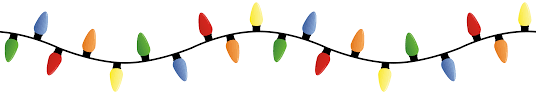
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**The Cuffer**

 A newspaper for School Councils in Newfoundland and Labrador

Nov/Dec 2019



Hello Members! It is hard to believe that the Christmas season is upon us again. No doubt students and teachers are busy preparing for events and concerts at school. On behalf of the Federation, thank you to our teachers who

spend countless of unpaid hours planning celebrations and practicing with students so they can showcase their talents and delight audiences with their great energy, creative costumes and captivating performances.

I think it is fair to say most people who are not in the education system cannot fully appreciate how busy the days are in our schools or the volunteer time given by teachers.

Aside from parents, teachers have one of the most impactful roles in our children’s development – therefore it is important that we continue to advocate for better working conditions for teachers. Reducing class size, increasing teacher units, increasing administration time and providing teachers with the resources they need to teach will not only help teachers, but will yield many benefits for students. The education of our children should be one of our top priorities. Our society should value our teachers, educational outcomes and our infrastructure, as much as we ask our students to value education.

February 9-15, 2020 is Teacher Appreciation week. Our teachers know that all students deserve to be successful. They have the internal drive and the external skills to keep striving for teaching excellence with every student, every day, year after year. They are our children's friends, mentors and guides rolled into one. They deserve our greatest esteem.

Speaking of advocacy, on November 16th the NLFSC executive hosted an Atlantic Caucus Meeting with representatives from Home and School Associations from Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The meeting provided an opportunity for representatives to meet, discuss and learn about issues of mutual interests that impact student learning, health and well-being in our respective provinces.

There was a unified concern about the scourge of vaping among students and we are calling on all levels of government to take urgent action in this regard. The targeted marketing of our youth by big tobacco companies needs to stop now! We also want to limit youth access to these products through a combination of regulation and or taxation.

###### Another area of shared concern was access to mental health services for students. While it is recognized that many governments share our concerns regarding expanding mental health access throughout society, the timely access to assessment and services requires more attention. The Atlantic Caucus is calling for expanded supports for mental health services in all schools.

###### On a personal note, the holiday season is upon us and on behalf of the Board of Directors I would like to take this opportunity to extend good tidings to you and your family as we celebrate this season of giving.

###### Merry Christmas and a happy healthy New Year

###### Sincerely,

###### Don

Email: Don.Coombs@easternhealth.ca

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###### **Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week**

###### Remember those teachers who showed you kindness - those whose influence still impacts you today - the teachers who helped you choose a career or discover a passion and pointed you back on the right path? Now, think of the teachers who are doing the same for your child or grandchild today. Then, from February 9-15th join thousands of Canadian parents as they say thank-you to teachers/administrators and all school staff, whose care and guidance has and is impacting the lives of their children, during Teacher /Staff Appreciation Week (TSAW).

###### During this week the NL Federation of School Councils encourages communities from across the province to recognize the contributions of those who inspire, motivate and care for students.

###### Every school has dedicated teachers and school staff who play a vital role in ensuring that students receive the quality education they need to become the leaders of the future.

###### 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.

###### **Teacher / Staff Appreciation Week (TSAW) was initiated by the Canadian Home and School Federation in 1988.**

###### **Looking for Ideas for TSAW?**

###### (Don’t forget the Principal, Vice Principal bus drivers, secretaries, student assistants, custodians and district staff).

###### Hang a “We Love Our Teachers/Staff” banner on the front of the school.

###### Place an apple with a note from the School Council in each mailbox or on each desk.

###### Breakfast (or lunch, or snacks…..food is always good!)

###### A draw for prizes donated by parents and local businesses

###### Engage students in showing appreciation

###### Notes of appreciation in the teachers’ mail slots

###### A basket of apples or cheese and fruit platters for the staff to enjoy

###### Purchase something for the staff room (new coffee maker, supplies, etc.)

###### A Wall of Appreciation: posters or a banner demonstrating appreciation

###### School Councils and Parents members share messages of appreciative announcements

###### Host a ‘Teacher and Staff Appreciation Tea/Lunch’

###### **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.

###### **Showing Appreciation Year Round**

###### 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 best 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.

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###### **Name Change for Newsletter**

###### The NLFSC Executive wants to rename their newsletter and are looking for ideas from our membership.

###### The “Cuffer” which is sent out five times a year, is an important part of communicating with our membership. It provides our membership with updates on changes taking place in education and offers tips and advice on the role of a council. We also include information from many of our education partners.

