

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association



Priorities for 2023-25

Provincial Executive

January 31, 2025

Priority #1: Workload Concerns

Goal: To improve the working conditions of teachers generally and to address individual teacher workload concerns

- Programs and Services staff assisted numerous teachers during the Fall of the 2023-24 school year in drafting correspondence re: class size and composition and inadequate resources that prevent them from effectively delivering curriculum and ensuring a safe and effective teaching and learning environment despite their best efforts as caring and competent professionals. In several cases, additional allocations followed.
- During the 2023-24 school year and continuing into 2024-25, Administrative Officers have assisted teachers with exercising the right to refuse unsafe work under OHS legislation. Members have been provided with advice and support regarding violence in the classroom, rights, responsibilities and options. While some matters have been resolved to teachers' satisfaction, several refusals are ongoing January 2025, and new cases have arisen.
- A policy grievance (failure to consult) was filed regarding changes to policy which would require NLTA members to administer hearing and vision screeners prior to comprehensive assessments. This matter was referred for arbitration with hearing dates confirmed for November 2024. The RNUNL was notified of the arbitration dates as this matter raised work of the bargaining unit (public health nurses) concerns for them, which they are pursuing as well with the Department of Health & Community Services through their own dispute resolution processes. Several meetings were held by the parties during the Spring/Summer 2024, continuing into the Fall of 2024. This grievance was settled in November 2024, resulting in a reversal of the policy changes. As a result, NLTA members will no longer be required to complete hearing and vision screeners prior to comprehensive assessments. A memo from NLSchools was sent to the system regarding these changes in early January 2025.
- The committee established to review the RTL model has now met 4 times, most recently on October 16, 2024. The Committee has secured quotes from MQO and Thinkwell and are engaged in the selection process with the goal of distributing surveys prior to February 1, 2025.
- The 2022-2026 Collective Agreement contains a provision requiring the establishment of an Advisory Committee within 120 days of the signing of this Agreement for the purpose of considering the appropriateness and feasibility of implementing recommendations from the TARC report. Association staff initiated discussions with the Department of Education (March-May 2024) to commence the work of this committee. Due to staffing changes at the Department of Education/NLSchools and CSFP, the initial meeting of this committee was delayed, but took place on October 8, 2024. Subsequent meetings have occurred on

December 9, 2024 and January 15, 2025, with several other meetings scheduled through to the end of the current school year.

- The President had a telephone meeting with Premier Furey in mid-May 2024 to discuss teacher shortages and ideas to address teacher workload and retention/recruitment challenges. This was followed up with correspondence from the President to the Premier on May 29, 2024. Subsequent discussions with NLSchools officials in July 2024 led to a response from the Minister of Education on August 12, 2024, confirming a commitment for some additional resources in several regional “pilot” schools, including introducing a new student services TLA support position in 6 schools for the 2024-25 school year. Recent (early December 2024) discussions with Department officials indicate that feedback from school administrators at pilot schools has been mainly positive and the employer intends to add additional TLA units for the remainder of 2024-25. Input from NLTA has been sought and provided regarding suggestions for additional pilot schools. A total of 21 additional full-time SS TLA position were allocated to schools across the province as of January 2025 for the remainder of the school year. The Minister confirmed in a meeting with the President on January 10, 2025, that hiring for these positions is ongoing.
- Programs & Services staff have developed and are sharing an explanation with teachers regarding the possibility of a grievance under Article 30 (Class Size) of the Collective Agreement. Integration of the former NLESD with the Department of Education may make grievances around class size/under resourcing more likely to succeed, depending on the facts of each particular case. A couple of such cases that were being explored during the Fall of 2024 did not proceed to grievance as initial efforts/inquiries led to additional resources being allocated.
- The Association worked with M5 to review the most recent comments received from parents after the latest Not Okay campaign, which was launched online in May 2024. These comments were packaged for use in future public awareness campaigns and in correspondence with government officials to advocate for increased resourcing in classrooms. Some quotes were used in the NLTA pre-budget submission in January 2025.
- The next installment of the Not Okay campaign was launched on October 29, 2024, and incorporates comments received from parents as well as a statement regarding the increase in incidents of school violence as disclosed by updated ATIPP request data received in August 2024. The campaign includes social media assets, an online video and a television commercial. The timing of the campaign was determined strategically to coincide with the reopening of the House of Assembly for the Fall sitting on November 4, 2024. General feedback from members on the campaign has been positive and there has been significant engagement with the posts and videos. The “still” not okay tagline and some parent comments were used in the NLTA pre-budget submission in January 2025.

