



# NWTTA NEWS

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## Welcome to the 2023-2024 School Year!

This edition of NWTTA News was delayed from September due to the wildfire evacuation of all residents of Yellowknife from August 16 to September 6, 2023.

The NWTTA is excited to welcome you for the 2023-2024 school year.

The NWTTA is here to serve you, our membership. If you have questions or need assistance, please reach out through email, phone, or drop by our office in Yellowknife. Mobile phone numbers for after-hours urgent access are printed on the back of your membership card and on the contact poster in your staff room.

All new members are encouraged to create their NWTTA online membership account as soon as possible. Please visit [nwttan.ca](http://nwttan.ca), click on "REGISTER" in the top right hand corner and complete and submit your registration. Once your status as a NWTTA member is confirmed, your online account will be activated. You will receive automated emails throughout the process.

All members who registered their online account by **September 30** will receive a 2023-2024 Membership Card, which will be printed and sent to your school/work site in late October.

Membership Cards can be used for proof of profession, and that you are eligible for various educator and/or government discounts.

Below is a preview of the 2023-2024 Membership Card which features a photo of multi-coloured aurora borealis over a treed landscape in the Northwest Territories.





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## President's Update

**Matthew Miller, President**

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! I want to extend a warm and hearty welcome to both our returning members and the newest additions to the NWTTA. Our "September" issue of the newsletter is a little later than normal, given another disruptive start to the school year.

As I began my fourth and final year as the NWTTA President, I held a faint hope that I might finally experience the joys of a "relatively normal" year. The kind where I could focus on addressing member concerns, participating in annual meetings, and maybe even find some consistency in my daily schedule. However, as life would have it, that notion proved to be wishful thinking.

On the same day our office opened for the new school year, the order to evacuate Yellowknife was given. Anticipating the announcement, we combed through the office to bring what we could and felt necessary to have while we were away, knowing that many schools would still be in session and, likely, there would be members requiring assistance who were evacuated.

During the considerable upheaval that characterized the evacuation, both on a personal and professional level, it is worth noting that amidst the chaos, there were some silver linings.

We often hear unions, federations, and associations preach the concept of "Solidarity." But what exactly does this term signify?

In the realm of labour unions and workers' movements, solidarity, in essence, embodies the spirit of unity and mutual support among workers as they pursue common objectives, particularly in the face of labour disputes or contentious interactions with employers. It conveys the profound understanding that we are bound together in our endeavours. To me, solidarity signifies a genuine commitment to being there for one another, regardless of the prevailing circumstances.

During my evacuation, I received calls, texts, and emails from the presidents of provincial and territorial teacher organizations as well as the Canadian Teachers' Federation offering support. It was overwhelming. Some donated to the United Way, others offered office space, assistance with member concerns, and even coordinating accommodations if our members were in need while in Alberta. It was clear from all of the communication we received from teacher organizations across the country that we were not alone. It is during times like these that remind us of the value of collaboration and compassion.

The support was unsolicited and provided through kindness and caring. It was one of the most challenging times our territory experienced, with approximately 68% of our Northwest Territories residents evacuated. Without question or reservation, teacher organizations across the country offered their support.

I hope there is never a need for the NWTTA to offer the support shown to us, but without hesitation, it should be provided if the time does arise. We should remain profoundly grateful to know that assistance is always available and steadfast that without question, we will also offer it.

Yours in Solidarity,

Matthew Miller



## Making Sense of Our World

**Canadian Teachers' Federation/Fédération canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants**

The map of human society is a myriad landscape. It encompasses oceans of history, great plains of thought, forests of community, and mountains of achievement. Exploring and making sense of this vast terrain is a lifelong education.

World Teachers' Day (WTD) recognizes educators' vital role as society's navigators. They guide children and youth not by pointing the way, but by teaching them to read society's map themselves. Our 2023-24 theme, "Teachers: making sense of our world", is both a reminder of educators' great worth, and an anchoring thought for those of us that support them.

Through societal shifts, political upheavals, and most recently the COVID-19 pandemic, our collective respect for the teaching profession has remained relatively stable; and throughout, teachers have persevered as pillars of society.

And yet, at no time in recent history has the nobility of the teaching profession been so threatened, and its value so undermined by governments. Working conditions have become increasingly untenable, making the recruitment and retention of teachers a national crisis.

Governments are expecting educators to teach children to read an incomplete map of our world and blaming them when kids lose their way. Their solution is to constrict curriculums, narrow the view, and tear off more and more pieces of the map. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are of little use, if the adjacent skills needed to interpret the topography of our complex world are left out of classrooms. We build and vote in our governments to protect the vitality of our population; we are incumbent in their course correction when they no longer serve our collective wellbeing. Addressing the issue of working conditions is no longer a choice: teachers are now miners with no ventilation.

This is why supporting and celebrating teachers has



never been more important. On October 5th, 2023, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE), along with the NWTTA and all teachers' organizations did their utmost to vault Canadian teachers, and engage with governments to take a hard look at the conditions facing publicly funded public education.

As 121 wildfires\* still burn, the need to recognize the perseverance of NWT educators could not be timelier.

This summer's catastrophic wildfire season put an incalculable toll on our 950 NWT members. As we all work together to recover and rebuild our communities, the NWTTA is doing its utmost to provide support to you, including accessible mental health supports (See [Starling Minds](#), a free, confidential digital mental health program designed for teachers. Use the code NWTMEMBER to get started. Invite family members 16+ years old with the access code: NWTFAMILY)

Teachers are truly the foundation of a thriving civilization. They equip each successive generation with the knowledge and skills to think for themselves, understand the value of collaboration, and broaden their

understanding of what it means to be a human being on this miraculous planet of ours.

