A Newspaper for School Councils in Newfoundland and Labrador

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 ***Message from the President***

 **Mr. Nathan Whalen**

Welcome to our end-of-school-year

edition of The Cuffer! Many of you

reading this are busy preparing for graduations, year-end ceremonies and final exams. It is an

exciting time. I wish all of this year’s graduates the best of luck in their future endeavors.

I am proud to report a fantastic 34th Annual General Meeting and Conference that was held in Grand Falls-Windsor from April 4 – 6, 2014. Delegates enjoyed excellent sessions on the role of a School Council, mental health partnerships, and digital citizenship.

During the business session, 14 resolutions were passed ranging from the need to increase

guidance services, to an analysis of the

Assessment and Evaluation policy and a

renewed focus on healthy living in schools.

At the meeting, members felt that the Annual General Meeting should change to become a

Biennial General Meeting (happening once every two years) and urged the Federation’s Board of Directors to host more regional events throughout the year that bring together local School Councils.

I am pleased to provide you with a copy of our AGM Report in this edition of The Cuffer. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our office at 229-2094 or by email at nlfsci@gmail.com.

As we end the school year, we continue our

focus on working with local schools, school

districts, and the Department of Education to advance our policy objectives. Specifically, we will focus on student assistant services, guidance services, mental health and addictions, and

inclusion.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, we wish you a safe, healthy, and happy summer!

Yours in education,

Nathan Whalen

president@schoolcouncilsnl.ca

 **The Newfoundland and Labrador**

 **Federation of School Councils**

 34thAnnual General Meeting and Conference

 April 4 – 6, 2014

 

 **Theme**

 **Today’s Vision – Tomorrow’s Reality**

Grand Falls-Windsor

 **REPORT**

Friday, April 4

The 34th Annual General Meeting was held at the Mount Peyton Hotel in Grand Falls-Windsor. The theme for the event was Today’s Vision – Tomorrow’s Reality.

**Entertainment**

The AGM began with entertainment provided by ***The Voices of Woodland Choir*** under the direction of Director/Music Teacher, Julia Rideout. The students delighted the audience during their singing of a number of heartfelt songs. The ***Voices of Woodland Choir*** gave an outstanding performance and was a great kick-off to the conference.

**Speakers**

Following the entertainment NLFSC Executive Director, Denise Pike, welcomed delegates to the conference. NLFSC President Nathan Whalen introduced the representatives who extended greeting on behalf of their organizations.

Speakers included:

Clayton Forsey, Member of the House of Assembly for the District of Exploits; John George,Trustee for the English Schools District

Charla (Cambee) Dorrington, President of the Nova Scotia Federation of Home and School Associations

Amy Coady-Davis, Councillor representing the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor.

**Keynote Speaker**

The Keynote Speaker for the conference was Jim Dinn, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers’ Association.

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 **Mr. Dinn’s Keynote Address (page 3-6 inclusive)**

"I am honoured to be the keynote speaker at the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils AGM.

A partnership, according to one definition, is a cooperative relationship between people or groups who agree to share responsibility for achieving some common specific goal.

I like to think of the relationship between the NLTA and the Federation of School Councils as a partnership. .......

Government will tell us the same thing - education is a priority. Government will even agree we must provide the best education possible for our children and so we should. The question though is - are we?

Now my job as President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association is to represent the province's 6,000 teachers. Their job, in turn, is to maximize the resources provided by government to ensure, as best they can, that our children go out into the world armed with the best education possible.

The best education...possible and let me add...under the circumstances. However, what if the best education possible...under the circumstances, is just not good enough?

What do teachers, and the NLTA representing them, do then? We believe our responsibility then extends beyond the classroom. We must become advocates for what we believe our children, your children, deserve. Not the best education possible under the circumstances, but the best possible education. Period!

Isn't that what we all want?  Do you think we're getting it? I hate to be the bearer of bad news, particularly in this regard, but we are not. We're doing the best we can...under the circumstances, but it's not good enough and that has to change, which means the circumstances have to change - a lot. If education is as important as we say it is, as government says it is, why then, year after year after year do we have to fight against cuts - teacher cuts, resource cuts. Cuts, cuts, cuts all the way across the K through 12 system. Every one of those cuts diminishes our ability to deliver the quality of education we want to deliver. The quality of education our children, your children, deserve.

