

ConnectED

empowering teachers • inspiring students • elevating communities

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Insight 2024 Survey Results

Wabanaki Language Keepers

CyberTitan: Digital Literacy

Music Exchange: NB to BC



NBTA
New Brunswick
Teachers' Association

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I want to extend a heartfelt welcome back to all of you. I know the hustle and bustle of the first few weeks can be overwhelming, but I'm confident that your passion and dedication will help create a positive, welcoming, and inspiring learning environment for New Brunswick students. A great deal has happened since my last ConnectED message to you in April.

AGM: The NBTA provincial annual general meeting took place at the end of May. Along with debating resolutions aimed at improving the teaching profession, we also approved a budget that included a dues increase. Another significant decision for our organization at this meeting was to proceed with the recommendation to reconfigure our current branch structure of 27 branches into 30. I look forward to working with branch leaders and NBTA staff as we "renovate" our branches to allow for increased member voice at the local level.

CTF/FCE AGM: In July, I attended the Canadian Teachers' Federation Annual General Meeting along with fellow delegates from the New Brunswick Teachers' Association and the New Brunswick Teachers' Federation. Teacher retention and recruitment emerged as a pressing national concern among the numerous critical issues discussed at that level.

CONTACT: I also had the opportunity to attend the CONTACT conference alongside a group of NBTA members and join dedicated educators from our Atlantic provinces this summer. The theme, "Empowering Inclusive Educators," perfectly captured the spirit of the event. The professional learning sessions were truly exceptional, offering a wealth of practical strategies and insights to help us create more inclusive and supportive learning environments for all students. If you have not had an opportunity to attend CONTACT, I strongly recommend it.

Press Conferences: Over the years, my predecessors and I have consistently urged educational leaders and government officials to take decisive action to address the critical issues stemming from the persistent shortage of certified teachers. This shortage has had a profound impact on our education system, leading to increased workloads for educators, unfilled absences, and compromised learning experiences for students.

In recent months, we have intensified our advocacy efforts through a series of public press conferences. These events have provided a platform for us to highlight the severity of the teacher shortage, educate the public about its consequences, and inform our members about the ongoing efforts to address this crisis. We hope to compel decision-makers to prioritize teacher recruitment, retention, and classroom complexity issues by raising awareness and building public support. Here is a recap of the messaging from these efforts:

Your NBTA, Your Magazine

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Editor: Chantal Lafargue

Editorial Assistant: Eileen Anderson

Graphic Artist: Eileen Anderson

Printed By: ROCKET

Member: CEPA

Address all correspondence to:

The Editor, P.O. Box 752

Fredericton, N.B., E3B 5R6

Telephone: (506) 452-8921

E-mail: nbtaNews@nbta.ca

Web: www.nbta.ca

June 20th "Save September": New Brunswick Teachers' Association is putting this government and future governments on notice that, without urgent and strategic intervention, classrooms will be critically understaffed this coming September. The anglophone sector alone needs 524 certified teachers by September to sustain the status quo given population growth trends and other factors. Additionally, 64% of current New Brunswick teachers in this sector have said they have considered leaving the classroom.

A classroom without certified, professional teachers denies students critical education.

"This situation is unacceptable and urgent for the future of New Brunswick students," said NBTA President Peter Lagacy. "The government needs to understand that New Brunswick teachers have a unique skill set and are in high demand in other jurisdictions as well as outside the education system. The New Brunswick education system is competing with other Canadian provinces, international schools, and the private sector."

July 17th "Political Parties Survey": "We are interested to see how the NBTA's recommendations are reflected in party platforms and hope this provides valuable insights on how each political party intends to support our public education system," said NBTA President Peter Lagacy. "This information is crucial for educators and the public as they consider their choices in the upcoming provincial election."

August 26th "Political Survey Results": "It was encouraging to see that all parties noted retention and recruitment of teachers as a priority, and they have each made some commitments to the Building a Better Education System action plan."

September 11th "NBTA asks for the province support and immediately fund a two-fold solution": "While we are thankful for community members who have stepped in to fill the gaps, leaning on local permit holders to shore up the school system without proper support is a faulty plan. No one is set up for success in that scenario: not our schools, not local permit holders, not certified teachers, and, especially, not our students," continued Lagacy.

Political Action: The start of the new school year was overshadowed by a wave of pre-election rhetoric targeting teachers and their professionalism. Many New Brunswick residents received misleading flyers or postcards containing

inaccuracies and statements that undermined the vital role of educators in public education. It's deeply disturbing to see such misrepresentation of our profession and public education in New Brunswick.

In addition to meeting with the Minister to ask for his support, the following statement was released by the NBTF Co-Presidents, "Teachers are highly certified professionals who are focused on students' education and wellbeing. To suggest otherwise is simply untrue and an attempt at eroding the public's trust in their professionalism and New Brunswick's public education system as a whole. We encourage the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, district officials, parents, and partners to stand with teachers in countering the spread of false information in our communities."

With the election only weeks away, please take some time to educate yourselves on the position each of the parties has taken on educational issues and I encourage you to exercise your right to vote. Your NBTA asked each political party to respond to a summer survey on topics relevant to teachers, and the results are available at www.nbta.ca.

Executive Steering Committee and Strategic Partnership with EECD: At the April 2023 Board of Directors, a motion was passed to accept the invitation of Deputy Minister Ryan Donaghy and embark on a strategic partnership with the Department of Early Childhood and Education. This partnership has seen your NBTA Executive Director Ardith Shirley appointed as Co-chair of an Executive Steering Committee of New Brunswickers alongside Assistant Deputy Minister Tiffany Bastin. This work has led to eight near-term and 11 long-term recommendations with an accountability framework that requires progress reports to the system and public each quarter for the next three years. This work can be found at the website listed below and has become a key mechanism for NBTA to address longstanding issues identified, such as class composition, chronic student absenteeism, teacher retention and recruitment and others.

As the school year unfolds, know that I will continue to proudly uphold the teaching profession while advocating for meaningful change that will make a difference in the lives of teachers and students of New Brunswick.

Respectfully,

Peter Lagacy



<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/corporate/promo/evolving-french-language-learning.html>

Insight 2024 Member Survey Summary

Dr. Kimberley McKay, NBTA Deputy Executive Director

Introduction

In May 2024, the New Brunswick Teachers' Association (NBTA) conducted its second full-membership survey – *Insight 2024*. The purpose of the survey was to provide members with an opportunity to express their perspectives on initiatives, products, and services since the inaugural survey in 2022, as well as to provide direction to the Association for future years. The survey framework is conceptualized through member engagement.

Insight 2024 addressed the same two research questions that were examined in 2022:

Research Question 1: How satisfied are NBTA members within five key areas of member engagement: avenues of access; flattened hierarchies; enhanced visibility; relationships; and value through relevance, belonging, and fulfillment?

Research Question 2: What understandings and directions for renewal of the NBTA are suggested in *Insight 2024*?

Participants

Each NBTA Branch is required to hold an annual general meeting (AGM) and in 2024 those meetings were held between May 2 and May 17. During the Branch AGM, the *Insight 2024* survey was introduced and members were provided an electronic link to immediately complete the survey. The survey link was activated May 1, and while the survey remained open indefinitely, no responses were received after May 20. A total of 2634 members responded to the survey, representing 40% of eligible participants. Further, this total represents a decline in participation from 60% in 2022. The decline in participation will be discussed further within the Limitations of the Study section.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study was a two-step process of analysis. In the first instance, a quantitative analysis of all numerical data was conducted and graphs for each question were prepared. In the second instance, the open-ended response questions were coded using the *Conceptual Framework for Member Engagement* (McKay, 2022) and then analyzed by keyword themes.

Study Limitations

Three important study limitations occurred within the research setting. First, New Brunswick's teacher organization structure is unique in Canada. Specifically, two professional associations (the anglophone NBTA and the francophone AEFNB) operate as entities separate from the NBTF (teachers' union). At times, it was difficult to know if the respondent was referencing NBTA, NBTF, or both organizations. A further complicating factor was that no substantial findings or recommendations regarding NBTF are appropriate, even if a participant made a clear and accurate reference to NBTF, because NBTF does not exist as an entity without input from both professional associations (anglophone and francophone) and, consequently, fell outside the scope of this study. However, all such data is informative and therefore even when comments reflect confusion between NBTA and NBTF, they have not been omitted or corrected.

The second study limitation within the research setting was in relation to the survey being completed in tandem with the local Branch AGM. Normally, the allotment of time to complete the survey as an item of business within the agenda would be ideal. The possibilities of procrastination or deletion should decrease when survey completion time is given during the meeting. However, the 2024 Branch AGMs saw branches grappling with two large and complex topics: a proposal for branch reorganization and a proposal for a dues increase. Concerns about a lengthy meeting resulted in inconsistency in the administration of the survey: some branches sent the link in advance and then provided a reminder during the AGM, other branches asked members to complete it in the afternoon during the professional learning component of the day, and still others asked members to complete it on their own time. The robust 2024 Branch AGM agenda may partially explain the 20% drop in respondents this year.

Finally, the impact of branch reorganization on the survey participation rate is not to be underestimated. Ten of the 27 branches would see a change to their structure if the branch reorganization proposal was approved; it can be hypothesized through anecdotal comments that for some members, responding to a survey on member engagement while concomitantly discussing the possible amalgamation or division of their local branch, could seem ineffectual and pointless.

Note: To view the full report please go to the members' section of the website.

Results

Sphere of influence: Avenues of Access

Avenues of access includes the concepts of: competency in the knowledge and practices of the NBTA; identification with the NBTA through imagination; tensions related to association mandates; past or current experiences of engagement; time and timing; transparency and trust of elected officials and staff; and development of promising practice strategies that cultivate identity through relevance and belonging.

Question six probed the participant’s basic understanding of the branch AGM and garnered a 99% response rate. This question informs the influence of avenues of access in two areas: (1) it addresses knowledge and practices of the NBTA; and (2) it indirectly examines transparency and trust of elected officials and staff. More than 70% of members report understanding the purpose of the meeting and, further, believe that resolutions can be a means of change. Fewer members (60%) report understanding the roles and responsibilities of the local branch volunteers, albeit this is an 8% increase over the 52% of respondents who reported this understanding in the 2022 survey.

These results suggest a simple member engagement strategy for local branches to provide additional access to the NBTA: focus on explicitly educating members about the various roles and responsibilities of the volunteers within the branch. Interactions with local representatives and attendance at the branch AGM is often where members are first exposed to other members who are competent in the knowledge and practices of the organization. It is also one way identification with NBTA through imagination can be fostered, as members look to the local branch and assess if they are effectively being represented.

Keep... NBTA has gained the respect of teachers. The volunteer work that is being done by teachers is invaluable. For those who have offered their time and expertise there is much gratitude. Thank you very much.

Start... School Reps being more vocal in their respective schools. Understanding the roles of the directors and president and actually communicating information from board events effectively.

Question 13 (Figure 4) asked respondents to identify the human contacts they use to access the professional association, with 98% of participants responding to this question. The question provides insight into avenues of access when a member feels belonging as a result of individual interactions with members or staff. Further, transparency and trust of elected officials and staff may increase when the contacts are known individuals. However, it is important to remember that interactions with local volunteers or staff may provide either a positive or negative experience, both of which may impact a members’ avenues of access to the NBTA.

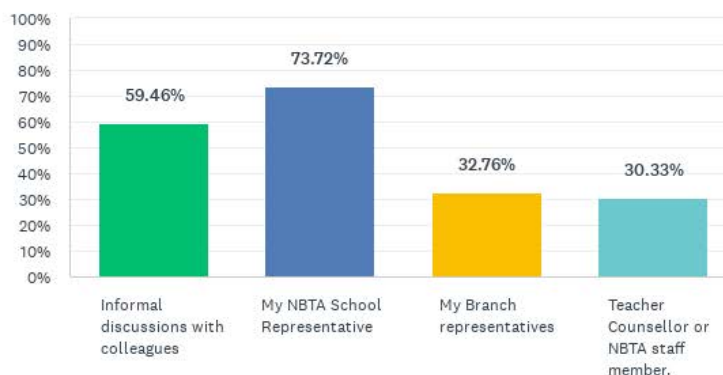
As shown in Figure 4, 74% of respondents indicated that they would use the NBTA School Rep. as a means to access the Association. This is in contrast to the 2022 survey in which 44% indicated they would be most likely to contact their School Rep. Likewise, the number of participants responding that they would contact a person on their local branch executive (33%) has doubled since the 2022 survey (15%). However, a result not to be overlooked is that almost 60% of members still rely on their colleagues for information about the Association.

