



December 2022

The Educator

A newspaper for School Councils in Newfoundland and Labrador



Message from the NLFSC President



Hello Members!

Hello Members!

With the Christmas season just around the corner I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a joyous holiday. It is

my hope that you will be surrounded by family and friends and that every event you attend and celebrate over the next few weeks be filled with laughter and great memories. I'd like to also wish you a happy and prosperous 2023. The beginning of a new year allows us to reflect on last year's achievements and to set new goals for the future. A new calendar year also brings the promise of change as we take stock and plan new courses of action to improve our lives.

I believe 2023 will provide the opportunity for school councils to have more authority and

greater input on the decisions impacting the education system and schools.

The establishment of a Provincial Advisory Council on Education (PACE) will ensure school councils and parents from around the province have a coordinated voice on education matters.

The mandate of the PACE is to provide parental and community advice to the minister based on the input from local school councils.

This includes regional and local matters, provincial programs, policies and all initiatives that affect education.

Regional meetings, with the chairs of school councils, will be held at least twice a year for the purpose of discussing school matters arising in the area. Hosting regional meetings is something NLFSC has always wanted, but could never achieve due to lack of funding. Matters raised by local school councils at these meetings, as well as advice, and recommendations, will be passed along to the Minister.

I am pleased with the plans and discussions with Minister Haggie and department of education officials thus far regarding PACE and giving councils more authority. 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

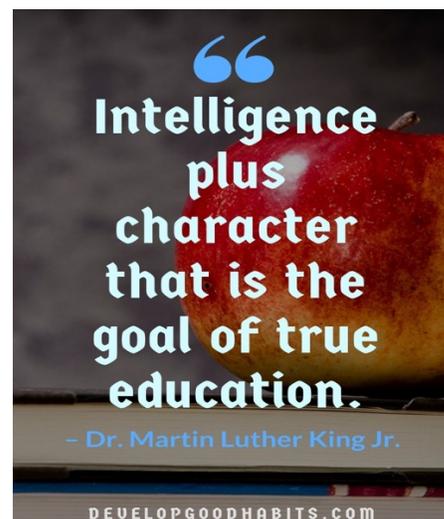
the success of all students.

As we move closer to Christmas, I want to express my appreciation to school councils for your support to NLFSC. Without your encouragement and goodwill, we would not have been able to achieve our advocacy objectives. I also extend gratitude for your unwavering devotion to schools and students. NLFSC commends your willingness to be part of a school council. You are part of a team working to enhance the education system. Your participation is making a difference.

May the Christmas lights bring positive energy and brightness to you and your family. Have a festive season. Take care, stay safe.

Don

Email: Don.Coombs@easternhealth



Changes to the School's Act Passed in the House of Assembly

The establishment of a Provincial Advisory Council (PACE) on Education.

PACE will be an advisory council to the Minister of Education. The goal is to ensure school councils and parents from around the province have a coordinated voice concerning educational issues.

Amendments to the governance structure of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District

Removing the requirement for an elected board at the district. An integration board of Deputy Ministers was put in place in 2022, and will remain until the integration is complete

Replacing the Director of Education for the district with a new Superintendent position.

Removing the requirement for a board to appoint an associate director and assistant directors.

Additional amendments to help modernize the Act, include updating the powers and duties of the board and the Francophone School District and incorporating gender neutral language.



Executive Meeting

The NLFSC Executive met on Saturday, November 19 to discuss education concerns and set goals for the 2022-23 school year. Some of the Agenda items included:

- Update on the Provincial Advisory Council on Education (PACE)
- School Council Handbook Update
- Food Security
- Substitute Teachers/Smartfind
- First Day Replacements for School Custodians

Executive Meeting Notes:

Smartfind

Smartfind- the automatic substitute teacher scheduling system - is causing headaches for schools.

Teachers and administrators say the system makes substitute teacher schedules less predictable, which reduces consistency for students.

Before Smartfind an Administrator would call a list of potential substitutes to fill in for a teacher who wasn't able to work. Sometimes the same substitute would teach the same class or subject until the regular classroom teacher returned.

This meant less disruption for students and instruction.

Smartfind does the work for the Administrators, and selects substitutes from a data system based on qualifications. Under the Smartfind system a different substitute could be called in for the same class every day.

Parents and councils are upset because of the inconsistency and say having a different substitute in class each day is interrupting their child's education. Teacher continuity means improved learning conditions.

Discussion Summary:

- Many Administrators like Smartfind because it means they don't have to spend hours calling for substitutes
- Smartfind creates a more equitable

opportunity for new teachers.

