



The Educator

Feb 2023

A Newspaper for School Councils in Newfoundland and Labrador



Message from the President

Hello Members! I hope you have a happy and healthy 2023. I also hope you are ready to continue to support your schools during the second half of the school year.

While we appear to be moving away from the pandemic, there is still much cause for concern. Before Christmas hundreds of students, teachers and other school staff in NL were sick and some classrooms were half empty for weeks. Although the situation

seems to have improved to some degree, Influenza A and other respiratory viruses are hitting children hard. I've heard from parents concerned for the health of their child, as well as the loss of instruction due to time missed from school. Parents and children have been through so much over the past 3 years particularly when it comes to following safety measures; however, it is still important to continue to practise good safety measures, especially frequent handwashing.

The past few years have also been extremely challenging and stressful on our teachers and school staff; therefore, it is extremely important we express our heartfelt gratitude

during this year's Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week.

From Feb. 12-18 please join NLFSC in thanking our teachers, administrators, secretaries, custodians, student assistants, bus drivers, and all other school staff for the care they give to our students on a daily basis.

Perpetually hard-working and often under-appreciated, teachers shape our future by molding our children's minds and hearts. Teaching is a tough job and that's why it's important to take the time to recognize and thank them. I am sure many of our members will be planning events and activities to celebrate the week, however showing appreciation doesn't have to be costly. Kind words and actions go a long way in making a teacher and school staff member feel valued. I urge school councils to inform parents about Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week well in advance - and encourage them to email and text messages of appreciation to teachers and staff. Thank-you messages can also be posted on a school's Facebook page.

An email, note, or message is a great gift because it shows that you have taken the time to think about them and write down

your thoughts. A face-to-face 'Thank you' will never be forgotten. Our teachers and school staff play a critical role in the lives of our children and deserve to know how much they are appreciated.

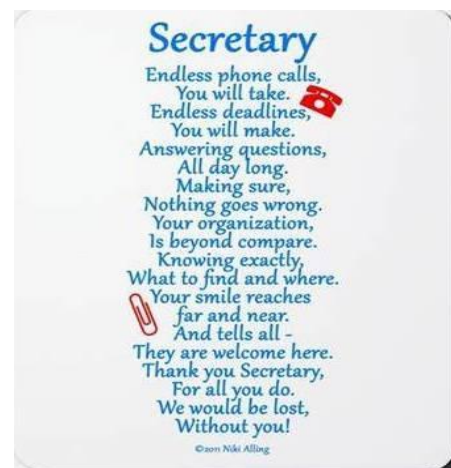
In closing I want to reiterate that NLFSC remains steadfast in our focus on our students as they continue their pursuit of academic achievements and educational excellence. The goal of student achievement continues to be the focus of our advocacy. Thank you for your continued support of these efforts. Together we can accomplish whatever it takes to make a difference in our children's lives.

Sincerely,

Don

don.coombs@easternhealth.ca

Thank-You School Secretaries



Thank You Bus Drivers



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.

Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week

February 12-18, 2023



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 a parent 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.

This year's annual National Teacher /Staff Appreciation Week (TSAW) takes place on February 12-18th.

From Feb. 12-18 be sure to tell teachers and our school staff how much you appreciate who they are and what they do.

Teachers and our school staff have some of the most difficult jobs. They are there for

Give Teachers/School Staff More Quality Time

One thing that parents probably don't think about is that the "quality time" teachers and school staff spend with our children is just as important to them as it is for parents. Quality time for teachers means teaching. Often teachers are asked to assume other duties that take time away from teaching our children. When you advocate for teachers, advocate for giving teachers the time they need to teach. Let your teachers and school staff know you value their profession and support their needs. Be their advocate and you will find them advocating for you and your children!



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.

Monday - 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 the 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.

For more ideas, please visit our Facebook page and take a look at the photos,

submitted by members, during past TSAW celebrations.



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.

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.

NLFSC invites councils and parents to take the opportunity to address the issue of bullying by wearing pink, planning an event or activity, or just having an intentional conversation.



2023 Pink Shirt Day

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

Bullying is often a problem in our schools, workplaces, homes, and over the Internet.

On February 22nd NLFSC encourages School Councils, across the province, to

Toronto District School Board offers high school students' virtual options for 2023-24 School Year

High school students in the Toronto District School Board will be able to choose to attend a virtual school in the 2023-24 school year. The option to partake in virtual learning is being described as a choice of learning models and not a pandemic response.

Regular programs and Intensive Support Programs (ISPs) will be available at virtual secondary school, depending on available space. A decision on whether to offer virtual learning for elementary students has not yet been made.

Ontario students dealt with the longest school closures in the country in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, with experts warning that disruption to in-person learning has caused some students to fall behind academically and has stunted their social development.

The Ontario provincial government mandated a virtual school option be offered by all boards up to the 2021-22 school year.

