

**About the Newfoundland & Labrador Federation of School Councils**

The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils (NLFSC) is the provincial umbrella group for parents, teachers, high school students (where applicable), and community supporters who are committed to enhancing the quality of school programs and improving the levels of student achievement in our schools. The Federation provides School Councils and parent groups with a voice on educational issues and encourages parental involvement at all levels of education.

NLFSC works to strengthen communication between parents, school councils, government and the school district. NLFSC is often consulted on issues and proposed changes, and is a member of numerous provincial education committees. In addition, we maintain an on-going liaison with provincial partner groups to foster mutual trust, cooperation and support.

NLFSC is a non-profit organization governed by an elected volunteer Board of Directors. Membership consists of school-based parent groups, who are represented through School Councils, and Home and School Associations. Membership is optional and renewed annually.

Education gives every child an opportunity to succeed and is society’s greatest equalizer. One of the NLFSC’s primary goals is to engage parents as much as possible in their children’s learning and as such, we encourage all school councils to make this a priority as well. Learning begins at home and parents are their child’s first teacher. NLFSC and School councils can play a major role in helping this continue as children progress at every grade level.

The founding meeting of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Home & School and Parent-Teacher Associations was held in Gander on Saturday, October 20, 1979. The Newfoundland and Labrador Home and School Federation was incorporated on July 5, 1994, under the Corporations Act, Revised Statutes of Newfoundland, 1990, Chapter C-36, Section 420.

On August 30, 1999, the Articles of Incorporation were amended and the name was changed to “The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils, Inc.”

**Objectives of NLFSC**

The Federation is established for the following purposes and shall restrict itself to such activities as in its opinion, directly or indirectly, promote these objectives:

1. To provide a forum through which school councils, parent associations and other school- based groups can communicate with each other in the pursuit of excellence in our schools.

2. To provide assistance on request to any Member Association 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;
* advise its school board on matters of concern to the school and the community;
* develop and promote a plan for improving teaching and learning in the school;
* carry out any other duties of the Member Association that may be required or permitted by provincial legislation and regulations.

3. To continue as a provincial voice for parents and to advocate the importance of effective parental participation in school councils.

4. To foster cooperation between parents, teachers and community volunteers in teaching and learning in our schools both during and outside school hours.

5. To advise governments, school boards and other bodies on matters relating to the pursuit of excellence in our schools.

6. To liaise and cooperate with other like-minded organizations, both within the province and elsewhere, in the pursuit of common educational objectives.

7. To foster the development of policies, practices and activities that will enhance the quality of school programs, the learning environment and the level of student achievement in our schools, including:

* to monitor the care, protection and training of our children that the educational system provides;
* to promote the concept that all responsible educators protect a child’s self-esteem and his/her eagerness and willingness to learn;
* to develop strategies for parental and community volunteers to help children who need one on one tutoring and to assist teachers generally;
* to advocate for the provision of a safe, friendly and clean environment to further facilitate learning in our children;
* to foster an educational environment in our schools that will facilitate learning by students of all ages;
* to foster high ideals of citizenship and to promote, through educational means, international good will and peace;
* to encourage the development and implementation of programs that will facilitate the transition from school to work;
* to encourage community use of school facilities and the identification of schools with the communities they serve.

**As a major stakeholder in education, NLFSC continues to express its point of view and work to influence policy or program changes before final decisions are made.**

NLFSC receives an annual operating grant of $22,200 from the Department of Education. Our part-time Executive Director maintains our office.

NLFSC averages between 150 – 200 phone calls per year from parents, councils, various government departments and agencies. The media, both provincially and nationally, contacts us almost weekly for our input on educational issues and countless topics relating to the social, emotional and academic needs of students. Our opinion is also greatly valued by other numerous education stakeholders such as the NLTA and Memorial University and English School District.

Other Partners:

(Duke of Edinburgh, School Milk Foundation, Kids Eat Smart Foundation, CONA, NL Association of Social Workers, Association of Psychology, Retired Teachers Association, Association for Community Living, Canadian Mental Health, Learning Disabilities, Canadian Cancer Association, Community Food Sharing Association, School Lunch Association, NL Division of the Canadian Mental Health/Association)

Many of our partners also use NLFSC’s resolutions, views and numerous media quotes to strengthen and support their own surveys, reports and requests for more resources.

One of the key instruments of communication for NLFSC is the membership listserv, which facilitates quicker information exchange. The listserv is used on a weekly basis, to inform our membership of any changes relative to our schools. It is also a great medium to gather immediate feedback on issues of concern and to share current information.

NLFSC also has a Facebook, Twitter account and website.

Our Mission Statement, Constitution and Policy Document can be found on our website: www.schoolcouncils.nl.ca

**How We Can Help**

Recognized as the advocacy voice in public education, NLFSC presents the School Council perspective to government and education organizations in NL.

NLFSC is a strong advocate for quality education and is increasingly being recognized as a crucial component of a strong and vital education system. We are united in our goal to promote quality education as we work to ensure that funding for education resources, both human and physical, is available to our schools.

NLFSC provides parents and school councils with a voice on educational issues and encourages parents and guardians to become active participants in their children’s education. Parental involvement in the school community provides school councils an opportunity to understand relevant issues and to provide input and feedback to decision makers at all levels.

Membership provides the opportunity for individual school councils to raise their voices with others throughout the province on issues and concerns with our public education system. It is important to recognize that the success of all efforts in our organization must rely on the value that NLFSC can bring to its members

Membership ensures that your council’s voice is heard on issues affecting young people as well as providing opportunities for parent education, communication, and leadership development.

Regular communication and constructive dialogue with all stakeholders in education allow us to develop strong positive working relationships with all partner groups.

NLFSC is committed to enhancing the quality of school programs and improving the level of student achievement in the schools. In order to fulfil this role, we need to be fully aware of what the issues are affecting our students and their learning environment. We value and welcome your input on any issues impacting your schools.

NLFSC continues to work on educational issues as well as other issues related to school council organization and functioning. Throughout the coming year we follow up on the resolutions passed in previous Biennial Meetings.

NLFSC also deals with other education issues as they arise in our schools.

Joining NLFSC is a great way to become involved in your child’s education on the local and provincial levels.

There are many changes and challenges taking place in the school system and NLFSC is busy advocating on your behalf.

Your membership will help support our mission in striving for excellence in Education, for all children in Newfoundland and Labrador, and to represent your school council as part of the collective voice.

NLFSC believes it is critical for government to continue its prudent management of the province’s finances in order to ensure continued prosperity in the years ahead. We do believe, however, that a sound fiscal plan is a necessary, but not sufficient condition to ensure quality of life continues to improve. There are, of course, important programs and services that require investment –especially education. Some of our ongoing education advocacy initiatives include: teacher, administrative and guidance counselor allocations, supports for mental health and addictions, improved supports for Inclusive Education, class size, school construction and renovations and much more.

As an NLFSC member you will receive support and information through five issues of *The Cuffer* and the Listserv. If you have an education concern, call us at (709) 764-8993 or email us at nlfsci@gmail.com. You can also contact us at [**www.facebook.com/nlfederationofschoolcouncils**](http://www.facebook.com/nlfederationofschoolcouncils)**.**

**Website:** [**www.schoolcouncilsnl.ca**](http://www.schoolcouncilsnl.ca)

**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

**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.**