- The Association sent a message to all members on October 9, 2024, strongly encouraging participation in an Education Accord survey. Reminders were sent periodically until the survey closed in December 2024.
- Administrative Officers are working with Special Interest Councils and the NLCU on measures to improve the efficiency of banking procedures for all Councils. A new process has been established and is in the testing stage as of January 2025.
- Programs and Services staff are collecting data from Administrators on increases to workload. Data was presented to the Professional Issues Committee in late Fall 2024; the Committee has directed their staff consultant to identify key themes and takeaways to send to Mike Tobin, Senior Management Official for School Systems with a request for action to address the increases. Mike Tobin's office has management of Directors of Schools who work with Administrators.
- The TPP Joint Sponsor Body met on December 11, 2024 and, in response to the continuing shortage of substitute teachers, a motion was carried to continue the lifting of limits on retiree substitute work for the 2024-25 school year.
- Programs and Services staff are working with and advocating for schools to establish boundaries on the types/nature of student medical interventions that can be required of NLTA members. Follow up with DOE Student Services staff is ongoing as of January 2025. The Executive Director has also raised this concern with the Deputy Minister in December 2024, reminding of the Department's obligation to consult with the Association on any contemplated changes to employer policy on this issue.
- The President and Executive Director discussed concerns regarding inadequate resourcing to support CDLI expansion during a meeting with the Minister and Deputy Minister on January 10, 2025.
- On January 3, 2025, the Association submitted its Pre-Budget Submission to the Provincial Government for the 2025 Budget. The submission, entitled *Our Education System is STILL Not Ok*, articulates the Association's position that significant and strategic funding must be allocated in Budget 2025 for K-12 public education in this province. The submission highlights quotes from parents and links the importance of education funding to our society, health care system and future. The submission was also shared with members and posted online.
- The Association lobbied NLSchools in late 2024/early 2025 regarding concerns raised by members on the number of days allocated for mid-term and final examinations in semesterized and non-semesterized schools. A commitment was made to collect and assess information in relation to the re-introduction of exams and the concerns raised would be a consideration in future discussions by programs staff on the rollout of examinations for the the next school year.

Priority #2: Membership Well-Being and Protection

Goal: To promote and improve supports for teacher health and wellness, including teacher mental health and well-being

(See Appendix for updates on recommendations from the Teacher Mental Health and Well-being Ad Hoc Committee)

- Due to the continued growth of mental health referrals to the EAP for Teachers, EAP had significantly reduced the number of workshops provided in schools. There are ongoing requests and a need for more wellness workshops in schools throughout the province. With the addition of a third EAP position, the provision of some workshops has resumed during the 2024-2025 school year.
- Association staff continue to assist members with various payroll matters throughout the Fall of 2024 and Winter 2025, including issues related to the calculation and payment of negotiated bonuses and retroactive salary increases, the expanded eligibility for the isolation allowance and teachers not paid in the first pay period for 2024-25. Meetings between Programs & Services staff and Payroll officials have been ongoing to address problems and advocate for systemic improvements, including during July-August 2024 and September, October, November and December 2024. Further meetings with government payroll officials are scheduled for late January 2025.
- The Association facilitated and attended a meeting with Department of Education officials for representatives of the PIE SIC on June 3, 2024. PIE presented research and suggestions to improve the recruitment and retention of school psychologists. It was confirmed during this meeting that NLTA advocacy has been successful in leading to regulatory changes to create a path to level VII certification for all school psychologists, and to update terminology in regulations to refer to “school”, as opposed to “educational” psychologists. NLTA staff have sought updates on the status of these amendments to regulations coming into force (October, December 2024, January 2025) and have been advised that legislative drafting is ongoing. An estimated timeframe has been requested; we are awaiting a response.
- Programs & Services actively (August-November 2024) advocated with government officials for the continuation of the policy to not require medical documentation from teachers for periods of absence (up to 14 days) for COVID-19 and/or related symptoms. Department officials advised that this policy would remain in place until future notice as government was, in general, considering the matter for all public sector employees. Government has since informed all employees that medical notes will, in general, be required as of December 1, 2024, but not as frequently as required under current collective agreement language.

Programs and Services staff are seeking employer clarification on certain aspects of this moving forward and are considering a potential policy grievance regarding the impact of retroactive application. A deadline of January 23 has been provided to the employer.

