



NWTTA NEWS

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Commitment to Community

Congratulations to **Valerie Gendron** who was awarded the 2022 Aboriginal Sports Circle NWTTA Teacher Award on November 26, 2022 in Yellowknife!

For the past 32 years, Val has been a staple in Fort Simpson. Her commitment to the community is possibly unrivaled. She has passionately coached youth throughout her teaching career in soccer, cross country skiing, speed skating, track & field, hockey, and in many more sports. Val currently sits on the board of the Open Doors Society (pre-school & after-school program), Seven Spruce Golf Course, Fort Simpson Curling Club, NWT Speed Skating Association and is also NWTTA Dehcho Regional President. Val is also part of a volunteer group that organized an initiative to ensure that every child grade six and under had a gift for Christmas. For the past three years, Val has also been a very active member of the Fort Simpson Fire & Ambulance Department.

Thank you, Val, for your long-term contributions to education, sport, the Fort Simpson community, and genuine desire to make a difference.



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President's Update

Matthew Miller, President



The start of the 2022-2023 school year has been entirely different. The communication with members has changed, and there is renewed energy. We returned to in-person regional orientations for regional executives and local receiving officers. Meetings were held in Fort Smith, Hay River, Yellowknife, Norman Wells, Inuvik, and Fort Simpson. While travelling, we had the opportunity to visit schools and board offices, engaging with members and hearing about their challenges and celebrations.

After hosting regional orientations, the NWT Educators' Conference and Women's Symposium were the priority. It has been too long since we have been able to all come together. Based on the survey results, the conference was a success. There are many moving parts and challenges in hosting the conference. The survey also highlighted areas that need improvement. With the next conference scheduled in three years, website registration, accommodations, flights, and overall communication will all be reviewed to improve the experience you have.

Immediately after the conference, we hosted the NWTTA Executive Leadership & Planning Meeting with the Central Executive and Regional Presidents. Education, Culture and Employment staff presented and answered questions on Education Act Modernization and the Northwest Territories Competency-based Educator Standards during the meeting. The Executive Leadership set the priorities of the Association at this time based on input from regional orientations and members. The priorities of the Association were selected as Workload, Mental Health and Wellness, Housing, Negotiations, and Teacher Recruitment and Retention.

Like many of you, I have been following the challenges of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) education workers negotiating a fair deal with the Ontario Government. On a virtual call held on November 16, 2022, I heard from Laura Walton, President of CUPE Ontario School Board Council of Unions (OSBCU), about the support she and her members have felt from unions in Ontario and across the country. This show of unity was crucial in having the Ontario Government repeal Bill 28, which imposed a contract on education workers and would have banned them from striking in its entirety. I hope this was enough to deter any government from using the notwithstanding clause to avoid a fair deal through collective bargaining in the future.

The only NWTTA bargaining unit set to go back to the table this year is the GNWT members. Following the elections for the GNWT Negotiation group of seven, representing each GNWT NWTTA region, the team met

in October at the NWTTA Central Office for training with our legal counsel and to develop a survey which launched on November 14, 2022. If you are a GNWT member, have your say and complete the survey. The results from the survey will form the foundation of the asking package when the team meets again in the new year.

As members of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, David Murphy and I traveled to Ottawa in November to meet with representatives from across the country. During our two days of meetings, we were provided with the National Summary of Cross-Canada Reports. We also heard updates from Education International, held a discussion on a national position on remote learning, and had breakout sessions where we could have open dialogue on a variety of topics. We also took this opportunity to meet with our counterparts from Nunavut and the Yukon to discuss northern-specific issues.

On behalf of the Association, I want to extend our appreciation for the work you do in supporting your schools, communities, and colleagues. I hope you can find peace and relaxation with your friends and family during your upcoming holidays. I wish you good health and prosperity in the New Year.

Northern Lights

Meet Julie Clark from Paulatuk (Beaufort-Delta region)



Q. Where did you grow up?
I grew up in Winnipeg, Manitoba and I like to make the joke that nothing could have prepared me more for the Arctic than Winnipeg weather! My parents are both teachers so I was able to enjoy summers off with them and spent a lot of time camping, fishing and taking road trips to British Columbia.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?
When I was in Grade 12, I had the unexpected stress of becoming a parent myself! At the time I had an incredible Psychology teacher whose lessons would make the students participate in social experiments where groupthink and the bystander effect would come into play. We would easily remember the terms because we experienced them rather than just reading about it in a textbook! This teacher literally and figuratively lifted me up off the floor and told me - whatever job I do that I would be very good at it. He gave me confidence in myself at a point when I had none. I thought, 'if a teacher can help people when they need it the most, then that is the most powerful job you could have.' Life has come full circle, as my wonderful daughter pursues her education degree as well!

Q. What do you teach?
I am currently the Principal at Angik School in Paulatuk and I continue to teach Grade 6 Math. I am so lucky in my position that I get to lift students spirits' every day. It is also very rewarding to encourage teachers and SAs to take action on all the exciting ideas they come up with.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?
I enjoy teaching most when the learners start to realize their potential and start working toward them regardless of the difficulties they are experiencing.

Q. How do you engage your students?
I enjoy watching students make progress and persevere through challenging lessons. I engage my students through games, humor, relationship building, storytelling, and art!

