



On the inside:

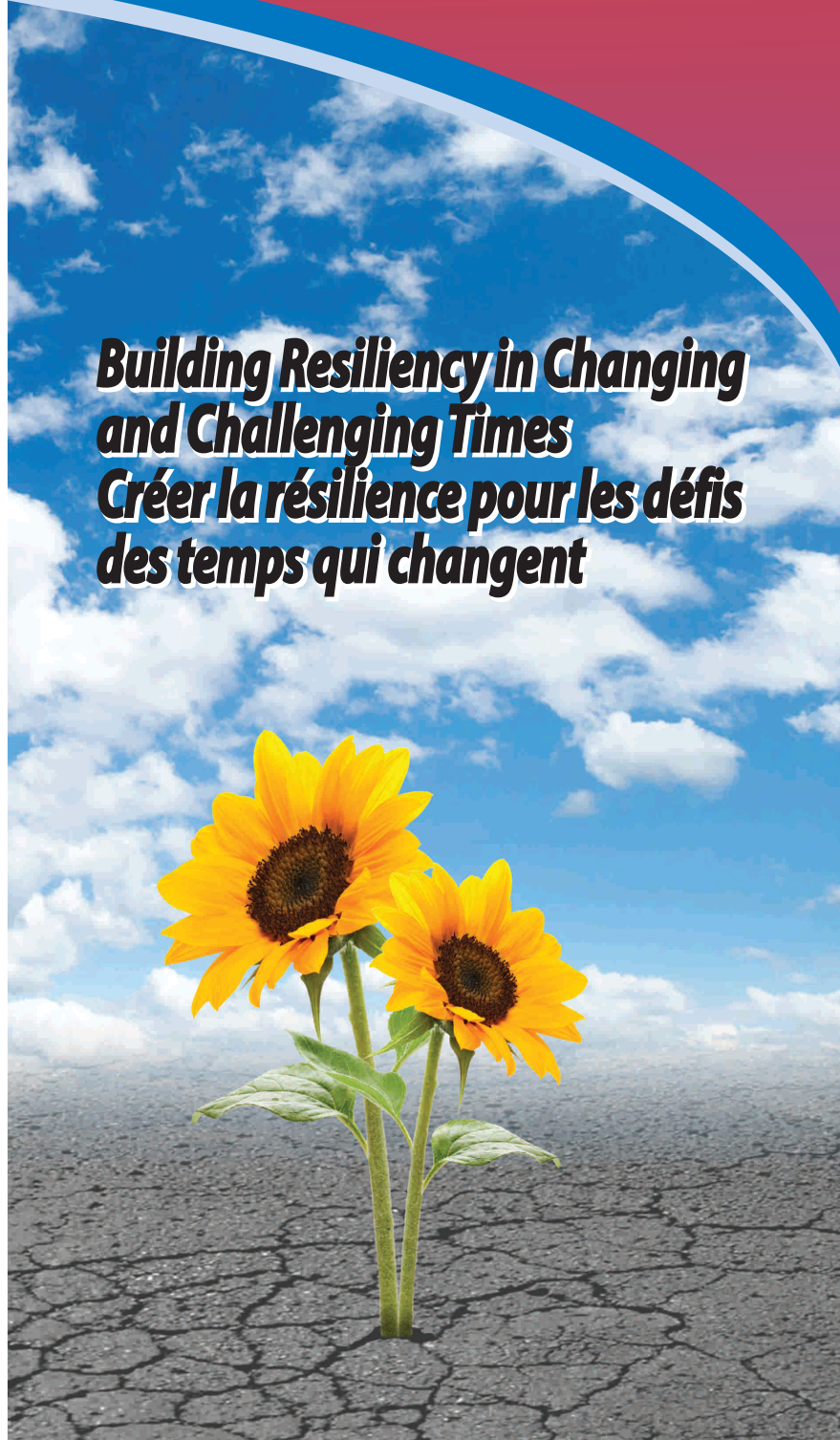
Change is in the  
Wind...Yet Again!  
p. 2

