



The Educator

A newspaper for School Councils in Newfoundland and Labrador

Message from the NLFSC President



Hello Councils.

This time of year serves as a reminder that Spring is here and we are heading into the last few months of the school year.

It is easy to assume things will wind down as it gets closer to the end of the school year, but that's actually far from the truth. For most schools, the months of May and June are

jam-packed with activities that include exams, reports, field trips, dances, sports, class projects, celebrations—and for older students, graduation. Multiple events and activities in rapid succession can eventually overwhelm and stress students, teachers, and parents.

Many teachers and parents are experts at change and dealing with anything that comes their way. In saying that, managing a family, work, and school can take a toll both mentally and physically.

Strong stress management and coping skills go a long way in helping to keep heads above water this time of year, and being positive and supportive of one another is equally effective.

As we approach the rigorous pace associated with the end of the school year, I encourage you

to continue to focus on all the successes experienced at your school this past year.

In doing so, don't forget to praise the work of teachers and other school staff and verbalise your support. At this time of the year many teachers are feeling overwhelmed, frustrated and completely burned out. This is the time they start putting additional and unfair pressure on themselves.

Teacher burnout is an extreme form of chronic stress that can affect any teacher, regardless of how experienced or passionate they are about their jobs.

Remind teachers about the meaningful impact they've had on your child and students since the beginning of the school year. Express your appreciation for the difference they have made in your child's life, academically and personally. Tell them how much your child has learned and grown as a student and highlight all the wonderful things that took place in their class during the year.

After all we are all on the same team and playing for the same side, with our students' success as our main goal.

Sincerely,

Don

Email: Don.Coombs@easternhealth.ca

Representation

Since our last newsletter, NLFSC President Don Coombs has met with Greg O'Leary, Deputy Minister of Education on two occasions. He also maintains contact with the English School District and NLTA.

NLFSC continues to be vigilant in our attempts to keep issues that are crucial to education at the top of every discussion such as class size, administrator workload, student assistant time, teacher recruitment, school absenteeism, and behavioral issues. We also receive many calls and emails from administrators and school council representatives regarding the school council role and function.

NLFSC has also participated in several online surveys, pertaining to education and students, and continues to share information and network with Home and School Associations from Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. NLFSC received an invitation to attend an Annual General Meeting in PEI.

NLFSC is also collaborating with several school councils in Saskatoon on a project pertaining to Student Rights and Appeals.



Teacher Abuse on Social Media/Private Facebook Groups

Many schools across NL have a private “parent group” on Facebook that is managed by parents. In most cases these groups are used to ask questions, share information and are a great resource when you are looking for a copy of this week’s spelling list, or have forgotten the date of the annual Christmas Concert.

For the most part these groups contain helpful information and the usual banter about school activities, assignments, and changes to cafeteria services. Unfortunately, not all are worthwhile and some are causing more harm than good.

Over the past 3 years NLFSC has seen more and more of these groups being used as forums to disparage, wrongly accuse, and even slander teachers, administrators and other school staff. When parents criticize and rant online about their child’s teacher/teachers it can quickly spiral, especially when there’s no opportunity given for a teacher or administrator to offer clarification. In many incidents, just snippets of information are given about things that happened and imaginations are left to fill in the blanks.

Most of the time, negative incidents shared on social media are misunderstandings and can be easily cleared up. But even if a comment is justified, social media is one-sided and gives no opportunity for resolution.

When a parent/parents post aggressive and defamatory remarks on social media or in a group it is often taken as factual, whether it’s true or not, and it can easily damage an educator’s professional reputation. I have spoken with many teachers and Administrators who have been on the receiving end of some of these nasty FB posts and they feel helpless, defeated and heartbroken. They also feel bullied because they know they cannot retaliate in the way they’ve been presented on social media. Please remember when educators are bashed online, it often negatively impacts student behaviour and the opinion they have about their teacher. The nasty comments written by some parents are often spoken out loud at home and repeated by children to their classmates.

