogs he so loved.

Franklin was born to Nellie (Hoffe) and George Peckford of Change Islands on January 11, 1941. He was 1 of 9 children they raised in a time when the Fishery wasn't the future and education was expected. Franklin spent his life from the age of 17 teaching, but was a fisherman at heart. Franklin's love for the water was instilled in his youngest son.

Franklin met his life partner Linda and married on February 6, 1967, and was the mother of his much-loved children.

Franklin started teaching when he was still a young lad. He taught in a few remote communities,

IN MEMORIAM

and he spent the majority of his teaching years on Fogo Island and retired from teaching in 1992. With no desire to travel Franklin enjoyed every moment of his retirement walking the bogs on Fogo Island, spending time in his favourite place- his cabin, picking berries, trout in Squid Cove, moose hunting, tending to his gardens and making fish. Franklin always said he had no regrets.

Franklin leaves to mourn: His loving wife of 59 years Linda. His children, Terry (Paula), Beverley (Keith), Sandra (Tony), and Monte (Leanne). Grandchildren, Justin, Courtney, William, Christopher, Alisha and the highlight of being a parent is his great grandson Milo. Brother Bert, sisters Kathleen and Ruby. He was predeceased by his parents, 4 sisters and 1 brother, little Joey.

(Submitted by the Peckford Family)



In Memoriam Submission Guidelines

Submissions to In Memoriam should be a **maximum of 250 to 300 words** and may contain a photo of the deceased. In Memoriams should be submitted within a timely manner – normally within the same school year (if possible) of the death of the teacher.

Please submit to: Melanie McDonald, Editorial Assistant, *The Bulletin*, mmcdonald@nlta.ca, Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association.

Please be sure to include a contact name, mailing address, telephone number and email address.



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The Gift of Soft Eyes During The Holiday Season

by Kenda Riggs

“You have to be calm in order to enjoy being calm.” ~ Dr. Stuart Shanker

During the holiday season, there can be many feelings of warmth, love, joy, and excitement, as we gather with family and friends, spend time decorating our homes and classrooms, watch holiday shows, and listen to festive music, while sharing food together and spreading holiday cheer. However, the holiday season can also be a challenging time for people, as it may bring many stressors including busy schedules, time commitments, expectations and financial burdens. This time of the year can also be a time of sadness, loneliness and reflection, especially when grieving the loss of a loved one, life changes, or coping with sad news related to physical and/or mental health.

As you enter the holiday season, there may be both positive and negative stressors around you, which can bring a mixture of emotions. Energy is high at schools with student excitement, which can also bring increased stress to the classroom. Whether a positive or negative stressor, it is important to recognize that the holiday season brings more stress. From eating different foods to increased caffeine and alcohol, staying up late to shop or wrap presents, or trying to run errands that you just don't have the time to do, these are all hidden stressors that come around this time of year. There can be more overt stressors as well, such as increased traffic when driving or shopping and time pressures to clean, decorate, shop, or attend scheduled events that you may be invited to. These hidden and overt stressors can all impact your thoughts and emotions.

At this time, I invite you to pause and simply try to slow down. Slowing down may seem incredibly difficult when you have to get everything done, but there are ways to deliberately slow down to help reduce your experience of stress during this holiday time. Slowing down can help you reset, which can then help you have a clearer mind to continue your holiday planning.

- If you decorate a tree, try to schedule time to

truly enjoy the decorating process, rather than trying to fit decorating in just to get it done.

- If you decide to bake, schedule time for this to truly enjoy the smells and tastes of the festive process of baking homemade treats. If you decide to buy your Christmas goodies, that is wonderful too, and if you don't get treats, that will be okay too!
- If you wrap presents, take your time while being mindful of cutting the wrapping paper, folding and taping one piece at a time.
- When you need a break, breathe in the fresh, cool air outside. Even if just for a few moments, step outside, breathe in and breathe out. Truly embody the feeling of being.

It is important to be responsible for your own well-being during the holiday season, to pace yourself and be aware of your own energy levels. Too often, many teachers go into the holiday season completely exhausted from all these stressors and are just too tired to truly enjoy time off for the holidays. Therefore, it is up to you to monitor where you spend your energy, as conserving energy is actually most important at times of high stress! Even though it does not always feel like it, you do get to choose how you would like to spend your energy. This may mean things are done differently this year, with increased flexibility around holiday traditions. Prioritize your time and what you want to do, not what others expect of you.

