



An Interview with our President



Gilles Arsenault

Gilles Arsenault begins another second year term, becoming the 1st president in the history of the TF to do so. The Constitution was changed in 2011 to allow this to happen. Mr. Arsenault was the principal of Evangeline School for 5 years prior to becoming President, and had taught for 11 years before that. He has a wife, Leonie, and 3 sons, Martin, Andre, and Alain.

1. Why did you decide to run for a second term?

I felt that I still had lots of things to contribute to the PEITF. I wanted to be able to complete many files that were started during my first term. I also truly enjoy the experience and especially meeting many great teachers along the way. I am as enthusiastic about this second term as I was for my first.

2. What was your greatest learning experience in your first term as President?

My greatest learning experience is by far the engagement and dedication of Island teachers towards their students. I had the

privilege of touring many of our Island schools (which I will be completing this year) and I have learned so much from all of our teachers and administrators. For me, this has been more of a PD opportunity than a union experience.

Don't get me wrong; I truly enjoy the union side of my work as well. It is a rewarding experience and an eye opener that I wish every teacher in PEI could experience.

3. What do you enjoy about being President of the PEI Teachers' Federation?

There are four main things that I enjoy about being President of PEITF:

- The great people that you meet;
- The support that I am able to offer to teachers and administrators;
- The bigger picture of education that you come to understand;
- The colleagues that you make and the friendships that you create within our organization and within other teacher organizations across the country.

4. When did you first become involved with the TF? And why?

I started my involvement with TF my second year of teaching. I came on the Board as Assistant-Coordinator for the AEELF. From there, I went to Coordinator, Member-at-Large, VP to finish off where I am today as President.

I always felt it was important to get involved if you wanted to affect change, so that is what I did and never regretted this move. This has been the best educational decision that I could have taken! I encourage everyone to get involved in some way, shape or form. We need positive, ambitious, energetic people to help advance the educational cause.

5. What changes have you seen in the profession and schools since you first became involved with the Federation?

The biggest change that I have seen in the profession since I became involved in the Federation would have to be workload issues for teachers. We seem to be downloading every societal issue in our classrooms. Teachers are taking on way too much responsibility and no extra human or material resources are added to help in this area.

We have reports and studies suggesting ways to help with these issues, but nobody seems willing to take these on. We have a Workload Study that is sitting on a shelf somewhere, but we need to get the dust off of it and start implementing the recommendations. This was a joint project between PEITF and the Department of Education. This frustrates me! Nothing will change unless we implement those recommendations!

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Lois Adams

New Look

Editorial by Lois Adams

Island classrooms had a new look this year, as seats filled with fresh faces from the year before. Many students (and teachers!) were decked out in their new school clothes. Teachers changed their displays to reflect new themes and to show off posters and charts purchased and created by them to support student learning. The excitement in schools was evident as a new year began.

Our newsletter is taking on a new look too. We are adding more photos, and columns that will hopefully support you in the classroom. We welcome any input on the changes, and on our Facebook page too. We will draw for a coffee card from the list of people who submit feedback prior to October 31st. *We welcome submissions from our members, but reserve the right to edit all and any articles.* ☐

DSS

(Developing Successful Schools)

Delegates from the 4 Atlantic Provinces came together at Mt. Allison University, July 8-11th. They were joined by presenter Sandra Herbst for an Instructional Leadership Institute entitled “Leading the Way - Transforming Schools through Effective Engagement, Assessment, and Leadership”.

It was an intense 3+ days filled with new learnings and grand conversations about education. PEI was well represented by 9 delegates from the District, Department and school level.

Sandra focused on how we as leaders can help our students recognize what quality work is, and self monitor for success. Each day she modelled and shared a number of effective strategies which can be used across the grade levels. Participants were given the chance to practice these and discuss how best to integrate them into their daily work. ☐



Island contingent at DSS in Mt. A

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6. What would you say to teachers who are considering becoming involved with the Federation either as a Board of Governor rep, or as a member of one of our committees?

I would encourage anyone to get involved in the Teachers' Federation. This will be the greatest experience of your teaching career. You meet people, you affect change and you get a broader perspective on teaching and the teaching profession. Start now, get involved!

7. For someone who is unfamiliar with the workings of the Federation, what would you tell them the role of a Board of Governor is?

Every school including the Boards and the Department has a Federation

rep that we call the Board of Governor. This person is the link between your staff and the Teachers' Federation. This person is responsible to provide teachers, within your school or work area, with information that is sent out from the Teachers' Federation. The Board of Governors usually meets as a group, three times a year: Board Workshop, Semi-Annual and Annual Meeting. These board reps. are also representing your school, or work area, at the monthly meeting of the three local associations. They work hard on your behalf. This year, for the first time, substitute teachers will have representation at the Board of Governors' level.