So what do we do about it?  First, we need to recognize the problem. All of us, including - no especially - government.

And the problem is this: government sees the cost of education as an expense, not an investment. And there is a world of difference between the two. Now, of course, government uses the word *investment* all the time to describe education spending. Check out any throne speech. It will talk about government's "investment" in education. But in reality, it treats it as an expense - as a cost to be controlled. So every year as budget time rolls around, education is reduced to a line item, an overhead, a cost. The objective then becomes - get that cost down - no matter what. And it is always under the assumption that we can maintain the status quo with less money. That assumption is dead wrong. And our children are suffering the consequences of that failed assumption.........Education as an expense sees it treated as a cost to be reduced. So the annual question is - how can we cut costs?

Education as an investment generates an entirely different set of questions: What's our return on investment? Are we maximizing our ROI? If not, what can we do to maximize it?

The decision - expense or investment - will carve out two very different futures for our entire society.

Research is clear on this. Education as an expense generates an increase in the cost of health care, social services, and crime and incarceration. Education as an investment would see a reverse of this trend. Education as an investment would save the province, indeed, save the country, enormously in these areas. And that's our return on investment. That's our ROI, not to mention a quality education for our children. So let's look at the evidence of that assertion and there's plenty of it.

And here is where it gets tricky, because as you will see, education as an investment requires government to take a long-term view, have a long-term plan. And that's not how government likes to operate. And that's what has to change. But I will say this: The long-term benefits of education as an investment are so profoundly beneficial to our society as a whole, we absolutely must change our approach. It would be irresponsible, if not negligent, to do otherwise.

Let me set it up by saying this - education as an investment would obviously require us to increase the investment in the short term. But the results will be lower costs for educating the next generation, lower health care costs, less use of foster care and juvenile diversion, lower crime, and lower costs of incarceration, lower costs to social services, which would mean a reduction in the dependence on welfare transfers like income support (often called social assistance), drug cards, child benefits, employment insurance, old age security, and so on.

Education as an investment would compel us not only to identify this as a problem that can be solved through education, but create an action plan to deal with it. That's what it means to maximize our ROI.

Education as an investment will see our kids of today become the "better educated parents" of tomorrow. And set aside, if you want, our moral obligation to ensure this happens.

But you can't ignore it as an economic imperative. So, what do we do? Where do we start?  Remember I mentioned that teachers are doing the best we can...under the circumstances. Our best is not good enough and I don't know of a single teacher who is happy about that? They feel snowed under by the incessant avalanche of cuts. And our children are the worse for it. That goes against what every decent teacher stands for. They live to see their kids achieve and they agonize over the circumstances that deny them - our children - the best chance to achieve.

Change our funding approach to education from a budget line item to be cut and cut again, to education as an investment. The failure to do this in the past comes with staggering costs today. And those costs will not go anywhere but up. And as the costs of a failure to change go up, the more cuts we can expect to education. And you know what that means. The quality of education for our children will continue to go down. If we make the right decision today, two things will happen. In the short-term, you'll see a dramatic uptick in the performance of our children that will continue to improve over time, in all areas of scholastic performance, health, and social well-being. This in turn will drive down the costs of health care, social services, crime and prevention far beyond the investment in education.

Wouldn't you say that's a pretty good return?

Helen Keller said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." Considering the

challenges she faced, Helen understood working together, that partnerships are essential if we are to achieve that which we value.

If we are to ensure that schools are safe and caring environments, are fully resourced, offer the best possible curriculum and extra-curricular activities, are staffed with adequate number of trained teachers and support staff so that all children have the opportunity to succeed, so that all children can realize their full potential, and so that all children have the potential to become contributing members of society then we are going to need each other........

**The Keynote address was followed by a Meet and Greet reception.**

**AGM Topics and Presenters**

**Breaking the code of Silence (page 6-8 inclusive)**

 *Presenter: Nathan Whalen, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils*

During his presentation, Nathan talked about how we need to build a case for education and open the dialogue on what is needed to best serve our children and our province’s future. His interactive workshop included conversations surrounding education advocacy, School Council roles and responsibilities, parent and community engagement in learning and school activities, and the School Development Plan. Nathan stressed the ideal that School Councils play a pivotal role in the discussion of education and the success of children.