It is, however, also essential to nudge yourself forward if you are feeling sad and down during the holiday season. You can become easily isolated from others by delaying getting ready for the day, not going to visit family or friends, and choosing unhealthy ways of coping with loneliness. It is important to remain connected with people through a visit, phone call, text, email, FaceTime or Zoom. Reach out to others to say a warm hello or share a story to help

combat feelings of loneliness. Social connectedness promotes health and well-being and can help you stay positive, even when you just feel like you want to be alone.

The Gift of Soft Eyes

One of the biggest gifts that you can give yourself and others during the holiday season is the gift of **soft eyes**. When experiencing stressors during the holiday season, our thoughts can be busy, and our emotions can feel more intense. This means that people often feel more agitated and frustrated. Soft eyes help you view others and yourself with compassion rather than judgement and help you notice that this behaviour during the holiday season (including your own) may be stress behaviour, rather than deliberate one. Viewing others with soft eyes helps you see the whole picture, therefore allowing you to not react to what you see or hear. With soft eyes, life is viewed with an open heart and mind, a sense of connection with the world around us, and an awareness of what others (and ourselves) may be going through.

“Embracing the gift of soft eyes is not only a gift to others but a loving gift to ourselves because when we become more understanding of those around us, we embody a calmness that goes deeper.”

~ Dr. Stuart Shanker

Although you may not be aware, it is important to remember that every single person may have something they are carrying this time of year. This can be worrying about a sick family member, a custody situation with family, financial strains, past trauma or an overburdened schedule. Soft eyes help us view people with much-needed compassion and give an encouraging word or gentle response if they seem stressed or have emotional responses. Too often, teachers in particular portray a happy face, even when there may be many other emotions that they are carrying inside.

One of the easiest ways to reduce stress is with gratitude, by showing appreciation for those you love and care about. During the holiday season, try to be grateful for what you have. The holidays should be a time to restore energy and balance in your life. Focus on finding your calm, as *you have to be calm in order to enjoy being calm*, which comes easier when we

embrace soft eyes. Take time to reflect on the important things in life and embrace the gift of soft eyes this holiday season.

During this holiday season, and every day...

“May we remember to be kinder. May we remember to be gentler. May we teach our children to listen with their hearts, And by so teaching, may we listen for our own heart’s song. May we smile more, breathe more deeply, walk slower, and help sooner. On matters of principle, may we stand in the water like a rock, And in matters of love, may we follow the stream like a petal. May we not waste a minute, but never hurry. May we not be distracted, but always open. May our lives be uncluttered but filled with memories.”

- George Kaufman

Warmest wishes to you and your loved ones this holiday season. If during the holidays you are experiencing a mental health emergency, please call 811, go to your local emergency department, or contact your local Doorways Walk-In Clinic.

Kenda Riggs is a Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for Teachers. For confidential assistance contact Lori Hewitt (ext. 242), lhewitt@nlta.ca or Kenda Riggs (ext. 265), kriggs@nlta.ca.

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An Interview With...

School Administrator

Melissa Hackett (King)

Melissa Hackett (King) was born and raised in Brigus, Newfoundland and Labrador. She has been teaching since 2017 and holds a Master's Degree in Education Leadership and a Bachelor's Degree in both Music and Music Education, all from Memorial University. Early in her career, she moved from the island portion of the province to Labrador, where she took a permanent job as the Music and French Teacher at Lake Melville School in North West River. In the past six years at Lake Melville School, she has worn many different hats including teaching Music, French, and Art, and working as a Positive Action for Student Success (PASS) teacher.

In 2021, Melissa accepted the role of Vice-Principal at Lake Melville School, and as of the 2023-2024 school year, she currently holds the role of Principal. As an introduction to the membership in her role as an Administrator, Melissa answers a series of questions about her role as a new Administrator in Labrador.