- Administrators not permitted to override Smartfind as they did in the past.
- Glitches with Smartfind include substitute teachers getting calls for absences that do not exist.
- Smartfind is being preprogrammed to allow "top-up" for onsite staff/substitutes.

Substitutes Teachers

- There are many teaching positions vacant throughout the province and NL is experiencing a substitute teacher shortage. This situation could exacerbate quickly if substitute teachers are not receiving calls, or the hours they need to qualify for Employment Insurance. There's a fear that many will leave the teaching profession,
- Government should consider implementing a seniority system for substitutes
- The number of days a retired teacher can teach needs to be decreased to where it was before the start of the pandemic. Many times, a retired teacher is being called to substitute before a new teacher. This doesn't seem fair.
- Substitute teachers should be invited to

Professional Development Days

- A comprehensive plan by Government is necessary to address recruitment and retention of teachers

First Day Replacements for School Custodians

Concerns expressed that many schools are without the services of a custodian/caretaker on the first day the school's permanent custodian is absent from work.

The current policy says replacements can only be called on the second day of absence. This means a school often has to go without the invaluable services of a custodian and the duties often fall to the administrator or teachers.

School custodians serve the important role of maintaining the cleanliness and safety of educational facilities—their work allows school children and faculty members alike to enjoy a sanitary and secure environment for learning activities.

If a school custodian is unable to work, a replacement should be called to assume the role on the very first day.



Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week

February 12 -18, 2023

Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week will take place from February 12 – 18 in Newfoundland and Labrador

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.

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
- 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 appreciation
- Host a 'Teacher and Staff Appreciation Tea/Lunch'



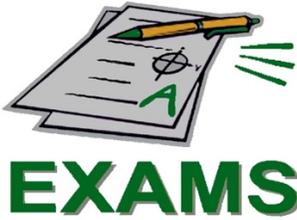
Kids Help Phone -NL

Kids Help Phone provides immediate help and hope that young people need and deserve 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Every day, Kids Help Phone counsellors answer calls and online questions from across Canada. No matter what the problem or concern our counsellors are there to provide immediate and caring support, information and referrals to the kids who reach out to us.

The mission is to improve the well-being of Canadian children and youth by providing them anonymous and confidential professional counselling, referrals, and information through technologically-based communications media. Last year, Kids Help Phone helped Canadian kids in need well over two million times through our phone and online counselling services.

Kids Help Phone's professional team provides support on a range of topics (grief, sadness, stress, anxiety, depression, suicide, etc.) and questions that children frequently ask. Toll-free phone: 1-800-668-6868



Public Exams Cancelled

The Department of Education is expanding its current review of assessment in the province's K-12 schools. As that review is ongoing, a decision has been made to cancel public exams for the 2022-23 school year.

The public exam system as it existed pre-COVID 19 may no longer meet the educational needs of students. The Department is expanding its review of the current public exam system, with a view to creating an innovative, up-to-date system of evaluating high school students.



Membership Renewal

Many thanks to the school councils who have renewed their 2022-23 membership with NLFSC.

If you have not renewed membership and would like a renewal form, please email us at nlfsci@gmail.com

Why should your school be a part of NLFSC?

Your continued membership will help support our mission to advocate for excellence in education for all students in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Your membership also allows NLFSC to continue to represent the concerns of School Councils.

The NL Federation of School Councils is the provincial umbrella group for School Councils, provides school councils and parent groups with a voice on education issues, and encourages positive parental involvement at all levels of education.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils also offers information, support, and guidance to parents and school councils to help them better understand the policies and procedures of their local schools, school districts, and the Department of Education.

Prime Ministers Award Selection Committee

NLFSC has been asked to evaluate the nominations for the 2023 Prime Ministers Award for Teaching Excellence selection process.

Atlantic Caucus

NLFSC maintains contact with the Provincial Home and School Associations/ School Council Federations from Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. The discussions allow the Atlantic Province associations to discuss commonalities in education, and share ideas.



The Eating Disorder Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador (EDFNL) is a leadership advocacy group dedicated to promoting research and providing public support services and information about matters related to eating disorders, including information on available treatment services for individuals and families who experience disordered eating.

Goals of EDFNL

- * To support persons who experience disordered eating by acting as a Resource Centre and a front door to a focused and coordinated treatment path.
- * To promote a healthy body image and self-esteem by way of public education and awareness programs
- * To advocate at various levels of government, health and community groups to ensure input and involvement in the decision-making processes that affect eating disorder policies and treatments
- * To educate individuals, professionals, government and families through the distribution of materials, an information line, regular awareness programs and a living website
- * To advocate for and support ongoing research and related medical services

Understanding Eating Disorders

Eating disorders are illnesses that cause a person to adopt harmful eating habits. They are most common among adolescent girls and boys, and frequently occur along with other psychiatric disorders such as depression and

anxiety disorders. The poor nutrition associated with eating disorders can harm organs in the body and, in severe cases, lead to death. The two most common types of eating disorder are anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa.

