



A Year In Review: Next Steps

by Gilles Arsenault



Gilles Arsenault

Where to start when summer is just around the corner... Where to start after a year full of activities and events? As a small organization we certainly have been involved in a variety of educational debates, conversations, meetings, discussions and so on. We managed to keep our regular tasks on the go while negotiating a new contract for teachers and a first official contract for substitute teachers. This was definitely an important moment in the history of our organization.

The result of our ratification vote held on Wednesday, May 22 was a clear indication to our Executive and to our Economic Welfare team. The high percentage of teachers accepting this contract showed that PEI Teachers supported the items incorporate in the new contract and I want to personally thank our Economic Welfare team for a job well done. We know that this was not an easy task, but the feedback received from the majority of our membership was a very positive one. We acknowledge the fact that this was not a good

financial time to negotiate a contract, but when times are tough, those are usually the years we can get other items in our contract that we might not get in a year when money is not so tight.

I am confident that in two years time, we will be able to renegotiate salaries and am hopeful that we will get a larger increase in pay, but like you know, there is no guarantee! I also want to thank all of you for getting involved in making this vote a successful one. We counted on you on numerous occasions and we are thankful for your continued support and dedication in Federation activities. A special thanks goes out to our lead Negotiator, Mr. Shaun MacCormac, as he was excellent in his role of Negotiator. We also counted on the expertise of Patrick MacFadyen and Michel Plamondon to assist us in this process and they did a fabulous job. You really need to see these staff members in action.

Even if we ratified a contract that does not mean that we are out of the woods! We all understand that government is cutting teaching positions and this will have an impact on our workload. We will feel the crunch and we will have to pick up the pieces of an already overworked educational system. I cannot comprehend the reasoning of government, while in one hand they pride themselves on teachers as being their greatest asset and on the other hand, not willing to pay for the high quality of teachers we have in this province. They can hide behind declining enrolment but they can't hide behind the reality of changes that come with class composition and common assessments. This is why the Federation is commissioning a public campaign in order to advise the public and the membership of the impact of these decisions. As a Federation, we voiced these concerns with the Minister and with other government officials, we had TV ads promoting education before and after Compass news, we sent out information to members and we tried, even if tied up with media ban during negotiations, to relay the message to as many people as possible.

We are scheduling a meeting with the Premier in order to let him know our frustrations regarding these drastic measures in education. We will not only monitor the situation but will do our best to protect and secure the integrity of this profession.

We know and we understand the differences of opinions out there of how to go about in addressing these issues, but we will rely heavily on our PR committee who is putting a plan in place to address the media piece of information going out to government and to the public at large. The Federation is constantly reminding politicians of their actions and the impact of their decisions on teachers and students. We will continue to do so on your behalf.

Comme vous l'avez constaté, l'entente collective a été ratifiée mercredi dernier et nous sommes contents qu'une grande majorité d'entre vous ont voté pour accepter ce nouveau contrat. Nous

continued on p. 8

On the inside:

Letting Go:
Supporting Student
Autonomy
p. 3

Event Photos
p.p. 4-5

2013
Federation
Summer Hours
June 24 - August 23

Monday - Thursday
8:30 am - 4:00 pm

Friday
8:30 am - 1:00 pm

Please Note: Federation
House will be closed to
direct member services
during the week of
July 29 - August 2.

Visit our website at www.peitf.com



Lois Adams

What Happens After the Bell Rings?

Editorial by Lois Adams

There is a lot of chatter in the media about what teachers do after the bell rings in a school. I can attest to what a number of them were doing on Friday night - date night for many people, but not so for these dedicated folks.

Friday night was the Relay for Life night at the Charlottetown Driving Park. There was a very large and enthusiastic group of students from Morell High School participating under the guidance of two of their teachers. I know one of them has young children, and I am sure would have liked to have spent the time with them, but instead gave up a good part of his weekend to support these students. (The Relay ends at 6 am Saturday morning). Teachers are also involved in organizing and supporting student participation in similar events in Westisle and Kensington.

Friday night was also the athletic banquet at a number of the high schools. Students and teams were recognized for their achievements and successes. Also recognized were the coaches, many of them teachers, who gave countless hours of their own time to ensure that these athletes had the opportunity to participate and compete. Many then went home after these evening games and practices to check and prepare work for the next day.