And while the comments are being posted in a PRIVATE group, you can be sure and certain the hurtful comments and allegations always go back to the teacher they are being made against. In many cases the comments are also copied and shared with other people and groups, including NLFSC.

For the most part parents and school council members are very supportive of their teachers and schools, however those who aren’t have a huge negative impact on the morale of teachers. When teachers are unfairly disrespected online it makes it hard for them to continue to be motivated to go above and beyond (as most do) in teaching.

The issue of being bashed online causes many teachers to feel as if they cannot do anything

right. It causes them to rethink their career and consider moving to another profession.

So, the next time you're tempted to make a private issue public by going on a Facebook or Twitter tirade about your child's teacher, keep this in mind: most teachers aren't saints, but most kids aren't either. You should also be aware that teachers also have rights and are able to take legal action for potentially libelous comments on social media.

The reality is, none of us are perfect. We all make mistakes and should be held accountable, but social media is rarely the right place for that to occur.

If you have an issue or concern regarding your child or school, PLEASE contact the school administrator or classroom teacher before making a rant on facebook, privately or publicly. Give the teacher an opportunity to address the concerns, offer an explanation or even admit a mistake. Teachers aren't perfect and sometimes all it takes to resolve an issue is a conversation.



2023 National Volunteer Week

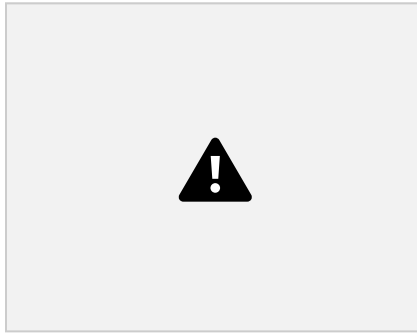
This year's National Volunteer Week (April 16 – 22) provides the opportunity for everyone to salute the invaluable work and inspiring acts of kindness shown by thousands of people across NL.

The week allows NLFSC to reflect on the efforts given by school councils throughout this province who are committed to helping students, and supporting schools.

The global pandemic has changed the way education is delivered and the way that schools operate. Never before has the role of a school council been as important as it is now. Many of you have shown great leadership in advocating on behalf of your school and communities. Your commitment to supporting your children and schools has been reaffirming, constructive and exceptionally encouraging. Thank you for your dedication. Please continue to be the bridge and information highway for your school community.

National Volunteer Week

April 16 - 22, 2023



Let's celebrate Canada's volunteers. The empathy, compassion and generosity of volunteers creates connected communities and builds a stronger Canada.

The National Volunteer Week theme for 2023 is Volunteering Weaves Us Together. This reveals the importance of volunteering to the strength and vibrancy of our communities through the interconnected actions we take to support one another. These diverse forms of sharing our time, talent and energy strengthen the fabric of our community.

Through volunteering we experience our interconnectedness, making our lives more meaningful. Getting involved in various ways, we find friendship, develop trust, and link our relationships. Threading these connections, we come to belong as we contribute towards the same goals.

Like each individual thread makes weaving stronger, every volunteer's experience, perspective, and abilities add to our collective resilience. Woven together from coast to coast to coast, volunteering reinforces our ability to grow, thrive, and create change within our community, province, and country.

Knowing our volunteer contributions are valued and meaningful creates a greater sense of purpose and dedication. From helping build a home, cleaning up a park, or coaching a sports team to cooking for an ill friend, checking in on a neighbour, or helping a stranger cross the street, each action we take impacts our community's overall wellness, now and for future generations.

During National Volunteer Week 2023, we celebrate our collective impact: through our kindness, generosity and commitment to volunteering, we weave our lives together.

Student Bursaries

Government bursaries are available to students when high school programming is not available in their home community.

\$500.00 a month is provided to assist the student with board and lodging in another community where high school programming is available. Application forms can be obtained by contacting the administrator of the school a child will attend.

The completed application form must be submitted to the Department of Education for approval.



Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Teaching – Deadline April 30, 2023

Each year, Canada's History Society recognizes 6 teachers for innovative approaches to teaching Canadian history. The 2022 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 and the History Makers celebration dinner (subject to public health regulations)

If you or a teacher you know makes history come to life in the classroom, submit a nomination or apply online today! The CanadasHistory.ca/GGAward

If you have any questions about the award or application, please contact Brooke Campbell at bcampbell@canadashistory.ca.

2024 Kindergarten Registration

Online Registration for Kindergarten for September 2024 will begin in May, 2023 for both the English and Early French Immersion programs on the dates provided below:

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)**.

Early French Immersion

French Immersion is a program designed for non-francophone children. Parents/guardians interested in registering a child for the French Immersion Kindergarten Program must select their zoned school. If Early French Immersion is not offered in the zoned school, parents/guardians must select the school closest to their place of residence that offers Early French Immersion (EFI).

Early French Immersion Kindergarten registration takes place on a **first-come first served basis for a limited number of seats**.

Applications will be dated and time-stamped upon submission of the online application form. All students are entitled to a program in English so if your child is waitlisted for EFI at a school that is not your zoned school, space will be held at the zoned school. Parents/guardians will be

provided with further information once class lists for EFI are finalized in September. 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 nlesdfedback@nlesd.ca.

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: Frequently Asked Questions

When should I register my child for KinderStart?

Registration for KinderStart is automatic when parents/caregivers register their child for Kindergarten at their designated school.

Registration takes place in the calendar year a child becomes four years of age.

Parents/caregivers should watch their local newspapers and school newsletters for more details regarding Kindergarten registration in their area.

2. Is busing provided for KinderStart sessions if I live greater than 1.6 kilometres from my school?

Busing is not provided for KinderStart sessions.

3. How do I register my child for KinderStart?

Registration for KinderStart is automatic when parents/caregivers register their child for Kindergarten at their designated school.

4. What does my child need to know before going to school?

Children arrive at KinderStart at different stages of development and with a multitude of embracing, experiencing new things and promoting independence will have given their child the necessary skills for school.

6. My child has a disability. Is there anything I should know before registering him/her for KinderStart?

Should a parent have a child with a disability entering school and the child already has an ISSP, a transition meeting with members of the school attending should happen prior to registration for KinderStart. The child may need additional support such as student assistant, itinerant or special education.

If the child does not have an ISSP the parent may initiate the process by contacting the school where the child will be registered and begin the collaboration process



EYE SEE EYE LEARN

Newfoundland and Labrador Eye See Eye Learn Program

Eye See Eye Learn, is NL Government funded program designed to allow children to overcome potential barriers to eye exams and contributes to a more positive learning experience, as well as an overall improvement to their quality of life.

The Eye See Eye Learn Program provides a free comprehensive eye examination for every kindergarten-age child resident in the province and provides one pair of free prescription eyeglasses to children who require them. Where available, a parent is required to access private insurance before seeking financial assistance from the program.

The Essilor Foundation is providing the eyeglasses free of charge to children who require them, and the program is administered through

the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Optometrists.

To be eligible, a child must be born in 2016, and they must have a valid MCP card.

If eligible, your child may be provided free eye examination and one pair of prescription eyeglasses (if required and not covered by your personal insurance or another government program).

HOW CAN MY CHILD PARTICIPATE?

1. Book an appointment with a Newfoundland and Labrador Optometrist to arrange an eye examination for your child.
2. Any amount not covered by your insurance (to a maximum of \$80.00 per child) will be covered. If you do not have insurance, HCS will cover the cost of the eye examination (to a maximum of \$80.00). If required, and not covered by your insurance, the program will provide one free pair of prescription eyeglasses per child.
3. Please remember to bring your child's valid MCP card with you to your appointment.

Wage Increase for Early Childcare Educators

On March 28, 2023 the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced details of a new wage grid for early childhood educators working in regulated child care centres that are part of the Operating Grant Program.