The results of question 13 suggest the importance of local branches being hubs of timely and accurate information through volunteers who are approachable, visible, and knowledgeable. It also reaffirms the need to maintain the opportunity for all School Reps. to receive training to understand their role; this is currently a component of the NBTA Leadership Empowerment Series. However, the results further suggest a heightened importance in getting more correct information to more members, as currently happens through the direct to member emails, video updates, etc. The 60% of members who access their NBTA via informal discussions with colleagues may reflect a flattened hierarchy and reduction in exclusionary structures; no longer are designated individuals the only keepers of knowledge.

Keep...the connection to members and schools is so important – it builds trust and makes our Association healthy.

Stop... being hard to access as a young teacher. Be more clear and open to pathways of engaging as a younger educator and programs for teachers past the POINT – which is great, thank you.

Figure 4: Question 13 - I access my professional association through the following contacts (click all that apply)



Question 14 (Figure 5) moved beyond accessing human resources to consider channels that a member may access. 98% of respondents answered this question, which speaks to the literal avenues of access that a member may use when seeking information. Somewhat surprising is that 80% of members reported that one of the channels they use to access the Association is the website. This is a significant increase from 2022 when only 13% of respondents explicitly mentioned the website in comments. This suggests two overlapping interpretations: the website has improved; and more members are going to the website and find it relevant. The other frequently cited channel for access was direct to member emails, with 56% of respondents identifying this as a source. However, this percentage is down from 2022, in which 67% of members commented on the value of these direct emails. These results may be a reflection of the novelty of the Mailchimp platform in 2022, as this channel was relatively new at that time.

Question 14 results suggest that the NBTA should focus on continually refining and enhancing the website under the assumption that members will continue to view it as a primary channel to access the organization. In addition, many, many comments spoke to the need to reduce paper consumption, to limit paper publications, and to offer more virtual opportunities – all of which may be achieved through an enhanced website. The results of question 14 also suggest that direct to member emails are an important channel for members but that closer scrutiny to timing, content, and accessibility may be needed if they are to remain relevant to members. When considering the two results together, it suggests that members who seek information expect to be able to do so seamlessly through a website but that an organization that shares information should do so electronically and directly. The final suggestion arises from that of omission; while general support for social media was certainly expressed, there is virtually no evidence that members were looking to add to social media channels already in use.

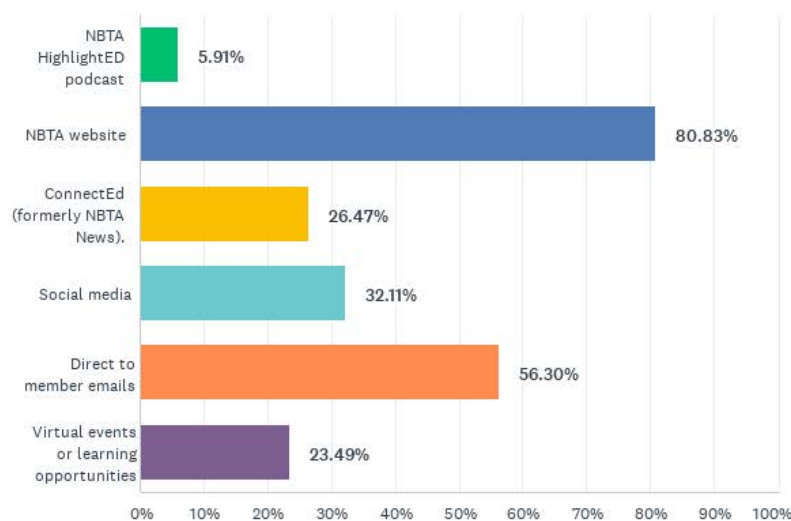
Keep... More direct to member emails – this might sound silly but I'm so busy and when I get the emails to my inbox, that is the information I actually see.

Start... Updating processes to move issues and concerns faster through the system. Have a formal running tally of ongoing issues, their status and/or solutions... reporting them to the membership or having them be always accessible on the website. This should include meetings, reports, press releases, etc. around every issue.

Question 15 explored members' awareness of the broad portfolios of their paid staff; 91% of participants opted to respond. Transparency and trust of not only elected officials, but also NBTA staff is a component of the avenues of access influence. In 2022, only 44% of respondents reported an understanding of paid NBTA staff work and therefore this access point was examined again in 2024. The work of liaison with individual branches (72%), signature event preparation (54%), and liaison with individual members (52%) received the highest indications of awareness, although even then, some mandates were barely above half the respondents. Awareness of external work with partners through stakeholder engagement (25%) and strategic alliances (16%) received the lowest reports of awareness.

The results of question 15 suggest there has been very little improvement in the understanding of the day to day work of the NBTA staff. These results would hint that much of the work of staff is invisible; however, this suggestion is tempered somewhat by comments in the open-ended questions (which will be discussed in a later section). The levels of awareness may also contribute to a sense of a lack of a supportive relationship with NBTA staff. Further, if members continue to be unaware of the work of staff, and the pressure of their own professional responsibilities continues to build, resentment, distrust, and cynicism may follow. This interpretation indicates a need to flatten the hierarchies around exclusionary staff structures and to expand member knowledge about the roles of the NBTA staff.

Figure 5: Question 14 - I access my professional association through the following channels (click all that apply)



Keep... Continue improvement in being user friendly, accessible, and supportive to ALL teachers.

Stop... not sure but there are a lot of things that don't seem to help on the front line that have mentioned in this survey.

Stop...hiring staff who are in the pocket of the employer.

Question 16 (Figure 7) acknowledges the unsurprising fact that both time and timing influence how and when a member accesses the Association – if they access it at all.

This point was reinforced in the 2022 survey in which 78% of members indicated lack of time or energy was a contributing factor in preventing more active involvement with the NBTA. However, in 2024, the survey sought to understand factors other than time that might be influencing engagement. The first choice – I do not see a way to be more actively involved – is linked to avenues of access. As can be seen from Figure 7, 13% of respondents indicated that other avenues of involvement were not readily apparent to them. This result may be viewed as a positive result in that it can be interpreted that over 300 members might become more actively involved if they had clarity on what that looked like. It is also important to note that the other factors identified in Figure 7 also influence engagement and each will be examined in future sections of this report.

This result reinforces the need for the NBTA to implement actions that bring more information to members about involvement, including streamlining of processes. It also suggests that the organization should identify barriers to more active engagement and implement strategies to dismantle any exclusionary structures.

Sphere of Influence: Flattened Hierarchies

Flattened hierarchies includes the concepts of: power; influence; holding capacity; exclusionary structures; mandatory memberships; NBTA and NBTF role confusion; and government influence.

Question four, as shown in Figure 8, is designed to gauge respondents' confidence in explaining the mandates of the NBTA and the mandates of the NBTF. This question received a 99% response rate. NBTA and NBTF role confusion is one component of the influence of flattened hierarchies, and therefore appropriate to discuss in this section. Results show that a mere 33% of respondents feel very or confident in explaining the mandates of the organizations. However, when compared to 2022 survey results, those who reported "no" to understanding the roles and responsibilities of each organization stood at 44%, whereas those reporting "not at all confident" in 2024 stood at 18%. While these results not directly comparable, it does suggest some of the strategies put in place between 2022 and 2024 have improved members' understandings (i.e., NBTA Service & Supports Map; School Rep. Basic Skills training). It is also predictable that in a bargaining year, such as 2024, when NBTA and NBTF staff collaborate more fulsomely on syndical matters, that the blurring of the lines may increase.

The results of question four, combined with results of other questions about advocacy work and staff portfolios, suggest that members who continue to have confusion about mandates, may also have expectations of either organization that are unrealistic or cannot be fulfilled, resulting in reduced value for the member. Arguably, this confusion also contributes to frustration when a member perceives they are being passed around with no staff member willing to assist. These results further suggest that while improvements have been made in understanding mandates, that continued emphasis on helping members gain understanding is important.

Keep... lobbying for classroom composition, teacher wellness, working with EECD to make informed decisions, work with NBTA for negotiations.

Keep... Clearer map of NBTA/NBTF roles. I know this has been discussed a lot, but the lines are still very unclear.

Start... Calling back and giving support when one has questions.

Figure 7: Question 16 - Understanding that time is always a factor, what additional factors might prevent you from becoming more actively involved with the NBTA? (click all that apply)

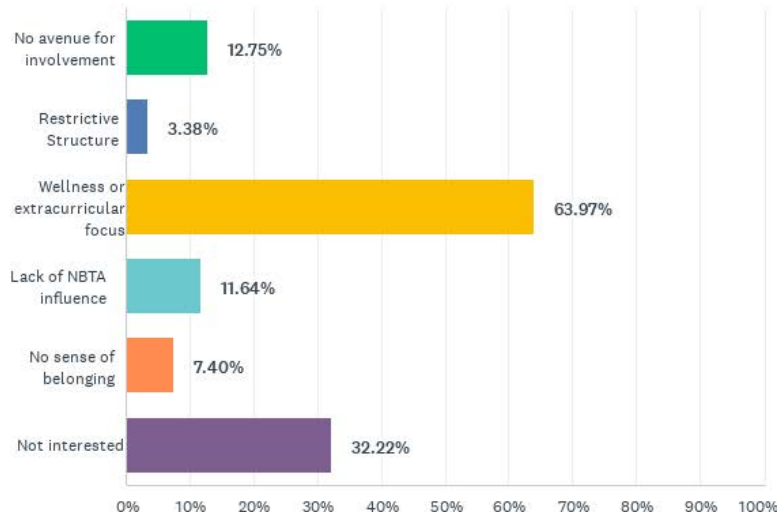
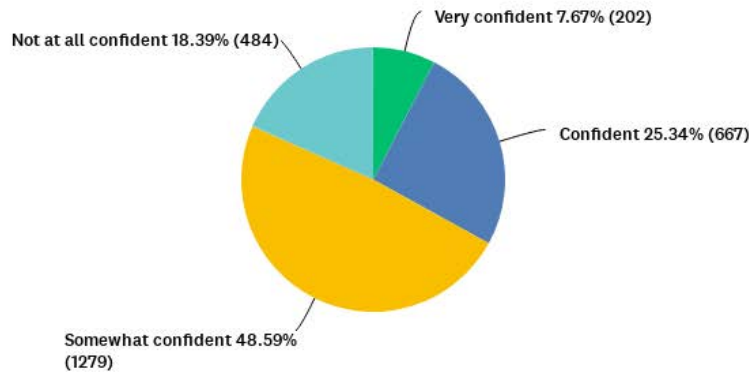


Figure 8: Question 4 - A co-worker ask you to explain the work of the NBTA (professional association) and the NBTF (union). How confident are you in providing an answer?



Question nine of the survey was also designed to provide insight into the influence of flattened hierarchies, with 91% of participants responding. As shown in Figure 9, members were asked about Association initiatives designed to positively influence the future of the NBTA. This question pertains to flattened hierarchies because it suggests an organization identifying potentially exclusionary structures, and then collaborating with members to instill change. Respondents reported greatest awareness regarding the proposed dues increase (79%) and the proposed branch restructuring (59%). This is not surprising since of the four response choices, these were more likely to have an impact on the individual members. Awareness of the NBTA Strategic Plan (38%) and the NBTA rebranding (35%) showed lower numbers; and given that these initiatives tend to be more operational in nature, this is not surprising.

These results suggest that members may take a greater interest, and therefore find more value, in efforts for the future of the organization that directly impact them. Given this, the organization should be mindful and continue to actively inform and involve members in key decision-making about the future. This is another strategy to develop trust through strong collaborative relationships amongst members.

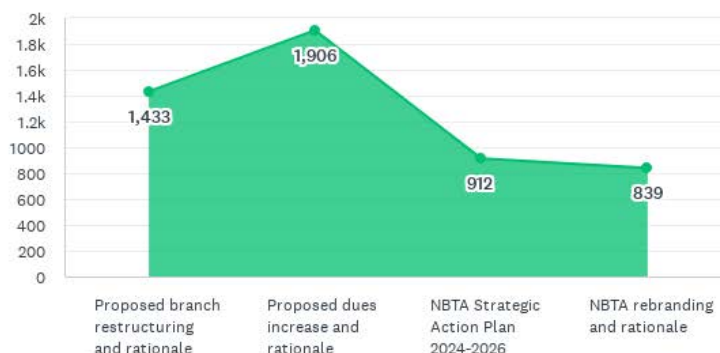
Keep... working to be more representative of the concerns of all staff even if it doesn't dovetail with the Executive's agenda.

Stop... reorganizing stuff and focusing on politics within the NBTA itself

Question 11 is also instructive in understanding flattened hierarchies, as it speaks to the participants' beliefs about how powerful and influential the NBTA is perceived to be by its members. In this instance, power and influence are represented by the NBTA having the capacity to positively impact change in the issues most important to members. 99% of participants responded to this question, and as seen in Figure 10, 49% of respondents believe the Association has this capacity, while another 45% believe the NBTA "somewhat" has the capacity to influence change in priority areas. Although not directly comparable, 2022 survey result saw 70% of members respond "yes" to holding capacity, with 19% being not sure. The starkest difference is in the numbers reporting "no" for holding capacity: 11% in 2022 and 6% in 2024 – interpreted as improvement.

