

Issue # 16

January 2009

In this Issue:

**Negotiations: Ratification of a New Collective Agreement**

**Meetings Under Article 55 of the Collective Agreement**

**Communicating With Parents Via E-mail: A Few Tips**

**Passport to the Internet: a Comprehensive Internet Literacy Tutorial**

**The NBTF Board of Directors for 2008-2009**

**The New NBTF Wayne Nightingale Resource Centre**

**NBTF Workshop for Grievance Officers and Alternates**

**New Sign for the Federation Building**

**Storm Days: Frequently Asked Questions**

**Class Size Numbers for 2009-2010**



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FOCUS is published as an information newsletter and is intended for guidance; however, before acting on any information contained in **Focus**, teachers should contact a member of the Federation Administrative Staff.

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# FOCUS

## Teachers Vote in Favour of a New Collective Agreement



On Friday, December 5, 2008, the result of the vote on the tentative agreement was determined at the NBTF building. 91.7% of teachers voted in favor of the proposed settlement with 96% of the membership participating in the vote. The vote followed four weeks of branch meetings in which

teachers were advised of the terms and provisions of the new contract.

The contract provides for a 14.5% wage increase over four years. The term of the contract is retroactive to March 1, 2008 and will be in effect until February 29, 2012. In addition to the wage increase, the parties have agreed to the establishment of a joint committee on Teacher Allocation and Workload. The committee will provide a forum for the Federation to advance concerns regarding class composition and teacher workload in a less positional environment, which is often characteristic of bargaining.

The new Collective Agreement was signed on December 17, 2008. Members of the Federation Strategies Committee and Negotiating Team attended the official signing ceremony of the new agreement. In picture From left to right (seated): Marcel Larocque (NBTF Co-President), Kelly Lamrock (Minister of Education), Brent Shaw (NBTF Co-President). Standing: Rick Brewer (Minister of Human Resources) and Victor Boudreau (Minister of Finance).

As per Article 3.03 of the Agreement, the terms and conditions of employment agreed to between the parties shall be implemented within sixty days of the signing. Therefore, the Federation has been advised that teachers are scheduled to receive their adjusted salary in January and their retroactive pay on February 13, 2009.

The new Agreement is now available on the Federation member only web site. Hard copies will be available in schools early February, 2009. The Federation Co-Presidents, Negotiating Team, Strategies Committee, Executive Committee and Board of Directors wish to thank members for their patience and support during this past round of bargaining.

## Meetings Under Article 55 of the Collective Agreement

Teachers who are requested to attend a meeting at their district office pursuant to Article 55 of the Collective Agreement have the right to have a member of the Federation administrative staff accompany them. Such a meeting under Article 55 is called when a teacher may be facing discipline. In such a situation, all members have the right to union representation. On that issue, this is what was stated in an adjudication decision:

"Union representation in disciplinary interviews, now widely accepted, serves a number of purposes. At the most basic level, the employer has the benefit of a third person who can serve as a witness to the exchange between the employee and the employer. The right of union representation also gives to the employee several



other benefits. Firstly, the union officer who attends may gain a more immediate understanding of a dispute between the employer and employee, and thereby be better informed to handle a subsequent grievance. Additionally, a union representative may provide

assistance to the employee in the form of objective and considered advice during the course of the interview. Union representation can also, at times, permit the input of an experienced person whose thoughts or suggestions, whether they relate to issues of fact or the interpretation of the collective agreement, may give the employer pause, and assist in ultimately sorting out the question under investigation in a manner that is mutually satisfactory. Also, the presence of a union representative may safeguard against the making of concessions or agreed interpretations of the collective agreement or practices in the work place which goes beyond the individual employee's case, and which could adversely affect the larger interests of the union and its membership. These are but the most obvious consequences of representation by a union representative in a disciplinary interview conducted under the terms of many contemporary collective agreements." [1]

Obviously this gives a broad spectrum of what union representation may provide. Also, there is usually an opportunity to put forth legal principles or arguments in a teacher's favour that are unique to the teaching profession.