Building Memories that Last a Lifetime
My favorite part of teaching in the North is planning and organizing 'On The Land' Trips. My first year at Angik which was 5 years ago, I went out hunting ptarmigan with my grade 7/8/9 students. It was so interesting to switch roles with my students and allow them to teach me about hunting! For the last 3 years, I have organized two ice-fishing trips each year! It is so fun to engage with students outside of the classroom and build memories that last a lifetime!

Professional Development

Trent Waterhouse, Professional Development Coordinator

Thank you for attending the **NWT Educators' Conference and Women's Symposium**. I hope you took the opportunity to make and renew connections with others and draw some inspiration from the sessions. Overall, I expect that the experience gave you some strategies for braving the waves of learning with students and families with kindness and reciprocity. There are photos from the conference scattered throughout this edition of the newsletter.

Regional Professional Development is a great way to support your Professional Development growth plan over the course of the school year and career. As per your specific Collective Agreement, each Education Body shall create a committee comprised of members that represent the employer and members that represent NWTTA to provide direction on Professional Development funds for your Region. Detailed information on Regional Professional Development policies and procedures can be found on each Regional Page in the Members Area of the NWTTA website (www.nwtta.nt.ca).

If you are interested in a Monique Gray Smith, Adrienne Gear or Jody Carrington prize package, please send me an email (pd@nwtta.nt.ca) with the presenter's name and the territory or community that the presenter lives in the subject line. Include your school or mailing address you would like the prize pack sent to. I will randomly draw from all completed submissions on January 4, 2023 and send them out to the winners.



*NWT Educators' Conference & Women's Symposium Opening Keynote **Monique Gray Smith** addressed the group virtually due to airline issues.*



Starting this January, NWT educators will pilot new professional standards.

The Standards set out the skills, knowledge and values NWT educators should have, and guide professional development and training opportunities to further their careers.

Feedback from the small-scale pilot will be used to refine the final Standards.

You can view them at:
www.ece.gov.nt.ca/nwt-competency-based-educator-standards

Government of
Northwest Territories



Working for Our Members A Glimpse of What We Do

David Murphy, Executive Director

As I write this article, I am attending the Canadian Teachers Federation (CTF/FCE) Board of Directors meeting and the CTF/FCE National Staff Conference. Upon reflection of the support that CTF/FCE provides to the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (NWTTA) and the other Canadian teacher associations, I have outlined areas of this support to provide our NWTTA members with a better understanding of the important support CTF/FCE provides.

The Board of Directors meet at least four times a year with three meetings held in Ottawa at the CTF/FCE office building and one meeting held virtually. Most Canadian teacher associations, Member Organizations, are represented at these meetings by two delegates, usually the President and the Executive Director, and focus on a number of topics under the umbrella of the CTF/FCE strategic vision. The strategic vision of CTF/FCE is "to be a strong advocate for and defender of publicly funded education, labour rights and social justice." To support this vision CTF/FCE has in place a number of committees and events in which Member Organizations are invited to participate. The NWTTA is represented, or has been, on a number of these committees including Diversity and Human Rights, French as a First language, Status of Women, National Teacher Research Network, Network Francophone Liaison Officer, Teacher Bargaining Network and Teaching Profession.

As well the NWTTA participates in a number of the events planned by CTF/FCE. These include the National Staff Conference, Women's Symposium, Social Justice and Project Overseas.

This year's National Staff Conference was held on November 16-18, 2022. The theme of this year's conference was "Stronger Together" and sessions focused on social justice issues, networking for Black, Indigenous and people of colour, mental health, decolonization and discussion at to whether or not public education can save Canadian democracy.

For those of you who would like to know a bit more about CTF/FCE I suggest you visit their website at <https://www.ctf-fce.ca>. You can choose to view the website in either French or English. When you open the website you will see several menu buttons where you can click to obtain additional information. Clicking

the "Home" button will provide you with the three priorities of CTF/FCE. These are ensuring adequate funding and resourcing for public education, strengthening labour rights and unionization and advancing social justice in Canada and around the world.

The "Who We Are" section provides the timeline of important events in the life of CTF/FCE from the time it was born to the present day. It also lists the Member Organizations that make up CTF/FCE, the CTF/FCE staff and their contact information. The "What We Do" section provides information about advocacy for public education, resources for francophone education, social justice issues and a resource, FEM•LEAD•FÉM, to support all who identify as women in teacher unions and are interested in women's leadership, as well as their allies and there is a link to a publications catalog with resources on a number of topics. The "Get Involved" section lists CTF/FCE staff positions as they arise and also provides information to graduate and undergraduate students who may be successful in obtaining a four-month term position working at CTF/FCE to gain work experience and further develop their professional skills. The "Media" section provides information of upcoming events, blogs and podcasts on several issues and, for those of you who may have a need, provides downloadable versions of the CTF logo.

Those of you who attended the Annual Meeting of Central Council (AMCC) would have met the CTF/FCE President Sam Hammond who chaired our annual meeting and brought us greetings on behalf of CTF/FCE. As well, for those of you attended the NWT Educators' Conference and Women's Symposium you may have met Sam and Wes Delve, CTF/FCE Program Officer, who presented a session and setup a display booth to meet teachers and provide them with information about CTF/FCE programs.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the supports that CTF/FCE provides to the NWTTA and other member organizations please let me know.

In closing, please remember, if you do encounter any bumps along the way please contact us and we will try our best to level them for you so your journey is more pleasant.



LE DROIT D'AUTEUR... ÇA COMPTE!

GUIDE DE RÉFÉRENCE À L'INTENTION DU PERSONNEL ENSEIGNANT

Le droit d'auteur... ça compte! fournit des réponses à un large éventail de questions du personnel enseignant au sujet du droit d'auteur.

