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Photos:

- *President Aldene Smallman at PEITF AGM. (Photo courtesy Shelley Morse)*
- *PEITF Leaders' Forum on Education attracts hundreds both in person and online.*

From the President

We have made it to June again and looking back, you may be wondering where May went. Thankfully we have the sun and warm weather to keep us energized through these long days of report cards, exams, field trips, and year-end meetings. I have June 28th circled on my calendar, but with so much to do before then, it will be a sprint to the finish.

When I decided to run for President, I knew that it would be a significant transition, but that I would have July to help ease the adjustment. However, much like the weather on the Island, things can change rather quickly, and did they ever!

With the appointment of Bethany MacLeod to Deputy Minister of Education, the role of PEITF President came on more suddenly than expected. Trying to balance the Presidency with my current position as Acting Principal at O'Leary Elementary has been challenging, particularly during staffing. I am grateful to the PEITF Executive and staff along with my families, both at home and at school for all the support.

This past year the Federation ratified a new agreement with the government which was then followed by a historic election result. It awaits to be seen how a Conservative minority government will impact the learning environment of our students

and the working environment of our teachers.

As I write this, the Provincial budget has not yet been announced, but we are hoping for good news for education. As indicated through the appointment of my predecessor, Bethany MacLeod to the position of Deputy Minister of Education and Life-Long Learning, this government appears to be willing to listen to the concerns of teachers. We hope that hearing these concerns leads to action from government and a review of how schools are staffed.

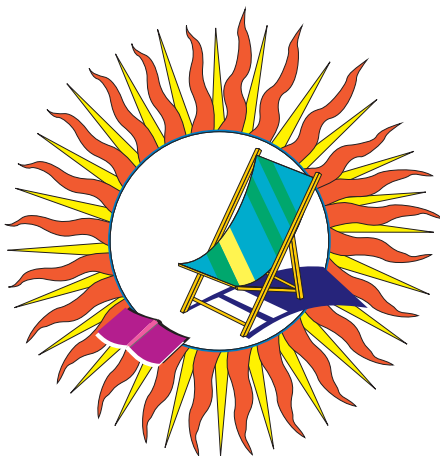
Though I am in the role now to conclude Bethany's term, my term as President will officially begin on July 1st. I am thankful for the support and notes of congratulations received since my election and strive to represent you to the best of my abilities.

I wish you all an enjoyable and relaxing summer with opportunities to spend time with family and friends. Please take time to enjoy the beauty of our Island and recharge your batteries. You deserve it.



Aldene Smallman
President, PEITF

by Aldene Smallman



Federation Summer Hours June 24, 2019 to August 23, 2019

Monday - Thursday:

8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Please Note:

Federation House will be closed to direct member services during the week of August 5, 2019 - August 9, 2019



Chad Gallant

Professional Learning Opportunities

Summer is only hours away, and for some, professional learning may not be at the front of mind as they recuperate from a hectic year-end. Others are getting set to begin or continue their work in pursuit

of a Master's degree or to further their knowledge by attending courses or conferences. Regardless of what type of reading is on the arm of your beach chair this summer, let's hope that it is meaningful and/or enjoyable. In the meantime, there are some opportunities for summer learning and information about fall PD that you should know.

Summer PD opportunities

Developing Successful Schools (DSS) is set to go July 2nd to 5th in Sackville, NB on the campus of Mount Allison. For those that are not familiar with DSS, it is an annual joint effort from the PEITF, NBTA, NSTU, and NLTA focusing on school leadership. While this institute typically attracts school or system administrators, it is open to anyone interested in school leadership. DSS gives participants to go deep in their learning on a given topic and always reviews very well by participants. This year's facilitator is Kristin R. Anderson, author of Data

Teams Success Stories Volume 1, Real-Time Decisions. At this year's event, Kristin will lead participants to learn about the many benefits to fostering one's belief in their own capabilities. Participants will examine strategies to use to increase their self-efficacy, and receive tools to embed these concepts into their daily practice to fully unleash their personal power as well as the beliefs of those they lead.

CONTACT (Conference on New Techniques and Classroom Teaching) is another annual summer learning opportunity for teachers planned jointly by PEITF, NBTA, NSTU, and NLTA and which rotates through the Atlantic provinces. This year's stop is the 40th anniversary of the event and is being held in Saint John, NB. CONTACT features sessions facilitated by classroom teachers and keynotes from educational leaders in the local communities. This year's themes center around global competencies, using drama in teaching, and using stories to change the world with concurrent sessions on educational technology for the classroom, music for wellness in the classroom, transformative learning, and civics education. Add to that a great social program with opportunities for networking with teachers from across the region, and you will find a great learning experience. PEITF has grants available to cover the costs of this event! Why not grab a colleague and come learn in Saint John this summer?

The New Memorandum and PD

During this last round of negotiations, changes were made that you should be aware of regarding what used to be known as Alternate PD for the joint staff days. Now known as "Self-Directed" PD, the new memorandum makes a slight, but important change in how teachers apply for these types of activities. The new memorandum reads:

"One Teacher may complete the application in Appendix D for a group of Teachers involved in the same self-directed professional development activity. A group application must include the names of each Teacher participating in the activity, and the application shall be signed by each in acknowledgment of her/his consent to participate."