[1] Re C.N.R [1993] 35 L.A.C. [4<sup>th</sup>] 88 at p.12

## Communicating with Parents by E-mail: Advice from the NBTF

Perhaps its a sign of changing times, perhaps its a question of practicality, but one thing is certain: the employer is expecting teachers to communicate more and more with parents by e-mail. Of course, this request could have a serious effect on teacher workload as time is not provided to teachers to reply to e-mails or to communicate concerns about specific students to their parents in that fashion. Normally, homework and class assignments should be posted on a school web site for everyone to see. Private communications by e-mails with parents have the potential of becoming an overwhelming task, especially when a teacher teaches more than one class of 28 students. Therefore, teachers are urged to read the following advice from the Federation:



Section 13 of the Education Act mentions several times that **"...a parent is expected to communicate reasonably with school personnel..."** and **"...the parent of a pupil has a right to reasonable consultation with the pupil's teacher..."** and **"...it is the responsibility of the parent of a pupil and of school personnel to conduct themselves in a respectful manner and to follow established procedures when involved in communications concerning the pupil."** The key words are "reasonable" and "respectful". Because we all know what *respectful* means, the NBTF would suggest that *reasonable* refers to the frequency. Therefore, teachers have the legislative right to set limits. The staff of a given school can surely think of a way to advise parents that some situations can become unmanageable. Furthermore, any message that is aggressive, provocative or not respectful should not be answered. Set limits. If it is an urgent situation, invite parents to call the school. Remember, teachers have the authority to set the procedures within what is considered to be reasonable and respectful.

Furthermore, teachers should never use home/personal computer for contact with parents. They must also be reminded that an e-mail can be used as evidence of one's conduct. The e-mail may be forwarded to a much wider audience - deliberately or unintentionally. Teachers should avoid participating in lengthy e-mail exchanges that consume a lot of time. In addition to adding to one's workload, protracted exchanges may be prone to misinterpretation. Always respond to complex messages from parents by telephone or make time for a face-to-face meeting. Finally, no confidential information should be sent by e-mail. Of course, teachers should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid communications that could be interpreted as personal.

The New Brunswick Teachers' Federation has published a pamphlet entitled ***E-Communications, Advice from the NBTF***. The pamphlet speaks to appropriate professional use of e-mail, text messaging, internet, web surfing, chat rooms, instant messaging, blogs, school websites, bulletin boards, telephone voice mail, platforms (Facebook, MySpace, You Tube), etc. Hard copies are available from the NBTF or can be downloaded from the NBTF web site under Publications at : [www.nbtf-fenb.nb.ca](http://www.nbtf-fenb.nb.ca).

Teachers are also encouraged to carefully read *Policy 311* on the use of ITC in schools. Also, it is important to note that teachers cannot claim privacy if using the employer's e-mail account for personal reasons. It is also strongly suggested that copies of every e-mail sent and received from parents or students be kept for future reference.

For further information on this issue, please do not hesitate to communicate with any member of the Federation administrative staff at : 452-1736.

## Earning a Passport to the Internet: New learning tool teaches children how to navigate the challenges, risks and opportunities of online world

(by Matthew Johnson, Media Education Specialist with Media Awareness Network)

In little more than a decade, the Internet has gone from being a curiosity to an inescapable fact of life – and parents and educators are struggling to catch up. Early concerns focused on the “digital divide,” as schools and governments worked to assure Internet access for all students. As the Internet grew, however, the main issue became one of safety, as sensationalist media coverage prompted fears of students being contacted by “online predators”.

Recent research has shown that these fears, while not entirely misplaced, do not accurately reflect the reality of children’s online vulnerabilities. There are more prevalent issues that also need to be addressed: the arrival of Web 2.0 – online services that rely on user-contributed content, such as *YouTube* and *Facebook* – has underlined the need to teach young people to manage their privacy. At the same time, the Internet has become students’ first – and often last – resource for research. Unfortunately, that research sometimes consists of little more than *Google* and *Wikipedia*, and hoax, commercial and hate sites are all too ready to take advantage of students’ lack of scepticism and authentication skills. Finally, in the years since its inception the Web has become overwhelmingly commercial, spawning environments such as advergames which seamlessly blend advertising and entertainment, with young people showing little awareness of the nature of these sites.