Cabin Pressure  
Dropping  
p. 3

Board of  
Governors  
p.p. 4-8

Thoughts and  
Comments  
p. 12

***Building Resiliency in Changing  
and Challenging Times  
Créer la résilience pour les défis  
des temps qui changent***



*Photo: PEITF Annual Convention talks resiliency  
and burnout.*

## Change is in the Wind...Yet Again!

I have one year as President behind me now, and I dare say it was definitely unforgettable! In November of last year, the ELSB was dissolved, and we witnessed major structural changes in our education system. These changes caused great stress for board-based and Department staff and the teachers they support. The professionalism and dedication shown by all ensured that student learning was not impacted. Unfortunately, more change is on the horizon for our Island schools.

The review of schools in the Public Schools Branch is forefront in the minds of many teachers, parents, and communities and is proving to be a stressful time, as so much remains unknown. The PEITF has had a presence at all of the public meetings and have met with the Public Schools Branch to discuss scenarios that may derive from this process.

The PEITF believes that Government is genuine in indicating this process is about having equitable services available to Island students to drive student achievement. However, equitable doesn't always mean adequate. That is why the PEITF requested assurances be made that the outcome of this process will not see a reduction of teaching positions. We reiterated to Government that schools must be staffed at a level that will ensure manageable class sizes with the supports for learning and class compositions that will allow children to thrive.

We have since received assurances that staffing numbers will not be cut for the next school year. This stability is encouraging, but Island classrooms today clearly justify the need for MORE teachers to support the diverse needs and class composition issues that exist in classrooms across PEI. It is promising that Government listened to our concerns and recently added positions to support EAL students and two Kindergarten classrooms, but more has yet to be done.

It would be remiss not to mention the PISA results that have captured the attention of many. We are pleased to see that these results show great improvement for Island 15 year-olds. However, these results are derived from one day of testing for one group of students. Placing too much emphasis on any standardized test result can be troublesome. These one moment in time tests such as PISA capture only a small portion of what matters in public education. We maintain that the best method

to determine how our Island's education system is serving Island youth is through engaging those that lead Island schools and classrooms everyday; our teachers.

In closing, I would like to thank all teachers for everything that you do. I can't say it enough... I am privileged and honored to represent Prince Edward Island teachers. Look after yourselves, as too often you put others first. "Life is short, time is fast, no replay, no rewind, so enjoy every moment as it comes". I wish you all a memorable Christmas holiday and a much needed break to relax with family and friends.



Bethany MacLeod  
President, PEITF



## RTA CORNER

by Sheridyth MacNeill  
President, Retired Teachers' Association

**G**reetings from PEIRTA  
Hello and Merry Christmas to all you hard working teachers. I know you are ready for a much needed break, and you certainly deserve it. I hope Santa brings all you asked for and that Minister Doug Currie helps with the gift wrapping.

As retired teachers, we tend to keep a close eye on the issues that face teachers. I must admit we always add: "Thank God I'm retired." We try to keep things in line in the retirement area, so it will be ready when you get here. Big joke!! Like things will be even remotely the same for you.

Just know that all PEI retired teachers are willing to help out if you ever need us.

Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year.

by Bethany MacLeod



Chad Gallant

## Cabin Pressure Dropping

A few years back, my family travelled on March break to Florida to escape from the cold of winter. While on the plane, the flight staff went through the in-flight safety video as they typically

do. Eventually the flight crew came to the part where they talk about the oxygen masks falling from the ceiling in case of cabin pressure loss. The announcement from the crew stated that adults should ensure their own mask was secured first before assisting others. My son thought that was strange and remarked that kids should be helped first because they can't do it on their own. I went on to explain to him that if the adults didn't get the oxygen first, they might not be able to help others later.

When the convention planning committee sat down to plan for this year's convention, it was evident to those around the table that this year's event needed to be different than those of recent memory. The change was not because past conventions hadn't been well received, but more because those around the table felt that teachers had reached the tipping point in their own mental well being and were dealing with students that are

at the same juncture. The oxygen masks are dropping.

We felt that the mental health of teachers and students must be at the core of this year's convention. While new teaching strategies, and hot button topics were also offered, it was obvious that teachers must have an opportunity to learn strategies for self-care.

