

PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MINUTES

**Ninth Regular Executive Meeting
October 31, 2024**

**Boardroom
NLTA Building**

PRELIMINARIES

The Ninth regular meeting of the 2023-25 Provincial Executive Council was held in the NLTA Boardroom on Thursday, October 31, 2024. The meeting convened at 9:00 a.m. and adjourned at 4:30 p.m. Participating in the meeting from Provincial Executive were: Trent Langdon (Chair), Dale Lambe, Stephanie Drover-Edmunds, Lynette Snook, Della Way, Colin Short, Sean Weir, Hollis Cull, Russell Stockley, Tracey Payne (via Zoom), Sheldon Slaney, and Darryl George. Participating from Staff were Stefanie Tuff, Ian Crewe, Wade Rogers, Jennifer Tulk, Darlene Johnson, Jody Saunders, Jamie Kieley, Bob Johnston, John Veitch, Gabriel Ryan, and Samantha Lee.

REGRETS: Miriam Sheppard and Deana Hatcher

The President welcomed Stephanie Drover-Edmunds to her first Provincial Executive meeting. Ms. Drover-Edmunds is replacing Angela Dawe, including Committee chairing responsibilities, during a leave of absence. He then welcomed all attendees and read the NLTA Mission Statement and Land Acknowledgement.

I. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Slaney/George: That the Agenda be adopted as presented.

CARRIED

II. MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 20, 2024

Weir/Short: That the minutes of September 20, 2024, be accepted as presented.

CARRIED

III. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Association's financial statement for the period ending September 30, 2024, was reviewed by Mr. Sheldon Slaney, Chair of the Finance and Property Committee, for the information of members. *(A copy is attached to the Official Minutes)*

IV. BUSINESS ARISING

There were no items under business arising at this time.

V. ASSOCIATION PRIORITIES FOR 2023-25

Updates on the Association Priorities were provided to Provincial Executive for review, questions, and comment. *(A copy of the document is attached to the Official Minutes).*

Highlights of issues discussed are as follows:

#1. Workload Concerns

- Details on the settlement that was reached on the policy grievance regarding hearing/vision screenings
- NLTA advocacy on securing leave for administrators to attend the National CAP Conference
- Information regarding social media protection for members and related ongoing cases
- Discussion on submitting the suggestion of a liaison group for school administrators as a topic for the next School Board Teacher Liaison agenda as a forum for administrators to provide feedback to the employer
- Statistics on unfilled positions
- Update on potential Article 30 grievances related to class size and composition
- Lack of student assistants exacerbating workload concerns
- Number of retired teachers filling vacant positions
- Work intensification related to the RTL database

#2. Membership Well-being and Protection

- Update on proposed changes to employer policy regarding prevention of and response to workplace harassment
- Discussion on the mental health PL day announced following the Teachers Think Tank
- Requirement for school counselors to complete an assessment course in order to secure permanent employment
- Discussion on the student assessment backlog for school psychologists and school counselors
- Update on ongoing advocacy around payroll issues

#3. Collective Bargaining and Services for Members

- Update on the timeline for initiating the next round of negotiations
- Status of Labrador Benefits Agreement negotiations
- Discussion on the policy grievance regarding access to sick leave accruals for substitutes
- Update on the policy grievance regarding the inappropriate use of individual contracts

#4. Retention, Recruitment, and Resourcing

- Discussion on ongoing committee processes

#5. Advocacy on and Response to Government Initiatives

- Update on plans for implementation of intermediate curriculum renewal
- Discussion on filling the new Math Program Specialist positions
- Lack of consultation with CDLI teachers before implementing new programs

VI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS – IN BLOCK

Weir/Stockley: That the following committee reports and subsequent Recommendations be approved in block.

CARRIED

1. Finance and Property Committee, October 30, 2024

There were no recommendations from the committee at this time.

Mr. Short requested that the Communications Committee report of October 8, 2024, be removed from the block:

2. Communications Committee, October 8, 2024

Mr. Short requested more information on the theme that was decided for BGM. Ms. Snook explained that the Committee decided on this theme (Fighting for Change) to highlight the ongoing challenges that teachers continue to face in schools due to insufficient resourcing. Additionally, the theme emphasizes the significance of the keynote speaker's address, which will focus on the importance of a strong public education system for a thriving, sustainable, and equitable society.