Our research report *Young Canadians in a Wired World – Phase II* (the most comprehensive and wide-ranging study of its kind in Canada) convinced us that there was a need for a comprehensive Internet literacy resource that could be used in Elementary and Intermediate classrooms. The YCWW research showed us that young people are actively interested in learning more about their online environments. The kids we spoke to in our focus groups felt strongly that what they need from adults is more information about the kinds of content they find online, so they can make informed choices about what they choose to see, as well as training in how to protect their online privacy and how to tell good online information from bad. The interest is highest among the children in Grades 4 to 6. This is a particularly important time to learn

these skills because kids in these grades are playing on commercial game sites that actively seek to collect their personal information, and, by Grade 6, they are exploring edgier Web sites.

To meet this need, Media Awareness Network (MNet), a leading Canadian media education organization, has created a comprehensive Internet literacy tutorial, *Passport to the Internet*. Intended for classroom use in Grades 4-8, the *Passport to the Internet* program is designed to teach students key skills relating to online safety and privacy, research and authentication, online ethics and recognizing and decoding advertising. It does so by providing five modules that simulate popular environments used by young people, in which they are free to experiment and safely learn from their mistakes.

Young people told us that they are exposed to material all the time that they must choose to reject. They don’t find this decision process difficult and they explain that it isn’t as if they have to “sneak a peek” at a rare find of pornography or games of violence – rather, they must fend off material that they choose to avoid for their own reasons. The first module, *Web Café*, shows students how to judge a link, e-mail, banner ad or search result before clicking it, to determine in advance whether it will be useful and appropriate.

Almost all (94 per cent) of the top 50 sites students reported visiting in YCWW include marketing material. Over three-quarters of kids who play product-centred games (advergames) think they are “just games,” not “mainly advertisements,” and lack of awareness of the commercial nature of these games is highest amongst younger students – 82 per cent of kids in Grades 4-6 say these are just games not advertisements. *Co-Co’s Choco Match*, a simulated advergame, teaches students to distinguish between legitimate information and advertising material on a commercial site while teaching them some of the “tricks of the trade” that online advertisers use to reach young consumers.

When students are asked what Internet-related subjects they would like to learn about in school, the top choice for 68 per cent was “How to tell if information you find on the Net is true or not.” The interest

was highest amongst the younger students – 75 per cent of Grade 4-6 students want skills to authenticate online information. *Study Space* begins with a mock search engine which teaches students to use effective searching techniques by leading them to three fictional Web sites whose content users must judge as being reliable, unreliable or simple opinion.

In describing what they would like to learn about the Internet, young people told us that efforts should be made to develop opportunities, particularly for young children, to learn how to think about choices, and to gain decision-making skills. *Instant Pigeon* lets students engage in four Instant Messaging conversations, where they choose how to reply to their online “buddies” in order to learn how to deal with stranger contact, uploading photos and videos, and cyber bullying.

Another major concern reported by students was online privacy: two-thirds of respondents (66 per cent) say they would like to learn “How to protect your privacy on the Net” in school. Again, the interest was highest among younger students: 74 per cent of Grade 4-6 students want skills to protect their privacy online. In *MyFace*, users are challenged to create an engaging social networking profile while maintaining their privacy.

Key to the *Passport to the Internet* approach is that each of the modules is interactive: students learn by performing the actual tasks they do online – using a search engine, carrying on a conversation, creating a profile. Instead of front-loading educational content before each module, *Passport to the Internet* lets users access what they need to know when they need to know it through the Help tool, which provides information about anything the student points to on the screen. Each module also ends with detailed feedback to help users improve their performance, and students are encouraged to re-visit each module as many times as they want to earn a perfect score. Throughout, *Passport to the Internet* takes a positive approach, reaching students through empowerment – teaching them to get the most from the Internet

Article continued on page 8...

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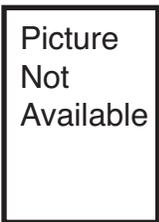
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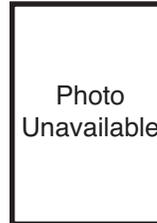


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## The Inauguration of the Wayne Nightingale Resource Centre



At the NBTF Board of Directors' meeting held on October 24, 2008, an official ceremony was held to name the NBTF Resource Centre as the **Wayne Nightingale Resource Centre**.

Mr. Nightingale was the first Executive Director of the NBTF from 1975 to 1995. He negotiated all the Collective Agreements in that time frame and therefore, has played a significant role in improving New Brunswick teachers' benefits and working conditions.