This change will take effect for the Joint Staff day for December 5th, 2019. A reminder for those that will be applying
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**PEITF
Newsletter**

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND TEACHERS' FEDERATION

Published by

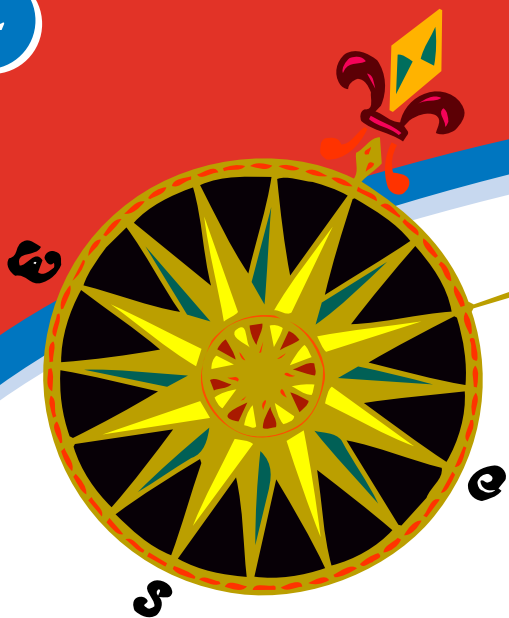
Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation
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Contributions are welcomed and must be signed by and bear the address of the writer. Articles contained herein reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily express official policy of the PEITF.

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Member CEPA

by Chad Gallant



Project Overseas

Lana's Journey

Project Overseas (PO) is a joint endeavor of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) and its member organizations to support overseas partners in developing countries as they deliver professional services to teachers. In 2018, Lana Mill and Megan Morrison were among 53 teachers working on 12 different teams in 9 countries throughout Africa and the Caribbean.

Lana was on a four-member team going to Les Cayes in Western Haiti, and Megan's team of four was partnered with a different teachers' union, traveling to Cap-Haitien in northern Haiti. After their orientation session in Ottawa, all eight teachers traveled to the capital city of Port-au-Prince together, on July 5th, before beginning their separate projects the following day. Both teams started planning in February, which includes online meetings to start building relationships and planning workshops. Teams meet approximately once a month to check-in, get the detailed information regarding partner-member needs, and help design the lessons. As the July departure gets closer, planning and preparing take a lot of time

It's very difficult for me to talk about my involvement in Project Overseas (PO) 2018. My experience was not typical for most participants. In fact, what happened to the seven other Canadian teachers who were chosen to be members of two separate teams working in Haiti and me was a new experience to everyone involved.

I found out in February 2019 that Megan Morrison and I were chosen to participate in PO 2019 marking this the first time PEITF would sponsor more than one teacher. Although we were both headed to Haiti, our locations in the country would be different. Megan had participated in PO 2016 in Uganda and was a life-saver in helping me plan and prepare for this endeavor. Of course, our teams, consisting of teachers from Quebec, Ontario, and Manitoba, were an essential part of the planning and preparation as well.

Megan and I were planning personal "post-project" travel plans, and two other members of Megan's team were going to be joining us. We spent several evenings meeting on Skype to confirm travel arrangements and became very friendly. When we finally met in person during our orientation in Ottawa the first week of July, we all agreed that we were more like one team of eight and not two teams of four - a sentiment that was repeated often in the coming weeks.

Our team of eight flew out of Ottawa in the wee morning hours of July 5th, 2018 and arrived in Haiti's capital of Port-au-Prince (PAP) that afternoon. The noise, chaos, and confusion of the airport were overwhelming, and a little frightening, but



Team Haiti during orientation in Ottawa.

our team had a plan in place, we stuck to the plan and made it safely to our waiting vehicle with all our luggage intact!

Driving to the hotel was another assault on the senses. The sheer number of people on the street and sidewalks with no street lights, no traffic signs, no crosswalks was beyond anything I had imagined. You can still see the destruction from hurricanes and earthquakes everywhere. Piles of rubble lined the streets, and in some places, the shoulder of the road simply disappears into the ditch. The houses are like compounds - gated fences closed to the public - and there is not one familiar chain among the colourful handmade signs advertising local stores and restaurants. Everything about PAP was new, unfamiliar, and exciting. I couldn't wait to see more.



The staff at Hotel Port-au-Prince took very good care of our team! Front row (L-R): Lana, Natasha Fengali (Windsor, ON), Nicole Beaulieu (Ottawa, ON), and François Rémillard (Winnipeg, MN).

Friday, July 6th, 2018 is a day I won't forget. Early that morning, Megan and her team left the hotel for their 250km seven-hour drive to Cap-Haitien in northern Haiti. Around lunch, my team, who was still at our beautiful hotel, met with M. Franck, the director of UNNOEH-FENATEC, the local teachers' union and our two co-teachers to get an understanding of the realities of teaching in Haiti. During the meeting, the three Haitians were continually checking their phones and chatting in Creole. I thought at first it was rude, but soon they explained the situation.