- NLTA staff continue efforts to have the employer implement a system that would allow members to have individual, “self-service” access to personal leave accrual and usage information. The new Letter #12 in the Collective Agreement requires the employer to explore this. Teacher Payroll officials have advised that this functionality has been included in ongoing investigations into a new payroll system to replace TCAS but, in the interim the possibility of other options are being explored (for example SmartFind, monthly balance updates ...). The Association has also explored whether a complaint regarding privacy concerns to the OIPC could lead to this issue being expedited. In mid-September 2024, the Association was made aware that members can access leave accrual information via SmartFind. While some concerns have come in regarding the accuracy of these numbers, the overall sense is that the majority of this information is correct. In a meeting with the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board Secretariat officials on November 26, 2024, the President and NLTA staff in attendance were advised that work on instituting a self-service portal is ongoing. This matter was also raised at the SBTLC meeting on December 12, 2024, and the next meeting with payroll officials is scheduled for January 27, 2025.
- Two Beginning Teachers’ Conferences have been held in Happy Valley-Goose Bay on November 30-December 1, 2024 and January 11-12 in St. John’s. Feedback from participants was extremely positive. A conference scheduled in Deer Lake was cancelled due to numerous participants having to cancel.
- The Public Accounts Committee copied the President on its October 24, 2024, correspondence to the Deputy Ministers of Education and Treasury Board Secretariat, seeking information from them on government efforts to address Teacher Payroll problems. The Association has responded, seeking timelines for the Committee’s deliberations and an opportunity to provide feedback on any information provided by government.
- The NLTA held three virtual Group Insurance information/Q&A sessions for members on January 14, 15, and 16, 2025. The purposes of the sessions were to discuss the Group Insurance Program and any potential changes to the Health Insurance Plan and to elicit feedback from members.
- The next installment of the Not Okay campaign was launched on October 29, 2024, and incorporates comments received from parents as well as a statement regarding the increase in incidents of school violence as disclosed by updated ATIPP request data received in August 2024. The campaign includes social media assets, an online video and a television

commercial. The timing of the campaign was determined strategically to coincide with the reopening of the House of Assembly for the Fall sitting on November 4, 2024. General feedback from members on the campaign has been positive and there has been significant engagement with the posts and videos. The “still” not okay tagline and some parent comments were used in the NLTA pre-budget submission in January 2025.

- Programs and Services staff assisted members in two schools with the Conseil scolaire francophone provincial (CSFP) regarding employer expectations during Fall 2024 of travel outside work hours to attend mandatory PL. The employer adjusted school hours and travel itineraries in response to NLTA advocacy.
- Programs and Services staff assisted members (several separate schools) in exercising their right to refuse unsafe work resulting from threats and violent incidents during Fall 2024. While some matters have been resolved to teachers’ satisfaction, several such refusals are still ongoing and new cases have arisen.
- An Administrative Officer prepared an article for the January/ February edition of *The Bulletin* on Accommodation: The Basics.
- EAP Coordinators offered the following wellness workshops:
 - Corner Brook – in person presentations – “Understanding your Employee Assistance Program” and “Coping with Stress and Critical Incidents” - Offered November 1, 2024.
 - Fortune – virtual presentation – “Understanding your Employee Assistance Program” - Offered November 1, 2024.
 - Marystown – virtual presentation – “Understanding your Employee Assistance Program”. Offered November 1, 2024.
 - St. John’s (Centre for Distance Learning (CDLI) - in person presentation – “Understanding your Employee Assistance Program”. Offered November 20, 2024.
 - St. John’s (Faculty of Education, Memorial) – in person presentation – “Teacher Wellness: Prioritizing Self-Care for New Teachers”. Offered November 29, 2024.
 - Gander – in person presentation – “Compassion Fatigue and Burnout”. Offered December 6, 2024.
- On November 26, 2024, the President, Executive Director and an administrative officer attended meetings with senior government officials regarding payroll issues. This meeting was also attended by the Minister of Finance and senior Treasury Board Secretariat officials. The next meeting has been scheduled for January 27, 2025.
- The Assistant Executive Director and an Administrative Officer met with the newly appointed Quality Assurance Manager for government payroll on December 3, 2024.
- The President participated in numerous media interviews (from December 18, 2024-January 16, 2025), speaking on the government’s cell phone policy, violence in schools, the interim report of the Education Accord NL and the initial findings of the CTF Parachute Survey. He

also gave several “year-end” interviews with various media outlets, reviewing the issues of importance for NLTA members in 2024 and the Association’s priorities for 2025.