On this World Teachers' Day 2023, we extended our deepest gratitude to teachers everywhere. We intrinsically understand their role in our lives and those of our children. And with that, we renew our promise: to protect the rights of teachers and do our part to ensure the map of society we entrust them with is a vivid and complete picture of the only world we have, the real world.

### **The Canadian Teachers' Federation**

Founded in 1920, the CTF/FCE is a national alliance of provincial and territorial teachers' organizations that represent over 365,000 teachers and education workers across Canada. The CTF/FCE is also an affiliate of Education International, which represents more than 32-million educators. The NWTTA is a Member Organization of the CTF/FCE.

\* at the time of writing





# Collaborate, Co-Construct and Co-Deliver Professional Learning in Ghana

Julie Donohue-Kpolugbo (Beaufort-Delta DEC)

I've been on quite the adventure in the last few months, partly due to being a **Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (NWTTA)** member. This most recent chapter included a 3-week professional learning opportunity through the **Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE)** and the **Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT)** in various locations in the western region of Ghana with the program **Project Overseas**. The NWTTA, as a supporting member organization of CTF/FCE, funds a selected NWTTA member candidate each year. What an opportunity! For me, the stars aligned, and I was chosen for one of the teams heading to Ghana.

Our goal, with our GNAT partners, was to collaborate, co-construct and co-deliver professional learning for 700 educators across three regions, focused on the topics of Inclusive Education, Gender and Culture, Technology Education, and Classroom Management. My partner facilitator, Christiana Azure Ayinzoya (District Director of Education Talensi) and I were tasked with delivering a 2-part session on Gender and Culture. With all the humility, we were a dynamic duo by the end of 16 of those 4-hour sessions. Our



*l-r Christiana Azure Ayinzoya, Faith (participant), Julie Donohue-Kpolugbo in Kibi, Ghana*

achievement: learner-centred, activity-based sessions, steeped in crucial elements of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 5.

From virtual team meetings through the spring to onboarding in Ottawa in July to 3 weeks of planning and delivering professional learning to teachers and head teachers (principals) in Ghana... I have learned

more than I've given. If you know me well, I'm constantly advocating a shift in perception of presuming competence first rather than walking into any given situation, especially in a low- or middle-income country with the perception that you, from somewhere else, know best. So, with that guiding intention, I walked into this experience with my heart and mind open, willing to learn as much as I shared. Stepping up to collaboratively develop a context-based and locally relevant learning experience for our participants on the vast and critical topic of Gender and Culture in education.

Amidst this extraordinary professional learning was camaraderie, a cultural exchange, laughter, built friendship, and an experience of professional learning that will stand the test of time. But let me be frank here for a moment. This experience isn't about a fun thing to do on your summer vacation; this is where long hours of actual work and real learning happen, inwardly and outwardly. Away from what you know, on the ground, outside your comfort zone, working as a team to accomplish something extraordinary.

I often quote from a conversation I had a few years back with the award-winning author Lawrence Hill. He offered some advice, "Read, Write, Travel! Find experiences outside of what is familiar to better understand who you are."

So now, if any of what I've said here speaks to you in any way at all, don't think twice; apply for Project Overseas and see just what this journey could have in store for you. I guarantee it will allow you to embrace an opportunity to move, think, and act differently as you walk this life journey.



*Session Delivery - Kibi Presbyterian College of Education Site*

# Project Overseas 2024

*What are your plans for summer 2024?*

*Are you looking for a larger, more global view of education?*

*Are you ready for a personal and professional adventure?*

## Project Overseas might be for you!

The NWTTA is now taking applications for Project Overseas 2024. **Deadline to apply is October 31, 2023.**

More information and application forms can be found in English and French on the [Professional Development page of our website](#).

PROJECT OVERSEAS 2024	
<a href="#">Project Overseas 2024 Application Form</a> (available as fillable MS Word - please request)	<a href="#">Projet Outre-Mer de 2024 Formulaire de Demande</a> (Disponible sous forme de MS Word à remplir - veuillez demander)
<a href="#">Information for Applicants</a>	<a href="#">Directives aux Candidates et Candidats</a>
<a href="#">Brochure</a>	<a href="#">Pamphlet</a>
<a href="#">Frequently Asked Questions</a>	<a href="#">Foire aux Questions</a>

Application forms are available in English and French in MS Word fillable format by request to [news@nwtta.nt.ca](mailto:news@nwtta.nt.ca).

Travel and living expenses of participants are covered by the NWTTA's contribution to Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE) for Project Overseas. No salaries or honoraria are paid to Project Overseas participants. Selected participants attend an orientation program in Ottawa in early July prior to departure for country of assignment during July 2024.

The NWTTA has been a sponsor of Project Overseas since 1969 with recent participants going to Ghana (Julie-Donohue-Kpolugbo, 2023), Uganda (Cora America, 2019), Dominica (Nashra Kamal, 2017), Ghana (Obad Duru, 2015).

Project Overseas is a joint endeavour of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE) and its Member and Associate Organizations to support partners in developing countries as they co-plan and co-deliver professional learning to local teachers.





# Working for Our Members A Glimpse of What We Do

David Murphy, Executive Director

For several of our schools, due to the wildfires in the Northwest Territories, the start of the school year was delayed as residents were asked to evacuate. Those who evacuated travelled to southern provinces with most evacuees finding accommodation in Alberta. When I received word that Yellowknife residents were to evacuate, I was enjoying my summer vacation and had a few more days before I was to head back to Yellowknife and back to the office. However, since I was not allowed to return home I sheltered in place and worked for a while from my summer home. It was a difficult time for all who had evacuated, having to leave their homes behind and worrying about the uncertainty that the wildfire may bring. I did travel to Alberta a few days before Yellowknife residents were allowed to return and stayed with my brother John and sister-in-law Gladys. One positive from this is it provided us an opportunity to spend more time together as a family.