That afternoon the FIFA World Cup soccer game between Brazil and Belgium was aired in Haiti. Haitians are big soccer fans and even bigger Brazil fans. Brazil was favoured to win, and many Haitians were glued to whatever screen they could find to cheer on their team. At the same time, the President of Haiti, Jovenel Moïse, announced a massive increase in gas, diesel and kerosene prices - a move encouraged by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for Haiti to receive \$96 million in low-interest loans and grants. Kerosene is the lifeblood of many Haitians. They use it for cooking their meals and heating and lighting their homes. Before this 51 percent price increase, many Haitians were already spending 40 percent of their daily income on cooking fuel. This increase was more than the average Haitian would be able to withstand financially.

President Moïse believed that this announcement would be softened by Brazil winning the soccer match. Unfortunately, Brazil lost. It did not take long for violence to erupt. Demonstrators set up barricades by setting cars and tires on fire and tried to establish a hotel and a gas station on fire. At least 3 people were killed trying to get through the barricades. We watched fires burn and heard gunshots in the distance. Our hotel went into lockdown. Armed guards were stationed at the doors of the hotel as the gates were locked.

Saturday, July 7th. My team was supposed to travel to Les Cayes to start our workshops. It was eerily quiet on the streets. The noise and chaos that overwhelmed me upon our arrival were gone. There was no traffic - vehicle or pedestrian - on the streets. It was not possible to sit outside for any length of time at our hotel, as the smoke from burning tires made it difficult to breathe. Unsure of what was going to happen, Nicole, Natasha, François and I continued our work - creating an itinerary for our teacher-participants for the next two weeks and fine-tuning our lessons.

Sunday, July 8th. It was extremely quiet on the streets. There were no protests - apparently, people do not protest on Sunday in Haiti. We continue planning as much as we can.

On Monday, July 9th, the Canadian Embassy was closed out of concern of safety. Public transportation workers were on strike, and there are no flights allowed in or out of Haiti. We are trying to be positive and ensure our loved ones back home that we are safe, we are well taken care of, and we hope to be "on the project" tomorrow. Unable to leave the hotel, our team continued working on how we could support the Haitian teachers while we waited on decisions from M. Franck in Haiti and the CTF team.

The following day, the Canadian Embassy remained closed. Travel advisories are still high. We are told to shelter in place and avoid all travel to Haiti. Our team leader, Nicole, spoke with a UN officer stationed in Haiti who advised us to get out as soon as possible. It's not safe, even for the UN, and if something happens in the neighborhood where we are, we are told that no one can come and get us. A decision is made that we will leave the next day.

The next morning we are told our driver will come and get us in the afternoon, however at breakfast, there is a change of plans. There are rumours of further protests later in the morning and that we have to leave right away. Driving through Port-au-Prince on the street, there is a high police presence at many intersections, our car doors are locked, and the tension in the vehicle is high. It is a relief to arrive at the airport.

We were able to fly out and into Miami. There we are met by Megan's team who flew out of Cap-Haitien. They have spent 4 days on the project getting to know the participants, working with their co-teachers and developing relationships in the community. It is an emotional time for all of us, and we spend most of the night together in one room comforting and reassuring one another.

Thursday, July 12th. We arrive in Toronto and are met by



Lana's Journey continued...

Bev Parks and Dan Martin of the CTF. Both teams spent the evening explaining to each other the separate situations we were in and hearing how the CTF was working around the clock to get us out of Haiti safely and as quickly as possible. I can't explain the emotions in that room that night. Throughout our entire stay in Haiti, both teams stayed in contact via FaceBook messenger, texts, and Twitter. Again we reiterated feeling like one big team of eight and not two teams of four. We supported one another through a terrifying and emotional time. Dan and Bev let us vent. We were angry - angry at the situation. Angry that we put so much time into preparing for something that we didn't get to complete and feeling that we let our Haitian partners down. Again, we spent most of that evening in one room together comforting each other.

It's been almost a year since I returned home. In writing this article, I am reliving that time in Haiti, and I am in tears. Project Overseas has been sending teachers to various countries since 1962, and there have been times when projects have had to be canceled in advance due to political situations in the country. This is the first time in memory when a team (or in this case, two teams!) have had to be evacuated. The safety and security of teachers involved in PO is the priority of the CTF and knowing what was done to get us out, I have no doubt of that.

What has impressed me the most is the "aftercare" we have received. My team leader, Nicole, checks in regularly. Bev, Dan, and now Wes Delve, who just recently joined the PO team, have been part of our Skype meetings. They keep us informed on decisions that are affecting this year's project and ask our input and listen to our concerns to ensure that we feel safe returning to a new project.

We often hear, "Your union is here for you." I know that to be true. Last year's experience with PO was tough - both for those of us in Haiti and for those taking care of us here in Canada. I know that the CTF team will continue to be here for me, and take care of me, as I return to another project in 2019.