8. What goals have you set for yourself in the next two years of your Presidency?

I have set myself three main goals:

- Finish touring all Island schools;
- A successful second round of negotiations;
- Representing teachers successfully on the local, national and international front.

9. Any other thoughts?

It is truly an honor and a privileged to serve as President of the Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation. I could not do this position if it wasn't for the great team I have at the office. To Shaun, Patrick, Michel, Lois, Sheila, Marion and Lisa, a million thanks for all that you do on behalf of our teachers and administrators. It takes a great team to make things happen and I am only a small part of that.

To each and everyone, have an excellent school year and don't forget to be good to yourselves. ☐



PEITF
Newsletter

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Meet your Colleague



Isabelle Savoie-Jamieson, Ecole Francoise Buote, Ecole Saint Augustin, and Ecole La-Belle-Cloche
 Years teaching: 11
 Grade/Subject teaching: Literary coach K-6
 Favorite teaching moment: When a student told me, during writers' workshop, "I never liked writing, but now I love it!" with a great big smile on her face!
 No. 1 item on bucket list: Go to Paris with my daughter, mother, sister and niece.
 Dream vacation: Greece
 Favorite summer activities: boating and swimming
 Book(s) currently reading (personally, professionally, or both):
 "Realization" by Lyn Sharrett and Michael Fullen (professionally) and Volte-face et malaises by Rafaele Germain (personally)




Bethany MacLeod, Montague Regional High School
 Years teaching: 12
 Grade/Subject teaching: 10-12, Career Education, Entrepreneurship, Accounting and Business
 Favorite teaching moment: When struggling students experience the 'aha moment' or tell you that you have had a positive impact on their lives.
 No. 1 item on bucket list: To run the Boston Marathon
 Dream vacation: Mediterranean Cruise
 Favorite summer activity: Camping with my family.
 Book currently reading (personally, professionally, or both): I have been involved in planning a national conference...so emails have been my daily 'reading'.

*Do you know who teaches down the road from you?
Who are the teachers in your area?*



Blaine Bernard, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
 Years teaching: 27
 Grade/Subject teaching: Coordinator, English Curriculum
 Favorite teaching moment: Seeing students successfully graduate who struggled in their high school years.
 No. 1 item on bucket list: Buy a self-driving car for those early morning meetings in Charlottetown.
 Dream vacation: Travel across Canada by train.
 Favorite summer activity: Travelling
 Book currently reading (personally, professionally, or both): Inferno - Dan Brown



Aldene Smallman, O'Leary Elementary
 Years teaching: 19
 Grade/Subject teaching: K-6 Music and Resource, VP
 Favorite teaching moment: When a kindergarten child entered my room for the first time and said, "But Mrs. Smallman, where is your bed....?"
 No. 1 item on bucket list: To own a Shelby Mustang.
 Dream vacation: Venice
 Favorite summer activity: Boating
 Book currently reading (personally, professionally, or both): Safe Harbour 

What's Happening With Teachers?



The Ad Hoc Committee on Governance was formed in response to a resolution at the Annual Meeting in May 2012 to look at voting procedures. Since then, their mandate has expanded to include the role of the membership, Board, Executive and staff, an oath of office and elections for Board members, voting and election procedures, among others. They are seen here working with John Staple of Queen's University and formerly of the Canadian Teachers' Federation. They have developed a new Handbook for Board of Governor members which will be handed out at Area Association meetings in October. Committee members are: Karen Malone, Karen Smith, Paulette LeBlanc, Andrew Stewart, and Michele LeClair



President Gilles Arsenault talks with two of our new members at the Beginning Teachers Workshop.

September 20th - Provincial Learning Day

The Joint Staff Development Committee organized over 50 sessions for teachers across the Island...



*teachers
engaged in
learning and
conversations
about
professional
development*



PEITF hosted **CONTACT 2013**  at Holland College in Charlottetown this summer.

The evaluations show that it was a great conference! The participants enjoyed the speakers and felt they learned a great deal to take back into their classrooms in September. Sessions included classroom management, differentiated instruction, social justice, human rights, and technology. They also enjoyed the Race Around Charlottetown, and the facility and accommodations.

Kudos go out to the Organizing Committee: Lynn Sherren (co-chair), Karen Mullaly (co-chair), David Wood, Stephanie Benoit, Rachelle Arsenault, Becky Newson, and Charlene Cain.

CONTACT 2014 will be in NL. Watch for information coming out in the New Year. We would love to have a strong contingent attending from the Island.



The Welcoming Committee for CONTACT!
They greeted everyone with a smile!



PEI delegates for CONTACT.