On a professional level the NWTTA received support from the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE) and other teacher organizations. The CTF/FCE and several teacher organizations made financial contributions to the NWT United Way. Others contacted myself or President Miller to express their concern and to see if there was anything they could do to assist us. Within a day of the evacuation CTF/FCE Executive Director Cassie Hallett contacted me and CTF/FCE President Heidi Yetman contacted Matthew. The NWTTA is very appreciative of the support provided and the messages of support we received. Thank you to everyone!

With most of our teachers evacuated to Alberta, Dennis Theobald, Executive Secretary, Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), reached out to assist our NWTTA members with billets if they needed them. Around 300 Alberta teachers had agreed to billet our NWTTA members in their homes. ATA created space on their website promoting this and Matthew notified NWTTA members of this assistance through a mass email. ATA also offered to provide our office staff with office space in their offices in Edmonton or Calgary. With our office staff spread out in Alberta and British Columbia we unfortunately were not able to accept this gracious invitation. Thank you to the

ATA staff who worked with Dennis to provide this support to our members and our office staff.

When we returned to Yellowknife everything was okay in our homes and offices. Sadly, that was not the case for everyone. Driving back from the Alberta-NWT border to Yellowknife was difficult. Seeing the damage caused by the wildfires in Enterprise was heart breaking. As we continued to drive, we saw lots of smoldering, the occasional flame and certainly lots of burned trees and scorched ground.

The evacuation and the return home are having an effect on the mental health of some of our members. We have been contacted by members seeking support with mental health concerns including anxiety which they believe has been caused by the evacuation and personal wildfire experiences they have encountered and have to deal with. While all members have access to counseling through the Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP) and support through Starling Minds for anxiety and depression, I expect that employers may have to work with individual teachers to address their individual concerns.

I also would like to thank our NWTTA staff for the excellent work they did to ensure members, especially those who were evacuated, continued to be served well and their concerns addressed in a timely manner. We most certainly weren't working in ideal conditions at all times. Our staff were spread out throughout Alberta and British Columbia, the Internet wasn't always working or available, small hotel rooms with two adults and children didn't provide much privacy and as evacuees ourselves we had the additional worry about homes left behind. Thanks Sara, André, Trent and Denise for all you did to serve our members and support President Miller and myself.

A special acknowledgment to President Miller for his work, especially the long hours he spent, ensuring that members received the most updated information as quickly as possible. Well done, Matthew!

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.

# Negotiations Update

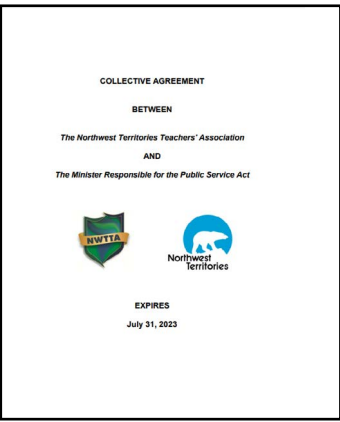
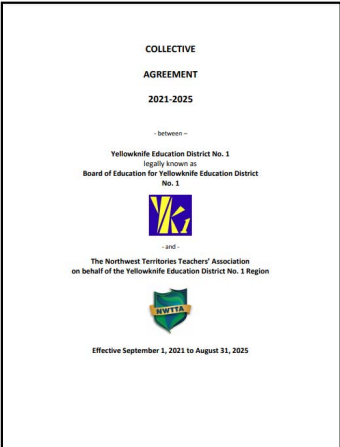
David Murphy, Executive Director

The Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (NWTTA) is responsible for collective bargaining with three employers for three collective agreements – Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YCS), Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1) and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT).

Negotiations with YCS and YK1 resulted in collective agreements for a four year term from September 1, 2021 to August 31, 2025. Negotiations for these two collective agreements will commence prior to the termination date of August 31, 2025 and notice to begin bargaining will be provided by one party to the other prior to March 2025.

In these previous YCS and YK1 negotiations salary increases for the 2023-2024 and the 2024-2025 school years are linked to the salary increases negotiated in the current GNWT negotiations. Effective September 1, 2023 the YCS salary grid will increase as per the GNWT increase and the YK1 salary grid will increase as per the GNWT increase plus 0.25%. YK1 will process the increase as one retroactive pay once a new GNWT collective agreement is ratified. Effective September 1, 2024 the YCS salary grid will increase as per the GNWT increase but will not be less than 1.5% and the YK1 salary grid increase will increase as per the GNWT increase plus 0.25%.

Negotiations for the GNWT bargaining unit is ongoing. It is important to note that until a new collective agreement is negotiated and ratified by both parties the current collective agreement remains in effect during the negotiations for its renewal.



# Northern Lights

Meet  
Jasmine

Marianayagam  
from Yellowknife (YK1  
region)



**Q. Where did you grow up?**

I was born in Yellowknife and moved to Ontario about 10 years later. I grew up in Mississauga, ON and moved back to Yellowknife as an adult to teach in 2018.

**Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?**

I started tutoring when I was in Grade 9 and quickly realized how much I enjoyed helping others learn. I would look forward to my tutoring shifts and never saw it as "work". That made me realize teaching was a passion of mine.

**Q. What do you teach?**

This year I teach Grade 4 at École Itt'ò.

**Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?**

My favourite part is building connections and rapport with my students, their families and the community. I also love collaborating with my colleagues and doing my part to make our work and learning environment a fun and positive space.

**Q. How do you engage your students?**

My best teaching happens when I show my students real-world lessons and inspire them to give back to the community. It's also important to foster a caring classroom community where my students feel comfortable to take risks and learn each day.

**Empowering Students**

"Le savoir c'est le pouvoir!" Knowledge is power. My goal is to teach my students lessons and empower them in ways they will remember long after the bell rings.



# GNWT Professional Development

*Trent Waterhouse, Professional Development Coordinator/ Member Services*

One of the negotiated benefits available to GNWT members through the Collective Agreement between the NWTTA and the GNWT is Professional Development (PD).