Q. *What is your main priority as a School Administrator?*

A. As a School Administrator, my main priority is to create a supportive and positive learning environment for all students. This involves working with staff to implement policies and practices that will promote academic learning, emotional well-being and personal growth for all students while creating a school community where all members feel valued.

One thing I learned very early in this journey is the importance of creating a sense of community where all members of the school community feel valued. I prioritize creating a positive school culture by encouraging collaboration and open communication between staff, parents, community members and students. A goal of mine at Lake Melville School is to create a support system to address the diverse needs of the students at our school. To do this, it is essential that all members of our school community feel as though their voice is being heard and that their needs are important to us and are being addressed. By con-

tinuing to foster an open, collaborative and supportive atmosphere, I hope to enhance the overall educational experience for everyone in our school community.

Q. *Describe the important role School Administrators play as "lead teachers" in their school.*

A. I feel very privileged that the path I have taken with my career has been supported along the way by many other "lead teachers." Early in my career, I was given so much support from leaders in my school and my school community to develop my skills as an educator. Knowing that I was being supported by people I looked up to gave me the confidence to take risks and become involved in projects and initiatives that I may not otherwise have thought I was capable of so early on. Ideas I had for my school, such as revamping the Christmas concert or new school-wide initiatives, were always welcomed with open arms and given the utmost support by the administration.

Now, being in the role of an Administrator myself, I feel like it is my responsibility now more than ever to be a "lead teacher." This means being a mentor, providing guidance, and contributing to the implementation and improvement of teaching practices throughout the building. It also means not only leading by example, but also recognizing the strengths and needs of the members of my teaching staff and always looking for ways to provide them with the encouragement and motivation they need to take risks in their classrooms and throughout the building and to help provide them with the capacity to become "lead teachers" themselves.

Q. *What do you see as the opportunities and benefits that come from teaching in Labrador?*

A. I moved to Labrador as a young teacher with little actual experience in my own classroom. Before this, I had some experience with substituting and had taken a 0.5 replacement as a music teacher. Accepting a permanent position in Labrador was an adventure

and an opportunity to start off my teaching career. At the time, I didn't realize it, but Labrador would soon become my home, not just a place of employment.

Teaching in Labrador provides teachers with a unique experience and can offer educators many opportunities and benefits. For one, teaching in Labrador offers educators a special opportunity to experience the rich cultural diversity of our province and provides teachers with the opportunity to engage and learn authentically. Personally, teaching in Labrador has opened my eyes to the importance of authentic and place-based educational practices, which have both become passions of mine over the past number of years. There are so many skills I have learned from my students, such as beading and drumming, which I may otherwise not have had the opportunity to experience.

Most notably, teaching in Labrador has helped me to grow professionally and has really shaped my teaching practices. While living and teaching anywhere may present its own set of challenges, the unique opportunity of teaching in Labrador leads to a rewarding and impactful teaching experience.

Q. *What motivates you to work hard?*

A. My motivation to work hard is rooted in the well-being and achievement of my students. Being in an all-grade school, I have the privilege of witnessing their growth as they progress through the grades. Witnessing their growth and success and seeing them overcome any challenges that life may throw at them is immensely rewarding. Contributing to their educational journey and preparing them for future success in the world fuels my dedication and hard work.

The first time it really hit me how much of a capacity educators have to make changes in their students' lives was when I was working as a PASS teacher. I was working with a grade 12 student who had seen her grades drastically decrease after facing challenges outside the building. This student was on the path to attending university; however, because of these challenges, she was missing a significant amount of instructional time, and it was looking like she wouldn't meet the entry requirements. I worked with her through the PASS position to make a plan that would help her get back on track academically and allow her to continue her studies. By the end of the year, she had gotten her grades back up to where they needed to be and was able to attend post-secondary. Although I couldn't help her with all the challenges she was facing, it was so rewarding to know that I was making a real difference in her life.

Experiences like this make us realize the difference that dedication and hard work can have on a student's life. Experiences like this provide me with the motivation to continue to work hard, regardless of how tiring this job can be. Being an educator is hard work, but it is rewarding work.