Project Overseas

To Haiti and Back Megan Morrison

Project Overseas (PO) 2016 was the summer of my dreams. In Teaching in Uganda, I felt like I was doing exactly what I was meant to do and exactly where I was meant to be. I knew immediately I'd participate in PO again at some point in my career and encouraged many others to apply. When I found out I'd be participating again in 2018, I could hardly believe it! I dreamed of going back to Uganda, as all my teammates had done after our project, and researched all the other countries, knowing a totally new experience was equally appealing. Volunteering in a Francophone country was a possibility, so when I found out I was going to Haiti, I was up for the challenge and excited to visit a part of the world I knew



At Citadelle Laferriere, Northern Haiti

very little about. Haiti shares the island of Espanola with the Dominican Republic. I'd never been to the Dominican and knew next-to-nothing about Haiti's complex and fascinating history. I did as much research as I could and reached out to anyone I knew who'd been to Haiti. The message was always the same: the country is chaotic and beautiful, the people are warm and welcoming, you will witness extreme poverty and



Leading our teacher participants in an interactive team building activity.

Haiti is very unpredictable. Little did we know how true this would come to be.

We arrived in the chaotic hustle and bustle that is Port-au-Prince (PAP). Our group of eight had a game plan for staying together in the airport and retrieving all our luggage. We were met by our drivers and left for the hotel. Our driver, Moise, had driven previous Canadian teams and we'd heard a lot about him. We knew immediately he was an extraordinary individual. On the way to the hotel, Moise took us to a school that had been rebuilt after the devastating earthquake in 2010. We met our course director and other union employees. We settled into the hotel, had dinner, and relaxed. Although we were two separate groups of four, it was apparent from early on we were one team of eight. This would prove to be very important. Our team was scheduled to leave in the morning for the roughly seven-hour drive (only 240km) to Cap. Lana's team had one more day in PAP to meet with their Haitian colleagues before leaving for Les Cayes.

We hit the road about 10am on Friday, July 6th. I was really excited to see the country, travel through small villages, and get a sense for what the country was really like! The first three or so hours were on paved roads. After that, it was a very bumpy ride! We stopped for lunch mid-day in Gonaives and watched some of the World Cup game between Belgium and Brazil. Haitians are HUGE Brazil fans and watching the game with the locals was a real highlight for me. Just about everyone in the country was glued to the game.

During the game, and without warning, the Haitian government drastically increased fuel prices. It was widely

reported that the announcement was made intentionally during the game, assuming Brazil would win and Haitians would be celebrating. Belgium won, and word of the price hike got out: gasoline by 38%, diesel 47% and kerosene by 51%.

At some point on Friday evening, we heard reports of riots, fires, and roadblocks. Mostly in PAP but also where we were, in Haiti's second biggest town, Cap-Haitien. We were in touch with Lana's team very regularly, and they were safe but could not leave their hotel. We were safe too, and mostly oblivious. We met our co-tutors: Donatien, Demitris, and Amos. They'd worked with Canadians before and were excited to be taking part again. They, along with course director Karoline and Moise, stayed with us at the hotel and we would spend most of our time together.

On Saturday, we planned our lessons and learned that the other group would not be leaving for Les Cayes as scheduled. The situation was far too dangerous, and all flights in and out of both Cap-Haitien and PAP were canceled. The border to the Dominican Republic was also closed. We had initially planned to do an outing on Saturday but could not leave the city, so we went for a walk with Moise and our Haitian colleagues along the waterfront. At some point over the weekend, we began receiving emails from the Canadian Embassy, alerting us of the situation in Haiti. At some point, we told our families we were safe. Most of those specifics are a blur to me. We were not overly worried and felt very safe in our little bubble. The Embassy closed on Monday, July 9th and would remain closed...

On Sunday, we attended mass, got a private tour of the basilica (which was closed for renovations), went to the market and visited UNESCO World Heritage Site, Citadelle Laferrière (on horseback). We were quite literally and figuratively on top of the world on this mountain adventure. We saw some fires and encountered some roadblocks, but amid the day-to-day chaos of Haiti, it didn't seem too out of the ordinary. I still struggle to accurately describe this day: between the familiarity of a Catholic mass, the breathtaking beauty of the citadel and the tense situation we were in. The civil unrest continued in PAP, and the city was on lockdown.

We were excited and nervous to start our project on Monday morning. We had roughly 50 teachers for the first week of professional development and planned to do the same sessions the second week with new teachers. It was summer vacation in Haiti, and the participants seemed very excited to be spending a week with us. I was partnered with Amos to teach Science. The first day was a big hit, and they absolutely loved the activity



Our team leader suggested we do a group photo a few minutes after getting the call that we were going home. The rest of us didn't know yet... We didn't know we would not get a chance to say goodbye.

I had prepared: building catapults with popsicle sticks to launch a table tennis ball as far as possible. Along with Science, our team co-facilitated sessions on Lesson Planning & Classroom Management, Math, and French. We had planned ice breakers, activity breaks and - the most popular - Minute to Win It games to end the day!

Monday evening, we heard that things in Port-au-Prince were still volatile. We talked to a UN Police officer, who told us they were unable to open up the road between Cap and Port-au-Prince. So at that point, with no flights leaving Cap, we were stuck by land and air.