Summer is approaching. What will teachers do when that final bell rings on June 28th? A number of them will be taking courses over the summer or attending conferences. We have a delegation of Island educators participating in DSS (Developing Successful Schools) at Mt. Allison University in early July to work with Sandra Herbst on the areas of engagement, assessment and leadership. Our teachers are hosting the CONTACT conference in August, and will welcome teachers from the 4 Atlantic Provinces to learn together about best practice in the classroom. Not only do we have a number of teachers attending, we also have a number of our teachers involved in planning and delivering sessions. In addition to these professional development opportunities, many teachers are involved in taking Masters level courses to improve their certification. They are taking courses from UPEI, Mount St. Vincent's, Acadia, and numerous other universities, so they are better able to meet the needs of their students. UPEI is also offering a number of short courses in response to a needs survey sent out to the membership, which will be attended by teachers and

substitutes wanting to learn more about best practice in a number of areas.

In addition to this, many will be doing summer reading. Yes, many will be hauling out the latest bestsellers, or the John Sanford or Danielle Steele novel that has been gathering dust on the shelf all winter. Many, though, will be found relaxing with curriculum guides if they are teaching a new course or changing grade levels. Some will be reading up on information related to special needs students who will be part of their class in the fall, and creating materials, such as visual schedules to support them. Others will be reading professional literature in the areas of literacy and numeracy to integrate into their practice. Others will be previewing books that they have purchased for their classroom libraries to enable them to recommend the book to the appropriate students and have a rewarding discussion with said students about the content.

Other teachers will be reviewing and revising lesson plans for September to ensure that they will accommodate the needs of the students that they will be receiving. Others will be found creating materials to support the learning environment. Teachers are constantly revamping learning centers based on student interest and student needs.

Will they take a vacation? Yes, they will. Many will spend much needed time with family and friends relaxing and rejuvenating to enable them to begin anew in September with their new classes of students. But for most their vacation will continue to involve what they are passionate about - providing a quality education to Island students. ●

UPEI News

Sizzling Summer Learning Opportunities

The Faculty of Education at UPEI is planning to offer over 20 new mini-courses this summer. You can find the essential information about these Professional Learning Experiences at <http://education.upei.ca/pe-summer-courses>. While we will accept registrations right up until the day the course begins, we recommend that you register early - at least 2 weeks before the start date - to ensure your place in the course. For further information, please contact Cathy Hennessey at cahennessey@upei.ca or 902-566-0731.

REMINDER: Deadline for MEd in 21st Century Teaching & Learning

The deadline for the MEd in 21st Century Teaching & Learning is June 1st, however, we will continue to accept applications until the cohort is full. To ensure an application file is started for you, please send your application form, CV, and statement of intent as soon as you can to UPEI's Registrar's Office. Details can be found here: <http://education.upei.ca/med-programs>. ●



PEITF
Newsletter

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND TEACHERS' FEDERATION

Published by

Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation
P.O. Box 6000, Charlottetown
Prince Edward Island
C1A 8B4

Editor: Lois Adams
ladams@peitf.com

Contributions are welcomed and must be signed by and bear the address of the writer. Articles contained herein reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily express official policy of the PEITF.

ISSN 0383-199x
Member CEPA

Letting Go: Supporting Student Autonomy

by Roberta L. Squire

Twenty-first century students are living in an increasingly fast-paced, ever-changing, technologically-focused society. Both inside and outside the classroom, students regularly participate in collaborative events, problem-based learning activities, and activities that involve high levels of critical thinking. Through student-focused pedagogy, we, as teachers, need to continue to foster challenging, enticing, and supportive classroom environments where students can use their competences to become engaged, motivated, and invested in their learning. The purpose of this article is to illustrate the importance of student autonomy and to present some recommendations for how it can be achieved in the classroom setting.

Motivation is an important aspect of student learning, because it provides the foundation for building knowledge, competence, and success in the classroom. Lai (2011) defined motivation as “the attribute that moves us to do something or not to do something” (p. 4). Motivation has the ability to drive high levels of success and achievement both during and beyond the school years. Motivation can affect how students relate to their teachers, how much effort they put into their schoolwork, if they are engaged or disengaged in an instructional task, and their level of determination in seeking new and exciting challenges (Center on Education Policy, 2012).

