



The Educator

A newspaper for School Councils in Newfoundland and Labrador

Message from the NLFSC President



Hello Councils.

The days are longer and spring has officially arrived. I hope you all enjoy a restful Easter break.

We received great feedback on Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week held in February. It warmed my heart to know many school councils and parents took the opportunity to express gratitude for the work of our educators and all other school staff. The celebrations and

acknowledgments highlighted the profound impact that our school staff have on the lives of children. As you are aware, the relationship between home and school is an important component to ensuring academic success. When children observe respect being expressed by parents to teachers and vice versa, they are more likely to mirror that view and develop positive attitudes towards school and learning.

The parent-school partnership can also influence better behavior and increase motivation and attendance.

Making parents feel welcome in school can also significantly impact a child's education and school culture. Parents who do not feel welcome or comfortable in school are less likely to attend parent/teacher meetings, won't volunteer and often miss out on what is happening in their child's school life. Creating a welcoming environment in school is a key step to

establishing a strong base of volunteers and parental support. Many of our school councils have taken an initiative to foster parent engagement. Some councils set up information booths during Meet the Teacher Night and provide information on the role of the school council. They regularly update parents on what is happening in their school and encourage parents to become involved. Instilling positive parental participation doesn't require a massive plan, sometimes all it takes is a little encouragement and a nudge in the right direction. I believe most parents care about their child's education and want to be involved, but don't really know where to start. The school council is a great way to engage parents.

As we move into the last few months of this school year and the rigorous pace associated with it, I encourage you to continue to focus on all the successes experienced at your school this past year.

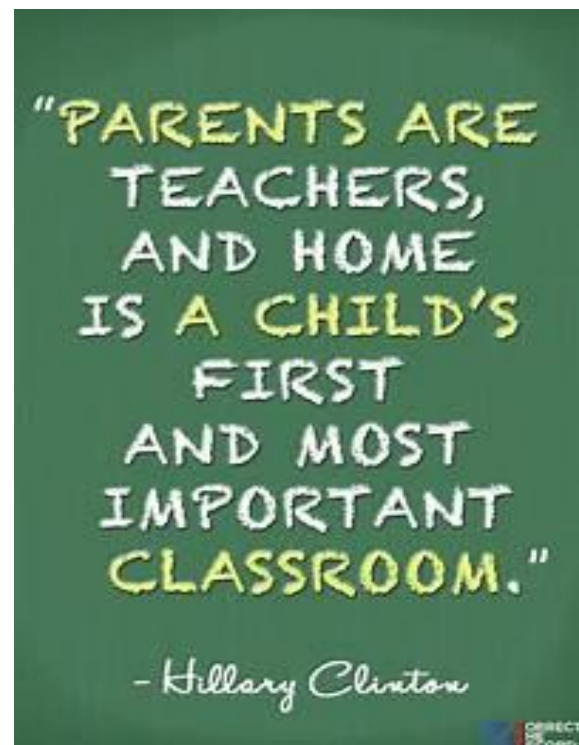
Please continue to praise the work of teachers and other school staff and express appreciation for the care they give on a daily basis. At this time of the year many teachers are feeling overwhelmed, frustrated and completely burned out. Kind words or a pat on the back from a parent is often all it takes to make a teacher feel that "It's all worth it."

Words matter. They are packages of power that can harm or help. Your expression of appreciation to a teacher may be the words that make all the difference.

Happy Spring

Don

Email: Don.Coombs@easternhealth.ca



Representation

Some of the Provincial Committees NLFSC has attended:

- Next Steps for School Meals, led by Food First NL.
- Steering Committee for Education Transformation
- School Safety Coalition Meeting
- NLESD Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence
- Canadian Mental Health Association-NL

President Coombs has been interviewed by CBC NL and CBC Investigates on school absenteeism. Over the past 9 years NLFSC has been expressing concern about the number of school days missed by students. In 2019 the Child and Youth Advocate released a report on student absenteeism which said in 2016-17 school year 6,600

students (10 percent) had missed. At least 18 days of school.

NLFSC feels that number has increased significantly since the pandemic.

The report recommended the development of an action plan to combat chronic absenteeism, and gave the provincial government a one-year deadline for that plan. NLFSC will continue to lobby for a solution to address the growing concern of school absenteeism.

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 continues to inquire about the establishment of the Provincial Advisory Council on Education and we are still waiting on the updated version of the School Council Handbook to be released. We have not received a timeframe on either, but anticipate both will be completed and in action for the beginning of the next school year.

In the meantime, NLFSC is 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.

Our work also includes assisting and supporting parents and councils who contact us with concerns. We may not always provide the answers they want, but we always do our best to help and mediate. We also receive many calls and emails from administrators and school council representatives regarding the school council role and function.



2024 National Volunteer Week

This year's National Volunteer Week (April 14 –20) 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.

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 14 - 20, 2024

The empathy, compassion and generosity of Canada's 24 million volunteers creates connected communities and builds a stronger Canada.

Let's recognize and celebrate every volunteer and each contribution they're making to strengthen inclusivity and wellbeing in our communities. Now more than ever, Every Moment Matters!

The theme for National Volunteer Week 2024 is Every Moment Matters. It highlights the importance of every volunteer and each contribution they make at a moment when we need support more than ever. The sharing of time, skills, empathy, and creativity is vital to the inclusivity, strength, and wellbeing of our communities.



Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Teaching – Deadline April 10, 2024

Each year, Canada's History Society recognizes 6 teachers for innovative approaches to teaching Canadian history. The 2024 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, 2024 for both the English and Early French Immersion programs.

To complete the registration process, proof of address and confirmation of MCP number must be provided to the school on or before **May 31, 2024**.

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.

Kindergarten

Kinderstart: Frequently Asked Questions

1. 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. 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.

3. 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 experiences. Teaching your child to embrace new things and promoting independence will have given your child the necessary skills for school.

4. 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 personnel from the school 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

DOORWAYS: Support for Mental Health and Addictions

DoorWays is a single session, walk-in counselling service in NL that provides rapid access to mental health and addictions counselling services ‘one session at a time.

- Available to youth and adults without an appointment or referral
- A health care professional will meet with you and discuss your concerns on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- DoorWays provides information and support focused on your need. Some examples of what you may want to discuss are: family, health, grief, work, relationships, stress, anxiety, depression, drinking or drug use.

DoorWays is not an emergency service. In an emergency, call 911 or 811 to speak with a Healthline Nurse, or proceed to the nearest emergency department.

Counsellors are available to support individuals who have mental health or substance use concerns as well as family/friends who are affected. If you are experiencing concerns related to any of the following:

- Alcohol and Drugs
- Anxiety and Stress
- Mental Illness

- Relationships
- Smoking
- Gender and Identity
- Eating Disorders
- Fear and Phobias
- Grief and Loss
- Depression
- Parenting
- Sexual, Physical and Emotional Abuse
- Suicide
- Anger
- Family Issues
- Gambling

or any other concern that is affecting your mental health and wellbeing, you may want to speak to a counsellor.

To find DoorWays in your area:

- Call 811 and a Healthline nurse will provide you with a location near you.

Other supports:

- [Bridge the gapp](#)
- [Janeway family centre](#)
- [CONNECT team](#)
- [The Bridges Program](#)
- [Youth Outreach Program](#)



Funding for Provincial Public Libraries

On February 26, 2024 Krista Lynn Howell, Minister of Education, and Derek Bennett, MHA Lewisporte-Twillingate, announced \$600,000 to the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board (PILRB), which is responsible for public library services in Newfoundland and Labrador.

One-time funding of \$500,000 has been allocated to supplement the Provincial Information and Library Resources Board's core operating grant, for a total of over \$12.8 million in Provincial Government funding for this fiscal year. This will support the board with costs for maintenance, operations and acquiring additional resources such as new hard copy and digital books.

An additional \$100,000 will be provided to the board to support the expansion of the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Libraries' early years programming to include digital literacy tools. Using digital technologies

responsively with children over the age of three helps prepare them for the future and is important in achieving early literacy goals.

There are currently 94 public libraries throughout the province that provide a variety of important literacy and community-based services to individuals, families and community groups. Newfoundland and Labrador Public Libraries works to ensure that library materials, free access to the Internet and programs are available to meet the needs of the province's people.

**Kindness can become
its own motive.
We are made kind by
being kind.**

—ERIC HOFFER



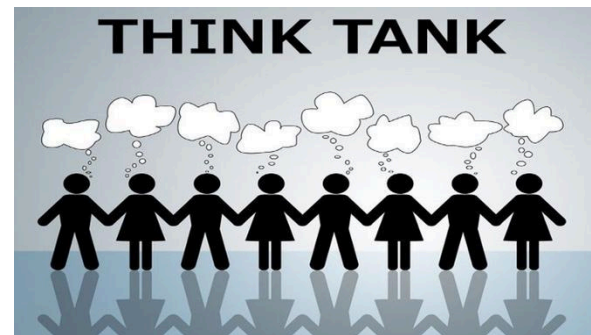


2024 Athletic Excellence Fund

The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation is advising athletes throughout Newfoundland and Labrador that provincial sport organizations are now accepting applications for the 2024 Athletic Excellence Fund.

The Athletic Excellence Fund supports local athletes by providing financial assistance to help offset costs associated with training and competition. Funding is provided to athletes through four channels – the Premier’s Athletic Awards, the Team Gushue Awards, the Elite Athlete Assistance Program, and the Sport NL Scholarship Program.

In order to apply, applicants must be members in good standing of a Provincial Sport Organization. Individuals must submit their applications to their respective Provincial Sport Organization by March 20, 2024.



On February 23, Premier Andrew Furey, Education Minister Krista Lynn Howell, attended a virtual Teachers Think Tank hosted by the Provincial Government and the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers’ Association (NLTA).

As a result of the meeting Government, in collaboration with the NLTA, committed to the following initiatives:

- Formation of a committee to address recruitment and retention, led by the Deputy Minister of Education and President of the NLTA, which was a commitment made in the new collective agreement;
- Provincial Government to provide a \$450,000 grant to the NLTA to help expand mental health supports and initiatives for teachers;
- Provision of an additional 125 hours per day to the total allocation of student assistant hours in English public schools

for the remainder of this school year to support student needs; and,

- Assignment of an additional two floating teacher positions within rural schools of the Conseil scolaire francophone provincial to ensure coverage during teacher absences.

Furthermore, beginning in the 2024-25 school year, one professional learning day per school year will be added to focus on mental health issues affecting teachers. This will continue for the next three school years.

More than 2,200 teachers and administrators in the province completed an online questionnaire related to recruitment and retention which informed the topics discussed at the Teachers Think Tank.

School Milk Online Ordering System

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

BUY MILK

SCHOOL MILK FOUNDATION

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



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.



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