###### We invite individual members and /or councils to submit a new name for our newsletter - and if possible-provide rationale for the new title.

###### The council/person with the best name for the newsletter will be featured in an upcoming Cuffer. The Deadline to Submit is Feb 20th.

###### **Membership Renewal**

###### Thank you to the school councils that have renewed their membership for the 2019-20 school year! 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)**

**Are you new to school council?**

Welcome and thank you for getting involved in your education community in this way. We hope you enjoy your term on school council.

Be sure to locate a copy of the School Council Handbook, or download it at:

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

###### **2018-19 School Council Person of the Year Award**

###### NLFSC is currently accepting nominations for the 2018-19, School Council Person of the Year Award.

###### **Purpose**

###### The purpose of the Award is to publicly recognize significant and outstanding achievements of School Council Members.

###### **Candidates**

###### Candidates for the award may be any school council member (i.e. parents, teachers, students, community reps, principals).

###### Candidates who contribute by actions and efforts to the development of a positive learning environment may be nominated by their colleagues, students, or parents.

###### **Criteria**

###### • Performance of volunteer duties at a high level at all times.

###### • A significant school and/or system-related achievement.

###### • A specific innovation or achievement of

###### significant value or importance to the school community, or a unique circumstance considered worthy of recognition by the NLFSC Board.

###### • A member of a School Council in good standing with the NLFSC.

###### **Nomination Procedure**

###### Nominations will be submitted on the Award nomination form by: Individual School Council members, Students, Parents, or School Council as a whole.

###### Nominations must include:

###### The name of the candidate(s) and School Council location.

###### Names of at least two nominators and their positions; or the School Council chair on behalf of the entire School Council.

###### Signature of the administrator or School Council Chair along with a short rationale for the nomination.

###### The provision of supporting documentation (letters of support, etc.) is important because it provides background information for members of the selection committee.

###### **Nomination Form attached**

###### **The deadline to submit is Jan 30, 2020**

###### **Media Interviews and Representation**

###### During November the NLFSC Executive has sent out several Press Releases and responded to the media requests for information and comment.

###### Some of the issues include:

###### Bullying and behavioral issues in school

###### Class Size

###### Elimination of final exams for Jr. High Students

###### Junior Kindergarten

###### Atlantic Caucus Meeting

###### Mental Health and Addictions

###### Student Assistance time

###### Need for increase to Administrative Time School

###### Review Process/ Reconfiguration

###### **Meeting with NLTA**

###### NLFSC met with Steve Brooks, Executive Director, and Dean Ingram, President of the NL Teachers’ Association.

###### NLFSC is keenly interested in the NLTA’s Class Size Matters campaign and recognize it mirrors many of the issues NLFSC has been bringing forth to government on behalf of our membership. We believe our two groups working together can intensify the awareness of many common concerns in education.

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###### **Empowering School Councils**

###### NLFSC has had numerous conversations with Administrators and School Councils looking for clarification on the structure of councils, and their roles and responsibilities. **We are very concerned about the mixed messages/ restrictions being relayed to our membership on what they can and cannot do.** NLFSC feels this is an issue we must address in the coming months.

School Councils are a legislated, constituted structure that can help highlight and draw attention to many issues in education. The provincial Gov. introduced school councils in the 1997 schools act.

There was a strong recognition at that time that the educating of children is a team effort with each member of the team having a role to play. Unfortunately, over the years little training has been provided for School Councils in NL and they have basically been left to evolve on their own. In the coming months NLFSC plans to instigate dialogue, about the purpose of a school council, and help school councils better understand their roles, potential, and advocacy power.

School Councils are one of the main lines of communication between the school, parents and the community at large and can contribute significantly to the improvement of student achievement and performance. Other than a school staff, they are closest to the children in a particular school and best understands the needs of those children. NLFSC wants to continue to improve partnerships and involve the parental community to ensure that a strong parent voice is heard and expressed at all levels. NLFSC believes school councils and parents are vital partners in education and, when given the necessary guidance and support, can bring a valuable perspective to the establishment and review of provincial goals for education, and the success of all students.

