

The Educator

A Newspaper for School Councils in Newfoundland and Labrador

February 2025



Message from the President



Hello Members!

Welcome to February!! I can't believe we are half way through another school year. This month please join NLFSC in celebrating Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week from February 9-15.

The theme for this years' celebration is "*Thank you for lighting the way*"

This is a powerful theme that beautifully

illustrates the selflessness and dedication of our educators and school staff to illuminate the minds of our students with knowledge and help them navigate the complexities of learning and life.

They often go above and beyond, sacrificing their personal resources and time for the betterment of their students. Teachers and school staff offer guidance, knowledge, and mentorship to their students, empowering them with knowledge and skills that will shape their future. They give tirelessly, sometimes at the expense of their own comfort and well-being. This self sacrifice is a testament to their dedication and passion for education.

Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week provides

us with an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the invaluable contributions of all our educators and school staff. It serves as a reminder to recognize and appreciate the pivotal role they play in shaping the intellectual and moral landscape of the future.

I am sure many of our school councils 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.

Sincerely,

Don

don.coombs@easternhealth.ca



NLFSC Membership Renewal

Many schools were unable to mail us their membership renewal forms and fees this fall due to the Canada Post strike. The form is attached to this newsletter with the hope you will be able to send as soon as possible. (*Membership Form Attached*)

Your continued membership will help support our mission to advocate for excellence in education. Together we can accomplish whatever it takes to make a difference in our children's lives.



Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week 2025

Gift cards and mementos are welcome treats, but emails and text messages of appreciation to teachers and staff are also very meaningful. School council members and parents are encouraged to post messages on the schools Facebook page and website.

Councils are also welcome to post pics of your TSAW celebrations on our Facebook page

(www.facebook.com/nlfederationofschoolcouncils). We would love to showcase what is happening at your school during TSAW and throughout the year. Please include the name of your school and any other information.



TSAW Week Ideas:

Monday - Hang a “We Love Our Teachers/Staff” banner on the front of the school. Place a red apple with a note from the School Council in each mailbox or on each desk. Don’t forget the bus drivers and custodians.

Tuesday - Hang a collage made of photos of teachers/staff and students at work and play and decorate the halls and classroom doors with written stories, poems or drawn pictures. Serve coffee and treats in the staff room.

Wednesday - Place flowers and treats in the staff room.

Thursday - Have cheese platters and a fruit basket in the staff room. Give each staff member a bag filled with pens, notepaper, etc.

Friday - Hold a Teacher/Staff Appreciation Tea/lunch. Be sure to arrange for supervision so all teachers and staff can attend.



2025 Pink Shirt Day

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

On **February 26th** we encourage School Councils, across the province, to wear something pink to symbolize that we as a society will not tolerate bullying anywhere.

This year's One Heart, One Mind pink T-Shirt was designed by Kadence Lánahmats George, a 13-year-old artist from Səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh Nation). Kilila (Butterflies) hold deep cultural significance as a symbol of transformation and embody the spirit of "one heart, one mind," where togetherness and collective strength are celebrated.

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.

You too can join the sea of pink! NLFSC invites you to take the opportunity to address the issue of bullying with your children or teens, by wearing pink, planning an event or activity, or just having an intentional conversation.

**History will judge us by
the difference we make
in the everyday lives of
children.**

NELSON MANDELA

MINIMALISTQUOTES.COM

Education Accord Interim Report Released

On January 9, the Provincial Government released Education Accord NL's interim report, **A Vision for the Future: Transforming and Modernizing Education.**

The Accord Advisory Team, in collaboration with the Pillar Committees and Advisory Board, have actively engaged individuals and groups through dialogue, consultation, and knowledge-sharing. Input and engagement involved content experts, focus groups, key informant meetings, Indigenous Governments and Organizations, symposia, a public survey, and written submissions. This stakeholder engagement remains ongoing.

The Education Accord NL's interim report outlined the work completed to-date, findings, and foundational elements that outline the vision of the final report. The interim report can be viewed online [here](#).

Education Accord NL was created in January 2024 to reimagine the education system. It will ensure students and learners at all levels receive the educational services they need in the classroom, are prepared for the modern global economy, and develop strong decision-making skills to foster positive health and well-being.

The deadline for the Provincial Government to receive the final Education Accord NL report is March 31, 2025.

"We think we're made of numbers: percentages on tests, pounds on a scale, likes on a photo, price tags on clothes, but we're not. We're made of love, happiness and the way we laugh. We're made of good memories and late nights. We have more substance than numbers."





The Newfoundland and Labrador Alliance for the Control of Tobacco (ACT) is pleased to introduce NEW Vaping Education resources

- **Nicotine Exposé Kit 1 for grades 7 and 8**
- **Nicotine Exposé Kit 2 for grades 9 and 10**

In recent years vaping has become a significant public health concern among Newfoundland and Labrador’s youth, as data indicates increasing rates of experimentation and regular use of Vaping products.