Nathan also emphasized the importance of School Council members recognizing their roles as well as the roles of school board and the school district officials as members of their school community.

His presentation also included discussions on: tips on monitoring and approving fundraising activities, the basics of school council engagement, and school council concerns and political action.

**School Council Fundamentals**

The Make Up

School Councils must have between 8 and 15 members, consisting of:

* School Principal
* Parent Representatives
* Teacher Representatives
* Community Representatives
* Student Representatives (in schools that teach senior high courses)

Our Role

Some of the responsibilities of School Councils include:

* Represent the educational interests of the school
* Advise on the quality of teaching and learning in the school
* Facilitate parent and community involvement in teaching and learning in the school
* Advise the board on matters of concern to the school and the community
* Approving, for recommendation to the board, the School Development Plan and ensure that report is available to the public
* Approve and monitor fundraising activities
* Consider information respecting performance standards in the school
* Monitor the implementation of recommendations in reports on the performance of the school
* Conduct meetings with parents and members of the community on matters within its responsibility
* Enter into a protocol agreement with the board, which shall serve as a guide and reference for School Council operations

The School Council also may:

* Recommend that the Principal provide for a religious observance in the school
* Approve a voluntary school levy (payable once in a school year) in lieu of fundraising activities for the school, subject to the by-laws of the board.

\*School Council must be in place by the 15th of October.

**Supporting the School Development Plan**

* Add “School Development Plan” to each School Council meeting.
* Ask one Department Head to present at each School Council meeting on their plan to improve teaching, learning, and student achievement within their Department. Ask each Department Head to provide School Council with a progress report periodically.
* Review midterm results, final exam results, CRT results, and the School Climate Survey.
* For the purposes of future planning, consider the results of CRTs for incoming grade levels to determine a course of action to support their achievement.

**Tips for Approving and Monitoring Fundraising Activities**

* Plan ahead! Ensure that your School Council determines priority items of which funds must be raised. This will help with determining which fundraisers to approve when various groups may have conflicting fundraisers. These priorities should stem from the School Development Plan.
* Ensure that the school is not asking for money from the school community too often. School Council is accountable to both parents and the school community. It is important that fundraising activities do not place a significant or perceived burden on families.
* Add fundraising to each School Council meeting agenda and ask groups that complete fundraising to submit a report on the success of the fundraiser and how the money was spent.

**The Basics of School Council Engagement**

* Ensure all School Council agendas are posted on the school website in advance of your meeting
* Plan in advance! All School Council meeting dates should be included in school newsletters, on the school website, and in the school calendar. Many School Councils find regular days of the month work best. For example, your School Council could choose the second Tuesday of the month at 5:30pm as a regular meeting time.
* The week after School Council meeting minutes are approved, be sure to post them on your school website.
* Be present! School Council members should offer to volunteer at school events and the School Council Chair may bring greetings at Curriculum Night or a school fundraising event.
* Try to plan one to three parent and community engagement activities per year. For example, host a session and invite an expert to speak about cyber-bullying, scholarships, or mental health!

**School Council Concerns & Political Action**

When presented with a concern, the School Council should first consult the Principal. If the matter is not resolved, it should be brought forth to the District’s Senior Education Officer.

If the matter cannot be resolved within the District, please get in touch with the NL Federation of School Councils Office to discuss next steps and to consult on a course of action:

**Partners in Mental Health (page 9- 10)**

*Presenters: Brenda Stamp, President of the Schizophrenia Society NL*

*Dave Banko, Executive Director for the Schizophrenia Society NL*

Brenda and Dave began their presentation by providing a summary of the Mental Health Strategy for Canada “Changing Direction, Changing Lives.”

Released in May 2012, the strategy aims to help improve the mental health and well-being of all people living in Canada, and to create a mental health system that can truly meet the needs of people and families impacted by mental health problems and illnesses.

Aims include:

Promoting mental health across the lifespan in homes, schools, and workplaces, and prevent mental illness and suicide wherever possible.

Fostering recovery and well-being for people of all ages living with mental health problems and illnesses, and uphold their rights.

Providing access to the right combination of services, treatments and supports - when and where needed.