Wayne Nightingale was introduced to the Board of Directors by Edouard Allain, a retired NBTF Executive Director. He related many of Wayne's accomplishments

The Wayne Nightingale Resource Centre is now situated upstairs on the second floor of the Federation Building. The Centre is opened five-days a week and provides services for staff members on a regular basis.



and, (as Edouard would not have it any other way having worked so closely with Mr. Nightingale), he also had a few humorous anecdotes to share. Mr. Allain also composed a song for the occasion, which he sang in a duet with our translator Annette Pelletier accompanied by the Federation Co-President Marcel Larocque on the piano. After expressing his gratitude and indicating how honored and flattered he was, Mr. Nightingale then proceeded to unveil the name of the new Wayne Nightingale Resource Centre.

Edouard Allain reminded the Board of Directors of the tremendous contribution Mr. Nightingale has made to the New Brunswick Teachers' Federation

In bottom pictures beginning on the left: Mr. Nightingale unveils the name of the Centre. Next, Edouard Allain and Annette Pelletier honour Wayne Nightingale's contribution to the teachers of New Brunswick in a little song they composed. Finally, in the right picture, Brent Shaw (NBTF Co-President), Edouard Allain (Retired NBTF Executive Director), Wayne Nightingale, Robert Gagné (NBTF Executive Director) and Marcel Larocque (NBTF Co-President) at the Opening Ceremony.



### New Sign for the Federation Building



A new sign was installed at the entrance of the Federation's building parking lot this fall. The sign is bigger than the previous one, and contains the logos of the Federation, the Associations and the tenants in the building. It also lights up at night. A brick

base was also installed and shrubs will be planted there in the spring to complete the overall look.

### NBTF Workshop for Grievance Officers and Alternates

The NBTF usually holds a Grievance Workshop every two years for all grievance officers and alternates. This workshop is important because it gives grievance officers valuable information on their duties and responsibilities and explains the process of filing a grievance. Branches will no doubt be naming members as grievance officers and alternates at their May AGMs. Therefore, the NBTF Workshop for Grievance Officers and Alternates will be held in the Fall, probably in early October.

Meanwhile, should grievance officers need assistance in dealing with a specific case, they are to contact any member of the NBTF administrative staff. Grievance officers and alternates will be advised by e-mail at the beginning of the next school year, of the date and time of the upcoming workshop.



## STORM DAYS

### *Frequently Asked Questions*



#### What is the situation for a teacher who is on leave when there is a storm day?

The NBTF and the Employer have agreed on an interpretation for a teacher who is on sick leave at a time when the school is closed because of inclement weather. If the teacher is in school the day previous to the storm day or the day following that storm day, then it will be assumed that the teacher would have been at work during the storm day. A sick day will not be deducted in such a situation. For example, if the storm day is on a Thursday and the teacher was absent for health reasons on the Wednesday but is at work on the Friday, then it is assumed that the teacher would have been at work on the Thursday which was the storm day. The day will not be deducted as a sick day.

For any teacher who is on sick leave both on the day before and the day after a storm day, it is assumed that the teacher would not have been at work on the storm day. That day will then be deducted from a teacher's accumulated sick leave.

#### What about other situations involving a long-term leave?

Obviously, if the teacher is on a paid leave and there is a storm day, there won't be any consequence since this day is already remunerated. Some leaves which fall into this category are educational leaves, paid leaves under Articles 35.02, 34.01 and 32.03, or when a teacher has been subpoenaed to testify in court. However, for teachers who are on unpaid leave, it is not

expected that this storm day would be paid. The Employer has already accepted to grant a leave but the condition at the outset was that it would be without pay. Essentially, a storm day cannot make it such that a teacher would be in a better financial position than if it had not occurred.

With regards to compassionate leave, the same type of interpretation should be applied. For example, the Collective Agreement states that a bereavement leave must be taken at the time of the situation requiring the leave. There again, the NBTF has agreed with the Employer that a bereavement leave must be taken within the period of 7 days following the time of the event (death). Saturdays and Sundays count but statutory holidays don't. A storm day would then be counted as any other day.

