

Responsive Teaching and Learning Summary Report





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RTL Model Report

Introduction

Rationale for the Review

As outlined in [Letter #14](#) of the NLTA Provincial Collective Agreement (2022–2026), a Responsive Teaching and Learning (RTL) Model Committee was established to conduct a review of the Responsive Teaching and Learning Model.

For clarity, this report refers specifically to the Responsive Teaching and Learning Policy (hereafter referred to as the RTL Policy), rather than the broader term “RTL Model.”

Background of the RTL Policy

The Premier’s Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes (2017) directed the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to develop a policy to replace the 1996 Special Education Policy. In response, the Department developed the Responsive Teaching and Learning (RTL) Policy.

The RTL Policy defines responsive teaching and learning as:

“An approach to education that emphasizes social-emotional and academic learning in a safe, healthy, and inclusive school environment. The approach uses the collaborative inquiry model, which is evidence-based and focuses on...” (p. 10, RTL Policy).

Implementation of the RTL Policy occurred in three phases across K–6 schools from 2018-2021:

- o Phase 1 (2018-2019): 40 schools (39 NLESD, 1 CSFP)
- o Phase 2 (2019-2020): 40 schools (39 NLESD, 1 CSFP)
- o Phase 3 (2020-2021): remaining 121 schools (118 NLESD, 3 CSFP)

Professional learning was provided to all schools during their rollout year. It varied year to year to reflect updates to the policy, refinements to processes, and the impact of COVID-19 on schools. All professional learning modules from the 2018–2021 time period are archived on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development K12PL website.

Since its initial release, the RTL Policy has undergone several revisions during both the phase roll out and after implementation. The most recent version is dated November 2023.

Committee Composition and Mandate

Based on Letter #14 in the NLTA Collective Agreement, the Committee shall consist of a maximum of three (3) representatives from each of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers’ Association, the Department of Education and the School Districts.



The mandate of this Committee was to conduct a review of the Responsive Teaching and Learning Model and to produce a report not later than one (1) year after the establishment of the committee.

Committee Members

Conseil Scolaire Francophone Provincial (CSFP):

- Patricia Greene, Department of Educational Services

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development:

- Denise Coady, Senior Management Official, Student Services
- Kerri Whelan, Program Development Specialist, Student Services (2025)
- Denise King, Manager, Student Services (2024)

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (NLTA):

- Dale Lambe, NLTA President
- Darlene Johnson, NLTA Assistant Executive Director

Scope and Methodology of the Review

As outlined in [Letter #14](#) of the Provincial Collective Agreement, a **Responsive Teaching and Learning (RTL) Model Committee** consisting of representatives from the CSFP, the Department of Education/NLSchools and the NLTA was established to conduct a review of the Responsive Teaching and Learning Model.

As part of this work, the Committee reviewed previous research conducted by the Employers and the NLTA and sought new input and feedback from all educators involved in the implementation of the RTL Model in K-6 education. To solicit this new data, the Committee engaged MQO Research to conduct educator research through a survey for completion by all K-6 educators who were then holding permanent or temporary contracts. Each educator received an individual link. The survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete, and respondents were advised that their feedback would inform, both this report and the implementation of the RTL model.



Survey Results

The survey captured responses from 1,349 education professionals across a range of school sizes and configurations. The majority of respondents (69%) worked in large schools with over 201 students, while 27% were in medium-sized schools (51–200 students) and 8% in small or very small schools. Almost half (48%) the respondents worked in combined primary/elementary settings, 20% worked in K–12 schools, and smaller proportions worked in primary (16%), elementary (12%), and intermediate (7%) schools.

In terms of professional roles, over half the respondents (56%) were classroom or subject teachers. Instructional Resource Teachers (IRTs) made up 18% of participants, followed by administrators (6%), reading specialists (5%), teaching and learning assistants (5%), school counsellors (4%), and NLSchools/CSFP staff directly supporting schools (4%). Teacher librarians and Department of Education staff constituted the smallest groups, each representing about 1% of respondents. This distribution highlighted a broad range of roles and school contexts.

CLASSROOM AND SUBJECT TEACHERS

Topics Requiring Further Professional Learning

The survey revealed that determining needed interventions is the highest priority for professional learning among classroom and subject teachers. A total of 47% of respondents identified this as their top-ranked topic, and 80% placed it within their top two. There was a slightly higher proportion in small schools (55%) compared to large schools (46%). Results were consistent across school sizes, although teachers in smaller schools were slightly more likely to prioritize understanding staff roles.