Sachez comment la législation sur le droit d'auteur s'applique au personnel enseignant et aux écoles!

Cliquez sur le lien pour télécharger le document : www.ledroitdauteurcacompte.ca



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Queer Tips to get Through the Holidays

Kirstin Prescott, Mildred Hall School (YK1 region) adapted from <https://www.queertheology.com/queer-holiday-tips/>

FIGURE OUT FRIENDS YOU CAN CALL & TEXT When you're stressed or scared or your family says or does something messed up and you need advice or just to vent, have a friend or two on standby that you can reach out to.

SET BOUNDARIES You are allowed to take care of yourself. We can set and maintain boundaries that keep us safe, happy, and healthy. You don't have to go to the Christmas service at your childhood anti-gay church. You don't have to explain how you know you're a woman on the drive to your aunt's house. Communicating your boundaries to your family ahead of time might work well for you or you can decide on them yourself and enforce them if folks bump up against them.

MAKE TIME TO BE ALONE These days, my family is wonderfully supportive and still, I need some time to sneak away and just be myself. Spending time with lots of people can be exhausting and families that are not supportive can be extra exhausting. Make time to sit in bed and read a book; to get outside and go for a walk, run, or bike ride; or even to take a nap.

CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS WITH YOUR CHOSEN FAMILY TOO We're told that spending time with our families of origin is the only "proper" way to spend the holiday. In some cities, like New York City, where I live, "Orphan Christmas" is a thing... friends who aren't going home to their families gather together to celebrate. But getting together with close friends to celebrate a holiday shouldn't need a qualifier... it can just be Christmas, or Thanksgiving, or Chanukah, or Kwanza. Remember to celebrate holidays with the people in your life who are supportive (even if that means hopping on a Google Hangout because they don't live nearby).

HAVE MUSIC AND MOVIES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD Make a playlist of music you love and that makes you feel awesome. If you need to, step away for a bit and listen to your favorite song. Bring some DVDs to the Christmas party and put them on for distraction. Give yourself some breathing space.



CREATE AN EXIT STRATEGY IF YOU CAN Have a friend call with an emergency. Say that you have to leave at a certain time. Give yourself permission to leave if things get too intense. You don't have to stay super late. You can stay in a hotel instead of sleeping on your parents' couch. Do what you need to do to give yourself the out you need.

HOW TO BE A GOOD ALLY DURING THE HOLIDAYS – A NOTE FROM THE GENDER & SEXUALITY SQUAD

With the holiday season coming up, it can be a triggering time for the 2SLGBTQIPA+ community. Many queer people experience high levels of stress, anxiety, and depression at this time of year. Some 2SLGBTQIPA+ individuals may not return home for the holidays, but this time of year can remain challenging and triggering.

WHY ITS ESSENTIAL TO BE A GOOD ALLY DURING THIS TIME Many people in the 2SLGBTQIPA+ community face rejection or are removed from their families due to their identity. Many individuals in the community may feel guilt around the holidays about wanting to avoid their families so they can protect themselves from the stigma and judgment that can occur with uninformed family members at gatherings. If you wonder how you can be a good ally to 2SLGBTQIPA+ people this holiday season, here are some tips.

LISTEN TO YOUR 2SLGBTQIPA+ LOVED ONES It is essential to listen and not comment right away when 2SLGBTQIPA+ people in your life are opening up to you. Never minimize their feelings or experiences, or shut down their emotions.

SET A GENTLE REMINDER THAT THEY NEED TO PRIORITIZE THEIR WELLBEING Those struggling during the holidays might pull away from loved ones, self-medicate, or use other responses that could not benefit their wellbeing. Be sure to check in on them, ask how they're doing, speak up in a gentle way if you see some warning signs that they are not taking care of themselves. Offer to be part of their self-care plan if that makes it easier on them.

BE THE GO-TO ALLY If your queer friend or family member is nervous about the holidays, you can tell them you are there for them and that they can get in touch with you at any time. Being available to them can be very helpful, and letting them know they can ask you for help is key.

INVITE THEM ALONG WITH YOU Some 2SLGBTQIPA+ people may not have the option of being with their families of origin; however, if you are their chosen family, you could always invite them along with you for the holidays (if your destination is a safe space for 2SLGBTQIPA+ people!). If they do attend your family holiday celebration, be sure not to bring attention to their personal story – keep it simple and say they are a good friend who is coming to join the festivities.

THINK ABOUT HOW YOU ASK THEM ABOUT THEIR HOLIDAY PLANS Instead of straight-up asking your queer friend if they're spending time with family during the holidays, asking open ended questions may be more effective. If you phrase your question as "Do you have holiday plans?" they can choose how much to share with you.



Inaugural NWT Music Awards

Stephen Richardson, École St. Joseph School (YCS region)

Dave Dowe (École St. Patrick High school) and I, **Stephen Richardson** (École St. Joseph School) of Agony of the Leaves (AOTL) recently opened at the Inaugural NWT Music Awards. This was held to attract Breakout West (BOW) Music Awards and eventually the Junos to Yellowknife. Music NWT has met with both organizations in Calgary and Toronto about future Yellowknife hosting opportunities for BOW and the Junos.

At this year's awards gala Dave Dowe won the NWT Music Industry Excellence Award for Best Music Engineer in the North and AOTL was nominated for Best New Single for their song *Where's the Sleep?*

We also recently produced, engineered, and released a single by two former students from my Grade 7 Band Songwriting class.

