

## The Teacher's Guide to Summer Break

**H**ere are some ideas and guidelines that are aimed at helping teachers have some fun and relaxation during their summer break.

**1. 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.

**2. 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 to the beach. Stepping away from school will help you become a better teacher.

**3. 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.

**4. 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?

**5. Reconnect** - As you are busy yourself over the summer, 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.

**6. 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.

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## Another School Year Winds Down/Winds Up

You are almost there... the finish line is nearing... I'm certain the warm, sunny days are reminding you that campfires and sandy beaches are awaiting your arrival! However, there is still so much to do before the end of the school year, as this is such a busy time. Teachers are busily preparing for field trips, closing ceremonies, graduation ceremonies, and activities, correcting exams and preparing final report cards. As another school year draws to a close, may you not forget that you have once again made a difference in the lives of the children you teach.

It has been a year of change for Prince Edward Island's education system. (I believe my picture might now be in the dictionary next to the word change!) In November, the government announced a "New Direction" for education and the subsequent dissolution of the English Language School Board. A few weeks ago, the transition team released the new organizational structure for the amalgamation of the Department and ELSB. The government has reassured us that no full-time positions in schools will be lost. What has yet to be determined is how exactly this will be translated to the school level as consultants play a vital role in supporting teachers and working alongside students, yet the role and number of consultants will have been altered in this new structure. It is hoped that this "leaner system" will not lose sight of the valuable work those serving in coaching and consulting roles do in our Island classrooms.

All these changes have created stress for many involved, including, once again, administrators. It is a difficult and stressful time for administrators as they work hard to staff their schools with the issued allotments. We have heard from several schools regarding their displeasure surrounding their staffing numbers. We continue to communicate with the Board to ensure the staffing numbers are the same as this past school year as was promised.

On May 30th, our Memorandum of Agreement was settled through binding arbitration. The new collective agreement runs from September 1, 2015, to August 31, 2018. Teachers will receive a seven percent salary increase over that time. Several other items were negotiated during the bargaining process and a limited number of items, including salary and

maternity/adoption leave, were settled by the Arbitration Board. We are pleased that reasonable gains have been made for teachers and thank the Economic Welfare Committee tremendously for their tireless work on behalf of their colleagues.

Doug MacDougall, Administrator for PEITF's organizational review, hopes to have his final report ready by the end of June. He has interviewed teachers, administrators, staff, past-presidents and he has even reached out to other Atlantic counterparts. I am very confident that he is doing a thorough review, and I thank you for your feedback throughout this process. During the summer months, the Executive will review the recommendations, which will then be presented to the Board of Governors in September.

There have been some turbulent times this past year, but we have not lost sight of the realities of teaching in today's classrooms. We continue to share with the various stakeholders in education how teaching and learning have changed in this Province. We have increased our profile in the public to communicate with the community about the workload of teachers, the value of professional development, the need for increased supports in Island classrooms, and the importance teachers are to the future of this Province.

You have worked countless hours and volunteered your time on numerous occasions. You do so much more than just teach. You coach every sport imaginable, offer extra help before school; during lunch and after school, orchestrate school plays and concerts, travel with students to various school-related events, organize and help plan student events and fundraisers... and, along the way, you inspire students to achieve greatness. Thank you for yet another successful, inspirational school year. I know I say it over and over, but please take the time to relax and enjoy time with family and friends this summer. See you in September... take care.

*"I've learned that it is not what I have in life but who I have in my life that counts!" - Blaze Olamiday*



Bethany MacLeod  
President, PEITF

by Bethany MacLeod



Chad Gallant

## Compassion Fatigue and Summer Reading

**S**poiler Alert! Summer is coming. Time to recharge your batteries and reclaim your work/life balance. I hope that you all of you find time to enjoy your favourite beach chair or relaxation place and

if that is the case, you may be interested in some light reading!

Recently, Francoise Mathieu, an expert on Compassion Fatigue, presented on the Island. Compassion Fatigue is a form of burnout becoming more prevalent in caring professions. The personal connections, the responsibility for student learning, the passion of teachers to deliver excellent instruction in often under-supported positions, all make teachers prone to compassion fatigue. The following article, by author Joanna Krop outlines Compassion Fatigue, it's prevalence in education and offers tips on how to find a balance in the ever taxing job of being an educator. <http://bit.do/CompassionFatigue>

There is a growing amount of chatter surrounding the use

of Big Data in education. Case in point, a recent article published in the *Washington Post* by researchers Pasi Sahlberg and Jonathan Hasak, noted how the move to Big Data (data walls, standardized tests, PISA) often has not sparked the insight about teaching and learning that was intended. At the recent PEITF Annual General Meeting, CTF President, Heather Smith, spoke of how the Alberta Teachers' Association passed a motion urging their provincial Minister of Education to withdraw from several assessments such as PISA <http://bit.do/ATAwithdraw>. In his article, Sahlberg goes on to suggest a move may be coming toward (or back) to "small data." The article does not discount the value of Big Data, but certainly is a worthwhile read to add to the discussion. Check it out at <http://bit.do/sahlberg>

A reminder as well, that there are some great learning opportunities for Island educators this summer such as DSS & CONTACT (Grants still available). Check out PEITF.COM for more information.