Other areas identified as priorities included form completion, including the RTL database (23%) and understanding the roles and responsibilities of staff (22%). A smaller portion of respondents (8%) indicated other topics. When combining the first and second rankings, 80% of teachers prioritized determining needed interventions, followed by form completion (56%) and roles and responsibilities of staff (54%).

Preferred Professional Learning Formats

Teachers expressed clear preferences regarding how professional learning should be delivered. The majority (67%) preferred in-person sessions as the most effective format, while 22% favoured virtual asynchronous learning, and 11% preferred virtual synchronous sessions. When considering the second-ranked choices, 54% of classroom and subject teachers found virtual synchronous formats effective, followed by virtual asynchronous (33%) and in-person learning (13%). Combining the top two rankings, in-person learning remained the most preferred overall (81%), followed by virtual synchronous (65%) and virtual asynchronous (55%). These results suggest that, while digital formats are valued for flexibility, in-person learning was



the most effective and engaging option for classroom and subject teachers. Teachers in smaller schools showed a slightly stronger preference for synchronous virtual sessions, possibly reflecting accessibility and logistical challenges.

Access to Additional RTL Professional Learning

Only 25% of classroom and subject teachers reported having access to additional professional learning related to RTL outside of mandatory sessions. In contrast, 40% indicated they did not have access, and 36% were unsure. Among those who did not participate in additional professional learning, the most frequently cited barriers were a lack of awareness of opportunities (70%), lack of time (25%), and competing priorities (21%). Twenty-seven per cent of classroom and subject teacher participated in self-directed or optional learning, with similar barriers noted: lack of information (55%), time constraints (30%), and competing priorities (30%). These findings highlight the importance of communication about available opportunities for professional learning and of providing more flexible options to accommodate teachers.

Access to Resource Personnel

Access to resource personnel appeared to play a crucial role in supporting the implementation of the RTL Policy. The survey showed that 83% of teachers had access to an Instructional Resource Teacher (IRT), 81% to a School-Based Reading Specialist (SBRS), and 79% to an administrator. Access to other personnel was lower: teaching and learning assistants (54%), school counsellors (56%), teacher librarians (38%), and program specialists in reading (28%) or mathematics (17%). The most common types of support provided include assistance with documentation (64%), in-class support for interventions (56%), and participation in Teaching and Learning Team (TLT) meetings (77%). However, classroom and subject teachers in smaller schools reported greater difficulty accessing these personnel due to limited staff availability or deployment to other locations.

Resources Supporting RTL Implementation

When asked to identify which resources best supported student needs, classroom and subject teachers ranked the IRT as the most beneficial (53%), followed by the school-based reading specialist (22%) and teaching and learning assistant (19%). When combining the top two rankings, the IRT was identified by 79% of classroom and subject teachers as supporting RTL implementation, the reading specialist by 52%, and the teaching and learning assistant by 50%. The top three combined results show that 90% of teachers relied on the IRT, 88% on the reading specialist, and 75% on the TLA. While other roles such as program specialists and librarians also contributed, their perceived impact was lower compared to direct instructional support roles.



Conclusion

Overall, the findings demonstrate that determining appropriate interventions was the top professional learning priority for classroom and subject teachers. In-person learning was the most effective and preferred format for professional development. Barriers such as time constraints, lack of awareness of available opportunities, and competing priorities limited participation in additional professional learning. Access to resource personnel, particularly IRTs and school-based reading specialists, was deemed central to the successful implementation of the RTL Policy. These results underscore the importance of developing targeted and accessible professional development initiatives that directly address the needs of classroom and subject teachers and enhance student learning outcomes.

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE TEACHERS

Topics Requiring Further Professional Learning

The survey revealed that 47% of respondents identified defining the role of the IRT in implementing necessary interventions as the top-ranked subject for further professional learning. Seventy-six per cent ranked this among the top two topics. Professional learning regarding documentation, including the RTL database, was ranked first by 27% and among the top two by 68%. Another area of importance was clarity of roles and responsibilities of school staff, with 19% of respondents ranking this first and 46% including it in the top two areas for further professional learning. These results highlight a strong need to deepen understanding of the IRT's role and to strengthen practices related to documentation within the RTL process.