Maria Lourdes De Ausen and Ryder Quinlan wrote an excellent song, *The End Of The Year* about graduation. *The End of the Year* is streaming on [Spotify](#), [YouTube](#), [Apple Music](#), and all music platforms worldwide.



Agony of the Leaves opens the Inaugural NWT Music Awards



Dave Dowe wins the NWT Music Industry Excellence Award for Best Music Engineer in the North



Stephen Richardson performs at the NWT Music Awards



(above) Community candlelight vigil to pay tribute to those who have passed in the delta region



(left) Caribou hunt harvesting by students, teachers, parents and elders to provide meat to the school and community

(below) Staff dressed up for Halloween! l-r Jim Sloan, Heather Evans, Nicole Sloan, Melanie Silva, Megan Lennie, Amanda Reynolds, Lucinda Summers, Colin Rose



Moose Kerr School



Nubia Shaw, Mangilaluk School (Beaufort-Delta region) proudly shares a Truth and Reconciliation Felt Hanging created by her grade two class.



Nick Diem and Basketball NWT visited ?ehtseo Ayha School (Sahtu region) and worked with all levels. The students really enjoyed the time with Nick and BNWT. Mahsi from all of us!

Northern Lights

Meet

Charlotte Hall
from Hay River (South Slave region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Nottingham, England, but moved to Canada when I was 10. I have lived in Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, and now the NWT!

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

I think I have always wanted to be a teacher. I love meeting new people, and learning from the people around me. Teaching allows me to do that while also sharing some things in return. I was also that kid that forced their siblings to sit down and pretend to be my students, so it seemed like a good fit.

Q. What do you teach?

I teach Grade 9 Humanities and Health at Diamond Jenness Secondary School in Hay River.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

I think it has to be learning about the passions and interests of my students and sharing mine with them. We spend so much time with our students and I really enjoy and value the relationships we get to build.

Q. How do you engage your students?

Through humour and being myself. I like to think my students feel comfortable and safe in my classroom because I am always encouraging them to be who they are and modeling that myself.

How Lucky I Am

I have learnt so much about myself as an educator since moving to the NWT, and I really have the wonderful community both in and out of Diamond Jenness to thank for that. I truly enjoy the time I spend with the staff and students and I realize how lucky I am to feel so fulfilled in my career. I hope at least some of my students are able to find that for themselves.

Paulatuk-Toronto Student Exchange

Julie Clark, Principal, Angik School (Beaufort-Delta region)

From September 24 through October 2, thirteen students and two chaperones (**Julie Clark** and **Kyle Sagert**) from Angik School in Paulatuk, explored Ontario as a part of an Experiences Canada student exchange. The trip was a big deal for our community because there has not been a student exchange in 40 years!! Most of our students have not spent much time outside of Northwest Territories so this was a very exciting opportunity for our youths. They encountered some first-time experiences such as escalators, pigeons and traffic!

On Monday, we tested our limits at a tree-top trekking adventure where students navigated obstacle courses high up in the trees! Tuesday was action packed; we toured the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, shopped at the Eaton Centre, went to the Hockey Hall of Fame, the CN Tower, and a Blue Jay's game! On Wednesday, we went to Niagara Falls and took a boat ride right up to the tremendous waterfall. In the afternoon, the students ran around Clifton Hill where they tried out roller coasters, laser tag, a haunted house, a Ferris wheel and more! On Thursday, we went a host family's farm. We learned about farming pigs and corn, we enjoyed a wonderful farm-fresh lunch, we listened and sang along with a French Canadian singer. The students got to enjoy swinging in a barn, feeding chickens and donkeys, and playing baseball. On Friday, we went to Blue Mountain Resort where the students got to wall climb, zip

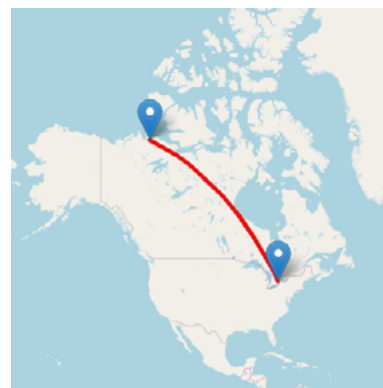
line, go on roller coasters and water bikes, play mini golf, and enjoy shopping!

The students stayed with their gracious host

families in various parts of Ontario in the area surrounding Toronto! The host families took them to enjoy more activities such as a NHL game, shopping, a movie theatre, a car show, to Wasaga Beach and more!

We can't wait to host the students from Ontario in Paulatuk! We plan to take them on two-ice fishing trips, go sledding, skating and teach the students about Inuvialuit culture by participating in drum dancing, beading, jigging, storytelling, and sharing traditional food!

I would like to thank **Aubrey Hawton** and **Jodie Hollett** who are organizers and chaperones in Ontario. Thank you to **Herb Nakimayak** and **Ray Ruben**, who donated money to buy the students some meals along the way! Thank you to a fellow Beaufort-Delta Divisional Education Council teacher **Chris MacLea**, who dedicated time helping before the trip, and his mom **Kim McNair** who generously gave all the students from Ontario and Paulatuk a thoughtful gift during the trip. Lastly, thank you to Experiences Canada for providing this wonderful opportunity for students across Canada to connect and learn from each other! Please check out www.experiencescanada.ca if you would like to plan a student exchange at your school.