- On November 25, 2024, the Fall 2024 Teachers Change Lives story was launched. The story features an IRT at Goulds Elementary, Donna Dalton, and her special relationship with her student Lilly. The campaign ran on TV and online for four weeks. Work has already begun on the Spring 2025 TCL campaign.
- On January 10, 2025, the Association submitted its Pre-Budget Submission to the Provincial Government for the 2025 Budget. The submission, entitled *Our Education System is STILL Not Ok*, articulates the Association’s position that significant and strategic funding must be allocated in Budget 2025 for K-12 public education in this province. The submission highlights quotes from parents and links the importance of education funding to our society, health care system and future. The submission was also shared with members and posted online.
- Education Week 2025 will take place from March 24-29, 2025, with the theme *Adventure in Learning/Apprendre: une aventure!*
- EAP Coordinator prepared an article entitled “New Year’s Resolutions: Yay or Nay” for the January/February 2025 edition of *The Bulletin*.
- EAP Coordinators have attended two meetings re: updating the EAP website. Work on this project is ongoing.
- Since December 2024 there have been 7 requests for EAP Wellness Workshops / Resources. Four (4) workshops have been scheduled between February and May of 2025; 3 were declined due to short notice and scheduling conflicts.
- An EAP Coordinator offered an in-person wellness presentation, “Understanding your Employee Assistance Program” on December 9, 2024, in St. John’s.
- An Administrative Officer participated in learning sessions directed toward improving the delivery of professional learning to teachers as part of the 2024 Learning Forward conference held in December 2024.
- The President and Executive Director discussed the need for greater clarity around TLA roles during a meeting with the Minister and Deputy Minister on January 10, 2025.
- The Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director and two Administrative Officers met with Andrew Hickey (NLSchools) on January 16, 2025, for a preliminary discussion regarding the potential for establishing a comprehensive formal Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program. This is very much at the exploration stage and no specific commitments have been made, but the initial discussion was promising. Mr. Hickey has been tasked with doing a jurisdictional scan of current practices and with speaking to various stakeholders (including NLTA) on this subject.
- The TPP Joint Sponsor Body met on December 11, 2024, and, in response to the continuing shortage of substitute teachers, a motion was carried to continue the lifting of limits on

retiree substitute work for the 2024-25 school year. During a subsequent meeting on January 13, 2025, the JSB approved the most recent triennial TPP Actuarial Valuation Report – as of August 31, 2024, the TPP has a funding ratio of 122%.

Priority #3: Collective Bargaining and Services for Members

Goal: To continue to provide exceptional representation and supports to members, including through collective bargaining and other programs and services

- Association staff continue to assist members with various payroll matters, including issues related to the calculation and payment of recently negotiated bonuses and retroactive salary increases, the expanded eligibility for the isolation allowance and teachers not paid in the first pay period for 2024-25, effective date for application of outside service credit and overpayment miscalculations. Meetings between Programs & Services staff and Payroll officials have been ongoing to address problems and advocate for systemic improvements, including during July-August 2024 and September, October, November and December 2024. Further meetings with government payroll officials are scheduled for late January 2025.
- Programs & Services staff have developed and are sharing an explanation with teachers regarding the possibility of a grievance under Article 30 (Class Size) of the Collective Agreement. Integration of the former NLESD with the Department of Education may make grievances around class size/under resourcing more likely to succeed, depending on the facts of each particular case. A couple of such cases that were being explored during the Fall of 2024 did not proceed to grievance as initial efforts/inquiries led to additional resources being allocated.
- Since early Fall 2023 and continuing into the 2024-25 school year, Programs and Services have assisted and are working with teachers in situations where the right to refuse unsafe work under OHS legislation is being considered or exercised. Staff have provided advice on incidents of violence in the classroom, rights, responsibilities and options. While some matters have been resolved to teachers' satisfaction, several such refusals are still ongoing and new cases have arisen.
- Administrative Officers are assisting and representing a growing number of teachers in discipline investigations.
- ATIPP requests for information related to violent incidents at two schools were submitted in 2022-23. Some disclosure was received in September 2023, but the NLTA filed for a review by the OIPC in October to ensure that the exemption cited to prevent release of other materials was properly applied. The exemption due to ongoing law enforcement matters was upheld by the OIPC. On December 4, 2024, a similar request was made. The deadline for

response in this matter was extended from the normal 20 business day response time due to the need to consult with other public bodies, to January 27, 2025.