*“The announcement from the crew stated that adults should ensure their own mask was secured first before assisting others. My son thought that was strange and remarked that kids should be helped first because they can't do it on their own. I went on to explain to him that if the adults didn't get the oxygen first, they might not be able to help others later.”*

Teachers, by nature, do not tend to put themselves first. It's difficult for many to ditch the correcting, planning, phone calls, etc, after school hours to exercise, read a book, play a game with family or do something for themselves because they are consumed with ensuring the students in their care get the best education possible. As was discussed during convention however, it's not selfish to put your needs first, in fact, much like the oxygen mask - it's necessary.

I'd like to thank the committee for their work in planning this year's event and everyone who took the time to provide the committee with feedback through the online evaluation. The convention committee will be reviewing the evaluations in planning future events.

Take care,  
Chad.



**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: Chad Gallant**  
**chad.gallant@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

by Chad Gallant

## Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation Executive



Bethany MacLeod  
President



Blaine Bernard  
Vice-President



Aldene Smallman  
Vice-President



Andy Doran  
Member-at-Large  
WATA



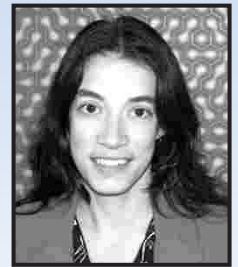
Angela Killeen  
Member-at-Large  
EATA



Aletha Coady  
Member-at-Large  
EATA



David Chisholm  
Member-at-Large  
WATA



Nathalie LeBlanc  
Member-at-Large  
AEELF

### Up to **40%\*** savings on auto insurance. **How exciting!**

Johnson Insurance is thrilled to give you access to exclusive savings and offers. We look beyond the things people insure, to the people themselves. Whether you're up or down, we're in this together.

**JOHNSON**  
INSURANCE

If it happens to you,  
it happens to us.



Group code: 65

Call or visit us online for a quote.

**1-877-742-7490**

**johnson.ca/start-saving**



Johnson Insurance is a tradename of Johnson Inc. ("Johnson"), a licensed insurance intermediary. Home and auto policies are primarily underwritten by Unifund Assurance Company ("Unifund"). Unifund and Johnson share common ownership. Some conditions apply.\*Full savings amount available on auto insurance if the following discounts are applicable: long term, multiline, conviction free, select and a qualifying group member. Percentage savings may vary otherwise. Applicable only to policies underwritten by Unifund in Prince Edward Island. Eligibility requirements, limitations and exclusions apply. 0352.16

# BOARD OF GOVERNORS Area Coordinators and Assistants 2016-2017

This issue features the teachers who continue to work hard to support and represent your viewpoints and concerns. The members of the Board of Governors give generously of their time to do this work. On behalf of all teachers, accept our thanks for representation, hard work and professionalism.



Marcel Landry  
École Évangéline  
Coordinator  
AELF



Ginette Arsenault  
École-sur-Mer  
Assistant Coordinator  
AELF



Sheryll O'Hanley  
Morell Cons.  
Coordinator  
EATA



Sherri Campbell  
Morell Cons.  
Assistant Coordinator  
EATA



Gisèle Smallman  
Bloomfield Elem.  
Coordinator  
WATA



Sharon Anderson  
Somerset Elem.  
Assistant Coordinator  
WATA



Micheline Landry  
École-sur-Mer



Manon Leclair  
École Évangéline



Rachel Steadman  
École La-Belle-Cloche



Paul Killorn  
École François-Buote



Anne-Marie Rioux  
École Pierre-Chiasson



Carl Peterson  
École Saint-Augustin

## L'association des enseignantes et des enseignants de langue française



Sheila Gaudette  
Tignish Elem.



Paul Quinlan  
Amherst Cove Cons.



Anne Marie Muise  
St. Louis Elem.



Barbra Forbes  
Three Oaks Sr. High



Mary Hart  
M.E. Callaghan Int.



Lesley Cousins  
Kinkora Reg. High



Cindy MacKendrick  
Three Oaks Sr. High



Kimberley Williams  
Westisle Composite High



Heather Harris  
Alberton Elem.