Ryan and Deci (2000) explored the factors that affect student motivation and engagement. They constructed a philosophical concept called Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which highlights the importance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and highlights that high-level learning is self-motivated and self-determined. The three key components of SDT are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Ryan and Deci believed that these factors of self-determination are essential for student learning. Herein, I focus on the details related to student autonomy.

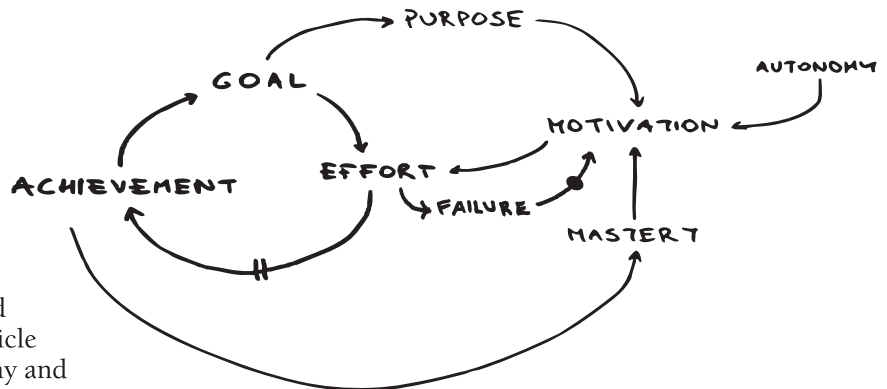
Teachers Supporting Students Through Student-Autonomous Learning



Autonomy is a key component intrinsic motivation. When students have a supportive teacher who allows freedom of choice, students are prone to take ownership of their learning. Students with such autonomy tend to participate in classroom

activities for the sake of learning and enjoyment (Brooks & Young, 2011; Center on Education Policy, 2012)

<http://marcin.floryan.pl/blog/2011/05/motivation-3-0>



Teachers can support student autonomy by offering choices regarding curricular outcomes, opportunities for input with the design and requirements of the class, and options for how instructional tasks will be delivered. When teachers nurture this type of student-centered classroom, self-pride, intrinsic motivation, and willingness to participate are enhanced (Brooks & Young, 2011).

What else can teachers do to support student autonomy? Below is a list of additional ideas to promote autonomy and increased levels of competence and motivation in the classroom:

- Strive to gain a high level of understanding about the individual needs and abilities of students in order to provide them with diverse learning opportunities they need to succeed. Find a variety of ways to deliver your instruction based on their diverse interests.
- Strive to maximize students' perceptions of choice. Provide opportunities for students to decide on the number and the type of activities in which they would like to become involved.
- Provide the necessary tools for students to take ownership of their learning through such things as accessibility to digital technologies and tools for differentiated learning.
- Provide many opportunities for deeper learning by creating challenging yet attainable tasks for students. Ask critical thinking questions to drive a conversation or during Socratic seminars where listening is just as important as speaking.
- Include a variety of real-world issues and applications into curriculum content, instructional pedagogy, and class discussions.
- Promote inquiry-based learning. Provide the foundational

continued on p. 6

Event Photos



Presidents meeting hosted by PEITF. Here they are touring Province House.



Here we are counting ballots for our tentative agreement.



President Arsenaault meeting with Quebec MP and CTF staff during Hill Day at Directors meeting. Theme of meeting: Helping families in poverty.



President Arsenaault chooses the Educational Prize at the 2013 Heritage Fair.



President Arsenaault attends the Heritage Fair 2013! He enjoys talking with students.



President meets with Senator Percy Downe.



Gilles and Marion touring the new section of the Delta!

Teachers are Golden!

On Friday, May 3rd, Area Associations announced their Golden Apple winners. The following teachers were nominated by their colleagues to recognize their outstanding contributions to the life of the school: Elizabeth Blake - Ecole Francois Buote, Ken Gaudet - West Royalty Elementary, Gail MacInnis - Souris Consolidated, Richard Baker - Bluefield High, Marilyn Hudson - Westisle Composite, and Tom Fraser - Summerside Intermediate. Congratulations to all of you and thank you for making a difference in the lives of your students and your colleagues!