Recognizing Mental Health Problems in Children

Mental health problems are common in children and can interfere with their daily lives. It can be difficult to understand mental health disorders in children because normal childhood development is a process that involves change. Additionally, the symptoms of a disorder may differ depending on a child's age, and children may not be able to explain how they feel or why they are behaving a certain way. Mental health disorders in children are generally defined as delays or disruptions in developing age-appropriate thinking, behaviors, social skills or regulation of emotions. These problems are distressing to children and disrupt their ability to function well at home, in school or in other social situations.

Parents and other family members are usually the first to notice a change in a child's emotions or behavior, however identifying a mental illness in children can be hard for parents. As a result, many children who could benefit from treatment

Below are some of the warning signs which indicate a child's need for professional help:

- Persistent sadness lasting two weeks or longer.
- Withdrawing from or avoiding social interactions.
- Actual or discussed self-harm.
- Talking about death or suicide.
- Outbursts or extreme irritability.
- Potentially harmful out-of-control behavior.
- Drastic changes in mood, behavior, or personality.
- Changes in eating habits.
- Sudden, unexplained weight loss.
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Frequent headaches or stomach-aches.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Changes in academic performance.
- Avoiding or missing school.

A child may only show some of these symptoms. If you're concerned about your child's mental health, consult your child's health care provider. Describe the behaviors that concern you. Talk to your child's teacher, close friends, relatives or other caregivers to see if they've noticed changes in your child's behavior. Share this information with your child's health care provider.

Online Supports:

Call 709-777-3200 or Toll Free 1-888-737-4668

Bridge the gapp

Bridge the gapp is a free online resource for youth and adults. It connects you to self-help information and local support through a searchable service directory. You can also access a variety of tools to support wellness. For more information please visit:

www.bridgethegapp.ca

I CAN (Conquer Anxiety and Nervousness) Adult program

The I CAN program supports young adults (18-30 years) in learning life skills to overcome anxiety and cope with major life stressors. The program offers distance telephone and online coaching, and is free to residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The I CAN program is now open for registration. People can sign up by calling Strongest Families Institute directly at: 1-866-470-7111

The Crisis Text Line: Powered by Kids Help Phone, individuals can text 'Talk' to 686868, to speak to a trained crisis responder.

Mental Health Crisis Line

Provincial telephone service for individuals in Newfoundland and Labrador needing immediate help or support.

Available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

The Breathing Room Project

An online program developed by the Mental Health Commission of Canada for youth aged 13 – 24. The program consists of 8 modules to help individuals learn how to manage stress, anxiety, and depression.

Available online and to purchase through the Google Play Store and the App Store.

Visit: [Breathing Room Project Website](#).

Canadian Mental Health Association, NL

CMHA-NL provides services and supports for individuals and families to strengthen mental wellness and support recovery from mental illness. [Visit the CMHA-NL Website](#).

Mental Health Programs

Programs offered by the Department of Health and Community Services,

Government of Newfoundland Labrador.

[Visit the NL Gov't Website](#).

Strongest Families Institute

A non-profit organization which offers programs and support to families seeking help with children's mental wellness.

Programs are designed to support children aged 3 – 17. For more information, visit their webpage.

So far this year NLFSC has received 49 calls from parents regarding mental health issues in children



2023 Freedom to Read Week

Freedom to Read Week (February 19th-25th) is an annual event that encourages Canadians to think about and reaffirm their commitment to intellectual freedom, which is guaranteed under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The 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>

NLFSC 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.

National Nutrition Month

March is Nutrition Month across Canada. A time for Canadians to focus on the importance of making informed food choices, developing sound eating and physical activity habits.

Dietitians work across all areas of food and nutrition, on the front line and in leadership roles to address the nutritional needs and challenges of the many varied and unique communities they serve.

During this year's event, dietitians will be planning events and showing Canadians

how to unlock the potential of food: Find dietitians.

Dietitians will be encouraged to plan events and communications which address the informational needs of the various patients, clients and communities they serve and showcase how finding a dietitian can help Canadians unlock the potential of food.



February is Heart Month in Canada, a time to bring attention to the importance of cardiovascular health, and what we can do to reduce our risk of cardiovascular disease.

Heart disease affects approximately 2.4 million Canadian adults, and is the second leading cause of death in Canada. We can all reduce our risk of heart disease by making healthy lifestyle choices, including quitting smoking, eating a healthy and balanced diet, getting enough sleep, exercising regularly, and monitoring blood pressure and cholesterol levels.



Newfoundland and Labrador
Federation of School Councils

National Flag of Canada Day, commonly shortened to Flag Day, is observed annually on February 15th to commemorate the inauguration of the flag of Canada.

At the stroke of noon on February 15th 1965, Canada's red and white maple leaf flag was raised for the very first time on Parliament Hill. On the same day in 1996, National Flag of Canada Day was declared.

The Educator 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.

Editor: Denise Pike, Proof Reader: Lori Barry
Email: nlfsci@gmail.com