Paul Shepard  
Parkside Elem.



Elizabeth Johnston  
Miscouche



Kendra Silliker  
O'Leary Elem.



Eamon Graham  
Kensington Inter.



Kimberley Studer  
Elm Street Elem.



Melanie Gallant  
Somerset Elem.



Susan Gallant  
Queen Elizabeth Elem.



Rory Herget  
Bloomfield Elem.



Kelly Gorriil  
Hernewood Inter.



Mark MacNeill  
Summerside Inter.



Paige Ricketts  
Substitute Teacher  
Representative

Missing Photos: Karen Brennan  
Ellerslie Elem.  
Aidan Downey  
Greenfield Elem.  
Shelley Schurman  
Athena Cons.

# EASTERN AREA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

7



Jill Coffin  
Bluefield Sr. High



Edwena Arbuckle  
Montague Cons.



Jeff Trainor  
Englewood Cons.



Alison Kelly-Doyle  
L.M. Montgomery Elem.



John Michael Murphy  
Birchwood Int.



Amy Boswell  
Sherwood Elem.



Joanne MacNevin  
Public Schools Branch



Jodi Murphy  
Charlottetown Rural High



Lori Ronahan  
Colonel Gray Sr. High



Ryan Casey  
East Wiltshire Int.



Linda Gallant  
Stonepark Int.



Kurt Duncan  
Sherwood Elem.



Darwin Woods  
Eliot River Elem.



Lacey Gallant  
Spring Park Elem.



Helen Smith-MacPhail  
Stonepark Int.



JoAnne Jay  
St. Jean Elem.



Elizabeth Crawford  
West Royalty Elem.



Lana Mill  
Belfast Cons.



Mark Enman  
Central Queens Elem.



Michaela Oliver  
Morell Cons.



Kelli Seaward  
Glen Stewart Primary



Catherine MacDougall  
Charlottetown Rural High



Kristina McLane  
Montague Reg. High



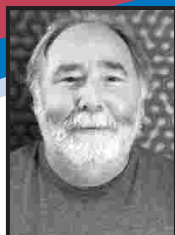
Noreen Lisi  
Cardigan Cons.



Chris MacKinnon  
Queen Charlotte Int.



Andrea Robbins  
Parkdale Elem.



Kevin Stonefield  
Montague Int.



Tracey Evison  
West Kent Elem.



Treena Hann  
Stratford Elem.



Marion McGaughey  
Donagh Regional



Vanda Deighan  
West Royalty Elem.



Stephanie Ellsworth-Reid  
Westwood Primary



Robert Fitzpatrick  
Georgetown Elem.



Melissa MacKinnon  
Mount Stewart Cons.



Mark McGillivray  
Gulf Shore Cons.



Lori-Dawn Gordon  
Morell Reg. High



Clodagh Peverley  
Westwood Primary



Christina MacAulay  
Souris Cons.



Tammy Cann  
Southern Kings Cons.



Dylan Taylor  
Glen Stewart Primary



Judy Warren  
Public Schools Branch



Jack Headley  
Bluefield Sr. High



Ronald Munn  
Montague Reg. High



Jeff MacDonald  
Colonel Gray Sr. High



Monica Rafuse  
Dept. of Education, Early  
Learning and Culture



Patty Casely  
Prince Street Elem.



Cheryl Turner  
Public Schools Branch

Missing Photos:

David Wood  
Vernon River Cons.

Stephanie Hatton  
Substitute Teacher  
Representative  
Eastern Area Teachers' Assoc.

Kent Pond  
Hearing Education Auditory  
Resources / Birchwood Inter.

Kevin Peters  
Souris Reg. High



## All of Society Benefits When Our Students' Mental Health is Supported Early in Life



As I stood at the podium to open the July 2016 Canadian Forum on Public Education, I was struck by the timeliness of the Forum topic - Wellness in our Schools. When I started teaching in the early 1980s, the mental health and wellness of neither students nor teachers were regular topics of conversation around the staff room table, or anywhere else for that matter. Students and teachers were not well served by this silence and lack of support for diagnosis or real needs.