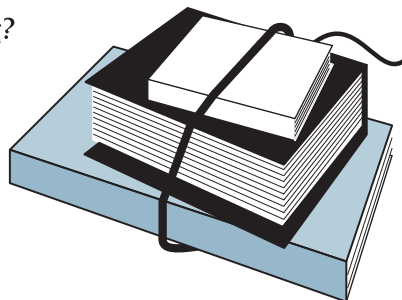
Other recent award winners include K.J White (Queen

Charlotte) chosen as the Island winner for the Canadian Association of Principals Distinguished VP award, Ken Gaudet (West Royalty) chosen as the Island winner for the Canadian Association for Principals Distinguished Principal award, Lynn Sherren chosen as the Eastern winner for the PEI Home and School's Extra Mile award, and Nicole Haire who was chosen as the Western winner for the same award.

Also, congratulations to Suzanne Lee of Colonel Gray Senior High School. Suzanne was recently awarded the Walter Zeller award from Kiwanis for her work as the teacher advisor of the Colonel Gray Key club! 🍷

Summer Reading

*Looking for a good book for your summer professional reading?
Here are just a few, courtesy of the CAPTO PD Officers.
Enjoy!*



- 1) The Gold Mine Effect by Rasmus Ankerson
- 2) Finnish Lessons by Pasi Sahlberg
- 3) Different Children, Different Needs by Dr. Charles F. Boyd
- 4) The Power of Why by Amanda Lang
- 5) The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey
- 6) Prevention of Bullying in Schools, Colleges, and Universities: Research Report and Recommendations (AERA)
- 7) Motion Leadership in Action: More Skinny on Becoming Change Savvy (Fullan)
- 8) Be a Changemaker: 12 Coaching Strategies for Leading Professional and Personal Change (Reiss)
- 9) Essential Questions: Opening Doors to Student Understanding (McTighe & Wiggins)
- 10) The Skillful Team Leader: A Resource for Overcoming Hurdles to Professional Learning for Student Achievement (MacDonald)
- 11) Drive, Daniel Pink discusses what motivates us
- 12) Conscious Teaching, Rick Smith discusses effective teaching practices and classroom management
- 13) Teach Like a Pirate, Dave Burgess provides creative ways to hook and engage students
- 14) Boys Adrift, Dr. Leonard Sax discusses how to support our boys in Education and how boys differ from girls regarding homework, reading etc.
- 15) Girls on the Edge, Dr. Leonard Sax discusses the Cyberbullying issues, environmental toxins facing etc. our girls
- 16) Outliers, Malcolm Gladwell discusses what contributes to people's success
- 17) Professional Capital, Michael Fullan a great read for administrators, Board, DOE and Teacher Organizations

For our francophone/Immersion teachers:

- 1) L'évaluation des apprentissages dans une approche par compétences (Gérard Scallon)
- 2) L'évaluation des compétences (Jacques Tardif)
- 3) Ma première classe - Stratégies gagnantes pour les nouveaux enseignants (Teresa Langness)
- 4) Différencier au quotidien (Jacqueline Caron)
- 5) Apprivoiser les différences (Jacqueline Caron)
- 6) Quand revient septembre, vol. I et II (Jacqueline Caron)
- 7) Les intelligences multiples (Campbell, Campbell et Dickinson)
- 8) Human Learning (Jeanne Ormrod)
- 9) All Systems go (Michael Fullan) ***surtout pour les personnes occupant un poste en administration scolaire***



RTA CORNER

by Patricia McCardle
President, Retired Teachers' Association

You are all on the count down to the end of the 2012-2013 school year with all your final reports and closings. Hope everyone reaches their goals and completes a successful year.

I have just returned from the National meeting of retired teachers of Canada in Ottawa. It was interesting to hear all the comments from each province and how much the

same concerns appears in each one. The greatest concern is with pension plans in all provinces. No province has developed a solution to the concerns.

We are one of the lucky ones to still have a very positive relationship with our active teacher's organization. This makes my job much easier and more enjoyable. Have a restful and enjoyable summer.