- Programs & Services assisted members with a number of requests for workplace accommodations throughout the 2023-24 school year and during the 2024 staffing season. This work continues into the 2024-25 school year.
- The Assistant Executive Director and an Administrative Officer met with HR officials from NLSchools in January 2024 in an effort to clarify the parameters used by NLSchools in the consideration of equivalency in the assessment of qualifications. Discussions on this issue were ongoing as of May 2024 and continued during the 2024 staffing season and into the Fall of 2024. There is a grievance on an equivalency matter that has been moved to arbitration, nominees to the arbitration panel have been confirmed and hearing dates are being sought. A meeting to set dates for the hearing was held on January 13, 2025.
- As of mid-January 2025, NLTA staff continued to receive and respond to a high volume of contact from the membership re: a wide variety of issues (eg. workload, discipline/allegations investigations, matters leading to potential grievance, payroll problems, etc.).
- Programs and Services staff have assisted members, responding to a high volume of questions/calls/emails related to Recognition Bonus and Retroactive Pay coming out of the 2022-26 Collective Agreement. This required a substantial amount of communication with government and payroll offices. While most issues have been addressed, this work is ongoing as of January 2025. The major systemic issue outstanding relates to eligibility for the recognition bonus for a number of teachers who commenced sick leave prior to August 20, 2022, and who are still on leave. Legal counsel has been sought and a group/policy grievance was filed and referred to arbitration.
- Members who were on DSLP in 2022-23 did not initially have their TPP premiums adjusted and deducted to reflect correct pensionable earnings. This error happened in the previous round as well and Teachers' Payroll were reminded of this when the most recent agreement was signed. Following discussions, Teachers' Payroll agreed to fix these and staff have been working with those individuals who contacted NLTA. Teachers' Payroll has confirmed these are all now completed, and staff checked with TPPC on same and learned 5 members were not fixed. TPPC has notified Teachers' Payroll and are working to get those fixed as of January 2025.
- The Unions' team presented its opening proposals on November 20, 2024, for Labrador Benefits Agreement negotiations. The employer did ask some questions but reserved responding until the next bargaining dates. The Unions' team held a virtual meeting on January 15, 2025, to discuss providing additional information to support its opening proposals. Government plans to present its first pass (response to Union proposal) on

February 12, 2025. Face to face negotiations are scheduled for 3 full days (February 17-19, 2025) in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

- NLTA staff continue (January 2025) efforts to have the employer implement a system that would allow members to have individual, “self-service” access to personal leave accrual and usage information. The new Letter #12 in the Collective Agreement requires the employer to explore this. Teacher Payroll officials have advised that this functionality has been included in ongoing investigations into a new payroll system to replace TCAS but, in the interim the possibility of other options are being explored (for example SmartFind, monthly balance updates ...). The Association has also explored whether a complaint regarding privacy concerns to the OIPC could lead to this issue being expedited. In mid-September 2024, the Association was made aware that members are able to access leave accrual information via SmartFind. While some concerns have come in regarding the accuracy of these numbers, the overall sense is that the majority of this information is correct. In a meeting with the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board Secretariat officials on November 26, 2024, the President and NLTA staff in attendance were advised that work on instituting a self-service portal is ongoing. This matter was also raised at the SBTLC meeting on December 12, 2024, and the next meeting with payroll officials is scheduled for January 27, 2025.
- Programs & Services staff actively (August-November 2024) advocated with government officials for the continuation of the policy to not require medical documentation from teachers for periods of absence (up to 14 days) for COVID-19 and/or related symptoms. Department officials advised that this policy would remain in place until future notice as government was, in general, considering the matter for all public sector employees. Government has since informed all employees that medical notes will, in general, be required as of December 1, 2024, but not as frequently as required under current collective agreement language. Programs and Services staff are seeking employer clarification on certain aspects of this moving forward and are considering a potential policy grievance regarding the impact of retroactive application. A deadline of January 23, 2025, has been provided to the Employer.
- Issues around the payment of school counsellor bonuses appear to be largely resolved as of September-October 2024, and payments are generally timely to date. A systemic settlement to the outstanding grievances filed in previous years is being discussed actively. Government representatives advised in mid- December 2024 that they will be responding to the most recent NLTA settlement proposal as soon as they hear back from all stakeholders. Follow up inquiring as to status was made on January 8, 2025.
- Pre-retirement seminars are complete for the 2024-25 school year and were held in Gander (October 7-8, 2024), in Deer Lake (October 17-18, 2024), and in St. John’s (October 31-November 1, November 28-29 and December 5-6, 2024).
- The Public Accounts Committee copied the President on its October 24, 2024, correspondence to the Deputy Ministers of Education and Treasury Board Secretariat, seeking information from them on government efforts to address Teacher Payroll problems.

The Association has responded, seeking timelines for the Committee's deliberations and an opportunity to provide feedback on any information provided by government.