Bring culture and heritage to your classroom!



Wish you could visit the PWNHC?

Your class can visit us any time:

- View multimedia and audio exhibits: www.pwnhc.ca/virtual-exhibits
- Tour the museum online: www.nwtexhibits.ca/navigator
- Look at old photos: www.nwtarchives.ca
- Learn about NWT geographic place names: www.pwnhc.ca/cultural-places/geographic-names

For a full list of resources:

www.pwnhc.ca/education/educational-programs-and-services

For more information:

Phone: (867) 767-9347 x 71245

Email: pwnhc_education@gov.nt.ca

Website: www.pwnhc.ca



Prince of Wales
Northern Heritage Centre

Class Tours of the Legislative Assembly

Contact LA_PAC@ntassembly.ca to book

Upcoming session dates:
February 7 -
March 10, 2023

Is your class located in Yellowknife? We would love to host your class for a tour of the Legislature. Tours are available in English or French. Come during session to have your class recognized by their MLA in the Chamber, or come outside of session to receive a more thorough tour of the "Place of the People!"



Christmas Math Puzzle!



Santa Claus has three gift boxes to deliver.
Each gift box consists of few chocolate bars.
In the Green and Red boxes, he has 20 chocolate bars.
In the Green and Blue boxes, he has 35 chocolate bars.
In the Red and Blue boxes, he has 25 chocolate bars.
How many chocolate bars are there in each box?

By Mr. Sushil Jasper M.Sc., B.Ed.,
Mathematics and Science Teacher
Liidlii Kue Regional High School (Dehcho region)



Answer on page 23

My Raison D'être

Elise Decarie-Jean, Teacher, East Three Secondary School
(Beaufort-Delta region)

In August, I participated in a Canadian Parents for French campaign to share my passion of teaching French as a second language. The campaign MY RAISON D'ÊTRE is happening across the country.

A call for interest was made to Northwest Territories French second language teachers by the Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Education, Culture and Employment. I submitted my name and won the draw, which meant a trip to Vancouver to take part in the filming and recording of the campaign. During the month of July I was interviewed and answered questions on why I was passionate about the career of teaching French. A script was created to represent the important lines of my interview.

I wanted to participate in the campaign to share my reasons to share my culture through teaching in French Immersion. I also see this campaign as a good recruitment tool. There is something quite special that happens in the French Immersion programs; not only do we teach a language but we also open a new world to our students.

More information on the program can be found at this link: <https://cpf.ca/en/teachinfrench/>



Northern Lights

Meet Paige Anderson
from Yellowknife (YK1 region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

I am born and raised right here in Yellowknife. I am a proud Northerner through and through and I respectfully acknowledge that I get to live, play and teach within traditional Chief Drygeese Territory and the Yellowknives Dene First Nation.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

While I never pictured myself as a teacher when I was younger (wanted to be a singer) I come by this profession honestly; both of my parents spent the better part of their lives educating right here in Yellowknife. In short, I became a teacher to make a difference.

Q. What do you teach?

I am a proud middle school teacher. I am currently teaching grade 8 at École William McDonald Middle School. However, I have taught grade 6, 7, 8, 9, and kindergarten PE.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

What I love most about teaching is creating a sense of community, building relationships and seeing the 'aha' moments. I also enjoy dressing up for all of the seasons (I have a different Christmas outfit for the entire month of December) and decorating my classroom for the students.

Q. How do you engage your students?

I engage my students in their learning by first building community, trust, and positive relationships, then by relating their learning to the real world, providing opportunities for community field trips, hands on projects and experiments and opportunity for inquiry.

Teacher Don't Always Need to Know Everything

My second year as a teacher, living in Fort McPherson, the porcupine caribou herd came back for the first time in three years. The school turned the gymnasium into a meat processing production (I'm talking kindergarten to elders). I watched as my grade 7/8 class skinned and cut up the caribou. One student looked at me, and said "it's time I teach you Miss Paige" so that day I learnt how to skin and cut a caribou. A moment that taught me more than just how to harvest meat.

Food First Foundation

Tess Ondrack, Coordinator, Food First Foundation

The Food First Foundation is a registered charity based in Yellowknife. Our mission is to support food and nutrition education programs in schools across the NWT, encouraging a healthy population of children and youth for future generations.

Thirty percent of NWT children live in food-insecure households; the second highest of any province/territory in Canada. Many of these children are going to school hungry and undernourished. As teachers and administrators know all too well, inadequate nourishment leads to poor concentration, classroom behavioural issues, higher absenteeism, and reduced scholastic success. Healthy food provides the energy children need to be attentive and enthusiastic in school, increasing their ability to concentrate, learn, and develop into outstanding adults.

Food First provides funding to schools to feed their hungry students via breakfast, lunch, and snack programs. The support we are able to offer varies from year to year, and is meant to help fill gaps in funding that schools may have. Food First has also developed a cooking program called Taste Makers which complements the NWT curriculum and teaches students practical kitchen skills. There is a student and teacher's manual which are available year round digitally, (send us an email if you

would like it!), as well as a bit of funding for ingredients and supplies distributed at the start of the school year. We also help schools to stock their kitchens with equipment and support school gardening programs with supplies and funding.

Over the course of the 2021-2022 school year, we supported 36 school food programs, provided funds for 16 school cooking programs, and sent gardening and composting supplies to 17 schools across the NWT.