Patrick MacFadyen
Deputy General Secretary

Leaves and the New Agreement

While the new agreement starts on October 1st, 2013 most of the changes will start in September. While gains were made in regards to paternity leave, bereavement, and illness in family days the biggest changes will be in the area of special and unpaid leaves.

In my last newsletter article under “Frequently Asked Questions” I discussed the changes for unpaid leave under the current agreement that ends this year. Thanks to the gains made in the new agreement, which was ratified by the membership, unpaid leave will now be available to teachers once again in September.

It is important to note that while there are some limitations on unpaid leave, it can be used to extend a vacation or holiday period. Some of the limitations include the length of the leave. Teachers may not be able to take leaves for weeks and weeks at a time and there will be an expectation that the substitute hired is provided with lesson plans in order to have some continuity of instruction. These items are all covered under the “operational requirement” section of the new memorandum.

For special leaves, as you already know, the teacher now has the discretion of the full three days. The days still have to be approved by the Principal to verify that “operational requirements” are met. *The days can't be used for the purpose to extend a vacation/holiday as defined in the memorandum.* If there is something at the school that the Administrator feels is important to the operation of the school, it can also be denied. For example if there were parent teacher interviews during the

day requested, or if there was a special PD activity that cannot be replaced. If someone needed to use the day for something that would have been covered prior to the change (ex. family wedding, fire, flood, etc.) the limitation on holiday period and operational requirements would be waved.

Giving teachers the freedom to decide how to use the three days for should make it easier for the teacher and the employer to administer. With the change also comes a strong word of caution. The Employer doesn't have any more special leave days. Once they are gone they are gone. If a teacher uses all three days by December and then something happens later in the year that is out of the teachers' control (flood, fire, death of a friend, etc.) the days are gone and the teacher will be required to use unpaid leave.

The results of the Economic Welfare survey showed that both of these leaves were important to teachers. First, with unpaid leave, it is a recognition that teachers have lives that continue during the school year. Family reunions, once in a lifetime trips, and other activities that teachers need to be away from school for do happen. This recognition of teachers having lives outside the classroom and they need to access paid and unpaid leave at times, shows our educators professional respect.

The changes in special leave days allows teachers some flexibility and freedom. Attending your child's hockey tournament, making it to the Christmas play, or just taking a much needed long weekend are all on the table now.

Teaching is a noble profession but not everyone's life and plans coincide with a teachers' schedule. With these changes hopefully when life does happen now, you can be there to enjoy it. ●

continued from p. 3

information for a situation but encourage students to explore and solve the problem in their own way.

- Ask students for input with rubric design and assessment activities or ask them to create other assessment methods to demonstrate their knowledge.
- Provide a safe and caring environment. At all times, students should feel respected, and valued within the classroom.
- LET GO of potential doubts relating to student autonomy and provide a setting for learning exploration.

References

Brooks, C. F., & Young S. L. (2011). Are oice-making opportunities needed in the classroom? Using self-determination theory to consider student motivation and learner empowerment. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 23(1), 48–59.

Center on Education Policy. (2012). *What is motivation and why does it matter?* The George Washington University, Graduate School of Education and Human Development. Retrieved from:

<http://www.cep-dc.org/>

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68

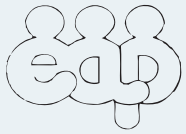
Images:

Motivation 3.0. [Photography]. Retrieved from <http://marcin.floryan.pl/blog/2011/05/motivation-3-0>

Multi-ethnic Children And Teacher Typing Looking At Laptops. [Photography]. Retrieved from Encyclopædia Britannica Image Quest. http://quest.eb.com/images/154_2903532

BIO: Roberta Squire is a Masters of Education student at the University of Prince Edward Island. Recently moved to Charlottetown, PE from Airdrie, Alberta where she taught with the Rockyview School Division for seven years as a grade 7 and 8 Mathematics and Physical Education and grade 5 generalist. Her current research investigates the impact of digital literacies on student motivation.

Important sentence: When students have a supportive teacher who allows freedom of choice, students are prone to take ownership of their learning. ●



The Teachers' Guide to Summer Break: Tips for Fun and Relaxation

Even though summer does provide a break for teachers, they don't get to experience the same sense of freedom as their students. Being a teacher means keeping your body of knowledge in tip-top shape. Summer break equals a lot of preparation for the coming marathon, especially since teachers have to stay a few steps ahead of their students in order to guide the race over the course of the next school year.