The 2021-22 CSTADS indicates that NL has the highest prevalence of past 30-day use of e-cigarettes among grade 7- 12 students among Canadian provinces.

To address this growing crisis, The Newfoundland and Labrador Alliance for the Control of Tobacco (ACT) is excited to announce Nicotine Exposé Kits, a new set of vaping education resources for grades 7 - 10. Developed by ACT and its provincial partners, the project was designed to provide vaping Education resources that align with existing

curriculum outcomes, across multiple subject areas, such as health, science, language arts and social studies.

Much effort has been dedicated to making the resources easy to use for teachers and other educators.

“Cigarette smoking among grade 7–12 students in Newfoundland and Labrador is at a record low of 2.5%. However, vaping has become the primary nicotine product used by youth with 40% of NL students in grades 7–12 having tried vaping. The Nicotine Exposé Kits are designed to educate students about vaping, encouraging students to critically examine the consequences of nicotine use in any form, with the ultimate goal of promoting prevention and aiding youth who wish to quit.” states Kevin Coady, Executive Director of ACT.

Each Nicotine Exposé Kit includes an Educator’s Handbook, paired with a student workbook for each grade, presenting a wide variety of key messages, issues and considerations related to vaping for students to explore. Materials will be available in both English and French.

These resources can be found on ACT’s website <http://www.truthaboutvaping.ca> and are free for all educators to use.

Media Contact: Kevin Coady 709-753-0079

kevincoady@actnf.com



**Introducing
Nicotine Exposé Kits 1 & 2
Educators' Webinar**

Educational resources for Grades 7 - 10

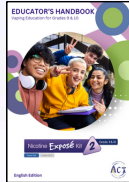
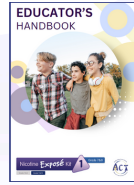


BECAUSE...

Vaping has become the primary nicotine product used by youth with 40% of NL students in grades 7-12 having tried vaping

Inviting:

- Secondary Teachers
- School Administrators
- Guidance Counsellors
- School & Public Health Nurses
- Coaches or Parents
- Community Youth Workers
- Mental Health & Addictions Counsellors
- Anyone interested in youth vaping prevention



February 19, 2025



**3:30pm NST
3:00 in Labrador**

Join us for an overview of these versatile, user-friendly resources designed to enhance vaping awareness while supporting curriculum objectives across multiple subject areas.

The resources aim to educate students about vaping, prompting a critical examination of the consequences of nicotine use in any form, with the ultimate goal of promoting prevention and helping youth who wish to quit.

**Register
Now**



Nicotine Exposé Kits 1 & 2 are available to download: www.truthaboutvaping.ca

And it's about time. According to early reports from other provinces that have restricted the use of smartphones and other devices, students are less likely to be distracted in class. Instead of constantly checking their phones for messages, they're more likely to engage with the teacher and their peers. In fact, the latest report from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) noted a "strong association" between smartphone distraction and student performance. But since research shows that students learn more when they are not distracted by smartphones, all provinces should look for ways to reduce other distractions in classrooms.

Firstly, stop violence in schools. According to a recent survey of 6,500 teachers and staff who work in Ontario's K-12 public schools, 75 per cent said "incidents of violence" have increased since they began working in the province's public school system, 43 per cent have "witnessed an attempt of physical force against another staff person" and 31 per cent have "personally had physical force used against them." Other provinces have experienced similar spikes.

Obviously, not much learning takes place when students and teachers feel unsafe. Students who threaten the wellbeing of others should be

Reducing distraction in the classroom

By: Michael Zwaagstra

The Frazer Institute

January 22,2025

In Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador often does things last even though the sun rises there first. In 1949, for example, it was the last province to join Confederation. And last week, it was the last province to enact provincewide restrictions on smartphones in schools.

suspended from school, and the most serious cases permanently expelled. To ensure this happens, each provincial government must send a clear message that it will fully back school administrators who suspend violent students.

Secondly, provinces should crack down on the excessive use of school-issued devices, particularly in younger grades. Getting students off their personal smartphones is a good first step but this accomplishes little if students simply transfer their attention to electronic devices (laptops and tablets) given to them by the school. Not only would going back to a “paper and pen” approach benefit student learning, it would also likely save money.

Third, any province serious about reducing distractions should encourage schools and teachers to seat students in traditional rows as much as possible. Students are more likely to pay attention if they face the teacher during class. In contrast, putting students in groups where they face each other is a sure-fire recipe for distraction.

Finally, there’s overwhelming evidence that most students learn best when instruction is teacher-led rather than student-led. It’s time to retire, once and for all, the idea that a teacher

should be a guide on the side rather than a sage on the stage. Teachers are paid to be instructional leaders—not to passively follow students—and the primary source of knowledge in the classroom. Some education advocates claim that the Internet has made memorization obsolete, but in reality, knowledge acquisition is more important than ever. Research shows that background knowledge about the topic of a book or article significantly increases the ability of students to comprehend what they read. Simply put, discard so-called “discovery learning” or inquiry learning and resurrect teaching methods that are best for students.