- On November 26, 2024, the President, Executive Director and an administrative officer attended meetings with senior government officials regarding payroll issues. This meeting was also attended by the Minister of Finance and senior Treasury Board Secretariat officials. The next meeting has been scheduled for January 27, 2025.
- The Assistant Executive Director and an Administrative Officer met with the newly appointed Quality Assurance Manager for government payroll on December 3, 2024.
- A policy grievance was filed regarding access to sick leave accrual for substitutes. The employer met with the Association in October 2024 and discussions were positive and settlement discussions are ongoing. This matter is still ongoing as of January 2025.
- A policy grievance regarding the inappropriate use of individual contracts has been filed and was referred for arbitration in Fall 2024, however, a settlement has since been reached which was acceptable to all parties.
- NLTA submitted its response to a survey on French minority language and French second language education in the province in December 2024. This survey is part of the annual Official Language in Education Consultations of the Department of Education.
- Three Group Insurance Managers completed the Foundations of Trust Management Standards (FTMS) course in late Fall 2024 as part of their required fiduciary training as Managers. The Administrative Officer responsible for Group Insurance completed The Advanced Trust Management Course (ATMS B).
- Programs and Services staff continue to respond to many inquiries from members about the NLTA Group Insurance Program stemming from the October 2024 survey and January 2025 information sessions on potential changes to the Health Plan.
- A detailed overview of the structure of and current challenges facing the NLTA Group Insurance Program was prepared for the November/December 2024 edition of *The Bulletin*.
- NLTA staff are preparing for and engaged in the collection of data which will include a member survey related to the next round of collective bargaining. Following a call for expressions of interest, the members of the Collective Bargaining Committee will be selected in early 2025 and will begin working on the NLTA Opening Proposals for the next round of negotiations.
- The Association proceeded to hearing on a grievance regarding the interpretation of Clause 10.06 of the Collective Agreement and the employer practice of suspending teachers without pay pending the outcome of criminal charges. The hearing occurred on December 10-11, 2024. We await the panel's decision.
- A policy grievance was filed regarding NLSchools' failure to consider non-discretionary probation waivers under clause 37.03(b) in accordance with provisions of the Collective Agreement and agreed-upon past practice. This matter was referred for arbitration in January 2025.

- Johnson Insurance officials requested a meeting with NLTA staff to advise of ongoing issues with Teachers' Payroll including not receiving summer reports for the past 3 summers. NLTA staff addressed the matter with Teachers' Payroll and the information is, as of January 2025, now being prepared.
- A Financial Wellness PL was provided at IgnitED at Macdonald Drive JH on December 13, 2024.
- A Financial Wellness PL was provided to Whitbourne Elementary with Holy Family Elementary on January 24, 2025.
- A Financial Wellness PL was provided to Carbonear Branch on January 29, 2025.

Priority #4: Retention, Recruitment and Resourcing

Goal: To address teacher retention and recruitment challenges and proper resourcing of public education through advocating for effective and appropriate Government/employer action and investment, and through promoting the teaching profession and public education

- The final report of the Labrador West Teacher Recruitment and Retention Committee has been drafted for approval by the Committee – the next meeting is scheduled for February 6, 2025. Once finalized, the Labrador West report will be provided to the provincial committee established pursuant to Letter #11 of the 2022-26 Collective Agreement for further consideration.
- The most recent Teacher Induction Ceremony for new MUN Faculty of Education graduates took place on October 17, 2024, with the second planned for May 2025.
- Discussions between NLTA staff and Teacher Certification are ongoing regarding the importance of potential changes to regulations that would improve/enhance certification upgrade options, up to and including a meeting on December 9, 2024, regarding proposed regulatory amendments. Work on regulatory changes remains ongoing as of January 2025. NLTA staff worked with a member who was previously denied approval for a masters program in Social Work and advocated to have the matter reheard by the committee. The member provided a thorough submission, and the committee agreed to approve the program for the member and to consider MSW programs going forward.
- During a meeting with Department of Education officials for representatives of the PIE SIC on June 3, 2024, it was confirmed that NLTA advocacy has been successful in leading to regulatory changes to create a path to level VII certification for all school psychologists, and to update terminology in regulations to refer to “school”, as opposed to “educational” psychologists. As of January 2025, the DOE advises that drafting and approval of the required changes to regulatory language is ongoing. We are still awaiting final communication on this matter.
- The first meeting of the provincial Teacher Recruitment and Retention Committee (Letter #11 of the 2022-26 Collective Agreement) took place on June 19, 2024. Subsequent meetings took place on September 18, November 6, December 11, 2024 and January 16, 2025 with the next meeting scheduled for February 13, 2025. The Dean of the MUN Faculty of Education has formally joined the group which has been a welcome addition.
- The President had a telephone meeting with Premier Furey in mid-May 2024 to discuss teacher shortages and ideas to address teacher workload and retention/recruitment challenges. This was followed up with correspondence from the President to the Premier on

May 29, 2024. Subsequent discussions with NLSchools officials in July 2024 led to a response from the Minister of Education on August 12, 2024, confirming a commitment for some additional resources in several regional “pilot” schools, including introducing a new student services TLA support position in 6 schools for the 2024-25 school year. Recent (early December 2024) discussions with Department officials indicate that feedback from school administrators at pilot schools has been mainly positive and the employer intends to add additional TLA units for the remainder of 2024-25. Input from NLTA has been sought regarding suggestions for additional pilot schools. A total of 21 additional full-time SS TLA positions were allocated to schools across the province as of January 2025 for the remainder of the school year. The Minister confirmed in a meeting with the President on January 10, 2025, that hiring for these positions is ongoing.