The fund is administered by the Central Professional Development Committee, comprised of two members that represent the employer and two members that represent the NWTTA to provide direction on PD in the NWT. In Article 16 of the Collective Agreement there are funded opportunities for PD that GNWT NWTTA members can apply for.

**Education Leave** with or without Allowances: [link to application form](#)

A teacher with four or more continuous academic years of teaching experience may be granted leave with or without allowances to enroll in full time studies through a recognized institution for a period of one academic year.

The Education Leave deadline for applications for GNWT NWTTA Members is March 1, 2024 5:00 PM

**Summer Credit Courses:** [link to application form](#)

There is \$2500 available to GNWT NWTTA members to attend a university in the summer to take a credit course during the regular vacation period.

The Summer Credit Courses deadline for application for GNWT NWTTA Members is May 30, 2024

**Distance Education** or Correspondence Credit Courses: [link to application form](#)

There is \$3000 available to GNWT NWTTA members to enroll in courses from an accredited institution or university during the school year. Applications

must be submitted and approved prior to the course beginning.

### Education Leadership Program:

There is \$2500 available to GNWT NWTTA members to support their attendance at the NWT Education Leadership Program.

**Summer Non-Credit Courses:** [link application form](#)

There is \$500 available to GNWT NWTTA members every summer to support non-credit courses (examples are first aid, computer, music, art classes.)

**Indigenous Language Acquisition Fund:** [link to fund overview](#)

There is \$6000 available to GNWT NWTTA members every year to support professional improvement of language proficiency in one or more of the Indigenous Languages of the NWT.

**Regional Professional Development** is also a great way to support your PD growth plan over the course of the school year and career. As per Article 16 of the Collective Agreement, each GNWT NWTTA Region shall create a Regional Professional Development Committee comprised of members that represent the employer and the NWTTA to provide direction on PD opportunities in that Region. Detailed information on Regional PD can be found on each Region's Page in the Member Area on the NWTTA website.

Professional Development opportunities are supported by the Central Office in Yellowknife. YCS and YK1 Collective Agreements have different processes for PD; YCS and YK1 members should contact their PD committees for information. If you have any questions or would like to share any opportunities regarding PD reach out to Trent Waterhouse the Professional Development Coordinator at [pd@nwtta.nt.ca](mailto:pd@nwtta.nt.ca).

# YK1 Regional Professional Development

*Rachell Simmons, YK1 Regional PD Chairperson*

Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1) members working at Kaw Tay Whee and K'alemi Dene Schools receive Professional Development (PD) funding from their respective Dettah and Ndilo District Education Authorities. All other YK1 members have **two sources of funding** for PD:

### Credit Course Funds

This source of funding helps support ongoing learning through enrollment at an accredited institution for credit courses leading to a degree, diploma or certificate. There are two date groupings for Credit Course Fund applications: **School Year** (September to June) and **Summer**. Applications for **School Year** courses are accepted twice per year by October 31 and by February 28/29. **Summer** applications are due by the first Friday in June. Presently the available funding is \$800 per credit course to a possible maximum of \$1600 for each date grouping (**School Year** and **Summer**). Depending on the number of applications received in each date grouping, the maximum amount (\$1600) may not be given, but the minimum amount of \$800 will be reimbursed.

### Personal PD Funding

These funds can be used to attend workshops or conferences, to purchase professional reading material or to pay for courses in full or the portion of tuition fee not reimbursed by the Credit Course Funds. Presently each YK1 member receives a \$800 per year allotment for Personal PD Funding to a maximum build-to of \$3000 per person. The cost of two substitute days will be covered by the Fund for members to attend PD outside of Yellowknife. Substitutes costs are not covered for those positions not requiring a substitute. Any member who is less than 1.0 FTE will only be covered for one substitute calendar day absent from work; those whose positions are 0.5 FTE are not eligible for the two substitute days being covered.

## Applying for YK1 PD Reimbursements

### Step 1

Determine which source of funding (**Credit Course Funds** or **Personal PD Funding**) is suitable for your Professional Development. Complete the appropriate form contained in the YK1 PD Handbook **June 2023** Edition, found in the YK1 Member Area of the NWTTA website.

Use Page 10 for workshops, conferences, and credit courses (list under registration fees) not reimbursed by the Credit Course Funds (considered a top-up). NOTE:

Reimbursement is based on receipts provided, not a per diem. Alcohol charges are not reimbursable.

Use Page 11 for professional reading material (up to 20% of the total funds in your account can be used for reading materials).

Use Page 12 for Credit Courses

### Step 2

Submit the appropriate application to the PD Chairperson ([yk1pd@yk1.nt.ca](mailto:yk1pd@yk1.nt.ca)) prior to the PD session or commencement of the course. This step does not guarantee leave approval. Approval for leave from the school must be obtained from school Administration, following each school's protocols. If the conference takes place outside of Canada you must seek approval from the Superintendent.

### Step 3

Attend the PD session, complete the course(s), or purchase the resources. Submit **all receipts** with a written breakdown **or proof of payment** for the course(s) plus **proof of successful completion** of the course(s) to the PD Chairperson at [yk1pd@yk1.nt.ca](mailto:yk1pd@yk1.nt.ca).

**NOTE:** Reimbursement submissions must include the following documents:

**Credit Course Funds** reimbursements must include: proof of payment and proof of successful completion. Reimbursement submissions must be received the day before the next application deadline date to be eligible for reimbursement. These reimbursement deadlines are October 30, February 27/28 & 1st Thursday in June).

**Personal PD Funds** reimbursements must include all receipts with breakdown or proof of payment for the workshop or conference and be submitted by the day before the start of the subsequent school year. This would be around August 24.