We knew the other group was in jeopardy of being sent home. Moise received a call Tuesday at noon from Dan Martin at CTF. We got word that the decision had been made to send the other group home. We felt sick for them because our second day was going even better than the first day! Our team leader, Sandy, spoke to Dan for quite a while, and I honestly didn't think too much about it in terms of our team and our project. It was my turn to lead the afternoon activity. As soon as we were done, Sandy asked us all to get together for a group photo. It was then, I knew something was up because why would we do a group photo at precisely that moment? We had the whole week to take group photos...The afternoon went ahead as planned, and I tried to pretend everything was fine.

As soon as we arrived back to the hotel, Sandy called us into her room for a meeting. It is a moment I will never ever forget. "As you know, the other group is being sent home tomorrow since they're still unable to leave their hotel safely. And...so are we; we're leaving tomorrow morning." I was absolutely floored. And shocked. It had crossed my mind that the second week of the project could be in jeopardy or that our flights might be changed, to leave from Cap-Haitien, instead of

driving back to Port-au-Prince. Being sent home the following morning was most definitely not on my radar.

Telling Donatien, Amos, Dimitris, and Moise was so devastating. We told them we had to meet with them and, while waiting for the last one to arrive, Moise saw I'd been crying and asked why. I told him, "I can't tell you just yet." We sat in silence for what seemed like forever and, once everyone had arrived, Sandy took the lead on telling them. They were as shocked as us. Moise was the first to speak, and said, "I feel like...Like...I'm losing a part of my family." And more tears. Keep in mind, we'd only been all together for four days!

In an attempt to make the best out of a somber moment, we presented them with our thank you gifts: Canadian shirts, baseball caps, Metis belts, and Canadian flag pins. We invited them to dinner, as is customary with Project Overseas. We had an abundance of school supplies and other Canadian souvenirs we had taken with us for our participants, which we divided up to leave with our colleagues. It was at this point that we realized we would not be able to say goodbye to our teacher participants. We later heard they were very emotional when they showed up the following morning at the college, to find out we'd been sent home. The feeling of abandoning them when it seemed like they needed us most hasn't left; it still bothers me to this day.

The day we left felt surreal. Our course director and co-tutors came to the airport, and we said our final goodbyes. We were able to check in and go through security, and things seemed like business as usual. We arrived in Miami ahead of the other group, made our way to the hotel, and had dinner. We were able to greet them in the lobby when they arrived and began to process all that had happened since we saw each other last, only a few days earlier. We were so thankful for the evening together in Miami. We spent most of it together in one room.

Dan and Bev (CTF) greeted Lana and I in Toronto, as we arrived a few hours ahead of the rest of the group. It was during this time that, in chatting with Dan and Bev, I began to realize we'd been through something much bigger than I thought. CTF had been working around the clock over the weekend, monitoring the situation and trying to navigate the best solution. They'd been working very closely with the Canadian Embassy, Foreign Affairs Canada and the teachers' unions in Haiti. Ultimately, when the Canadian Embassy upped their alerts for Haiti from avoiding all non-essential travel to avoid all travel (highest alert) on Tuesday morning, CTF was faced with no other option than to pull both teams out safely while they could. Behind the scenes, back in Canada, our families received phone calls providing them with updates, all our travel arrangements were made, and our every need was taken care of. They literally did everything they possibly could to support us, welcome us home and ensure we had nothing to worry about.

The debrief lasted several hours, as we each told the story about how things unfolded from our personal perspective. Each

group had a great deal of empathy for what the other had gone through: we felt so horrible they'd been stuck in their hotel; they felt guilty for "ruining" our project and that we'd only been sent home because of them (we didn't feel this way at all!). Our team leaders and CTF staff thanked us as team members for being supportive and understanding of the whole ordeal and the difficult decisions they had to make. In turn, we thanked them for their leadership and compassion. Upon return, the rest of July was a bit of a blur. Sometimes, I get really emotional when looking at my photos or thinking of my brief time in Haiti. I talk to Lana and the others often, but I find it hard to share the experience with others accurately.

During the debrief, the general consensus among the group is we all wanted to go back. In January, I was overwhelmed with excitement to learn our teams would be staying intact and heading back to Haiti! As I mentioned, Haiti is predictably unpredictable. On February 7th, tensions arose again and lasted

several weeks.

Along with a period of civil unrest in the fall, a pattern had developed. I knew CTF would not risk our safety nor those of our host organizations. We found out in March that CTF's partnership with Haiti was on hold for 2019 and we'd be reassigned to another project for this summer. I hope I make it back to Haiti someday but am thrilled to be going to Togo this summer.

To everyone at CTF and PEITF, thank you so much for ensuring we got home safely and for checking in with us regularly. To my team of eight, can't wait to see you all in July in Ottawa and complete PO 2019! To my Haitian colleagues, you are never far from my thoughts, and I hope we can be reunited in the future.

Happenings

PEITF Annual General Meeting



PEITF President, Aldene Smallman thanking former President Bethany MacLeod at PEITF AGM.