Funding for this school year has gone out to 26 schools for their food programs, 15 schools for

their cooking programs, and 13 schools to purchase kitchen equipment. Ten schools will receive gardening program funding or supplies. West Coast Seeds is currently working on our order. Once completed schools will be informed about what they will receive!

There was an unprecedented level of interest in the Great Big Crunch NWT this year! This is an event involving a synchronized crunch of an apple, (or other healthy snack), which promotes the importance of enjoying food together and enhances student understanding of where their food comes from. Unfortunately we had to limit the number of schools who could participate, but we will be sure to allocate

additional funding for this initiative next school year. More than 1,300 students in seven schools signed up to crunch this fall.



École Boréale Great Big Crunch NWT 2021



Chief Sunrise Education Centre gardening program



Chief Julian Yendo School breakfast program



Paul W. Kaeser High School cooking program

The application process and reporting requirements for Food First funding are simple. We know how much time and energy teachers and administrators dedicate to their school food programs, and we strive to make things as easy and as flexible as possible. Principals, watch out for an email from us in late spring 2023 for the 2023-2024 school year!

It was great to meet many of you at the NWT Educators' Conference and Women's Symposium earlier this year, and hear about all the wonderful food, cooking, and gardening initiatives you have on the go.

Thank you once again to the NWTTA for the Christmas donation. It will be put to good use for NWT school food programs!

For more information about Food First, please visit www.foodfirst.ca, or email coordinator@foodfirst.ca.



2021-2022

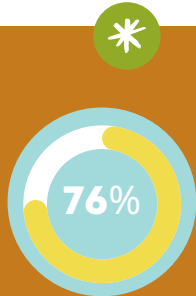
YEAR IN REVIEW



The Northwest Territories (NWT) has the second highest prevalence of children living in food-insecure households at 30%.

Source: Tarasuk V, Mitchell A. (2020) Household food insecurity in Canada, 2017-18. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF).

School food programs are essential for feeding the children who may not be getting enough food at home.



76% OF NWT SCHOOLS were supported by Food First funding

Over \$220,000 distributed to NWT schools

WE SUPPORTED...

36 SCHOOL BREAKFAST, LUNCH & SNACK PROGRAMS in 22 communities

16 SCHOOL COOKING PROGRAMS in 10 communities

17 SCHOOL GARDENING PROGRAMS in 11 communities

More than 4,000 STUDENTS benefitted from Food First funding

"The Food First Foundation has been an integral part of our success. There is no doubt in my mind that students learn more efficiently, stay active longer, and present themselves better when provided healthy foods in their diet."

- Dan Summers, Principal Moose Kerr School, Aklavik

STIP

Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practices

Sara McCrea, Assistant Executive Director

In the Northwest Territories, Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practices (STIP) was implemented in the 2017-2018 school year as a result of negotiations between the NWT Teachers' Association (NWTTA) and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT). The intention of STIP is to improve student learning and achievement through strengthening teachers' professional practices.

For detailed information around the purposes behind STIP, scope, scheduling and allocation of time, please click here: [Ministerial Directive Strengthening Teacher Instructions Practices \(2020\)](#)

NWT education bodies are required by legislation to have school calendars submitted to the Minister and made publicly available by April 1. All school calendars are submitted by the Superintendents to the GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) for review. The NWTTA also reviews the calendars to provide observations to ECE. When the NWTTA reviews the school calendars we check to ensure the calendars follow the Ministerial Directives as outlined; for example, if the STIP days are equally distributed between the teacher professional planning days (Individual STIP days) and teacher collaborative planning days (Collaborative STIP days). We also verify if schools meet the yearly and daily instructional hours as stated in the Education Act.

Members sometimes contact Central Office with questions or concerns regarding the application of STIP. Teachers should have access to their school calendars. Each school calendar outlines the starting and closing dates for their school, the STIP days, Professional Development (PD) days, Christmas break, spring break, observance of holidays, in-service or administration days, cultural orientation days and civic holiday if applicable.

Below are main points regarding STIP as per the Ministerial Directive:

- **Number of Hours:** education bodies must establish up to 100 hours of non-instruction time for Individual and Collaborative STIP. The total STIP time may not be less than 52 hours.
- **Collaborative STIP time** is the non-instructional time for professional planning for ongoing collaborative and learning. For example, the development of professional learning communities (PLC). **Divisional education bodies will determine and coordinate how this time is used.**
- **Individual STIP time** is the non-instructional time for planning for student assessment and reporting. For teachers to engage in individual planning and learning activities, and carry out their professional duties. **Individual teachers will determine how they use this time.** These professional duties and activities must be

conducted in the school setting, unless prior approval is given.

- **Allocation of Hours:** the hours allocated are divided equally, 50% Individual STIP and 50% Collaborative STIP.
- A **Full STIP day** should be equivalent to the number of instructional hours in a regular school day.
- **Transition Planning** for the start and end of the school year. At least one full day or equivalent time of **Collaborative STIP** must be scheduled at the beginning of the school year for student transition planning as well as within **60 days before the end of the school year.**
- **Reporting Periods:** at least **one full day** or equivalent time of **Individual STIP** time must be scheduled **within 7 working days before submission of marks** to the principal for each reporting period.
- **NWTTA members** will not be required to formally report on their use of Individual STIP time.

Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YCS)

the Collective Agreement references STIP in Article 23 Professional Development (PD) and Article 28 Discretionary Leave.

Requests to use PD leave days will not be approved on scheduled collaborative STIP days, except in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Superintendent. PD leave days may be approved on personal STIP days. If PD days or collaborative STIP days are scheduled next to long weekends teachers will be allowed to schedule PD days and discretionary days may be used on those days.