A lot of young people, many of whom are not overweight in the first place, want to be thinner. They often try to lose weight by dieting or skipping meals. For some, worries about weight becomes an obsession. This can turn into a serious eating disorder.

Someone with anorexia nervosa worries all the time about being fat (even if they are skinny) and eats very little. They lose a lot of weight and their periods stop. Someone with bulimia nervosa also worries a lot about weight. They alternate between eating next to nothing, and then having binges when they gorge themselves. They vomit or take laxatives to control their weight.

Both of these eating disorders are more common in girls, but do occur in boys.

What are the signs of anorexia or bulimia?

- * Weight loss or unusual weight changes
- * Periods being irregular or stopping
- * Missing meals, eating very little and avoiding 'fattening' foods
- * Avoiding eating in public, secret eating
- * Large amounts of food disappearing from the

cupboards

- * Believing they are fat when underweight
- * Exercising excessively
- * Becoming preoccupied with food, cooking for other people
- * Going to the bathroom or toilet immediately after meals
- * Using laxatives and vomiting to control weight.

It may be difficult for parents or teachers to tell the difference between ordinary teenage dieting and a more serious problem. If you are concerned about your child's weight and how they are eating, consult your family doctor.

What effects can eating disorders have?

- * Tiredness and difficulty with normal activities
- * Damage to health, including stunting of growth and damage to bones and internal organs
- * Loss of periods and risk of infertility
- * Anxiety, depression, obsessive behaviour or perfectionism
- * Poor concentration, missing school, college or work
- * Lack of confidence, withdrawal from friends
- * Dependency or over-involvement with parents, instead of developing independence.

It's important to remember that, if allowed to continue unchecked, both anorexia and bulimia can be life-threatening conditions. Over time,

they are harder to treat, and the effects become more serious.

Where can I get help?

If you think a young person may be developing an eating disorder, don't be afraid to ask them if they are worried about themselves. Some young people will not want you to interfere. These simple suggestions are useful to help young people to maintain a healthy weight and avoid eating disorders:

- * Eat regular meals – breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- * Try to eat a 'balanced' diet – one that contains all the types of food your body needs.
- * Include carbohydrate foods such as bread, rice, pasta or cereals with every meal.
- * Don't miss meals – long gaps encourage over-eating.
- * Avoid sugary or high-fat snacks (try eating a banana instead of a bar of chocolate).
- * Take regular exercise.
- * Try not to be influenced by other people skipping meals or commenting on weight.

When professional help is needed

When eating problems make family meals stressful, it is important to seek professional advice. Your general practitioner will be able to advise you about what specialist help is

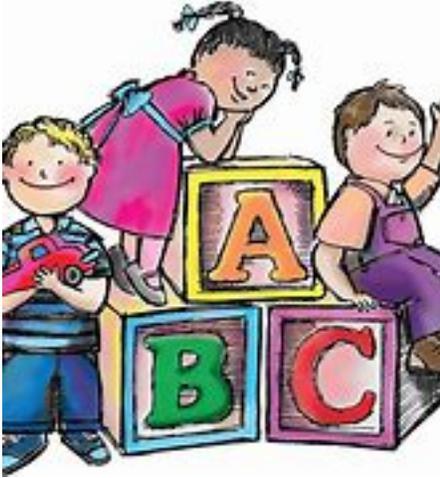
available locally and will be able to arrange a referral. Working with the family is an important part of treatment.

If the eating disorder causes physical ill health, it is essential to get medical help quickly. If the young person receives help from a specialist early on, admission to hospital is unlikely. If untreated, there is a risk of infertility, thin bones (osteoporosis), stunted growth and even death.

Some people are more at risk than others. Risk factors include being female, being previously overweight and lacking self-esteem. Sensitive or anxious individuals, who are having difficulty becoming independent are also more at risk. The families of young people with eating disorders often find change or conflict particularly difficult, and may be unusually close or over-protective.

More information and programs available to help people battling an eating disorder can be obtained by calling EDFNL at 709-722-0500, or by emailing: info@edfnl.ca





You can also call:

- Labrador Region - Tel: (709) 896-2431
- Western Region - Tel: (709) 637-4000
- Central Region (including Vista and Burin areas) - Tel: (709) 256-2547
- Avalon Region (Avalon West, Avalon East and St. John's Metro area) - Tel: (709) 758-2372

Kinderstart and Kindergarten Registration

Registration for Kinderstart 2023 and Kindergarten 2024 will begin May, 2023.