The results of question 11 suggest there is a shift underway in perceived capacity, through influence and power, but what it is and how it is defined were not probed in this

Figure 9: Question 9 - I am aware of the NBTA's collaborative efforts pertaining to the future of the NBTA such as (click all that apply):



survey. Given that the relationship members have with their Association is partially dependent upon their belief in capacity, continuing to explore and understand this influence would be beneficial.

Keep... Continue to advocate for teacher working conditions, though I don't feel the NBTA has much influence on anything.

Keep... We were VERY powerful with our work before the last contract negotiations.

Question 16 is depicted in an earlier section in Figure 7. Two of the possible factors for response in question 16 relate to flattened hierarchies. First, "I find the structure of the NBTA too restrictive". This response received only 3% of overall responses, suggesting that currently this is not a factor on which to focus to flatten hierarchies. The second, "I am not sure the NBTA can influence change" received 12% of responses, again suggesting, in conjunction with the results from Question 11, that it need not be an area of primary focus. It is, however, worth noting that holding capacity and demonstrating capacity are not the same influences. In a later section of this report, results will be presented that suggest that the NBTA has enhanced its visibility by demonstrating capacity more overtly – and this would be a more logical continued focus for the organization.

Sphere of Influence: Relationships with Self, Others, and the NBTA

Relationships with self, others, and the NBTA includes specific concepts pertaining to relationships: inner dialogue; headspace; self-confidence; supportive relationships; and collaboration with others.

Question three asks respondents about their primary connection with the NBTA, which garnered a 99% response rate. It is relevant to this sphere of influence as it asks directly about relationships with oneself, colleagues, and the NBTA. Unlike other questions in this survey, members were to consider their primary connection, and not check all the answers which would apply. This question was asked on the 2022 survey, and there is no significant difference between those responses and responses of 2024. As can be seen in Figure 11, 32% of members selected the support

they have or would receive as representing their primary connection. The responses of connection with local members who are volunteers (23%) or the local AGM (22%) represent the next closest connections. It should also not be overlooked that 10% of respondents did not consider they had any connection to the Association.

The results of question three suggest that the ongoing work on member engagement is still warranted. They further suggest that a local branch would be wise to consider some of the specific examples related to the branch and branch AGM experience and implement positive changes. They also suggest that future surveys may want to get curious about what that perceived support looks like, as being more intentional in this area could cause more members to feel connected to their professional association. Also interesting within these results is that respondents seemed to draw virtually no line between being actively involved with the NBTA and seeing it as their primary connection. This might be worth exploring in more detail amongst active volunteers.

This may suggest, as in 2022, that the relationship appears to be on a purchase or insurance model of membership for many NBTA members. That is, the connection is there should they ever need it, primarily in times of difficulty.

Stop... ignoring teachers in need of support and backing down to district and government.

Stop... trying to maintain a good relationship with employer and work on starting to keep teachers, the ones who pay dues, well and happy.

Keep... I feel the NBTA is doing a good job. Info is available and support available when needed.

Question 10 was also structured to provide additional information about relationships within the organization – specifically, products and services for the membership at large. 95% of participants responded to this question. While the connection to the influence of relationships may not be readily apparent in question 10, it is relevant in that key services and products that have a high awareness rate, should presumably positively influence the feelings of support and hence, the overall relationship with the NBTA. It is

Figure 11: Question 3 - I consider my connection with my professional association, the NBTA, to be through:

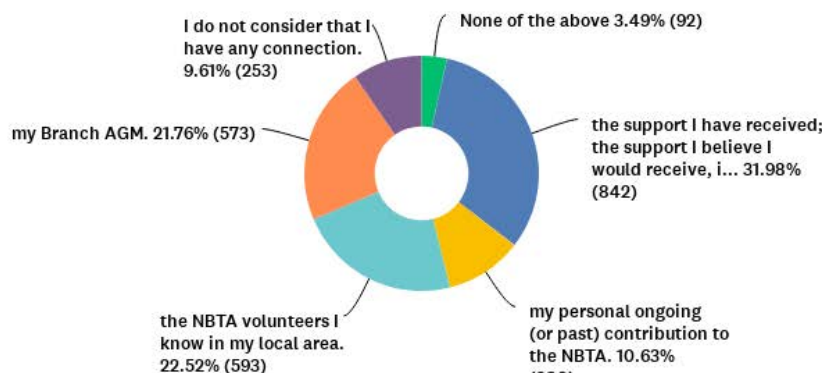
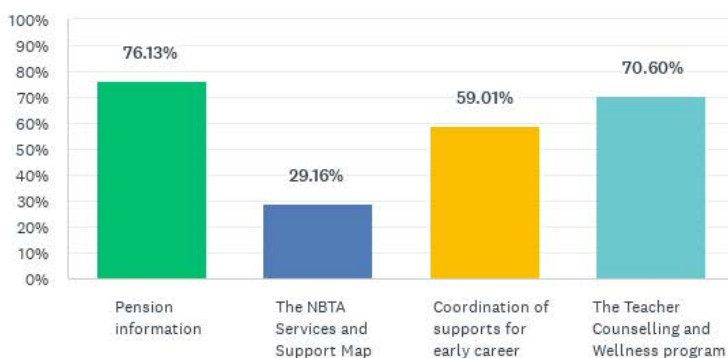


Figure 12: Question 10 - I am aware of the NBTA's collaborative efforts to enhance existing services and products pertaining to (click all that apply):



important to note that this question only queries awareness, and does not delve into satisfaction. As can be seen in Figure 12, three of the four services or products received approximately 60% or higher (pension information – 76%; early career teachers – 59%; and Teacher Counselling and Wellness – 71%). Only the fourth option – The NBTA Services & Support Map received little awareness at 29%. The map was a new initiative as a result of the 2022 survey and was an attempt to help members better understand the mandates of the NBTA and the NBTF. Given that role confusion has been evident in the discussion of previous question results, it would seem important for the Association to continue to educate members about this tool.

The third response choice in Question 16 (Figure 7) speaks most directly to the influence of relationships – and specifically to the “headspace” a member currently has to engage more actively with the NBTA. As can be seen from the results, 64% of respondents indicated that they currently focus on personal wellness and/or other extracurricular opportunities. This is interpreted to mean that their capacity to become more actively involved with the NBTA is currently maximized. However, the sixth response choice must also be considered when discussing the influence of relationships. “I am not interested in becoming more involved” (32%) may speak to the member’s inner dialogue (i.e., this is not an organization I particularly want to be associated with), collaboration with others (i.e., I cannot imagine working with that group of teachers on that committee), or relationship with the NBTA (I am perfectly content with my involvement now and see no need to change). Regardless, questions three and six emphasize that members have no further capacity to spread themselves any thinner and they are making choices about what to prioritize. While the overall results are not surprising, understanding this question in more detail may assist the NBTA in developing strategies to engage members on the periphery. But first the organization must understand why they are on the periphery.

Sphere of Influence: Enhanced Visibility

Enhanced visibility includes the concepts of: imagination; demonstrating capacity; and witnessing the impact of individual contributions. That is, there can be a positive impact on member engagement when NBTA overtly demonstrates to members where organizational power and capacity have influenced change in areas members value.

Question seven explored members’ awareness of issues in which the NBTA had engaged in advocacy. The results are shown in Figure 13, with 96% of participants responding to this question. This question is related to enhanced visibility for two reasons: (1) members see advocacy for issues of importance to them and imagine an association that is in alignment with their values and; (2) the identified advocacy issues represent significant efforts and funding on the part of the NBTA so it is informative to ask about member awareness levels. It is also important to remember that this question is not about agreement or efficacy with advocacy efforts, but simply awareness.

Question seven results suggest several learnings for the Association. First, Only 40% of 2022 survey respondents indicated awareness of current lobbying efforts so 2024 results may be interpreted to suggest the NBTA is improving in its ability to demonstrate capacity. The results may also suggest that the work of the public relations firm engaged to support the NBTA has been money well, with more media interest involving the stance of the NBTA on both political and educational matters. These results may further suggest a more engaged membership overall, one that expects its professional body to be in the public eye and more vocal when it is not. A synthesis of quantitative and qualitative results is two-fold: (1) continue to use new and successful strategies to enhance the visibility of the organization’s work; and (2) be mindful of participant comments urging the NBTA to stay focused on members and the classroom and not to be distracted by political games.

Keep... Push for something to be done about the current classroom realities.

Keep... Standing up for teachers and students, rather than remaining silent on issues that may be unpopular with the current government.

Start... Sharing the stark realities that are faced in the classroom. People think teaching is an easy job that anyone can do.

Question eight was also instructive in understanding the influence of enhanced visibility. It asked members to indicate awareness of any initiatives pertaining to professional growth. It is not surprising that the highest percentage of awareness was associated with the long-standing and member-wide Council Day (85%). It is also not surprising that the lowest percentage is associated with the newest and self-selected initiative of NBTA Networks (17%).

Of interest in these results is that often the services requested in anecdotal comments are offered but percentages reveal a lack of respondent awareness. This suggests that new strategies to enhance the visibility of initiatives pertaining to professional growth should be prioritized, as many respondents cited the importance of these services and expressed a desire for more. The other tension the Association will need to eventually address is the competing demands for meaningful, in-person professional learning and efficient, cost-effective virtual professional learning. Further, qualitative comments suggest a growing dissatisfaction with professional learning associated with the Branch AGM, how NBTA professional learning funds are allotted, and mandatory professional learning sessions – all topics that will need to eventually be addressed by the Association.

Sphere of Influence: Value through Relevance, Belonging, and Fulfillment

Value through relevance, belonging, and fulfillment, which underpins the previous four influences, includes the concepts of: pursuing individual passions; satisfaction of individual motivations; growth opportunities; leveraging the local through social capital strategies; and increasing alignment.

As Question five indicates, in 2022 75% of respondents indicated they received relevant information from the NBTA. In 2024, it was important to gain a more precise understanding of how relevant was being defined. Question five elicited this information, with a 99% response rate; the most common interpretation of relevant from amongst the given choices was “information that helps me make an informed decision” at 70%. Three other interpretations of relevant scored very close together: information that helps me grow as a professional (52%); information that helps me advocate for the profession (54%); and information that keeps me current in areas of personal or professional interest (50%). The final choice, information that helps me maintain my well-being scored 38%. It is important to remember that like other survey questions, these results do not measure respondents’ satisfaction, but rather agreement with broad potential categories of answers.

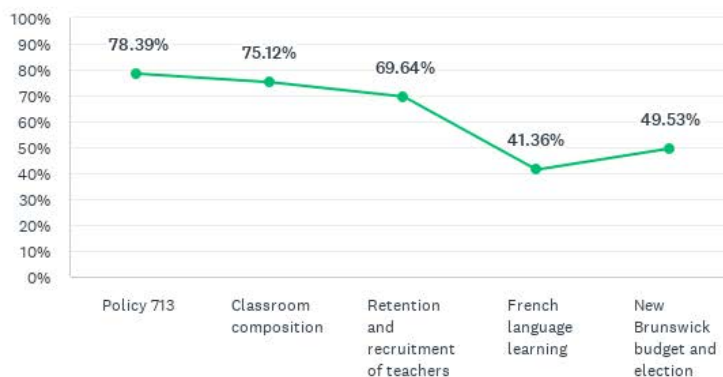
Question five results show that more than half of respondents consider information that helps them grow as a professional to be a definition of relevant. This result, combined with the numerous anecdotal comments pertaining to professional learning, suggest that as the organization renews, it should not lose sight of its role in professional learning. Further, as discussed in previous sections, the NBTA should carefully consider how to modernize this need in order to maintain this relevance for members. The second key result is that respondents appear to make a distinction between “information to help me maintain my well-being” and advocating for wellness. NBTA should examine the concepts of wellness and well-being so that valued products and services in this area continue to evolve to meet contemporary needs.

Keep ...striving for the financial and mental wellness of teachers through pays, schedules and class compositions.

Start ...Aggressively advocate for their members mental health. Many of us love teaching to our core but are just so done with the system that it's not worth staying anymore.

Stop ... just agreeing with government, speak up and actually fight for members. Don't be afraid to strike, go against government mandates. NBTA needs to actually fight for teachers, not simply agree to what is put forth by EECD.