Here are some ideas and guidelines that are aimed at helping teachers keep up with their summer-training schedules:

Decompress. The concept of spare time is a foreign one for teachers. When summer arrives, teachers often need a couple of weeks to adjust and to realize that they are NOT behind on grading homework.

Pamper Yourself. Even though the idea of relaxation may be harder for some than others, it is still important that teachers take time in the summer for things that they truly enjoy doing – not things they have to do. There are a multitude of things that can provide an escape, from attending to a garden, to getting a massage, to going on a walk. Stepping away from school will help you become a better teacher.

Reflect. Speaking of stepping away, summer time also provides the important opportunity to look back at the highs and lows of the previous school year. Examine the lows and critically think about what you could do to avoid these situations in the next year, but focus mainly on the highs so that you can cultivate a positive attitude within your subconscious about the upcoming school year.

Inspire Yourself. Another helpful way to rekindle positive feelings about your job as a teacher is to rediscover why you became one in the first place. Who doesn't lose sight of a few things during hectic times?

Say Thank You. While you're feeling all those lovely positive feelings after re-inspiring yourself, take the time to say those two simple words: "Thank you." For all the occasions a colleague helped you out, put your newly-acquired spare time to good use by actually properly thanking those people for their kindness. It can be as simple as sending a card or a note, but it's still important. You haven't forgotten how they made you feel, so let them know about the difference they made. Send them to your fellow teachers and even to administrators. This is a great way to create friendships and build a strong network that you will be able to rely on for any help you may need in the future. If you're feeling particularly grateful, maybe even take the time to send a thank you note to that coworker you don't always get along with so well.

Reconnect. As you busy yourself cultivating new friendships, don't forget about the ones who have always been there for you. Take this opportunity to reconnect with friends – ask them about their lives and show them that even when times get busy, you still value their friendships.

Create Family Time. Just as maintaining healthy friendships is important, even more so is giving your all to your family. If you have kids, as a teacher, you realize that staying involved in what is going on in your children's lives is of the highest importance. Use the summer as an opportunity for bonding by planning family adventures that will further development while preventing summer learning loss. Make sure you also show your spouse how thankful you are for their support and patience – let them know you haven't forgotten how understanding they were when you spent all those long nights

conducting parent-teacher meetings and grading papers.

Plan Parent Involvement. Take some time to come up with ideas that will get parents involved in helping out with the classroom next fall. Make a letter to send to the parents of all your new students that expresses how crucial parent volunteers are for a successful classroom environment. Make up a syllabus for your classroom next year and be sure to include a note to parents to include their e-mail addresses so you can keep them in the loop.

Improve Classroom Procedures. Teachers have to make the most out of their time away from students, so use the summer to improve upon your classroom procedures in order to maximize your efficiency in the upcoming school year.

Revamp Old Lessons. Think about a few lessons that could use improvement and spend a few hours at a time giving them a new perspective. Think about your learning objectives (what you want the students to take away), plan effective and fun learning activities (something that will really capture your students' attention), and come up with an assessment plan to implement throughout the course of the lessons and activities to make sure the kids are absorbing what you want them to. Remember, triumph starts with "try" and ends with a whole lot of "umph!"

Teach Summer School. Of course, there is usually the option to teach summer school if you are looking to make a little extra income. Talk to your principal and other administrators to find out how to get involved.

Work Part Time. It is not unusual for teachers to hold part-time jobs during the summer months, though it might not be right for everyone. The benefits of having a part-time job are that you are able to help ends meet and keep your time productively occupied. The cons are that finding a temporary position is not always easy or flexible, so you become somewhat tied down. Really, this is an option each person has to evaluate individually and then decide what is best for themselves.

Travel and Teach. Believe it or not, there is a way to combine seeing the world and your important work as a teacher. Organizations such as Geoo help teachers afford traveling to all sorts of international locations while also using their knowledge and practice to better the lives of others.