- The Association worked with M5 to review the most recent comments received from parents after the latest Not Okay campaign, which was launched online in May 2024. These comments were packaged for use in future public awareness campaigns and in correspondence with government officials to advocate for increased resourcing in classrooms. Some quotes were used in the NLTA pre-budget submission in January 2025.
- Two Beginning Teachers’ Conferences took place in Happy Valley-Goose Bay on November 30-December 1, 2024, and in St. John’s on January 11-12, 2025. Feedback from participants was extremely positive. A conference scheduled in Deer Lake was postponed due to numerous participants having to cancel.
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- Education Week 2025 will take place from March 24-29, 2025, with the theme *Adventure in Learning/Apprendre: une aventure!*

Priority #5: Advocacy on and Response to Government Initiatives

Goal: To take actions, through meaningful consultation and advocacy efforts, to ensure that the development and implementation of Government policy, reports and decisions that impact public education are informed by and in keeping with NLTA objectives and the interests of members

- The DOE Education Transformation project was incorporated as one of the “pillars” of the Education Accord NL – the former advisory committee was replaced with a pillar committee, the members of which include (among others) a number of teachers and the NLTA Executive Director. The Executive Director attended pillar committee meetings on July 8, September 9 & 23, October 7 & 21, November 4 & 18 and December 9 & 16, 2024, with one more meeting scheduled for January 20, 2025. The group prepared a pillar “vision statement”, received updates from working groups and reviewed the interim pillar report to the Accord on emerging themes. The Executive Director has met separately with the Deputy Minister for Education Transformation. Meetings have also included presentations and discussion regarding financial literacy programming, supports for EAL/newcomer students, AI, curriculum transformation, supporting 2SLGBTQAI+ students, indigenous education and staff and skilled trades programming.
- The Association has reminded the DOE of the obligation for consultation with NLTA regarding ongoing plans during 2024-25 for policy development regarding AI in education and the use of cell phones in schools. The Assistant Executive Director is the main NLTA contact on AI and is liaising (Fall 2024) with DOE officials re: consultation on draft guidelines. With respect to the cell phone policy, which came into force on January 6, 2025, NLTA was afforded meaningful opportunity for consultation including input prior to and following a draft policy and survey being circulated to parents/guardians, students and school staff. Many of the changes recommended by the Association were included in the final version of the policy.
- A policy grievance (failure to consult) was filed regarding changes to policy which would require NLTA members to administer hearing and vision screeners prior to comprehensive assessments. This matter was referred for arbitration with hearing dates confirmed for November 2024. The RNUNL was notified of the arbitration dates as this matter raised work of the bargaining unit (public health nurses) concerns for them, which they are pursuing as well with the Department of Health & Community Services through their own dispute resolution processes. Several meetings were held by the parties during the Spring/Summer 2024, continuing into the Fall of 2024. This grievance was settled in November resulting in a reversal of the changes. As a result, NLTA members will no longer be required to complete hearing and vision screeners prior to comprehensive assessments. This change was

communicated to Executive and Joint Council in November and it was communicated to the broader school system in January 2025 after multiple and ongoing requests from the Association.

- The 2022-2026 Collective Agreement contains a provision requiring the establishment of an Advisory Committee within 120 days of the signing of this Agreement for the purpose of considering the appropriateness and feasibility of implementing recommendations from the TARC report. Association staff initiated discussions with the Department of Education (March-May 2024) to commence the work of this committee. Due to staffing changes at the Department of Education/NLSchools and CSFP, the initial meeting of this committee was delayed, but the first meeting occurred on October 8, 2024. Subsequent meetings have occurred on December 9, 2024 and January 15, 2025 with several other meetings scheduled between now and June 2025.
- Discussions between NLTA staff and Teacher Certification are ongoing regarding the importance of potential changes to regulations that would improve/enhance certification upgrade options, up to and including a meeting on December 9, 2024, regarding proposed regulatory amendments. Work on regulatory changes remains ongoing as of January 2025. NLTA staff worked with a member who was previously denied approval for a masters program in Social Work and advocated to have the matter reheard by the committee. The member provided a thorough submission, and the committee agreed to approve the program for the member and to consider MSW programs going forward.
- The President, as a member of the Education Accord Advisory Committee, attended meetings on April 16, May 21, June 18, July 16, August 20, September 17, October 15, November 19 and December 17, 2024, as well as the official release event for the Accord Interim Report on January 10, 2025. While it is positive to see reference to issues such as school violence, student absenteeism, workplace safety, teacher/administrator health and well-being, the need to address/support classroom diversity and complexity, investment in quality professional learning for teachers and the importance of K-12 public education to society, the Association continues to closely monitor the Accord process and avail of all opportunities to have input/influence around recommendations/calls to action that will be part of the final Accord report.
- On April 19, 2024, an Administrative Officer met with DOE Student Services staff and were advised that there are changes upcoming to the Safe and Caring Schools Policy. The Association has requested consultation at all stages, including during a meeting between the Deputy Minister and Executive Director on July 3, 2024. At the end of November 2024, the Association was advised that work on policy amendments is ongoing and that the obligation to consult will be respected. This issue was raised again on January 10, 2025 during a meeting between the President, Executive Director, Minister and Deputy Minister, stressing that teachers trying to foster inclusive learning environments and 2SLGBTQAI+ students and

school staff need clarity and explicit policy statements around underlying principles, expectations and supports.