Figure 13: Question 7 - I am aware of the NBTA's collaborative advocacy efforts related to (click all that apply):



Findings

1. Relatively few respondents (60%) understand the roles and responsibilities of branch volunteers.
2. Respondents have several specific examples for improving the Branch AGM.
3. Respondents are most likely to approach their NBTA School Rep. for information about the NBTA.
4. Members heavily rely on their colleagues for information about the NBTA.
5. Respondents rely most on the website for information.
6. Members continue to express support for direct-to-member emails (Mailchimp).
7. Members expect the NBTA to cut waste through reduction in paper consumption and printing costs.
8. Members continue to report a lack of understanding about the daily work of staff.
9. What one segment of the membership finds to be inclusive, supportive, and valuable, another segment may find to be lacking in value and unsatisfactory.
10. Confusion between the mandate of the NBTA (professional association) and the NBTF (union) continues to exist. However, comparison of similar results between 2022 and 2024 suggests improvement.
11. Members take a greater interest, and therefore find more value, in efforts for the future of the organization that may directly impact them (i.e., dues increase, branch reorganization).
12. Proactively involving and informing members about key decisions appears to be a strategy to engender trust.
13. There appears to be a positive shift underway suggesting that fewer members believe that the NBTA does not have power, influence, and capacity in matters of importance to the membership.
14. Perceptions of support (expected versus actual; positive versus negative) from a staff member have an impact on the relationship the member describes having with the NBTA.
15. Members do not appear to consider their personal contributions to the Association as a connection.
16. For the majority of respondents, their capacity to become more involved with the NBTA is maximized as they currently prioritize personal wellness or extracurricular activities.
17. Results suggest enhanced visibility of the work of the NBTA through quantitative analysis of awareness of advocacy issues, products and services, and professional growth opportunities.
18. The advocacy of the NBTA is sometimes described as too political and there is an undercurrent in results to not let this distract from educational issues or alienate some members.
19. Members continue to have most awareness of long-standing, member-wide initiatives, with fewer reporting awareness of new or segment-specific initiatives.
20. Results make it clear that providing opportunities for professional growth is valued by the membership.
21. There is a reasonable degree of congruence between what the NBTA currently prioritizes and what issues members self-identified to prioritize. What is unknown is the degree of satisfaction.

Recommendations

1. The NBTA should develop new strategies or incentives to increase the survey participation rates.
2. Branches should continue to focus on creative and engaging strategies to improve awareness of and support for the roles and responsibilities within the Branch.
3. Branches should use strategies to improve the overall experience of the Branch AGM.
4. The NBTA should continue to focus on skill development for NBTA School Reps. and Branch Executives.
5. The NBTA should continue to improve and enhance the website as a primary channel of communication.
6. The NBTA should strategize the timing, content, and accessibility of direct to member emails in order to leverage their relevancy.
7. The NBTA should target a reduction in paper consumption and enhance the visibility of these measures to the members.
8. The NBTA should increase avenues to let members know about the NBTA Service & Support Map.
9. The NBTA should continue to be mindful of initiatives or changes that may directly impact individual members and continue to actively involve and inform members in key decision-making around these topics.
10. The NBTA should examine in greater detail members' perceptions and satisfaction about the organization's power, influence, and capacity.
11. The NBTA should continue to employ strategies that overtly demonstrate the NBTA's influence by enhancing the visibility of this work.
12. The NBTA should maintain provision of professional growth opportunities as a priority service for the NBTA. It should engage in purposeful and informed discussions regarding professional learning: formats; topic areas; facilitation; structure; and funding. This should be done in tandem with work being done by EECD.
13. The NBTA and its affiliates should examine in greater detail supports that members envision regarding their own well-being.
14. Future surveys should prioritize measuring degrees of satisfaction.

Conclusion

Insight 2024 makes it clear that many respondents are aware of the work of volunteers, elected officials, and paid staff to modernize the NBTA so that it continues to be the valuable professional association members can rely upon. However, as the report also emphasizes, not all survey participants are content and they are using their collec-

tive voice to bring about pressure and urgency for change. And fortunately, the voices within the survey, although not unanimous by any means, offered a multitude of practical, budget-friendly, and streamlined suggestions to keep the Association on its future-focused path.

References

McKay, K. (2022). *Understandings and Experiences of Member Engagement in the New Brunswick Teachers' Association*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of New Brunswick (Canada)].

Empowering Children to Change the World Starts with Their Teachers

By Jennifer Stevens and Samantha Gawron, Learning for a Sustainable Future

With more wild storms, fires, floods, and searing heat, Canadians are increasingly concerned about climate change. But learning how best to respond to Canada's climate emergency remains a challenge. How do we create a climate-literate society that has the knowledge and motivation to act to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate? In the face of escalating environmental and social crises, education remains a crucial tool to enhance awareness, understanding, and action. Traditional teaching methods must evolve to address these complex issues and the eco-anxiety that young people face.

According to **Learning for a Sustainable Future's (LSF)** recent national climate change education survey, "**Canadians' Perspectives on Climate Change & Education**," 81 per cent of Canadians agree that climate change is happening, but only 55 per cent understand that greenhouse gas emissions are the primary cause. Only a very small portion of the population (17 per cent) think that the Canadian government is doing a good job addressing climate change. Half of Canadians believe that climate change is either causing or worsening mental health issues. Students are more likely than any other respondent group to report feeling anxious (41 per cent) or frightened (31 per cent).

There is wide agreement (64 per cent) that the education system should be doing "a lot more" to educate young

people about climate change. However, only a third (34 per cent) of educators feel they have the knowledge and skills needed to effectively teach climate change. They are calling out for more support in the form of more classroom resources, materials, and professional development.

The need for better climate change education is clear. In order to prepare our young people for a climate-altered future, our school system needs to do more. Canadians overwhelmingly say it is time for education ministries across Canada to incorporate climate change into virtually all subjects and across all grades K-12. This extends past science class to include geography, health, math, art, business, and others. Climate change connects to everything we learn in school.

In order for youth to feel capable of addressing complex global challenges, we must first equip educators. Educators need practical professional development that provides tools and strategies to foster critical thinking, engage global citizenship, and reduce eco-anxiety among their students. This needs to be supported with curriculum-connected resources focused on climate change, sustainability and Indigenous knowledge. In order to address eco-anxiety, students need more opportunities to learn about and take action on climate change.





LSF's **Resources for Rethinking (R4R)** database supports educators with more than 1,800 free or low-cost, peer-reviewed, curriculum-matched lesson plans, videos, books, and other materials, from over 250 publishers. The search tool connects teachers to resources that highlight climate change, the UN sustainable development goals, Indigenous ways of knowing, and more. "R4R is one of the few databases in the world that offer teacher-reviewed and curriculum-tailored content from Canadian perspectives," says Charles Hopkins, the UNESCO chair at York University. "The R4R database helps educators with teaching con-

tent and pedagogy to address these complex sustainability challenges in age-appropriate ways, make them relevant for their students, and move from teaching about to teaching for sustainability."

By embracing a multidimensional approach to education that encompasses climate change, sustainability, and Indigenous perspectives, educators empower students to become agents of positive change in their communities and beyond. It is empowerment to act that will build a foundation of hope!



Bio Note:

Jennifer Stevens is the director of learning, research, and communication at Learning for a Sustainable Future. At LSF she works to implement programming, conduct research, and integrate the ideals for a sustainable future into the Canadian school system by working directly with youth and supporting parents and teachers. Jennifer holds a master's in child study and education from the Jackman Institute of Child Studies at the University of Toronto and a bachelor of arts (honours) in psychology from Queen's University. She is passionate about all things outdoors and is always looking for new ways to integrate sustainable ideals into her life and work.

Sam Gawron, director of programs, engagement, and development at Learning for a Sustainable Future (LSF), is a graduate of the environment, sustainability, and society and international development programs at Dalhousie University and the University of King's College. She's been at LSF since 2015, where she leads programs to engage Canadian youth and educators in sustainability and climate change learning and action. Sam's past experience includes work with the Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre on their social enterprise cafe, a position on the Toronto Youth Food Policy Council, and participation in various multidisciplinary environmental education programs, such as the Upper Grand District's Headwaters program.

Stepping UP: Realizing Culturally Responsive Schools

Wabanaki Language Keepers

by Serena Sock, Delbert Moulton, and Mona Francis

In this article, three Wabanaki language keepers in New Brunswick's education system share their experiences in promoting and advancing their languages.

Profiles:

Serena Sock: A Mi'kmaw language keeper, educator, author, and translator in Elsipogtog, New Brunswick. She is a Language Teacher and Language Lead at Elsipogtog School and contributes to the New Brunswick Mi'kmaw language curriculum.

Delbert Moulton: A Wolastoqey language keeper, educator, writer, translator, and mentor. He develops provincial Wolastoqey curriculum and resources, teaches at Southern Victoria High School, and serves as an online Wolastoqey language teacher for New Brunswick high school students.

Mona Francis: A Mi'kmaw language keeper, educator, and curriculum developer from Elsipogtog, New Brunswick. She has developed resources for the online Mi'kmaw language course and is working on revised language courses and resources for the provincial curriculum.

Tell us a little about your journey and motivation to engage in this work?

Serena: When I was a little girl, I found some letters written in Mi'kmaw in my parent's bedroom. I would sit down and tried to read these letters and got really interested in them. Then, when I was in Grade 6, a language teacher, Dr. Mildred Milliea, came to our classroom for the first time and I was so impressed. That was my last year at Big Cove School before I went to town school, but the students who came after me in Big Cove were so lucky to have this. I have been really interested in the language ever since. Every course that would come out, I would join. When I got to university, I took more lessons. The biggest impact was when Dr.

Bernie Francis taught the teachers Mi'kmaw in our school. This is where I picked up a lot. I keep it; and I try to share it.

Mona: Growing up, I was made to feel like I was nothing, and we weren't encouraged to speak our language. It took a long time to regain my sense of identity and start speaking Mi'kmaw again. I never planned to be a teacher, but I realized the importance of passing on the language so others don't struggle like I did.

Delbert: I became a Wolastoqey language and Native Studies teacher in 2004 without knowing what I was getting into. With a strong background in language and 20 years of teaching experience in First Nations schools, I developed a Grade 9 and 10 program in the provincial school, exploring the importance of language to our identity.

Why are Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqey languages important in New Brunswick schools?

Serena: We are losing our languages fast. Our communities don't realize this, and we aren't communicating in Mi'kmaw much anymore. It's important to bring the language to our children, and we'll need help from the community and parents.

Mona: Our languages are just as important as French and English. They need to be recognized as first languages and official languages. Language is the common denominator that can bring our students together. Cliques start melting away when you involve language. Language builds community, and we are a community-oriented people.

Delbert: These languages should be legislated as official languages in our province. Our languages and language teachers deserve equal treatment as French and English.

What challenges have you experienced in your role?

Serena: The writing styles have been challenging. I initially taught using an older Mi'kmaw writing system, which frustrated parents and children. After learning a new system from Bernie Francis, I now teach it, but not everyone in my community wants to use it.

Mona: Teaching online is challenging, especially when students are enrolled just as a place to put them. These courses should be taken seriously.

Delbert: Online teaching can be difficult when students are placed in your class without sufficient information. For example, we might find out two months later that a student is on a PLP (Personal Learning Plan) and has an EA. This should be communicated in the beginning.

What are some of the good things you have experienced in your role?

Delbert: The online support team such as Paul Martin, Heather Roxborough and Allen Steeves are very knowledgeable and helpful in delivering the online Courses in NB and PEI. The online teachers are supportive to each other by sharing their expertise, which has helped me tremendously in teaching the Wolastoqey Courses. The staff are very helpful, and I learned a lot about programming and design from them. I had a great experience working with Will Dickeson, one of the designers. He and the other designers are very passionate about what they do. Working with teachers like Mona and helpful people like Craig Williamson at EECD has been a great experience.

Serena: This work is hard to do alone, but we aren't giving up. It's encouraging to work with others who are fighting for the language.

Mona: We now receive more respect and recognition than before. It's comforting to work with people who respect me as a Mi'kmaw person. We've had to fight hard to get where we are.

Many people talk about the revitalization that is happening with Indigenous languages. Do you see evidence of this among Wabanaki Peoples?

Mona: Yes, I see it big time. The way they are very creative in how they include their language and culture in what they are working on. Like rap in Mi'kmaw and playing the Honour Song on violins. They are doing these things which are relevant to them and are quite interesting to see. There's no limit to what you can do if you know your language and culture.

Delbert: In our area, land acknowledgments and performing O Canada in Wolastoqey are becoming more common. I've been working with Molly Brown and Sarah Francis at ASD-West to support Wolastoqey language learning in the district, and this is having a great impact.

Serena: I have hope. The resources I create need to be used and shared. We want them to be as good as possible so that children are proud to learn Mi'kmaw.

What advice do you have for those who want to follow your path and become a language teacher?

Serena: My advice is to start now, even though there aren't many language courses offered.

Delbert: I wish more would become language teachers. I help as much as I can. When people ask for my help, I'm there.

Mona: When students say the language is dying, I tell them it was, but not now.