Q. *What advice would you give to another young person looking to begin a career as an Administrator?*

A. I started my career as an Administrator in 2021 when I was only four years into teaching. It was overwhelming at first to think that I had accepted this position so early in my teaching career, but I knew that this was the path and challenge I wanted to explore. Transitioning from teacher to Administrator is a big feat to undertake, but it is so rewarding.

To any other young educator looking to transition into administration, I would recommend gaining the experience and knowledge required by developing a strong foundation in teaching to understand the dynamics and challenges of a classroom. As an Administrator, classroom teachers are often looking for guidance and help. By establishing your own teaching practices, you can better identify challenges and make suggestions to help build the efficacy of your teaching team. It is also important to look for opportunities to build your leadership capacity. This could include becoming involved in new initiatives, participating in professional development opportunities and looking for opportunities to be a lead learner in your building.

Perhaps the most valuable piece of advice I could give to aspiring Administrators is to reflect and continue to grow as you develop your skills. It is okay to make mistakes because it is from these mistakes that we grow the most. It is okay to admit that you need help at times and recognize that it takes a team of people collaborating and learning together to successfully manage a school. The journey to becoming an Administrator is a combination of experience, continued skill development and most importantly, a genuine passion for improving your school.

.....
If you would like to suggest someone in your school community that you think the entire membership should get to know a little more, send your suggestion to jtulk@nlta.ca.



Ceremony of Induction into the Teaching Profession Thoughts from a Faculty of Education Graduate

by Rachel Harpur

The following are excerpts from a speech given by Rachel Harpur, a recent graduate of the Faculty of Education at Memorial University, at the MUN Induction Ceremony into the Teaching Profession on October 19, 2023.

When I was asked to speak on behalf of our class, I was humbled and honored. It gave me the opportunity to reflect on our year together, and I was reminded of all the fantastic memories that we were able to create.

I know that for me, the education program was the first time that I felt like part of a cohort. It was great to actually know your classmates and to be able to laugh and joke with each other. I am confident that the friendships that we made in this program are going to last a lifetime. The faculty of Memorial's Education Program are without compare. They are encouraging, caring, and positive. It was a pleasure to come to campus simply to interact with the lovely faculty members. There was always a listening ear and some good advice whenever we needed it. You showed us that you cared about us and for that, we are forever grateful.

The program opened my eyes to a new way of teaching. Memorial is dedicated to educating our future teachers in the modern, revolutionary teaching practices that are changing how we view and approach education. For me, coming from a science background, you get really good at thinking analytically, logically, and systematically. In the education program, we were given the opportunity to work in ways that we never had before. The interpersonal skills, the creativity, and the collaboration were a breath of fresh air. Was it challenging? At times, but boy was it rewarding.

The program took my skepticism and extinguished it. I am sure many of you went into the program with a similar mindset as me. I went into this program with the mindset of "One year and you're

done. Suffer through it and then you can do what you have always dreamed of doing – teaching." It wasn't long before I was being challenged to remove the skeptical spectacles and open myself up to change. It was uncomfortable to have my views challenged, and my views were challenged many times throughout the program. I found myself questioning "When would I ever use this?" and now, I am using the practices that I learned over and over again. News flash - UDL does work! A portfolio is a valid and valuable way to assess student learning. Getting hands-on is the best way to learn. When I allowed myself to have an open mind and consider the evidence being presented, I grew into a teacher who was even better than I could have imagined. The time and effort put into me during this program will affect my students now and for the next 30 years. So, on behalf of my students and from the bottom of my heart, let me say thank you.

I have built a strong, supportive network because of this program. I have never been one for group work - in the face of group work, I would say, "Why depend on others when I can do it myself? It's easier if I just do it all myself." Well, I had to get over that quickly. Literally every project is a group project. And I hated it at first. I griped and complained - and don't be too quick to judge me because I'm sure many of you felt the same way. But, through the forced group work, I learned that having a team to bounce ideas off and critique your work is a good thing. You just have to find your people. Find the people that aren't afraid to challenge you. Find the people that push you to do better. Find the people who offer to take some of your load when you are having a bad day. I found my people (you know who you are). And my people still have my back. When I agreed to do this speech, I was like "I totally got this. I have plenty of time to write this speech." I did not have plenty of time, but I wasn't worried. Why not? Because I knew that my

BEGINNING TEACHERS

people would have my back. So, I made the Google Doc, added them to it, sent a cry for help, and here I am standing before you today. Even when separated by hundreds of kilometers, my people had my back. So, if you haven't found your people yet, do it today. Teaching is not a lone-wolf career - how could it be when you have 20+ kids in your room at any given time? Teaching is collaborative. Teaching is pulling strength from those around you. Teaching is being part of a family. Teaching is sending out the cry for help and knowing that you are not going to be let down. I wouldn't have learned this without my year in the education program, and it is a lesson that I will always be grateful for.