CTF Vice-President Shelley Morse addresses PEITF at PEITF AGM.



Former PEITF President Bethany MacLeod stands with party leaders at PEITF Leaders Forum on Education.

Happenings

PEITF Leaders Forum on Education

Protecting Personal Days

The PEITF recognizes the importance of the three personal days in our MOA to teachers. While teaching comes with the benefits of the school calendar, it also comes with the disadvantage of lack of flexibility in terms of scheduling and vacation. Fortunately, the three personal days negotiated over the course of several years provide some flexibility to teachers. Therefore, when the Employers try to limit teachers' ability to use these days, the PEITF intervenes forcefully.

PEITF intervention was necessary in two recent situations. We were successful in both cases.

“Fortunately, the three personal days negotiated over the course of several years provide some flexibility to teachers. Therefore, when the Employers try to limit teachers' ability to use these days, the PEITF intervenes forcefully.”

Case 1: In January 2017, a Grade 1 Teacher requested three personal days and two unpaid leave days for the first full week of September to accompany her spouse to a conference overseas. The Teacher had secured a substitute - a retired Grade 3 Teacher known to the school. The *Commission scolaire de langue française* denied the request on the basis of operational requirements. The case proceeded to arbitration.

The arbitrator held that the Employer's decision to deny the leave was unreasonable. The arbitrator commented that *personal leave requests are mainly at the discretion of the teacher*. The teacher's request must comply with the MOA, and where it does, it should be granted: *“Assuming the teacher can stick-handle through those restrictions, the leave ought to be granted.”* The arbitrator further commented that teachers' professional judgement on the question of whether a leave request compromises operation requirements should be given a high level of deference. In this case, the teacher had secured an experienced substitute and had met the students in an orientation session the prior school year. The teacher felt that her leave did not compromise operational requirements. The arbitrator commented that *“the grievor was entitled to have her opinions*

and experience given considerable weight (...). Had the Board (...) done so, I believe it would have concluded that the request under 20:03(a) was well-enough supported that it should have been approved.” He added, *“I do not believe that it is asking too much of the Board to recognize the importance of such requests from teachers who are themselves professional educators, which requests are not made lightly, and to make the effort to understand how the teacher proposes to meet her obligations.”* In a rare ruling, the arbitrator awarded the Teacher \$1,500 in damages for the lost travel opportunity.

“Going forward, the PEITF expects that the Employers will be much more cautious in denying personal leave requests for situations that are beyond the listed exclusions in the MOA.”

Case 2: A high school teacher requested a personal day for one of the last days of the 2017-2018 school year. The Public Schools Branch denied the request on the basis of “professional responsibilities”; a staff meeting was planned for that day and the school wanted as many staff present as possible to discuss the upcoming school year. Days before the arbitration, the Public Schools Branch conceded that it does not have grounds to deny the leave as the activity was not an operational requirement or professional responsibility listed in the MOA.

Both cases are essentially binding on the Public Schools Branch and the *Commission scolaire de langue française*. The MOA states that personal days will not be granted for the purposes of extending a vacation or holiday, PTI, meet the teacher events, their own exams, etc. Going forward, the PEITF expects that the Employers will be much more cautious in denying personal leave requests for situations that are beyond the listed exclusions in the MOA.



Selina Pellerin
Staff Officer, Economic
Welfare and Member Services

by Selina Pellerin

LIVING WELL

Summer: It's YOUR Time!

by Sophia Slaney

Summer is just around the corner and teachers will be looking forward to a well-earned rest. The last weeks of school are a frenzy of activity with report cards, assemblies and classroom clean-out. It can be challenging for some teachers to switch off from work and avoid planning ahead to next year's lesson plans. Teaching is a calling, not just a profession, which makes it difficult sometimes to step away. Transitioning into "summer mode" may not be easy to do. There is empirical evidence indicating that it is in teachers' best interests to do so. Research out of the UK supports the idea that planning for a summer break that is restful and restorative is a good idea. A study of 90 teachers from across the UK by a research team, led by Dr. Paul Flaxman and Sonja Carmichael at City University, London, found that it is important for teachers to stop working and even thinking about work during school breaks and holidays. The report states that the time off allows teachers to "restore their emotional energy". Furthermore, Dr. Flaxman, a senior lecturer in organizational psychology at City University, stated that "Making sure that teachers have regular opportunities to recover from the considerable demands of the job will help to prevent burnout". Summertime, then, is the perfect time to unwind and recharge - the perfect time to look after "you".

Relax

As teachers, we are commonly looked to be the "go-to" person at school, or with your family and friends when they have a problem or something important needs to get done. Summer is the time to dial it back and slow down. Take some time for yourself to do things that are just for you. This isn't selfish. It is vital to look after yourself so that you can continue to look after others. You've heard Eleanor Brown's saying, "You can't serve from an empty vessel". It's easy for teachers to become an empty vessel because, by nature, they are compassionate and giving individuals. Therefore, try to devote a few hours each day to being GOOD to YOU! Get together with friends, enjoy a rousing game of golf or a hike in nature, start a new hobby or revisit an old one, read a non-professional book, listen to audiobooks and so on. Choose activities that bring YOU joy and - do them!