The "Stepping UP: Realizing Culturally Responsive Schools" series is coordinated by EECD and NBTA contributors Kathy Whynot, Craig Williamson, Monique Hughes, and Chantal Lafargue. This article series is a space for teachers to highlight their journeys in embracing culturally responsive practice.



Serena Sock



Delbert Moulton



Mona Francis

TEACHER DESIGNED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING GRANTS 2025

by Kimberley McKay, Deputy Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

The New Brunswick Teachers' Association recognizes that teacher professional learning occurs within a broad spectrum of experiences and processes that lead to deepened understanding and improvement of practice. Effective professional learning strongly links teacher and student learning and is guided by evidence. Further, research highlights that effective professional learning must be personalized and responsive to the complex and unique needs and context of the learner.

As adult learners, teacher motivation for professional learning is linked to relevance, meaning and choice. Developing competence and a sense of self-efficacy by directing one's efforts to meet student needs is key to teachers undertaking professional learning. An integrated design that focuses upon student and teacher learning activities within a job-embedded context and supported by both time and resources is the ideal professional learning context.

WHAT IS A TEACHER DESIGNED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING GRANT?

TDPL is an annual school-based professional learning opportunity funded by the New Brunswick Teachers' Association. NBTA will award up to five \$1,500 grants for the calendar year January 2025 – December 2025. Interested teams of 3-5 teachers are invited to apply. Application forms will be available online after November 4th, 2024.

The TDPLG is intended to fund proposals from teachers who seek a peer leadership role in curriculum, instructional practice or supporting other teachers.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE TDPL GRANTS?

There are three goals associated with this grant:

1. support teacher professional learning within the context of improving student learning

2. foster teacher leadership
3. facilitate the sharing of exemplary practices

WHAT IS THE TDPL GRANT SELECTION PROCESS?

- Applicant teams develop a project proposal and complete an application form. Applications received after 4 pm on Thursday, December 9, 2024, will not be considered.
- The NBTA committee established to administer the grant fund will screen all applications received by the deadline. Proposal selection criteria are described in detail in the next section.
- Five successful team applicants will be notified by January 10, 2025. Start-up materials and funding will be delivered to each team.
- Unsuccessful team applicants will be notified by January 10, 2025.

WHAT IS THE SELECTION CRITERIA FOR TDPL GRANTS?

- I. The extent to which the project proposal is guided by characteristics of effective professional learning:
 - a. **Coherent** – project is designed within the context of both best practices for student learning and provincial/district/school mandates.
 - b. **Goal-Oriented** - project clearly connected to student learning, daily practice and provincial/district/school mandates.
 - c. **Sustainable** – proposal includes practice time, reflection time and a plan to progress over time with grant funding used for resources critical to the project.
 - d. **Evidence-Informed** – proposal considers current research as well as any formal or informal relevant data.
- II. The extent to which the project proposal demonstrates the following general characteristics:

- a. **Quality** – proposal is well thought out and realistic
- b. **Impact** – proposal has the potential to impact student development as well as the learning of participating teachers
- c. **Measurable** – project goals can be measured and clear description of how this will be done
- d. **Sharing** – proposal incorporates a specific plan for sharing the project with other educators
- e. **Demographics** – general consideration will be given to distributing grants to various levels (K-12) as well as geographic location, team composition, etc.

WHAT IS REQUIRED OF SUCCESSFUL TEAM APPLICANTS?

- meet with NBTA Staff Officer for a brief overview of TDPL requirements (school-based meeting/approx. 30 minutes)
 - carry out activities described in project proposal/application form
 - share project and team learning with colleagues via:
 - o Written article for *ConnectED* at project completion
- Or**
- o Team Choice (i.e. presentation to staff, offer Council Day session, electronic posting, etc.)
- submit a short report of the project using NBTA template
 - submit a financial report using NBTA template

Questions? Contact
kim.mckay@nbta.ca



NBTA
New Brunswick
Teachers' Association

Teaching about Politics: The K-12 Social Studies Teacher



Kevin Foster, New Brunswick Social Studies Educators' Network

While New Brunswickers are preparing to head to the polls October 21, 2024, this is a prime opportunity to engage students in robust discussions about our democratic system and the key issues facing New Brunswickers. From kindergarten to grade 12, several resources are available to maximize this opportunity. Many schools in New Brunswick have already registered for Student Vote, a program created by CIVIX that includes lesson plans, worksheets, student activities, PowerPoints, and videos to teach students about governance in New Brunswick. The program will culminate in an election held in schools to give students a chance to “vote.” If you are in a school that has not registered, it is not too late! Register with Student Vote to gain access to some of these resources (<https://studentvote.ca/nb/>).

Many other resources are available depending on your needs and grade levels. The following five are worth checking out:

1. CIVIX’s “politalks” provide instructions and resources to help engage students from grades 4 to 12 in a variety of styles of constructive discussion. These include common styles like Jigsaw; Think, Pair, Share; and Fishbowl. It also includes Thinking Colours, Save the Last Word, and World Café. A highlight includes Structured Academic Controversy, which allows students to really engage their listening skills and find common ground among differences. Resources can be found at <https://politalks.ca/resources/>
2. The Parliament of Canada has fun, digital resources for students in elementary and above. Online activities provide lessons on the rights of citizens, the different levels of government, how a bill goes through Parliament, and branches of government (<https://lop.parl.ca/About/Parliament/Education/classroom-activities-e.html>). There are also print-ready resources for teachers who would like to incorporate simulations in their classrooms. The Parliamentary Committee simulation is an excellent way to engage students in inquiry and debate. Currently, there are resources for an elementary class to engage in a simulation about a veggie bill (what parents can put in their child’s lunches) and resources for a secondary class to engage in a simulation about a social harmony bill (whether or not students can use social media in school). Aside from these classroom activities, teachers can also order books and view videos about all things Parliament (<https://lop.parl.ca/About/Parliament/Education/teacher-resources-e.html>)

3. Elections Canada (<https://electionsanddemocracy.ca>) provides materials and lessons for K-12 teachers (mostly secondary level). Lessons include an examination of the history of voting to consider the enfranchisement of women and Indigenous People in Canada. There are also lessons about the significance of voting (Does Voting Matter?) and going beyond voting to examine how to be a good citizen (Civic Action: Then and Now). They have resources for simulating an election in an elementary classroom that is cute and effective.

4. Elections NB provides a teachers’ toolkit with videos on levels of government and a quiz on New Brunswick political trivia (<https://www.electionsnb.ca/content/enb/en/resources/toolkit.html>).

5. For high school classes that can delve deeper into the political landscape of Canada, the Samara Center for Democracy has created a six-part podcast called *Humans of the House* that explores the path of members of Parliament into and out of politics. This series comes with lesson plans and activities and features former Fredericton MP Matt DeCoursey.

6. Join host Sabreena Delhon as she speaks with former Members of Parliament, to hear, in their own words, what this job is really like. (<https://www.samaracentre.ca/podcasts/humans-of-the-house-podcast>).



NBSSEN (New Brunswick Social Studies Educators’ Network) partners with the Social Studies Educators’ Network of Canada (SSENC) to connect teachers with social studies teaching resources for all grade levels. We would love to connect you with these resources. To join the NBSSEN mailing list and to receive our *Rising Tide* newsletter, please email Kevin Foster at kevin.foster@nbed.nb.ca or nb@ssencressc.ca. Also, check out <https://ssencressc.ca> to subscribe to SSENC and to learn about more social studies resources available to the classroom teacher.

CONTACT 2024

Balancing Rest and Growth

Dawn Beckingham, Director of Professional Learning Services

For teachers, summer break is a crucial time to rest and rejuvenate. After a year of lesson planning, assessing, and addressing the diverse needs of students, taking a step back and refuelling is essential. Activities like traveling, spending time with family, and pursuing personal hobbies help educators return to their roles in the fall with renewed energy and enthusiasm. At the same time, summer offers a window to participate in workshops, conferences, and courses. Many educators take this opportunity to pursue their professional learning. They experience a balance of relaxation and professional growth, making them well equipped with new energy, strategies, and insights to bring into the following year.

One of the standout professional learning opportunities this summer was CONTACT 2024, an Atlantic Canada teacher conference held in Corner Brook, Newfoundland (CONTACT stands for Conference on New Techniques and Classroom Teaching). Eighteen NBTA delegates attended and delved into the theme "From Awareness to Action: Empowering Inclusive Education." The conference emphasized the transition from simply understanding inclusivity to actively implementing practices that support all students. Classroom leaders and invited keynote speakers from Atlantic Canada engaged the participants in hands-on learning and in-depth discussions on the following topics:

- Understanding and Honouring Indigenous Perspectives
- Trauma-Informed Practice
- Building Safe and Relational Classroom Environments
- Strategies on Welcoming Newcomers
- Holistic Restorative Justice in Education
- The Promise and Perils of Artificial Intelligence in Inclusive and Personalized Education
- Taking Learning to the Great Outdoors
- Promoting Inclusivity for the 2SLGBTQ+ Community in Schools

In addition to the formal sessions, CONTACT always provides ample opportunities for networking and collaboration. Every NBTA member should experience CONTACT at least once.



Contact 2025 will be hosted by NBTA! Stay tuned for next year's theme.

Save the date: August 5-8, 2025, on UNB Saint John Campus

Send your name to evan.vanbuskirk@nbta.ca or dawn.beckingham@nbta.ca to put your name on the participant list (25 seats available)

Why is Professional Learning Important?

Dawn Beckingham, Director of Professional Learning



No matter how much experience teachers have in the classroom, they are confronted with new challenges each year. Research shows that continuous professional learning improves instructional practices and student learning. Council Days provide that opportunity, and with the help

of our New Brunswick expertise Council Days can be great. Please consider joining your school- or branch-based PL committee or your NBTA Council to tailor these days to what you feel is needed. Your input is important.

The Article 36.02 in the NBTF Collective Agreement provides teachers with three days during the school year in which PL is mutually arranged by NBTA, AEFNB, and EECD. We call those Council Days, and NBTA Policy 612 lays out the guidelines on their use. For the 2024- 2025 school year, those day are in August, May and June.

Responsibility of local PL committee

August 27: Collaboration between NBTA PL chairs and districts. Can be school based, branch based, or district based.

Responsibility of NBTA Councils

Council Day: May 2, 2025
Elementary in Miramichi with Phys Ed strand
Middle Level in Moncton with Art strand
High School in Fredericton with Music strand

Responsibility of local PL committee

June 23: Collaboration between NBTA PL chairs and districts. Can be school based, branch based, or district based.

Data and Member Feedback from Council Day 2024

Attendance: in person 2,014 members (35 per cent), virtually 3,722 members (65 per cent); 1,845 feedback responses

General feedback themes:

- Opportunity to collaborate with colleagues in person
- Virtual platform met the needs of many
- Middle Level food trucks were a hit
- Parking was an issue in some areas
- Virtual sound for David Myles was an issue
- Specialty sessions are appreciated
- Not enough French sessions
- Administrator, school counsellor, and social studies sessions were appreciated
- Positives words about Jody Cunningham, FASD presenters, Drew Dudley, David Myles, Wabanaki content, Big Daddy Tazz, Jenni Donohoo, and many more
- Thank you to the Council Day volunteer organizers!

Awards

We know there is a fantastic teacher on your staff who is deserving of an award. Nominate them today: <https://www.nbta.ca/councils/> . These praiseworthy teachers will be recognized at their respective Council AGM in May.



Call for Presenters

Call for presenters is now open. Deadline for submissions is December 13. The more submissions we receive, the richer the program will be. You are an expert, and we need you! Submit through the NBTA website.



Elementary Council

Barbara Brown, Napan Elementary School

As the golden hues of summer give way to the vibrant colors of autumn, I hope each of you had the opportunity to relax, rejuvenate, and relish the warm days. Whether you spent time exploring new places, diving into a good book, or simply recharging with family and friends, I hope your break was both restful and enjoyable and that you have a wonderful start to the new school year.

My name is Barbara Brown, and I am your newly elected Elementary Council President. I am the principal of Napan Elementary in the wonderful ASD-N. I'm very happy to share that this year's Elementary Council will be held in my hometown of Miramichi. Our Elementary Council is made up of a wonderful group of teachers who volunteer their time to organize an enriching and inspiring Council Day. This year,

we're collaborating with the Physical Education strand to bring you a day filled with movement, collaboration, and meaningful learning, either online or in person.

Last year, we hosted some outstanding institutes and professional learning experiences beyond the classroom. Elementary Council is excited to offer more enriching opportunities for teachers across the province this year. Stay tuned to NBTA communications for updates and details. We look forward to seeing you at these events and sharing the excitement of fresh ideas and opportunities.

Wishing you all a wonderful year ahead, full of growth, joy, and success!



