

**The Cuffer**

A newspaper for School Councils in Newfoundland and Labrador

**January/February 2019**

**Message from the NLFSC President**



It is difficult to believe that we are nearly halfway through the school year. It is my hope that the rest of 2019 is prosperous, healthy and happy for you and your family.

As in past years the NLFSC executive will continue to advocate for the many issues our members bring forward on a daily basis.

Programs and projects, no matter how excellent, cannot be considered sustainable without an advocacy plan. We will continue to forward your concerns to government, the NLTA and other organizations that share our passion for ensuring we have the best education possible for our students.

I welcome any input from you on areas of concern, which you feel the federation should be focussing on.

NLFSC commends government for the establishment of the education action plan "The Way Forward: A vision for sustainability and growth in Newfoundland and Labrador".

The plan promises to make changes to our education system, that would improve the

learning experience for all students, by focussing on these 9 key areas:

1. Inclusive Education

2. Student Mental Health and Wellness

3. Mathematics

4. Reading

5. Indigenous Education

6. Multicultural Education

7. The Early Years

8. Career and Co-operative education

9. Teacher Education and Professional Development.

The release of Now is the Time Action plan has generated a great deal of interest from parents and school councils. NLFSC hopes the recommendations mark the beginning of great change and improvements in the education system. It is also our hope that many of the resolutions put forth by our membership and many of the issues and concerns we have repeatedly presented in our previous pre-budget submissions will be addressed once the recommendations in the Action Plan have been implemented.

We are fully aware the action plan outlines specific timelines and responsibilities for implementation of the recommendations and are compelled to do everything in our power to ensure these timelines are met and promises are kept. In good conscience we could do nothing less; our children need and deserve nothing less.

Now IS the time to provide our schools and students with the proper resources and supports needed to improve and enhance the educational experience for the students of our province.

With a provincial election taking place in the near future, this is a critical time to unite to ensure education is at the top of government’s priority list.

We are also committed to supporting government with the implementation of the action plan and offer our assistance on informing parents and school councils of any changes and improvements.

As I previously stated, we have faith that many of the issues and concerns that currently exist in our education system will be addressed in the Action Plan. We are committed to ensuring these promises are honoured.

I would also like to take the opportunity to say thank you to our teachers/administrators and school staff whose care and guidance has and is

impacting the lives of our children, during Teacher /Staff Appreciation Week, Feb. 10-16.

During the week please take time to acknowledge your school staff for all they do and give to our students. The activities do not

have to be costly - even a simple handwritten note or thank you card goes a long way in letting our educators and school staff know they are appreciated and valued. Our educators and school staff play an integral role in the success of our students and TSAW provides us with an opportunity to highlight and thank them for their hard work.

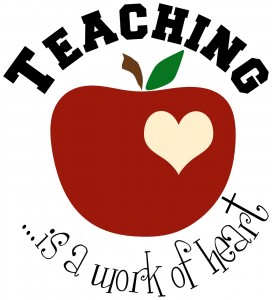
I look forward to working with you as we continue to advocate for our students.

Please feel free to contact me at any time with concerns or questions you may have, or contact the NLFSC Office.

Sincerely,

Don

Email: [Don.Coombs@easternhealth.ca](mailto:Don.Coombs@easternhealth.ca)



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**Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week**

**February 10-16, 2019**

Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week will be held Feb. 10-16, 2019. NLFSC encourages our membership to acknowledge and celebrate the hard work and care our teachers and support staff gives to our children on a daily basis.

Teachers and our school staff have some of the toughest jobs. They are there for our children day in and day out, often under trying

circumstances and with less than adequate

resources and support. Their professionalism, dedication, and expertise form the cornerstone of our nation's public education system.

Without the hard work of teachers, Canadian scientists, artists, and political and business

leaders would not be among the best in the world.

Many education leaders suggest that the most effective way to improve education in this

country is to give teachers the status, support, and recognition they genuinely deserve.

Recognizing our teachers and school staff, for all they do, does not need to be time-consuming, expensive, or reserved for one special week during the year. One of the greatest ways parents can show their appreciation, to those who work in our schools, is by being actively involved in their child's education all year long.

Parents should establish a good working

relationship with teachers/school staff early in the school year.

Talk to your children's teachers on a regular

basis, not just at scheduled parent-teacher

conferences. Find out how you can help with homework assignments and reinforce at home what is being taught in the classroom. By being an involved parent, you are showing your respect and appreciation for your child's teachers and the school.

When parents and teachers establish open communication and good working relations, great things get accomplished for students.

Thank Them for Being Teachers. Teachers play a critical role in the lives of our children. It takes a lot to give a lot. Patience,

understanding and kindness are constantly

required to nurture a class full of young minds and personalities.

Teachers also play a very important role in

promoting self-discipline in our children and in establishing guidelines and rules for participating in a classroom or group. Their guidance helps our children develop social skills and become competent in group situations. That's why it's important for parents to remember those little, often overlooked qualities that make teachers such special people in our children's lives.