**Professional Reading Material** - It is recommended that prior approval be sought before a large purchase. The application for reimbursement and proof of payment must be received by March 31 of the school year in which the purchase is made.

**REMINDER** - PD funds in your personal account are **NOT** your personal money. The PD funds negotiated in our collective agreement are to encourage professional development ultimately to improve the learning of the students. Upon resignation from YK1, the unused portion of PD funds remaining in any member's personal account will be rolled back into the general YK1 PD pool to be redistributed to all active members.

#### GNWT PD FORMS

 [GNWT Distance Education Credit Course Application](#)

 [GNWT Summer School - Non-Credit Course Application](#)

 [GNWT Summer School - Credit Courses on Campus Application](#)

 [Duty Travel Rates Effective July 2019](#)

 [GNWT Education Leave with/without Allowances Application](#)



# What the NWTTA Does for Members

Matthew Miller, President

It's not uncommon for some of our members to wonder about the role and importance of our Association. Some might feel they would be fine on their own and don't need the services of the NWTTA. In my view, plenty of members can vouch for how crucial the Association has been in their time of need. If you are wondering what the NWTTA actually does for members, I have included some of the responsibilities below.

What is equally important as what we do is who does it. We rely on our members to step up and take on leadership roles in their schools, regions, and territorially. These individuals work with the NWTTA Office Staff to protect your labour rights and provide support and direction.

Why do people want to take on the additional workload by taking on a role with the NWTTA? The answer varies to that question. Some follow in the footsteps of family members, and others are looking to give back or like to be in the know. Whatever their motivation, those who take on these essential roles deserve our gratitude because not every member will have the desire to study the collective agreement in great detail or share the same passion for the inner workings of the Association.

There will always be a need for individuals willing to step forward and assume leadership roles. With elections for the Central Executive and Regional Executives for 2024-2026 being held this year, I encourage you to consider serving the membership, contributing to the continued strength and advocacy of the NWT Teachers' Association.

Always remember that whether you believe you can function independently without the Association or not, we are here to provide our support and assistance when you require it.

Your NWTTA provides a variety of services for members, including:

- **Negotiates** Collective Agreements with the GNWT and Yellowknife Boards (YK1 and YCS) to provide competitive salaries and benefits, including pensions and professional development funds

- **Advocates** for members' rights
- **Advises** members on their rights and responsibilities
- **Provides** legal assistance through the Members' Protection Fund
- **Prepares** and expedites approved grievances and arbitrations
- **Advances** teacher inquiries with government departments and member employers
- **Pursues** resolution to teacher concerns in joint consultation meetings with representatives of YK1, YCS and/or GNWT (Departments of Education Culture and Employment and Human Resources)
- **Administers** the GNWT Professional Development fund through the Central and Regional PD Committees
- **Affords** members the opportunity to apply for NWTTA bursaries, awards and international programs (Project Overseas)
- **Operates** with a full staff complement of Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, Professional Development Coordinator/Member Services, Finance & Communications Officer and Administrative Assistant to meet member needs
- **Provides** urgent after-hours support and advice to members
- **Lobbies** politically with government leaders and relevant organizations
- **Consults** and co-operates with the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) and other teacher organizations in Canada
- **Updates** members via regular communication on regional, territorial and national educational issues
- **Provides** leadership opportunities within the association and support
- **Promotes** and advances the cause of Public Education
- **Endeavours** to increase public awareness about the realities in education

# Catching Up Members' Life Events



Everly Haven Rose was born on July 16, 2023. Congratulations to parents Jessica & Patrick MacKay (Harry Camsell School, South Slave region)!



Congratulations to Philippe Goguen & Rayna Hayes (both NWTTA members at Diamond Jenness Secondary School, South Slave region) who got married in July in New Brunswick!



## NWT TIMELINE

**Travel through the history of the Northwest Territories: the people, the land, pivotal events, and ways of life**

**The renewed NWT Historical Timeline brings archives, museum collections, and stories to your classroom!**



**Educators can use the timeline as a resource for courses like Northern Studies, Social Studies and beyond. Students can use it as a primary resource for research.**



### nwttimeline.ca



# A Teacher's Probationary Period

Sara McCrea, Assistant Executive Director

All new teachers to the NWT are hired into positions on probation for the first two years of their employment and are provided with an Interim teaching certificate. Teachers on probation are required to be evaluated for two years. Upon satisfactory completion of the evaluations, they can apply for a Professional Teaching Certificate with the registrar's office.

There may be two exceptions to this rule:

1. Teachers who have successfully completed their probationary period in another jurisdiction or with another district in the NWT may have their probation period reduced at the superintendent's discretion.
2. The employer may extend a teacher's two-year probation an extra year if there is a concern with the teaching practice and the employer wants to see improvement.

A two-year probationary period is longer than most occupations. Many probationary periods are six months, but because of the vulnerable population that teachers work with and the difficulty of assessing the work and pedagogy of teachers, the probationary period for teachers is longer than most. The two-year observation and evaluation is mainly for new teachers with an Interim teaching certificate. Employers must determine if they can successfully obtain their Professional Teaching Certificate.

## If you are a probationary employee, what should you be concerned about?

The most important thing to remember is that the principal is responsible for your supervision and evaluation as a teacher. At the end of the probationary period, the principal is who recommends to the superintendent that you pass the probationary period. With this in mind, you must establish a good communication dialogue with the principal as soon as possible. The principal will be formally and informally evaluating you through your probationary period. The standard that the principal is trying to gauge is your suitability as a teacher in your particular school and community. If you are unclear of the expectations, ensure you meet with the principal to clarify

expectations and standards of practice.