When you finally "arrive" in summer mode, to get the full benefit of your relaxation time, be mentally present. Gail Kinman, a professor of occupational psychology at the University of Bedfordshire, says that if you're not working, you may be thinking and worrying about work which "defeats the object of relaxation." She suggests that teachers practice some mindfulness techniques where you anchor yourself in the present moment. Mindfulness is the act of being present without judgement of what is happening; it is being aware and observing our thoughts.

Additional research on mindfulness point to benefits for both teachers and students. Patricia A. Jennings, a professor at the University of Virginia, led a team of researchers who collected data on educators' well-being, observations of classrooms and student behavioural reports over the course of a year. She found that teachers who received emotional regulation training (including mindfulness) were more emotionally supportive, demonstrated greater sensitivity to student needs, and provided more positive and productive classroom environments. The report concluded that when educators have opportunities across the school year to practice the arts of mindfulness, listening and emotional management, they can better navigate any number of stressors they face in a given day. Furthermore, when assessing teachers' stress levels, teachers noted considerably less distress and an improved ability to manage their emotions.

Reflect

Another way to restore your energy over the summer is to spend some time thinking about the successes of the past year. Reflecting on the year's accomplishments can lead to a feeling of effectiveness. Martin Seligman, the founder of Positive Psychology (the science of well-being), has identified five areas that, when cultivated, lead to people feeling good and functioning well. The five areas are often described as pillars of well-being known as PERMA (P-positive emotions, E-engagement, R-positive relationships, M-meaning, A-accomplishments). One of these five pillars is accomplishment - knowing and celebrating our achievements and goals. Celebrating your accomplishments can renew your sense of purpose and affirm your strengths. It can remind you why you love teaching and mentally ignite you

for a fresh start to the new school year.

Re-energize

Self-care shouldn't only be a priority in the summertime. It is easy to forget about your own needs when you have so many responsibilities during the school year. Use the summer to create a helpful self-care routine. The self-care habits we have fine-tuned during the summer can be carried into the new school year. The fun activities we enjoyed all summer season could be reframed and viewed as self-care. We don't need to wait until summer to get the same sense of fulfillment and vitality they provide. We could frame these activities as contributing to meaningful self-care all year long. Authors Jonathan Weinstein and Lauren Porosoff assert that by focusing on the function of our favourite summer activities rather than the form, we might be more open to what self-care can mean for us year-round. For example, in the summer, we may connect with loved ones on the beach or around a campfire. In the fall and winter, connecting with loved ones may consist of lunches on weekends with friends or having Sunday dinner at a family member's house.

There are many warm-weather practices we could continue beyond the summer season to restore the body, mind and spirit. Some of us recharge by enjoying alone time while others of us are energized by spending time with others. Recharge the body with a healthier diet by taking advantage of the fresh fruit and vegetables that are more readily available during the summertime and learn to cook some new healthy meals that are easy to make. Take advantage of any good weather we might have to enjoy the outdoors. Find something fun that gets you moving. Create an effective sleep routine. While you have the time, create or strengthen good habits and you will reap the benefits from them all year long.

Whatever recharges you and makes you feel good - do more of it this summer. If work recharges you, remember to balance it with plenty of time off. Look for professional development that is worthwhile or on a topic that you are eager to learn more about.

At the end of the summer, when you are engaged in preparatory activities for the new school year, set boundaries and limits around your time. Go to your classroom during the

last part of the summer and only on rainy days. Strengthening these self-care skills in the summer will make it easier to apply them during the school year when it becomes very busy. According to registered dietitian Nancy Clark, "you will choose to carry your good habits with you into the school year when you stay mindful of the benefits of healthful fueling and enjoyable activities."

It IS all about YOU!

Taking a break from developing lesson plans and curriculum materials and, instead, investing in some much deserved "you" time will help you to strengthen your emotional resilience and it could be the way to prepare for your best year yet. Dr. Sue Roffey, a psychologist and academic who has published widely on the subject of well-being, says that teachers themselves recognize that focusing on their own well-being is crucial in supporting student well-being. The growing evidence coming from the field of Positive Psychology is showing how we can not only support student well-being, but also that of teacher well-being. If teachers have strategies to support their well-being, they will be better placed to manage every day stressors of the job to not only survive, but flourish. In doing so, they become better role models and educators for their students. Treating yourself with care can help you achieve a positive work-life balance and approach stress management in a way that balances your needs and the needs of your students. Summer is a great time to take a step back, evaluate your self-care needs, and start practicing beneficial behaviors so they become habits before school starts. Practicing these approaches over the summer can help you prepare for the challenges of back-to-school, so you'll start the school year more energized, more rested, and ready to give your students your best all year long. This summer, take the opportunity to invest in yourself and maybe even establish a few more healthy habits to carry through to the rest of the year. You will return to school in the fall feeling more balanced and revitalized and ready to inspire a new group of students.

Sophia Slaney is an EAP Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for Teachers.