In closing, know that you don't have to do this alone. Look around this room. We are here for you. So, on those days that you question your ability to teach. On those days when you feel like throwing in the towel. Remember this: you are not alone in your feelings. I've felt it, and I can guarantee that almost everyone in this room has felt it too. Reach out. Find someone who will listen and then challenge you to get back up and get back in the fight because you ARE capable. You ARE making a difference. You ARE strong enough. And you ARE worthy to be called a teacher. Thank you.

Rachel Harpur is a new graduate of the Bachelor of Education (Intermediate/Secondary) program from Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador and is currently teaching at Botwood Collegiate. Rachel has always been passionate about teaching and has worked as a tutor, assistant lab instructor and kindergarten teaching assistant. Rachel is excited to see where her teaching career takes her as she continues to build her knowledge of teaching through experience.

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FYI

EDUCATION WEEK 2024 SEMAINE DE L'ÉDUCATION MARCH 18-22

More information will be forwarded to schools in the coming weeks



Celebrating NL Teachers

2023 Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence Winners

The Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence have recognized exceptional elementary and secondary school teachers in all disciplines since 1994. Teaching Excellence Award recipients are honoured for their remarkable achievements in education and for their commitment to preparing youth for a digital and innovation-based economy. The Teaching Excellence in STEM Awards celebrate outstanding Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics teachers who help develop the culture of innovation Canada needs today, and in the future. The 2023 recipients include five teachers from this province.

Teaching Excellence – Certificate of Achievement

Beachy Cove Elementary School educators **Lisa Watts Cobb** and **Roxanne Penney** are outstanding educators who make it their mission to develop reading and writing skills with all students.

TEACHING APPROACH

Roxanne and Lisa engage all learners, including those with challenges. Their premise is simple – all students are capable of learning in meaningful ways. The journey just looks different for each learner. They feel strongly that it is the responsibility of educators to put their experience, skills and resources to make learning a positive experience for everyone. They promote cultural openness and inclusion – key ingredients in providing meaningful learning experiences.

IN THE CLASSROOM

As a teacher librarian, Roxanne's learning space ensures all learners are afforded opportunities for skills development and enhancement. She works closely with instructional resource teachers in support of students with learning exceptionalities. She schedules time for students on alternate curriculum to visit the school library and complete projects in a quiet, calmer setting. She schedules a daily free flow book exchange which allows learners to exchange their books when they are ready rather than waiting for their class session. This initiative allows learners greater access to reading material at the speed of their

comfort and it fosters independence.

As the School Based Reading Specialist Lisa spends a lot of time implementing good literacy practices and new research to help all learners flourish. She spends time facilitating writing workshops in all classes showing the limitless potential of creative writing. She also shares pedagogical insight with her colleagues, modeling word work, creative writing, and good reading practices for the teachers and the learners.

EXCEPTIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Beachy Cove offers a rich French Immersion program. Drawing the Francophone community into the school allows learners to actively engage with the local francophone community and become aware of French as an essential element of Canada's cultural fabric. Together, Lisa and Roxanne have facilitated those cultural connections for all of their learners in their Library Learning Commons. They provide opportunities to celebrate the many cultural aspects of Canada's composition and history through engaging activities, not only for the school but also for the entire community.

Teaching Excellence in STEM – Certificate of Achievement

Holy Trinity High School teacher **Heidi Kavanagh** has a highly successful experiential approach to learning.