Preferred Professional Learning Formats

IRTs expressed clear preferences regarding how professional learning should be delivered. The majority (68%) preferred in-person sessions as the most effective format. Virtual synchronous learning was also valued (69%), particularly in small schools. Virtual asynchronous/self-directed learning was the least preferred option. Overall, IRTs expressed a preference for in-person learning experiences, while still recognizing the value of online formats.

Access to Additional RTL Professional Learning

Access to additional professional learning on RTL appeared limited. Only 19% of respondents reported having access to additional RTL training within their school. Fifty-four per cent indicated that they did not have access to additional RTL professional learning and 27% were unsure of additional opportunities. Actual participation in additional professional learning was even lower at 18%. These findings highlight a lack of on-going professional learning and the importance of improving communication about available opportunities.

Among IRTs who indicated that they had not participated in additional professional learning, the main barrier was the lack of information about available opportunities (74%). Other



barriers of note were the lack of time or inability to take leave (34%) and competing priorities (22%). Nearly 45% of IRTs reported engaging in self-directed, non-mandatory professional learning. It is of note that barriers to this type of learning were similar to those for formal professional learning. There was a lack of awareness of available opportunities (65%), a lack of time (28%) and competing priorities (27%). These findings suggest that improving access to information/communication and providing sufficient time for professional learning are key factors for increasing participation.

Collaboration with Resource Personnel

IRTs reported frequent collaboration with other IRTs (89%), administrators (78%), school counsellors (67%) and school-based reading specialists (69%). Access to TLAs was limited (33%). Smaller schools report significantly lower access to certain resources, such as reading or math specialists. The most common forms of collaboration with resource personnel included the completion of documentation (79%), joint planning (60%), participation in TLT meetings (63%) and direct in-class or pull-out student support (50%). Collaboration with personnel focused on activities related to planning for engagement with students and providing the necessary supports for students, as well as interactions with the individuals positioned to design activities/processes to address students' needs.

Main Challenges in Carrying out the IRT Role

IRTs identified several operational challenges, including the lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities (52%), the shortage of substitute teachers leading to internal coverage needs (43%), additional assigned duties (38%), and other organizational constraints (40%). These obstacles would seem to hinder the effective implementation of support as outlined in the RTL Policy.

Conclusion

The results indicated that the work of IRTs in implementing the RTL Policy was somewhat hindered because of the following areas of need: a) clarity of their role, b) completing documentation, c) communication regarding professional learning, and d) human resource support. IRTs valued in-person professional learning and collaboration with colleagues but faced challenges related to time and availability. Addressing these barriers could be key to optimizing their impact in supporting student learning and planning for interventions and support.

ADMINISTRATORS

Topics Requiring Further Professional Learning

Required documentation (including the RTL Database) emerged as the top area of professional learning need for administrators (88%). This was closely followed by deployment of resources (85%) and clarity of the roles and responsibilities of various staff (79%). Whether ranked first or



second, these same areas retained their relative importance. Scheduling/supporting TLT meetings was rated as less critical (24%). No major variations were found across school sizes, though medium schools rated deployment of resources higher than large schools (80% versus 51%).

Preferred Professional Learning Formats

Preferences for formats of professional learning for administrators followed the same rankings for other respondents. Administrators preferred in-person, face-to-face professional learning, with 77% ranking this as most effective and 92% including it in their top two formats. Virtual synchronous learning followed (71%), while virtual asynchronous/self-directed learning was less favored (37%).

Access to Additional RTL Professional Learning

Just over one-third (37%) of administrators reported having access to additional professional learning on RTL at their school, and 35% participated in such learning. The main barriers to additional professional learning included lack of knowledge of professional learning opportunities (50%) and competing needs (45%). Similar patterns emerged for self-directed learning, where 38% engaged in independent professional learning, while 47% of non-participants cited competing priorities as an impediment to participating in additional professional learning.

Access to Resource Personnel

Access to resource personnel is one area where school size appeared to play a role. IRTs were widely available, 95% overall and 100% in large schools. SBRs (91%) and school counsellors (86%) were also widely accessible. Program specialists for reading (73%) and math (59%) were less consistently available. TLAs were present in 71% of schools, but only in 18% of small schools. Indeed, small schools reported the lowest access across most resource types, primarily due to “no allocation” or “no personnel on staff.”

Role of Resource Personnel

As per other respondents, administrators identified resource personnel as contributing primarily to completing documentation (86%), in-class and pull-out support (88%), TLT meetings (88%) and planning (73%). Professional learning (55%) was also cited as an area of positive contribution.

