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Education Our Best Investment



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Teachers' Federation

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Photo: PEITF Board of Governors press for more supports at PEITF Annual General Meeting.

Almost There!

Dear Teachers:
It is difficult to believe that another school year has come and is almost gone. Soon, I'm hoping, you will all have the opportunity to enjoy our beautiful Island, and finally attain much-needed rest and relaxation with family and friends. As I'm certain you will agree, it has been an eventful year in education.

Just recently the Government announced the addition of 27 FTE's to support Island classrooms. From the onset of the staffing process, the PEITF has advocated for additional staffing for all schools to ensure schools would be better able to offer quality education for all students. The Board of Governors also expressed their concerns to the Minister of Education at our recent Annual General Meeting. It is evident that our concerns, and those voiced during the school review process, have been heard. We will continue to ask the Government for more teachers, recognizing that this is a step in the right direction!

Speaking of steps, Michel Plamondon will soon step away from the PEITF after 47 years in the education field. Michel was part of the first UPEI graduating class and then began teaching at Charlottetown Rural. He became a PEITF Board of Governor, then Treasurer on the Executive before being PEITF President in 1989-1991. He is finishing his years of service as Executive Assistant at PEITF, a position he has held since 1999. He has taught me more than I ever wanted to know about pension and group insurance! Michel will be truly missed. He is excellent at what he does, and it is evident that he is passionate about his work. Michel is kind and caring, and he has always demonstrated compassion and respect in communication with members. We wish him all the best in his retirement.

We are pleased to be hosting CONTACT 2017 this summer at UPEI, which will provide an opportunity for teachers across Atlantic Canada to come together to share ideas, reflect on experiences and celebrate all that is best about teaching. Grants are still available, so please contact PEITF if you wish to take advantage of this wonderful learning experience.

I would like to welcome our newly elected PEITF Executive Members: Sheryll O'Hanley, Gisèle Smallman, and Ghislain Bernard. I know they will be excellent additions to the Executive, as they each bring a wide array of experiences and knowledge

to the Committee. I look forward to working with them over the next school year.

Teaching is a rewarding profession, but it is becoming more and more challenging as demands increase and resources dwindle. You work tirelessly on behalf of your students, and I thank you for your daily efforts and dedication to children, despite these circumstances. So please take time this summer to rejuvenate and relax - it is vital that you take care of yourself. "Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover." (Mark Twain)

Thank you for another successful school year. I am proud to represent such an amazing group of teachers!



Bethany MacLeod
President, PEITF



The Costs of Perfectionism: Tips For Letting Go

It's that time of year again, the stress and excitement of the end of a school year. Sometimes it can feel like racing to celebrate at the finish line after a marathon and other times it feels like we're dragging ourselves the last kilometer. Looking back on the year in review, how do you feel about your accomplishments and abilities? How do our expectations and belief systems contribute to a successful finish?

To the perfectionist teacher, nothing is ever good enough - - nothing. While it's beneficial for teachers to be detail-oriented and focused, as they are charged with the important task of preparing youth for later-in-life success, teachers who engage

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by Bethany MacLeod



Chad Gallant

Penalize the Behavior or Investigate the Underlying Cause?

There's almost always one (sometimes more than one). The student that is consistently not meeting the expected behaviors and therefore spending time in the detention room, the office,

suspended, etc. We've all been there. No matter the punishment, the behavior continues even after the consequence has ended.

These students may cause concerns for many reasons. Often the behavior is viewed as something that keeps the student from learning. The behaviors will often distract not only the student exhibiting the behavior but also their peers. Teachers want all their students to achieve well, and when classroom learning is continually distracted or interrupted, frustration mounts.