#### What time must teachers be at school if instruction is delayed by one hour or more?

According to the Education Act, teachers are expected in school 20 minutes before instruction begins. If instruction is delayed by one hour or more, teachers are expected to be available 20 minutes before the delayed time schools open in the morning. So teachers would adjust accordingly. However, supervision duty must be carried out. Teachers would be advised to check with the school principal to get information on procedures before this happens.

**For other questions related to storm days, please call a member of the Federation administrative staff at 452-1736**

## ARTICLE 20 -- CLASS SIZE NUMBERS FOR SEPTEMBER 2009

20.01 Whenever reasonably practicable the normal class size shall be twenty-six (26) pupils. No class size shall exceed twenty-nine (29) pupils.

20.02 Notwithstanding Clause 20.01, the maximum class size for grades 4 - 6 inclusive shall be twenty-eight (28) pupils; however, if unforeseen circumstances arise, the maximum class size may be increased to twenty-nine (29) pupils.

20.03 Notwithstanding Clause 20.01, classes exceeding twenty-nine (29) pupils shall be allowed when formed by the grouping of other classes for team teaching or similar purposes. The Employer agrees that the application of Clause 20.03 is subject to the modifications outlined in Clauses 20.02, 20.04, 20.05 and 20.06.



20.04 Notwithstanding Clause 20.01, it is agreed that the maximum class size for grades 1 and 2 shall be twenty-one (21) pupils.

20.05 Notwithstanding Clause 20.01, the maximum class size for Grade 3 shall be twenty-six (26) pupils; however, if unforeseen circumstances arise, the maximum class size may be increased to twenty-seven (27) pupils.

20.06 The maximum class size for kindergarten shall be twenty-one (21) pupils.

20.07 (1) If it is necessary to combine two (2) or more grades in one class with one teacher, the maximum class size for such a combined class shall be as follows:

<u>Grades 1-3</u>	<u>Grades 3-5</u>	<u>Grades 5-12</u>
16	23	24

(2) A kindergarten class which is combined with any other grade shall not exceed sixteen (16) pupils.

**Contrary to popular belief, the Employer enjoys no discretion to extend the application of this article beyond the first school day, Please contact the Federation administration staff for further information on this article: 452-1736.**

### Passport to the Internet...

... and take control of their online lives – rather than through scare tactics.

Designed for use in schools, *Passport to the Internet* provides teachers with a variety of tools for integrating it into their classrooms. It is provided in two versions, Junior (Grades 4 to 6) and Senior (Grades 7 to 8), each one customized to reflect students' developmental level. In *Study Space*, for instance, older children research the issue of whether fast food should be sold in schools, and must judge the reliability of three sites based on some fairly subtle clues; younger children, meanwhile, investigate the more fanciful question of whether or not cats dream and are given more obvious hints to judge each site's reliability.

The program provides teachers with tools to track each student's progress through the tutorial, and notifies them when a module has been completed and whether the student earned a Pass or Best result. Teachers are also provided with a thorough Teacher's Guide which gives detailed instructions for using the tutorial in class as well as background information on the major issues covered and suggestions for warm-up and extension activities tied to each module. Finally, curricular connections charts are provided to show teachers how *Passport to the Internet* fits into the

curriculum for their province or territory.

MNet has been creating interactive Internet literacy tools since 1998, when it launched *Privacy Playground: The First Adventure of the Three Little Cyberpigs* (still available on the MNet Web site). With each project MNet has broadened its focus, adding resources that deal with topics such as online advertising to children, hate material and propaganda, and parenting in the Internet age. In addition to classroom Internet literacy resources, MNet also produces a group of professional development tools—the *Web Awareness Workshop Series*—which educates teachers about such topics as online safety, cyber bullying, privacy, marketing, research and authentication.

*Passport to the Internet* builds on these past efforts to create a resource that is more comprehensive, more interactive, and more technically sophisticated than anything MNet has done before. The program is available through a licensing arrangement as a stand-alone resource, or as part of the *Web Awareness Workshop Series*. For more information, or to preview Passport to the Internet, contact [licensing@media-awareness.ca](mailto:licensing@media-awareness.ca).

*Passport to the Internet* partners are: Inukshuk Wireless Learning Plan Fund, TELUS, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, Toronto Catholic District School Board, London Public Library, and Nortel LearnIT.