For schools without access to specific personnel, the most frequent reasons cited by administrators were no allocation for the school, particularly for small schools, the absence of personnel on staff, and deployment of personnel elsewhere. For TLAs, 58% of respondents indicated the lack of allocation. School size appeared to be a factor, with 70% of administrators of small schools and 57% of medium schools identifying this factor. For IRTs, 75% of administrators noted other reasons for the lack of access, citing needs elsewhere and the allocation for the school, particularly for small schools. Seventy-six per cent of respondents



noted that there was no school-based reading specialist, particularly in small and medium schools. Similar results were identified for teacher librarian, program specialist for reading and program specialist for math, whereas small schools' administrators in particular noted the lack of allocation. The lack of access to the school counsellor was linked to the lack of availability and being deployed elsewhere. Fifty per cent of administrators cited other reasons, the primary reason cited being coverage for other staff, including student assistants.

Conclusion

The analysis reveals that the most pressing need for professional learning is related to required documentation, followed by resource deployment and clarity of staff roles. Regarding training formats, administrators preferred in-person learning over virtual options, although overall access to additional professional training was limited by lack of awareness of opportunities and competing priorities. Survey results also considered access to, and the role of, resource personnel, noting that school size was an important factor, with administrators of smaller schools reporting significantly less access to various specialists.

TEACHER-LIBRARIAN

Topics Requiring Further Professional Learning

Teacher librarians identified deployment of resources (90%), roles and responsibilities of various staff (70%), and required documentation (including the RTL Database) (40%) as the top priorities for professional learning when ranked first or second. The ranking order showed slight variation, but deployment and roles consistently emerged as most important.

Preferred Formats for Professional Learning

Teacher librarians strongly preferred in-person face-to-face sessions (91% ranking it first and 100% as the top two). Virtual synchronous learning was preferred to a lesser degree (55% ranking among the top two), and virtual asynchronous/self-directed learning was the least preferred format (45%). These results mirrored responses for the other respondent groups.

Access to Additional Professional Learning

Over half (55%) of teacher librarians had access to additional professional learning on RTL beyond required department-led sessions. Participation was lower (36%), with the main barriers being lack of knowledge of opportunities for additional professional learning (57%), insufficient leave time (43%), costs (14%) and competing needs (14% each).

Twenty-seven per cent of teacher librarians engaged in optional self-directed learning beyond school-based or department-led sessions. Barriers to this professional learning mirrored those for additional professional learning: lack of knowledge of professional learning opportunities (50%), leave time constraints (38%), competing needs (13%) and other factors (25%).



Collaboration with Resource Personnel

Teacher librarians reported collaborating most frequently with in-school personnel. They cited classroom teachers (100%), school-based reading specialists (91%), administrators (82%), IRTs (82%) and TLAs (55%). They collaborated less frequently with program specialists for reading (27%) and math (9%).

The focus of collaboration of the teacher librarians with other personnel was planning (73%), TLT meetings (73%), and professional learning (64%). Other areas of activity included completing documentation (45%), in-class support (45%) and pull-out support (36%).

Barriers to Supporting RTL Implementation

The primary barriers to supporting RTL implementation identified by teacher librarians reflected results from other personnel. These included the lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities (55%), other factors (45%) and internal coverage due to substitute shortages (36%). Many of the other comments were linked to coverage and competing needs.

Conclusion

Overall, the results for teacher librarians indicate the need for targeted professional learning, structured collaboration with resource personnel, and clearer role definitions to optimize teacher librarians' impact on RTL Policy implementation.

SCHOOL-BASED READING SPECIALISTS

Topics Requiring Further Professional Learning

Providing needed interventions was identified by School-Based Reading Specialists (SBRS) as the top priority for professional learning, ranked first by 49% of respondents and among the top two priorities by 78%. Understanding the roles and responsibilities of various staff was ranked first by 21% and was among the top two priorities of 60%. Documentation (including RTL Database) was also ranked first by 27% and first or second by 58%. These results were similarly aligned with those of other respondent groups.

Preferred Professional Learning Formats

The survey revealed preferences for professional learning formats among SBRS that mirrored other groups of respondents. In-person, face-to-face was the most preferred format, ranked first at 81% and 88% in the top two. Virtual synchronous learning was deemed less effective with 14% ranking it first, but with 71% placing it in the top two formats. Virtual asynchronous/self-directed was the least preferred with 6% ranking it first and 42% placing it in the top two. These results suggest that in-person professional learning is the preferred format for the majority of SBRS.