Dave and Brenda also shared information on the national organization “Partners for Mental Health.” This organization is supercharging a ground-breaking social movement that will transform the way we think about, act towards and support mental health in Canada

The mission of Partners for Mental Health is to generate systemic and social change that will result in:

* Increased access to services, treatment, and support
* Better workplace policies
* More funding for programs and services
* Increased awareness and attention towards one’s own mental health
* Better treatment toward those living with a mental health problem or illness
* Through partnership and public engagement, we will redefine the current norms, so that people living with mental health problems or illnesses can receive the services, treatment and support they need, when they need it.

Brenda and Dave encouraged delegates to take action to ensure that mental health-related services, treatment and support are available to all children and youth.

Mental Health statistics on young Canadian youth:

* 762 young people commit suicide.
* Suicide is the #1 cause of non-accidental death among youth.
* Almost 90% of people who die by suicide have a mental illness.
* 23% of all deaths for youth aged 15 to 19 can be accounted for by suicide

Brenda and Dave summed up the importance of advocating for more mental health supports, particularly for youth, with this quote by Margaret Mead

*“Never Doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world,*

*indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*

**Teaching Digital Citizenship: Respect, Educate, and Protect**

**(page 10- 13 inclusive)**

Presenter: *Michael Walsh, Department of Education*

**Digital citizenship is the norms of safe, respectful, and responsible behaviour with regard to the use of technology**.

In his power-point presentation, Mr. Walsh provided guidelines and tips to assist School Council members (parents, students, and teachers) to determine what they should be teaching youth concerning digital wellness, ethics, and online behaviour.

With the tsunami-like nature of new digital technologies, children are learning to use technology at the same time as the adults. This leads to misunderstandings and uncertainties of how technologies can or should be used.

Mr. Walsh described the 9 elements or themes of Digital Citizenship as:

**1. Digital Access:** F*ull electronic participation in society.* Technology users need to be aware that not everyone has the same opportunities when it comes to technology. Working toward equal digital rights and supporting electronic access is the starting point of Digital Citizenship. Digital exclusion makes it difficult to grow as a society increasingly using these tools. Helping to provide and expand access to technology should be the goal of all digital citizens.

**How do schools embrace BYOD (bring your own devices)?**

**Do children with diagnosed exceptionalities have access?**

**Are there issues around equality? Is there a digital divide?**

**Do all people have High Speed Access?**

**2. Digital Commerce:** *Buying and selling of goods online*.  Are students knowledgeable in the risks and opportunities associated with purchasing or commercial transactions across the Internet?

Do they know how to monitor their online spending habits?

**3. Digital Communication:** *Electronic exchange of information*

Are students and educators participating in educational conversation regarding privacy and public sharing?

Do students know the school rules related to cell phones, instant messaging, and other communications?

What is the understanding of appropriate vs. inappropriate communication online?

**4. Digital Literacy:** P*rocess of teaching and learning about technology and the use of technology.*

**What technologies must be taught and how will technologies be used?**

* access and use
* understand digital media content and applications
* problem solving
* critical thinking
* create with digital technology
* multi‐literacies

While schools have made great progress in the area of technology infusion, much remains to be done. A renewed focus must be made on what technologies must be taught as well as how it should be used.

**5. Digital Etiquette:***Appropriate and inappropriate use of technology*

How do we teach students appropriate behaviours online?

How do we teach students appropriate use of technology?

Technology users often see this area as one of the most pressing problems when dealing with Digital Citizenship. We recognize inappropriate behavior when we see it, but before people use technology they do not learn digital etiquette (i.e., appropriate conduct).  Many people feel uncomfortable talking to others about their digital etiquette.  Often rules and regulations are created or the technology is simply banned to stop inappropriate use. It is not enough to create rules and policy, we must teach everyone to become responsible digital citizens in this new society.

**6. Digital Law:** *Legal rights and restrictions governing technology use*

Do students understand the legal implications for unethical and illegal behaviours online?

* Harassment
* Defamatory libel
* Copyright Violations

Digital law deals with the ethics of technology within a society. Unethical use manifests itself in form of theft and/or crime. Students need to understand that stealing or causing damage to other people’s work, identity, or property online is a crime. These laws apply to anyone who works or plays online. Hacking into others information, downloading illegal music, plagiarizing, creating destructive worms, viruses or creating Trojan Horses, sending spam, or stealing anyone’s identify or property is unethical.