I hope change has begun and these discussions are occurring in schools. Across Canada, educators have told us that student mental health is the number one issue that impacts teaching and learning, saying schools need more community support, professional services and resources to help students facing challenges.

According to a 2012 teacher survey conducted by the CTF, in collaboration with our Member organizations and the Mental Health Commission of Canada, the majority of teachers say stress, anxiety disorders, attention deficit disorders, attention hyperactivity disorders and autism spectrum disorders as well as learning disabilities such as dyslexia are pressing concerns in their school.

And yet, in the same survey, almost 7 in 10 teachers said they had not received professional training to address student mental illness in their schools. Clearly, there is a major gap between identified needs and the reality. According to teachers, stigma and discrimination are by far the biggest barriers hindering dialogue and support for everyone's mental health and wellness.

In response to this need, CTF officially releases on October 10 - World Mental Health Day - a new classroom resource for teachers aimed at opening up classroom discussions on stigma. The booklet titled *Mental Health Stigma: Challenging it together!* aims to increase teachers' and students' comfort level when talking about mental health.

Over my 33-year career teaching and providing resource support in New Brunswick classrooms, there have been many children over whom I have lost sleep. While I taught all levels from Kindergarten to Grade 5, I spent over 13 years teaching at the Kindergarten level with four and five-year-olds. I felt frustration, concern and even anger at times when the school team had to fight for appropriate services for individual students only to be blocked at every effort. It was no surprise to me that I could easily name the students the high school vice-principal saw on a regular basis for disciplinary issues, nine years after I had taught them in Kindergarten. While teachers feel they're part of the solution in supporting student wellness in the school, they clearly cannot do it alone without experts, professional learning and funding.

And let's be frank... mental health challenges can also affect teachers. The results of CTF's 2014 national survey on work/life balance, which garnered over 8,000 responses, revealed that teachers' stress related to work-life imbalance had jumped over the previous five years for 80% of teachers. When asked why, 95% said it was the inability to devote as much time as they'd like to each of their students.

As for life outside of the school, once again most said they didn't have enough time to spend with their own children, spouse or partner, for recreational pursuits and/or for caring for family and friends in need. Plus, teachers and other education personnel have taken on the duties of front line triage with students suffering the effects of poverty, food insecurity, family stress and addictions, and mental health concerns. All of these factors can lead to teacher burn-out and mental distress. And that certainly has an impact in the classroom.

The CTF Canadian Forum on Public Education just began to scratch at the surface of the issue of wellness in our schools. It IS time to act and those of us in schools must lobby and advocate for sufficient and appropriate supports for students and colleagues, and we need to find those allies in the wider community in order to work together. Those of us here at CTF will most certainly do our part at the federal level!

*Heather Smith is the President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation for the period 2015-2017.*

*October 7, 2016*

by Heather Smith

To promote change & inspire hope.



To fill students' buckets and fill mine too.

At the 2016 PEITF Annual Convention, teachers take the opportunity to answer the question...



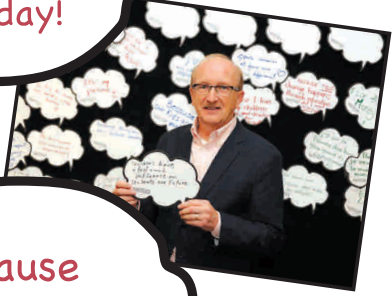
WHY?

#WHYTEACH



To inspire and support.

I TEACH to share the JOY of making music every day!



My purpose is to help kids be the best they can be.

Because children are awesome!



## CONTACT 2016 Antigonish, Nova Scotia



On August 2nd - 5th educators from across Atlantic Canada joined together on the St. Francis Xavier University campus in Antigonish, Nova Scotia to take part in the Conference on New Techniques and Classroom Teaching or CONTACT. Over the course of the four days, participants explored the evolving requirements of the teaching profession and the challenges of today's classroom under the theme "Teach Like a Jedi!"

*CONTACT 2017 comes to Charlottetown this coming August...  
stay tuned for more details!*

## DSS 2016 – Sackville, New Brunswick

The Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation once again this year partnered with the teacher associations in the three Atlantic Provinces to sponsor the DSS 2016 Institute. The event took place at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick on July 5-8, 2016.