Learn Something New. Whether it's taking up a hobby (such as pottery or painting), or signing up for a class at a local community college, learning something new will give you even more inspiration, knowledge, and skills to draw from when planning lessons and activities for next year. ●

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
Tel: 902-368-5738
Toll-free: 1-800-239-3826



Shaun MacCormac

Thoughts and Comments

from the General Secretary

The name of our organization is the Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation. I must admit that I do not know why the word Federation was originally chosen over the word Union, but I can tell you that today we make the distinction based on our overall goals as a representative for teachers.

A union, by definition, has the goal of improving the working and employment conditions of its members. Clearly, that is a major goal of the PEITF as the bargaining agent on behalf of teachers, but it is not our only major concern or goal. The Executive, PEITF professional staff, and the majority of teachers also want the Federation to consider students and the state of our education system as a whole.

I would say that today we are concerned on both fronts. In terms of bargaining, we continue to be frustrated in our goal to achieve gains in working conditions that would have a positive impact on the ability of teachers to do their job better, and would also have the benefit of having a positive impact on the learning conditions for students. Things like limits on class sizes, adequate preparation time for teachers, and training and resources for teachers dealing with students with special needs are all among areas that need to be addressed by the Employers and government.

Even more frustrating is the fact that things are getting worse in many of these areas. Job cuts in the guise of declining enrolment may be a great political spin, but it does nothing but put more pressure on a system that continues to be under strain. Class sizes in many of our bigger schools continue to rise, not fall, because of these cuts especially at the elementary level.


The high level of needs in Island classrooms, despite the denial at the Department level, continue to put a strain on teachers who do not have the training or help they need in order for our school system to truly have effective inclusion for all students. Fewer teachers at this point limits the boards' ability to offer better instruction, teacher leaders, teacher mentors and more specialists and coaches that our system needs to improve and benefit our students.

I still believe our government has good intentions when it

comes to education. I have stated this on a number of occasions. I, as well, am loath to look a gift horse in the mouth. As a member of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Communication and Information Technology, I am well aware of the state of technology in the school system. However, to spend \$8 million on upgrading that system at the same time the education budget has not increased (meaning cuts have to be made because of increasing costs) and teaching positions have been cut brings into question what the priorities in education should be. The research, and this is not conflicting, consistently shows that the classroom teacher has the greatest impact on student learning. In fact, if you created a list of the needs that would have the greatest impact on student achievement in our system right now, I'm not sure where technology would end up?

Now, I don't want to just be critical. The Federation would like to suggest to the government that there are better ways to spend money in the education system during tough economic and educational times. We would like to sit down with the Minister and Premier to discuss some suggestions. Many of these are contained in the Teacher Workload Teacher Allocation Report that government has already seen. This was a joint report by the Federation and the Department of Education and ECD. They could also look back to the 2010 report from the "Proceedings of the Minister's Summit on Learning". There is also a large body of research we could discuss on what impacts student learning the most.

The Federation, as the representative for teachers, and teachers, as professionals, are always concerned about our students and their education. I know the government, and all the leaders in education, are as well. It's time we all sat down and created a direction and a plan on how to improve student achievement regardless of what the financial situation of the province is, and despite any political position any of us have. Together we can achieve more than we can on our own.

Another end of the school year has come. Teachers, you do an amazing job. You make a difference. I hope you all get a well-deserved break and get to recharge your batteries for the fall. Take care of yourselves and each other. 

continued from p. 1

sommes d'autant plus content de l'appui reçu de la part de nombreux enseignants pendant ce temps de négociation. Un merci special à ceux et celles qui nous ont aidé dans le processus du vote.

Pension is another area of concern for many teachers. Two committees have been struck this year to address the ongoing issue of a well-sustained pension plan. We have a steering committee and a working group. The working group is at the stage of revising propositions from government and we should be able to count on receiving information in the fall on their preliminary findings.

Teachers, we know that times have been tough for teachers and the Federation this year as we were involved in negotiations, a few legal challenges, a pension review, the inclusion of substitute teachers in our membership, a variety of hosting of events, school calendar issues, and a PD model review, but with the help and support of all, my job was made more manageable and at the same time rewarding.

It remains my privilege and honour to serve such a wonderful group of individuals who continue to shine and strive in these ever-challenging times. I look forward to my second term and hopefully I will be able to continue to support each Board member in a meaningful way.

Take care and enjoy a well-deserved summer break! 