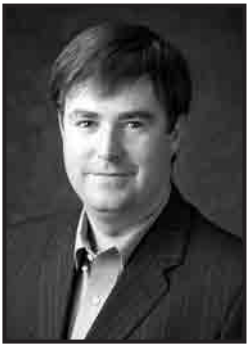
Winning team in Race Around Charlottetown
Do you think having 2 Islanders helped?



Thumbs up for CONTACT
2013! Delegates attending Ian
Kent's session on Connected
Classrooms.



Delegates from across Atlantic Canada attend CONTACT 2013.



Patrick MacFadyen
Deputy General Secretary

20 Days (Part 1)

I was asked to give the membership information on the grievance process, so I figured the newsletter would be a good place to start. You may feel this isn't relevant for you because you will never have a grievance, and chances are you are correct; however, you should read this because there is one very important piece of information on grievances that every teacher needs

to be aware of, and that is the 20 day time limit. In fact, it is so important I named the whole article after it!

Filing a grievance is one of the most important processes between an employer and employee in a unionized environment. The process starts during negotiations, when the union negotiates working conditions with the employer. The Negotiation Agency gets a mandate from the Government to represent the rights of

“If you are ever not sure if something should or can be grieved you need to contact the Federation.”

employers and the employees agree to the conditions through a ratification vote by members. If both sides can't come to an agreement an Arbitrator will decide on the conditions. Once the rules of employment are set, both sides have to live by them. If there is a disagreement in the interpretation of the conditions set out in the Memorandum or if one side feels the other is not following the rules, the grievance process can begin. The grievance process is a fair process that would start with informal conversations and if taken to the end disagreements will be decided by an independent Arbitrator (Judge) who will make the final and binding decision. It is designed to be fair to both sides.

I will explain the whole grievance process but it is a lengthy process and will take more than one article, therefore my whole year of newsletters will be dedicated to the topic, so let us begin:

“... there is one very important piece of information on grievances that every teacher needs to be aware of, and that is the 20 day time limit.”

Part one: What can be grieved?

Not everything is open for a grievance. What can be grieved should really be covered by the Memorandum of Agreement. A grievance says that we believe the employer has broken the rules of employment that were agreed to, and when filing the official grievance we state exactly what section of the agreement was broken. For example, if a teacher did not get their first choice of a classroom we wouldn't be able to file a grievance, since it is not covered in the Memorandum of Agreement. If a teacher was denied an illness in the family day for a parent, we likely would be able to grieve that (of course it would depend on the details). If you are ever not sure if something should or can be grieved you need to contact the Federation. We are happy to answer any question you have.

If a teacher feels his/her rights under the Memorandum of Agreement has been violated he/she need to contact the Federation as soon as possible. In our collective agreement there is a 20 day time limit. The Memorandum states:

“The aggrieved party shall, within twenty (20) calendar days of the effective knowledge of the facts which give rise to the alleged grievance, present the grievance in writing”

Once you contact the Federation, is when it gets interesting. I will continue the next steps in the next newsletter.

If you have any questions on what was explained so far you can contact me at the Federation. 🌐



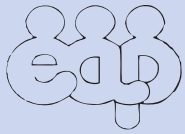
RTA CORNER

by Patricia McCardle
President, Retired Teachers' Association

Another school year is well under way and all the active teachers and support staff have returned to duty.

I'm sure it feels as if you never left for two months. Those of us who are now enjoying retirement wish you a productive and successful year. The executive of the PEIRTA has had a more active summer dealing with several different concerns and attempting to meet with our MPs over the Canada Health Act which was an interesting activity. We are now preparing for our Annual Meeting on November

7, 2013. Although less complicated than the PEITF AGM, it keeps us busy. At this meeting we will review activities from the past year and deal with reports from each chairperson. We will have a guest pharmacist to review many health and medication concerns. At this meeting we will be electing our new Executive for the next two years. Therefore, this will be my last writing in the RTA Corner. All the best for each and every one of you and have a great year. 🌐



Stress Management for Teachers

Stress is a normal part of every teacher's life. But left unmanaged, it can undermine effective teaching and learning. Luckily, there are ways to manage stress. Take a look at the following tips.

Recognize the signs of stress.

Monitor yourself for the following symptoms:

- You're not sleeping.
- You feel nervous all the time.
- You forget important things.
- You get sick a lot.
- You're always tired.
- You eat a lot more or less than usual.
- You no longer enjoy everyday activities.
- You think about leaving the teaching profession.

If stress has taken over, it's time to take action.

Identify your key stressors.

The first step in handling stress is to identify its key sources. These may be behavioral (you're not getting enough sleep), situational (lack of feedback from your supervisor), or mental/emotional (low self-esteem).

Pay attention to your stress load over the next few days or weeks. Keep a stress journal in which you record your reactions to specific events. Review the results, look for patterns, and identify the key sources of stress in your life. Then develop a targeted plan to avoid or alleviate these stressors.

Talk to colleagues.