Recently, the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI held an event in Summerside featuring Dr. Ross Greene. Dr. Greene is the author of the book, *The Explosive Child*, and more recently in his book, *Lost at School*. Dr. Greene's work, which he has titled, "*Collaborative and Proactive Solutions*" is rooted in discovering the underlying reasons for student misbehavior rather than punishing the behavior itself. Through Dr. Greene's work the

question is raised on should we be treating chronically misbehaving children as though they don't want to behave when in many cases they simply can't? The program is designed to be a proactive solution to issues of behavior. As someone that is not far removed from the classroom, I fully realize that trying to be proactive is difficult while watching your carefully planned lesson get hijacked by a student who appears to be uninterested in the content you are attempting to deliver. In that last statement, however, Dr. Greene would like to say that the word "**appears**" is problematic. Dr. Greene will argue that doing well is always preferable and that often the misbehavior is due to a lack of skill rather than a lack of desire. As Dr. Greene highlighted in his presentation, "Kids do well if they can; not if they want to."

The program as laid out is fairly intensive in how these behavioral challenges are handled. Student skill inventories are constructed to try to remove any barriers preventing student success that are possibly triggering some of the behaviors. Ultimately, rather than deciding on methods of punishment, a go-forward plan on developing lacking skills for that student is devised.

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For many, this is not new information. Teachers have been speaking of Dr. Greene's work for some time and have adopted Dr. Green's methods for addressing student behaviors or have other techniques that work for them. It is however, food for thought in regards to student behavior.

If you would like to have your name entered in a draw to win Dr. Ross Greene's Book, *Lost and Found*, email chad.gallant@peitf.com with the subject line "Book Draw." Have a wonderful, well-deserved, summer.



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Newsletter

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by Chad Gallant



The PEITF
would like to *thank*
Michel Plamondon
for his 18 years serving Island Teachers.



We wish him
all the *best*
in his
retirement.



RTA CORNER

by Joyce McCardle
President, Retired Teachers' Association

I cannot believe the school year is drawing to a close and the last articles are being written.

I was delighted to attend the PEITF AGM dinner on Saturday, May 27. Although it is so different to recognize so few faces (except the oldies like myself around the past presidents' table), it is evident the Federation is in good hands. Congratulations to the retiring members; you have served teachers of PEI well.

I can't believe Michel won't be there to answer all my questions. He has been a faithful member and such an important part of the Federation for so many years. He deserves a rest.

The Federation has had a very busy year with all the changes (or no changes in places!!). Your executive serves you well and works very hard on your behalf. Our retired group is quite willing to help lobby or do anything else you need if required.

Once again the retired teachers of PEI thank the Executive of PEITF for the help and support to our group.

Have a restful summer; enjoy yourselves and leave any stress you may have endured behind.

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Lights, Camera, Engage!



If you see a large dog mascot around the streets of Cornwall, chances are good that Margo Campbell and Darren Ford are nearby with a video camera. Campbell and Ford have been recording school newscasts with the help of student reporters to create the “Ozzy Newscast” to engage and inform the school community.

The newscasts, named after the school mascot “Ozzy,” report on upcoming, current, and past events at the school, along with community bulletins with all information delivered by grade six students. The videos are edited and posted to youtube and linked to the school website.

One recent highlight saw the Ozzy News Team travel to the set of CBC’s Compass where they met with Bruce Rainnie and Boomer Gallant. On set, the students were able to interview the two outgoing local television icons and get tips on how they could take their newscast to the next level.



Margo Campbell and Darren Ford in front of their green screen at Eliot River School.

The following questions were sent to the Campbell and Ford about “Ozzy News.”

How have you found this has engaged your school and/or school communities?

“This has been an excellent way to engage our school community. Students have been engaged since day one and feel ownership of the newscast. It’s the students’ ideas and contributions that fuel the newscast. We are lucky to have very supportive admin teams, which have supported the newscast.

The school community has enjoyed our newscast, and it has served as an excellent way to get out to our community what happens within our school on a regular basis. The videos keep everyone informed in a fun-filled manner.”

What have your students learned from doing this?

“The students have learned so much from this whole process. They have become better communicators and improved their speaking abilities. They have learned to work collaboratively and enhanced their critical thinking to put the show altogether. The Ozzy News team has also learned that they must work hard to put a good product in front of their audience.”