Be sure to tell teachers and our school staff how much you appreciate who they are and what they do.



**Here are a few ideas and suggestions to assist with the celebration of TSAW week:**

Monday - Hang a “We Love Our Teachers/Staff” banner on the front of the school. Place a red apple with a note from the Home and School Association/School Council in each mailbox or on each desk.

Don’t forget the bus drivers and custodians. - Make a daily draw for a donated prize.

Tuesday - Hang a collage made of photos of teachers/staff and students at work and play and decorate the halls with balloons and paper apples on which the students have written stories, poems or drawn pictures. Serve coffee and treats in the staff room. - Daily draw.

Wednesday - Place flowers in staff room. Serve a buffet lunch. Be sure to arrange for supervision so all teachers and staff can attend. - Daily draw.

Thursday - Have cheese platters and a fruit basket in the staff room. Give each staff member a bag filled with pens, notepaper, etc.- Daily draw.

Friday - Hold a Teacher/Staff Appreciation Tea/lunch. -Daily draw or draws depending on the number of prizes that have been donated by local businesses. - Raffle grand prize winner draw.

The celebrations and ideas don’t need to be costly. A heartfelt homemade card, notes on classrooms doors, and banners also go a long way in making your school staff feel appreciated. An email message or face-to-face “Thank you” will never be forgotten.

For more ideas please visit our Facebook page and take a look at the photos, submitted by members, during past TSAW celebrations.



**School Councils**

School councils can have a positive impact on the learning success of children in schools across this province.

School Councils are the legislated platform for parent engagement in K-12 public

education and a fundamental vehicle for

communication. The school council role

represents the link between the school

administration and the parents in the school community.

We receive many phone calls requesting a copy of the School Council Handbook. Unfortunately the government stopped printing them a number of years ago. A copy of the School Council Handbook (Building Learning Communities: A Handbook for School Councils 2nd Edition), can be downloaded at

[www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/publications/k12/Handbook2ndedition.pdf](http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/publications/k12/Handbook2ndedition.pdf)

This document is an invaluable resource in

assisting school council members to understand their roles and responsibilities.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact the NLFSC office at (709) 764-8993 or by e-mailing us @ nlfsci@gmail.com

**Membership Renewal**

**Thank you to the school councils that have renewed their membership! We greatly appreciate your support.**

**To those who have not, please do so as soon as possible**

Your continued membership will help support our mission to advocate for excellence in

education for all students in Newfoundland and Labrador.

(Form attached)

**Prebudget Submission**  
The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils is currently preparing a Pre-budget Submission to government outlining the importance of investing in education.  
  
NLFSC believes the best solution to our province’s pressing economic and social challenges lie in providing our children with a quality education.  
These children will one day be our workforce, business-owners, and political leaders. Education affects everyone and it provides every child with an opportunity to achieve a

prosperous future.   
NLFSC encourages parents and school councils to share your views with your MHA and Government on how to best invest in education.

The voice of parents and councils can often precipitate effective change!



By: Joanne Schnurr, CTV Ottawa   
Published Friday, January 18, 2019

**New data is showing a worrisome trend about vaping and smoking among teens**

**Will vaping reverse decline in smoking rates?**

New data is showing a worrisome trend about vaping and smoking.

Vaping rates among teens in Canada are skyrocketing.  Now new research suggests for the first time in decades, cigarette smoking may

be on the rise as well.  The statistics are alarming:  more than double the number of young people vaping in just one year.  And while e-cigarettes are aimed at helping adults quit smoking, the downside is that young people are becoming addicted to them. And the truth is, we simply don’t know the long-term consequences of that.

You don't have to go far to see someone taking a puff on an e-cigarette. Vaping rates are dramatically on the rise in Canada, packing a powerful punch of nicotine.

“The “nic,” says Olivier Ste-Croix, a University of Ottawa student who vapes, “They call it getting light-headed. Sometimes it's cool.”

“I think it's bad for you,” adds student Sophie Radake, “but people aren't seeing it now. They're just doing it for the coolness factor.”

And that's a concern for folks at a weekend conference on smoking cessation in Ottawa called the State of the Art Clinical Approaches to Smoking Cessation.  They say great in-roads have been made in reducing smoking through advertising policies and health awareness, but they worry we're creating another generation, a much younger generation, of nicotine users.

Dr. Neal Benowitz is with the U.S. Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education, “Is it a trade-off?” he asks, “Are we helping adults quit smoking by addicting kids and if that's the case, what are the net harms and benefits?  How many adults are quitting smoking and how many lives are being saved that way and what are the consequences of kids using nicotine? And actually, we don't know.”

Schools in Ottawa are trying to address this issue.  Some Catholic high schools have removed their washroom doors to prevent students from vaping in them.  The product of choice?  It's called Juul and comes in variety of flavors.