Social isolation is a common cause of professional stress. Talk things over with your colleagues. How do they handle classroom issues? What stress management techniques work for them? Conversations can take place casually or be formalized as once-a-month stress management roundtables.

Take regular breaks throughout the school day.

Many teachers go all day without a break. Don't fall into this trap! Use your breaks to step away from work and relax. Avoid shoptalk in the staff room, and take a walk around the

block or listen to music to clear your head.

Plan ahead to avoid feeling rushed.

Too busy? Time management is an important component of stress management. Take a few minutes each night to organize for the next day. Develop a weekly schedule with time for teaching, grading, meetings, and other obligations. Consider setting your alarm 15 minutes earlier to start each morning with quiet reflection.

Practice daily stress management skills.

Small steps can add up to a practical and effective stress-management plan.

- Eat well.
- Exercise.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Reduce caffeine consumption.
- Practice relaxation techniques such as yoga or meditation.
- Keep a sense of humor!
- Enjoy a favorite activity on a regular basis.

Try "re-framing" difficulty situation.

Re-framing is an exercise in which you view problems as opportunities, focusing on the positive rather than the negative. Example: "Boy, I really blew it on that lesson plan. The kids didn't get it at all." Re-framing: "Now I know to avoid that particular learning strategy."

Think of stressful situations at work. How can you re-frame these issues in a more positive light?

Take it one day at a time.

You may feel extra stress during state exams or when final grades are due. Use the tips provided here to help you get through these difficult periods. Plan a reward for yourself when the crunch is over, like a massage or dinner out. ●

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



Shaun MacCormac

Thoughts and Comments from the General Secretary

The Government of PEI currently sponsors two major public sector pension plans. The Teachers' Superannuation Fund (TSF) and the Civil Service Superannuation Fund (CSSF). In the spring of 2012, the Government approached the unions involved in the TSF (PEITF) and the CSSF (UPSE, CUPE, PEINU, and IUOE) to discuss the financial position of these Plans, and to see if these unions were interested in working together to find solutions to help sustain these Plans. All the unions agreed to participate, and meetings (the Plans' Review) began in June 2012.

Information was shared with union representatives including the history of the Plans, the current funding requirements and the future financial and actuarial requirements for the Plans.

Some important steps were taken through these meetings. I will only speak on behalf of the PEITF, but most, if not all, the unions would agree with the following points:

- The Government has now paid more than half of the Plans' funding;
- There are some serious actuarial concerns that must be addressed including that fact that people are living longer ("Mortality") and the target that the Plans' investments must reach is too high ("Discount Rate"); and
- There is likely to be a large shortfall (dollar-wise) in

the funds come the next actuarial valuation in 2014.

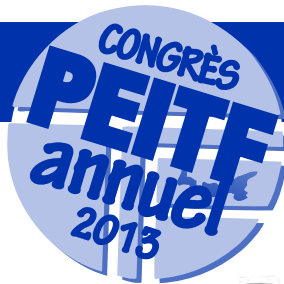
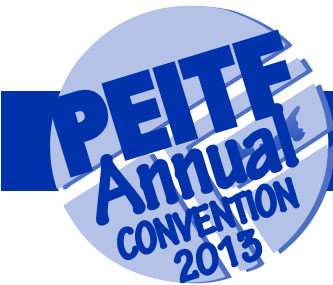
Many points were made and discussed throughout this Review. Although the unions would like this process to continue, the Government is anxious to deal with the financial impact these Plans may have on the Province's budget(s). To that end, the Government is looking at passing legislation in November that will take affect on January 1, 2014.

The Government laid out the basics of its proposed changes to the unions on September 5th. Since then, the Federation and the other unions have asked questions, sought clarifications and have continued to give input to Government. That process, and other work, continues as I write this article.

The proposed plan has both positive and negative possibilities for Plan members. The Federation will inform members, as more details are known. At this time, there are two important points that need to be made:

1. The Government is guaranteeing pension benefits earned up to when the changeover occurs. *The pension changes are on a go forward basis.*
2. The changes will have very little affect(s) on those who can retire at this point in time. Retiring now will not allow a person to avoid the proposed changes to the plan.

Despite the challenges on the employment side for teachers, I hope your year in education is a positive and rewarding one. Be good to yourselves and each other. ☺



The Annual Convention Committee has been hard at work over the past year planning an informative convention for teachers. They have brought in a broad range of speakers on the topic of engaging our students.



The committee consists of back row L to R - Julie Gagnon, Michele Pineau-Campbell (co-chair), Chad Gallant (co-chair), Pam Walsh. Front row L to R - Jonathan Hayes, Kent Pond, Anne-Marie Rioux, Aletha Coady. ☺

Engaging Our Students: A Learning Process
Susciter l'intérêt de nos élèves : un apprentissage