It is recommended that you ask questions of colleagues and listen carefully to the direction the principal is giving. It is also important to contribute to the school climate and culture and be a valuable staff member outside your classroom. The main issue that all principals are looking for is that you are an effective teacher in your classroom. That does not mean that you are an expert. In fact, if you are in your first few years of teaching, there is too much to learn to be an expert right away. Being let go at the end of (or in the middle of) a probationary period may be a decision based on your suitability for the position. It is not a dismissal that needs to show cause, but remember, for the most part, the employer invests a lot of money to move teachers into the NWT; they are not looking to have their new teachers fail. Take advantage of this; ask questions, take advice, and try suggestions from more experienced northern teachers. We are all here to help you. Remember all of the experienced teachers you see around you were new once, and they too had to pass a probationary period.



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
COMMISSION

## Incorporate human rights learning into your classroom with ease.

No matter what grade you teach, we have a selection of ready-to-use human rights lessons.

Resources are

- FREE
- downloadable
- organized by grade
- tied to the social studies curriculum
- curriculum objectives are included

We also have information on creating accessible classrooms, sexual harassment at school, supporting LGBT youth, building equal and health relationships and anti-racism resources.

Visit our website to access the Teachers' Toolkit!  
[nwthumanrights.ca/resources/forteachers/](http://nwthumanrights.ca/resources/forteachers/)

[nwthumanrights.ca](http://nwthumanrights.ca)



## Attention NWT Educators!

Check out [ConnectEd NWT](#) to find training on the new, adapted JK-12 curriculum.

Log in and explore the courses, view the curriculum, and give feedback.

New courses will continue to be added!

Questions?

Email: [nwtcurriculum\\_renewal@gov.nt.ca](mailto:nwtcurriculum_renewal@gov.nt.ca)



<https://catalogue.getconnectednwt.ca/>

Government of  
Northwest Territories

## Math Puzzle!

In a classroom, there are 50 students.

They all participate in a tree-planting activity.

Each female student plants 4 trees, and each male student plants 2 trees.

If the total number of trees planted by the female students is 20 more than that of the male students, how many male students would be in the classroom?



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

Answer on page 19

During the wildfire evacuation of Yellowknife, **Teegan Rendell** (Weledeh Catholic School, YCS region) experienced a different first day of school.

August 28, 2023

This is not what my first day of school normally looks like.

I am incredibly grateful for the teacher community in Grande Prairie, Alberta. I posted on an Alberta Teachers Facebook page asking if anyone in the Grande Prairie area had a laminator I could borrow as I didn't bring mine when I evacuated from Yellowknife. I had multiple people reach out offering including principal Julie from St. John Paul II Catholic School. Julie allowed me to go to her school and use the big laminator. She also told me if I needed anything else to reach out and I could use the school space if needed.

Trying to prep without knowing when you start and without everything you need is tough. I can't wait for school to start and to meet my new set of students, hopefully before October. Thank you Julie and all others who offered support.





# Free Mental Health Support for Teachers

Erica Comacchio, Customer Success Manager, Starling Minds

Join us for the latest Mental Fitness Challenge: **Mindful Living: A Path to Preventing Burnout.**

This Mental Fitness Challenge is designed to empower individuals with tools and insights to enhance their mental well-being.

## About the Workshop:

Title: Mindful Living: A Path to Preventing Burnout

Date: Every Tuesday until November 21st

Time: 5:00 PM Mountain Time

Registration: <https://info.starlingminds.com/nwt-2023-burnout-workshop>

## What Will Members Learn?

- **Mindfulness Practices:** Simple yet profound mindfulness techniques that can be effortlessly integrated into daily routine.
- **Understanding Burnout:** Deep insights into the signs, causes, and consequences of burnout, and discover how mindful living can be a protective shield.

- **Self-Care Mastery:** The art of self-care and how it can nourish mind, body, and soul, promoting holistic well-being.
- **Stress Management:** The secrets of effective stress reduction, helping find inner peace even in the midst of chaos.
- **Resilience Building:** Emotional resilience that empowers people to bounce back from adversity and face life's challenges with confidence

## Continue your mindfulness journey with Starling Minds Mental Fitness Program:

Do you feel like you are going through life on autopilot? Learn how to be more present and integrate a mindful approach into your everyday routine with our new mindfulness series. Bring about lasting positive change to feel healthier and happier. Go to [Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy Modules Now.](#)

## Make self-care your priority this year.

Register or log back into Starling Minds by visiting [member.starlingminds.com](https://member.starlingminds.com) and enter your access code: **NWTMEMBER**

Invite your family members to use Starling Minds with the access code: **NWTFAMILY**



Thank you for everything.

It's time to take care of you.



# CJBS School Year Startup

Chief Jimmy Bruneau School in Behchoko (Tlicho region) school year startup included on-the-land and in-school activities.



# Northern Lights

Meet **Adri Vanderelst** from Fort Good Hope (Sahtu region)



**Q. Where did you grow up?**  
I was born in Belgium and grew up near Brussels.

**Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?**  
I always enjoyed sharing and teaching my skills and knowledge. My mom was a teacher for 40 years and she inspired me to go to teachers college to become an elementary teacher.

I did not always have the best learning experiences as a student myself and I think, part of why I became a teacher is because I wanted to take a different approach on certain aspects of teaching to make learning a positive experience for children.

**Q. What do you teach?**  
I teach Grade 5/6 in Fort Good Hope.

**Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?**  
I enjoy being part of my students' learning journey. I like to teach them new skills and set them up for success. It becomes rewarding when they understand 'why' we are working on learning activities and developing certain skills. I appreciate the freedom to make lessons your own, based on students' needs and interests.

Learning from my students is also one of my favourite things. Living and teaching in the NWT is very special and my students bring so many stories from The Land. I love when my students share their knowledge with me, whether it be about hunting, fishing, building log cabins, and so on.

**Q. How do you engage your students?**  
I have conversations and listen to my students' stories and interests to find out what they wonder about. I try to incorporate their interests in my lesson planning. Currently, I have an 'I Wonder Box' where my students can drop pieces of paper of topics they are curious about. Every few days, I go through the box and see which topics I can incorporate in my daily teaching.