- The Association worked with M5 to review the most recent comments received from parents after the latest Not Okay campaign, which was launched online in May 2024. These comments were packaged for use in future public awareness campaigns and in correspondence with government officials to advocate for increased resourcing in classrooms. Some quotes were used in the NLTA pre-budget submission in January 2025.
- The committee established to review the RTL model has now met 4 times, most recently on October 16, 2024. The Committee has secured quotes from MQO and Thinkwell and are now engaged in the selection process with the goal of distributing surveys prior to February 1, 2025.
- The President and Executive Director met with Treasury Board Secretariat, NLSchools and Public Service Commission representatives on September 5, 2024, to consult on proposed changes to government policy on the prevention and response to workplace harassment. NLTA was provided with a copy of proposed policy changes for review and provided detailed feedback in October 2024. An update on the status of this policy has been requested.
- The Association sent a message to all members on October 9, 2024, strongly encouraging participation in an Education Accord survey. Reminders were sent periodically until the survey closed in December 2024. Department officials have indicated that response rates were high.
- The next installment of the Not Okay campaign was launched on October 29, 2024, and incorporates comments received from parents as well as a statement regarding the increase in incidents of school violence as disclosed by updated ATIPP request data received in August 2024. The campaign includes social media assets, an online video and a television commercial. The timing of the campaign was determined strategically to coincide with the reopening of the House of Assembly for the Fall sitting on November 4, 2024. General feedback from members on the campaign has been positive and there has been significant engagement with the posts and videos. The “still” not okay tagline and some parent comments were used in the NLTA pre-budget submission in January 2025.
- The Assistant Executive Director scheduled a meeting for November 4, 2024, with DOE officials to discuss the upcoming plans for intermediate curriculum renewal. This meeting was subsequently postponed. The Association is still waiting for an official update on this initiative but are aware that meetings have been taking place in January 2025 with administrators from 14 prospective junior high schools from across the province as to how potential changes would be implemented in schools with different grade configurations in terms of student choice, scheduling, PL needs, impact on staffing, etc. Discussions with Government are ongoing on this matter and DOE officials maintain that no final decisions will be made without consultation with NLTA.
- Programs and Services staff have met with and are engaged in consultations with the Department of Education on changes to the comprehensive assessment policy (September-

November 2024). As of January 2025, NLTA has been advised that work on the policy is ongoing, including discussions with the NL Board of Psychology.

- The first School Board-Teacher Liaison Committee (NLSchools) took place on December 12, 2024. A date for the second meeting this school year will be determined soon.
- On November 22, 2024, the Assistant Executive Director met with government officials in advance of the memorandum that was sent to all public service employees regarding the changes to requirements for notes related to medical/sick leave. Government has since informed all employees that medical notes will, in general, be required as of December 1, 2024, but not as frequently as required under current collective agreement language. Programs and Services staff are seeking employer clarification on certain aspects of this moving forward and are considering a potential policy grievance regarding the impact of retroactive application. A deadline of January 23, 2025, has been provided to the employer.
- Department of Education officials shared drafts of proposed policy on cell phones in schools and an accompanying feedback survey with the President and Executive Director on November 19, 2024. The Association provided detailed feedback, questions and concerns in writing on November 21, which led to changes in both the proposed policy language and the survey prior to these being released to NLSchools staff, students and parents. The NLTA raised particular concern regarding the lack of respect for teacher professionalism, the apparent poor understanding of the reality of schools as workplaces and potential workload increases. Messages were sent to members to encourage participation in the survey and the Association provided further detailed feedback to the DOE as part of the consultation process. Many of the changes recommended by the Association were included in the final version of the policy, which came into effect on January 6, 2025. Feedback from members to date has been generally positive with no serious concerns/issues being raised.
- On January 3, 2025, the Association submitted its Pre-Budget Submission to the Provincial Government for the 2025 Budget. The submission, entitled *Our Education System is STILL Not Ok*, articulates the Association's position that significant and strategic funding must be allocated in Budget 2025 for K-12 public education in this province. The submission highlights quotes from parents and links the importance of education funding to our society, health care system and future. The submission was also shared with members and posted online.