Best wishes for a relaxing summer,  
Chad

by Chad Gallant

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# Connected to Learn: Teachers' Experiences with Networked Technologies in the Classroom

By Bernie Froese-Germain and Richard Riel  
March 18, 2016

To get a better understanding of how networked technologies are impacting teachers and their teaching practices, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) partnered with MediaSmarts in 2015 to survey K-12 teachers and school administrators who are teaching in a classroom setting across the country.

They explored the extent to which networked technologies

are available in the classroom, the ways teachers are using networked technologies to support learning, the knowledge and skills teachers have developed to make the most of networked technologies as learning tools, and creative uses of networked technologies for learning activities.

A total of 4,043 teachers responded to the survey.

## Key findings

*Teachers are very positive about the role of networked technologies in the classroom.*

Teachers use these devices frequently and feel they have a positive impact on learning: a strong majority of teachers agree “strongly” or “somewhat” that “networked devices make it easier for my students to learn” and “networked devices make it easier for me to match my instructional practice to students’ various learning styles”.

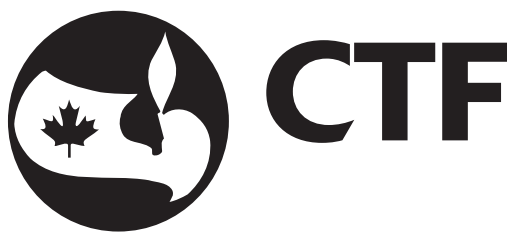
*The vast majority of teachers has access to and uses networked devices in the classroom.*

Virtually all teachers say their school has provided them with some kind of networked devices in the classroom. The most common networked devices supplied by schools are smart boards (interactive whiteboards), desktop computers and laptops/notebooks.

Most devices are provided fairly evenly in both elementary and secondary schools, with the exception of tablets, which are more commonly provided at the elementary level than the secondary level. Kindergarten teachers are most likely to report having access to desktop computers and tablets and least likely to be supplied with laptops and notebooks.

*Teachers have generally not embraced social media for educational purposes.*

Just over 1 in 10 teachers report they use social networking with their students for educational purposes *inside* the classroom





Heather Smith, CTF President

and fewer than 1 in 5 teachers use these tools for educational purposes *outside* of the classroom.

*Teachers feel it is very important to teach digital literacy skills and are generally confident in their ability to do so. Over 9 in 10 teachers surveyed consider it “very” or “somewhat” important that students learn the full gambit of digital literacy skills.*

### The five most popular skills indicated by teachers as being “very important” were:

- *staying safe online*
- *appropriate online behaviour*
- *dealing with cyberbullying*
- *understanding online privacy issues and settings*
- *verifying that online information is credible/relevant/accurate*

Teachers are fairly confident in their ability to teach these skills as well: at least seven in ten teachers report being “very” or “somewhat” confident in their ability to teach each surveyed skill respectively.

*Teachers are using networked devices in their classrooms to deliver content to students and to empower their students to create content.*

More than 7 in 10 teachers report their students have accessed content through online videos, almost half through video games, and a third through digital comics or graphic novels.

Although almost 4 in 10 teachers have had their students create videos, they are much less likely to have students create content through other technologies.

*Teachers want more support and autonomy in using networked technologies in the classroom.*

While teachers are generally positive about using networked technologies as learning tools, they are less likely to feel they have the support they need to realize potential benefits.

Teachers were most concerned about:

- the lack of technical support for maintaining and upgrading software, devices and networks (especially in remote and Northern schools);
- the lack of proper training in how to use networked devices to meet curricular goals.

The majority of teachers experienced not being able to access websites needed for lessons: Over 8 in 10 teachers have had websites they wanted to use for educational purposes blocked by school or board filters. For about 1 in 5 teachers, this happens “frequently”.

Teachers are more evenly divided on the support they receive from schools and districts: Just over half of teachers “strongly” or “somewhat” agree they have sufficient support to help them learn how to use various kinds of networked technologies. Half of teachers agree they receive sufficient support to help them use networked technologies to meet curricular goals.

## New Agreement Brings New Changes

As you read this newsletter article (probably in the staff room in mid-June while you wait for the microwave to be free), you will already know the results of the arbitration from last month, and are awaiting retroactive pay from the award.

As with any negotiation, salary is usually the issue that gets the most attention, but before the arbitration, there were some significant items negotiated that PEITF members should be aware. I will outline just a few of those changes here.

### Seniority and Forced Transfer

You will notice in this Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that seniority is more clearly defined and given greater importance. The biggest change is if a teacher is forced to move out of a school because of the school having fewer positions than teachers, the decision is now based on seniority with the employer as long as the remaining teachers can fulfill the roles in the school.