During the last contract negotiations, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was agreed to. A joint YCS-NWTTA committee will be struck to review the application of STIP. The committee will include at least two teachers from each school site, in addition to any District and school administration that wish to attend. The first meeting should be scheduled within the next few months.

Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1)

does not have additional language regarding STIP in their collective agreements.

Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT)

does not have additional language regarding STIP in their collective agreements.

[Familiarize yourself with the Ministerial Directives and your school schedule, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at Central Office for assistance.](#)



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- tied to the social studies curriculum
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nwthumanrights.ca/resources/forteachers/

nwthumanrights.ca



A school cabin being built at ?ehtseo Ayha School (Sahtu region). Thanks to **Gordon Taneton, George Baton and Nathan Dayman**. We are excited to get the students out learning in this new environment.

Northern Lights

Meet

Betsy Lucko
from Yellowknife (YCS region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Delhi, Ontario on a Christmas tree farm!

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

I had some really great elementary teachers that inspired me. My past teachers were enthusiastic and planned incredible lessons that were meaningful and impactful. My Grade 5/6 teacher was a very vibrant teacher that shared her passion with all her students.

Q. What do you teach?

I currently teach Grade 1/2 at Weledeh Catholic School.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

I love building relationships with students and having tons of fun with them while they are learning! Every year there are new challenges and great opportunities to learn from my students. I love incorporating student-led learning and outdoor education into my teaching. I also love the people I work with! Weledeh Catholic School has been my teaching home for the past 11 years and I am so grateful to work with such amazing co-workers and students! #weledehfamly

Q. How do you engage your students?

I spend a lot of time at the beginning of the year building strong relationships with all my students. We learn a lot about each other, our likes and dislikes and our favourite things! Often that looks like outdoor adventures, playing lots of learning games together and sharing my student's passions.

Everyday is New and Exciting

Although I might joke about going to "work at the bank" on the tough days, I know that being a teacher is what I am the most passionate about. Everyday is a new and exciting day full of surprises, sometimes good and sometimes not so good. Do what you love and love what you do - or else go work at the bank!

Chief Jimmy Bruneau School Knowledge and Nutrients Farm

Chief Jimmy Bruneau School (CJBS) is proud to announce the official launch of a large-scale hydroponic farm – The CJBS - Knowledge and Nutrients Farm. In partnership with Food Programs and Challenges Division, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Tlicho Government - Lands Protection & Renewable Resources, and Ecology North, CJBS secured funding, training, and support to implement a project that will nourish students’ minds and bodies for years to come.

The main effort of the CJBS - Knowledge and Nutrients Farm is to promote healthy eating and living, provide access to quality produce, and improve science outcomes from K-12.

Providing opportunities for our youth to explore the culinary arts and become excited about fresh produce is of key importance at the farm. In working with the plants, from seed to sprout to plate, students will become excited about healthy eating. CJBS offers a foods program and local cafeteria service where some of the produce will be used. Those students can receive the same produce from the farm after harvesting to replicate the dishes at home. The remaining food is a by-product of educational outcomes and will be shared with the community.

The CJBS - Knowledge and Nutrients Farm has an enormous capacity for growing food. Operating at 100% capacity, 336 heads of lettuce could be harvested every 21 days. Other vegetables are planned but this highlights the sheer volume of quality food that will eventually be coming from the farm and going to families.

Hydroponics systems are ideal for education due to their ease of use and efficient use of space, time, and resources. The CJBS - Knowledge and Nutrients Farm is a set of 12 towers with supplemental lighting, nutrient solution reservoirs, and pumps. The farm has a capacity of 336 growing sites in a footprint of around 72sqft. As a hydroponic system operating indoors, we can grow crops throughout the school year even when temperatures dip below freezing. Components of the CJBS - Knowledge and Nutrients Farm are modular and portable; each can be rolled away to a classroom as

needed. The educational value of a farm can’t be overstated.

It is a science class’s dream. Students from all grade levels will have access to a system that encourages them to troubleshoot, research, problem solve, collect data, make predictions, journal findings, and critically analyse situations. While all the amazing skills of scientific literacy are being developed, students working with the CJBS - Knowledge and Nutrients Farm will have a deeply personal connection to the topic through food for themselves and their community. Students will find the experience an engaging one. It is our hope by creating the conditions for engagement we may support student success.

In the coming months the farm will be constructed, and a subset of four towers will be operated as a pilot with the CJBS – Green Team as project leads with the support of Ecology North. As the Green Team develops their expertise, they will establish standard operating procedures, guides and troubleshooting tips. The Green Team will then act as the in-house experts following the pilot and will



consult with other classrooms as they begin to use the systems as educational tools. This will be an excellent leadership opportunity for students.

The CJBS - Knowledge and Nutrients Farm will be a cornerstone for healthy eating, educational outcomes, and engagement in the community. Students will lead the project and their peers, creating the conditions for success and community wellness. Stay tuned to the CJBS Facebook page where you can check us out as we pump “Knowledge and Nutrients” from system to student every day.

If you would like to collaborate with us or contribute to the project feel free to reach out!



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Know how copyright law applies to teachers and schools!

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Produced by the CMEC Copyright Consortium which is composed of the ministers of K–12 education of Canada’s provinces and territories, with the exception of Quebec – www.cmec.ca/copyrightinfo.