**7. Digital Rights & Responsibilities:***Those freedoms extended to everyone in a digital world.*

Digital citizens have the right to privacy, free speech, etc. Basic digital rights must be addressed, discussed, and understood in the digital world.  With these rights also come responsibilities as well. Users must help define how the technology is to be used in an appropriate manner. In a digital society these two areas must work together for everyone to be productive.

**8. Digital Health & Wellness:** *Physical and psychological well-being in a digital technology world.*

How do we address the physical and psychosocial well-being for students to support their increasing use of technologies?

**Ergonomics**

**Addiction**

**The on-off switch**

Eye safety, repetitive stress syndrome, and sound ergonomic practices are issues that need to be addressed in a new technological world. Beyond the physical issues are those of the psychological issues that are becoming more prevalent such as Internet addiction.  Users need to be taught there are inherent dangers of technology. Digital Citizenship includes a culture where technology users are taught how to protect themselves through education and training.

**9. Digital Security (self-protection*):****Electronic precaution to guarantee safety and security.*

How do we protect private and confidential digital information?

What should students know about protecting their personal security online?

In any society, there are individuals who steal, deface, or disrupt other people. The same is true for the digital community. It is not enough to trust other members in the community for the responsibility of our own safety. We need to have virus protection, backups of data, and surge control of our equipment. As responsible citizens, we must protect our information from outside forces that might cause disruption or harm.

Mr. Walsh pointed out that the best way to explain and teach Digital Citizenship to all students (Kindergarten to Level 3) is through the concept of REPs - **Respect, Educate, and Protect.**



Digital Citizenship, in NL, is part of the Safe and Caring Schools Policy, which directs all schools to develop and implement a plan to teach Digital Citizenship.

**Business Meeting (page 13-24 inclusive)**

The Chair for the Business Meeting was President Nathan Whalen, while Secretary Peter Whittle served as the Parliamentarian.

There were 14 voting delegates in attendance, 8 non-voting and 12 Proxy’s to establish the quorum. Business included the presentation of the Annual Report, President’s Report, Financial Report, as well as the 2014-2015 Budget.

There were a total of 14 resolutions discussed and adopted- of those resolutions, 8 were rescinded from the NLFSC Policy Document, amended and adopted, while 6 were new.

**Resolutions**

**1. School Council Operations**

**Original Resolution:**

5.5 The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils supports the provision of workshops for parents involved in home and school associations and school councils. (2002)

Rescind Article 5.5 from NLFSC Policy Document and replace with:

*Whereas School Councils feel more supports are required to assist them to fulfill their role and to support their respective school development plans;*

*Be it therefore resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils supports the provision of workshops for parents, teachers, administrators, community members, and students involved in School Councils and home and school associations.*

**2. RCMP Anti-Bullying and Anti-Drug Programs**

**Original Resolution:**

19.4 The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils supports a lobby of Government to have financial resources to the RCMP reinstated.

Rescind Article 19.4 from NLFSC Policy Document and replace with:

*Whereas new information from efforts to advocate for RCMP drug awareness and anti-bullying programs has arisen;*

*Be it resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils campaign government and the RCMP to have financial resources to the RCMP reinstated.*

**3. Student Transportation**

**Original Resolution:**

2.4 The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils supports the requirement by government that transportation companies provide training for all school bus drivers on managing life-threatening allergies. (2006)

2.5 The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils supports more thorough and advanced first aid training so that school bus drivers have safety, first aid, and EpiPen training before they drive a school bus with children on board. (2006)

Rescind Articles 2.4 and 2.5 from NLFSC Policy Document and replace with:

2.4 *Whereas student safety is of paramount importance to parents, teachers, and school communities;*

*Whereas school bus drivers should be properly trained to respond in emergency situations;*

*Be it resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils commend the Department of Education on working to include first aid, epinephrine administration training, and other training that will ensure the safety of children in the new contract template with independent school bus operators.*

*Be it further resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils commend the Department of Education on following through on providing first aid training so that school bus drivers have safety, first aid, and EpiPen training before they drive a school bus with children on board for board owned buses.*

Renumber existing Articles 2.6 – 2.9 to 2.5 – 2.8 from NLFSC Policy Document

**4. Student Transportation**

**Original Resolution:**

2.3 The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils seeks a change in legislation regarding the maximum age of school buses in operation on our roads. (2005)

Rescind Article 2.3 from NLFSC Policy Document and replace with:

*Whereas student safety is of paramount importance to parents, teachers, and school communities;*

*Be it resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils commend the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for the implementation of the CSA D250-07 School Bus Safety Standards that provide for a maximum age of school buses in operation.*

**5. Healthy Living**

**Original Resolutions:**

11.2 The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils encourages school councils to work in a co-operative manner with their respective School Boards to move forward with implementation of initiatives supporting healthy eating and active living for students in schools throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. (2005)

13.1 The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils recognizes that lack of exercise during the school day poses a serious health risk to our children. (2004)

13.2 The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils endorses and promotes regular physical activity for all children during recess and lunch breaks. (2004)

Rescind Article 11.2 from NLFSC Policy Document and replace with:

*Whereas a recent study published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal shows more people in Canada, and particularly Newfoundland and Labrador, are becoming obese;*

*Whereas this same study reports that approximately 71 per cent of people in Newfoundland and Labrador will be considered obese or overweight by 2019;*

*Whereas our children and families must learn how to lead healthy lives and school communities have a strong role to play in fostering healthy living practices and combatting the global obesity epidemic;*

*Be it therefore resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils renew its commitment to healthy living by working with School Districts, the Department of Education, and community organizations to support healthy living in schools;*

*Be it further resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils work with partner organizations to provide resources and supports for School Councils and parents to assist families in living healthy lifestyles;*

*Be it further resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils commend the School Boards and Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for its work on Healthy Living and reiterate the importance of resolutions 13.1, and 13.2.*

**6. School Infrastructure**

**Original Resolution:**

8.1 As most government buildings are maintained at a cost of $2.50 per square foot, and schools are maintained at a cost of $0.55 per square foot, the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils recommends that funding for schools’ maintenance be increased to a standard more in keeping with that spent on other publicly maintained buildings. (2000)

Rescind Article 8.1 and 19.2 from NLFSC Policy Document and replace with:

*Whereas students require well-designed and well-maintained schools in order to learn in a safe and healthy school climate;*

*Be it therefore resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils commend the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for its commitment to school maintenance and infrastructure spending.*

*Be it further resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils recommend that the Department of Education and School Districts work closely with School Councils in the concept, design, and development of all new school construction and renovation projects to ensure adequate feedback is sought from the school community.*

**7. School Fees**

**Original Resolution:**

9.2 The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils requests that the Department of Education state publicly that Government does not fund 100% of the cost of textbooks and field trips up to Grade 8 and that such costs must be covered by parents. (2001)

Rescind Article 9.2 from NLFSC Policy Document and replace with:

*Whereas School Councils are pleased with the amount of necessary curriculum and material resources available to schools;*

*Be it therefore resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils commend the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for the elimination of school fees for students in grades K-12 and for providing textbooks for students in grades K-12.*

**8. Guidance Allocation**

**Original Resolution:**

12.7 The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils encourages the Department of Education to immediately implement a change in the allocation formula for Guidance Counsellors to one per 333 students for Kindergarten to Level III, beginning in September 2009.

Rescind Article 12.7 from NLFSC Policy Document and replace with:

*Whereas modern schools are confronted with diverse and intense demands by students of a personal nature, which include career planning; comprehensive student assessments; scholarship and postsecondary application procedures and information; drug and alcohol awareness; personal counselling; anti-bullying programs; and mediation;*

*Whereas the Guidance Counsellor is often the professional educator charged with these responsibilities;*

*Whereas the current Guidance Counsellor allocation of one per 500 students does not meet the needs of students and is particularly challenging in rural schools;*

*Be it resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils urges the Department of Education to implement a change in the allocation formula for Guidance Counsellors to one per 333 students for Kindergarten to Level III as per Recommendation #20 from the final report of the 2007 Teacher Allocation Commission.*

**9A. Administrative Allocation**

**Original Resolution:**

19.3 The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils supports a lobby of Government to ensure cuts to aforementioned educational staffing allocations be reconsidered and reinstated.