Elementary Council Award Winners



Sarah Cogswell – Bristol Elementary School

Sarah has been teaching at Bristol Elementary School for most of her career. She is currently the grade 2 teacher. If you walk into her classroom, you will see her working with a group of students while the other students are engaged in activities. Sarah spends time finding new activities and games so that her students have fun while learning. Her “You and Your World” lessons change from Lego blocks and creating towers to cars and a garage. The students are always learning and eager to participate. When she is teaching, the students know what is expected of them, and they know the work standard is high. She goes the extra mile to make it fun and interesting, using technology in the classroom for listening and reading activities. As part of her extracurricular activities, she teaches chess. Her enthusiasm for chess is contagious. The students love playing and learn strategic moves. They are pleased to return from the tournament with a trophy or just the experience of friendly competition.

Over the years, Sarah has stayed on top of the current practices by reading and putting into practice what works. She currently is involved in differentiated learning through EGLA assessments and Building BrainWorks for Beginners to assist students with reading. Her classroom is filled with learning aids for the students and their work.

Parents know and appreciate Sarah’s communication and the ways she makes them feel involved in their children’s education. Sarah shares pictures of class events, displays their artwork on the bulletin boards often, and stays in touch on a regular basis. She uses every moment for learning opportunities as she goes over the Bossy R and Magic E. Her colleagues turn to her for her advice and to share their ideas, as one of the most experienced teachers at the school. She is a good listener and helpful colleague. She certainly deserves this award.

Leanne Delaney – Frank L. Bowser School

Leanne has graced ASD-East with her artistic prowess for over thirty years. She is a phenomenal music specialist who has worked in all levels from K-12. She began the In Harmony violin program sixteen years ago and continues collaboration with Sistema NB to this day. Her many extracurricular groups include choirs and drama productions. Leanne stands out as an inspiration for students, teachers, and musicians within her community and beyond, whether it be in the classroom, leading a violin concerto, heading up a large musical production, or fostering collaboration and problem-solving, all while serving the needs of the whole child.

She has been the district music lead for over twenty years and has given numerous PL sessions to teachers throughout the district. Her passion for music is infectious. Her energy and enthusiasm for arts education has been the gold standard for decades. Leanne’s institutional knowledge and experience will be sorely missed when she retires in June.



Nancy Sansom – Stanley Consolidated School

Nancy is a legend in the teaching profession in New Brunswick. Her passion and love for teaching, her students, and her community are unparalleled. She has been teaching in the NB school system for sixty years, a truly legendary length of service. She has been through many changes in education, has a great deal of knowledge, and continues to share her advice and expertise with her colleagues. Nancy has worked at Stanley School since moving to the area in 1972. Over her career, she has worked as a teacher, vice-principal, and principal. The influence she has had on generation after generation of students and their families is staggering. She is more than deserving of this award.

Elementary Council Award Winners



Teena Duplisea – St. Martins School

Teena has been teaching for thirty years, spending most of that time passionately teaching grades 1 to 3 in St. Martins. She has been a coach, a Reading Recovery teacher, and a mentor for new teachers. Teena has an energy that excites her students to learn. She thinks far outside the box, and each day her lessons are engaging and meaningful. Teena is ahead of the game in terms of the latest best practices in numeracy and literacy. Teena has inspired her fellow teachers and impressed parents. The number of parents who state that Teena changed their child's school experience is outstanding, and having her as a teacher is hailed as a turning point for readers in the community. She truly knows her students and works hard to meet every need and engage them in every learning opportunity. Her classroom is a positive environment with learning stations, exploration centres, and experiential learning. She is dedicated to teaching outside the classroom with outdoor learning and explorations of all St. Martins has to offer. She teaches empathy and kindness, and her classroom-management skills are almost magical. Teena is humble; she is not a teacher who would ever look to be recognized, but she deserves all the recognition possible. She truly makes our profession proud.

Carla Kolada – Nashwaak Valley School

Carla is an advocate for diversity and inclusion and goes above and beyond to ensure that every single child is seen as an important part of her classroom and the school. She looks for opportunities to lead not only her students but others in the field of education. She gives freely of her time, energy and expertise and has made presentations to many district and provincial committees and been a headlining keynote speaker to hundreds of educators at an Inclusion NB conference. She has also worked with many parents of children with diverse needs through workshops, has presented at a conference in Saint John, at Compass beginning-teacher conferences, served on numerous panels, and has led countless workshops at UNB. She also presented at the Canadian Down Syndrome conference. Carla has taken on leadership roles within the school, such as math lead and special events coordinator, and as math lead at the district level. She spent several years creating resources to support our curriculum and shared them with district colleagues. Carla has worked annually with UNB and STU to host new interns as both a cooperative teacher and the liaison teacher for her school. Congratulations to Carla on receiving this award!



Marly Sutherland – Max Aitken Academy

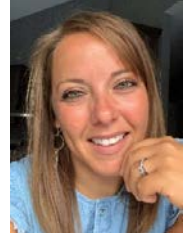
Marly is a grade 1 immersion teacher and the mother of four active boys. Despite the demands of work and home, she has taken on the pivotal role of school wellness rep, responsible for fostering a positive and supportive environment among a staff of over a hundred members. Her contributions to her school community are nothing short of remarkable. She has organized and executed various engaging activities and challenges aimed at boosting staff morale, such as scavenger hunts, a heartwarming "whose baby picture is it?" game, and a bake sale (making most of the treats herself). Proceeds from the sale went back into prizes for participating staff. Marly created a survey to gather insights from staff, forming an interest list. Each month, she selects a suggestion from this bank, offering the staff new and exciting experiences. She has helped organize a staff potluck, a holiday gathering, and is currently leading an after-school session to teach crochet to interested staff members. She is planning an exercise boot camp/yoga sessions to keep staff active. She works tirelessly to foster a positive workplace culture. Marly's selflessness, kindness, and giving nature continue to astound those fortunate enough to work alongside her.

Middle Level Council

Presenting Middle Level Council 2024! First up, we have our fearless leader, commander in chief, head of state . . . it's our president, **Tamara Carter**! We are so happy to have Tamara in the role of president again this year. We look forward to another great Council Day in May, and we cannot wait to get started on planning it! Let's meet the rest of our team:



Rachel Legere: I am new to the Middle Level Council. It's my sixteenth year teaching, and I have spent the past eight years at the middle level, teaching French immersion math at Millidgeville North School in Saint John.



Erin-Beth Daneluk: I started my teaching career in 2007. I am a math teacher at Perth-Andover Middle School, where I also serve as the NBTA representative. This is my second year on the Middle Level Council, and I'm excited to be in charge of Institutes this year. Looking forward to a fantastic 2024-2025 school year!



Kendra McLean: I am a teacher of twenty-plus years in Miramichi and have taught in multiple grade levels and subject areas. My love of teaching started in Japan and Alberta, and I finally settled in my hometown of Miramichi. My favourite subjects are music and the humanities. I am a mother of two daughters, one of whom is graduating this coming year; the other is in grade 7. This is my first year on Middle Level Council, and I am looking forward to working with this wonderful group of teachers.



Jennifer Hickey: I teach grade 8 FI math and am an academic support teacher for numeracy at Bayside Middle School in Saint John. I've been teaching since 2008, and this is my fourth year serving as your treasurer on Middle Level Council.



Liza Muise: Hello, everyone! This is my nineteenth year teaching. I am an ELA teacher and vice-principal of Barnhill Memorial School in Saint John. This is my second year as an MLC member, and I look forward to assisting in all that is middle school! Cheers to a great school year!



Robert Jeffrey: I teach humanities at Bayside Middle. This is my third year on council, and I'm looking forward to bringing high-quality, informative, and interesting presenters to you during council days. I've been in the teaching game for fifteen years now, with the past five teaching middle school, and it's my personal goal to make Council Day one of the best days in your teaching year. Please reach out to any of us if you have ideas or contacts that you know could help our professional learning. Don't be shy! Let's make this year's day the best the province has ever seen!



Breanna Saulnier: Breanna is currently on maternity leave. We patiently await her return to Middle Level Council as our vice-president.



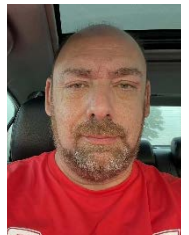
Kaitlin LeClair: I teach primarily grade 5 French immersion as well as grades 6 to 8 FI at Campbellton Middle School (CMS). I am entering my seventh year of teaching this fall. I am the NBTA school rep for CMS and secretary for Branch 1538. This is my second year on Middle Level Council, and this year I am stepping into the role of communications coordinator. Wishing you all a great school year!



Jonathan Spiritts: I am your MLC secretary and professional-learning chair. I'm back at Lewisville Middle school (ASD-E) working as an ELA teacher. Come January, this will be my eleventh year teaching, and I look forward to putting another successful program together with your team in my home base (Moncton).



Richard Williams: I am serving in my third year on Middle Level Council. I have been working in New Brunswick for the last six years and in education and related fields for twenty-five years. I presently teach humanities and other electives at Saint Mary's Academy.



High School Council Award Winners



NBTA High School Council President Peter Woytiuk presents Teacher Recognition Certificates to Kelly Coughlan and Heather Ryan at Council Day 2024.

Council Day
May 2, 2025



Elementary
& Phys. Ed. Specialists Strand
Miramichi



Middle Level
& Art Specialists Strand
Moncton



High School
& Music Specialists Strand
Fredericton



Remember When
MIRAMICHI

“Put Your Best Foot Forward”

James M Hill Memorial High School
78 Henderson Street, Miramichi



Saturday, November 2nd



9:00 AM - 3:30 PM



Social Friday November 1st
8 PM to Midnight
Mike's Bar and Grill



Register here!



Heidi Ryder Elected NBTA VP/President-Elect



Heidi Ryder is the NBTA Vice-President/President Elect for 2024-25. She was elected to the role in April 2024 at the conclusion of the most recent campaign in which Harmien Dionne also ran.

Heidi, who is the principal of James Memorial High School in Miramichi, is entering her twenty-fifth year of teaching and of involvement with her professional association. She has held numerous positions at the local branch level: school rep, secretary, PL chair, president, alternate director, and director. Over her years serving teachers she has also sat on many provincial committees from the 100th Anniversary Ad Hoc in 2001 to the In-School Administration Committee in 2023. In between she has sat on the Board of Directors and various committees and the most recent Structure and Services Review. Heidi was also the NBTA appointee to the provincial Teacher Certification Appeals Committee. As a New Brunswick Teachers' Federation member, she has been part of the Federation Committee on Terms and Conditions of Employment and the Employee-Employer Relations Committee.

Heidi holds a BA, BEd, and MEd from the University of New Brunswick. She has worked at elementary and high school, as an online facilitator, and as an administrator. In 2018 she was recognized by the Learning Partnership as one of Canada's Outstanding Principals.

Branch	Harmien Dionne	Heidi Ryder	Abs.	Total
0214	7	50	1	58
0215	30	354	4	388
0216	5	57	2	64
0217	4	34	2	40
0618	8	100	2	110
0619	25	228	4	257
0820	30	345	16	391
1021	0	30	0	30
1022	3	14	0	17
1023	6	64	1	71
1428	4	28	1	33
1429	6	79	2	87
1430	27	51	1	79
1431	28	32	6	66
1450	29	12	0	41
1454	6	9	0	15
1536	1	20	0	21
1538	5	43	1	49
1542	3	72	0	75
1608	1	166	0	167
1610	5	154	1	158
1640	3	40	0	43
1724	4	34	0	38
1725	10	152	2	164
1809	0	25	0	25
1826	33	320	7	360
1827	6	31	1	38
Total	289	2542	54	2885
%	10.0%	88.1%	1.9%	100%

Do you know a fantastic teacher?

Nominate them for one of the NBTA's provincial awards

- Centennial Award
- Vince Sunderland Award for Outstanding Educational Leadership
- NBTA Credit Union Award for Excellence in Teaching
- Indu Varma Award for Creativity in Education

Deadline: December 1

***online nomination process* www.nbta.ca**



NBTA Credit Union Award for Excellence in Teaching 2024

Michael Flinn — Teacher, Riverview High School

The NBTA Credit Union Award for Excellence in Teaching is presented each year to a member of the New Brunswick Teachers' Association who is recognized by peers and the community for exhibiting excellence through an ongoing commitment to students and pedagogical approaches. The NBTA Credit Union has proudly sponsored this award since 2017.

In May 2024, the award was presented to an inspiring and caring teacher whose inclusive and joyful approach in his humanities classes fosters critical thinking and student engagement. By building a sense of belonging for all students no matter their backgrounds, skills, needs, or interests, this teacher promotes project-based learning and leadership opportunities for students to develop as model citizens. Colleagues describe him as knowledgeable, humble, quirky, and "the teacher" whose passion for learning reaches learners who are seemingly unreachable.