**A Privilege**  
Teaching is about learning and growing alongside your students. It is a privilege to teach and learn from so many incredible students.



# CYBERTIPS FOR TEACHERS



The use of technology has increased dramatically in recent years, but the standards of professionalism have not changed. Teachers are professionals and expected to model ethical and appropriate cyberconduct. Teachers hold a position of trust with students and will be held accountable if their actions expose students to inappropriate material or communications. Remember, **nothing is truly private when you communicate digitally**. When you use school board equipment and networks, your employer has access to all your messages and any sites you have browsed.

## WHEN PRIVATE BECOMES PUBLIC

Nothing posted is ever completely erased from the Internet. Anything can generate unintended consequences far into the future. "Friending" students, posting pictures of partying, or sending overly casual messages or texts to students, parents and others may lead to professional difficulties you did not anticipate. People tend to feel safe when surrounded by "friends". While sitting alone in front of a monitor, it is easy to forget that you are on a public forum. Consequently, the line between our public and private lives becomes blurred, making it easy to mistake a webpage for a diary.

## DO'S AND DON'TS OF USING EMAIL

- Do maintain exemplary professional standards when sending email messages to students, parents, colleagues and administrators.
- Don't use your personal email accounts to contact students or parents.
- Do keep copies of all your email messages.
- Don't share your user name and password with colleagues or students.
- Do use a teacher voice when communicating with students via email.
- Don't leave your computer on and unattended when students are around.
- Do use a signature that includes your name, assignment title and school name.
- Don't send unnecessary attachments with your emails.

## CLASSROOM RESOURCES

[www.mediasmarts.ca](http://www.mediasmarts.ca)

Media Awareness Network and its Web Awareness Program features lesson plans, classroom activities, background articles and Canadian resources for media education. It also offers practical tips for helping parents manage media in the home.

*Excerpt from Canadian Teachers' Federation **CyberTips for Teachers** brochure used with permission. [English](#) and [Français](#) brochures are available online and from NWTTA Central Office.*

## Meet Your Central Office Team

**David Murphy**, Executive Director

If there is ever a time you feel you need support or clarification of an issue, please contact us.

When you contact us through phone, **Denise Works**, our Administrative Assistant, will be the person who will assist you. Denise is very knowledgeable about the general workings of the Association and can assist you with many of the questions you will have. As well, for those questions and concerns you may have that require a more in depth answer, she will direct you to the staff member who is best equipped to assist you.



Denise Works

**Matthew Miller**, your NWTTA President, is the elected official working in the NWTTA office. His main role is to reach out to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), Deputy Minister, Assistant Deputy Minister, Labour Relations and Superintendents to make them aware of educational issues affecting our members. He is available after hours to take urgent issue calls from members.



Matthew Miller

**Sara McCrea**, Assistant Executive Director, and myself, **David Murphy**, Executive Director, are the people you will contact regarding the many members' concerns you may have. We are



Sara McCrea

prepared to assist with your questions regarding pay and benefits, certification and salary assessment, your evaluations, job accommodation needs, discipline hearings, meetings with the employer and if need be, grievances and arbitration. They are available after hours to take urgent issue calls from members. Sara parle couramment français.

You may occasionally contact **André Corbeil**, Finance and Communications Officer, with regard to expense claims if you encounter expenses involving GNWT Professional Development (PD), or working on NWTTA business. As well you will receive emails from André periodically providing you with information about Association business regarding the newsletter, surveys, negotiations, PD and meetings.



David Murphy



André Corbeil

GNWT teachers may contact **Trent Waterhouse**, Professional Development Coordinator, to discuss Education Leave applications with or without allowances, short term assistance for summer credit courses, distance credit courses, educational leadership program and Indigenous language courses.



Trent Waterhouse



# Nominations Open December 1 for Central Executive 2024-2026

*Are you interested in becoming a leader with the NWTTA? Here's your chance!*

NWTTA Central Executive consists of five positions, four of which (President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer and Member-at-Large) are elected for two-year terms, and the fifth, a Regional Presidents' Representative who is selected by Regional Presidents. The term of office for the current Central Executive ends June 30, 2024.

Nominations open **December 1** for the 2024-2026 four Central Executive positions listed above. **Deadline for nominations to be received at Central Office is January 15, 2024 at 5:00 pm.**

All nominations must be moved and seconded by two NWTTA members.

The [Central Executive Nomination Form](#) can be found in the Forms section of the NWTTA website (nwtta.nt.ca).

To be eligible for nomination to the office of the President, a member must have previous NWTTA Central and Regional Executive experience. There is no previous Central or Regional experience requirement for the positions of Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer and Member-at-Large.

Duties of Central Executive Officers:

The **President** shall:

- call meetings of Central Executive and Central Council
- preside over the above mentioned meetings
- be a member ex-officio of all committees
- represent the Association officially
- be legal custodian of the property of the Association, but shall not have the power to acquire or dispose of Association property
- serve as Canadian Teachers' Federation Director
- the President's duties and responsibilities are to be as directed by Central Executive in accordance with its Bylaws and Policies

The **Vice-President** shall:

- assume the duties of the President in the event of a vacancy in that position or the President's

- inability to perform their duties, or in their absence
  - assist the President by acting for them when requested
  - assist other Executive Officers as directed by Central Executive
  - perform other duties as specified by Central Executive
- The **Secretary-Treasurer** shall:
- ensure that the minutes of meetings of Central Executive are recorded
  - ensure that minutes are typed, circulated, filed promptly after each meeting of Central Executive
  - ensure that the newsletter is published and oversee the financial aspect of a newsletter and other publications
  - exercise general financial control and supervision over the Association
  - present a financial report and proposed budget to Central Council at AMCC or such other time as may be designated by Central Council
  - cause to have the books audited at the end of the fiscal year
  - perform other duties as specified by Central Executive

The **Member-at-Large** shall:

- serve as the representative of all members in all regions
- perform other duties as specified by Central Executive

Have questions?