Access to Additional Professional Learning

Only 26% of SBRS reported access to additional professional learning opportunities beyond required sessions. Actual participation in additional professional learning, thus, was also low (28%). SBRS identified the following barriers to participation in additional professional learning activities: not being aware of professional learning activities (67%), insufficient leave time (40%) and competing needs (23%).

A majority of SBRS (57%) engaged in self-directed optional learning. Those who did not participate in self-directed learning identified not being aware of opportunities (42%), leave time constraints (29%) and competing needs (39%) as the main barriers.

Collaboration with Resource Personnel

SBRS most frequently collaborated with personnel directly implicated in the implementation of the RTL Policy. Their primary collaborators were IRTs (93%), followed by classroom teachers (85%) and administrators (81%). They also collaborated moderately with program specialists for reading (68%) and school counsellors (63%). These results reflected similar trends for other collaborative relationships.

The nature of the collaboration with the SBRS resembled that of other teachers and administrators. The activities included completing documentation (90%), TLT meetings (88%), in-class support (71%) and pull-out support (68%), as well as planning (69%). Other activities include evaluation (47%) and professional learning (43%).

Barriers to RTL Implementation

Primary barriers identified by SBRS were the lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities (50%), other administrative factors (57%), internal coverage due to substitute shortages (25%) and assigned other duties (24%). These responses were similar to other survey groups.

Conclusion

The survey results highlighted a need for targeted professional learning. SBRS also identified the importance of clarifying roles and responsibilities, providing accessible learning opportunities, and strengthening resource personnel collaboration to optimize their impact on RTL Policy implementation.

TEACHING AND LEARNING ASSISTANTS (TLA)

Professional Learning Priorities

The top-ranked priority for professional learning was the role of the TLA in supporting needed interventions, selected as the highest priority by 67% of respondents. When considering the top two rankings combined, this topic was identified as a priority by 89% of participants.



Roles and responsibilities of various staff ranked second, with 46% of respondents selecting it as their second priority, and 63% including it within their top two priorities. Documentation, including the RTL Database, was the third key area, highlighted by 50% of respondents as third-ranked. These results reflect those of other respondents.

Preferred Formats for Professional Learning

Respondents were asked to rank the effectiveness of various professional learning formats. In-person, face-to-face sessions were overwhelmingly preferred, with 77% ranking it first and 91% including it among their top two formats. Virtual synchronous learning followed (61% in the top two), while virtual asynchronous/self-directed learning was preferred by 48% of respondents.

Access to Additional Professional Learning

Twenty-three per cent of TLAs reported having access to additional professional learning on RTL beyond the required Department-led sessions, while 38% indicated they did not have access to additional professional learning, and 39% were unsure. Among those with access, only 21% participated in such learning opportunities. The most common barrier reported by those who did not participate was a lack of awareness of available opportunities (81%). Other barriers included limited leave time (25%), competing needs (12%), and cost (6%).

A total of 41% of TLAs engaged in self-directed learning beyond required sessions, while 59% did not. Among those who did not participate, the main reasons were the lack of awareness of opportunities (69%), leave time (38%), and competing needs (18%).

Collaboration with Resource Personnel

Collaboration was a key component of the TLA role. Most respondents reported working closely with classroom teachers (92%) and school-based reading specialists (86%). A majority also collaborated with instructional resource teachers (65%) and administrators (61%). Fewer TLAs reported collaboration with program specialists for reading (32%) or math (11%).

The main forms of collaboration included attending TLT meetings (77%), providing in-class support for interventions (74%), engaging in professional learning (55%), and planning (56%). Other forms included pull-out support (55%) and assistance with documentation (30%).

Barriers to Supporting Teaching and Learning

When asked about barriers affecting their ability to support teaching and learning under the RTL Policy, 50% of respondents cited a lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities. Other common barriers included internal coverage shortages due to substitute shortages (24%) and being assigned other duties (17%). Nearly half (48%) also identified other unspecified challenges.



Conclusion

Overall, the findings indicate that teaching and learning assistants prioritized clarity in their roles and effective intervention support. They favored in-person professional learning opportunities and valued collaborative work with school-based teams. However, challenges remained in terms of communication about available learning opportunities and clarity of roles within the RTL framework.