**Functioning Role of a School Council**

School councils provide a formal structure through which all partners can come together to discuss the education of the children with the primary goal of enhancing the quality of

teaching and learning, resulting in improved

student achievement.

As stipulated in the Schools Act, 1997 Section 26(2), the functions of a school council are to:

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; and**, advise the board on matters of concern to the school and the community.**

School councils and council members represent the educational interests of all students

collectively.

Council members also represent the views of their respective groups in that parent

representatives speak for the parents of children in the school, teacher representatives speak for the teachers of the school, student

representatives speak for the students of the school, and community representatives speak for the community.

In order to effectively represent a group,

council members should regularly seek

feedback from their respective groups on the teaching and learning environment of the school and issues, which impact this environment.

**It is the responsibility of council**

**members to bring these issues forward on behalf of their groups and to**

**communicate any decisions/actions back to the groups they represent.**

###### **Highlights from the 2019 Atlantic Caucus Meeting**

###### The 2019 Atlantic Caucus Meeting of the School Council Federation and Home and School Associations took place on Saturday, November 16th in St. John’s, NL. Representatives from the Home & School Federations in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and the Federation of School Councils in Newfoundland Labrador met to discuss priority issues in education and share ideas.



Members of the Atlantic Caucus Home and School/ School Councils Associations expressed unified concerns about the increase of vaping among students, and are calling on all

levels of government to take urgent action to address the issue. The group is asking for stricter legislation to limit youth access to these

products through a combination of regulation and or taxation.



Dean Ingram, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association, talks about the importance of class size and the impact it has on student achievement. There is clear research that shows smaller class sizes have a positive impact on learning and achievement.



Ken Hopkins, Executive Director for the Newfoundland and Labrador School Lunch Association, discussed goals, outcomes, and operations of the School Lunch Program. The School Lunch Association is a registered charity whose mission is to operate a non-stigmatizing program that provides a hot, nutritious lunch for school children, regardless of a families’ financial situation. The program serves over 6,300 meals each day, in 36 schools across Newfoundland. Last year the program served over one million meals to children. and discuss the best practices for now and the future.”



Representatives at the Atlantic Caucus Meeting say quicker assessment and better access to mental health services, for students throughout Atlantic Canada, is needed. The Atlantic Caucus is also calling for expanded supports for mental health services in all schools.



Diane Power, President of the Nova Scotia Home and School Association talks about the issues and changes in education in Nova Scotia.

During the meeting each provincial representative presented a written report on current provincial education initiatives, on-going concerns and priorities.



The Atlantic Caucus Meeting of Home and School/School Council Federations aims to encourage discussion on common issues in public education in Atlantic Canada, and bring added value to provincial associations. Participants at the meeting were:

Front row (left to right) Don Coombs, President of the NL Federation of School Councils (NLFSC) ; Heather Mullen, Vice President, PEI Home and School; Deborah Couzens, Secretary, Nova Scotia Home and School; Denise Pike, Executive Director NL Federation of School Councils; Cory Thomas, President, PEI Home and School; Diane Power, President, Nova Scotia Home and School;

Shirley Smedley Jay, Executive Director, PEI Home and School; Cynthia Richards, President, New Brunswick Home and School;

**Back from left:** Craig Tavenor, Vice President, NLFSC; Lori Barry, Secretary, NLFSC; Andrea Richard, Director, PEI Home and School; Dean Ingram, President, NL Teachers’ Association; David Hillier, Vice President, NLFSC;

***“There are educational items of mutual interest to parents and educators in Atlantic Canada.***

***“The Home and School/School***

***Council Caucus meeting held in St. John's provided an opportunity for delegates to meet, discuss and learn about issues that impact student learning, health and well-being in our respective provinces.  Working with our neighbours to come up with solutions for issues is essential.’***

***--- Cory Thomas*, *PEI Home and School President,***

**NLESD School Review Process**

NLFSC encourages school councils and parents to make note of the school review process being carried out by the NL English School District and how it will impact your school and child.