Vince Sunderland Memorial Award for Outstanding Educational Leadership 2024

Noella Owens — Retired Principal, Gesner Street Elementary



Noella Owens

The Vince Sunderland Memorial Award for Outstanding Educational Leadership was established in 2006 and is sponsored by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The award is presented each year to a principal, vice-principal, or administrative team who demonstrates the qualities of successful educational leadership and fosters a positive school climate. The award is named in honour of the first recipient, Vince Sunderland, a vice-principal at Riverview High School, who embodied all the characteristics recognized by this award.

In May 2024, the award was presented to a leader who leads with compassion, making sure to place student and staff well-being at the centre of decision-making. Through co-creating a school culture where student, parent, teacher, and staff voices are honoured, she has motivated those around her to work toward achieving common goals as a community.

Indu Varma Award for Creativity in Education 2024

Amy Tompkins — K-5 Learning Specialist, Centres of Excellence

The Indu Varma Fellowship Award for Creativity in Education recognizes an exceptional teacher who exhibits excellence in collaborative, creative, and interdisciplinary teaching practices. The teacher creates a high degree of student engagement by linking various subject areas taught within the curriculum and focusing on artistic and creative aspects — such as art, music, and drama — and demonstrates significant community involvement. The emphasis is on student-led creative and ingenious projects that promote inventiveness and foster higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills. This fellowship provides financial support for the further development of the innovative project or these teaching practices.

In May 2024, the award was presented to a teacher whose impact spans across elementary schools throughout New Brunswick. This educator encourages teachers and community partners to work together and find solutions, bringing meaningful real-world activities into the classroom. Teachers who have invited her to work alongside them say that her creativity and innovative approaches have “gone viral,” which speaks volumes about her successful virtual and hybrid interactive lessons.



Amy Tompkins

Indu Varma
(NBTA President
2005-2007)

NBTA Centennial Award 2024

Paul Michaud — Administrator, NB Virtual Learning Centre

The NBTA Centennial Award is the highest honour bestowed by the New Brunswick Teachers' Association. Established in Canada's Centennial Year, 1967, the award is presented each year to an individual who has made a significant contribution to education in New Brunswick.

In May 2024, the award was presented to an exceptional educator with a thirty-five-year career spanning classroom teaching, school-based administration, online teaching, and administration. As the years passed and technology evolved, he slowly became the hub of virtual-learning support for teachers and students across New Brunswick and beyond our borders at offshore schools. Most educators have never met him in person, but they know that they can count on his sense of humour and problem-solving skills to fix any glitch, anytime, anywhere. For this and countless other reasons, this trailblazing educator is recognized for his contributions to the teaching profession and for his service to New Brunswick public education.



NBTA Honorary Life Membership 2024

Carmen Meehan — NBTA Teacher Counsellor



The NBTA board of directors confers the New Brunswick Teachers' Association Honorary Life Membership on those who demonstrate exemplary contributions to the NBTA or public education on a provincial or national level.

In May 2024, the NBTA honoured Carmen Meehan. Carmen is known for her calming demeanour and many admire her for her empathy and ability to see both sides of an issue and suspend judgment. These qualities have served her well in the many roles she has had throughout her career.

Originally from Sussex, Carmen has a bachelor of education and a master's in education in guidance and counselling, both from UNB. She began teaching in the fall of 1984 in the Northwest Territories at the community college level, and she moved back to the Maritimes to teach kindergarten before becoming a long-term supply teacher at Belleisle Regional High School. She then made a shift back to adult education, working as an instructor at New Brunswick Community College in Saint John and later in Sussex. In 1994 she was recruited to work as a teacher and coordinator at PALS, or Partners in Alternate Learning Strategies, a learning environment designed to focus on the social, emotional, and academic needs of adult- and school-aged students who require an alternative setting. Following this, she assumed the position of vice-principal at Sussex Middle School in 2005.

Carmen joined the NBTA Professional Counselling Service for Teachers in 2008, advancing to the position of coordinator in 2009, where she assisted teachers in school districts 6, 8, and 10. She modelled a growth mindset and a passion for wellness through her countless workshops. She strengthened relationships with school administrators and district leaders as she calmly responded to numerous critical incidents in schools. Her daily one-on-one counselling sessions with clients also focused on developing resilience and strategies for prevailing in challenging circumstances.

For a decade, she served all schools in Anglophone South School District. In 2018 she stepped away from the program to accept a guidance position at Sussex Regional High School. She returned to the Professional Counselling Program for Teachers in 2021 when the team doubled its staff and remained on the team until her retirement in 2023. Those who worked with her closely say that her commitment to the well-being of New Brunswick's teachers was evident in her steadfast vision. One of her many lasting contributions was leading the counselling team in creating and developing a strategic plan for the program.

NBTA Honorary Life Membership 2024

Andy Stewart — NBTA Teacher Counsellor



In May 2024, the NBTA also honoured Andrew Stewart. Andy is known for bringing a sense of playful joy into every space he shares with colleagues. This levity and the compassion he exhibits in his interactions are hallmarks of his supportive approach to client-focused service to teachers.

His journey in teaching and counselling spans thirty-five years of working with children, adolescents, and adults in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. Hailing from Sunny Corner, New Brunswick, Andy obtained a bachelor of art in communication studies from Concordia University and later a bachelor of education and master of education in counselling and human development from the University of New Brunswick. At the beginning of his career, Andy worked as an adult education teacher for the English-as-a-second-language program at the CEGEP level in Quebec, and he was assistant manager of a YMCA English summer program which served 1,550 children and youth. From 1990-1996, when he was a teacher for the Kativik School Board, he created and coordinated a stay-in-school project for at-risk Inuit youth that included entrepreneurial work simulations, job shadowing, and academic upgrading. The program entailed liaising with community members and providing individual and group counselling aimed at empowering youth.

In 1997 he returned to New Brunswick and worked for Breakthrough Performance in Miramichi, supervising staff at this career centre and providing counselling to adults. Shortly thereafter he became an elementary French second-language teacher, and he later moved into various guidance roles, facilitating support in crisis response and non-violent crisis intervention for his district's twenty-three schools, including as the alternate program counsellor from 2010-12. He lent his extensive expertise to Anglophone North School District until 2021, and Andy has also been an entrepreneur since 2002 at Fresh Start Training and Counselling, which offers a solutions-focused reality therapy approach.

Andy holds multiple counselling specializations and has contributed to his professional association throughout his career, particularly at the local level. Volunteer roles include serving as alternative for Branch 1608, NBTA grievance officer for Branch 1610, and NBTA wellness representative and facilitator in School District 16. In 2021, he joined the Professional Counselling Program for Teachers when the team doubled its staff, and he remained there until his retirement in 2024. Those who worked with him closely say that his big heart and laughter will be missed by all, as will his gift for integrating nature-based learning into professional learning sessions for teachers.

ICTC's CyberTitan: Digital Literacy Gateway for Students and Teachers

Paul Stastny, Communications Officer ICTC-CTIC

Fredericton's Nashwaaksis Middle School has nurtured some extraordinary student accomplishments in a Canada-wide cybersecurity competition called CyberTitan, placing first in the middle school division five times in the last seven years.

This year's CyberTitan National Final had students battling a fictional cybersecurity threat to an airport. Nashwaaksis's grade 8 CyberDragons came in first place. The grade 6 Firewall Fighters placed second. Both teams beat a few high school finalist teams. High performance of this sort raises several questions. What is Nashwaaksis's secret sauce? What are students getting out of CyberTitan? And for that matter, why focus on cybersecurity?

Cybersecurity Big Picture

As the world becomes more digitized and cyberattacks proliferate, cybersecurity is falling behind.

According to the latest World Economic Forum (WEF) report, nearly four million professionals are needed in the cybersecurity industry, with an estimated global talent shortage reaching more than eighty-five million workers by 2030. In Canada, one out of every six cybersecurity openings goes unfilled.

As a province, New Brunswick has recognized the importance of cybersecurity and fashioned itself as one of Canada's top academic cybersecurity hubs. The University of New Brunswick is home to the Canadian Institute for Cybersecurity, and significant public and private investment has created a thriving cybersecurity ecosystem of startups and scale-ups. The province presents a golden opportunity for middle and high schools to feed into this cybersecurity talent pipeline.

Secret Sauce

CyberTitan is a middle and high school program that culminates annually with the CyberTitan National Finals in May. Organized by the Information and Communication Technology Council (ICTC), the program involves six months of school-year cybersecurity competitions among 196 Canadian teams and thousands of international affiliated teams through the US Air Force Association's CyberPatriot program.

Gary Gautreau, Nashwaaksis team CyberTitan coach and technology teacher, says the secret sauce to CyberTitan's success is hands-on learning and finding the right students. "Our students participate in daily practice sessions by choice, allowing them to apply theoretical knowledge they've researched directly on the computer in front of them," he says.





Many students welcome this kind of immersion in digital technologies; teachers less so. Timothy King, ICTC's cybersecurity education coordinator and a registered teacher in Ontario, says schools have generally been slow to adopt digital technologies or appreciate digital literacy's importance. "Digital literacy today is like basic literacy," says King. "If you don't have those skills, you are disadvantaged. You're basically illiterate."

King coached CyberTitan teams to top-five finishes in 2018 and 2020 in his hometown of Fergus, Ontario. He's on a mission to improve digital literacy among students and teachers. He says CyberTitan is one of the best ways to do this. "The insights you get from CyberTitan is like opening the hood of a car and pulling apart the engine to see how things work rather than polishing the car." Teachers shouldn't fear getting in over their heads with CyberTitan, he adds, because ICTC provides all the support they need. "And in New Brunswick, you've also got all sorts of additional support — the provincial minister of education and early childhood development supports cybersecurity. The Canadian Institute for Cybersecurity will provide you with a mentor to help you and your students. So you're never doing this alone," King says.

Girls' Teams

King's parallel mission is to encourage more girls in the STEM fields. Intense gender stereotyping has many girls in

grades 8 through 10 drifting away from math, science, and digital technology. Having coached the first-ever all-girls team to a CyberTitan Nationals, King notes the importance of setting positive examples in having all-girls CyberTitan teams and creating co-ed teams. "Girls change a team's culture by turning off the negative tech-bro approach that boys tend to adopt," he says. "There's more collaboration, better communication, and better results."

Start a CyberTitan Team Today

For many students, CyberTitan competitions are a high-water mark in their education journey. Grade 8 student Jneid El Jneid says joining the Cyber Dragons was "probably one of the best decisions I have made."

For teachers considering CyberTitan, Nashwaaksis's Gautreau says, "Go for it! It's a fantastic opportunity for both teachers and schools to get students involved in cybersecurity. It's hands-on, real-world stuff that prepares them for future careers. Plus, it's not just about tech skills; it's about critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork — all essential nowadays."

For more information about ICTC's CyberTitan program and to receive an early registration discount, please visit <https://etalentcanada.ca/for-educators/programs/cybertitan>.



Music Exchange: NB to BC

by Alex Wojcicki, Grade 10 student, Leo Hayes High School
Submitted by Jennifer Horsman, Music Teacher/Band Director, Leo Hayes High School

The 2023-24 school year was a busy and exciting year for both Leo Hayes High School (LHHS) and Nackawic High School (NHS) music departments. Each school had individual success with rehearsals and concerts, and an unlikely event united both schools together for an experience nobody will forget.

In October 2024, Anglophone School District West music offered a music-exchange opportunity through Experiences Canada to Mrs. Jennifer Horsman, music director at LHHS. The exchange took place between Garibaldi Secondary School (GSS) in Maple Ridge, British Columbia, and LHHS in Fredericton, New Brunswick. The Experiences Canada Cultural Exchange program provides air transportation for thirty students. This was more than the number of students in the band program, so Mrs. Horsman approached NHS music teacher Mrs. Jennifer (Purdue) Meldrum to discuss a potential collaboration

“Excitement arose among students because for so many, an opportunity such as this was something no one was expecting”

“For me, it was kinda like disbelief because I’m so unused to getting such big opportunities in such a small community.” Ally Lewis, Nackawic High School baritone saxophone player.

Over the next couple of months, there was a significant amount of collaboration and fundraising for both LHHS and NHS. To help defray the cost of a variety of activities while in British Columbia and foster relationships, multiple fundraising events occurred throughout the winter for students at both schools, culminating in a dessert concert with food preparation by the LHHS culinary tech team. In preparation for the trip, musician Josie Colford designed a logo for

our team hoodies, which were purple, a combination of the blue and red colours of our respective high schools.

“Before the students knew it, May 1st had arrived.”