SCHOOL COUNSELLORS

Professional Learning Priorities

When asked to rank topics requiring further professional learning, school counsellors most frequently identified professional learning for their role in providing needed interventions as the top priority (55%). This topic remained dominant when combining the top two rankings, with 73% identifying it as a key area for professional learning.

Completing documents (including the RTL Database) followed closely as a major focus, with 29% ranking it first and 69% including it within their top two priorities. Finally, roles and responsibilities of various staff was selected by 49% of respondents within their top two priorities.

Preferred Formats for Professional Learning

In-person, face-to-face professional learning was the preferred approach for school counsellors. Eighty percent ranked it first, and 89% included it in their top two formats. Virtual synchronous sessions were also valued, appearing in the top two formats for 70% of participants, followed by virtual asynchronous/self-directed learning (41%). This reflected a similar trend for other respondents.

Access to Additional Professional Learning

Thirty-six per cent of school counsellors indicated having access to additional professional learning on RTL beyond the Department-led sessions, while 46% reported no access and 18% were unsure. Among those with access, 27% participated in additional professional learning opportunities, the main barriers being lack of awareness of available opportunities (76%), competing needs (51%), and insufficient leave time (12%).

A majority of school counsellors (68%) engaged in self-directed optional learning beyond the required sessions. Among those who did not, key barriers included lack of awareness (56%), competing needs (50%), and limited leave time (28%).

Collaboration with Resource Personnel

School counsellors reported broad collaboration with other resource personnel to implement the RTL Policy. The most frequent collaborations were with instructional resource teachers



(93%), administrators (84%), and school-based reading specialists (73%). They also worked with educational psychologists (63%) and student services program specialists or itinerants (66%). Fewer collaborations were reported with teacher librarians (21%), program specialists for reading (16%), and program specialists for math (14%).

Collaboration typically involved completing documentation (86%), supporting interventions (70%), planning (59%), and attending TLT meetings (54%). Other collaborative activities included evaluation (38%), professional learning (41%), and other school-based initiatives (18%).

Barriers to Supporting Students and Implementation of RTL

School counsellors identified several key barriers to effectively fulfilling their roles within the RTL framework. A lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities was the most significant issue, cited by 59% of respondents. Other barriers included being assigned additional duties (54%) and internal coverage shortages due to substitute shortages (21%), while 52% cited other unspecified challenges.

Conclusion

The survey results highlight that school counsellors are deeply engaged in supporting the RTL Policy, but face challenges related to workload, role clarity, and competing priorities. They show a clear preference for in-person learning formats and express strong interest in improving their understanding of interventions, documentation, and collaborative practices. Addressing the identified barriers and enhancing access to targeted professional learning opportunities will be key to strengthening their impact on student support and intervention implementation.

NLSCHOOLS/CSFP STAFF

Professional Learning Priorities

The survey identified key areas requiring further professional learning. The top-ranked topics for staff were providing necessary interventions (70% ranked first or second) and determining the need for interventions (52% ranked first or second). Documentation (including the RTL database) (39% ranked first or second) and roles and responsibilities of various staff (28% ranked first or second) were deemed to be lesser priorities.

Overall, when considering the top three priorities for professional learning, 85% of respondents included providing necessary interventions, 78% identified determining the need for interventions, and 70% included documentation.

Effectiveness of Professional Learning Formats

Respondents rated in-person face-to-face learning as the most effective format (68% ranked first; 87% ranked first or second). Virtual synchronous sessions were preferred by 77% who ranked them first or second, while virtual asynchronous/self-directed formats were least preferred (36% ranked first or second).



As facilitators, staff also favored in-person face-to-face sessions (79% ranked first) and virtual synchronous sessions (94% ranked first or second), indicating strong preference for interpersonal professional learning approaches.

Access to Additional Professional Learning

Approximately 32% of respondents reported having access to additional professional learning beyond the required Department-led sessions. Participation in these opportunities was limited to 32%, with the main barriers being lack of awareness of professional learning opportunities (69%) and competing needs (47%). Administrative factors were also noted, including leave time (19%), and costs (14%).

Sixty percent of staff engaged in self-directed optional learning. Barriers for non-participants included lack of awareness of professional learning opportunities (43%), competing needs (48%), and leave time (14%).

Collaboration with Resource Personnel

Respondents frequently collaborated with school teams (87%), student services program specialists (79%), administrators (66%), and Department of Education program development specialists (57%). Collaboration with these groups focused primarily on planning (64%), professional learning (50%) and TLT meetings (42%).