Newfoundland and Labrador English School Board regularly undertakes school system

reviews within the province. The need for a

review is based on a variety of factors such as (but not limited to) new school construction, student population growth or decline, or a

desire to ensure the best possible programming and service delivery for students in a given

region.

Typically, the process includes consultation with school councils, administrators and the school communities and is guided by the District's [School Review Policy (GOV-104)](https://www.nlesd.ca/about/policies.jsp#GOV-104).

Information about the process for each individual school system can be found at the links below.

The resources listed are to provide school community members with a complete package of information available through the school review process. Routinely during the consultation process, the District will ask school community members to review the latest information provided on the site to assist them in submitting feedback to the Board of Trustees.



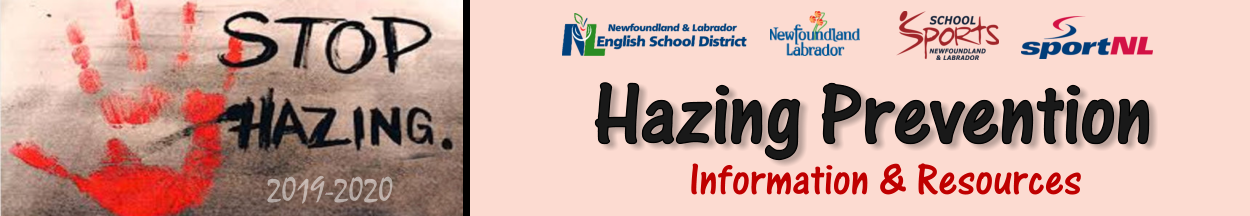
**2019-2020 School System Reviews**

* [Waterford Valley High School Feeder Systems](https://www.nlesd.ca/schools/schoolreview/2020/system-wvh.jsp)
* Holy Trinity High School System
* [Marystown Central High School System](https://www.nlesd.ca/schools/schoolreview/2020/system-mch.jsp)
* [Phoenix Academy and Gill Memorial Academy School Systems](https://www.nlesd.ca/schools/schoolreview/2020/system-pa.jsp)
* [Dorset Collegiate School System Review](https://www.nlesd.ca/schools/schoolreview/2020/system-dc.jsp)

More information on the school review process can be found on the NLESD website.

**Stop Hazing!**

*(Copied from the English School District Website)*



Hazing activities continue to be an issue in some of the province's schools and throughout Canada - and there appears to be an escalation in terms of the violent nature of the incidents. Such incidents cross the line in terms of what is socially acceptable, and are often not reported until after the fact.

Although effective policy on hazing is important (See [PROG-324 - School Athletics Policy](https://www.nlesd.ca/about/policies.jsp#PROG-324)), anti-hazing education is critical to establishing that hazing will not be tolerated in our school communities.

The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District believes that hazing prevention education is necessary for students, staff, coaches, volunteers and community members. As such, the District has partnered with School Sports Newfoundland and Labrador, Sport Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Provincial Government (Department of Children, Seniors, and Social Development) to develop a Hazing Prevention Program for Grades 7-12 students, along with staff, coaches and community volunteers.

Topics include: Hazing versus Bullying, Hazing Statistics, Criminal Code, Consequences of Hazing, Severity of Hazing, and The Step Up Model. This education session integrates technology and Google apps for Education and is interactive, providing online registration, quizzes, videos and resources for students, staff, coaches and volunteers.

Using a Train the Trainer Model, the District is offering the sessions for a lead teacher(s) in all schools with a 7-12 configuration, anticipating that each school will have a lead teacher trained by the end of the 2019-20 school year.

This will allow for full implementation in all of our provinces schools in 2020-21.

**Hazing Resources**  
  
The following resources are among the trusted sources used to inform the program and can be used to help inform discussions at home, recreational leagues or clubs to further reinforce these messages with students.