How did you get started with this project? How has it evolved?

“The project started off small with the idea of providing an opportunity to students to show off their skills as reporters and to get news out to the community. It has evolved from a low-key production to a very elaborate production involving various technologies - especially our Green Screen that provides the newscast with a real news look and feel. We are always looking for bringing in the right backgrounds, music and interview opportunities. This is one way to meet our school SMART Goal of Community Engagement and having fun doing it in the process.”

Where would you like to see this go in the future?

“There is no doubt that this will be a staple of our school as we move forward. As the year has progressed, there has been a lot of interest from all grade levels that want to be part of this project. We are already recruiting our current grade 5 students to be part of next year’s crew, and over 20 students have expressed interest.”

Check out the Ozzy newscast at <http://tiny.cc/OzzyNews>

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in perfectionism often run into problems, because perfection isn't possible. Teachers who practice perfectionism run the risk of feeling the strain that accompanies teaching more acutely than those who are better able to moderate their work.

Perfectionism is not the same thing as striving to be your best. Perfectionism is not about healthy achievement and growth. Perfectionism is the belief that if we live perfect, look perfect, and act perfect, we can minimize or avoid the pain of blame, judgment, and shame. It's a shield. Perfectionism is a twenty-ton shield that we lug around thinking it will protect us when, in fact, it's the thing that's really preventing us from taking flight. It's a self-worth issue, where perfectionists see mistakes as evidence that they are personally flawed and therefore less acceptable to others.

Perfectionism is all about *perception* - we want to be perceived as perfect. Ironically, there is no way to control perception. No matter how much time and energy we spend trying, it's out of our hands. I once heard someone say, "What people think of me or say about me is none of my business." It's a hard value to practice.

Perfectionism is not self-improvement. Perfectionism is, at its core, about trying to earn approval and acceptance. Research shows that most perfectionists were raised being praised for achievement and performance (grades, manners, rule-following, people-pleasing, appearance, sports). Somewhere along the way, we adopt this dangerous and debilitating belief system: I am what I accomplish and how well I accomplish it. Please. Perform. Perfect. Healthy striving is self-focused - How can I improve? Perfectionism is other-focused - What will they think?

Research shows that perfectionism hampers success. In fact, it's often the path to depression, anxiety, addiction, and life-paralysis. Life-paralysis refers to all of the opportunities we miss because we're too afraid to put anything out in the world that could be imperfect. It's also all of the dreams that we don't follow because of our deep fear of failing, making mistakes, and disappointing others. It's terrifying to risk when you're a perfectionist; your self-worth is on the line.

Get Clear on The Costs of Perfectionism

- Are there areas in your life where you are highly productive, but not enjoying and valuing what you produce?
- Do you engage in black or white thinking? "Either I'm a total success or a total failure"
- Am I neglecting my own needs and self-care trying to measure up to an unattainable standard?
- Are your relationships struggling due to a tendency to not only judge yourself too harshly, but also judge others for being less than perfect?
- What dreams have you walked away from in an effort to avoid potential failures? Are there times you are paralyzed by indecision, afraid to make a mistake?

Tips on Letting go of Perfectionism

1. Perfectionism is contagious. Be mindful of the messages that you're sending the people around you; your kids, your partner,

your co-workers, your friends.

Make "*embracing imperfection*" a family project. If the house is messy or you're late for church or dinner is overcooked, let yourself off the hook and celebrate being imperfect.