Barriers to RTL Implementation

The main challenges reported in the implementation of the RTL Policy were the lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities (61%), substitute shortages (42%), challenges working directly with school staff (39%), and individuals being assigned other duties (25%).

Conclusion

The survey highlighted that NLSchools and CSFP staff prioritize learning related to providing and determining necessary interventions, with preferences for in-person professional learning. Access to additional professional learning and self-directed learning was limited by awareness and competing demands. Collaboration with specialized personnel supported implementation, though role clarity and resource constraints remained key barriers.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STAFF

Professional Learning Priorities

The top-ranked priority for professional learning was universal instruction and evidence-based teaching practice, identified by 60% of respondents, with other topics mentioned by 40%. When considering the top two priorities, all respondents (100%) ranked universal instruction and evidence-based teaching practice as a top priority, while 60% ranked determining the



need for interventions. Respondents also included providing necessary interventions and documentation (including RTL database) as lesser priorities.

Preferred Professional Learning Formats

Department of Education staff expressed a strong preference for in-person face-to-face learning, with 100% ranking it as the preferred format. Virtual synchronous learning was cited by 83% and virtual asynchronous/self-directed by 17%. When considering second and third ranks, virtual synchronous was preferred by 83% and virtual asynchronous/self-directed by 83% of respondents for the third rank.

Access to Additional Professional Learning

Seventeen per cent of respondents reported having access to additional professional learning at their workplace, while 50% reported no access, and 33% were unsure. Participation in additional learning in the workplace was reported by 33% of respondents, while 67% did not participate in such additional professional learning. The majority of respondents (83%) engaged in self-directed optional professional learning. Barriers to engagement in self-directed professional learning included lack of awareness of opportunities (50%), costs (25%), and competing needs (25%). Other reasons were cited by 25%.

Collaboration with Resource Personnel

Department of Education staff collaborated primarily through professional learning sessions as reported by 83% of respondents. Other collaborative activities included planning (17%), TLT meetings (33%), and other activities (33%).

Barriers to Effective Implementation

Respondents highlighted several barriers to the effective implementation of the RTL Policy. The most common challenge was a lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities (67%), followed by substitute shortages (33%), challenges collaborating with NLSchools/CSFP staff (33%), while 33% noted other unspecified barriers.

Conclusion

The survey findings indicate that Department of Education staff prioritized universal instruction and evidence-based teaching practice and determining the need for interventions as their main professional learning needs. In-person, face-to-face formats for professional learning were overwhelmingly preferred. While most respondents engaged in self-directed optional learning, awareness of opportunities and scheduling were obstacles to additional professional learning. Effective collaboration occurred through professional learning sessions, but substitute shortages and unclear roles continued to hinder the implementation of the RTL Policy, and for this group, challenges collaborating with NLSchools and CSFP was a further barrier.

[Survey Data Available Here \(link\)](#) 



Recommendations

Professional Learning

1. Develop an Ongoing Professional Learning Framework: Establish a structured, continuous model for RTL-related professional learning that includes refresher sessions, updates, and specialized modules.
2. Prioritize In-Person Learning: Prioritize in-person, face-to-face professional learning as the primary delivery method.
3. Improve Communication About Opportunities: Ensure educators are informed of available professional learning sessions and resources.
4. Ensure Equity of Access: Provide leave time for RTL-related professional learning.

Role and Responsibility Clarification

1. Embed Role Clarity into Professional Learning: Integrate discussions of role descriptions and collaboration expectations into professional learning modules to ensure shared understanding across roles.
2. Revise and Disseminate Role Definitions: Provide clear, accessible descriptions of all roles within the RTL framework.

Improve Access to, and Deployment of, Resource Personnel

1. Review Staffing Allocations and/or Deployment: Ensure an adequate and equitable distribution of key support staff is provided to effectively implement the RTL Policy across schools of varying sizes, particularly addressing shortages in small and rural schools.
2. Address Internal Coverage Concerns: Develop strategies to support staff so they can fulfill their RTL responsibilities without being diverted to other duties.
3. Provide Time for Collaboration: Embed structured collaboration time within the school schedule.

RTL Database and Documentation

1. Provide Targeted Professional Learning on Documentation: Ensure role-specific professional learning on data entry, analysis, and use of RTL forms to reduce confusion and increase consistency.