Smartphones distract students—that’s obvious, and policymakers in every province and territory should remain vigilant to ensure that restrictions in the classroom are strong enough and effective. But there are other troubling trends in our schools, and we must do more to reduce classroom distractions.





Canadian educators outline 4 key reforms in new Parachute survey series

Monday, January 13, 2025 – OTTAWA – The Canadian Teachers’ Federation (CTF/FCE) has released initial findings from the first edition of their new pan-Canadian educator survey series, [Parachute](#). The data paints a vivid picture of poor working and learning conditions across the country.

The CTF/FCE urges ministries of Education to address the concerns underscored by teachers and educators and take action to strengthen provincial and territorial public education systems.

Over 90% of Canadian K-12 students attend public schools: they, their teachers, and communities deserve proactive stewardship from Education ministers.

Parachute surveyed almost 5,000 education

professionals, including teachers, principals, education assistants, and support workers.

The initial results underscore five key issues at the heart of the crisis:

- 1. Lack of ministerial support**
- 2. Untenable working conditions**
- 3. Class size and complexity**
- 4. Rising incidents of violence and aggression**
- 5. Overwork and lack of preparation time.**

The survey also collected over 800 testimonials detailing measures provincial and territorial governments could implement to improve Canada’s public education systems.

1. Lack of Support from Ministers of Education

- **Ministerial failure:** A majority (63%) of educators deem their provincial or territorial ministries of Education as “not supportive at all,” highlighting widespread systemic neglect.

2. Untenable Working Conditions

- Nearly 80% of educators report struggling to cope with unpredictable and mounting workloads. 70% cite poor working conditions as a major factor.
- **Lack of student support:** A staggering 95% of educators observe that staff shortages are negatively impacting

students. The most severe consequences include unmet academic needs and the erosion of specialized services and supports.

3. Overloaded and Complex Classrooms

- **Increased complexity:** 77% of educators report that students' needs have become "significantly more complex" compared to five years ago.
- **High-needs students:** The number of high-need students without adequate support, along with the diversity of their needs, are the main factors contributing to classroom challenges.
- **Special needs neglected:** Students requiring special education support are being systematically left behind, exacerbating inequities in the classroom.

4. Rising Violence and Aggression

- **Unsafe environments:** Over half (55%) of educators have experienced violence or aggression in the past year.
- **Inadequate responses:** While 84% reported these incidents, only 25% indicated that appropriate actions were taken by health and safety committees or officers to address them. School administrators are overwhelmed.

5. Overwork and Insufficient Preparation Time

- **Excessive workloads:** 73% of educators work more than 45 hours per week, with 35% exceeding 48 hours.
- **Unmanageable demands:** Three quarters of educators report that their job demands have become less manageable over the past five years, and 20% describe them as "very unmanageable."
- **Need for preparation time:** 65% of educators identify increased preparation time as a top priority for improving working conditions.

Educators' Recommendations to Improve Working Conditions

To address these pressing issues, educators have identified key provisions that would enhance working conditions and, subsequently, student outcomes:

- **Class size reductions:** Supported by 75% of educators.
- **More education support staff:** Supported by 71% of educators.
- **Class complexity provisions:** Supported by 66% of educators.
- **More dedicated preparation time:** Supported by 65% of educators.



Kids Eat Smart Foundation NL

You can help school age children and youth learn and grow to be their very best. Every \$1 raised will give a child breakfast.

Donate today at www.kidseatsmart.ca or call 709-722-1996.

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. This year's theme "**Nourish to Flourish**" was chosen by Dietitians of Canada as a way to shine a spotlight on the profound connections between

food and overall wellbeing.

The theme goes beyond the basics of physiological health to celebrate the integral role of nutrition in mental health, emotional resilience, and fostering social and cultural connections. It's a versatile, meaningful, and inspiring theme that opens the door to countless opportunities for promoting the power of nutrition across diverse communities.

Nourish to Flourish Nutrition Month will also serve as the theme for Nutrition Month 2026. This two-year approach will enable a deeper exploration of its potential and allow for expanded initiatives and engagement.

Did You Know

To date only Newfoundland and Labrador, Manitoba, PEI and Ontario have signed agreements with the federal government to accept funding for a school food program in their jurisdiction.

With the cost of living at an all-time-high across the country and knowing that children learn better when provided nutritious food, one has to wonder why other provinces and territories would drag their feet on this life-changing initiative.

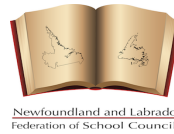


Conservation Corps NL

Looking for an opportunity to work with amazing youth across the province?

Join us as a Regional Supervisor and lead our dynamic Green Team Program! This is a fantastic opportunity to work with extraordinary youth from across the province while gaining valuable hands-on experience.

Visit <https://www.ccnl.ca/> for more information.



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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

The impact our teachers and school staff have on our children's lives cannot be adequately expressed in words. We are very appreciative of you. On behalf of NLFSC have an enjoyable and memorable Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week