Rescind Article 19.3 from NLFSC Policy Document and replace with:

*Whereas the amalgamation of four English School Districts into one has downloaded an increased administrative burden on Principals and Assistant Principals;*

*Whereas Budget 2013 reduced administrative allocations for schools;*

*Whereas Principals and Assistant Principals play a vital role in teaching and learning and are the instructional leaders in the school;*

*Be it therefore resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils*

*reiterate to lobby Government to ensure cuts to administrative allocations be reconsidered and reinstated*

**9B. Educational Allocation**

**Introduce Article 19.3(a) to NLFSC Policy document to read as follows:**

*Whereas Budget 2013 reduced the number of teaching units available to support schools and student achievement;*

*Be it therefore resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils reiterate to lobby Government to Increase the amount of teaching units provided for the Needs Based Resource Allocations – such as Regular Teachers, IRT’s, Student Assistants, etc. – as requested by the district, for individual schools needs.*

*Be it therefore further resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils reiterate to lobby Government to reinstate teaching units that were cut in Budget 2013.*

**10. School Board Governance - Introduce New Resolution**

*20.1 Whereas research on school board effectiveness shows that Trustees are a crucial piece in supporting student achievement if they are able to adequately hear and respond to the concerns of parents and the school community;*

*Whereas the current system of 15 appointed trustees for the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District does not appropriately meet this objective;*

*Be it resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils recommends that school district governance should be derived from already elected School Councils in place of the existing appointed Board of Trustees;*

*Be it further resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils urge the Department of Education that a change in legislation occur to this effect before any further school closure consultations or major policy decisions occur where the spirit of Schools Act, 1997, indicates accountability for parents and school communities in education.*

**11. Assessment and Evaluation Policy – New Resolution**

*Whereas parents, former students and current students are concerned with the effects of the “No-Zero Policy” in relation to preparedness for post-secondary;*

*Be it resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils petition the Minister of Education to gather qualitative and quantitative evidence to determine whether the implementation of the Assessment and Evaluation Policy is having a measurable positive effect on student aptitude (e.g., work habits, citizenship, and preparation for post- secondary study) and student achievement.*

**12. Safe and Caring Schools Teaching and Learning Resources**

*Whereas most, if not all, schools face issues of social justice, bullying, and acceptance;*

*Whereas there are currently some awareness raising programs in existence around these issues; however, more programs are needed for the varying age groups and learning levels for our children to deal with the increasing number of children feeling unsafe in the school environment.*

*Therefore, be it resolved that the Department of Education and the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District work together to develop more teaching and learning resources to assist in educating children about social justice, anti-bullying, and respecting each other and the importance of acceptance of each and everyone.*

**13. Funding for Technology Maintenance in Schools**

*Whereas all schools are expected to provide and utilize the latest in technology including smart boards/team boards, Wi-Fi, iPads, and associated devices and subscriptions;*

*Whereas we want our children to be able to avail of the latest learning technologies and devices, both to assist in learning and to be able to utilize the technology productively;*

*Whereas all technologies, services, and subscriptions require financial resources to maintain, repair, and replace as needed and there is currently no financial resources provided in the budgets to the school boards for these resources, and therefore no financial resources allocated to individual schools;*

*Therefore, be it resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils request that the Minister of Education make a provision in the budgeting process for our schools to have the necessary additional budget allocation to properly maintain the current technology devices, services, and subscriptions to ensure our children are able to take advantage of these learning devices now and in the future.*

**14. Educational Psychologist Allocation**

*Whereas modern schools are confronted with diverse and intense demands by students of a personal nature, which include comprehensive student assessments; drug and alcohol awareness; personal counselling; anti-bullying programs; and mediation;*

*Whereas the guidance counselor is often the professional educator charged with these responsibilities;*

*Whereas comprehensive student assessments take upwards of 20 hours each to complete and is a significant burden on schools;*

*Whereas the current guidance counselor allocation of one per 500 students does not meet the needs of students and is particularly challenging in rural schools;*

*Therefore, be it resolved that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils urge the Department of Education to increase the supportive resources such as educational psychologists, counselors, and other support staff necessary to augment the intervention and assistance necessary to address the needs of students from Kindergarten to Level III.*

A discussion also took place on the low turnout at the Annual General Meetings over the past few years and whether it would be best to move the Annual General Meeting from Spring to Fall. Instead, a motion to host a Biennial General Meeting

(once every two years) was put forth and unanimously supported. Delegates also encouraged the Federation’s Board of Directors to host regional events throughout the year to bring together local School Councils.