TEACHING APPROACH

Heidi's teaching philosophy is "hands on, minds on." She connects science with direct experience and reflection to transmit knowledge, develop skills, strengthen values, and develop capacity to contribute to the community. Following hurricane Fiona, Heidi's students researched how hurricanes form and their connection to climate change. Then, they turned their efforts toward advocacy for the communities that were impacted by Hurricane Fiona, donating to a school-wide initiative toward the recovery effort on the Southwest Coast organized at their school. It is well known that students increase their understanding when actively engaged in the practice of science. Heidi paves the way for students to become young scientists.

IN THE CLASSROOM

Heidi promotes the use of hands-on activities through Let's Talk Science resources to show students the importance of using technology to make communities better, debating respectfully with people of different opinions, checking the validity of online sources, and distinguishing fact from fiction. Her guidance and leadership put students on the path to be engaged and responsible digital citizens.

EXCEPTIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Heidi's pedagogy extends well beyond the classroom. She is a tireless promoter and advocate for science fairs in Newfoundland and Labrador. Science fair projects help students to develop critical thinking, communication, collaboration, citizenship, and creativity. In 2023, Holy Trinity High School sent 34 students to the Regional Science Fair, where Heidi's students won 7 honourable mentions, 18 medals and 9 special awards.

Teaching Excellence – Certificate of Excellence

Waterford Valley High School teachers **Margaret Reha-Taylor and Jill Rose** are transformative leaders focussed on inclusion and student engagement.

For more on Jill and Margie's Deep Learning and Mentoring Initiative, see page 22.

Recipients of the Prime Minister's Award receive a certificate from the Prime Minister, promotion of their best teaching practices and national recognition for their contribution to excellence in education in Canada. Nomination packages for the 2024 Prime Minister's Awards must be submitted to the Prime Minister's Awards program office by January 11, 2024. More information is available at <https://pmate-ppmee.ised-isde.canada.ca/site/pm-awards-teaching-excellence-stem/en/nominate-teacher>

(Information for this article was obtained from the Prime Minister's Awards program website.)

PRIME MINISTER'S AWARDS FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT



**LISA WATTS COBB
AND ROXANNE PENNEY**
BEACHY COVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PRIME MINISTER'S AWARDS FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE IN STEM CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT



HEIDI KAVANAGH
HOLY TRINITY HIGH SCHOOL

PRIME MINISTER'S AWARDS FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE



**MARGARET REHA-TAYLOR
AND JILL ROSE**
WATERFORD VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Premier Furey and Minister Howell Present 2023 Teacher Awards

On October 25, 2023, Premier Andrew Furey and Education Minister Krista Lynn Howell presented awards to the recipients of the 2023 Premier's Award for Teaching Innovation and the Minister of Education's Award for Compassion in Teaching.

The Premier's Award for Teaching Innovation recognizes primary, elementary or secondary teachers in all disciplines who have demonstrated innovation in instruction and a commitment to preparing their students for future success.

2023 Premier's Award recipients:

- Joanne Broders, Smallwood Academy, Gambo
- Peter Constantine, Paradise Elementary, Paradise
- Yvonne Dawe, Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation, St. John's
- Denise Hogan, Carbonear Collegiate, Carbonear
- Wendy Marsh, Peacock Primary, Happy Valley-Goose Bay
- Brigitte White, École C.C. Loughlin School, Corner Brook

The Minister's Award for Compassion in Teaching recognizes inspirational and compassionate teachers at the primary, elementary or secondary level who have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to supporting the social, emotional and mental health of their students, colleagues or school community as a whole.

2023 Minister of Education's Award recipients:

- Danielle Doyle, Carbonear Collegiate, Carbonear
- Perry Hann, Corner Brook Regional High, Corner Brook
- Tonya Kearly Russell, Holy Trinity High, Torbay
- Mathieu Laviolette, École des Grands-Vents/École Rocher du Nord, St. John's
- Rhonda Martin, Cloud River Academy, Roddickton
- Penny Pinsent, St. Mary's Elementary, St. John's
- Tara Reid, École St. Matthew's School, St. John's
- Cameron Snow, Exploits Valley High, Grand Falls-Windsor
- Gregory White, St. Kevin's High School, Goulds

The Teaching Awards were established in 2021 to acknowledge the leadership role that all educators play in the lives of students.