* [**Hazing Information & Myth Busting**](https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/student-groups/hazing)  
  A Canadian resource from the University of Alberta (2019) which aims to provide students, staff and parents with the facts about hazing activities, while also taking the opportunity to dispel some of the myths associated with hazing.
* [**HAZINGPREVENTION.org**](https://hazingprevention.org/)  
  A North American resource organization with the goal of empowering people to prevent hazing. Their focus is to educate, advocate and engage the community in hazing prevention.
* [**Stophazing.org**](https://www.stophazing.org/)  
  A North American resource primarily focused on university level sport. Stophazing.org has a mission to promote safe school, campus and organizational climates through research, information sharing and the development of data-driven strategies for hazing prevention.
* [**End Hazing**](http://www.endhazing.ca/index.html)  
  A resource developed by a practitioner in hazing prevention in Canada and the United States, Bruce Wood. The site offers resources and services to help groups and organizations address issues of hazing or implement strong prevention programs.
* [**When Hazing Becomes Criminal**](https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1376186435889)  
  This media archive provides information for families on hazing culture. Following the allegations of hazing activities at St. Michael's College School in Toronto came to light in 2018, hazing culture expert Jay Johnson spoke with CBC News Network about what he calls a pervasive issue, and how the act of hazing often crosses boundaries into criminal charges.

**Program Partners**  
  
The English District recognizes that partnerships are integral to ensuring our students are empowered with information from trusted sources to help them make informed, appropriate decisions about their health and safety. As all our organizations have a vested interest in making sure our young people know what is expected of them when engaging in organized sport, the following groups joined with the District to inform this program.

**Annual Poster Contest**



For all the budding K-12 artists in your life! Full details can be found at:

[https://heritagefoundation.ca/programs/poster-contest/](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fheritagefoundation.ca%2Fprograms%2Fposter-contest%2F%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR1tnD30UnSSeteCweMEzfvhxC5cWK8A-8M6eKq67KE1hPDgcSogKaCNLPE&h=AT2jg_cxA6iMMygIcfc4XUCPcNyJmZ2H3IokkLJ9LglvoP6A3IUl4Vfuac1-yr9TuTh1mlUeB84yQ2jFglDaHRGHhq_y-VLTHskgJQRW6uVGxKbv1BeR-2fTrot6fjmZdfDX99VLVibzwo6yIRpbKKuOPQ)



**Vaping Information**

To raise awareness among junior and senior high school students about the dangers of

e-cigarettes and vaping, ACT in partnership with the NL English School District has developed vaping awareness resources for schools.

Using a comprehensive school health approach the campaign targets youth, educators and parents.  ACT has integrated components of Health Canada’s [*Consider the Consequences of Vaping*](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/smoking-tobacco/vaping.html?utm_source=canada-ca-vaping-en&utm_medium=vurl&utm_campaign=vurl)youth vaping prevention campaign into the provincial campaign.

* [Letter to Teachers](https://actnl.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/teacher-letter-final.docx)
* [FAQ About Vaping](https://actnl.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/faqdocfinalaug15.pdf)
* [Comprehensive School Health Poster](https://actnl.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/cshpostervapingfinalaug15.pdf)
* [Presentation for K-12 Students](https://actnl.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/e-cigarettes-and-youth-vaping-with-discliamer-final.pptx)
* [Vaping Presentation Lesson Plan](https://actnl.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/school-vaping-awareness-activity-lesson-plan-final.docx)

E-Cigarettes

Electronic Cigarettes are products in the market that have been increasing in popularity. In 2016 the Newfoundland and Labrador Government introduced and passed amendments to the [Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act](http://assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statutes/t04-1.htm) which regulated e-cigarettes in the same way that “regular” cigarettes are sold in the province. E-cigarettes are not to be used in enclosed public spaces, sold to anyone under the age of 19, and starting in 2017, are to be kept in hidden displays in retail establishments. In addition, the Government of Canada has introduced [Bill S-5](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/programs/consultation-regulation-vaping-products/s5-overview-regulate-vaping-products.html) which allows adults, in particular adult smokers, to legally access vaping products as a less harmful alternative to tobacco.

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**Christmas Greetings from the NLFSC Executive**

*When we remember a special Christmas, it is not the presents that made it special, but the laughter, the feeling of love, and the togetherness of friends and family that made that Christmas special.*

On behalf of the NLFSC Executive

(Don, Dave, Craig, Lori, Ruby, Denise and Ashley)

**Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year!**

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

Annual membership dues are based on school enrollment. Individual subscriptions are available at $15 per year.

The views expressed or implied in this

publication are not necessarily official positions of the Federation.

The mention of any program, organization,

resource, product, person, place, or school does not constitute an endorsement by NLFSC.

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