Snook/Way: That the report from the Communications Committee of October 8, 2024, be accepted as presented.

CARRIED

3. Curriculum Committee, October 28, 2024

a) That the policy on Curriculum (Professional Development Section B) be amended as follows:

11. When new curriculum and programs are introduced by the Department of Education for new courses, teachers should not be required to teach such courses until the appropriate prescribed and supplementary student and teacher resources are on site at schools, teachers are inserviced **during the instructional day**, and other applicable materials are made available.

- b) That the policy on Interventions (Professional Development Section L) be amended as follows:

2. Considerations for Effective Interventions

- c) Children requiring interventions should be recognized as pre-referral students who experience difficulties in learning which **through the Responsive Teaching and Learning process** may be overcome by:
- i. a concentrated application of specific needs instruction, or
 - ii. ongoing supports and accommodations, or
 - iii. specific intervention, possibly for a short period of time, in a one/one or small group setting.
- f) Interventions support should be determined by the assessed needs, interests, and abilities of the student **according to the Responsive Teaching and Learning model.**
- c) That the policy on Multiage Classrooms (Professional Development Section M) be amended as follows:
8. The Curriculum Division of the Department of Education (~~with the aid of experienced educators~~ **in consultation with educators with a background in multiage teaching**) will be approached to develop different curricula and materials for multiage classroom use, and to develop curriculum guides with suggested teaching strategies and relevant resource and instruction materials and that such planning and development of resource materials be given high priority by the Department of Education.
13. The Department of Education, in collaboration with ~~experienced~~ educators with a background in multiage education, will develop an inservice that will assist ~~parents~~ **caregivers** in their understanding of this educational approach.

3. **Group Insurance Managers, October 9, 2024**

There were no recommendations from the committee at this time.

Mr. Stockley requested that the Substitute Teacher Committee report of October 22, 2024, be removed from the block:

4. **Substitute Teacher Committee, October 22, 2024**

Mr. Stockley expressed concerns from substitute teachers about a lack of communication from the employer regarding SmartFind. The Assistant Executive Director advised that the Association met with both the employer and substitutes regarding grievances filed due to issues with SmartFind. An agreement/settlement was reached on certain system parameters which was shared at the time and led to a significant decrease in SmartFind related questions/concerns from members.

Mr. Stockley spoke about the challenges some people encounter trying to get on the substitute list. Some requirements/measures appear unnecessary/excessive. The Assistant Executive Director acknowledged this concern and stated that, while not an excuse, employer efforts to automate application processes is, in part, motivated by HR department understaffing. The Association will continue to advocate with the employer for improvements to make the system more user friendly for those interested in substituting.

Mr. Lambe took the Chair.

VII. TABLE OFFICERS

Langdon/Short: That the Kids Eat Smart Foundation NL – Kids Eat Smart Breakfast Clubs donation request be approved in the amount of \$7,500.

CARRIED

VIII. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In a written report, the President outlined for Executive members activities undertaken since the last Executive meeting including meetings, school visits, and media interviews.
(A copy of the report is on file with the Official Minutes.)

President Langdon took the Chair.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

a) Notice of Motions

There were no Motions submitted from Provincial Executive.

b) Agenda Items

1. PASS Teacher Allocation (Russell Stockley)

Mr. Stockley highlighted the importance of PASS teachers in schools and asked for clarification on how they are allocated across the province. The Assistant Executive Director advised that units for PASS teachers are allocated to areas with higher student populations to provide support for credit recovery and assist students to successfully progress through the curriculum. Administrators who believe they need a PASS teacher in their school are encouraged to contact their DOS. Further discussion ensued.

2. Substitute List Challenges (Russell Stockley)

This agenda item was withdrawn by Mr. Stockley as it was addressed during the discussion on Executive Committee Reports.

3. Modified Course Responsibilities (Russell Stockley)

Mr. Stockley expressed concern about the increased workload for classroom teachers who are required to implement modified courses. He suggested that a more streamlined approach and clearer guidelines are necessary to support teachers in this process. The Assistant Executive Director clarified that it is the employer's responsibility to approve modified courses. Modifications are only necessary if a student is unable to be successful with the prescribed curriculum despite making their best efforts. Teachers are encouraged to contact program specialists in student support services if they require assistance with modifying a course.