Email them to [membership@nwtta.nt.ca](mailto:membership@nwtta.nt.ca)

## Central Executive 2024-2026

Term: July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2026

Nominations open: December 1, 2023

Nomination deadline: January 15, 2024

Campaign material deadline: January 18, 2024

Voting Day: February 15, 2024

# Northern Lights

Meet

**Seymore Chambers**  
from Fort Liard (Dehcho region)



**Q. Where did you grow up?**

I grew up in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

**Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?**

I decided to become a teacher for the following reasons:

- **Passion for Education:** I have a deep love for education. I enjoy sharing my knowledge and enthusiasm with others, especially with young learners.
- **Desire to Make a Difference:** Teaching allows me to impact my students' lives positively. My role is to teach and help students grow, develop skills, and reach their full potential.
- **Lifelong Learning:** Teaching is a profession that encourages lifelong learning. I often develop professionally and stay current with new educational trends and research.

**Q. What do you teach?**

I am currently teaching Carpentry, Mathematics, Science and Gym.

**Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?**

I value the opportunity to make a positive impact on young lives. Knowing I can inspire a love for learning, encourage curiosity, and help students overcome challenges is very rewarding. It's a privilege to be a part of their educational journey.

**Q. How do you engage your students?**

- **Active Learning:** I encourage students to actively participate in the learning process. This includes discussions, group activities, debates, and hands-on projects.
- **Real-World Connections:** I relate the subject to real-life scenarios and current events. This helps students see the practical applications of their learning and makes the content more relatable and meaningful.
- **Differentiation:** Every student is unique, so I differentiate my instruction to cater to various learning styles and abilities. This means providing different pathways to understanding and demonstrating knowledge.
- **Inquiry-Based Learning:** I encourage students to ask questions and explore topics independently. This fosters critical thinking and allows them to take ownership of their learning.
- **Multi-sensory Approaches:** I incorporate visual aids, auditory elements, and kinesthetic activities to appeal to different senses. This ensures that students with various learning preferences are engaged.

**Rewarding Journey**

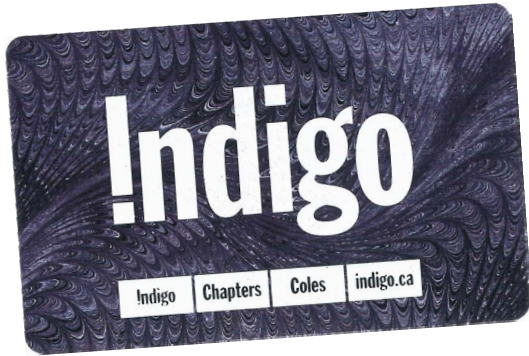
Being a teacher has been one of the most rewarding journeys of my life. Witnessing the spark of curiosity in my students' eyes and guiding them on their learning path is a privilege I cherish daily. In the classroom, I impart knowledge and learn from the incredible young minds that inspire me to be a better educator.

# Newsletter Trivia

Send your answers to the trivia questions below to [news@nwtta.nt.ca](mailto:news@nwtta.nt.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: **November 13, 2023**



## Win a \$50 Chapters-Indigo Gift Card!

1. When is the application deadline for Project Overseas 2024?
2. What is the application deadline for GNWT Education Leave?
3. How long is the probationary period for all new teachers to the NWT?
4. On what day of the week are the Starling Minds Fitness Challenges?

**Helen Wong** from N.J. Macpherson School (YK1 region) is the winner of the May 2023 Newsletter Trivia.

**Cover:** 2023-2024 school staff at ?ehtseo Ayha School in Deline (Sahtu region)

**Math Puzzle!** (page 13) answer: 30



# 2022-2024 Central Executive

**Matthew Miller**

President

matthew.miller@nwttta.nt.ca

**Gwen Young**

Vice-President

gwen.young@nwttta.nt.ca

**Wendy Tulk**

Secretary-Treasurer

wendy\_tulk@edutlicho.net

**Colin Pybus**

Member-at-Large

beaufortdelta@nwttta.nt.ca

**Todd Sturgeon**

Regional Presidents' Representative

tsturgeon@ssdec.org



*During the wildfire evacuation of Yellowknife, l-r Donna Hayden & Tara Hawk (Mildred Hall School, YK1 region) visited the Telus Science Centre wanting to do little science experiments.*

## Central Office Contact

P.O. Box 2340, 5018-48 Street,  
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P7

Phone: 867-873-8501

Fax: 867-873-2366

Email: [nwttta@nwttta.nt.ca](mailto:nwttta@nwttta.nt.ca)

[www.nwttta.nt.ca](http://www.nwttta.nt.ca)

### OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Thursday: 8:30 am – 5:00 pm

Friday: 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

### NWTTA PERSONNEL

**Denise Works**

Administrative Assistant

[denise.works@nwttta.nt.ca](mailto:denise.works@nwttta.nt.ca)

**André Corbeil**

Finance & Communications Officer

[andre.corbeil@nwttta.nt.ca](mailto:andre.corbeil@nwttta.nt.ca)

**Trent Waterhouse**

Professional Development Coordinator/  
Member Services

[trent.waterhouse@nwttta.nt.ca](mailto:trent.waterhouse@nwttta.nt.ca)

### FOR URGENT MEMBER ASSISTANCE CONTACT:

**Matthew Miller**

President

[matthew.miller@nwttta.nt.ca](mailto:matthew.miller@nwttta.nt.ca)

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**David Murphy**

Executive Director

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**Sara McCrea**

Assistant Executive Director

[sara.mccrea@nwttta.nt.ca](mailto:sara.mccrea@nwttta.nt.ca)

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