2. Surround yourself with people who are on a similar *journey*. Letting go of perfection is scary. It's how we protect ourselves. I don't think we can do it alone.
3. "What will people think?" Is the rally cry of perfectionism. The next time you find yourself worrying about this, STOP and ask these questions: *What do I think? How do I feel?* Writing down these answers is very powerful.
4. Think about the areas where you struggle with perfectionism. This simple question can help us start to understand the fear that fuels the perfection anxiety: When it comes to my _____ (house, body, teaching, mothering, etc.), I don't want to be perceived as _____. Where did those messages come from? *How much of your life are you willing to turn over to them?*
5. Examine your standards for success. Imagine working at 80% instead of 100%. For example, instead of the usual scheduled 5 hours to do report cards, commit to 4 hours and then evaluate if that extra hour will actually produce a significantly better outcome for your students.
6. Challenge your language that solidifies your beliefs around your perfection expectations. Embrace the terms effort and progress as well as the risks taken in trying something new. Honour your time invested and intentions, not just the outcomes. Shift to focus on the terms practice, persistence and skills building rather than work or achievements.
7. Practice *self-compassion*. We need to be kind and tender with ourselves. Most of us talk to ourselves in ways we would NEVER consider talking to other people. We are critical instead of kind. We are judgmental instead of loving. Perfectionism is ultimately a struggle for worthiness and there's no better place to start than remembering that our imperfections and vulnerabilities connect us to each other and to our humanity.

Excerpts from the work of BrenŽ Brown, PhD

Further recommended readings: "The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are" by BrenŽ Brown

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Thoughts and Comments from the General Secretary



Shaun MacCormac

Well, it's hard to believe it is that time of year again. Another school year has flown by, although for some, it may have seemed like it would never end. It has been another year of upheaval for teachers, especially in the Public Schools Branch. The PSB is up and running and, as could be expected, there are some problems to work through. The problems, however, seemed to be slightly diminished for a lot of teachers caught between conflicting directions from the Department and those from the English Language School Board.

The highlight (lowlight?) of the school year on the English side was the school review process that took place throughout much of this school year. The process was an interesting one, enlightening, frustrating, respectful, disrespectful, but reasonably thorough in the family of schools on which the review was based. I didn't envy those tasked with carrying through with the process, and I didn't envy those teachers, students, and parents whose schools were reviewed.

As you are now aware, it wasn't exactly all for not, but the outcome left many people wondering if the same outcome could have been achieved with a lot less stress and negative impact on all those involved. I guess I'll leave that question to the politicians, who, I hope, have reflected on that very question. I also hope the answer is fairly obvious.

In the end, some things have been accomplished. All schools have remained open, some students have been re-zoned, and we have seen how much people care about schools and, hopefully, education in this province. That is not an insignificant thing for teachers. You work hard, care a lot about your students, and deserve recognition of the challenges you face each day in your schools. This process was a beginning of that recognition, and the challenge is to continue to shed light on what the realities within schools have become.

We may never know what the exact impact on this Government was regarding the school review process. Some say the most vocal people got their way, some say Government learned some lessons about our system, and some say closing schools would have been contradictory to the plan regarding

rural development and population growth. Maybe it was all of the above and more. What I do know is at the end of the day, for whatever reason, this government stepped up to the plate.

The status quo was not an option. Some things did have to change. Some re-zoning of students did need to take place to address some of the issues of overcrowding. Some overcrowded schools remain and must be addressed. Teachers are drowning in the inclusive model that is in place. Even small classes include students who face challenges that seemingly either didn't exist to this extent in the past or were simply ignored. Deciding not to close schools was a decision that initially pointed to the status quo remaining in most schools in the province.

Then came the jobs. No, there weren't enough. No, it won't solve a lot of the problems that teachers are facing in their classrooms. Yes, both the PSB and CSLF deserve more. I feel obligated, however, to give some credit to this Government. I have, on a number of occasions, pointed out that despite declining enrolment, the Pat Binns Government added jobs and now the MacLauchlan Government has now done the same. Maybe the reason is different, but the impact will be a positive one nonetheless.

It is a start. Our goal as an organization regarding this matter is to get a workable staffing model back on the agenda. The current model is outdated. It does not meet the needs within our system. It does not adequately support inclusive education and not by a long shot. A staffing model would also make clear why positions would be added to the system, and that would be helpful.

It was also a great way to (almost) end a school year, or at least not a bad way. I hope you all have an enjoyable and relaxing summer. You deserve it! Please be good to yourselves and to each other; you deserve that as well.

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