7 Mental Health Tips during the Holidays

Tara Achkar, Customer Engagement Manager, Starling Minds

Hello there,

With so many expectations about what the holidays should be like or who we should be spending our time with, it can be very difficult to make it all work.

When things become overwhelming or very stressful it is important to take a break, breathe and make some time for yourself. Prioritizing yourself and your mental health will not only help you better navigate challenging times, but it will also help you appreciate what you currently have and what is working for you.

We often put ourselves last and everybody's needs before our own especially if we tend to be people pleasers. Which is why it's important to reserve a period of time just for yourself to wind down, enjoy your hobbies and other pastimes you often set aside to please others.

If carving out this time is a big challenge, perhaps look at applying the **five-minute rule** to give yourself breaks throughout the day and offer your body and mind small moments of mindfulness and relaxation.

The **five-minute rule** is a simple yet effective cognitive behavioral technique that is designed to help you commit to spending just five minutes doing something after which you're free to stop if you want.

At Starling Minds, we're here to help and have rounded up some tips and ideas to help you and your family this holiday season.

7 Tips for Your Mental Health



- 1 DO WHAT WORKS FOR YOUR FAMILY
- 2 TAKE TIME FOR SELF-CARE
- 3 REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT
- 4 RELAX YOUR BODY AND YOUR MIND
- 5 CHECK IN WITH YOUR EMOTIONS
- 6 LEARN NEW SKILLS TO BUILD RESILIENCE
- 7 LEARN TO SAY NO

Log into or sign up for your Starling Minds account to help you manage your mental health throughout the holidays.

Visit member.starlingminds.com and enter your access code: **NWTMEMBER**

Share the platform with your family and provide them with the access code: **NWTFAMILY**

SIGN IN



Northern Lights

Meet
Sasha Ilnyckyj
from Behchoko (Tlicho region)



Q. Where did you grow up?
I grew up near the Capilano River on unceded Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam territory in Vancouver, BC.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?
I've known I wanted to teach since I was young but I took a winding road to get here. I tried a bunch of pursuits including guiding, tutoring, teaching music and giving tours at a zoo for bugs. I loved them all and recognized that the common feature was the experience of learning. Only now do I see that I got it from my mom Alena and dad Oleh, my first and best teachers. Always patient and generous, they've nurtured my curiosity my whole life.

Q. What do you teach?
I am fortunate to teach high school science and music (humanity's top-two disciplines in my opinion...).

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?
I love how dynamic teaching is. There's an alchemy between the different people and ideas in the room that forces you to always improvise. Witnessing students' growth motivates you to evolve your practice as well. Teaching, like music, is a discipline with endless frontiers for development and a life's worth of joy and challenge. I'm only two years into my career and it's the promise of growth that excites me most.

Q. How do you engage your students?
I'm still figuring that out, but I try to make things authentic and relevant. School is a microcosm of life and I aim to give skills that will serve students beyond these walls: make a beat-tape, examine the local environment, be the class photographer, build drums, grow your own food. Give youth real projects and they will rise to the challenge.

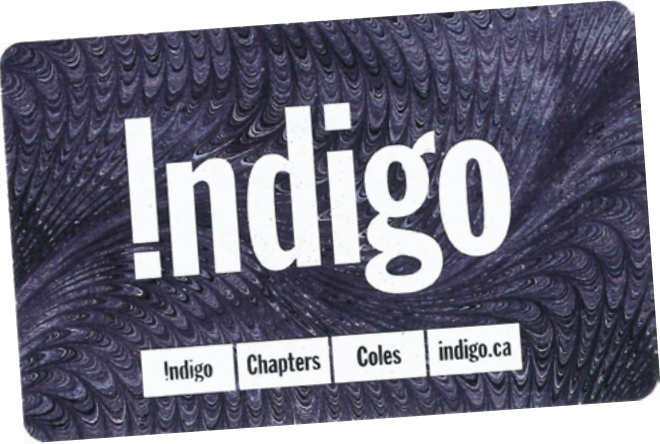
Broadening My Perspective
It is a privilege and challenge to teach in Tlicho territory. Getting immersed in Northern culture has broadened my perspective and challenged some of my assumptions. Masi to the many mentors who have helped me so far.

Newsletter Trivia

Send your answers to the trivia questions below to news@nwttan.ca with subject *Trivia*.

Trivia answers are contained within this edition of the newsletter. Newsletter Trivia contests are open to active NWTTA members.

Deadline for entries: **February 3, 2023**



Win a \$50 Chapters-Indigo Gift Card!

1. On what date did the GNWT negotiations survey launch? *Reminder - the survey closes December 18, 2022.*
2. Before their Paulatuk-Toronto Student Exchange trip, how long has it been since Paulatuk had a student exchange?
3. Who determines how Individual STIP time is used?
4. What are two mental health tips during the holidays?

Betsy Lucko from Weledah Catholic School (YCS region) is the winner of the September 2022 Newsletter Trivia.

Cover: Delegates pick up their name tags at the start of the NWT Educators' Conference & Women's Symposium held in Yellowknife October 19-21, 2022.

Math Puzzle! (page 14) answer:
Green = 15; Red = 5; Blue = 20

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*l-r Matthew Miller, NWTTA President &
Tess Ondrack, Food First Foundation Coordinator*

In lieu of sending Christmas cards, for the eleventh year, the NWTTA has made a donation to the Food First Foundation, a registered charity whose mission is to support food and nutrition education programs in schools across the Northwest Territories.

<http://foodfirst.ca>