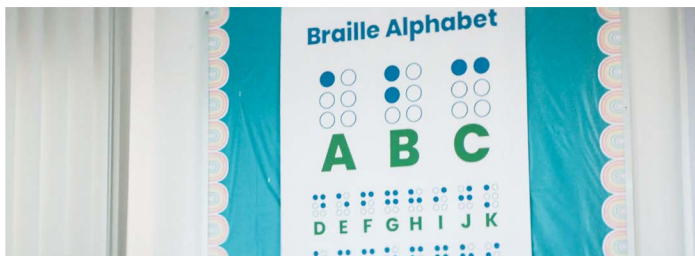
Premier Andrew Furey and Minister Krista Lynn Howell with the 2023 recipients of the Premier's Award for Teaching Innovation and the Minister of Education's Award for Compassion in Teaching. (Picture provided by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador)



*Teachers change lives
every day*

MS. HELLINGS' STORY

Every teacher has a story. Our teachers are more than educators. You are champions for our children. You are helping our kids overcome barriers, discover their talents, and feel confident in who they are. Teachers are changing lives every day. Our newest Teachers Change Lives story features Lindsay Hellings of Amos Cormenius Memorial School Hopedale, Labrador. Ms. Hellings taught herself Braille so she could teach her student, Jonathan Nochasak, to read. Watch their story, with described video, at <https://teacherschangelives.ca/>



*Teachers change lives
every day*

Lindsay Hellings
Amos Cormenius Memorial School
Hopedale

Jonathan Nochasak



Deep Learning and Mentoring Initiative

by Jill Rose and Margie Taylor

Peer counselling credits, prosthetic limbs, tutoring, YouTube running channels, improved attendance, business plans, authentic choice, hydroelectric engines, musical compositions, community-sector mentoring, expert learning opportunities, novel writing, APP creations, fitness plans...

These are just some of the highlights of the Deep Learning and Mentoring Initiative piloted at Waterford Valley High School in St. John's in 2022-2023.

This initiative is two-fold. Firstly, it aimed at allowing students to advance their leadership, networking and mentoring skills. Students improved their interpersonal skills by participating in a peer tutoring/counselling program where they developed a deeper understanding of conflict resolution, coaching, mentoring, ethics, collaboration and teamwork.

Secondly, this initiative allowed students the time to work on a passion project of their own choosing. Passion projects offer an avenue for deep learning and an opportunity for self-directed learning. Deep learning experiences promote curiosity by asking open-ended questions that invite students to seek, process, analyze, and interpret knowledge. In line with UDL principles of learner variability and student engagement, deep learning allows for increased engagement by offering students choice in what they learn and how they present their learning. Paired with the real-world experience of peer tutoring and counselling, this initiative helped students to develop real-world skills and to value the pursuit of knowledge.

But it seems like a lot of work for students, right? Students would never go for it! Yet, they did...

This initiative came about through listening to the wants and needs of students. Some students were saying that they were bored with school, and nothing was interesting. Attendance was becoming a concern for some. Other students craved skill development and wanted to learn skills that they would need in the workforce: collaboration, teamwork, mentoring and conflict resolution. However, students were adamant that they did not want more courses or projects added to their already over-full schedules. That is part of the

uniqueness of this initiative and added to its success. The deep learning and mentoring opportunity was embedded into the regular school day schedule and was provided as a choice for students, not a requirement. Through creative scheduling, students wishing to participate in this endeavour were given time within their regular school day to work on the projects. Grade 12 students, who did not need a full schedule of courses in grade 12 to graduate, were permitted to replace a course with the deep learning and mentoring initiative. They had a wide berth when choosing the passion project that they wanted to pursue, and students were paired with mentors from the community, Memorial University, and the business community, to enhance their learning experiences. Students were also given the opportunity to earn a Peer Counselling credit.

As with most educational initiatives, the real value and strongest advocacy is found in what student experiences tell us. Here are some of the student comments from the end of the year:

- "Through this project, I have learned skills in 3D computer design, developing research, how to study effectively, and overall, not to underestimate myself. When choosing this project, I wondered if I had bitten off more than I could chew, but I learned with hard work and determination, I can achieve my goals."
- "It helped me learn new things about writing, but also about myself. I had given up on my dreams of becoming a writer for a long time, but when I began working on it, I knew that I wanted to continue working on books in the future. I also became a lot more confident, as I had to speak with people more often."
- "I got to spend my time working on something I was actually interested in. It really locked in for me that dentistry is what I want to pursue in the future. I created stronger connections with my teachers, classmates, and also my mentor while researching my project."