Online Registration for Kindergarten for September 2024 (Kinderstart for September 2023) for both the English and Early French Immersion programs will take place on:

- Monday, May 8 / Tuesday, May 9 for Central Western and Labrador regions.
- Wednesday, May 10 / Thursday, May 11 for Avalon Region (includes St. John's Metro).

If you have any questions regarding the KinderStart/Kindergarten program and registration process and details, please contact your zoned school administrator for assistance or email your questions to nlesdfeedback@nlesd.ca.

English School District Weather Protocol

The main goal of any closure or delay, be it for weather or a mechanical issue, is to ensure the safety of students. With respect to weather, the District recognizes that it cannot account for every conceivable circumstance and that families are in the best position to judge whether a student can travel safely to and from school and bus stops.

The Decision Makers

Authority to close schools and/or school zones due to weather is delegated to the authorized zone administrator - which is usually a principal or assistant principal. Where a school system (that is schools in close proximity) is impacted, the authorized zone administrator is advised to consult with the other school administrations. In

areas where District Offices are located (St. John's Metro, Gander, Corner Brook, & Happy Valley - Goose Bay), delays or closures are managed by District staff.

The Timeframe

Closure or delay decisions are generally announced between 6:30 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. Communication will be made through local media - generally radio - as well as through Status Central on the main page of the District's website (www.nlesd.ca). Many schools also use Synervoice technology and Twitter.

Notices of closure will normally indicate that there will be a further update later in the morning, generally around 10:30 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. Delays should be communicated for a specific number of hours - for example, one or two hours. If a morning delay is longer than one hour, scheduled Kinderstart sessions for that morning will be cancelled.

Typically, closures for the entire day are only announced in the circumstance of a major weather event.

Schools may not necessarily close early because the weather is deteriorating while school is in session. It may be prudent and safer for students to remain in school during the peak of a storm.

Weather criteria taken into consideration when deciding a delay or closure include: snowfall; wind; visibility, temperature; and, road conditions.

Authorized zone administrators are provided weather forecasts from a contracted weather service and they can also consult with their student transportation staff or contractor, local municipalities or the Department of Transportation and Works.

The weather policy provides wind chill temperature thresholds at which schools will close. These are:

Grade	Temperature
K - 3	-45°C
K - 7	-50°C
K - Level III	-55°C

Occasionally, as with anyone making decisions dependent upon weather and a forecast, things can change quickly and the District attempts to make prudent decisions in the best interest of student and staff safety.



Weather Safety Reminders

As we all know, Newfoundland and Labrador weather is highly unpredictable and can cause challenges for families and schools. Below are some safety reminders to help everyone be prepared for our weather. Parents and Guardians are in the best position to judge weather, road, and safety conditions for their children.

- All students should be appropriately dressed for the season, particularly winter weather and changing conditions.
- Families should have alternate/back-up arrangements in place should an issue occur with student transportation, such as a delay caused by poor weather or road conditions.
- Families are reminded that in most circumstances, Kindergarten students must have an adult present for after-school drop off by the bus.



Provincial Reading and Mathematics Assessments (PRMA)

A Provincial Reading and Mathematics Assessment (PRMA) for grades three, six and nine students began May 2022.

The Premier's Task Force on Improving Educational Outcomes, Now is the Time, identified a need for a new provincial assessment of curriculum outcomes in reading and mathematics curricula to better align with national and international assessments.

PRMA helps to inform policy development, and help educators recognize areas of strength as well as barriers that may exist to students reaching their full potential.

There is no student preparation required for PRMA. The assessment takes place each May and June, with reading and mathematics administered in alternating years, measuring student knowledge in mathematics or reading at a particular point in time.

PRMA data will be monitored and analyzed by the Department of Education and the school districts to identify where action is needed to improve student learning.

Teachers, administrators, school districts and the department use this data to develop strategies and initiatives to support and further enhance student learning.



**HAPPY NEW YEAR
2023!**

This Christmas may all your family members
and friends who need a miracle be blessed
May whoever is feeling unwell and weak be
given strength
May all with heavy burden have their load
lightened
May your Christmas be filled with happiness
and joy

The NLFSC Executive would like to take this
opportunity to extend good tidings to you and
your family as we celebrate this season of
giving.

On behalf of the NLFSC Executive
(Don, Craig, Dave, Lori, Ruby, and Denise)
**Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Happy
New Year!**

The Educator is a benefit of membership in the
Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of
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