4. Family Leave Drop-Down Menu (Tracey Payne)

Ms. Payne expressed concern about the drop-down menu for requesting family leave. Some teachers feel this approach infringes on their privacy. The Executive Director clarified that this process is related to the employer notice given during the last round of negotiations, which was referenced in NLTA presentations and information provided during and following ratification. The employer is not looking for any details beyond what is included in the drop-down menu, which is essentially a list of the long-established eligibility criteria for family leave.

5. Group Insurance

Executive members had an extensive discussion regarding the recent Group Insurance survey that was distributed to all members. Concerns were raised concerning prior notification of the survey's distribution and the potential impact on members from implementing any of the potential changes.

Ms. Payne, Chair of Group Insurance Managers, provided some background information on the options that were included in the survey. As reported in their meeting minutes over the past several years, Group Insurance Managers have been exploring cost containment strategies for some time to address the growing need to offset Plan deficits and limit increases in health premiums. They have also researched options not included in the survey, but those presented are, based on expert insurance industry and actuarial advice, most likely to have the required impact on costs. No final decisions have been made. Managers will consider the survey feedback as part of the discussions during their December meeting and hope to make a decision in February.

The Executive Director noted that Group Insurance Managers have a legal fiduciary responsibility to make decisions in the best interest of the plan and its members overall, with the goal of ensuring the long-term viability and sustainability of the plan while providing good coverage for members.

Ms. Way highlighted the need for improved communication regarding potential changes to health coverage.

Discussion ensued and the following motion was accepted:

Way/Weir: That the NLTA hold educational sessions to provide information to members on the proposed changes to the Group Insurance Health Plan.

CARRIED

Mr. Weir inquired about employer contributions to NLTA Group Insurance premiums. The Executive Director advised that this is separate from the setting of premium rates, which is driven and determined by claims experience. An increase in government contributions to the cost-shared elements of the NLTA Program would have to be negotiated through collective bargaining. Under current agreement language, government contributes to cost-shared premiums in the NLTA Program at a rate equivalent to what they contribute to premiums for employees covered by the provincial government group insurance program. Because the NLTA health plan covers more than the provincial plan, NLTA claims costs and, consequently, premiums are higher. As a result, the rate of employer contribution that covers 50% of the premium in the government health plan does not cover 50% of the premium in the NLTA health plan.

Discussion ensued and the following motion was accepted:

Weir/Way: That the Collective Bargaining Committee consider for inclusion in the opening proposals for the next round of negotiations a provision for government to increase its contributions to the cost shared elements of the NLTA Group Insurance Program to 50% of premiums.

CARRIED

6. Patricia Cowan Award

The Executive Director reviewed and discussed the Patricia Cowan Award criteria and identified some individuals who may be considered potential recipients. Executive members are encouraged to submit the names of any individuals who they feel meet the established criteria so that a decision can be made at the December meeting. A reminder will be sent out before the next meeting.

7. Honorary Membership Award

The President reviewed and discussed the Honorary Membership Award criteria and identified some individuals who may be considered potential recipients. Executive members are encouraged to nominate any individuals who they feel meet the established criteria so that a decision can be made at the December meeting. A reminder will be sent out before the next meeting.

8. Executive Leave of Absence

The President discussed the arrangements recently made in response to the notice received that Angela Dawe will be taking a temporary leave of absence from Provincial Executive. The next highest ranked alternate from the election at BGM 2023, Stephanie Drover-Edmunds, will fill this position, including Committee responsibilities, until Ms. Dawe's return. Sean Weir, the next highest ranked candidate from the June 2023 Table Officers election, will serve as Table Officer on an interim basis.

X. GOOD NEWS ITEMS

Mr. Short spoke about the Kids Eat Smart Radiothon he attended with Table Officers. He highlighted the event's success and expressed appreciation to Jennifer Tulk, Communications Officer, for her efforts in organizing it.

XII. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of Provincial Executive is scheduled for Friday and Saturday, December 6-7, 2024.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

CONFIRMED:

PRESIDENT

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DATE

DATE**SL**