- “This project gave me the opportunity to challenge my mind by doing something I was interested in. This allowed me to gain plenty of knowledge surrounding my project, along with stimulating and challenging myself, which at times school hasn't been doing.”
- “One challenge I faced was projecting my vision of the engine on paper. I struggle with drawing and my teacher, Mrs. Taylor, introduced me to Rich (my mentor) who helped me produce an AutoCAD design for my engine. Another challenge was implementing more energy-efficient components into my engine, as I lacked experience and knowledge in this field. After hours of research, I was able to teach myself about all the different components I would need for my design.”
- “I had to change many parts of my novel as they were unrealistic and unnecessary. I also had to add parts and work on many literary elements of the book, like character development. Ms. Rose helped me a lot with this. I added chapters to show development and completely scrapped a huge part of the epilogue.”
- “One of the main challenges was trying to figure out how to make my project happen. After all my research, I still wasn't educated enough on the topic as I am still in high school. Getting in contact with my mentor and dentist helped me find the missing pieces.”
- “After seeing accumulating garbage in my community, I thought there has to be a way to reuse plastics for the better. My dream of a green earth and my interest in medicine led me to research the possibility of creating a prosthetic arm using recyclable materials.”

Education has changed so much in the recent past and continues to change daily, however, one thing remains: students need to learn how to learn. Being curious is the bedrock of learning, and when curiosity is paired with mentorship and opportunity, the sky is the limit for what students can accomplish. Through this opportunity, students learned how to seek mentorship (and give it). They learned how to source materials, ask the right questions, let failure be an encouragement to work harder, collaborate and find solutions, listen and respectfully disagree, work together for a common goal, and help one another to reach their goals. In the end, they learned how to learn, and they did it by discovering and following their passions.



Jill Rose helping a student with English work.



Margie Taylor working through Math with students in the PASS room.



Jill Rose and Margie Taylor with various Passion Project students as they present their work to the NLESD.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

For a full list of professional development opportunities, visit the NLTA website at www.nlta.ca/professional-development

Dates to Remember

January 2024

- Jan 12 **District Deadline:** Educational Leave Applications
- Jan 18 **Deadline:** PD Fund Applications
- Jan 26-27 NLTA Provincial Executive Meeting
- Jan 31 **Deadline:** Receipt of Nominations for Bancroft, Barnes, Allan Bishop and Special Recognition Awards

February 2024

- Feb 14 Janeway Day in Schools
- Feb 15 **Deadline:** PD Fund Applications
- Feb 29 NLTA Provincial Executive Meeting

March 2024

- Mar 1-2 NLTA Joint Council Meeting
- Mar 18-22 Education Week
- Mar 21 **Deadline:** PD Fund Applications
- Mar 31 **Deadline:** Centennial Study Award Applications
- Mar 31 **Board Deadline:** Notice for Retirement at End of School Year

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NLTA CHRISTMAS HOURS

Please be advised that the NLTA building will be **CLOSED** from **December 22nd to January 1st** (inclusive) to allow staff to enjoy the holiday season. The office will reopen on January 2, 2024.



APPLYING FOR EDUCATIONAL LEAVE?

Applications for Educational Leave for the 2024–25 School Year are available on the NLTA website at www.nlta.ca

Application is made to the District.
District deadlines are as follows:

NLESD: January 12, 2024

CSFP: January 12, 2024

Call for Nominations

NLTA Awards 2023-24

Each year your Association honours several of its members with four prestigious awards:

Bancroft Award

Barnes Award

Allan Bishop Award

Special Recognition Award

If you feel that someone within your school qualifies for nomination for one of the awards for the 2023-24 school year, please contact your school representative who will forward the name and information on this person to your branch president or the appropriate special interest council president.

All nominations must be completed on the NLTA website at www.nlta.ca and must be submitted by January 31st in order to be considered.