*“the Employer shall transfer the teacher with the least seniority in the school affected, provided the teachers retained have the qualifications, ability, and suitability for the positions remaining in the school.”*

In the previous agreement, there was much more discretion by the employer on who they could transfer out of the school.

### Probationary Teachers

Another seniority type clause is when a permanent teacher is “force” transferred out of a school. In the new agreement, if there are no open positions within 50km of their current school, the permanent teacher can then displace a teacher on a probationary contract. The probationary teacher then gets moved to open positions that may be further away from their former base school.

### Experience Recognition

The issue of only being able to move to the next pay step once during the school year (in February) has always bothered me. It has been a battle for the Federation in every round of negotiations for teachers, going through the steps, to be able to get the pay bump as soon as they become eligible through the required experience. For example, in the past, if your experience went from six years to seven years on February 11th you would not get the step increase until the next September.

This issue was finally solved through this round of negotiations, the new MOA states:

*“A teacher who qualifies for a higher level of experience recognition in any school year shall be entitled to the resulting increase in salary effective the beginning of the first pay period following the date when all required documentation has been submitted to the Registrar.”*



Patrick MacFadyen  
Deputy General Secretary

*“Other notable changes are some red circling for administrators, bereavement days for a burial or memorial that occur later than seven days after the death, STC changes in pay, changes to the notice of assignment date, increase grievance timelines, as well as other changes that come from the arbitration process including monetary items.”*

This change will help newer teachers as they move up the pay grid and allow them to get their increases earlier.

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Of course, the MOA impacts different teachers and different points in their careers and what is important to some may not be important to others. This article is just a short highlight, but you should take a careful look at all the changes to make sure you understand how it impacts your particular situation. As always, if you have any questions, please contact me at the Federation office.

Enjoy your well-deserved summer break,  
Patrick.

by Patrick MacFadyen

# Learning about Canada's Food Guide

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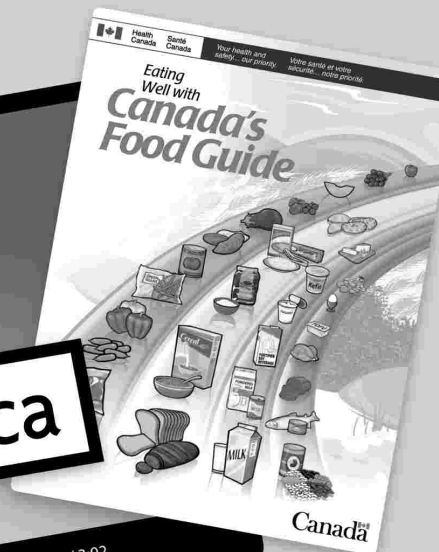


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## Thoughts and Comments from the General Secretary



Shaun MacCormac

It's finally June and another school year is coming to an end. It has been another year of major changes to our public education system, and another year of several challenges for teachers.

As I write this article, the hiring for the new curriculum delivery positions at the Department of Education (Early Learning and Culture) continues and everyone should be in place for the 2016-2017 school year. Hopefully, this will be the last of the major organizational changes we have for a while, and if you believe that, I have some swampland in Florida to sell you.

On the hopeful side, we should now see a more focused direction in terms of curriculum delivery, more collaboration on professional development for teachers, and a more efficient leadership structure. Why we haven't been able to do that already in such a small province remains a mystery to me.

Next year is already shaping up to be an interesting one. Re-zoning, restructuring of grades within schools, and future school closures are very likely to be on the agenda. It is always a big test for a government when the practical meets the political. Teachers, students and parents will have to hold on to their hats because it is likely to be a wild ride when those conversations begin.

On the positive side, we have a new Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), albeit an arbitrated one, that is in place until 2018. The Economic Welfare Committee had to work much harder than usual this time around spending 27 days at the bargaining table, two days in conciliation, and two days in the mediation/arbitration process. They did an incredible job. The outcome was a fair one for teachers and the committee was able to negotiate several items at the bargaining table, before talks broke down. There are some significant changes in the new MOA and we will continue to provide information to the membership to educate them on those changes.

Even more importantly on the positive side, and despite the many challenges teachers continue to face, students continue

to enjoy having great teachers and the world in the classroom remains a relatively happy place for most students, despite their own challenges. Teachers are great people and do whatever they can to shelter their students from anything they can control that might have a negative impact on learning. For that I thank you, not that I expect anything less.

Teachers are caring professionals, and they care a lot. This is extremely important, because it is not the body in charge of curriculum delivery, or any advisory council, or any rezoning or school closure that has the greatest impact on students – it is the teacher. It is you! So be proud of yourself and what you do because our education system depends on you and it needs you, and many people appreciate what you do.

I hope you have a restful and relaxing summer. Be good to yourselves and each other.



**PEITF  
Newsletter**

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND TEACHERS' FEDERATION

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

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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  
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