Well known education Blogger and researcher Peter DeWitt facilitated this institute focused on Visible Learning with a simple question: *what affects student learning the most?*

Participants discussed the work of John Hattie and focused on following core principles:

**Learners, Visible Learning Schools, Inspired and Passionate Teaching, and Effective Feedback.** Feedback from the DSS 2016 Institute participants is consistently very positive; this year was no different. Delegates appreciated the blend of hands-on learning and having the opportunity to socialize with like-minded colleagues.



*DSS 2017 will be held once again at Mount Allison University. The tentative dates are July 4-7. More detailed information on DSS 2017 will be available in the New Year. Hope to see you there!*

## Thoughts and Comments from the General Secretary



Shaun MacCormac

Another school year, another shake-up in the PEI education system. It seems like the past ten years have been devoted to major changes to education in this province. Unfortunately, most of the changes have not been focused on students, but on decisions for political and financial reasons.

The decision to move the Department of Education to Summerside was purely a political decision to decentralize some of government's operations away from Charlottetown, which, politically, may not have been a bad idea, but there were many better practical choices than the Department of Education.

As is too often the case with governments, the plan and its execution was not well thought out and had to be scaled back due to the need to have resources close to the majority of students, which would be Charlottetown. The government spent too many dollars, in my opinion, upgrading the Holman Building in Summerside, but also had to warehouse several employees in Charlottetown. The Aubin Arsenault Building, the Atlantic Technology Centre and other spaces were used as office space for employees who needed to be in Charlottetown and not Summerside. I'm not sure I want to know how much this has cost government, and our education system. All of that could have been avoided if the Government had asked the right people the right questions prior to finalizing that decision.

The decision to include kindergarten into the public education system was a good one. It was overdue and I applaud the Ghiz Government for making that decision. I trust it will be Robert Ghiz's primary legacy when people look back at his time as Premier. It has, in my opinion, been the only political decision that has been made in the past ten years regarding our education system that has put students and learning in the forefront. It was an expensive decision, but it was the right one. An unfortunate by-product of that decision, and other costly political decisions, however, has been the budgetary cutbacks that have occurred since that time.

What has occurred since the introduction of kindergarten is a series of changes that have been invoked by politicians for political and, I suspect, financial reasons. Too few of those decisions have yet to have any meaningful positive impact on students and have created stress, distractions, confusion, discord,

a lack of direction, and a lack of consistent leadership for teachers.

The combination of the Western School Board and the Eastern School District into the English Language School Board (ELSB) never seemed to gain any meaningful traction. It was never given enough time to mesh into its own identity and was finally implementing its own direction in student learning when government decided that it, and not a school board, should be making the instructional and learning decisions. It could be argued that it was the initiatives of the ELSB, if anything at all, that led to the improved scores in the most recent PISA results. Now it is gone.

The Government created the Public Schools Branch to handle English education in this province with curriculum and instruction being managed by the Department of Education. It created three councils for input to government. None of those has any meaningful direct input from classroom teachers, although there is a continued promise, with no action, that classroom teacher input will be sought... eventually. The kinks are still being worked out on this new structure, so we'll have to wait and see.

Now, a school review process is underway. Seemingly, according to Government, a redistribution of students will solve class composition problems in this province. I think an explanation of the difference between class size and class composition is in order, but that's just my opinion.

It is another year of uncertainty for teachers, but this time students and parents are on edge as well. School closures are possible, if not likely, and the "redistribution" of students is sure to create tension. It is sure to be an interesting spring.

On a more positive note, since it soon will be Christmas, here's hoping that while we all wait for peace on Earth, the MacLauchlan Government will give us peace (and quiet) in education in this province for the next school year and beyond.

I hope you all have a happy and restful holiday and a merry Christmas. Be good to yourselves and your fellow teachers.

Tel. 902 569 4157 • Toll Free 1 800 903 4157 • Fax 902 569 3682

24 Glen Stewart Drive  
PO Box 6000, Charlottetown, PE  
C1A 8B4