**Election of Officers**

An Election for the positions of 1st Vice-President and

Secretary was held with the following results:

**President for the term of 2013-15-**Nathan Whalen (Bishops College School, St. John’s)

**1st Vice President for the term of 2014-2016 –** Terry Green (Sprucewood Academy, Grand Falls-Windsor)

**2nd Vice-President for the term of 2013-2015–** Paulette Grimes (Woodland Primary, Grand Falls- Windsor)

**Secretary for the term of 2014-2016 –** Peter Whittle (St Paul’s Jr. High, Virginia Park, St. John’s)

Other executive members include: Ruby Hoskins, Past President, (Marystown); and Michele Peach, Treasurer.

The Business Meeting also included discussions on: (1) Membership Fees; (2) New School Construction (3) Administration and Teacher Allocations (4) Review of Health and Curriculum/Focus on Mental Health and Addictions; (5) Funding for School Council and NLFSC (6) Cuts to the RCMP community and school programs (7) Guidance Allocations and; (8) Student Assessment and Evaluation.

**The 2013-14 School Council Person of the Year Award** was presented to Terry-Lee Roberts from Dorset Collegiate, Pilley’s Island.

Ms. Roberts was nominated for the School Council Person of the Year Award by Mark Warren, Principal of Dorset Collegiate, and members of the School Council.

The award was presented at the closing banquet of the 34th School Councils Annual General Meeting and Conference, which coincided with the beginning of National Volunteer Week, April 6-12, 2014.

The location and date of the 2016 AGM was deferred to the executive.

More detailed and formal information regarding the business meeting can be obtained by contacting the NLFSC office.

**Thank you** to the School Councils that were represented at AGM! We appreciate your effort in finding the resources and time to attend the conference.

**Thank you** to the Department of Education for sponsoring our AGM.

**Thank you** to our Registration Kit Sponsors:

Office of the Child and Youth Advocate

ACT (Alliance for the Control of Tobacco, NL)

Scholastic Canada Ltd.

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association

Flanker

TD Bank Group

School Milk Foundation

Reddy Kilowatt Credit Union, St. John’s

Canadian Red Cross

**Thank you to our Conference Tradeshow Exhibitors**

The Department of Education

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association

Marine Institute

The NL Heart and Stroke Foundation

The Canadian Red Cross

College of the North Atlantic

Ironworkers Local 76

**Thank you to *The Voices of Woodland Choir,*** under the direction of Director/Music Teacher Julia Rideout, for your wonderful music and songs.

**Thank you** to Terry Green, NLFSC 1st Vice-President, and Paulette Grimes, NLFSC 2nd Vice-President, for assisting with the conference planning.

**Thank you** to Mondella Winsor and Darlene Sullivan for assisting us with registration

Our sincerest gratitude to you all!

On behalf of the NLFSC executive (Nathan, Terry, Paulette, Peter, Ruby and Michele), a heartfelt thank you to all our school council members for the effort and time you give to our schools and students, and for the loyalty and commitment you give to our association.

***NLFSC salutes the passion, action and impact of our School Council Volunteers***.

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Have a safe and enjoyable summer!

We look forward to hearing from you in the fall.

***Thank you to the NLTA for printing this Newsletter!***

***Congratulations to Our Graduates***

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Congratulations to our 2013-14 High School Students on your graduation. NLFSC salutes all your hard work and wishes you much success in your future endeavors!

***Canadian Environment Week***

***June 1- 7, 2014***

Canadian Environment Week is the

perfect time to celebrate our

achievements and initiatives in tackling climate change and reducing air pollution.

This year’s Canadian Environment Week will be celebrated from June 1-7 to coincide with and Clean Air Day( June 4); Canadian World Environment Day( June 5) and World Oceans Day on June 8th.

Protecting Canada's natural environment reaps a world of benefits for Canadians, from strengthening the economy to

enhancing health and quality of life.

***Celebrate Canada***

Celebrate Canada is an eleven-day

celebration which takes place from

June 21st to July 1st. Take advantage of

Celebrate Canada activities to get

together in your communities, to discover

and appreciate the wealth and diversity of

Canadian society, and show your love of Canada and your pride in being

Canadian.

Special dates include:

**National Aboriginal Day - June 21st**

**Canadian Multiculturalism Day - June 27th and Canada Day- July 1st**

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***The Cuffer*** is a benefit of membership in the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils.

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