The wage grid takes effect on April 1, 2023 with a base rate of \$25 an hour for Level II early childhood educators who hold a two-year diploma. This is the starting rate for a new graduate. Early childhood educators who continue to further their education and are awarded a higher certification level will be placed at Step One of their new level. Each step on the grid lasts 12 months, and is effective as of January 1, 2023.

Additionally, there will be a 10 per cent adjustment for administrator positions, as well as a Labrador Allowance of just over \$5,000 to early childhood educators working in regulated child care centres in that region.

Legacy wage rates will be in place for staff whose current earnings exceed the proposed wage scale. This will ensure no one will earn less than they are currently.

A one-time payment will be made directly to early childhood educators to cover the period from January 1 to March 31, 2023.

In addition to the new wage grid, the province has introduced a number of initiatives, including:

- Providing funding to the College of the North Atlantic, Keyin College and Academy Canada to expand the number of seats they can offer in early learning programs. These agreements will see an increase of over 700 seats at the end of this year;
- Enhancing grants and bursaries for early childhood education students and graduates;
- Conducting in-person information sessions across the province to attract more individuals to the profession;
- Providing a recognition bonus for early childhood educators; and
- Increasing funding for operators, including family homes.



School Milk Online Ordering System

Sign up your school for our online ordering system!

- Easily offer milk for sale to students
- Same low-price product as through direct sale, offered at 60 cents per 250mL carton!
- No need to handle cash - everything is handled online by the system
- Milk is ordered by parents each month and delivered to school weekly

Interested?
Contact:
matthew@schoolmilknl.ca

SCHOOL MILK FOUNDATION
OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

The School Milk Foundation encourages schools to avail of their online ordering system.

The system allows parents to order milk for recess and/or lunch, prepay it online and have it distributed to the students through the school.

ORDERING MILK ONLINE IS EASY!

- Sign up at Smilk.ca
- Enter your child's school, teacher, & grade
- Order milk for the days and times you want
- Pay online
- The milk is delivered on the days selected
- It's that easy!

REMEMBER!
Orders close the 15th of each month for the next month

SCHOOL MILK FOUNDATION
OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

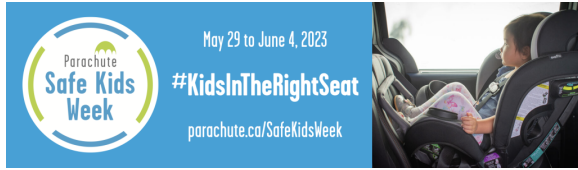
Nominations Open for the 2023 Inclusive Education Award

The Provincial Government, through Inclusion Canada Newfoundland and Labrador, is inviting nominations for the 2023 Inclusive Education Award.

Each year, the award is presented to a K-12 school in Newfoundland and Labrador that has shown exceptional spirit in creating a school that is welcoming and inclusive for students with an intellectual disability.

The deadline for submissions is April 15, 2023.

The recipient in 2022 was St. Matthew's Elementary in St. John's. The school was recognized for providing effective support and accommodations to ensure equitable opportunities for students, allowing them to see and feel the encouragement of love, acceptance and inclusion within the school community. The school will upgrade adaptive equipment in its play area and ensure a safe, caring, inclusionary playground. St. Matthew's Elementary uses adaptive equipment during field trips, and holds an awareness week for neurodiverse learners who participate in spirit days and different activities to celebrate each other.



Parachute Safe Kids Week will be held on May 29 to June 4, 2023, with the theme of Child Passenger Safety.

Safe Kids Week is an annual campaign to raise public awareness of child safety issues in Canada, encouraging community involvement as part of the solution.

Parachute's vision is to make the roads safer so that every kid can walk, cycle, or wheel to encourage mental, physical, social and emotional well-being.

For more information, please email

safekidsweek@parachute.ca



Join the Fight!

April is Daffodil Month – The Canadian Cancer Society's national fundraising campaign to raise funds for the fight against cancer.

During April, Society volunteers raise vital funds for the fight against cancer.

Money raised during Daffodil Month helps local patients living with cancer and their families.

Donations fund life-saving research, support services and other important work that means fewer Canadians will be touched by the disease.



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.

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