Both schools arrived in the wee hours of the morning at the Fredericton Airport sporting their purple hoodies and instruments, bound for six days of adventure on the West Coast, excited to meet new friends and make new memories. With the time change between the East Coast and West Coast, we arrived early with enough time to explore downtown Vancouver before meeting our host families at GSS, visiting Canada Place 400 to search the walkway bricks for New Brunswick towns and cities like Plaster Rock, Fredericton, and a few other significant places. Over the next six days, we visited Whistler, a concert performance at *časqonele* Elementary School; the University of British Columbia music department; attended a band workshop with Dr. Scott MacLellan, adjunct professor of music education at UBC; explored Capilano Suspension Bridge; Stanley Park; and wrapped up the exchange with a potluck supper and concert with GSS. We spent our last day in Vancouver with our host families enjoying West Coast culture.

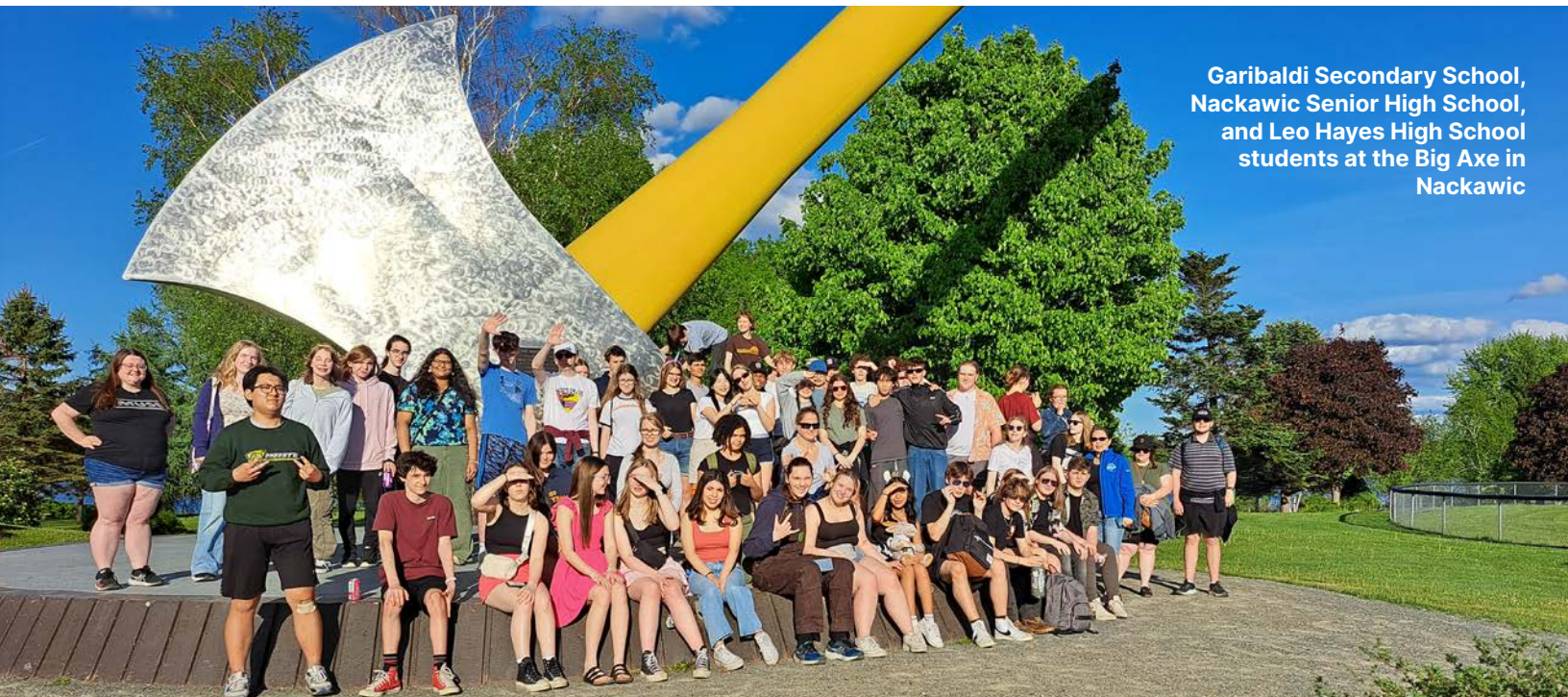
LHHS and NHS students returned home to Fredericton on May 6, but the exchange was only half over. On May 23, the GSS students arrived in Fredericton. Families in Fredericton and Nackawic hosted the Maple Ridge students, which fostered more friendships because the GSS students stayed with different NB host families than we stayed with in BC. During their time in New Brunswick, the GSS students visited multiple tourist sites such as the Hopewell Rocks, the Big Axe in Nackawic, and the Los Cabos drumstick factory. LHHS and NHS also took part in those adventures. The GSS students also visited Dumfries Maple Syrup to see the pro-



Leo Hayes and Nackawic students in Vancouver at Canada Place 400

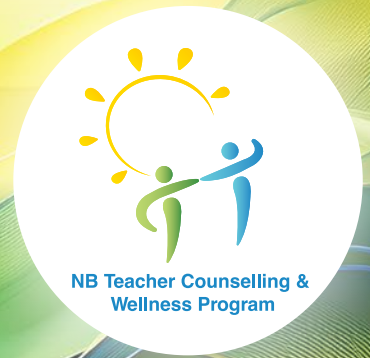
cess and production of maple syrup. The students from all three schools socialized at a barbecue followed by a kitchen party in Nackawic, complete with a walk down to the Big Axe. As a grand finale and farewell to GSS students, students from all three schools took part in a final concert performance at LHHS on Tuesday, May 28, where each school performed individually and as part of a mass band. This included the GSS concert band, jazz band and jazz singers, NHS concert band, and LHHS concert band and jazz band. The concert concluded with performances of Neil Diamond's famous "Sweet Caroline" and "Fire Dance" by D. Shaffer, marking the end of a successful exchange.

I strongly recommend that any teacher presented with a similar opportunity accept it. These co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities not only provide a "cool" experience but also allow students to make memories and friendships that will last a lifetime. As a ninth-grade student in my first year of high school band, this trip was fun because I experienced other parts of Canada. More importantly, it allowed me to build connections and relationships with band members outside my trumpet section as well as with other musicians in ASD-W and nationally. "For me, it was kind of like disbelief, because I'm so unused to getting such big opportunities in such a small community," says Ally Lewis, a Nackawic High School baritone saxophone player. Through the shared experience, this trip helped our school band become a tighter group and better musicians.



Garibaldi Secondary School, Nackawic Senior High School, and Leo Hayes High School students at the Big Axe in Nackawic

Your Teacher Counsellors



Micheal LeBlanc
Counsellor/Wellness Coordinator
Fredericton & Oromocto
Education Centres
506-462-0208
michael.leblanc@nbta.ca



Lisa Vienneau
Counsellor/Wellness Coordinator
Fredericton & Woodstock
Education Centres
506-325-3932
lisa.vienneau@nbta.ca



Lisa Calhoun
Counsellor/Wellness Coordinator
ASD-East
506-855-5243
lisa.calhoun@nbta.ca



Michael Tremblett
Counsellor/Wellness Coordinator
ASD-North
506-624-2103
mike.tremblett@nbta.ca



Sara Hayward
Counsellor/Wellness Coordinator
Saint John & St. Stephen
Education Centres
506-832-6032
sara.hayward@nbta.ca



Karrie Harris
Counsellor/Wellness Coordinator
Saint John & Hampton
Education Centres
506-634-2901
karrie.harris@nbta.ca

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Applications for the 2025 Loran Award open soon and we need your help!

We are offering thirty-six Loran Awards to high school graduates across Canada who are university-bound and who demonstrate strength of **character**, a commitment to **service**, and **leadership** potential.

Offered in partnership with twenty-five Canadian universities, the Loran Award is renewable for up to four years of undergraduate studies. But it's not just about financial support; it's about personal growth. Loran Scholars benefit from a four-year leadership-enrichment program, financial support for undergraduate studies in the form of a tuition waiver and living stipend, diverse opportunities for experiential learning, one-on-one mentorship from a business or community leader, scholar gatherings, and a long-term community of peers, alumni, and supporters from coast to coast to coast.

The students we seek may not see anything special about what they are doing — they just do what needs to be done. This is where you come in: tapping them on the shoulder, holding up the mirror to who they are, and encouraging them to apply for the Loran Award. **School counsellors are integral** to the identification of these amazing young people, who often may not fully recognize their own potential. Over the past four years, Loran has had [nine incredible scholars from New Brunswick!](#) We would love your support in engaging and uplifting the next generation of leaders from your province.

In addition to the 2025 Loran Awards, we will grant more than \$400,000 in additional one-time awards to fifty-four Loran finalists and seventy promising Loran provincial and territorial candidates. Because there are so many opportunities for young people to succeed in our selection process, applying is always worth the effort! Applications opened September 4, and the **deadline for applications is Tuesday, October 15, 2024, before 8 p.m. EST.**

Please use our ready-to-publish promotional materials to share our call for applications directly with your community via your:

- Website
- School and school-board portals
- Social media channels
- Community events and gatherings
- Digital screens
- Newsletters
- One-to-one conversations
- Local news

Our team would be happy to answer questions for any interested students or community members: 416-646.2120; info@loranscholar.ca

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The advertisement features a green background with a white torn-paper effect at the bottom. A cartoon character with dark curly hair, wearing a red jacket, is pointing upwards. Several banknotes (purple, blue, and orange) are floating in the air. A QR code is located in the top right corner.

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Bringing digital media literacy to your classroom this Media Literacy Week

By Amal Ahmed, Marketing and Communications Coordinator, MediaSmarts

Media Literacy Week

October 21-25, 2024



In today's world, where information is just one click away, developing media-literacy skills has never been more crucial. Digital media literacy — the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create online media — helps us think critically about the internet content we create and consume on the internet. By understanding information's origin and context, we can better question its purpose and be more aware of its impact on our beliefs and behaviours.

While any Canadian can actively engage online or simply browse the internet, those with the skills to navigate online platforms safely and responsibly hold a significant advantage. As services like online banking become increasingly prevalent, people who rely on the internet for essential information in their daily decision-making face heightened risks. Without the skills that come from being media literate, Canadians are vulnerable to false information and may even contribute to its spread.

For students, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the internet has become a vital tool for learning. The implementation of media literacy education in schools, however, remains inconsistent. While some teachers strive to incorporate media literacy into subjects like language and literature, there is no standardized approach to teaching these vital skills.

Research on media education in the infusion model in British Columbia found that the effectiveness of media literacy education can vary widely, often depending on a teacher's interests and the time they can dedicate to the topic. Some teachers may even rely on their own expertise to determine what topics to cover in media education, which can lead to significant gaps in student learning. This inconsistency can leave students feeling unprepared and lacking the confidence they need to navigate the complexities of the online world.

MediaSmarts, a Canadian registered charity, has been at the forefront of the discussion on digital media literacy education since 1994. As Canada's centre for digital media literacy, MediaSmarts conducts research, develops resources, and promotes digital media literacy nationwide. Its work addresses important topics such as misinformation, online safety, and critical-thinking skills for the digital age.

One MediaSmarts key initiative is the annual Media Literacy Week, scheduled for October 21 to 25, 2024. This event unites schools, libraries, and community organizations to emphasize the importance of digital media literacy. Canadians of all ages are encouraged to participate in workshops, discussions, and activities designed to promote thoughtful engagement with digital media. It serves as an excellent opportunity to educate students about navigating the web responsibly and prepare them for digital challenges.

During Media Literacy Week, MediaSmarts showcases its Teachers' Hub, a comprehensive resource designed to enhance educators' ability to teach media literacy effectively. This hub features daily lesson ideas and activities that align with MediaSmarts's four core competencies: use, understand, engage, and access. Structured lesson plans catered to students from kindergarten through Grade 12 accompany each competency, ensuring a rich learning experience throughout the week. Midweek, MediaSmarts highlights its Digital Citizen Day. This year, on October 23, the day will focus on important topics such as cyberbullying and will feature valuable tip sheets and videos designed to equip students with the fundamentals of digital citizenship.

In addition to the Teachers' Hub, MediaSmarts offers a Teacher Resources section that provides a wealth of supplementary materials for educators eager to incorporate media literacy into their year-round teaching. This section features a dedicated Lessons and Resources page, allowing educators to filter through various media topics to easily find the most suitable learning materials for their students at the desired grade level. MediaSmarts's Teacher Resources also contains a Digital Media Learning Outcomes by Province and Territory section, which connects digital media literacy lesson plans for each province and territory's curriculum outcomes across a broad range of subjects, including often-overlooked areas such as science and mathematics.

As the internet continues to become an integral part of our social, economic, and cultural lives, events like Media Literacy Week are a great opportunity for teachers to guide their students to become safe and responsible internet users. Through the efforts of educators and through the work of MediaSmarts, Canada is making significant strides towards fostering a more media-literate Canada, one classroom at a time.



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