Continued from page 3

for self-directed PD applications must be received at least fifteen (15) days before the date of the activity.

September 4th Joint Staff Day

This past year, on September 5th, one of the Joint Staff days was placed at the beginning of the school year prior to students beginning. The Joint Staff Day, could not be flipped in the calendar, and no other tasks or meetings were to be scheduled or assigned on the Joint Staff Day. From the feedback we had received, this was viewed positively amongst teachers, and we are pleased that this will be happening again in the fall on September 4th.

Just a reminder that there will not be sessions planned for this day, but teachers can meet with other teachers if they so choose. It also should be noted that mileage will not be paid for this day.

PEITF Annual Convention

The PEITF Annual Convention Planning Committee has been hard at work in planning for this year's event. Look for information on keynotes and sessions this fall for the 2019 PEITF Annual Convention - "Looking in, Reaching Out."

Have a great summer,
Chad

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Patrick MacFadyen
Deputy General Secretary

plan in line with the coverage for other public sector plans.

Fortunately, the plan had done well this past year with claims being lower than expected. This allowed for enhancements to the plan with only small increases to premiums at this time. For the dental plan, starting in October 2019, there will be an addition to include 50% lifetime coverage to a maximum of \$3,000 reimbursement for Orthodontics (which includes braces) and coverage of 50% to an annual maximum of \$1,000 reimbursement for Major Restorative (which include crowns, bridges, dentures).

The Health plan will also see some improvements that will be outlined at a later time when everything is finalized.

Also, through negotiations this past year, there was an increase to the life insurance and accidental death and dismemberment insurance that is paid for by the employer that every active teacher receives. Currently, the amount is \$20,000 for each, but it will be increasing to \$48,000.

There will be general increases to amounts that can be claimed for hearing aids, orthotics, wigs, insulin pumps, and private duty nursing. Most notably, the amount for paramedical (massage, physio, etc) will increase to 80% of \$70 for a total reimbursement of \$56 and for Psychologists a maximum of 80% of \$125 for a reimbursement of \$100 per visit. There will also be some coverage for vaccines, erectile dysfunction drugs and laser eye surgery. More information will be provided in the fall.

The Trustees also wanted to thank the Chair of the Trustees, Anne Marie Muise, who is retiring from teaching and thus will be stepping down as chair. Anne Marie's guidance through many changes to the plan during her tenure as chair since 2007 has been invaluable.

Sincerely,
Patrick MacFadyen Deputy General Secretary
pmacfadyen@peitf.com

Happenings

PEITF Curling Bonspiel



A great time for all at PEITF Curling Bonspiel. Special thanks to Jodi Murphy and Jaclyn Reid for organizing!

Thoughts and Comments from the General Secretary



Shaun MacCormac

Another school year is near its end and, like always, it has been an interesting one. With your indulgence, I will highlight the positives and not the challenges, which I am well aware exist in our classrooms and our education system.

Maybe not so apparent to many teachers is the fact that PEI is an anomaly compared to our Canadian counterparts. For example, our current Premier is not Doug Ford or Stephen McNeil. Our fiscal situation is positive, unlike Newfoundland and Labrador's and New Brunswick's. Our relationship with all education stakeholders is positive, and our new Government is even more teacher-friendly than the last one was.

Although you, individually, may not be benefiting at this time, there has been a continued influx of teaching positions, and these are beginning to have a positive impact in the areas that these positions have been targeted for. We are expecting an even greater influx of teaching positions in the near future, given the promises made by the PCs during the election campaign and the current financial position the province is in. The Provincial Budget has not been released at the time that I am writing this article, but all the signs are pointing to education as being a key target of provincial spending.

As promising as additional teaching positions, is the fact that the new Government seems genuinely interested in finding out how best to use these and all teaching positions. The Joint Committee on Teaching and Learning Conditions, which was formed through the new Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), has had its initial meeting and a report is being drafted for the Minister that lays out the challenges that exist in staffing schools to meet all the needs within our system. The Federation is cautiously optimistic about the potential of this committee

combined with the new Government and its current interest in hearing (and listening to!) input from teachers.

As you are aware, a new Memorandum of Agreement was negotiated before the election, and several positive changes were made, including an increase

in salary that is the best for teachers in Atlantic Canada, if not all of Canada. In terms of the bargaining process, we are hopeful that the new Government will return to the expedited process with negotiations taking only ten days and a new collective agreement ratified before the expiry of the old one. We will wait to see if it comes about. In the meantime, we will work with the new Government to try and address some of the major issues that we couldn't get agreement on during this past round of bargaining.

The next school year will no doubt bring about more changes in education. Each new Government has its own ideas about what and how things should be done. We are hopeful that those decisions are sound, well-reasoned, and fully supported within the system. Teachers are used to change, but they are tired of the number of changes that have occurred over the past five or so years. Hopefully, the vast majority of changes will be positive ones for teachers and students.

Thankfully, you have the summer to rest up and get mentally prepared for whatever comes our way in the fall. I hope you all have an enjoyable and re-invigorating break and you take some time for yourselves. Be good to each other.

by Shaun MacCormac

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