Dr. Andrew Pipe with the Ottawa Model for Smoking Cessation says that’s part of the problem; this deliberate attempt, he says, by the tobacco industry to market to teens.

“We've got to focus on that industry which has escaped unscathed as it laughs all the way to bank while it continues to addict and cause untold damage to our health and that of our community.

After years of successfully fighting smoking rates among young people, there's a sense that

e-cigarettes are re-igniting that battle.  For the first time in 20 or 30 years, we're seeing a possible increase in the number of young people and teens who are smoking cigarettes.

David Hammond, a professor at the University of Waterloo says the data he examined is concerning.

“Our data suggests that smoking may have stalled,” he says, “that it may be creeping back up.  That's such an important change over the past few decades that we need to see that in other studies as well but it is something to pay attention to.”

Add to that another concern: that these devices can be used to vape cannabis.  Removing the bathroom doors may not be enough to stop that.



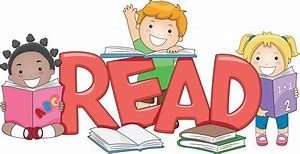


**2019 Freedom to Read Week**

Freedom to Read Week (February 24 – March 2) is an annual event that encourages Canadians to think about and reaffirm their commitment to intellectual freedom, which is guaranteed them under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Freedom to Read kit is suitable for librarians and educators. It includes a poster, extensive background material on freedom to read and some classroom exercises. For more

information visit their website at **http:/.**[**www.freedomtoread.ca/kits.index.htm**](http://www.freedomtoread.ca/kits.index.htm)

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** 2019 Pink Shirt Day**

Bullying is often a problem in our schools, workplaces, homes, and over the Internet. On **Wednesday February 27th** the NLFSC executive encourages School Councils across the province to wear something pink to symbolize that we as a society will not tolerate bullying anywhere.

Pink Shirt Day began in Nova Scotia in 2007, when two Grade 12 students - David Shepherd and Travis Price - stood up to defend a young male person who was bullied because he was wearing a pink shirt during the first week of school. The students took a stand by wearing pink shirts to show solidarity, and handing out pink shirts to their classmates.

Pink Shirt Day has since become a national campaign aimed to raise awareness about the power to prevent bullying.

Pink Shirt Day aims to reduce bullying by

celebrating diversity and promoting the

development of positive social relationships. The annual event helps to create a province and nation where all people feel safe, valued and respected.

Pink Shirt Day unites people in a movement to change people’s attitudes towards bullying. It teaches young people that we need to be more accepting of differences and that we cannot stand by and watch as bullying occurs around us. Schools, police departments, businesses,

politicians and youth groups across

Newfoundland and Labrador will use this day to raise awareness of the negative effects of bullying and show that any form of bullying will not be tolerated in their organization.

You too can join the sea of pink! NLFSC invites you to take the opportunity to address the issue of bullying with your children or teens, by wearing pink, planning an event or activity or just having an intentional conversation.



**EDUCATION WEEK  
March 3-9, 2019**

**Theme: Go The Extra Mile: Aller plus loin**

INTRODUCTION  
Education Week has always been about celebrating education and the importance of learning. The theme for 2019 is “Go The Extra Mile: Aller plus loin”. Education Week can be an enriching experience for students, teachers and parents. All teachers are encouraged to continue to observe Education Week with their students. All students have much to contribute and would grow and learn from involvement in Education Week activities.  
  
Opening Ceremonies will be held at Memorial Academy in Botwood on Monday, Mar. 4th.  
  
EDUCATION WEEK LOGO  
The four blocks symbolize the foundation of either a building or of learning. They represent both a solid foundation as well as the traditional blocks that most children are familiar with. Atop the blocks the chimney represents an

arrow pointing to the future. This symbolizes the growth and the importance of education. Together the blocks, the chimney, the arrow, and all elements are representative of a solid foundation for education and the future that is provided by our teachers throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

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**Governor General’s History Award for Excellence in Teaching**

Each year, Canada’s History Society recognizes 6 teachers for innovative approaches to teaching Canadian history. The 2019 recipients will be awarded:  
•An individual cash prize of $2500;  
•A $1000 cash prize for the recipient’s school;

and a trip for two to Ottawa to attend the awards ceremony at Rideau Hall, the Canada’s History Forum, and the History Makers celebration dinner.  
If you or a teacher you know makes history come to life in the classroom, submit a nomination or apply online today! Applications are due April 1, 2018

[**CanadasHistory.ca/GGAward**](http://canadashistory.ca/GGAward)

If you have any questions about the award or application, please contact Joanna Dawson

Facebook**:<https://www.facebook.com/CanadasHistory/posts/1648414315217536>**  
Email:[**jdawson@canadashistory.ca**](mailto:jdawson@canadashistory.ca)

Phone: **1-866-952-3444 (Ex:225)**

**The Cuffer** is a benefit of membership in the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils. Annual membership dues are based on school enrolment. Individual subscriptions are available at $15 per year.

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